

Do What Thou Wilt: The Terminus of Rock Rebellion

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“Do your own thing,” “It’s my life and I’ll do what I want,” and “Do what thou wilt so mete it be” echo throughout the annals of rock history. What is the origin of this seemingly innocuous philosophy? What does it present, under the garb of self-empowerment and freedom? In order to clearly frame these questions, it is necessary to examine the origins of this philosophy, from medieval novelist Rabelais, Sabbatai Zevi, Hassan-i-Sabbah to the Hellfire Club, Aleister Crowley and a plethora of rock icons. At its core, this philosophy offers individuals a model for interacting with the world that can leave a trail of ruined lives and widespread cultural decay.

The introduction of Aleister Crowley (1875-1941) and his philosophy to a mass audience was spearheaded by two seminal figures in the counterculture—John Lennon and Tim Leary. Appearing twice on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), Crowley’s unmistakable pate and menacing gaze revealed the occultic predilection of rock, something that had been relatively obscured to the general public. While increasingly shrill voices in the Christian right and anti-communist crusaders such as the John Birch Society repeatedly sounded the alarm regarding the destructive and culturally transformative influence of rock, the vast majority of the public viewed the antics and ethics of rock stars with amusement or full acceptance and celebration. It is important to note the positive valancing of this troubled and amoral man presented under the banner of “Peace and Love” to the willfully ignorant masses, offering the path of rebellion against social norms as the direct path to liberation of both individuals and society. Since that time, this mantra, “do your own thing,” has been promoted in

hundreds of songs, interviews, and in accompanying literature and merchandise produced and promoted by the music industry. From Kenneth Anger's films and his association with the Rolling Stones, to Ozzy Osborne's plaintive invocation of Crowley's white horse, the ethos of the Black Magician is wrapped in the banner of "cool" and the philosophy of self-empowerment.

Certainly, the morals of Christianity seemed both hypocritical and a central component in the oppressive machinery of late-20th century industrial capitalist societies. Variants of a bohemian lifestyle have been practiced on the margins of society for centuries, offering a life-philosophy of sexual indulgence and escape from the mind-numbing constraints of the office and factory. John Lennon's famous claim that "The Beatles are more popular than Jesus," and the Leary's contention that Christianity must be destroyed to bring about the psychedelic revolution represented an exoteric expression of the often esoteric and occult war on Christianity and the traditional value system of Western culture that can be traced back at least a thousand years. Johann Adam Weishaupt (1748-1830) expressed this as one of the central aims of the Illuminati, which he founded in 1776. His underground network successfully recruited highly placed members of the nobility and society, ostensibly working for the admirable goals of freedom, justice, and moral development. Just as the hippie revolution and communism have been presented as largely benign, so to the Illuminati and its founder. Dr. Tony Page contends that,

Weishaupt's plan was to educate Illuminati followers in the highest levels of humanity and morality (basing his teachings on the supremacy of Reason, allied with the spirit of the Golden Rule of not doing to others what one would not wish done to oneself), so that if Illuminati alumni subsequently attained positions of significance and power (such as in the fields of education and politics), they could exert a benevolent and uplifting influence upon society at large. His project was

utopian and naively optimistic, and he himself was certainly not without flaws of character – but neither he nor his plan was evil or violent in and of themselves. It is one of the deplorable and tragic ironies of history that a man who tried to inculcate virtue, philanthropy, social justice and morality has become one of the great hate-figures of 21st-century ‘conspiracy’ thinking. (Page: 1)

Is this truly the case? Have I as a former adherent of critical theory and social revolution been captured by the paranoia of ‘conspiracy culture’? I would respond that simply by observing the moral decay, perpetual war, and cultural degradation that surrounds us one could conclude that the subterranean influence of secret societies and pop-culture has been an important contributor to the fragmented and unhealthy modern cultural ecology.

