Satanic Cults:
Ritual Crime Allegations
and
The False Memory Syndrome

Edward OGDEN

Thesis in Criminology
for
Master of Arts
University of Melbourne
November 1993
Table of Contents

Foreword ................................................................. Page 4

Chapter 1 ~ Introduction .............................................. Page 6
  Allegations of "Satanic crimes" .................................. Page 6
  Analysis .............................................................. Page 7

Chapter 2 ~ Cults ....................................................... Page 10
  Why study cults? ..................................................... Page 10
  What is a Cult ....................................................... Page 11

Chapter 3 ~ A brief introduction to the occult traditions .... Page 17
  The Occult Mysteries ............................................... Page 17
    Hermetic wisdom ............................................... Page 18
  The Cabbala ........................................................ Page 19
  Isis and Osiris .................................................... Page 19
  Adonis and Ishtar ................................................ Page 20
  The Occult Traditions ............................................ Page 20

Chapter 4 ~ The contemporary picture of occult practices .... Page 21
  Contemporary Satanic Practice .................................. Page 21
  Dabblers in satanism ............................................. Page 23
  Traditional Satanists .............................................. Page 25

Chapter 5 ~ Interviews with "Survivors" of Satanic Cults .... Page 27
  Introduction ....................................................... Page 27
Foreword

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of a great many people, many of whom will not or can not be acknowledged personally. Some of these people are too shy, disturbed or frightened to be named. They appear in the footnotes as initials only. The fact that I do not believe that their stories are true does not mean that I deny the depth of their suffering or the reality of their feelings. There are certain therapists working with people who allege they are survivors of ritual abuse whose contribution is anonymously acknowledged, because they believe themselves to be at risk of retribution.

There are those whose help can be openly acknowledged. Inevitably there will be those who I have overlooked and to whom I apologise in advance.

My interest in criminology was inspired by Dennis Challenger who tolerated a student taking ten years to finish the Diploma in Criminology, and Stan Johnson who encouraged broad-mindedness to which I was unaccustomed. Stan challenged my attitudes, beliefs and conclusions.

My interest in cults was inspired by Anne Hamilton-Byrne whose "children", especially Sarah, taught me a great deal. They introduced me to their personal experience of growing up in strange isolation from the world. I received assistance and constructive criticism from the police Task Force investigating the Hamilton-Byrne "Family" especially Detective Sergeant DeMan. I began this task searching to understand "The Family", its origins and its meaning.

The path towards an understanding of cults took me in unexpected directions. I learned about the Satanic allegations and began accumulating material. Initially, some therapists with an interest in this area saw me as a potential ally, but as I began to question there assumptions I was rejected as a disbeliever, on the basis that "anyone who is not with us, must be against us".
In the end there was more material on more cults than I could manage. The distillation of that material into a meaningful thesis and the rejection of extraneous information has been the challenge. I finally chose to concentrate on the allegations of ritual crimes committed by Satanic Cults because the topic was causing so much distress in the therapeutic community with which I have contact and because the allegations were taking enormous amounts of time and energy of police. More recently the allegations have been sapping the energy of the investigators in the police complaints area of the Ombudsman's Office as they investigate complaints that police are not investigating these allegations with enough vigour.

Special mention must be made of the Church of Scientology and especially their Research Director in Victoria, Brian Johnston, who has provided source materials on the Church and its detractors, the anti-cult network and the sordid tales of government inspired "mind-control" research.

The knowledge I have gained has already enable me to give advice to police investigating alleged new cults or crimes where pagan symbols are found; to help restore rationality to some investigations where it could have been abandoned. If the insights I have gained do allow Victorian law-enforcement to cope more effectively with allegations of cult related crime, then it has been a worthwhile project.

Edward Ogden

7 February 1995
Chapter 1 ~ Introduction

1.1 Allegations of "Satanic crimes"

1.1.1 In recent years there have been numerous allegations that individuals and groups have been victims of criminal assaults said to be in rituals held in the worship of Satan. It is further alleged that this conspiracy is so powerful and pervasive that the criminal justice system is corrupted and impotent to take action against it. Allegations are then made that the police have failed to act or that promising investigations have been suppressed by powerful members of the satanic movement.

1.1.2 This thesis explores the nature of cults generally and the specific allegations of Satanic crime and to show that the evidence does not support fears of a Satanic Conspiracy, and that an alternative explanation, "The False Memory Syndrome" is a more reasonable interpretation of the observed phenomenon. The current preoccupation with Satanism is a modern allegory: it is to psychological therapy today as witch-finding was to pastoral care in the middle ages - a series of myths about the nature of evil within society. The risk now, as it was then, is that the myths will be taken literally causing harm to innocents.

1.1.3 Contemporary allegations of Satanic crimes are almost invariably made by women seeking psychological or psychiatric assistance. Most of the complainants have severe dissociative disorder or profess multiple personalities. The development of these severe symptoms is attributed to the alleged history of victimisation. The allegations of organised violence and evil arouse such disquiet that therapists seek to understand Satanism in order to understand their patients, thus abandoning objectivity and accepting the veracity of the tales. This search for understanding leads individuals to contact with existing networks of therapists interested in "Ritual Abuse" or if no network exists it is soon formed.
1.1.4 Professional groups concerned about Ritual Abuse do not test the accuracy of the patient's stories. They are concerned to define the symptoms and signs that confirm the diagnosis of "Ritual Abuse Survivor" and understand the pathogenesis of the syndrome. A "crime scare" is created and perpetuated with special validity because it comes dressed up as a clinical syndrome. More and more "clinical evidence" is identified to support the underlying belief that there is a criminal conspiracy, to show that the absence of criminal convictions is a proof of the corruption of the whole criminal justice system by the highly organised Satanic groups, and to demonstrate the soundness of the claims of criminal victimisation. Within such groups there is a real pressure to conform to the group beliefs. Dissenting views are not encouraged.¹

1.2 Analysis

1.2.1 There can never be a complete analysis of any intensely controversial, contemporary topic whose proponents and detractors speak with equal confidence. Some facts will rest uncontested whilst others are clothed in such colourful opinions that the reality is obscured. Most importantly, the full story cannot be known because our knowledge is still rapidly developing.

1.2.2 At any given time, scientific opinion is the crystallisation of the observable fact and current wisdom. Hypotheses are formulated then tested, accepted or rejected. Criminology is the application of scientific method to the study of crime. Criminologists bring their knowledge to bear to gain insights into the causes of crime and the interaction of the various players in the criminal justice system.

1.2.3 Some commentators argue that these allegations must be factual because there is remarkable similarity in the material that comes from "survivors" who have never met. This apparent corroboration of each other by the complainants does not make the allegations true. It is both illogical to maintain that the allegations must be

¹ As it became known that the author was not inclined to believe the allegations of Satanic Ritual Abuse in the absence of evidence to support them at least some therapists accused him of being a Satanist and of being part of a conspiracy to silence the anti-Satanic movement.

Page 7
true because individuals experience similarly strong feelings about them. This makes no more sense than saying that the psychotic delusions of the mentally ill are true because they are vividly experienced.

1.2.4 Sceptics question the credibility of allegations which are only made by a group with unusual psychiatric symptoms, arguing that the allegations themselves are merely further symptoms of some underlying psychiatric disorder. Proponents of the Satanic conspiracy assert that such bizarre experiences as those described, ought to produce a characteristic psychiatric disturbance.

1.2.5 If the allegations of Satanic crimes are true, then Satanists must be the ultimate criminal deviants - forming a subversive, secretive, wicked group, capable of subverting the very fabric of society and of doing so undetected for millennia. Not only are Satanists portrayed as quintessentially evil, but they are assumed to maintain superlative national and international organisational links, the elegance of which is proven by their invisibility. If these crimes are as frequent and widespread as the allegations suggest, they ought to be verifiable, but in spite of thousands of allegations all over the world, not one shred of tangible evidence exists to support the notion of the Satanic conspiracy. Paradoxically, disbelievers are constantly told there is a string of clues just waiting investigation, if only looked more closely.

1.2.6 The whole saga is reminiscent of the parable of The Emperor's New Clothes in which the faithful were unable to acknowledge the emperor's nakedness. As Hicks points out when criticising those police officers who accept the Satanic allegations:

"To assert that a criminal satanic conspiracy exists might constitute a working hypothesis with testable assumptions. . . . in fact, no evidence turns up, no witnesses come forth, and no information is volunteered - nothing. Instead of abandoning the hypothesis, the investigating officer rationalises the lack of evidence as proof of the cults success . . ."²

1.2.7 There is no evidence to support the allegations of a Satanic conspiracy, but evidence to suggest that this phenomenon has an iatrogenic genesis.
Chapter 2 ~ Cults

CULTS: n. system of religious worship esp. as expressed in ceremonies, devotions or homage to person or thing

"The handful of law enforcement professionals who have seriously attempted to understand this emerging Satanic challenge have all recognised that they are dealing with a well-organised, diabolical enemy."4

"Astrology, witchcraft, magical healing, divination, ancient prophecies, ghosts and fairies, are now rightly disdained by intelligent persons. But, they were taken seriously by equally intelligent persons in the past, and it is the historian's business to explain why this was so."5

2.1 Why study cults?

2.1.1 In recent years, people all over the world have made allegations that adults and children have been subjected to personal abuse in groups that profess "unorthodox" beliefs. The alleged crimes are ritualistic and form part of religious ceremonies: so the victims are said to have suffered from "ritual abuse"6. These allegations are not of trivial misbehaviour. They include: sexual atrocities; the sacrifice of animals and humans; cannibalism and vampirism; the use of women to breed children for sacrifice or abuse; child pornography; child and adult prostitution; bestiality; drug distribution; and the international trade of babies and children. Yet no cases that support the allegation of an international Satanic conspiracy have

---


6. The terms "ritual abuse", "satanic ritual abuse" and "ritual crime" are used interchangeably throughout the literature. Possible definitions and meanings are discussed in the next chapter. "Abuse" is a social work term implying assault or psychological maltreatment that is present "on the balance of probabilities".
seen the scrutiny of the courts. Is this because the allegations are unfounded? Or is the explanation more complex?

"This is the great controversy and crucial question in these cases. Some of what victims of ritualistic abuse allege is physically impossible (victim cut up and put back together, severe injuries with no scars); some is possible but improbable (human sacrifice, cannibalism, vampirism); some is possible and probable (child pornography, clever manipulation of victims); and some is corroborated (medical evidence of vaginal or anal trauma, offender confessions)." 7

Some of the attacks on new religious movements represent a more sinister phenomenon closely parallel to the attacks on witchcraft in the middle ages.

"Witches, according to their accusers . . . were supposed to bear identifiable stigmata of their demonic possession such as radical distortion of vocal qualities and speech patterns reflecting the will of the demon rather than the victim, nervous agitation, and ashen pallor; they were said to be "bleary-eyed", "hunch-backed", hollow-eyed and afflicted with "foul odours". It was also said that all of these signs would suddenly vanish when the victim was "exorcised" and returned to his "normal" condition. Likewise members of modern-day religious cults are accused of being mindless "zombies"." 8

2.2 What is a Cult

Defining the word "cult"

2.2.1 A cult can be defined as the basic philosophical or theosophical unit that adopts a particular belief system. (All religions began as cults with aspirations of orthodoxy.) A meaningful definition is such a difficult task that Wallis refers to it as that "elusive and slippery concept". 9 Melton and Moore define it as a

"small religious group that share a specific set of characteristics: First, these groups differ widely from the dominant faith of the society in which they exist:


Second, they are led by one person, a charismatic leader, who knows personally and is accessible to each member and whom each member sees as the embodiment of supernatural reality.\(^\text{10,11}\)

Whereas West says that attempts to define cults are "just silly."\(^\text{12,13}\) Enroth\(^\text{14}\), Martin\(^\text{15}\) and others, who write from an evangelical Christian perspective,\(^\text{8}\) attempt to define cults according to the "sociological abuses" that all cults (by their definition) inflict on others. Markham, for example, defines a cult as

"any group with an elitist cause and view of itself that in order to promote its cause either consciously or unconsciously abuses individual rights and freedoms."\(^\text{17}\)

This definition has the benefit of extending the idea to include all non-religious groups with unity of purpose. However Markham goes on to say

"The crucial point in determining that a group is a cult is whether or not the individual members have their wills violated, overpowered, or coerced into total submission and control . . . Often in a cultic atmosphere a total willingness to serve the cause means total obedience to the group's leaders."\(^\text{18}\)

Inherent in this extension of the definition is the implication that an observer can decide the voluntariness of any apparently submissive behaviour. The American Civil Liberties Union has expressed the view that


\(^{11}\) This definition limits itself to religious groups. Religious groups are a subset of the general phenomenon of group behaviour, that must include those groups whose motivation is dissident not theological. The I.R.A., the Red Brigades and the Basque Separatists could all be defined as cults in a secular sense.

