The Renaissance and/of Witchcraft

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Philosophy is odious and obscure;
Both law and physic are for petty wits;
Divinity is basest of the three,
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible and vile:
Tis magic, magic that has ravish'd me.

Christopher Marlowe,
The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus

These lines might well have been written by a denizen of the contemporary counter culture, though he might have respected "Divinity" only by eliminating it for "Government." The lines can suggest various things. First, that there is an analogy to be made between the Renaissance and the contemporary world. Secondly, that a rejection of conventional learning—we discuss it under the rubric of irrelevance—can be a prelude to a revival of the occult. Thirdly, the utilization of this text can intimate that, for present purposes, the author may owe more to Herodotus than he does to Ranke, that is, more to history as art than to history as science. That, too, may be a sign of the times.

In his seminal study, Theodore Roszak properly underscored that the occult "has become an integral part of the counter culture."[1] This corresponds well with the Renaissance, save that then the occult was even central to the culture. This is only one part of a general analogy between the Renaissance and the contemporary world, a preliminary treatment of which might render one species of it, i.e., witchcraft, more convincing.

This is to enlarge upon and perhaps qualify the thoughts of Paul Goodman on "the new Reformation."[2] Viewed more comprehensively, our age could as readily be characterized as a renaissance of the Renaissance. This would be far more conspicuous were it not for the prejudice that equates Renaissance and representational art. Again, many obervers facilely describe the Renaissance as a golden age oblivious of the anxieties that can lurk behind the scenes. Unlike Dante, who wrote at the dawn of the period, they do not take the "Montagues and Capulets" (Purgatorio, VI) seriously enough. Eugenio Garin, in a brilliant insight, saw the great art of that age as "an ideal refuge" from an unbearable world.[3]

This can suggest that the similarities are more compelling than the superficial differences. First and foremost, the Renaissance was an age of transition between two worlds, the medieval and modern, both relatively well defined, stable, and coherent world views. The patterns of the modern world are passing, and we are in an age of transition comparable to that of the Renaissance, one increasingly designated as "Post-modern." In both there is a certain rupture with the past and sense of discontinuity: the Renaissance humanist rejected his

1. *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1969), pp. 124-25. See especially chapter VIII: "Eyes of Flesh, Eyes of Fire," 239-68.
2. *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative* (New York: Random House, 1970), x-xi.
3. *La cultura del Rinascimento* (Editori Laterza, 1967), p. 8.

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medieval past and compensated by idealizing antiquity, alienated youth rejects his middle class (or modern) past and idealizes the folk. This involves a rehearsal of the quarrel of the *Quattrocento* between "Ancients" and "Moderns." At this point and in this sense the ancients are the youths of our counter culture and the moderns their elders, suggestive that their conflict is not so much over tradition as it is particular *traditions;* it also reminds us that the middle ages were once themselves "modern." Both old and new Renaissance want a certain sense of institutional and cultural coherence. (C. S. Lewis characterized the first as "a complex of heterogeneous events.") When reason (whether the old Scholasticism or latter-day Enlightenment) ceases to bind things together, we are torn between the obvious and the impossible, as in Durer's *Melancholia* or in our incongruity of the universalism of science and the ubiquity of the absurd. Terrestrial disorders prompt men to seek order in the stars: the age of Saturn and the age of Aquarius. Love philosophies reign when the old rationalist assumptions are in poor repute. Even the papacy succumbs! Ficino formulates the theory of Platonic love, Botticelli frames it in the "Birth of Venus," and we hear no end of the higher possibilities of love today. Despite this, both are great ages of violence, apocalypticism and plague—though for our age Jung has called it "psychic epidemics." The anxieties endemic to such ages are apt to be translated into irony, a courageous response to *Angst* and a more sophisticated genre of humor, be it the wise fool of Erasmus (or Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare) or in the theatre of the absurd. Poetry is the proper literary vehicle of such an age, for only poetry can reach the deeper resources of the dark night of the soul. Petrarch complains of a poet on every "street corner," and the novel is (admittedly, constantly) proclaimed dead. Identity crises are commonplace as established institutions erode. This can be seen from the time of Petrarch's nostalgizing over Mount Ventoux to that of Luther's brooding *Anfechtungen* at Wittenberg.