Under the cloak of darkness and ornamented with rapturous slogans, the systematic acceptance of incremental cultural transformation has resulted in a real triumph for Crowley’s endeavors. The breakdown of the family unit, the marginalization and/or cooption of mainline Christianity, and the denegation of individuals into a regressive and animalistic state are the fruits of this poison tree. Like a communion ceremony, every evening the media presents the chalice of amoral hedonism often accompanied by increasingly blatantly occult imagery, and the mass mind, consciously or unconsciously, moves inexorably towards a spiritual transformation. This rebellion, this freedom, is a false messiah. Sex, drugs and rock’n’roll is merely one ingredient in this magical potion, albeit one of the most visibly potent. The social structures that once offered security for the family unit and children are fading into obscurity on a daily basis. We walk on the killing fields, and unlike the decaying corpses in Cambodia, the victims are the heritage of civilization and minds and spirits of generations. These corpses are not as apparent as the victims of the many revolutions that mark the 20th century, but the stench of decay is no less

real. Countless musicians and fans have fallen prey to drug overdose, debased sexual practices, and a voluntary abjection of their own agency by following the “do what thou wilt” doctrine. A simple question: someone who lives for the next high, their mind and senses dulled by thundering music, who must increasingly ‘up the dose’ to get sexual satisfaction, who is no longer able to contribute constructively to the world, are they free? I would offer that without discipline and conscious effort, there is no true freedom, and the path of sensory indulgence is one of slavery to an ever more oppressive master.

The antinomian religious practices of Hassan-i-Sabbah and Sabbatai Zevi have a certain thrilling quality, and reverberate down the centuries to the present. When Hassan-i-Sabbah shocked his followers with his proclamation that “The chains of the law have been broken” in his mountain top citadel Alumat he declared “the end of history.” This end of history is a central thesis in the dialectical evolutionary paradigm of both Communism and modern capitalism (e.g. Francis Fukuyama¹), but a materialistic fog obscures the true import of this statement. Sabbah broke the holy fast of Ramadan, and offered wine to his followers, declaring “Nothing is real, Everything is permitted.” Sabbah is most famous for the legendary Assassins (derived from *hashishans*) who infiltrated various political organizations and terrorized the Middle East through their program of highly calculated assassinations. The initiates would be drugged with hashish, and then awake to a veritable paradise where beautiful women pleased them and wine and intoxicants flowed freely. Sabbah convinced his followers that they had been taken to paradise, and many were willing to sacrifice their lives to attain it again. Sabbah heresy went against the core values of Islam, but could be philosophically supported under the rubric Ismali beliefs by proffering that time itself had ended, and since we live in a post-*qiyamat* (day of

¹ Francis Fukuyama (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*. Free Press.

judgement) era that strict codes of Islam were no longer necessary. In fact, the breaking of these codes was required.²

Known as the “The Old Man of the Mountain,” Sabbah remained sequestered in his mountain citadel for thirty-five years—yet he was able to coordinate a highly skilled network of deep cover operatives who could remain undiscovered for years. His assassins often held sensitive positions: that of a trusted advisor, servant, or official, occulting their true allegiances until they received word. Then, in public, the victim would be stabbed, as the assassin awaited their fate without fear. This quality of total brazenness and the public nature of the assassinations created a mystical aura around Hassan-i-Sabbah, and served to generate fear and foreboding in both ruling elites and the general population. He exhorted his followers to deceive others as to their true faith, and this practice known as *batin* (hidden) allowed for actions that would be considered blasphemous by mainstream Islam. His adeptness at employing public spectacles served to amplify his power by creating a general sense of foreboding and insecurity. Sabbah served as an inspiration for many intelligence agencies, including the CIA, and at the same time seemed to employ some mysterious mode of mind control on his agents, as they conducted their work with total impunity and fearlessness. It is here that we can discern the roots of the interweaving of occult practices and intelligence services.

Sabbatai Zevi took this experiential philosophy a step further when he was declared by Phillip of Gaza to be the messiah in 1666. Zevi was a highly volatile individual, most probably suffering from manic depression, but he was able to gather thousands of followers among near Eastern Jews, and became a major political force until the end of his life. Jacob Frank later

² The Ismaili philosophy is highly complex, for a deeper understanding see *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis* by Henry Corbin.

declared himself to be the reincarnation of Zevi, and promoted this philosophy to a new generation. The Sabbatians or Zevites were notorious for their extreme antinomian practices, which included orgies, incest, and possibly human sacrifices. Analogous to Hassan-i-Sabbah, he presented a millenarian outlook, but with a clear utilitarian core. Zevi, as the messiah, proclaimed that in order to heal the world, to bring about the ascendancy of spirit over matter, and usher in a new paradisiacal golden age, one must indulge in every imaginal vice and evil, and by committing these acts, they would reset the cosmic balance and transform the very laws of time and space. Zevi and his followers were notorious during their time because of their ritualized orgies and the promotion of (often non-consensual) incest in the immediate family. Eventually, he converted to Islam, and was joined by many of his followers, who were enjoined to keep their real beliefs and practices secret.