\(^{12}\) West L.J. speech to the Second Annual Conference of FOCUS (Former Cultist Support Network), Los Angeles, 28 October, 1983.

\(^{13}\) West was one of the psychiatrists secretly funded by the Central Intelligence Agency to conduct "mind-control" experiments on humans in the 1950's. He has been a staunch supporter of the anti-cult movement and advocated the use of the medical model to eradicate cults.


\(^{16}\)


"All groups, including religious groups, ought to be free to attempt to persuade others by any lawful means. As long as such means of persuasion do not include restraint of liberty, physical violence or the threat of physical violence, there should be no prohibition or legal penalty."

So the argument comes full circle and a **cult** remains best defined as the smallest unit of belief or worship.

**The benefits of membership**

2.2.2 Cults can be very beneficial for their members. In separate studies, Galanter observed that joining the Divine Light Mission led to a reduction in neurotic distress symptoms correlated with the degree to which the person felt affiliated with the group, and that recruits developed a high degree of social cohesiveness following induction into the Unification Church (the "Moonies").

2.2.3 From earliest times humankind has struggled to understand life, the universe and the reasons for being, to comprehend the incomprehensible, to make sense of questions like "Why do I exist?" or "What does it mean?". These are the ultimate questions addressed by all religions. The very presence of such concepts in a philosophical system has been used as the test for a religion. All thinking humans have probably asked at some time about the human soul, the riddles of life and the meaning of death. Jung was so convinced that such thoughts were universal that he asserted that they formed part of "natural constituents and normal structure of the psyche". He found spiritual interest such an integral part of normal psychological life that

---


22. The Church of the New Faith vs The Commissioner for Payroll Tax, High Court of Australia, 27/10/83.

23. The People v Munz, District Court of Stuttgart, 419 711 2922249.

"for reasons of psychic hygiene, it would be better not to forget these original and universal ideas; and wherever they have disappeared . . . we should reconstruct them as quickly as we can . . . "

2.2.4 The beliefs adopted by a group explain not only the nature of their world, but the part that each individual is expected to play in it. Pattison and Pattison studied a group of homosexuals who changed their sexual orientation after joining a Pentecostal church\textsuperscript{26}, not only did they abandon homosexuality (something that orthodox psychiatry considers near impossible), but they exhibited less emotional distress than a comparable sample of practising homosexuals.

2.2.5 Faith has been sceptically defined as "Blind trust, in the absence of evidence, even in the teeth of evidence . . . "\textsuperscript{27} Such unsympathetic rejection of belief denies the reality that all perceptions, including the scientific perception of evidence, have a basis in some system of belief. A belief system provides a personal or social context for interpreting experience - how a person should feel - and can be a powerful influence on perception. It is not just a cognitive map that enables the believer to make decisions about which path to follow in life: it acts as a cognitive travel guide, in the sense that it also determines how things are perceived and what they mean. In the simplest sense, Schacter and Singer showed that the stimulation caused by an injection of adrenalin could be experienced as anger or euphoria depending on the context provided by an actor.\textsuperscript{28} A belief system and the presence of other believers could even more persuasively have decided the perception of the participants. This pressure to perceive things the group's way can lead to cognitive dissonance - a significant gap between the logical and "spiritual" reality. The sceptic may expect that this dissonance would lead to a rejection of the illogical and contradictory aspects of the groups teaching, but paradoxically it may serve


The Story of Mrs Keech

A well studied demonstration of credulity is the case of Mrs Keech and her failed prophecies. A small religious cult believed that Mrs Keech was a prophet receiving messages from another planet. She predicted a Doomsday on which the world would perish with earthquakes and floods. Only her true followers were to be rescued by a spaceship which was to arrive on the eve of the cataclysm. The followers sold their homes, gave away their money and waited on the appointed night on a mountainside for the flying saucer to arrive. Mrs Keech generously allowed independent observers to witness the great event. When the spaceship failed to materialise Mrs Keech announced that it was through the devotion of the faithful that calamity had been averted. Instead of rejecting Mrs Keech and leaving in anger, the events served to deepen the conviction of the faithful. Winn argues that if they had not been able to accept this rationalisation they would have had to face the reality of their foolishness and the psychological consequences of feeling duped. However, this implies a firm double standard about the inherent “truth” or “believability” of certain concepts.

As Masefield said

“I must admit that I cannot altogether understand why, on the one hand, it is perfectly acceptable - for some even commendable - that a man should regulate his whole life on the belief that God spoke to Moses through a burning bush or that Jesus was raised from the dead, despite the fact that the actual existence of neither Moses nor Jesus is historically certain, yet on the other hand quite absurd that the same risen Jesus should have spoken in a vision to the reverend Moon in the middle of the twentieth century. And the only explanation that a religion, if it is to be tolerated and accorded respectability, has to possess antiquity.”
to deepen the commitment. (Refer 16 - The story of Mrs Keech)

2.2.6 The human mind is capable of holding onto illogical ideas in spite of evidence to the contrary. Aronson and Linder\textsuperscript{29} conducted an experiment in which young women were recruited for a discussion on the psychology of sex. One group joined the discussion without selection, but two other groups were put through a "screening" that was either mild or strong. The "screening" consisted of having to recite swear words in front of a male experimenter. Afterwards all the women were played a tape of an extremely boring discussion. Only the women who had been subjected to the difficult selection process found the discussion interesting. It was concluded that those who had been embarrassed in the selection process could not face the fact that their embarrassment had been endured for nothing. Other explanations suggested for these observations were relief after the embarrassment, or excitement caused by the colourful swearing. Whatever the mechanism, the result was the same - they defended something trivial and worthless.

2.2.7 In summary the cult or charismatic group is the basic social unit on which a system of belief or commitment is built. A cult has the potential for good, and a real potential for evil if it allows an improper or unbridled concentration of power. In most groups the normal checks and balances of human interaction are sufficient to avoid undesirable consequences.

Chapter 3 ~ A brief introduction to the occult traditions

"Authorities say America is witnessing an epidemic of concern over Satan and his minions, especially among adherents of fundamentalist Christianity. So called ritual abuse is only part of it . . . George Ganaway who teaches psychiatry at Emory University is highly sceptical. "The likelihood is this is going to turn out to be urban legend, but I can't say for sure. I certainly don't believe there is any satanic conspiracy . . ."30

3.1 The Occult Mysteries

Occult: Kept secret, esoteric; recondite, mysterious, beyond the range of ordinary knowledge; involving the supernatural, mystical, magical. 31

3.1.1 The most perplexing allegations of cult activity are those relating to "satanism" or "ritual abuse". These allegations are often bandied about with a conviction that implies not only that the allegations are based on real events, but that they are proven to be so and universally accepted. Nothing could be further from the truth. The allegations have never been shown to have a factual basis, and many thoughtful commentators have come to dismiss them as at least unfounded and possibly iatrogenic. 32

3.1.2 What the media refer to as "satanism" is a mixture of local incidents (graffiti, animal mutilations, rumours), unfounded causal links between crimes and "heavy metal music" or fantasy games, confessions from criminals that "Satan made me do it", and the amazing tales told by "ritual abuse" survivors.

3.1.3 The contemporary image of the occult is of New Age Religions, magic, witchcraft, crystal balls, seances and Tarot cards, demonic possession and exorcism, astrology, clairvoyance and parapsychology. The image has been popularised by films like The Exorcist, the para-psychological 'feats' of Uri Geller, and by astrology columns in newspapers and magazines. This superficial veneer overlies a rich history of religious conviction and political intrigue throughout recorded history. It involves the "lost continents" of Atlantis and Lemuria, whose supposed civilisations pre-date the records. It would be futile to attempt a detailed history of the occult religions and the secret societies in this thesis: the brief introduction that follows is merely to place the commentary in social and historical context.  

3.1.4 The pagan tradition of religious practice has many remnants in contemporary Christian beliefs and observances. Ancient traditions were incorporated into the emerging Christian church. Other aspects of pre-christian religion lie behind the development of organisations such as the Masonic Lodge and the Rosicrucians. There are four main strains to the pagan tradition - Hermetic Wisdom, The Cabbala, the Egyptian myths of Adonis and Isiris, and the Babylonian stories of Adonis and Ishtar.

3.2 Hermetic wisdom

3.2.1 According to ancient beliefs, geometry and the art of working in stone were first taught to Lamech, an antediluvian patriarch. Like Noah, Lamech was warned of

---

33. Drury N & Tillet G. Other Temples Other Gods: The Occult in Australia. Methuen

the impending flood by Jehovah and inscribed his accumulated knowledge in stone pillars (traditionally in emerald) to preserve The Wisdom for coming generations. One of these pillars was later discovered by the Greek god Hermes, known to the ancient Egyptians as the ibis-headed god Thoth (Tehuti). This Hermetic wisdom appears in more recent times as an influence on the Gnostics, who were in direct conflict with the early Christian Church for attempting to fuse these ancient idolatrous beliefs with the new religion. It is found again in medieval movements such as the Cathars, the Knights Templar, the followers of the Rosy Cross and in the later development of speculative Freemasonry. The Emerald Tablets containing the Hermetic Wisdom are said to have been discovered in a cave by the mystic Apollonius of Tyana. An arabic translation was published in the eighth century and it appeared in Europe in latin translation in the thirteenth century.35

3.3 The Cabbala

3.3.1 Another great tradition of ‘hidden’ teaching was inherited from the Judaic mystical system known as the Cabbala. In traditional Judaism the Godhead is either abstract and neuter, or personified and masculine. In Cabbalism there are two feminine deities, Shekinah - the Bride of God - with folkloric fertility powers and the demonic Lilith who was first wife of Adam and taught him the magic arts of enchantment. Their origins can be traced back to the Sumerian goddess ‘The Lady of the Beasts’: the Great Goddess of the old pagan Mysteries. Goddess worship is a significant part of the Judaism of both the Old and New Testaments. This feminine principle was an important part of the early church and the tradition is clearly seen the place that the Virgin Mary takes.

3.4 Isis and Osiris

3.4.1 The third strain of traditional input to the Occult tradition comes from Egyptian mythology. Isis and Osiris were believed to be the original rulers of the Nile River basin. They were adored by their subjects for the development of the

legal code, agriculture and the arts. Osiris had an enemy in his twin brother Set. He arranged the assassination of Osiris and for the body to be thrown into the Nile. The cask was retrieved by the devoted Isis who planned a proper burial. However, Set retaliated by having the corpse dismembered into the fourteen pieces which were widely scattered. Isis travelled all over Egypt in search of the remnants building temples wherever she found a piece. The fourteenth piece, the penis, was not located, so Isis had a golden replica fashioned and this was buried in the temple to the Goat God at Mendes. Aspects of the story of Isis and Osiris inspired many aspects of the occult mystical heritage. Osiris was traditionally associated with agriculture and became the god of vegetation that died in the autumn to be reborn in the spring.