With the institutional deterioration of an age of transition, the coarsest hedonism and the most ethereal mysticism are found side by side, occasionally even together. At the same time, there is the debate between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa,* involvement or "copping out." There is a revolution in education, with much of traditional learning rejected as irrelevant, often in favor of the antique and the esoteric. A flight from the world is the complement of apoliticism and the concentration of power, convenient both as antecedents and effects of tyranny. From among the ruins of the Italian republics, Machiavelli sends up his stoic cry that we do "something crazy."[4] Hollywood, Yippies, Crazies, enter the lists. Everywhere there is profound religious ferment and a

4. *Lettere,* ed. Franco Gaeta (Milan, 1961), p. 457. I am grateful to Professor A. William Salomone of the University of Rochester for this citation. It goes without saying that it would be vain to document such a large canvas. Support for some of this can be found in the celebrated address of William L. Langer, "The Next Assignment," *American Historical Review,* 63 (January, 1958), especially 292-301. On the hedonist and mystic formula for such an age, consult Pitirim A. Sorokin, *The Crisis of our Age* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1957), p. 302. On apocalypticism, consider Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophesy in the Late Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford of the Clarendon Press, 1969); *Katallagete: Be Reconciled,* the whole issue of Fall, 1970; and Frank Kermode, "The New Apocalyptists," *Partisan Review,* 3 (Summer, 1966), 339-61. On Jung, see his "Epilogue to Essays on Contemporary Events," of 1932, in *Civilization in Transition,* trans. R. F. C. Hull, *Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), x, 243. And on Petrarch see *The Portable Renaissance Reader,* ed. James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), pp. 120-22.

widespread urge to get behind history to utopias, first principles, and primitive constitutions. The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and "the new reformation" of the twentieth. Finally, the irrational can preface a polarization of good and evil, as a golden age of mysticism is accompanied by the great witch craze. The latter, then, is only part of a larger correspondence between the Renaissance and our own age, and we should not be astonished to witness its revival. Interestingly, this argument, basically deductive, is itself an illustration of a fundamental principle of the occult: "like begets like."

Witchcraft itself is better characterized than defined, for it has varying creedal, liturgical, psychical, magical, moral, and historical dimensions. Viewed broadly, it is more than a "Christian heresy," for it is older than and can be found independently of Christianity. Western witches sometimes call it "the old religion," a primitive pre-Christian religion with druidic and classic associations. It is an open question whether it is rooted in Hecate, Diana, Dionysus, Cain, Satan or in the darker resources of the psyche itself. A scrutiny of the pertinent literature can suggest that these are gods better worshipped at a distance, and the studies of anthropologists generally conclude that witchcraft is considered evil.[5] But some witches, and following them, historians, define witchcraft so as to exclude "black magic," while other define it so as to exclude "white."[6] The objective course is probably to allow both, with traffic between the two. Philosophically, it is my mind at the present that witchcraft finds congenial either a strict monism or a pronounced dualism. In the first case good and evil can blur, in the second they can be transvaluated. When either takes place, one is "beyond good and evil."

There seem to be certain common denominators found rather universally in witchcraft. It particularly orients around two things: sexuality (as symbol or as fact) and power, often fusing the two. Sex can be its "philosopher's stone." With reference to power, LaVey's view is general: "no one ever pursued occult studies . . . without ego gratification and personal power as a goal."[7] This is an essential part of the attraction of witchcraft to the Renaissance old and new: witchcraft is a means of artifically heightening the will in ages when

5. For example, *Witchcraft and Sorcery: Selected Readings*, ed. Max Marwick (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 47-48, 60, 238; Lucy Mair, *Witchcraft*, (New York and Toronto: World University Library, 1969), p. 15. Pico della Mirandola went so far as to consider all paganism as diabolic. D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic From Ficino to Campanella* (London: The Warburg Institute University, 1958), pp. 146-47. On the problem of the gods see also Charles G. Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp. 244ff. Nauert provides much help generally on the Renaissance and the occult. Cain was put in this pantheon after reading Jacques Ellul, "Cain, the Theologian of 1969," *Katallagete: Be Reconciled* (Winter, 1968-69), 4-7. This view is supported by a contemporary Satanist. See Susy Smith, *Today's Witches* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 106-07.

