

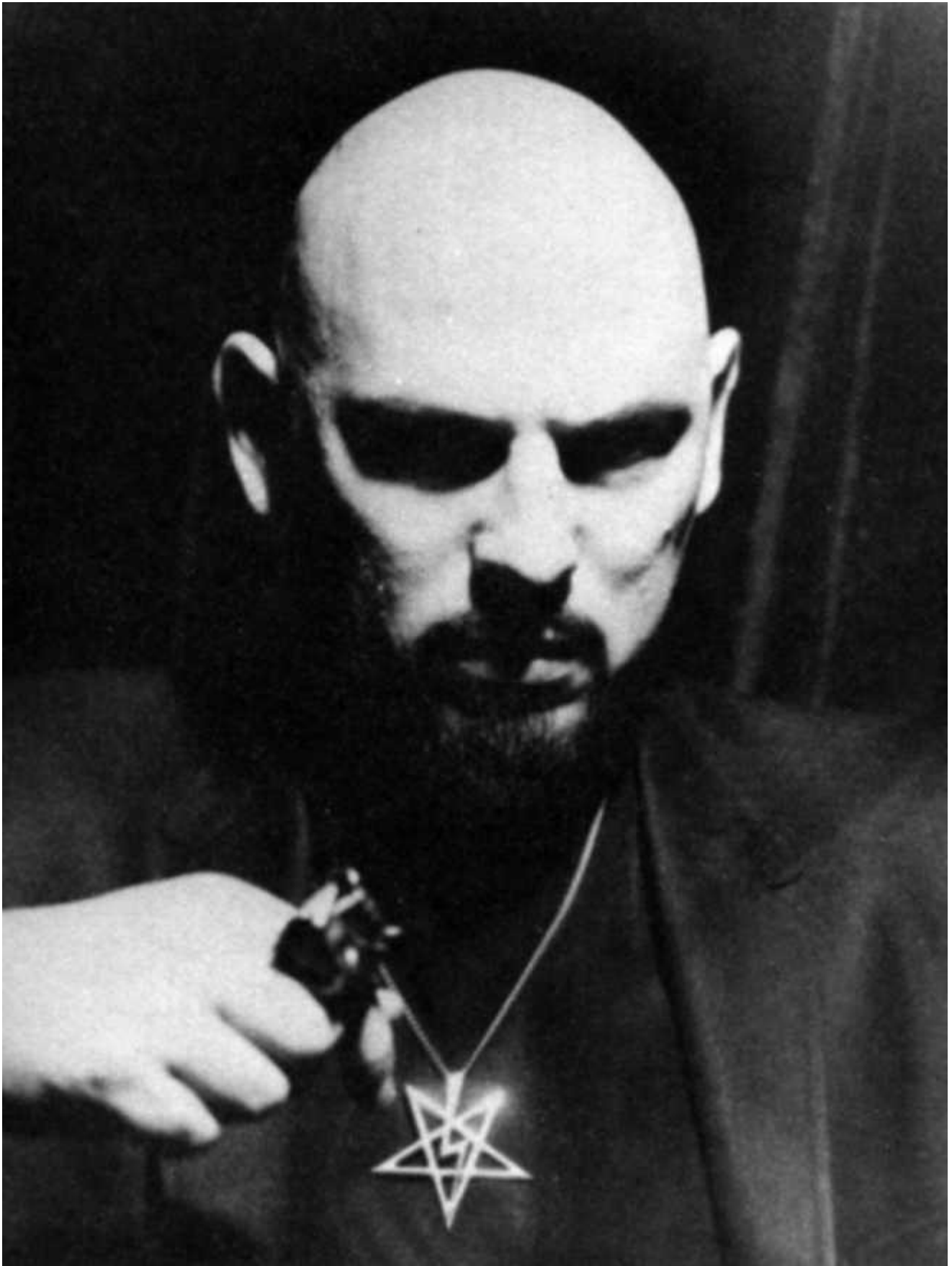
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Does the name Aleister Crowley mean anything to you? Have you ever heard of the ancient Egyptian god Set? The Golden Dawn? The Ordo Templi Orientis? Have you read the writings of J. K. Huysmans? Anton LaVey? Howard Phillips Lovecraft? Do you know what the Necronomicon is?

If you answered "no" to most of those questions, you're in the same position as I was in the summer of 1978, when I had my first real encounter with occultism in the person of Michael Aquino, founder of the satanic sect known as the Temple of Set. At the time, I knew virtually nothing about the occult or its subculture and had no interest in learning more. Yet, disarmed by my own naiveté, I fell in love with a satanist---and saw the life I knew destroyed as a result.



Like myself, most people who are grappling with issues related to satanism, ritual abuse, and the like came across the problem unexpectedly. Police officers investigating cases of vandalism by Satan-obsessed teenagers, therapists whose patients disclose ritualized abuse, and journalists covering stories of occult-related crime have all found themselves suddenly thrust into contact with a bizarre sort of parallel universe. How well they learn to understand the rules that

govern this alien world determines how effectively they are able to deal with it.

In many ways, my experience was identical to that of other victims of the hundreds of manipulative, controlling organizations commonly referred to as cults. Frequently, people become entangled in cults because a friend, relative, or spouse is a member. Maintaining a close relationship with a cult-involved person frequently leads to involvement with the cult as well. As I discovered, the results can be disastrous. Yet, I am fortunate in that my experience with satanism did not involve violence or illegal activity. It cost me my marriage, my career, and my peace of mind, but I know that for many the price has been even higher. In the language of satanism-related investigations, the term survivor usually refers to people who have endured the most horrifying physical and psychological torture at the hands of highly secretive, criminal cultists.

I was drawn to Michael Aquino not because he was a satanist but in spite of it. In the normal course of events, I would have had no interest in joining a satanist "church." I was not -- and am not -- a religious believer, nor was I a spiritual "searcher," nor had I been intrigued by the occult fads that swept the culture during the 1960s and 1970s. I would have insisted that I had no weak spots that the leader of a satanist group could hook in to. But I did. I just wouldn't have believed what they were.