**Adonis and Ishtar**

3.4.2 Another cluster of ancient traditions that contribute to contemporary Occultism are the ancient Babylonian myths of Adonis (Tammuz) and Ishtar. Adonis was born at midnight on the twenty-fourth of December (a feast date given new meaning by the Christians). He was revered by the original semitic peoples as the God of fertility with his partner, Ishtar. Adonis was killed by a wild boar and transported to the Underworld where the heartbroken Ishtar went in search of her lover. With both Ishtar and Adonis gone from the earth crops failed, cattle were sterile and women were unable to make love. People became desperate. At each of the seven gates to the Underworld Ishtar was made to remove an article of clothing but was refused entry until she was stark naked. Her pleas to the rulers of the dead were finally successful and Adonis was reborn, fertility and sexuality were restored to the earth.

**The Occult Traditions**

3.4.3 In each of these traditions there is a fundamental emphasis on fertility, birth and death. This preoccupation with the primary elements of life must have come
naturally to people so totally dependent on the forces of nature and the bounty of the seasons. A poor season meant a poor harvest and starvation. Infertile cattle meant no milk and no meat. Infertile women meant no children. Little wonder that the focus of attention was on the natural phenomena and their influence on daily life. The ceremonies and symbols of these pagan traditions have endured in many ways, sometimes in the face of official condemnation. The earliest religious traditions have continued in secret - supposedly hidden from view - as the occult mysteries.
Chapter 4 ~ The contemporary picture of occult practices

4.1 Contemporary Satanic Practice

4.1.1 The proponents of Ritual Satanic Abuse as a diagnostic category argue that since the occult traditions have continued in relatively innocuous secret societies for millennia, it is possible, even likely, that other more sinister secret societies have survived in a modern day perpetuation of the darkest aspects of the Ancient Mysteries. But . . .

"evidence for ancient satanism [and the occult traditions] no more validates doubts about the extent of modern cult activity than do observations of Epiphineus [in the second century] confirm it. Arguments designed to draw conclusions about the present based upon what historians say about the past contain suppressed premises about historical continuities. What if those premises were false?"\(^{36}\)

Observers discuss satanism at four levels - dabblers, self-styled satanists, organised satanists and traditional satanists.\(^{37}\)

4.1.2 Much of the media account of Occult practice is based on poorly researched data or accurately reported prejudice. Such reports are often allegations of subversion of society by groups such as "witches covens", "the occult" and

---


"satanists". The reports are often anecdotal and of poor evidential quality. While there are secular groups openly practicing various pagan religions\textsuperscript{39} the attempts to attribute great criminal significance to them are not well founded. Statements such as

"Some churchmen blame Satanism for suicides and other deaths and link it to teenage prostitution and drug taking . . .”

are frequently followed a few paragraphs later by disclaimers such as

" . . . churchmen say they had no personal knowledge of the rituals but believed Satanism was practiced . . ."\textsuperscript{39, 40}

4.1.3 Such allegations have the characteristics of myths. They are invariably stories in the third person creating a parable that is more a reflection of the nature of the story teller than a true picture of some factual material. Myths play an important role in passing on or reinforcing cultural norms, much as fables are used as allegories for children. The occult readily lends itself to such usage: it evokes fear and fascination because of the combination of mystery and the unknown.

4.1.4 Many media stories in Australia quote the same private investigator (David Lentin) as saying that "the situation" is so serious that there should be a national inquiry\textsuperscript{41} but he has not given the police any material of evidential quality\textsuperscript{42}. Lentin alleges there are between 30,000 and 70,000 people across Australia involved in Satanic cult activity.\textsuperscript{43} Somehow the mysterious craft of private investigation adds authority to his utterances, but Lentin fails repeatedly to reveal his sources. Dr Anne Schlebaum, a Sydney psychiatrist adds her authority to the same allegations based

\textsuperscript{39} Drury N and Tillett G. Other Temples Other Gods: The occult in Australia. Methuen Australia, Sydney, 1980.

\textsuperscript{40} Hewitt, S. "Geelong 'a centre of Devil cult", The Sun. August 23, 1988, p 7.

\textsuperscript{41} Hewitt, S. op.cit. p 7

\textsuperscript{42} Veitch, C. "Sacrifices to Devil", Sunday Press. August 28, 1988, P 5.


\textsuperscript{44} Safe M 'Satan in the Suburbs: Myth or Madness?' The Australian magazine, December 1 1991, 13.
on what her patients tell her.\textsuperscript{44}

4.1.5 This form of reporting is more reminiscent of the medieval persecution of witchcraft than of modern tolerant secular discourse or meaningful investigation. Fanciful leaps are frequently made from scant evidence. Vandalism in a cemetery spawns the headline "Devil worship fears spread"\textsuperscript{45} and a crudely drawn pentagram is evidence of "cultists".\textsuperscript{46} A group of youths involved in a ceremony dubbed a "Black Mass" at a cemetery in Sydney were linked to a report of a grave being disturbed in Fremantle on the pretext that both happenings were on Good Friday which happened to be the thirteenth of the month.\textsuperscript{47} This poor reporting trivialises any substantive issues that might exist and lays the foundation for serious allegations being scoffed off as sensationalism.

4.2 Dabblers in satanism -

Delinquent and rebellious behaviour

4.2.1 In the adolescent search for personal identity young people reject the orthodoxy of their parents, turning away from traditional answers to develop their own personal understanding of the world. The "great internal turmoil and external disorder of adolescence are universal and only moderately affected by cultural determinants"\textsuperscript{48} The functional imperative of adolescence is social and personal discovery. As Erikson puts it:

"This period [of adolescence] can be viewed as a psycho-social moratorium during which the individual through free role experimentation may find a niche in society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made

\textsuperscript{44} "Ritual Abuse: a perfect little holocaust in the suburbs", Australia New Zealand Association for Psychiatry, Psychology and the Law, Conference Proceedings, 1990.

\textsuperscript{45} Freeman, M. "Devil worship fears spread", The Sun, September 1990, p 34.

\textsuperscript{46} Place, A. "Vandals, cultists hit cemeteries", The Sun, August 18, 1987, p 6.

\textsuperscript{47} Anon. "Devil Cult blacksens holy day", The Sun April 14, 1990.

for him”.49

The adolescent identity crisis can be associated with the external signs characterised by labile and unpredictable behaviour, lack of commitment to a specific doctrine and experimentation with dangerous or deviant behaviour. The internal conflict will manifest as dreaming, experimentation with fantasy and introspection. The ancient mysteries of ritual magic50 and witchcraft, with their rich implications of the hidden and forbidden elements of sexuality and fertility, have obvious curiosity value. Experimentation with the symbolism and imagery of the occult by teenagers is apt to leave recognisable symbols scrawled as graffiti and hence to the creation of “trace evidence” of Satanism. The relevance of such findings is easily exaggerated or misconceived. For example, in 1990, a group of 14-16 year olds living in and around the country town of Shepparton were experimenting with the symbolism and fantasised rites of Satanism, Nazism and ancient Egypt in elaborate games. Nothing sinister was found to have happened but their activities were reported in the press as a "craze" 51 linked to "desensitisation" of the community by "heavy metal" rock music.52 This was reported so widely that some immigrants refused to settle because of their fear of satanism.53 These elaborate claims of youth ensnared in dangerous cult activity were based on prejudice not fact. The police investigation failed to reveal any evidence for an underlying group of malefactors nor was any crime identified greater than wilful damage by graffiti.

Dreamers - The Mentally III

4.2.2 It is not uncommon for psychotic thought to have a considerable "mystical" or

---


50. The word "magic" is frequently used in the literature to distinguish the pagan ceremonies conjuring tricks. "Magic" is deception; "magic" is ceremonial tapping of natural power sources.


52. Harkness, B.: "Devil-worship fears after dead cat, slogans found", *Geelong Advertiser*, 18/8/90.

"religious" content. Schizophrenia is a disease characterised by delusions, hallucinations and bizarre thoughts. Occasionally these abnormal thought processes will be organised in a system of delusions with a religious basis. Thus the schizophrenic with a preoccupation with "demons and monsters", who also commits a crime, is labelled "occult man". Animals killed or left in bizarre attitudes have been reported as a "cult rampage" with no evidence of anything more than sadistic behaviour. To label such isolated examples of mental aberration as evidence of Satanism is sadly to misunderstand both the nature of mental illness and the implications of its manifestation.

4.3 Traditional Satanists

Some individuals have undoubtedly worshipped the Devil as the antithesis of God, implying by their behaviour a strong belief in a personal God, whom they were deliberately rejecting. Intense in their faith but frustrated in their lives, they believed that by rejecting God, the Church, its rites and theology they might gain the power of the Devil to satisfy personal desires for money, sex or power.

"Thus, traditionally, Satanists began by accepting the truth of the Church's teaching - they believed in the God, in the Mass, in the Priesthood - but concluded by practising all that the Church rejected as immoral, sinful and diabolic."  

Contemporary traditional satanists are said to be comparatively rare:

"... the numbers in Australia are incredibly small. If you could muster 50 of them I would be quite surprised."  

---


57. Harkness, B.: "Devil-worship fears after dead cat, slogans found", Geelong Advertiser 18/8/90.


Those that do exist are proclaiming through their satanic allegiance, a cultural anarchy in which the restrictions and traditions of the dominant society are rejected. For such people the experience of rejecting traditional values is an important and liberating experience.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{61} Hartridge T quoted in Safe M "Speak of the Devil" The Australian magazine 1/12/91, 14.
Chapter 5 ~ Interviews with "Survivors" of Satanic Cults

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The therapists and survivors interviewed were self-selected. In November 1990 the author gave a paper to the Annual Conference of the Australia and New Zealand Association of Psychiatry, Psychology and the Law that received some media attention. In the weeks that followed therapists and clients made contact from all states of Australia. Some accepted an invitation to share their story. All have been guaranteed anonymity. They can be identified in footnotes only as an initial that does not relate to their real name.

5.1.2 Recruitment

Some of the alleged victims say they were recruited in adolescence or adulthood. They say they were homeless or runaways when kindly people helped them set themselves up in flats or shared houses. Clothing and spending money are provided until they were feeling secure and dependent on this provision. Suddenly the demands increased and the entrapment in cult servitude allegedly began. The only case of adolescent recruitment that has stood the tests of legal proof occurred in Western Australia.

---


63. Personal Communication, Case "B".


65. Scott Gozenton was convicted in March 1991 in the Perth District Court of serious sexual offences in the setting of a Satanic cult known as the Satanic Warriors.
5.1.3 Most complainants have been made by people who state their whole lives have been dominated by abuse at the hands of a cult. They say that they were born into families that have been involved in cult activities for generations. After describing horrific abuses supervised by her own mother, one survivor stated

"I hated my mother for what she was doing to me and I finally had the courage to tell my grandfather. I had this sense of relief. He said everything was going to be all right, but the next weekend my mother took me to the ceremony and there was Grandpa in special robes - he seemed very important and he made sure I was punished. He said that would make everything all right."\(^{66}\)

Another said

"Both my parents are actively involved. In the day they are successful lawyers, but at night they are heavily involved. My grandparents were involved too."\(^{67}\)

5.1.4 Some adults said they had left active participation in cult activity with an expectation that when the time came they would obey the call and return or provide their children.

"When my children were ready for kindergarten they told me that I should bring them for the meetings. That is when I decided to hide, I knew they would force me to bring the children or take them from me."\(^{68}\)

5.1.5 **Preparations for cult roles**

Preparations for a cult role allegedly began in infancy or childhood. Cult children are introduced to sexuality early and encouraged to stimulate each other. Lubricants and implements are said to be used to dilate and prepare anal and vaginal orifices for later penile penetration. Several people gave lurid description of training sessions in which children were prepared for their cult roles. In one description, children of primary school age were taken to a farm shed where they were tied up in the dark, forbidden to speak, given no food and minimal water, repeatedly beaten

\(^{66}\) Personal communication, witness "J".