6. For example, Anton Szandor LaVey, *The Satonic Bible* (New York: Avon, 1969), p. 88, rejects white witches as wanting conviction: "ONE GOOD ORGASM WOULD PROBABLY KILL THEM!" Sybil Leek, *Diary of a Witch* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 173, dismisses black witches as "pseudo-covens." Alex Sanders, now a white witch, allows both and has practiced both. See June Johns, *King of the Witches: The World of Alex Sanders* (London: Peter Davies, 1969).

7. *The Satanic Bible*, p. 110. And for one of many illustrations of sex magic, see Richard Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (London: Pan Books, Ltd., 1967), p. 279. Let me indicate that I have attempted to clear my mind on these and other subjects at better leisure in "The City of God Revisted," *Cross Currents* (Summer, 1969), 241-55, and especially "The Future of Witchcraft," *The Month* (London), scheduled for publication early in 1971.

men feel flattened by misfortune. It is hubris-enhancing, and it can tempt men to be "as gods."

The Renaissance *and* witchcraft can now be treated directly. Contrary to a common view that is not restricted to the popular level, it was not the middle ages but the Renaissance that was the golden age of the occult. The middle ages was generally skeptical of the reality of witchcraft. The Renaissance, on the other hand, was not a period of de-mythologization, but rather one of "re-mythologization." The Renaissance built upon the *Grimoire* traditions of the middle ages, to be sure, but almost to the point of building a Tower of Babel. Faust was an archetype of the Renaissance,[8] which was probably more gothic than the middle ages.

There were various reasons for the change. Foremost, probably, would be the straightened circumstances of the age—about which much has earlier been said—the despair that could induce Europeans to turn to the darker arts for succor. Compulsion neurosis readily works its way out as sacrilege.[9] This came easier at a time when established religion was rather less than exemplary. Again, the more exotic turn of humanism credulously rehabilitated the occult traditions of antiquity. Hence, the necessary literature was available to accommodate the more fundamental urge to use it. There were countless other considerations: the Renaissance stress upon *virtù*, its titanism,[10] and what we might call its "resurrection of the body," its "wholism."

Reactions against ascetic traditions can readily go too far, and a severe conflict has been posited between the traditional ascetic *ethos* of the middle ages and the increasing hedonism of the Renaissance.[11] This does not imply that all medieval men were monks, even chaste monks, or that all Renaissance men were over-sexed—though Henry VIII and a humanist like Poggio may have had some problems in this area. But the logic of this severe conflict could readily lead to a certain ritualizing around sex. This is not just another deduction. D. P. Walker confirms that the treatises (these are not the demonologies) on witchcraft "came near to being a pornographic *genre*"; moreover, we know that there were counter culture groups like the "Free Spirit" coming out of the high middle ages who began as an anarchic protest against wealth but who practiced a certain erotic mysticism.[12] They passed into clandestinity (and then what?) but we do know that they survived long enough to rankle Calvin.

In view of this, it should not be surprising that we find the demonologies obsessed with lust, though they are, of course, anti-erotic. This is borne out by the most famous (or unfamous), the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) of the Dominicans Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger. With them, this anti-eroticism

8. For some support for these general views see Francis A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (University of Chicago Press), pp. 11, 17-18, 126; Nauert, 223; Julio Caro Baroja, *The World of the Witches*, trans. O. N. V. Glendening (University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 44, 55-60; H. R. Trevor-Roper, "Witches and Witchcraft," *Encounter* (May, 1967).
9. Gregory Zilboorg, M.D., *The Medical Man and the Witch During the Renaissance* (New York: Cooper Square Publishing, Inc., 1935), p. 63.
10. For some support, beyond Yates, *passim*, see Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (New York: Mentor Book ed., 1961), pp. 363, 365, 373; and Nauret, 236.
11. Zilboorg, 61. Also cf. Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: The Norton Library, 1962), p. 193.
12. Walker, 82-83. On the Free Spirit, Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millenium* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), pp. 152, 165, 189.