My attraction to Aquino's world was rooted in the lure of the mysterious and romantic, which is so much more interesting than the ordinary and conventional. Some satanist groups still recruit through crude appeals to those seeking to "sell their souls to the devil" in exchange for fortune and fame. But sophisticated organizations such as the Temple of Set are more likely to target prospective members through a shared interest in such exotic subjects as vampire lore or Egyptian mythology. Other, less innocent aspects of the cult's philosophy may be hidden from the novice until he or she has been sufficiently conditioned, through psychologic manipulation, to accept and rationalize questionable teachings and practices. As I discovered, in the course of such conditioning the most intimate part of one's emotional being is often abused and betrayed.

I was thirty-four when I met Michael Aquino. My husband and I had been together for nine years; our marriage was affectionate and companionable, although not passionately romantic. The summer that Michael Aquino cast a shadow over our lives had been one of my happiest. We had left our Greenwich Village apartment because I needed to escape the nonstop hassle of New York City and had moved into a pleasant home in a beautiful suburb, I enjoyed my career as a designer. (My surname, incidentally, has nothing to do with my cult involvement, but was my married and professional name.) I loved my life but there was a part of me that remained emotionally vulnerable, and it was that window of vulnerability through which Aquino gained access.

One Sunday in August 1978, while shopping in a supermarket, I bought a science-fiction fan magazine containing a story by one Michael Aquino based on the movie Star Wars. I was captivated by the story's unusual twists and turns on the characters and events and by its strange, melancholy emotional tone, which touched the intensely romantic part of me that I rarely showed to others. In my ignorance, I passed right over the many occult references incorporated into the story, such as a statue modeled on the Egyptian god Set.

I steeped my imagination in that story for three months before I wrote to the author. Unfortunately for me, he wrote back, and we began a correspondence. Aquino was obviously flattered by my admiration, and I discovered that we shared many interests. He was intelligent and articulate, although his authoritarian politics and enthusiasm for philosophers such as Plato, Pythagoras, Hegel, and Nietzsche--and the way he ran on about the "Wagnerian" potential of the Star Wars series -- made me uneasy. However, I was so thirsty for the sort of emotional and imaginative communication that developed between us -- an element missing from my otherwise happy marriage---that I couldn't see that this well was poisoned, although the water was already beginning to make me sick,

Early in 1979, in his third letter to me, Aquino informed me that he was the leader of the Temple of Set and a former priest of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan. I was startled, I knew virtually nothing about satanism. To me, satanists were people in horror movies who sacrifice virgins on altars, not urbane Ph.D. candidates with U.S. Army Reserve commissions. However, although I was not ready to admit it to myself, I was already halfway in love, and I could not bring myself to abandon this intense emotional attachment.

I was falling into the confused and agitated state common to those who become involved with cults, and I needed help

desperately. But in 1979 there was only the bare beginning of a cult-education movement, There was no one my increasingly bewildered and alarmed husband, family, and friends could turn to as I alternated between bouts of withdrawal and hyperemotionalism I couldn't explain. About the only thing that would have changed my mind was to be able to see clearly into the future--in which case I would have cut off my hand rather than pick up that magazine.

I asked Aquino to refer me to other members of the Temple of Set so that I could learn more about their beliefs. in a rather stiff and formal letter, not at all like our previous correspondence, he told me that in order to have access to other "Setians," I would have to join the temple as a provisional member because the group refused to waste time on curious outsiders. (The temple still uses this argument to justify its stance as an exclusive club instead of a religious movement open to the scrutiny of all.) He also warned me that if I became involved with the "black arts" I would suffer social ostracism as well as fear and ridicule from others--but it would be worth it because I would reach a "higher level" of existence, one that was inconceivable to the lesser humans around me. It was as much a challenge as a warning.

Unaware that Aquino is a professional specialist in the area of psychological warfare, I was deeply impressed with the recruitment brochure he sent to me. He described the temple as "an institution unlike any that you have previously encountered." His writing projected an aura of respectability and intellectualism. For example, Setians did not "worship Satan." Instead, Set was "revered as an intelligent entity who possesses both the perspective and the prerogative to effect changes in the natural Universe in disregard of its intrinsic inertia". The temple embraced a "vast panorama" of occult knowledge, in keeping with its lofty ambitions. Only those possessed of "high intelligence and a very rare sense of magical and philosophical perspective" need apply.

These were "real" satanists, not the stereotypes portrayed in horror movies, the brochure asserted. Only the "paranoid ignoranti from conventional religions" believed that such people would engage in illegal or destructive activities. Aquino's trumpeting of individualism and personal independence -- portraying occultists as part of an underground struggle against convention -- was intriguing to me, and his repeated assurances that satanists were "ethical" helped to soothe my apprehensions. (I had yet to learn that "individual," "independent," and "ethical" are among the most abused terms in the satanists' lexicon.) There were philosophical and political aspects with which I disagreed and that made me uncomfortable, such as the fact that their view of morality was explicitly subjective. But I brushed aside my concerns, following the pattern of people who join cults and suddenly abandon their own political and social beliefs in order to feel compatible with the group or, as in my case, with a loved person who is involved. Overwhelmed by emotions I could neither understand nor resist, my attempts at questioning were too little, too late.

When I did join the temple I was put in contact with members from all over the country. I was assigned a "spiritual adviser," a middle-aged woman whose mundane life as a secretary contrasted dramatically with the flamboyant Church of Satan-style rituals she performed in front of an elaborate altar in her high-rise apartment. Once or twice a month I drove down to her place and watched, fascinated, as this satanist priestess, dressed in a black robe with her red hair flowing nearly to her waist, rang bells, waved incense about, and blessed everything in sight with a large phallicshaped wand, all the while invoking the names of assorted demons. In accordance with the publicly stated rules of the Temple of Set, there were no live sacrifices. Instead, she set fire to an invocation written on a sheet of paper and held it aloft at the end of her athame, or ritual sword, calling on Set for aid.