\(^{67}\) Personal communication, witness "D".

\(^{68}\) Personal communication, witness I.
and raped until they were "ready" to obey without question.\textsuperscript{69} This preparation was allegedly supervised by a psychiatrist who interspersed drug treatments and hypnotic sessions. Another person described being taken to a place with very brightly painted rooms. Each colour was significant. She believes children were kept in these rooms for about a week with only limited water and no food.

"By the end of the week your whole body was the colour of the walls. Everything seemed red or green or brown or whatever the room was. You were not allowed to sleep. You had to associate the colour with a feeling, then whenever they wanted to make you feel that way they would show you the colour at a meeting and you would respond, you couldn't help it."\textsuperscript{70}

5.1.6 Physical abuse

All the descriptions of cult abuse involved elements of physical torture and severe physical punishments. Disobedience or questioning attitudes were punished to reinforce earlier training. Recalcitrant or recidivist offenders against cult mores were supposedly sent to special re-education centres, where they underwent a mixture of psychological techniques and torture: with period of sensory deprivation accompanied by starvation; solitary confinement in the dark or the application of blind-folds and restraints; terror was increased with the use of repulsive stimulation such as snakes and spiders applied to the skin in a vulnerable area or if the individual has previously displayed a weakness it will be exploited, e.g., one rebellious teenage recruit with a fear of H.I.V. was injected with blood said to be from a person who had died of A.I.D.S.\textsuperscript{71} Some people reported the use of equipment varying in sophistication from electric fencing apparatus and cattle prods, to hospital diathermy equipment and defibrillators.

"The celebrations of the Black Mass are frequently accompanied by the administration of electric shock."\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{69}. Personal communication, witness I.

\textsuperscript{70}. Personal communication, witness J.

\textsuperscript{71}. Personal communication, case "B". (There was no evidence that this person became H.I.V. positive.)

5.1.7 The victims interviewed showed an extraordinary reluctance to allow even the most cursory of medical examination. One tattoo of unrecognisable inscriptions said to be satanic symbols has been observed.\textsuperscript{73} Another woman who said she was a survivor of a satanic family, vehemently stated that she had internal scaring as a result of cutting her internal genitalia and bladder when she was a child. She was extensively investigated and no evidence of trauma could be found. The cause of her long standing urinary problems was demonstrated to be psychogenic.

5.1.8 Punishment

Public ceremonial punishments for misdeeds, both real and imagined, were to be commonly described as being used for individual and general deterrent effects. These included beatings, torture and sexual perversions. Most survivors described bestiality when specifically asked, although it was rarely volunteered. They have described watching male members and children having intercourse with dogs or goats and some female survivors described being encouraged to receive an erect phallus from an animal, especially a goat. These animals became ceremonially significant and were later sacrificed and eaten.\textsuperscript{74}

5.1.9 Sexual offences

The most widely described of the abuses in the cluster are the sexual perversions. Finkelhor, Williams and Burns found that thirteen percent of their sample of nursery child-abuse had ritual components.\textsuperscript{75} The sexuality includes the luring of children away from parks for paedophilic sexual activity;\textsuperscript{76} individual sexual paring with cult

\textsuperscript{73} During a radio interview in November 1991 a caller stated "on air" that she had been examined by me and that I had identified an "internal tattoo" which she said was evidence of her satanic upbringing. "Off air" she confirmed that she was alluding to a vaginal tattoo — not something one would forget having seen — but she refused to identify herself so that the records could be checked. Although she promised to make contact and to redisplay this "proof". She has not been seen.

\textsuperscript{74} Kaye M & Klein LR "Clinical Indicators of Satanic Cult Victimisation" Fourth International Conference on Multiple Personality/Dissociative States, Audio Transcripts Ltd #389-87-vlb, Alexandria Virginia, 1987.


members at ceremonies,\textsuperscript{77} incestuous activity with parents of either gender sometimes acting together,\textsuperscript{78} orgiastic group activities and/or gang rape\textsuperscript{79}. Often the sexual activity would be in public with at least one participant drugged, hypnotised or beaten to submission. Anal intercourse was frequently described. A person who was attempting to leave a group said she was allegedly abducted and pack raped as a punishment.\textsuperscript{80}

5.1.10 Voyeurism and the appreciation of pornography is an integral part of sadism. The Maquis de Sade was an active voyeur who included staged sexuality and bedroom peepholes in his description of sexual adventures. He would undoubtedly have been making pornography if the technology had existed in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{81} One individual gave a vivid description of the production of adult and child pornography, including bestiality and sexual sadism both in still photography and video. She was convinced by conversations overheard during productions, that some themes were specially requested by the customers. She stated she knew where hundreds or even thousands of these tapes were stored. In spite of making these allegations to police she refused to attempt to identify the location of these tapes.\textsuperscript{82}

5.1.11 Pregnancies that were not sanctioned by the cult (because of inopportune timing, the wrong paring of partners, or poor omens) were allegedly terminated, usually in a drug induced state of altered consciousness, but not of altered pain

\textsuperscript{77} Personal communication, case "I".

\textsuperscript{78} Personal communication, case "R".

\textsuperscript{79} Personal communication, case "B".

\textsuperscript{80} Case "B" was spoken to by the author and police with forty-eight hours of this event. In spite of making a clear allegation of rape and abduction, she would not allow even a cursory examination of the physical injuries that she alleged she had sustained. No forensic evidence was obtained to substantiate this allegation. She would not make a statement.

\textsuperscript{81} Goodwin J "Sadistic Sexual Abuse: Illustrations from the Marquis de Sade" Seventh International Conference on Multiple Personality/Dissociative States, Audio Transcripts Ltd #595-96-1lb, Alexandria Virginia, 1990.

\textsuperscript{82} Personal communication, Case "I".
reception. All of the young women spoken to described at least one pregnancy being terminated when they were young teenagers. The terminations were all allegedly performed on the "altar" during a ceremony. The conceptus or foetus assumed immense importance and was consumed during the ceremonial.

5.1.12 Certain couplings were deemed destined to produce children and women are labelled as "breeders" and with selected paternity allowed to carry children to term. These children are then taken from the mother and either used in a sacrifice or sent away. 83

5.1.13 None of the subjects was able to give clear accounts of ceremonies because they say they find the memories too painful and threatening, because they have always been psychologically disturbing, and because of the influence of drugs. A common theme is the repetition of sacrificial worship in the ancient pagan tradition. Often an animal is killed in a ceremony and blood or body parts consumed. If a child in the group needed discipline the animal chosen might be that child’s favourite pet. 84 Most incredible of the allegations are those surrounding human sacrifice. Survivors report having witnessed several, even hundreds of human sacrifices, usually of infants but older victims are also described. The blood or vital organs were prized and consumed. 85

---

83. Personal communication, cases "B", "D", "I"


85. Interviews with Cases "I", "B", "J".
Chapter 6 ~ Discussion

6.1 Defining the problem

6.1.1 The behaviours alleged have been briefly listed without progressing closer to a definition of the problem. Finkelhor, Williams and Burns suggested that ritual child exploitation be defined as

"abuse that occurs in the context linked to some symbols or group activities 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". \(^{66}\)

The Los Angeles County Commission for Women has defined Ritual Abuse as:

"A brutal form of abuse of children, adolescents and adults, consisting of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, and involving the use of rituals (repetitive behaviours, sometimes connected with a specific belief system) . . ." \(^{67}\)

The San Diego County Commission on Children and Youth defines Ritualistic Abuse as:

"... severe and bizarre physical and sexual torture, and psychological abuse, delivered in a repetitive and ritualistic manner. Often occurs in group settings, as part of a specific organised activity, although it is not limited to this... Victims are most often terrorised into silence." \(^{68}\)


\(^{67}\) L.A. County Commission for Women Ritual Abuse: Definitions; Glossary; The Use Of Mind Control, September 15, 1989.

\(^{68}\) San Diego County Commission on Children and Youth Inter-agency Investigative Team Protocol developed by the MULTI-VICTIM/MULTI-PERPETRATOR RITUALISTIC ABUSE TASK FORCE, December 1990.
Percentage of patients reporting Ritual Abuses in Childhood\(^8\) \(^9\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RITUAL ABUSE IN CHILDHOOD</th>
<th>Young, Sachs, Braun &amp; Watkins 1991</th>
<th>Cook 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuse Reported</td>
<td>37 patients</td>
<td>33 responses to questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of patients</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>% of responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sexual abuse</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Witnessing and receiving physical abuse/torture</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Witnessing animal mutilation/killings</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Death threats</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Forced drug usage</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Witnessing and forced participation in human adult and infant sacrifice</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Forced cannibalism</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Marriage to Satan</td>
<td>26 of 33 %</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Buried alive in coffins and graves</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Forced impregnation and sacrifice of own child</td>
<td>20 of 33 %</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In many discussions the terms "ritual abuse" and "satanic abuse" are used interchangeably. There are dangers inherent in using a term as emotive as satanic abuse.\(^9\) As Jones (1991) points out, the primary concerns with the allegations of "satanic abuse" are:

"(1) the embedding of CSA [child sexual assault] within powerful belief systems, especially deviant one such as satanism, creates significant and long lasting distortion of victims attitudes, beliefs, allegiances and fundamental personality structure to such an extent that adaptive recovery is very difficult.
(2) The combination of CSA with premeditated and sadistic activities appears to result in more serious psychological consequences and"


(3) ... CSA accompanied by extreme degradation and demeaning the victim seems to have devastating consequences for the victim's self esteem."\(^{92}\)

We can adequately describe all the criminal elements in terms of the actual psychological, physical and sexual assault without the need to coin new terms. The addition of "satanic" or "ritual" abuse to professional jargon may be of no benefit to clarity of communication and threatens to cloud the real issues of child abuse in a smoky aura of mystical significance. It is this screen of emotive language and irrational responses that makes study of these phenomena so difficult.

6.1.2 The very mention of satanism can produce hysteria, provoke community panic and cause a loss of trust in the criminal justice system. Jonker and Jonker-Bakker describe allegations of child sexual abuse in an industrial Dutch village of 8,000 people in which ninety eight children told of widespread ritual abuse. The allegations included genital and oro-genital contact with adults and with each other, beatings, torture and human sacrifice.\(^{93}\) It is asserted that the children were disbelieved and implied that the police response was slow, inept and unsympathetic. As Putnam points out, here the community "turned against itself, filled with fear, anger and mistrust."\(^{94}\) Such a breakdown of relations between police and child protection-workers produces potentially disastrous disruption of protective services further endangering those children already at risk of abuse or neglect.

6.1.3 What is needed is a calm and rational assessment of the nature, extent and implications of the allegations.

"The reasonable question is not whether satanic ritual abuse exists at all but the reasonable question is where does it exist, under what circumstances and to what dimension . . . and where do we cross the line from acceptance to


6.2 Are these witnesses reliable?

6.2.1 How reliable are these witnesses? Some observers argue the reality of allegations of Satanic crime because of the similarity of the statements made by survivors who have never met. For instance Cook states

"... the most concrete form of validation experienced by most ritual abuse survivors is the intensity of the Memory Process..."  

This apparent corroboration does not make the allegations true. Other unbelievable allegations have similar agreement.

"It is interesting to note that, without having met each other, the hundreds of people who claim to have been abducted by aliens from outer space also tell stories and give descriptions of aliens that are similar to each other."  