takes a distinctly misogynous turn. They quote Writ with obvious approval, even relish: "I had rather dwell with a lion and a dragon than to keep house with a wicked woman."[13] Women are considered weaker, more vulnerable to witchcraft. A psychiatrist has written, advisedly or not, about "the misogynous trend of the age."[14] All students of the Reformation have heard the clarion call of John Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women.* Perhaps the trumpet had to be sounded because the women were on the march? Vives made the case for their education, and there had been Lucrezia Borgia, Caterina Sforza, Mary Tudor, and there would be Mary Stuart, Catherine de Medici, and Elizabeth. It would probably be reckless to say that mere monarchs constitute a movement, but there could have been much *ressentiment.* Not necessarily that the old pagan priestesses finally wreaked their revenge on a male chauvinist Christianity, but the majority of Renaissance witches do seem to be women. Caro Baroja holds that the archetype of the Spanish witch was the Celestina. A recent and refreshingly scientific study from England reveals that only 23 of 291 accused witches in Essex County were male. Michelet allows, if gratuitously, that a formula at the time of Louis XIII was: "For one Sorcerer, ten thousand Sorcerresses."[15] Some of our contemporaries have taken this to heart.

The witch craze was of stages, and its height coincides with the age of the Reformation. This can prompt a moment's speculation on the peculiar sectarian contributions or congruencies between its two great parties and witchcraft. In an interview with Alex Sanders I was struck when Sander's wife, Maxine, announced that they would rear their daughter a Catholic, "the closest thing to the craft!" This might be truly a left-handed compliment. Still, the emphasis found in Catholicism upon the *vis imaginum* and the *vis verborum* (e.g., *hocus-pocus* is allegedly a corruption of the words of consecration), particularly where vulgarized, can have congruencies with the occult. Again, any fixation upon chastity can engender a preoccupation with the "charms" of its opposite. Finally, it is not impossible that a Catholic monopoly on Christ, to the extent that it might conceivably be productive of more persecution than peace, can include a rehabilitation of his opposite, transvaluating good and evil, fair and foul.

The Protestant contribution was no less appreciable. The Reformation, despite intents, produced a sense of insecurity and an atmosphere where bold religions experimentation was licit. Parodies of Catholicism could in principle lead quite logically to parodies of the mass. Luther was fixated on the demonic, and Norman O. Brown accepts that he "filled Germany with devils." Satan was *princeps mundi.* Again, the logic of supralapsarianism would seem to make God the author of sin, which could be a Protestant counterpart to the Catholic monopoly as an inducement towards a transvaluation of God and Satan. Moreover, the Puritan was perhaps as obsessed with sexuality as was the monk. And one left-handed compliment deserves another: it was allegedly the English witches who

13. See the *Malleus,* ed. Montague Summers (London: The Hogarth Press, 1928), pp. 43 and 41-48 generally.
14. Zilboorg, 165.
15. Caro Baroja, 101-02; on Essex county, A. D. J. MacFarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), p. 160; and Jules Michelet, *Satanism and Witchcraft,* trans. A. R. Allinson (London: Tanden, 1965), p. 9. And on the old priestesses, see Margaret Alice Murray, *The God of the Witches* (London: Faber and Faber, 1931), e.g., pp. 145, 149. Let it be said that contemporary scholarly opinion is skeptical of many of Murray's theories.

raised the "Protestant wind" that confounded the Armada![16] These are only a few suggestions for further research.

The perennial question of the relationship between the witch craze and the witch hunter has never been resolved. The older rationalist assumption that the witch was the child of the witch hunter has, despite disclaimers, effectively been restated by Trevor-Roper. One should bear in mind that the witch antecedes the witch hunter. Moreover, there has probably been inordinate stress upon confessions extracted under torture; the witches volunteered many of their confessions.[17] No doubt there is truth on both sides of this question. Persecution could readily radicalize the proponents of the occult, driving them into Satanism. As Gerard Gardner, the late English witch, put it, ". . . who can blame the children of some of those thus tortured to death for making a wax image of their oppressors?"[18] Sanders, an hereditary witch, has himself confirmed to me that the witches of the Renaissance indulged in infanticide. But this scarcely justified the wanton execution of what is put conservatively at 200,000 of them during this period.[19] The Renaissance witch was no doubt more sinned against than sinning.