Deep down, part of me knew that I didn't really belong in this strange world. The temple's obsession with the 'dark side' of life, to the exclusion of all that was sunlit and joyful, seemed to me unbalanced and oppressive. But I constructed a sedan altar for myself in an unused room at home and wasted countless hours trying to achieve an "initiatory experience" by following the temple's guidelines for its rituals, which were somewhat less colorful than those of my "adviser." I could stare at pentagrams and wait for mystical 'gates' to open until the proverbial cows came home, but in truth the only real magical experiences were taking place in my correspondence with Aquino and the world I found in his stories. Still, for his sake, I tried to convince myself that I fit in.

In June 1979, I attended the temple's annual conclave, which was held that year at a Holiday Inn in Windsor, Ontario, across the river from Detroit. I shared a ride with a Setian priest who was in charge of bringing along the accoutrements for the altar. These included a human skull -- acquired, I assume, from a medical supply house -- and assorted ritual swords and daggers to be waved about during rituals. (Fortunately for the priest, Canadian customs

neglected to check the trunk of his car).

About thirty members of the group attended the meeting. The hotel lobby swarmed with men in priest's uniforms with black inserts in their clerical collars, and women in tight dresses slit halfway up their thighs. Caught up in my intense feelings for Aquino, which I had by now extended to embrace the rest of the group, I experienced a sense of alienation from ordinary people and bonded with the cultists who surrounded me. I was already buying into the temple's 'us versus them' view of the world, which included referring to outsiders as "mere humans."

I was sitting in the hotel coffeeshop with three other temple members when Aquino arrived. I looked up to see a tall man in his midthirties, dressed all in black, who resembled a cross between Bela Lugosi's Dracula and Mr. Speck from Star Trek. His most striking features were coal-black hair with a sharp widow's peak and eyebrows that curled up into equally sharp points over hazel eyes. Fair skin and an erect military bearing completed the effect. With him was his girlfriend, a former Church of Satan priestess who had taken the name Lilith. With her long black hair, pale skin, and short, snug black dress slit almost to the hip, she provided an interesting contrast to Aquino's priestly attire. He and I greeted each other exuberantly, more like long-lost friends than the august Ipsissimus of the Temple of Set -- Aquino's official title -- acknowledging a pretty but lowly recruit.

The temple membership turned out to consist of an odd combination of the respectable and the marginal of society. There were teachers, law enforcement and military officers, nurses, bank tellers, and secretaries, alongside former prostitutes of both sexes and the odd ex-biker or two. There were two former Jesuits. One member turned out to be the principal of a Catholic school! She and her husband, a priest of the cult, had adopted several children.

The Temple of Set is extremely image-conscious, and members had been admonished to avoid behavior that would upset the "humans" and tarnish the group's reputation. But any hopes of discretion were blown when one irrepressible priest found himself in an elevator with several hotel maids. "Who is this Set your group is named after?" one of them asked. He stepped out of the elevator and waited until the doors were beginning to close. "Well," he replied as their astonished faces disappeared, "the ancient Hebrews called him Satan." This news traveled rapidly, and the group was under intense scrutiny by the hotel staff and the local police for the remainder of the weekend.

The highlight of the conclave was a three-hour group ritual held in the hotel ballroom on Saturday evening. The room was dimly lit, and an altar had been set up at one end, surmounted by the temple's inverse-pentagram insignia. The skull I had shared a ride with rested on the altar, surrounded by a semicircle of Setians dressed in an assortment of ritual costumes, color-coded to their level within the temple hierarchy. Ronald K. Barrett, the officiating priest, a vulpine-looking individual with an even more pronounced widow's peak than Aquino's, was dressed in Egyptian fashion, including the elaborately painted eyes familiar from Egyptian artwork.

But the ceremony itself would have been a great disappointment to anyone hoping for naked female altars and bouts of blood drinking, let alone sex orgies or human sacrifices. The temple does not allow outsiders to view its rituals under any circumstances, and they were especially careful to maintain decorum. The result was a long, esoteric rite, the cumulative effect of which was very intense, almost hypnotic. It left many of the members visibly moved.

The next Ray Aquino and I said goodbye with more smiles and hugs. He had given me his private phone number, and we had several long conversations after the conclave. I had also collected names, addresses, and phone numbers from other temple members, and wrote to several of them. Many were obsessed with the notion that they were evolving into godlike beings within the elite cocoon of the temple, although few of them seemed to have any clear, specific idea of what this meant. Temple members tended to be of above-average intelligence, but it was not by intelligence alone that the Setians measured their uniqueness; they were convinced that in some mystical, unfathomable way they were "better" than those around them, and they were determined to gain mastery over the 'lesser' beings whom they felt were impeding their magical progress. Since most members held down rather mundane jobs and generally lived ordinary lives outside their ritual chambers, there was something pathetic about this collective delusion of grandeur.

Over the next several months, my involvement with Aquino and the temple followed an inexorable course to disaster. My marriage broke up under the strain and I left home and began a round of staying with friends. When Aquino and I became romantically involved during a visit to Washington, he dictated that I was not to interfere with his relationship with Lilith or his position within the temple hierarchy. When my obvious distress caused problems, I was subjected to

a great deal of emotional abuse and ultimately expelled from the group. Wishing I were dead, I sought help and eventually found a compassionate therapist. It felt strange to be told for the first time in over a year that my emotional needs were legitimate and I had a right to feel betrayed and devastated after so much loss. A confrontation with Aquino resulted in a brief reconciliation - although I never rejoined the temple - but eventually the disappointments and frustrations wore me down. Furthermore, I had begun to learn some very disturbing things about him. One was his apparent admiration for certain elements of Nazism. Other unsettling information was of a more personal nature. As these revelations increased and the tension between us grew, whatever loving feelings had existed between us disappeared and the relationship was mutually broken off early in 1981.