One possible explanation for this concurrence of allegations is the incorporation of extraneous material into "pseudo-memories." The allegations have mostly come from people with dissociative disorders who are extra-ordinarily suggestible and have problems

"deciding whether something that they believe happened really happened or did it occur in a dream or did they imagine it."  

It is illogical to say the allegations are true because the individuals making them experience strong feelings. It makes no more sense than saying that psychotic delusions are true when sufficiently vividly experienced.

---


Chapter 7 ~ Does cult crime exist at all?

Two men were stranded on a desert island. After exploring the island they concluded that the meticulous layout of the plants and the pathways could only be the work of a gardener. Each morning there were slight changes, yet the gardener was never sighted. They concluded the gardener must work at night. Night after night they lay in wait. Nothing was seen or heard.

"There is no gardener. There must be another explanation we have not thought of yet", concluded the first man.

"No. He must be invisible. We don't know how to see him. If only we new the way", retorted the second.

"How is that different from no gardener at all?", asked the first.

7.1 What is the criminological relevance?

7.1.1 Criminology is in part the sociology of crime and delinquency. Why should the criminal justice system have an interest in the activities of small groups of people with self-directed preoccupation with their chosen charismatic leader? Unfamiliar creeds create an unease that is often demonstrated in fears of subversion. Could such fears contaminate the criminal justice system? Why are so called cult-crimes reported and by whom? What attitude should be adopted to the conflict over religious freedom? Is it possible that some cults have hidden decidedly criminal behaviour behind a religious veneer? Is the apparent failure of law enforcement to bring the alleged miscreants to justice because of ignorance, stupidity, poor training, corruption, or, more simply, because no crime exists? Perhaps rather than "failure", the absence of successful prosecutions for "cult-crimes" demonstrates the ability of the courts to rise above unfounded allegations, no matter how emotive.
7.2 The False Memory Syndrome

7.2.1 In recent years there have been numerous allegations that individuals and groups have been victims of criminal assaults as part of rituals in the worship of Satan. The Satanic network is said to be such an immensely powerful conspiracy that it renders the criminal justice system corrupt and impotent. These allegations are made by disturbed women seeking assistance for a variety of personal problems who reveal a background of sadistic abuse only after they have developed a trusting relationship with a therapist. Many of these patients have severe dissociative illness or multiple personality disorder. The involvement of professional therapists gives an impression of scientific validity that is unfounded. False memories are presented as facts. Professionals who question the memories are regarded with suspicion, even branded as collaborators in the great satanic conspiracy. This presentation has been seen so often now that at least some observers are recognising a syndrome.\textsuperscript{100, 101}

7.2.2 The great difficulty experienced by police evaluating these complaints is that they are often reported via the therapist not directly to a law enforcement agency. The therapist is chosen because he or she is perceived by the complainant as open to hearing about sadistic abuse in a cult. If the therapist is not sensitive to this type of material, he or she is rejected in favour of someone who is. So it may be necessary for the therapist to "believe in the existence of the cult first" before therapy can begin, but it is the "therapy [that] is critical in discovering what comes out."\textsuperscript{102}

7.2.3 The person making "Satanic" allegations may sample several therapists before finding one who is receptive. So the choice of therapist may mould the type of disclosure. While this may be a valid selection by the client, the

\textsuperscript{100} Goldstein EC \textit{Confabulations: Creating false memories, destroying families}, Ferme 0-88777-144-3, 1993.

\textsuperscript{101} Boyd A \textit{Blasphemous Rumours: Is satanic ritual abuse fact or fantasy - an investigation}, 0-00-627597-4, 1993.

The Making of an Allegation

In January 1992 the author documented the biases of a therapist actively moulding disclosures of satanic abuse. Joan was a secondary teacher with a daughter (Melissa) of seven years and a son (Tom) aged five. Joan had recently separated from her husband. She attributed the decline in the relationship to Tom's birth. She became alarmed when Melissa began angrily throwing her favourite teddy bear about and showing signs of frustration. Apparently oblivious to the natural anger the child felt at the break-up of the family, Joan interpreted this uncharacteristic behaviour as "abuse games". When challenged about her knowledge of behavioural indicators of child abuse, she readily admitted it was based on school common room discussions and in-service seminars. At the time Joan was convinced she had identified evidence that her daughter had been abused. She sought advice from various counselling services and was really impressed when one counsellor told her that she should "believe it and document it", without any real attempt to help Joan and Melissa define what "it" was. Had someone helped Joan at this stage to put Melissa's anger and frustration about the family breakdown into perspective the paranoia about satanic rituals and abuse of Melissa would never have started. This counsellor freely admitted that she was not knowledgeable about "ritual abuse" but she was sure that "it" sounded like that was what Melissa was acting out. She suggested that Joan ring a Sexual Assault Centre because "they are sure to know about these things". Joan reported that the woman at the Centre was very helpful and sent her some literature on satanic crimes and ritual abuse.

The estranged husband had once belonged to a motorcycle group. Freed from the restraints of family life he had renewed old acquaintances and when he had Melissa on access she met some of these people. Copying designs from motorcycle jackets, she drew some odd pictures. The pictures were interpreted as proof of the satanic content of Melissa's experience. When Melissa first said anything that sounded like a story about satanic abuse Joan knew this was "a disclosure" and took four days of work to "be with Melissa". When Melissa mentioned a place her father had taken her in the country Joan cancelled her own plans and took Melissa and a friend driving to identify the spot. Melissa's directions were vague and they did not locate anything. Melissa soon learned a powerful tool for getting all of her mother's attention. The stories were more frequent and the drawings of skulls and other paraphernalia were produced in a steady stream. When I met Melissa she immediately offered to produce some drawings for me and happily described their horrific content.
therapist becomes an active participant in shaping the nature of the disclosures. The therapist may not actively seek to be placed in this position, but if he or she cannot believe what is being revealed in therapy, the client may change therapists or the therapist may feel unable to help. This places pressure on the therapist to "believe". If the therapist perceives the material as inherently unbelievable, even as psychotic delusion, then the diagnosis changes from a post-traumatic syndrome to psychosis, maybe schizophrenia. There is a real risk that the patient will leave therapy. If the therapist has previously participated in seminars or training courses that themselves fashion therapeutic perceptions or is ideologically committed to the rape crisis centre ethos "the survivor has a right to be believed", then questioning the reality of these disclosures is almost heresy.

"The consequences of disclosure of [satanic] allegations in the local professional and lay community have been remarkably similar, in the USA, UK and Europe. Initially the police and social services are unprepared for the horror and scale of the problem which they begin to unfold. Rapidly professional divide into two camps: the believers and the disbelievers. Outside expertise tends to be sought late, and after several cases have already been assessed and divisions between professionals have begun to occur." 104

7.2.4 Seminars and professional journals may be a potent source of bias for therapists, because the perceptual set gained by attending "training" sessions may be the source of error. One seminar offered participants a list of "indicators" of satanic abuse under specific headings105 which could have the effect of biasing the approach of the therapist, who, hearing about one of these indicators, might be led to unsupported conclusions about the likely existence of others unconsciously


rewarding the patient for producing more material that synchronises with the preconceptions. This "encyclopedic" method of data gathering - collecting material under headings and assuming causative links - has long been a source of error in social anthropology.\textsuperscript{106} It is a potential problem whenever anyone is collecting data from another person with a specific goal in mind. Patients with severe dissociative illness and multiple personality disorder are highly suggestible. The therapist is crucially able to influence not only the nature, extent, but perhaps even the content of the allegations that are made.

"People with dissociative disorders frequently do not know where they learned information. They may know the information but they have no idea of the context where they acquired it. Later when they access the information they may confabulate the context from which it comes."\textsuperscript{107}

7.2.5 Summit has observed that traumatic personal experience

"Is a common basis for the development of multiple personality disorder or other dissociative disorder . . . So it shouldn’t be surprising that the worst things that ever happen to children will turn up among multiple personality disordered people . . . During the last few years a striking finding has been the number of children speaking as alter egos through multiple personality individuals [about their history of ritual abuse]."\textsuperscript{108}

7.2.6 Encyclopedic data collection is not solely done by therapists. Throughout the literature there is a torrent of material from law enforcement officers who are widely quoted as authoritative sources. Current or retired police are often seen as authorities. It assumed that because of their profession they are unlikely to be promulgating material that is not inherently true: by this logic, any default the utterance of a police officer is valid. Kahaner, himself an ex-detective writes:


"I discovered a small clique of police officers - "cult cops" or "ghost-busters"... who have specialised in this field. To their surprise they find themselves overwhelmed with requests to analyse outside cases and lecture other law enforcement agencies. The need for this information is growing so quickly that the investigation of occult crime is now being taught in police academies..."\textsuperscript{109}

There is also a network of "survivors" that encourages the exchange of information and ready made definitions.

"Ritual abuse...is an organised form of severe sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse often involving numerous perpetrators and numerous victims. Due to the severity of the abuse, these experiences are almost always blocked out from the survivors memory leaving no recollection of the abuse. Recently, an unknown number of individuals have uncovered traumatic memories of ritual abuse and now talk about it among one another and in therapeutic settings... Ninety-seven per cent (97%) of the survivors... did not always remember the ritual abuse." [my emphasis]\textsuperscript{110}

The source of this information was collected in an encyclopedic manner:

"Advertisements were placed in five newsletters to which survivors of ritual abuse tend to subscribe... The ad described the questionnaire... all survivors in this study needed to be in therapy... to ensure support..."\textsuperscript{111}

The researcher had already circumscribed a group of people - they were all in therapy, reading "survivor newsletters" and willing to fill out a questionnaire - and then collected from this narrowly defined group the data she expected. She acknowledged "some limitations to this approach" but she had already decided that the material disclosed was inherently true.

"It is important to note that this sample is probably not representative of all ritual abuse survivors due to the requirement... to have a therapist... Another limitation due to the way in which traumatic memories are uncovered is not that survivors may remember things that did not happen, but rather it is more likely that the survivor has a great deal of repressed material that s/he


\textsuperscript{111} Cook C op. cit page 2
has not remembered yet."\(^{112}\)

7.2.7 At first glance these reports seem incredible -

"We have reached a level of information which contains so much that is unbelievable to the ordinary consciousness of our society that it threatens the credibility of ourselves and the society itself whether or not that body of material can eventually be proven to be true."\(^{113}\)

Hill and Goodwin discuss the historical context of the allegations and suggest that similarities with pre-inquisition material makes it possible that the allegations are true.\(^{114}\) They were taken to task by Noll for

"citing historical materials in an undisciplined manner . . . repeating the mistakes made by other such dilettantes in the past by doing so"\(^{115}\)

The historical evidence shows an enduring fascination with the ideas of cannibalism and orgiastic rituals, but there is no evidence to suggest such rituals have been part of any religious rituals.

7.2.8 Sceptics question the credibility of allegations only made by a group with unusual psychiatric symptoms, arguing that the allegations themselves are merely symptoms of the underlying psychiatric disorder. Proponents of the reality of "ritual abuse" assert that such bizarre experiences produce a characteristic psychiatric disturbance. The psychiatric literature on non-satanic cults reports that dissociation and post-traumatic stress symptoms are a frequent outcome of cult involvement.\(^{116}\)\(^{117}\) The most common diagnosis among "survivors of Satanic cults" is Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), which is a diagnosis only recently officially recognised.

\(^{112}\) Cook C op. cit. page 4


\(^{114}\) Hill S and Goodwin J "Satanism: Similarities between patients accounts and Pre-Inquisition historical accounts" Dissociation 2(1):39-44.

\(^{115}\) Noll R, Letter to the Editor, Dissociation, 2, 4:251, 1986.