Trevor-Roper, treating the decline of witchcraft in the course of the seventeenth century, argued; "it was Descartes who dealt the final blow."[20] By this is intended a whole new world view, oriented around science and rationalism. Yet curiously, it was just the *inordinate* success of this world view that helps account for the revival of the occult. Jung argues with force that the unconscious compensates for the deficiencies of the conscious, that rationalism breeds the occult.[21] To enlarge, this can involve such things as the Cartesian separation of sense and soul, the "geometric spirit," the suffocating bureaucracization of all phases of life, the "charisma hunger" that can follow the twilight of the gods.

This is to arrive at the renaissance *of* witchcraft. It might facilitate a necessarily abrupt transition from the first Renaissance to mention that Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), "the Great Beast" and probably the most famous witch of the century, claimed to be the reincarnation of the Borgia, Pope Alexander VI! Crowley a man of much *virtù*, saw his mission as in transmitting the more exotic "Oriental wisdom" to Europe and in the restoration of a purer paganism.[22] This could also suggest associations.

The new wave of witchcraft, like that of the Renaissance, is of stages. The first is that associated broadly with the *fin-de-siècle*. There is also at least one im-

16. To tie together some of these thoughts, the interview with Sanders was in London, July 8, 1970. Brown's study is his *Life against Death: the Psychoanalytic Meaning of History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), pp. 212-15, which is not to accept his association of Lutheranism and Manichaeism. For various thoughts see two well documented studies, MacFarlane, 186-88, 195, and Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVII siècle* (Paris, Plon, 1968), pp. 93, 122-25, 152. On the "Protestant wind," Johns, 126.
17. Allowed by Margaret Alice Murray herself, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1921), p. 16. Also see McFarlane, 138-41, 201; and Mair, 197. Interestingly, what we know of the Free Spirit from their inquisitional enemies accords well with their own sources; Cohn, 150-51.
18. *Witchcraft Today* (London: Arrow Books, 1966), pp. 22, 155. Also see Mandrou, 120.
19. *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, ed. R. H. Robbins. (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1959), pp. 16-17.
20. "Witches and Witchcraft," Part II, *Encounter* (June, 1967), 30.
21. See his celebrated essay, "The Role of the Unconscious," *Selected Works*, X, 3-28.
22. *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley: An Autohagiography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), pp. 838-39.

portant difference. Most of the witchcraft of the Renaissance probably orients around the church (*"Lèse Majesté Divine"*), the primary institution of the age; more of the new wave of witchcraft orients around the state, the primary institution of modern times. This can be called political witchcraft or, as I prefer, "demonocracy."

I submit that the most conspicuous illustration of this is Nazi Germany. As early as 1936 in his essay, "Wotan," Jung ventured "the heretical suggestion that the unfathomable depths of Wotan's character explains more of National Socialism than" the political, economic and psychological factors put together.[23] The revival of Wotan has some roots in Nietzsche, whom I would consider an implicit witch (if we can have implicit Christians, why not implicit witches?). Wotan, god of "storm and frenzy," is a "superlative magician," somehow associated with the "shrill whistling" in "the nocturnal wood." In their fascinating book, *The Morning of the Magicians,* Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier take a more Oriental route to reach comparable conclusions. Hitler is a "demoniac," National Socialism "the St. Vitus Dance of the twentieth century," and genocide human sacrifice.[24] This can suggest another and, no doubt, coincidental analogy. Both waves of witchcraft are (substantially) prefaced by an onslaught against the Jews, though in the first case they are "conversos." This could imply that there might have been demonic energies associated with the good fathers of the Spanish Inquisition. Augustine wrote that there are sheep without and wolves within. Perhaps the demonic is present wherever power is exalted over compassion.