P. 38 Historical Background

As these beliefs spread throughout Europe they influenced more powerful sects, such as the Cathars, a flourishing religious movement in southern France in the twelfth century, which taught that the God of the Old Testament was actually Satan, rival of the ultimate God and creator of the material world. Much of the Cathars' popularity was based on their reputation for honesty and good deeds, and they attracted many followers who felt oppressed by the Church and feudal society. Although the Cathar initiates called Perfects were ascetics, lower-level Cathars were permitted to live relatively normal lives. Those who were unwilling to practice abstinence were allegedly encouraged to engage in unorthodox sexual activities that would not result in conception, and they gained a reputation for sexual perversion. Some gnostics believed that their special 'knowledge' made them gods who could not be corrupted by anything they did.

The Cathars repudiated the Catholic Mass because they believed that the sacraments 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. Whether any of these sects actually worshiped Satan is unknown, but in the combined religious and political threat they represented gave rise to the Inquisition, instituted in 1233 by Pope Greg IX to suppress heretics. When the Inquisition dealt with witchcraft, it treated it primarily as a challenge to Church authority. The later Protestant witchcraft persecutions were more concerned with alleged pacts with the Devil and the malevolent use of occult powers.

Modern neopagans contend that much of the turmoil over satanism grew out of the persecution of their forerunners, the holdouts who continued to practice the ancient pagan fertility religion. This claim has been disputed by scholars, but while it is doubtful that much in the way of organized preservation of the old pagan faith survived into the Middle Ages, it is certain that many pagan myths, beliefs, customs, and superstitions lived on in folk traditions that were opposed by the Church. Some scholars believe that by the fourteenth century, certain gnostic beliefs and practices had combined with remnants of pagan rites to form the "witches' sabbat," a major outdoor ceremony honoring a Satan-like figure known as the "god of the serfs." While bearing only limited resemblance to what would now be called a black mass, the sabbat was said to include elements such as sacrifice of animals, use of hallucinogenic herbs, blasphemous parodies of the Catholic Mass, and wild dancing and sex orgies that later turned up in various versions of the classic satanic rite. Whether cannibalism and child sacrifice actually occurred at the sabbats, the lurid descriptions provided by accused witches appear to have inspired "copycat" rituals by satanists in more recent centuries .

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The most infamous black magician of the twentieth century was Aleister 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.

Crowley was born in England in 1875, the son of devout members of the Plymouth Brethren, a puritanical Christian

sect. Some observers have rather superficially interpreted his attraction to the diabolical as a rebellion against the religion of his childhood. This rebellion was so complete that his mother took to calling him "the Beast 666" after the book of Revelation, an epithet Crowley defiantly adopted along with a string of other "magical" aliases. While many young men have rebelled against a strict fundamentalist upbringing, no one else did it quite like Aleister Crowley.

Crowley's obsession with occultism was focused on sex. He was intensely drawn to it, but he also considered it "a degradation and a damnation." In his unique spelling of magick, the k is said to represent the first letter of kteis, the Greek - word for the female sexual organs. Educated at Cambridge University, Crowley was intelligent and erudite, and he put all the force of his considerable intellect behind the glorification of the subjective will. He fancied himself a great poet, but the most outstanding characteristic of much of his poetic work is its unremitting scatology and obscenity. His many books include works of pornography and sadomasochism as well as voluminous writings on occultism.

In 1898 Crowley joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the most influential of several British occultist societies that flourished at the time. Its membership included W. B. Yeats, Dracula author Bram Stoker, and several other prominent literary figures. The Golden Dawn emphasized the psychological element of magic, the occult power in imagination, and the concentration of willpower that would enable the magician to achieve the supreme power of an Ipsissimus, the highest level of the order's system of degrees. But Crowley, who had embarked on an enthusiastic exploration of drugs, sex, and the darker forces of human nature, alarmed the other members and they expelled him. Two years later he produced a short, ecstatic occultist tirade entitled *The Book of the Law*. By now he was convinced that his mission in life was to destroy Christianity, and this rant--which includes such admonitions as "stamp down the wretched and the weak"; "the slaves shall serve"; "kill and torture; spare not"; "these vices are my service; ye do well, and I will reward you" and "drag down their souls to awful torment: laugh at their fear: spit upon them!"--left little doubt as to the fate he wished for those who stood in his way. Most apologists for Crowley protest that this was all poetic license, but under his influence these and similar sentiments became basic components of much of twentieth-century Satanism.

Crowley reportedly urged his followers to gash their arms with a razor whenever they spoke the word 'I' to remind them that the human self must be destroyed before the magician's true work can be accomplished. His rituals sometimes included animal sacrifice, but his position on human offerings is ambiguous. His writings state that an innocent male child is the perfect sacrifice, and he advocates the use of the blood of a child in the making of ritual wafers. There has been much debate over whether these pronouncements were meant literally or figuratively.

In 1907, Crowley formed his own occultist Order of the Silver Star, but it was as the head of the British branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis, a German esoteric order, that he had the most influence. The O.T.O.'s secret teachings involve the practice of sexual magic, in which Crowley indulged with prostitutes, children, animals, and male associates as well as with his numerous wives and mistresses some of whom designated his Scarlet Women. 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 -- "will" in Greek -- in a Sicilian villa, where he indulged in two of his favorite pastimes: no-holds-bared ritual sex magic, and drug abuse. There were rumors of child sacrifice at the abbey, and when an adult follower died on the premises the scandal resulted in Crowley and his followers being expelled from Italy in 1923. Crowley died alone and impoverished in England in 1947, having tried unsuccessfully to cure himself of an addiction to heroin.

By this time, Crowley's followers had established a beach-head in the United States. One such devotee was Dr. John (Jack) Whiteside Parsons, a brilliant physical chemist and founder of the California Institute of Technology, who became head of the Agape Lodge of the O.T.O., based in Pasadena. Parsons was a devout advocate of the philosophy of "no restriction" and was adept at the ecstatic rhetoric of magick, which indiscriminately celebrates both suffering and joy: "Pain is. Terror is loss and loneliness and agony of heart and spirit, even unto Death. For this is the gateway to the kingdom of Pan." Gilles de Rais is prominent among the sorcerers Parsons hails as heroes in the struggle against "that vermin of Hell that is called the Christian Church."