It first appears in the authoritative Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American College of Psychiatry in the 1987 revised edition (DSM-IIIR). Multiple Personality Disorder is defined as

"the existence within the person of two or more distinct personality states. Personality is here defined as a relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and one’s self that is exhibited in a wide range of important social and personal contexts..."\(^{119}\)

As a relatively recent diagnosis, the current state of knowledge is largely the accumulation of anecdotal case material from therapists who are "often in non-academic settings, who have been sticking it out in the trenches with these complex and difficult patients".\(^{120}\)

7.2.9 Therapists who accept that MPD exists seem to generally agree that MPD arises from psychological trauma, especially from chronic child abuse of which the most pervasive sexual manifestation is incest. In spite of the paedophile-lobby's claim that anything done in a loving relationship is good, sexual abuse of children is invariably associated with some degree of emotional abuse. It has not been proven that childhood trauma causes MPD, and most therapists are unable to obtain independent verification that abuse did occur a decade or more earlier.

7.2.10 Dissociation is the ability to move to a different conscious state. Dissociative phenomena are on a continuum from daydreaming to psychiatric disorders. Hypnosis is a special case of deliberate dissociation. MPD can be conceptualised as a spontaneous self-hypnosis that occurs in people with an innate "biopsychological capacity to dissociate".\(^{121}\) A dissociated new personality is created when a susceptible individual is exposed to a stressor with which the psyche cannot

---


\(^{119}\) DSM-IIIR.


\(^{121}\) Putnam FW Diagnosis and Treatment of MPD, Guildford Press, New York, 1989, 47.
cope. One adaptation to overwhelming psychic trauma is the complete
dissociation of the experiences into separate personal entities so that the
complainant presents with multiple personality disorder. In theory, each personality
is age appropriate for a particularly traumatic event and knows only a limited part of
the saga. The host personality may know of the existence of subordinate
persona(s), but not know what they know. The ability to dissociate the personality
in this way might bestow a survival advantage on cult victims.

7.2.11 The goal of therapy in multiple personality disorder is to reintegrate the
personalities. Working with MPD patients is understandably complicated, time
consuming and personally draining. The problems they bring to therapy are
complex and patients have typically undergone seven years of therapy before the
diagnosis of MPD is reached. Not surprisingly, therapists look to each other for
support hence creating an important social network and information exchange.
Apart from providing the necessary personal supports, this networking also provided
the conduit for the propagation of mythical material. The importance of this network
is of central importance: not only does it shape the allegations. It may even be the
whole of the allegations.

"The network that links [the police, the therapists, the survivors, the concerned
parents' organisations, the clergy] together is sufficient to completely explain
the creation, elaboration and spread of the satanic-cult rumour. I believe that
they are the phenomenon." Not many therapists have the time or inclination to explore more thoroughly the
veracity of what they believe to be true.

7.2.12 All but one of the alleged survivors of Satanic Cults that were interviewed
for this thesis had been diagnosed as having MPD. Not one came up with a single

122 Bliss EL. Multiple Personality, Allied Disorders and Hypnosis, New York University Press, 1986, 125.

123 Braun B.G. (Ed), Treatment of Multiple Personality Disorder American Psychiatric Press Inc., 1986


125 Mulhern S "Training courses and Seminars on Satanic Ritual Abuse: A Critical Review" Seventh International Conference on
verified allegation. Many of the allegations that were potentially verifiable (e.g. severe assaults and mutilations) could not be verified because permission for examination was denied. In those cases where examination was possible, no stigmata of violence were evident. Most of the published work is descriptive and reports the patients’ stories in an uncritical way. At the Fourth International Conference on Multiple Personality and Dissociative States, Kaye and Klein presented a paper on the recognition of Satanic Ritual Abuse in which they not only described some inherently unbelievable material but also confessed their willingness to accept this material uncritically.

"In the face of the enormity of what we have learned, we have elected to focus upon our clients. To help them to deal with their pain, see what they need to see, hear what they need to hear, feel what they need to feel, and learn what the need to learn. This is the scope of our present interventions."  

At the same conference another therapist discussed

"satanic cult symbols, cues, cult death contracts and the inter-marriages in the elite groups to form a high level of blood purity."  

A third enjoined her colleagues to study the occult literature because

"Successful mental health care is often extremely dependent upon the therapists' specific knowledge of witchcraft, satanism and the occult . . . as well as the techniques of cult indoctrination and trance induction."  

Each of these therapists clearly described a network for exchanging information between therapists and seeking confirmation of this material from their patients.

7.2.13 There are few papers that attempt a scientific approach to this problem. Young, Braun and Sachs, describe a retrospective analysis of 37 patients who presented for evaluation following therapy for dissociative disorder. The satanic
allegations they reported were said to have been revealed in a "piecemeal fashion" over years of therapy. This paper fails to compare and contrast these stories with those of other MPD patients whose stories do not incorporate Satanic material, nor does it explore the role played by the therapeutic paradigms in moulding the disclosures. The therapists were all members of the same society for the study of MPD. They arranged the conference referred to above.

7.2.14 If these crimes are as frequent and widespread as the allegations claim, they ought to be verifiable. Putnam argues for the need for increased objectivity and scientific method in the collection and presentation of data on ritual crimes. Jones calls for a multi-disciplinary response team analogous with the teams that are created to deal with natural disasters and a national register of cases. Many allegations have never been examined by criminal investigators. The F.B.I. conclusion is a position of open scepticism:

"Any professional evaluating victim's allegations of ritualistic abuse cannot ignore the lack of physical evidence (no bodies or physical evidence left by violent murders), the difficulty in successfully committing a large-scale conspiracy crime (the more people involved in any crime conspiracy, the harder it is to get away with it), and human nature (intra-group conflicts resulting in individual self-serving disclosures are likely to occur in any group involved in organised kidnapping, baby breeding and human sacrifice) . . . "

The reality is that in spite of hundreds, maybe thousands of allegations all over the world, not one shred of tangible evidence exists to support the notion of a trans-generational, multi-national satanic conspiracy.

7.2.15 Clinicians base their acceptance of the inherent truth of what they were told on


"1. The violence of the abreaction of the recovered memory
2. The abundance of vivid detail and what therapists referred to as the logical consistency of descriptions of abuse
3. The manifestation of body memories prior to or during the remembering process
4. Their conviction that patients who had never met where saying the same things"\textsuperscript{133}

Although the stories that emerge from many adults alleging they are cult survivors there is no way of eliminating the possibility that these are "pseudo-memories"\textsuperscript{134} incorporated from literature or film.

7.2.16 As noted above, victims of childhood sexual exploitation frequently suffer symptoms of dissociation, somatisation, anxiety and depression.\textsuperscript{135}\textsuperscript{136} Childhood trauma in the first three years of life is likely to "remembered" as behaviour.\textsuperscript{137} Terr describes some characteristics of play in traumatised children: compulsive repetitiveness, unconscious link with the trauma, literalness of play, failure of play to relieve anxiety, wide age range of "players", power of play to involve others, contagion of uninvolved children, dangerous risk taking games, and preoccupation with doodling or talking.\textsuperscript{136} Another possible explanation for the complaints is that these patients have developed a powerful satanic metaphor for explaining, to themselves or others, severe abuse of some other type actually suffered in childhood.\textsuperscript{139} The involvement of professionals gives special credibility to the

\begin{flushleft}


\end{flushleft}
allegations and they are enshrined as "fact" when they are really "artefact". A syndrome of false memories.

7.3 Subversion and Counter-subversion

7.3.1 If the allegations of Satanic crimes are true, Satanists are the ultimate deviants. Some people have become very concerned at this threat of subversion, believing the very fabric of society to be under threat. As the allegations of satanic misdeeds gain credence in some circles, a counter-subversive dogma has arisen that is able to ignore the lack of evidence in pursuit of the forces of subversion. This is the anti-satanic movement (ASM) which formed to meet the presumed threat posed by satanic cults. Subversion fears have been a recurrent feature of history whenever there was a significant conflict between contemporary social patterns. Bromley argues that the current wave of satanic scares has arisen because there is a "structural incompatibility between family and economy . . . the source of which is given human agency in the form of satanists". The level of moral imbalance implied by the satanic allegations and the atrocious nature of the alleged crimes make it not just unpalatable, but almost unthinkable for people outside law-enforcement to seek the evidence. Such a pursuit would be foolhardy, almost unthinkable for the therapist. Satanic rituals are said to take place in locations outside the normal public domain which only serves to emphasise the secretive nature of the alleged conspiracy. What right-minded person would wander deserted woods, cemeteries or abandoned buildings in the dead of night looking for homicidal, perverted groups busy with rape, torture and cannibalism. Kahaner begins his book on Satanic crime saying:

"This book began as an investigation of the growing phenomenon of Satanism in America. It was to be a study of Satanists, their beliefs and practices. As I interviewed more and more people living in this bizarre and mysterious world, however, what I found led me in a different direction. I found a hidden society, much larger and more disquieting than the world of Satanism alone, a place

few people know exists... It is the underworld of occult crime..." ¹⁴¹

But all the accusations made in his book remain unproven. One of Kahaner's informants (Detective Sandi Gallant) stated:

"Occult crime may be the most difficult area of police work today. You won't find simple cases with obvious suspects. You find bits and pieces, evidence that goes nowhere, testimony that is always suspect and crimes so bizarre and disgusting that even most police officers don't want to believe it exists." ¹⁴²

Detective Gallant has missed the point: the disbelief of her colleagues is based on the lack of confirmatory evidence, not upon unwillingness to be persuaded.

7.3.2 The anti-satanists contend that the complaints are evidence in themselves. For instance

"Sceptics of the devil-cult scenario should acknowledge the sheer number of child victim allegations..." ¹⁴³

or "... the most concrete form of validation experienced by most ritual abuse survivors is the intensity of the Memory Process..." ¹⁴⁴

Tate begins his book *Children for the Devil* ¹⁴⁵ with a chapter entitled "A conspiracy of toddlers?" implying that because the allegations he examines are made by children they are inherently true. In that chapter he quotes the following case:

"Maya... described in great detail a satanic ritual in which her heart was exchanged for that of an animal. She told of her new heart being that of Satan. From the time of the ritual she perceived a large black mass pulsating on her chest and she felt permanently defiled, deformed and evil.

It is obvious that some parts of this event are not literally true, for Maya is alive, she has no visible chest incision, and there is no mass on her chest." ¹⁴⁶

and goes on to offer the profound observation that

---


¹⁴³ Penthouse "The devil made me do it", January 1986, 48.


¹⁴⁶ Van Benschoten S quoted in Tate T, op cit. 14
"The prevalence of these self-evidently impossible allegations has been a major stumbling block to the acceptance of ritual abuse as a reality throughout the world."\textsuperscript{147}

It seems extraordinary that the other major possibility is not self-evident to such authors - perhaps these allegations are just not true. The ideology of assuming that Satanism is inherently true is reminiscent of the parable of The Emperor's New Clothes in which the faithful were unable to acknowledge the emperor's nakedness. As Hicks points out

"To assert that a criminal satanic conspiracy exists might constitute a working hypothesis with testable assumptions. If, for example, I posit that a satanic cult murders young, transient, unemployed men as a form of propitiation to the devil, then one might expect occasionally to stumble on physical evidence, such as bodies (or body parts); to obtain interviews with witnesses to abductions; or to garner information from informants whose scruples about murdering have caused them to break ranks with their satanic fellows. But, in fact, no evidence turns up, no witnesses come forth, and no information is volunteered - nothing. Instead of abandoning the hypothesis, the investigating officer rationalises the lack of evidence as proof of the cult's success: murderous cult members remain covert, entrenched in otherwise responsible, common occupations; they dispose of all evidence at the site of their ritual murders; they never break ranks for any reason. Their success is measured by their invisibility and by their adroit management of crime scenes in never leaving traces of their activity. The cult's success, then, must be taken as self-evident; we no longer need proof. We know that cultists are sacrificing people to Satan because we know that they do it. And if the conspiracy claim still faces doubt, one throws the onus of proof back onto the sceptic:"Well, prove that it isn't so!"\textsuperscript{148}

The satanists are thus depicted as the ultimate subversives - able to congregate for the sole purpose of engaging in depravity for its own sake - and able to do this undetected. Not only are they portrayed as essentially evil, but they are assumed to maintain superlative national and international organisational links. The elegance of which is proven by their invisibility. Paradoxically, the disbelieving law-enforcers are


constantly told there is a string of clues just waiting investigation. But, consider the realities...