Jung, who has written with extraordinary insight into the new "gnosticism," has made it clear that the German catastrophe may only be "a curtain-raiser."[25] Whatever this may portend, the second stage of the new wave of witches is after the war, particularly the last decade. Various writers have affirmed that "witchcraft is more prevalent than at any time since the Middle Ages"[26]—by that, I believe, intending Renaissance. Though statistics are probably not very reliable, there are an estimated 60,000 sorcerers in France, 30,000 witches in England and, within five years, 20,000 Satanists in the United States. Several years ago the author of a study on the devil could conclude rather skeptically, "it would seem best to act as though evil spirits did not exist, until such time as their existence is forced upon us." More recently he apparently felt that that time had arrived,[27] publishing an essay, "Death of the Devil?"

The new wave of witches cuts across the various strata of society. It counts bourgeois witches and Satanists like Sybil Leek and Anton LaVey, who are perhaps only marginal members of the counter culture. A recent film of Bunuel can suggest that it may have potential for those of unreconstructed scientistic bent, at a time when their world view is increasingly under seige. This could prompt an adoption of the old maxim: the enemy (Satan) of my enemy (religion) is my friend. There are indications that the *extreme* feminist, the new

23. Wotan, *Selected Works,* X, especially 181-85.
24. Trans. Rollo Myers (New York: Avon, 1968), pp. 204-206, 283.
25. *Selected Works,* X, 83, 214, 243.
26. C. H. Wallace, *Witchcraft in the World Today* (New York: Award Books, 1967), pp. 12, 29. Also see Cavendish 10; and Smith, 107, 127-28.
27. Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 131 and his reappraisal in *Commonweal,* (November 6, 1970), 146-49.

Bacchae, may find the craft congenial (e.g., W.I.T.C.H., Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell, and S.C.U.M., Society for Cutting up Men). The emergence of W.I.T.C.H. on Halloween, 1968, led to hexes against the Stock Exchange and the declaration: "You have a fiend at Chase Manhatten."[28]

This could suggest that *some* of the *wilted* flower children are most vulnerable. There exists the poverty of the Free Spirit, the resurrection of the body, the anarchic eroticism, the violent politicization of sexuality as in *Che,* the embrace of the exotic, the dualism (e.g., polarization) and the radicalization. Probably many of the people who partook of the exorcism of the Pentagon in 1967 were on hand at Boston Common in 1970 when a young man told the crowd of some 100,000, "If you want peace, pick up the gun." This requires no documentation. The logic of the political witchcraft of the left is as sound as that of the right. If the state from which they are alienated is god (we prefer God and country, confusing the two), they *will* go to the devil. And their righteousness could make Torquemada blush. The note, with a Tarot signature, marking the murder of five people in California last year, read, "Materialism must die or mankind will." Susan Atkins expressed something of the same spirit: "The establishment is the beast."[29] And Charles Manson (Son of Man?), both God and Satan and beyond good and evil, was assuredly into black magic.[30] This kind of witchcraft need not require any formal induction. As W.I.T.C.H. declares, "You are a witch by saying aloud 'I am a witch' and thinking about that." This has support from an authority of eminence, Arthur Waite. In 1900 he wrote the gothicist, Arthur Machen, "The book proves that by thought and meditation rather than through reading, you have attained a certain degree of initiation independently of orders or organization."[31] Perhaps one can be a witch simply by cursing where one had prayed.

The ambivalence of the counter culture is perhaps best illustrated by its music. On the one hand there has been a widespread trend into magic and witchcraft. Groups like Black Sabbath and Black Widow have been indulging in black magic on stage. It is increasingly difficult to dismiss all of this as put-on. Hard rock can be violent music. Nick Cohn wrote of the Rolling Stones, whose music and mien are more violent than most, "More than anyone, more even than Bob Dylan, they became their time." They have been deep into black magic and drugs. And while they were playing at Altamont, California on December 6, 1969, their hirelings, Hells Angels, stabbed to death Meredith Hunter while Mick Jagger, the Stones' lead, was singing his "Sympathy for the Devil."[32] Coincidence—or possibly "the shrill whistling" in "the nocturnal wood?" On the other hand, it cannot be emphasized too much that a great deal of the music of the counter culture is (at least implicitly) religious. That of Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Simon and Garfunkel, and Joan Baez comes easily to mind. Like David, they could exorcise the evil from Saul.