In 1945, Parsons was joined by Lafayette Ronald Hubbard, who would later go on to found the Church of Scientology.

Parsons was impressed by Hubbard's understanding and appreciation of magick. He and Hubbard embarked on a series of sex-magic rituals aimed at procuring a "familiar spirit," that is, a woman willing to participate in future sex-magic rituals with Parsons in order to persuade a demonic spirit to incarnate itself in a child whom Parsons was to father. Hubbard acted as onlooker and scribe. Parsons wrote ecstatically to Crowley that the ritual -- known in occult circles as the Babalon Working -- had been a great success, but Crowley was not impressed. "Apparently Parsons or Hubbard or some- body is producing a Moon Child," he complained to the head of another O.T.O. lodge. "I get fairly Frantic when I contemplate the idiocy of these louts."

Hubbard and Parsons had a falling-out, and Hubbard subsequently claimed that he had infiltrated the O.T.O. as an agent of Naval Intelligence. However, Hubbard's estranged son, Ron DeWolf, in an interview in the June 1983 issue of Penthouse magazine, insisted that his father had been secretly immersed in black magic going back to his teenage years, when he first read Crowley's Book of the Law. According to his son, Hubbard was one of many black magicians who claimed to have inherited Crowley's mantle:

He was very interested in . . . the creation of what some people call the Moon Child. It was basically an attempt to create an immaculate conception, except by Satan rather than by God ... getting a satanic or demonic spirit to inhabit the body of a fetus. This would come about as a result of black-magic rituals, which included the use of hypnosis, drugs, and other dangerous and destructive practices . . . He thought of himself as the Beast 666 incarnate . . . the Antichrist. Alistair [sic] Crowley thought of himself as such....

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He (LaVey) had instituted an elaborate system of hierarchical degrees that had to be achieved through passage of examinations measuring the aspirant's understanding of the black arts. Aquino's hero-worship of LaVey had extended to his belief that through him Satan had channeled a message of honor to the Church of Satan founder: he was to be designated "daimon," a "true god" with the power to "alter the machinery of the cosmos."

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. . . a supernatural mandate to usher in a new satanist religion, and that he has evolved from a mere human into some kind of godlike being with otherworldly powers.

Aquino is alleged to have marked the event by having the number 666, symbol of the Antichrist, tattooed somewhere on his head. The mark is also said to have been inspired by Aquino's favorite celluloid antihero, "Damien," the Antichrist protagonist of the Omen movie series. Whatever the case, Aquino's wife denies the claim, and Aquino himself is coy about whether the tattoo exists. Asked point-blank by Oprah Winfrey during an interview, he replied, "Do you see it?" Oprah was not about to go looking. Nor, apparently, was she aware that in his analysis of *The Book of Coming Forth By Night*, Aquino makes the following curious observation:

Collectors of magical happenstance may take note of the following concerning the person of Michael A. Aquino. . . . He was also born dead, raising the question of the nature of the force inhabiting his subsequently revived body. On his chest he bears the same whorled swastika appearing on Crowley and the Buddha, and from infancy his eyebrows have always curled upward into the horns described in the Biblical Book of Revelation #13:11.

Aquino also comments that he was born in 1946, "precisely nine months after a Working by Crowley's California disciples to create a homunculus [an artificial being created by magic] per a secret instruction of Crowley's to the IXO of his Ordo Templi Orientis." It is interesting to note that in his book *The Occult Explosion*, Nat Freedland reports that a Hollywood occultist named Renate Druks told him she believed that Jack Parsons, the California O.T.O. leader who performed the Babylon Working with L. Ron Hubbard, had been "working on some very strange experiments, trying to

create what the old alchemists called a homunculus, a tiny artificial man with magic powers." Parsons died in an explosion in his home laboratory in 1952. Druks suspects it was one of his alchemical experiments gone wrong.

Following his acceptance of Set's revelation, Aquino resigned from the Church of Satan and formed the Temple of Set around himself and several dozen other disgruntled LaVey acolytes. He replaced LaVey's sleazy circus atmosphere with a thick intellectual veneer and a calculated respectability. He knows that one of the best ways to preserve the inner secrets of an occult order is to envelop them in a fog of esoteric occultist verbiage that is virtually indecipherable to the uninitiated. (Aleister Crowley, a past master of this approach, is one of his heroes.) It is prudent to subject virtually every statement Aquino makes regarding the philosophy and intentions of the Temple of Set to careful scrutiny. In recent years, Aquino has even taken to encouraging temple members to learn techniques of stage magic, conjuring, and mentalism, noting that when taken out of their entertainment context such parlor tricks can be used to manipulate and intimidate curious outsiders. Such training is incorporated into Aquino's concept of Lesser Black Magic, or LBM, which involves "techniques of attention control and behavior and attitude manipulation."

Aquino and the Temple of Set are particularly ambiguous on the subject of good and evil. The Setian concept of good and evil is based on the idea that whatever is good for one individual may well be considered evil by someone else, and who is to say who is right and who is wrong? Aquino cautions his followers that "profane" society will tolerate them only if they are "perceived" to be ethical people. By insisting that he disapproves of "destructive behavior" and waving the word ethical about like a shield, Aquino usually manages adroitly to sidestep the implications of such a radical philosophy of moral relativism.

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In Zeena's view, LaVey is a cynical charlatan, good for nothing beyond impregnating Zeena's mother, Diane, a natural sorceress who Zeena alleges was the real power behind the Church of Satan. But beneath all this satanic-soap opera bickering there is another, more ominous theme. As co-director with Schreck of the Werewolf Order, Zeena - who has been called the Fuhrerin of the satanist movement -- is casting aside the "Eastern and negative Judeo-Christian imagery" of the Church of Satan in favor of the "Western European magical tradition" in this context, a euphemism for Teutonic mythology .