"Many of the individuals claiming to be ritual abuse survivors are in their forties. If they were abused as young children it was in the 1950s. Assuming a network of roughly constant size and activity, satanic cult victims would number in the millions. Even if satanists sacrificed 10,000 (rather than the more commonly cited 50,000 children per year), the time period covered by current survivors' claims would have produced 400,000 victims, a total rivalling the 517,347 war-related deaths from World War II, Korea and Vietnam combined. Yet, not a single casualty of the satanic cult network has been discovered."149

7.4 Urban Legends - Professional Myths

7.4.1 Professionals, whether police officers or therapists, who accept the allegations of ritual abuse at the hands of Satanic cults are accepting a an urban myth. Mulhern, writing as a social anthropologist who has taken a keen interest in the satanic allegations has questioned the iatrogenic nature of satanic crime. She has spoken out warning of the dangers inherent in promulgating the allegations of satanic or ritual abuse without scientific data.

"When one concentrates the research focus on discovering the specific ways in which therapists come to "believe" in the reality of satanic/ritual abuse, one immediately uncovers a remarkable myth-making network of therapists, patients and investigators blending together specific idiosyncratic data into one a-temporal, analytic grid. . . . when one examines specific adult survivor stories, it becomes immediately apparent that initially patients were not saying the same things but came to say the same similar things over time."150

In fact the current preoccupation with alleged Satanism is a modern allegory of witch-finding. It presupposes a contemporary subversive network that is unseen: an

---


underlying evil within our society, not the spiritual evil of medieval heresy, but a palpable, secular evil of violence, sexual depravity and murder. This new conspirator runs day-care centres, but was recognised as a Jew in the fifteenth century, or a Christian in the second century. This evil alternative to orthodoxy was described by Cohn as

"another society, small and clandestine . . . addicted to practices which were felt to be . . . anti-human" 151

The Satanic Order is the creation of thousands of years of mythology. Its rich history does not make it true. Allegations are not evidence.

7.5 The Reports and the Reporters

7.5.1 Reports of abuses by subversive cults have been made in many parts of the world, throughout recorded history. The previous chapter discussed the contemporary example of "satanic cults", about which much is said and nothing proven. Some people hearing these stories have believed what they have heard in an unquestioning way152; others have sought proof and decided that these allegations do not seem to be true153; some observers conclude only that there is a need for further scientific and law enforcement study.154 In the debate many players forget that there is a hierarchy of needs for proof. Family or friends of an alleged victim may chose to believe what they are told because of their allegiance to the alleged victim. The level of proof required may be minimal because of the negative consequences of disbelief for family or social relationships. They need little proof because of their allegiance to the complainant.

7.5.2 For those with a firm faith in God in a dualist relationship with evil, the


existence of Satanic doings is axiomatic. The Adelaide Sunday Mail investigated 18 "occult suicides" and found church workers "concerned about Satanism" in the suburbs. These allegations were not supported by the police investigation because according to the reporter the investigation "hit a wall of silence". The journalist implied a conspiracy of silence but failed to consider that silence also occurs when there is nothing to say, or no-one present to speak.

7.5.3 Further removed from such obvious biases are professional counsellors who receive information alleging cult-crimes in the midst of therapy. There may be no need for formal validation of allegations in the mind of a care-giver. If the only consequences of mis-diagnosis are manifest between the therapist and patient, why worry about proof? A therapist may comfortably work with the client's sense of reality even if it is not founded in fact. Some therapists do. They do not feel compelled to make a clear distinction between fact and fantasy. By concentrating on their clients they avoid the issues of credibility. Perhaps they agree with Kaye and Klein who write

"We would like to think that these things are not true. We wish that we could.
In the face of the enormity of what we have learned we have elected to focus on our clients". 156

They chose to do so without proof that any part of their clients elaborate tales are true. Partly this is in respect for the client, but also a realisation that if the therapist is not sufficiently "sensitive" (i.e. unquestioning) about cult-rituals as a form of abusive behaviour, he or she is rejected in favour of someone who is. The person making such allegations may sample several therapists before finding one who is receptive to the macabre story. So the choice of therapist may mould the nature and extent of the disclosure.

7.5.4 When it is stated by a therapist that satanic abuse has been identified, it is

---


important to establish by whom such statements are made and what level of "proof" is offered. One child psychiatrist states:

"There is sufficient evidence arising from the public sector from both the victim and the adherents to occultism, clearly indicating that children and adults are being abused by persons or groups who have no other motive than criminal. They use the occult or Satanism as a cover for their premeditated criminal acts. Added to this are the indicators that Satanic groups dedicated to the worship of Satan also commit the same unspeakable acts."\(^{157}\)

This surely crosses the line into over-belief. Where is this evidence that clearly shows the veracity of the satanic allegations? This bald acceptance of criminal conspiracy has not one shred of evidence to back it. Allegations, stories and psychiatric opinion alone do not form evidence. Is this not the twentieth century version of medieval witch-finding?

"In Lancashire, England in 1632, a boy left his job tending cattle to gather plums. To justify to his parent his absence from work, the young cowherd explained that he had seen two stray greyhounds running toward him. He thought he might use them as hunting dogs, When he went after the dogs, however, a hare crossed the dog's path, and he noticed that they did not even try to pursue it. Angry at their laziness, the cowherd began to beat the dogs. Presently, the animals were transformed into new beings: one a small boy and the other a woman whom the cowherd knew. The woman offered to pay him for not mentioning the incident, but he refused: "Though art a witch," he said. The woman withdrew a string from her purse, which instantly became a bridle, and when she affixed it to the head of the small boy turned into a white horse. The young cowherd and the woman flew off on the back of the horse and alighted near a house, which they entered. Joining a company of people there . . . they partook of a feast . . . when pressed the cowherd later named eighteen neighbours who he claimed were present at the feast."\(^{158}\)

This story has many similarities to the major elements of the stories currently told. The narrative is alarming and contains elements of the supernatural, it implicates ordinary citizens, and authorities act on the uncorroborated evidence of a child. The

\(^{157}\) Schlaubaum A, General Statement on Satanism in New South Wales personal communication.

child in this story went on to be celebrated witch-finder.\textsuperscript{156}

7.5.5 If the professional's role is legally sanctioned in child protection then far more tangible evidence must be required. Courts cannot make custody decisions simply on the perceptions of a "believer". If children thought to be "at-risk" are to be protected, Protection Applications and Custody Orders need to be substantiated. Proof, at least on balance of probabilities, is needed. Proof requires evidence.

7.5.6 The law-enforcement officer who wants to get a search-warrant needs at least a "reasonable belief" that an offence has been committed. To secure a conviction he needs proof "beyond reasonable doubt". Few professionals who have not experienced the rigours of the criminal justice system comprehend the importance of the increased burden of proof in criminal cases. The defence have only to raise a \textit{reasonable doubt} in the mind of the tribunal for the accused to go free. It behoves those who hear allegations of crime and who bleat about the "failures" of law-enforcement to gain a clearer understanding of the various standards in the burden of proof. They must also be open to the possibility of actively encouraging the transformation of one social or psychological problem to another.

7.5.7 Allegations by third persons need careful analysis if they are to contribute anything. At law such material is \textit{hearsay} and not normally admissible in evidence. If the Rules of Evidence applied to the making of allegations as they do to their prosecution, most of the allegations of satanic crime would dismissed as unreliable, unfounded and uncorroborated.

\textsuperscript{156} Notestein W History of Witchcraft in England from 1558-1718, New York Crowell, 1968, 145.
7.6 Religious Freedom

7.6.1 It is the actions of individuals and groups not their beliefs or theories that decide criminality. The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights says:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes the freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance...

7.6.2 Conversely the fact that an individual or group holds certain beliefs does not as Hassan puts it:

"grant an automatic right to act indiscriminately on those beliefs."

When crime is associated with membership of a cult it is the behaviour that is criminal not the membership of the cult itself. However the converse is not true: belonging to a cult that professes unorthodox views does not excuse criminal behaviour. There may be groups whose inherently criminal behaviour is shielded by group solidarity and a cloak of professed religion. Hassan represents the anti-cult movement, the self-styled 'cult-busters', whose zeal and single-mindedness appears to exceed that of the cults they fear.

"Cult-busters have rigid criteria for differentiating the orthodox, normal and healthy from that which is unorthodox, abnormal and unhealthy -- and their criteria are applied with rigour and ferocity. Cult-busters are angry, passionate and totally uncompromising in rooting out and eradicating what they perceive and portray as evil. They create and they recount the 'subversion myths'."

One characteristic that Hassan claims is common to destructive cults is

---


limitation he says is placed on members freedom either to leave the group or make choices within it. The idea of brain-washing applied to children to ensure lifelong devotion to the group, or to make them more compliant with paedophilia and other forms of abuse is abhorrent and inherently criminal. If such behaviour could be substantiated there could be no question of the juvenile participant having given valid consent or that adult rights to religious freedom were being unfairly abused. But can such stories be substantiated?

"When I was about eight years old I was taken by my father to a shed with four other children. Some were really little, only three or four. I hated listening to them crying. Specially when they got belted for crying. They were not old enough to know how to not cry. We were given tablets and acid. We were tied to posts in the shed. When the door was closed it was dark and scary. We were not allowed to talk to each other. Sometimes they would come and hit us or have sex with us or just tell us the powerful words. I hated listening to them having sex with the little kids because they cried so much and got belted for it. The worst one was Dr ****, the psychiatrist, he hurt us a lot and his voice and things he said were really scary. There was no food and no drink. We were told we could only get out when we had turned into good little disciples. Even now I am 25 I cannot stop doing what they say when they use the powerful words. The other day my uncle came and told me to get myself out of myself and he said some powerful words so I had sex with him." 

This is a powerful story in the best satanic tradition. Unfortunately totally without corroboration as the individual refused examination.

7.6.3 Many groups in society can be, or have been accused of confusing the gullible, duping the naive, ruining peoples lives, dishonestly coercing them to part with their money or possessions, but it cannot be argued that such behaviour is inherently criminal, even if the allegations are true. In a modern secular society unusual beliefs can and should be tolerated and given the same protection and


166. Personal communication, case "I".
respect that is due the orthodoxies. Begelman questions our ability to draw a clear distinction between cults and orthodoxy when he asks

"Do criteria exist for distinguishing cults from major religions which after all once began as cults with hopes of graduation? Any reluctance to blur the distinction may spring from the conviction that "good guys" ought to be let of the hook for ritual abuse traditions some centuries old. The continuing problem of the sexual abuse of children by clergymen in the major religions is very much a living reality. One can of course separate institutional abuse and individual aberration but not when in house attempt to sweep the abuse under the carpet by maintaining secrecy and transferring offenders out of districts becomes policy. Then the problem transcends one of aberrated singletons and becomes institutionally, if not doctrinally based . . . better to regard no system as having a monopoly on abuses."\(^{167}\)

7.6.4 Clearly not all cults are either evil or negative. Some individuals have experienced personal benefit from groups that are labelled by others as "destructive". Galanter and Buckley studied members of the Divine Light Mission and found that there was a decline in neurotic symptoms, drug and alcohol use among devotees. Symptom decline was found to correlate significantly with group-related activities.\(^{168}\) Criminological inquiry must focus on behaviour that is either inherently criminal or prohibited, not on philosophies or deviance from orthodoxy. Any individual ought to be free to decide his or her own involvement is cult activities, shouldn't s/he? Not all would agree. Hassan, himself a survivor of a cult, argues that the essential evil of certain cults is their use of "mind control" techniques to subvert the validity of individual decision making\(^{169}\) asserting that

"nobody chooses to join a cult, they just postpone the decision to leave."\(^{170}\)

Beyond his own self-serving assertions, he offers no proof.