28. "Witch Power," *Motive* (March-April), 77.
29. Lawrence Schiller, *The Killing of Sharon Tate* (New York: Signet Books, 1969), p. 92, also see 94.
30. See, for example, Smith, 9-14.
31. For W.I.T.C.H., *Motive,* 77; for Waite, Pauwels and Bergier, 213.
32. Nick Cohn, *Rock, From the Beginning* (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), pp. 172, 165-65. Also see Jonathan Eisen, ed., *Altamont: Death of Innocence in the Woodstock Nation* (New York: Avon, 1970), pp. 23-24, 90. Jagger is continually treated as diabolic in this report. I am grateful to Miss Jan McKenzie, an undergraduate at the University of Kentucky, for some valuable counsel in this area.

To sum up, Michelet advanced that the witch was born out of the despair of humanity. That was true in the Renaissance; it is true now. Both ages are marked by efforts to get behind history: neo-primitivism and a certain psychic atavism. They turn to the East: the one towards the Hellenistic world and the other perhaps somewhat more to the Far East, though both also draw on indigenous traditions. Sociological generalizations are still tenuous, but in the first case the majority of witches seem to be women, whereas the distribution by sex seems rather even in the second. Again, the Renaissance witches were probably older than those of the new wave. In Essex the accused averaged between 50-70, whereas Alex Sanders reports that the average age in his covens is 28.[33] This could suggest greater sexual activity in the second. Drugs were commonplace to both,[34] and in the first they talk of "transport" and in the second of "trip." Drugs, too, may be a type of possession.[35] A parallel treatment like this can suggest congruencies between the primitive and the over-civilized. In both the authorities seem more concerned with repression than with remedies —but of course this is a far more subtle thing today. And the absence of a *Malleus* or of judicial torture today can suggest that these things were not always a critical factor in the spread of witchcraft. It comes when men are ready for it.

This essay attempts corroboration of history by life. It confirms that the Renaissance was not a golden age and that progress out of the middle ages cannot always be taken for granted. It also confirms that the essentials of Renaissance witchcraft were a reality. Rationalist historians, perhaps somewhat embarrassed by such an illegitimate subject, effectively extricated it from our story of the past. It must be reintegrated into the flow of historiography. Perhaps it is now the scientists who refuse to look into the telescope? Curiously, one of the world's greatest authorities on witchcraft, the anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard only recently wrote of "the almost complete disappearance of witchcraft belief in the England of today."[36] This is only symptomatic of the broader schizophrenia between the academic world and the real world.

Secondly, to take up matters not strictly academic, this essay would argue that we are closer to the Renaissance than the Age of Reason. If the first Renaissance represents a reaction against the middle ages and into the modern world, the second represents a reaction against the modern world and perhaps back into an age of faith. There is no other way to go. Witchcraft is probably only the first stage, albeit vulgar, of the return of religion. The main thrust of the counter culture seems to point up the return of the sage after centuries of the *savant*.

Meanwhile, there may be a message here for the counter culture itself. This study would caution against any lionizing of Satan as the archetype of the rebel. Long ago Lord Acton commented, "not the devil but S. Thomas Aquinas was the first Whig."[37] Witchcraft relates to the will-to-power and has probably been more reactionary than anything. Crowley, for example, was characteris-

33. MacFarlane, 161; Johns, 120-21, 96.
34. For some particulars, Zilboorg, 141-45; Caro Baroja, 107, 254.
35. Francis Huxley, "Drugs," *Man Myth and Magic,* 25 (1970), 713-14.
36. MacFarlane, xv.
37. Quoted in J. N. Figgis, *Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius,* 1st. ed., 1907 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), p. 9.

tically an admirer of Bismarck and a despiser of revolutionaries. Sanders is a royalist. And LaVey, if anything, is the reincarnation of Herbert Spencer. Witchcraft is not an idealistic tradition. Sybil Leek herself writes, "Among my acquaintances are witches from all over the world. I do not know one whose first idea is a desire to serve humanity to the best of her ability."[38] Finally, witchcraft—even "white" witchcraft—is dangerous. That is one reason why the alchemists of old laid it down that no one should devote himself to alchemy unless he is "pure in heart and inspired by the loftiests intentions."[39] Otherwise, he might turn gold into lead.

38. *Diary*, 183.
39. Pauwels and Bergier, 57.