The Werewolf Order shares with the Manson family a belief in the sacred liberating power of embracing fear: "Fear is the key to enlightenment and only by befriending it can the mind be totally free. Terror. Dread. Horror: these are the magical tools of the initiate in the process of attaining mastery of the soul,"

In keeping with their belief in "the monster as sacred archetype and liberating symbol of all that is forbidden," the Werewolf Order's symbol is the Fenris Wolf of Norse mythology. Spawn of the god Loki, raised in Asgard, the home of the gods, the Fenris Wolf grew so huge and fierce that he terrified the gods themselves. When they tried to bind him up, he snapped through every fetter until at last he was bound with a chain made of all the silent and secret things of the world. At the time of Ragnarok -- the destruction of the gods in Norse mythology, heralded by hatred, incest, murder, and warfare - the great Wolf will break the chain and devour the world. The Fenris Wolf is the very image of apocalypse, fitting for the Werewolf Order, which claims to represent the sacred forces of destruction: "From the fall of Atlantis to the rise of the Third Reich and beyond, we have monitored and engineered every 'catastrophe' and 'disaster' that has blessed mankind."

This barbaric mythology supports the Werewolf Order's goal of creating 'an international network of men and women of action dedicated to the creation of a new Satanic world order.' To this end, "an unholy war for dominion of this earth" will be waged by the "warrior priests and priestesses" of the order, the "lonewolves who shun the bovine herd of humankind and seek to fulfill their ancient legacy of power and mastery of the world." Estimates of the current size and composition of the Werewolf Order are hard to come by, given the group's extremely secretive nature and the implications of its membership policy. The order scorns public recruiting and advocates proselytizing primarily among one's friends and immediate family. The resulting "wolfpacks" are referred to as "WO Dens." Naturally, in keeping with the wolfpack metaphor, Schreck and Zeena see themselves as the Alpha male and female of the movement, in charge of a worldwide network of WO Dens. The Werewolf Order maintains a headquarters in Los Angeles and also

has a base of operations in Europe.

Rehabilitating individuals who have come to personify evil incarnate in the minds of most people is a virtual obsession among satanists. Adolf Hitler is one favorite; Charles Manson is another. On August 8, 1988, the Werewolf Order co-sponsored a public ritual celebration that included a video dramatization of the murder of Sharon Tate and others by members of the Manson family. While this was being shown, Zeena and Anton (who were still on speaking terms) stood with other satanists onstage and read from The Satanic Bible. Whenever the subject of the "8-8-88" satanic extravaganza comes up, Zeena and Schreck try to explain away criticism of the event as "simplistic" carping by those who fail to realize that the Church of Satan was "the last bastion of order" in the freewheeling sixties.

The Werewolf Order's media arms, Radio Werewolf and Video Werewolf, market much of their output through AES-NIHIL Productions of California. The moniker is short for Aesthetic Nihilism. AES-NIHIL is devoted to the distribution of material extolling the virtues of murder and mayhem. One of their favorite subjects is Charles Manson. Others include Jim Jones and the People's Temple massacre, satanism, mass murder, serial killers, racial conflict, drugs, pornography, vampirism, and a collection of O.T.O. rituals. There is also a special category entitled "The Nazi Dream Quest for Un-known Perfection" which includes such classics as the vicious Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda film The Eternal Jew.

In the late 1980s, the Werewolf Order's demonic duo took to promoting their ideas on the television talk-show circuit. Around Halloween 1988, Nick and Zeena appeared on the now infamous Geraldo Rivers two-hour television special on satanism. Zeena sat on the stage next to Michael Aquino and persistently insisted that real satanists never actually do anything bad. Schreck was interviewed via satellite from the West Coast. Dressed entirely in black, his dyed blond hair pinched into a sharp widow's peak, he spoke in a flat, emotionless voice. His brief comments certainly served to set a tone that might make one wonder about the consistency between the beliefs of satanists and their alleged actions - or lack of it. "We would like to see most of the human race killed off, because it is unworthy of the gift of life," Schreck sneered, demonstrating his fondness for Hitlerian phrases. "A bloodbath would be a cleansing and a purification of a planet that has been dirtied and degraded for too long."

Around Halloween 1989, Nick and Zeena were back on television to expand on this theme with Sally Jessy Raphael. The haughty Schreck's now-thinning widow's peak was black this time around, but his eyes had the same flat, lifeless quality familiar to viewers of the Geraldo special. On his left sleeve he sported the Werewolf Order insignia, depicting the Fenris Wolf. Zeena's appearance conjured up a vision of her sister-in-satanism, the late Jayne Mansfield, in vampire drag -- pale skin, bleached blond mane, black clothes, dark red lips and matching talonlike nails. (Mansfield, who had been a Church of Satan member in its heyday, died in an auto accident that Anton LaVey at one time suggested was the result of a curse he had put on her boyfriend, Sam Brody.)

When Sally asked Nick about the Werewolf Order, he replied that he had founded it in 1984 "as a vanguard for the coming satanic century, because we have been defined by Christians and our enemies for too long. Now satanists are coming out of the underground to reveal what satanism is, in the media." Schreck readily admitted that his goal is the annihilation of the Judeo-Christian population of the world.

These, then, are some of the foremost examples of the so-called respectable and legitimate satanic "religious organizations" that are actively working to gain recruits and influence American society. While their First Amendment rights must be respected, it is necessary to consider the impact such groups can have upon impressionable young people who come under their influence.

P. 190 **CHAPTER EIGHT Satanism and Nazism**

One of the most disturbing aspects of modern satanism is the increasingly open admiration for Nazism displayed by its adherents. The connection between satanism and Nazism has been relatively difficult for some observers to identify, because until recently most satanist groups have not shown themselves to be overtly racist or anti-Semitic. But some satanists now openly advocate forms of racism and anti-Semitism as a "natural" expression of their white, Northern European hereditary background. The more sophisticated groups, such as the Temple of Set, have adopted many of the

ambiguous and manipulative language strategies now being employed by the pseudoacademics of the neo-Nazi movement, known as historical revisionists, whose mission is to discredit the reality of the Holocaust. The more crudely extreme satanists openly embrace the trappings, the symbols, the ideology, and, in some cases, the aggressive behavior patterns of the neo-Nazi skinheads. So, this increasingly open affinity with Nazism is finding expression at all levels of the satanist movement.