\(^{168}\). Galanter M & Buckley P "Evangelical religion and meditation: Psychotherapeutic effects", J. Nervous and mental Disease 166(10):685-691.


Chapter 8: Where to?

8.1 Can the False Memory Syndrome be avoided?

8.1.1 The anti-subversive movement has intensified in recent years. The horror of Jonestown has focussed attention on the negative aspects of belonging to a fringe religion and provided a rallying point for bigotry. An ominous future is predicted by the anti-subversionists: a future in which communities are lost to the "mind-control" of the devious and pernicious enemy:

"large numbers of people in other countries may be laid open to mind control at the direction of self-appointed religious, social and political leaders."

The stigmatisation of "cults" and other unorthodox groups bears a relationship to the uncertainties associated with social change.

"The satanic subversion narrative gives human shape to the sense of danger and vulnerability, in this case the tension between family and the economy, that individuals experience. . . . The heroic figures in the narrative were the therapists (and their allies), who, despite the risk of personal harm and rejection by their fellow professionals, committed themselves to healing and vindicating their clients. . . ." 172

One of the off-shoots of this entrance of the mental health professionals into the field of cult inquiry has been that they are taking the place in contemporary society of the witch-finders of the middle ages. This has lead to what some sociologists call the "medicalisation of deviance" - and expansion of the controls of mental health, especially psychiatry, psychology and social work over religious behaviour.

"A fundamental element of the medical model is the assumption that it is less reprehensible to impose an unnecessary course of treatment that to risk leaving a pathological condition untreated. The risk entailed in rejecting the


8.1.2 Allegations of brainwashing involve a mystical psychological power that is attributed to the cults. Brain-washing and mind-control are the modern metaphors of demonic possession. The assumptions underlying the allegations of "brainwashing" and "mind-control" reflect the underlying assumptions that no sane or right-minded person could join a group with unorthodox life-style or ideology without coercion. The implication is that no-one would make such change voluntarily. These allegations ignore the fact that throughout recorded time people have voluntarily joined disciplined, authoritarian even totalitarian movements trading intellectual and personal freedom for security and sense of purpose.

8.1.3 The mind-control model has appeal for ex-devotees because it frees them from responsibility for the disruption of family and friends that occurred when they joined the group and provides a ready explanation to assist rebuilding their old life style after leaving. It may be easier for the apostate to explain the prior allegiance to a cult in terms of inability to resist "brainwashing" than to explain the intensity of religious conversion, especially whilst trying to relinquish the ties. The ex-member has a double-defection to explain - firstly leaving family and friends to defect to the cult and then defecting from the cult back to family and friends.

"pressures for self-justification and expiation of guilt are set in motion. These often take the form of insisting 'I was fooled, I was victimised'"\textsuperscript{174}

8.1.4 None of this would matter to the criminologist if the debate were limited to sociologists of religion. But, the debate is not limited. Reports are made to police. Allegations are taken seriously. Innocent people are accused of crimes, interrogated, and subjected to the humiliation of property search or seizure. Expert testimony is sought to support allegations about "thought reform" and "mind-control".


"When blatant prejudices and personal value judgements are allowed to masquerade as expert forensic opinion, significance of all expert witnessing is diminished, the legal system is subverted, and the freedom of religion . . . is imperilled.\textsuperscript{175}

The doctrine of "mind-control" amounts to no more than disparaging the seduction of individuals by groups that are not socially approved.

8.1.5 The fear of Satanic crime is the creation of thousands of years of mythology. Its rich history does not make it true. Allegations are not evidence. Professionals, whether law enforcement officers or therapists, who accept the allegations of ritual crime attributable to Satanic cults are accepting an urban myth and participating in a crime scare whose central focus is on Satan and Satanists as the embodiment of evil.

8.1.6 There is no evidence to support the satanic allegations. They must be seen as iatrogenic creations of well-meaning, but misguided therapists.

\textsuperscript{175} Streiker L, Letter to the American Psychological Association, 25/2/87.
Bibliography


Anon "Rock Against Drugs", *The North Dallas News*, 16 March 1990.


*Auckland Morning Star*, 5 November 1990.


Bliss EL Multiple Personality, Allied Disorders and Hypnosis, New York University Press, 1986, 125.

Bodycomb J "Lookout the cult-busters don't get you", unpublished radio talk from the ABC 1988.

Boyd A Blasphemous Rumours: is satanic ritual abuse fact or fantasy - an investigation, 1993.


Brass K "Inside The Family", The Australian Weekend Magazine 5/9/87


Church of Scientology of California v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue 19 Feb 1980, No 3352-78.

Coggin G, personal communication.

Cohen S & Dittman K.S. "Complications associated with lysergic Acid diethylamide (LSD-25) JAMA


Deam, A. "Woman shot 'to kill devil in her'", *Herald-Sun*, October 10, 1990.

Death Certificate No 14683/71

Deed Poll No 47050.

Deed Poll No 59974.


Dower G "Swiss drug firm 'gave free LSD'", *The Sun*, Melbourne 30/11/87.


Elias D "How Valerie McRoss sought nirvana and found a husband she did not love", *The Age*, 24 October 1985.

Elias D, "sect used drugs to re-call past lives: ex-member", *The Age*, Melbourne 23/9/83 p 1,5-6.

Ellis G quoted in Elias D "Sect used drugs to recall past lives: ex-member", The Age, Melbourne, 23/9/83, p 6


File note on Fleming v Ogden and General Television Corporation, Supreme Court of Victoria.


Foster, J.G., Inquiry into the Practice and Effects of Scientology, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 21/12/71.


Freeman, M. "Devil worship fears spread", The Sun, September 1990, p 34.


Galanter M & Buckley P "Evangelical religion and meditation: Psychotherapeutic effects", *J.Nervous and mental Disease* 166(10):685-691.


Goldstein EC *Confabulations: creating false memories and destroying families*, Farne 1993.

Grasser I., Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union, Letter to the American Psychological Association, March 9, 1987. Copy provided by the Church of Scientology.


Hamilton Byrne S, personal communication.
Hamilton Byrne S, statement for the Supreme Court in Fleming vs General Television Corporation Ltd and Edward Ogden, 18/12/89.


Harkness, B.: "Devil-worship fears after dead cat, slogans found", Geelong Advertiser 18/8/90.


Health Department records obtained by Citizen's Commission on Human Rights.


Hill S and Goodwin J "Satanism: Similarities between patients accounts and Pre-Inquisition historical accounts" Dissociation 2(1):39-44.


Hoffer, E. *The True Believer*, Harper & Row, New York, 1951 p 77


Holroyd L "An adoption dream that went wrong", *The Age*, 24/8/89.


Los Angeles County Commission for Women Ritual Abuse: Definitions; Glossary; The Use of Mind Control, September 15, 1989.


Macolino, A. "Pets Killed in Cult Rampage", Truth, 13/10/90.

McPherson, R. statutory declaration 17/11/87.


Marks J The Search for the Manchurian Candidate,


Notes of interview of Whitaker by Detective Sergeant DeMan, 11/2/90.


Ogilvie A. quoted in Norbury K., "I'm just learning things I never even suspected", *The Sunday Age*, 24 June 1990.


Osler W *The Principles and Practice of Medicine*, D Appleton and Company, New York, 1892.
Parnaby O, personal communication.


*Penthouse* "The devil made me do it", January 1986, 48.

Personal communication, Sandoz Australia.

Pinto P. Sect got house cash, court told*, The Age, Melbourne 7/7/84

Place, A. "Vandals, cultists hit cemeteries", The Sun, August 18, 1987, p 6.


Putnam FW "Treatment of Multiple Personality: the State of the Art" in Braun BG Treatment of Multiple Personality Disorder, American Psychiatric Press,

Putnam FW Diagnosis and Treatment of MPD, Guildford Press, New York, 1989, 47.


Putnam FW Diagnosis and Treatment of MPD, Guildford Press, New York, 1989, 47.

Quine B "Crimes finance Anne's jaunts", Sunday Press, 30/4/89 page 19

Revised Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association,


Roberts, G. "Satanists suspected of animal slaughter", The Age, 8.10.90
Rutter J, personal communication.

Ryle G "From Orphanage to $50m guru", The Age Saturday Extra 2, Melbourne 9 September 1990, page 4.

Ryle G. "Children say Family sect members forced them into sex under LSD", The Age, Melbourne, Tuesday 19 June 1990.


Sachs RG and Braun BG "Recognition of Possible Cult Phenomena in MPD Patients", Fifth International Conference on Multiple Personality/Dissociative States,


San Diego County Commission on Children and Youth Interagency Investigative Team Protocol developed by the MULTI-VICTIM/MULTI-PERPETRATOR RITUALISTIC ABUSE TASK FORCE, December 1990.


Schlebaum A, General Statement on Satanism in New South Wales personal communication


Spero MH "Psychotherapeutic Procedure with Religious Cult Devotees" Journal of

Steinberg, J. & Brewda, J. "Dossier Shows Evidence of a Satanic 'March through the Institutions'", Investigative Leads, July 1989, 10:10, p 2-4


Story, D.W. "Ritualistic Crime: A New Challenge to Law Enforcement", Law and Order, September
1987, p 31-33.


Sweeney J., letter dated 16 June 1980, provided by an anonymous source representing the Family of Love, formerly the Children of God


The Church of the New Faith ats The Commissioner for Payroll Tax, High Court of Australia, 27/10/83

The People v. Karl Friedrich Munz, District Court Stuttgart, 30 January 1985, File Number 8 33 OWi 9306/84 STA: 90 Js 3524/84


Ungerleider J.T. & Wellisch D.K. "Coercive Persuasion(Brainwashing), Religious Cults, and

Unidentified member of Johnson's family quoted in Ryle G. "How the sect came into being", The Age, 10 September 1990, page 11.

Universal Declaration on Human Rights, United Nations, 10 December 1948.

Van Benschoten S quoted in Tate T. op cit.


Veitch C "Did sect steal my girl" Sunday Press, 18/8/89.


Walsh B "Sect Riddle: Police query on deaths". The Sun, 29/4/90, page 1.

Walsh B. "Sect children sold" The Sun 19/5/90 page 2

Walsh B "Sect Riddle: Police query on deaths". The Sun, 29/4/90, page 1.


West L.J. speech to the Second Annual Conference of FOCUS (Former Cultist Support Network), Los Angeles, 28 October, 1983.


Whitaker, H., notes of Sergeant A.G. DeMan, 16/2/90.

Whitaker H, personal communication.


Wilson J.R. "Office Memorandum", Office of the City Attorney, City of Los Angeles, 29 July 1974. (Document supplied by the Church of Scientology, Melbourne).


## Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isis and Osiris</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adonis and Ishtar</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief system</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbala</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger, Dennis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive dissonance</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-subversion</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime scare</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definition</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefits of membership</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Light Mission</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Memory Syndrome</td>
<td>6, 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton-Byrne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermetic wisdom</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iatrogenic crime allegations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Stan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Personality Disorder</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myths</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occult</td>
<td>17, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis and Osiris</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adonis and Ishtar</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbala</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary practices</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermetic wisdom</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysteries</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 79
Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:
Ogden, Edward

Title:
Satanic cults: ritual crime allegations and the false memory syndrome

Date:
1993

Citation:

Publication Status:
Unpublished

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/39502

File Description:
Satanic cults : ritual crime allegations and the false memory syndrome

Terms and Conditions:
Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.