Satanic graffiti is a common enough, if disturbing, sight. So is Nazi graffiti. What is relatively new, however, is the growing number of incidents in which satanic and Nazi graffiti are found together, obviously the work of the same vandals.

For example, in summer 1991, swastikas and anti-Semitic slurs appeared together with inverted crosses, "666," and phrases such as SATAN RULES on the walls of schools, churches, and homes in eastern Massachusetts. In many parts of the country, skinhead gangs use satanic as well as Nazi symbols in their vicious desecrations of churches, synagogues, and cemeteries.

As far back as 1989, police in San Antonio, Texas, reported that some teen satanist dabblers were going on to bigger things: They were shaving their heads and becoming neo-Nazis. As the cops saw it, these kids became bored with satanism and sacrificing animals, so they dropped the satanic symbols in favor of those of neo-Nazism and white supremacy. "They speak of . . . the purification of the Aryan race and paint slogans like 'down with the Jews,' 'down with the blacks,'" sheriff's investigator Larry Quintanilla told the San Antonio Express-News. He noted that this was going on in every major city in Texas. Even graffiti was affected, with pentagrams being painted over as swastikas.

Members of white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups such as the Aryan Brotherhood reportedly flaunt satanic symbolism, such as the number 666, within their prison gangs. Skinheads and other young white supremacists have taken to sporting both Nazi and satanic tattoos and insignia. Some skinhead gangs have branched off into experimentation with animal sacrifice and satanic rituals. White Aryan Youth (WAY), White Aryan Resistance (WAR), and other neo-Nazi groups are also believed to have connections to Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth and other countercultural "satanazi" fence-straddlers. In Germany, interest in the occult in general, and satanism in particular, is said to be growing rapidly.

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In its early years, the Werewolf Order adopted the Radio Werewolf handle for its rock band, which doubled so a propaganda tool.

The Radio Werewolf Supreme Command once issued a broadsheet titled The Radio Werewolf Indoctrination. In it the supreme command invoked the image of the werewolf as a symbol of the "demonic manifestation" of the "glorious force" that had periodically visited the world to "wreak havoc and fear when it was necessary, and to instill order and obedience upon the masses" As its "current incarnation," Radio Werewolf's mission was to "rid this Earth once and for all of the subhuman parasites that have for too long hindered the spiritual evolution of the Chosen," clearing the way for the latter to "aspire to heights dreamed of by no mortal man." Its tool for this extermination would be its subliminal manipulation of the popular youth culture through its own form of demonic music "designed to instill the gleam of pride and independence of the beast of prey back into the eyes of the pitiless youth." If something sounds familiar about that last line, it should: It incorporates a quote from Adolf Hitler about his own Hitler Youth.

Sally Jessy Raphael confronted LaVey's daughter Zeena and Werewolf Order co-founder Nikolas Schreck about their admiration for the Nazis when the pair appeared on her television program. Schreck first attempted to dodge the issue by insisting that he was not a National Socialist. Refusing to be put off, Sally pursued her quarry. What part of Hitler's ideology did he agree with? Did he think the Holocaust was morally right? This question produced the most telling exchange of the program. 'Morality has nothing to do with it,' Schreck replied. "No, I don't feel it was right or wrong. Right by what standard? We do not believe in good or evil. You have to understand that."

. . . lights, and mirrored ceiling balls in the tradition of the Die Elektrischen Vorspiele (Law of the Trapezoid) ritual from Anton LaVey's *The Satanic Rituals* are added to create an "experience." In his songs, Rice calls for a "brutal gardener" to prune earth's population.

Rice is well known in England and the rest of Europe, but less so in the United States, although he has toured in this country. Hovering on the fringes of punk rock with others who felt that "the values they had bought in to were garbage and didn't serve any function in their lives," he says he felt a need for a "biological knowledge of what you are." Apparently his biology is "Aryan," and his response was to begin moving toward racial separation and tribalism. Around 1990 he took part in the joint performance event "Wotans- lager," or "Wotan's Lair," which also featured the European band Current 93. The event, sponsored in part by the Abraxas Foundation, was billed as a "Primeval invocation to the God of War," promoting bloodlust, savagery, and predation.

On a less elevated plane is the Luciferian Light Group, whose "main body," the Church of Luciferian Light, is a satanist "Secret Brotherhood" based in Tampa, Florida. According to their literature, they believe that "the Aryan race is descended from the angles [sic] who came to the earth from 'heaven' during the first age of man . . . Aryan people are the true Children of Satan and the rightful Masters of the world." (This bizarre theology echoes some of the nineteenth-century German occultists who preached that the "angels" of the Bible were really disguised references to "Aryan heroes.") The Luciferian group offers "advanced courses in satanic theology, tuition nonrefundable if you disappoint 'His Majesty Satan'." The L.L.G. explicitly bases its theology on that of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan. It is not clear whether LaVey endorses the group, but a variety of satanist organizations regularly place advertisements in its newsletter, *Onslaught*.

In its admissions policies, the L.L.G. takes care to dot the same t's and cross the same i's as the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set. The group is "geared to the advancement of the serious seeker." No one under age eighteen is admitted. Animal sacrifice and "illegal activity" are not condoned. An "occult disclaimer," published on advice of legal counsel, states that the whole enterprise is "intended for entertainment and educational purposes only."

A 1991 issue of *Onslaught* features a whole range of the doublespeak that characterizes current satanist publications. *Onslaught* presents declarations of Aryan supremacy out of one side of its mouth while condemning "hate crimes" legislation as "racist" out of the other. Its contributors attempt to advance their cause of "religious freedom" for the increasingly anti-Semitic, white supremacist, and Nazified religion of satanism. One reference was to a newspaper clipping reporting the case of a Kissimmee man who was charged with sending "satanic" hate mail after he sent out as many as one hundred letters signed with a pentagram and referring to himself as "the Demon." Other clippings feature stories about neo-Nazis in Germany and the United States.

On the international scene, Kerry Bolton, who is listed on the 1992 Temple of Set roster as a second-degree member, is also the founder of the New Zealand satanist group the Order of the Left-Hand Path. According to sources in Australia, Bolton is associated with the white supremacist Nationalist Workers Party. Interestingly, the N.W.P.'s literature pushes the "separation not domination" theme that has become so popular with Third Position neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements. N.W.P. booklets include "Scientific Origins of Racial Nationalism," "Racial Dynamics," and "Racial Nationalism," all written by Bolton. The order offers a correspondence course in satanism for thirty dollars, no refunds. If you complete the course to the satisfaction of the Collegium Satanus, and sign the oath of allegiance to Satan, you receive a certificate of ordination into the satanic priesthood "strikingly printed in black, on red card, suitable for framing."

One example is *The Passing of the Great Race*, by Madison Grant, which is described as presenting "a forceful case far

a European race history that would have done credit to Hitler and Rosenberg," although the review avoids an actual endorsement of the work. (Grant was chairman of the New York Zoological Society, trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, and a councilor of the American Geographical Society.) Other titles reflect the temple's interest in "geopolitics" and "metapolitics."

A turning point for the Temple of Set in its advocacy of the study of Nazi occultism came in autumn 1982. On November 8, in a letter to high-level members, complete with photos, Aquino explained that he had spent the early part of October participating in tours of European NATO installations are ranged through the World Affairs Council, of which he was a member. On October 19, at the conclusion of the tours, he embarked on "a long-awaited personal quest" -- a search for Schloss Wewelsburg, the Westphalian castle appropriated in 1934 by Heinrich Himmler to be the headquarters of the SS. Himmler had structured the SS very much along the lines of an occult order, complete with a type of religious hierarchy headed by officers who had completed the ritualized candidacy process and had taken special vows. These were, in effect, the high priests of the SS, the Black Order that Himmler envisioned as the elite guardians of the Third Reich and the Aryan race. Their model was the Nietzschean superman.

In 1933, during a political visit to Westphalia with Hitler, Himmler was so inspired by the romantically fog-shrouded atmosphere of the area that he acquired a castle there for use by the SS. According to occult historian Nigel Pennick, Himmler's interest in geomancy -- sacred geometry -- had led him to believe that "if he could find a significant place for the center of his Black Order, then he could psychically influence the whole of Germany."

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But Drury senses an "unexplained factor, a missing component" to these two, perhaps signaled by Aquino's belief that mankind is alien to the rest of nature and Lilith's assertion that Setians are "superior beings." And he is troubled by their emphasis on satanic, Nazi, medieval, and demonic imagery.

Drury notes that "the specific links between the Setian philosophy and the magical practices of the esoteric Nazi group [the SS] led by Heinrich Himmler are difficult to trace but are present, nevertheless." while Aquino states that many aspects of Nazism are repugnant to him, it is obvious that he is powerfully attracted to the Nazis' ability to "summon an extraordinary psychic force," which he contends was misdirected by the Nazis but can be properly directed by other magicians. Drury notes that this contention is coupled with the recurrent satanist theme of the initiated superman who can become an immortal god. In the interview itself, Aquino theorizes that a magician can learn to make everything, even time itself, subject to his will -- thereby enabling him to conquer death itself. If he is successful, at death the ego will refuse to die and will remain earthbound but disembodied.

In the video version of *The Occult Experience*, Aquino is shown lovingly fingering a dagger he owns, which he says once belonged to a high-ranking Nazi SS officer. Drury quotes Aquino's Crystal Tablet ruminations about the Nazi version of immortality: "[T]he monk-knights' of the pre-war S.S. could disdain, even willingly embrace, the death of the individual human being because the consciousness had been transferred to a larger life-form -- that of the Hegelian state -- and individual sacrifice towards the strengthening of that lifeform would actually contribute towards one's immortality. Aquino's ambitions are not so limited -- according to another article in the Order of the Trapezoid's newsletter, *Runes*, he intends to venture far beyond genetic engineering in his quest for immortality, into "manipulating the actual animating force in living things."

Aquino's sidekick in pursuit of the Germanic ideal is Stephen Edred Flowers, Ph.D., the current officiating high priest of the Temple of Set and head of the Order of the Trapezoid. Flowers, who earned his degree in Germanic studies at the University of Texas at Austin, is the author of several books on Teutonic mythology and rune lore under his own name and as "Edred Thorsson." He was attracted to Germanic religion at age twenty when he read Trevor Ravenscroft's *The Spear of Destiny*, a dissection of Hitler's occultism that is also a favorite of Aquino. Flowers avoids the Nazi label by arguing that his version of the Teutonic revival aims to restore the pristine ideals "distorted" by the Nazis under the pernicious influence of Christianity.

The Nazi movement in Germany was influenced by nine-teenth century movements such as Ariosophy, which

combined occultism with German nationalism and doctrines of Aryan racial superiority. One of the pioneers of these movements was Guido von List. List founded a religious order called the Armanen, which promoted a magical paganism based on the Runes, the ancient Germanic alphabet that occultists credit with mystical powers. Long considered a racist crackpot--his books were popular with the Ahnenerbe List has recently found a champion in Flowers, who in 1988 published his translation of List's 1908 work *The Secret of the Runes*.

While Flowers enjoys a reputation as a Teutonicist, he has also gained notoriety as a guru of a new breed of Wotan-worshipping satanazis, a phenomenon that is a great source of controversy in neopagan circles.

The Order of the Trapezoid originated with the Church of Satan. Its name derives from Anton LaVey's contention that the anxiety, hostility, and fear inspired by unharmonious angles can engender aberrant behavior. Whereas a complete and perfect triangle or pyramid is pleasing to the eye, its truncated form--the trapezoid--is the most disturbing and intimidating shape that exists, which makes it an ideal symbol.

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"Devil-worshippers believe that Satan is the master of this world," said one young victim. "When we die he will give us all the powers we need to control the spirit world. After a few rituals you just feel so dirty you think, well, if there is a God, he has no use for me now."