Both of these religious leaders gave free reign to self-indulgence as a transformative practice, and it is not difficult to find strong correspondences between their philosophy and that of Crowley, Leary, and the rock gods. Crowley was probably the central vector for the injection of this philosophy into the mainstream, and one can find direct echoes in films such as “Rosemary’s Baby”, “Eyes Wide Shut”, and many others. Crowley grew up in a strictly religious family. After his father died he began a systematic exploration of black magic, an array of psycho-spiritual practices, drugs, antinomian sexual practices, and what can only be termed psychopathic behavior. While one can find justification for the “do what thou wilt” philosophy especially during the cultural turmoil of the ‘60’s, and discern variants of it within the literary output of the Beats, Henry Miller, and artistic milieu of fin de cycle Vienna, the elevation of the debased and pathetic Crowley into the pantheon of mass culture icons in the 1960’s is a clear indication that other processes were underfoot. Why not celebrate Henry Miller, whose

controversial autobiographical novels *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn* offered a template for rebellion against societal constraints, celebrated individual sexual freedom, and presented withering social critiques? Why embrace the “Beast 666” who attempted to summon Satan in the most powerful black magic ritual known (Jimi Page later purchased the home where this was conducted), who watched his climbing partners die before his eyes and didn’t lift a finger, who destroyed the lives of his followers, wives and concubines, leaving a trail of suicide, insanity, and total degradation in his wake? Why indeed. Should a man, now clearly confirmed to have been an MI6 agent,³ who pushed his followers into increasing degradation and insanity during his time at his Abbey of Thelema, forcing them to chant under the influence of massive doses of drugs to stare at his pornographic murals, engage in bestiality, and other debased practices that left them mentally shattered, be presented to the youth of the world as role model?

The influence of popular artists like John Lennon and Jimi Page cannot be overstated, at least for their throngs of devoted followers. Especially considering Lennon and Leary’s “philosophy of peace and love,” the choice of Crowley is rather strange. In the Tibetan tradition, to name one example of many, certain spiritual practitioners engaged in radical sexual behavior, at the same time presenting an enlightened philosophy. The importance of Crowley is underscored in his connections with Scientology, Jack Parsons, Samuel Untermyer, and other major figures in politics, science, and the arts. One must ask then, was Lennon simply a deluded simpleton, who took a cartoon sketch biography of Crowley as gospel, or can the undercurrents of something far more menacing be revealed? As any four-year child yells passionately “I want it,” “I want to do it,” so to have generations of America’s youth embraced a hedonistic lifestyle with great abandon. The reasons for the embrace of Crowley are not to be found in the “if it feels

³ See *Secret Agent 666*, Richard Spence.

good do it” ethos, but in Crowley’s esoteric practices and stated goal of transforming the world to bring about the New Aeon and usher in the reign of Horus. ⁴

Crowley’s life is certainly a template for total rebellion against all ethical and spiritual values. He embraced the cutting edge of drugs, sex, and magickal⁵ practices, and at the same time produced many volumes of esoteric prose, poetry, several plays, traveled the world, and founded an influential esoteric school, the OTO. By his early twenties he had indulged a wide array of sexual practices, positing that his fulfilling his sexual urges were a rebellion against the Church and a celebration of his “extreme bodily enjoyment” (Lachman: 42-53)⁶. In 1898 he joined the Golden Dawn, and also published his first work of pornographic poetry, *White Stains*. This work glorified extreme sexual practices such as bestiality, necrophilia, coprophagia (eating excrement) and urophagia (56). Crowley was an athletic, confident, and charismatic individual, often turning his charms on an array of women some of whom ended up insane, dead, or ruined for life after their dalliances with him. In 1909 he embarked on one of his most spectacular occult adventures in the Algerian desert with his hapless disciple Victor Neuburg, a promising poet and recent Cambridge graduate who was hopelessly in love with Crowley.

In the bleak African deserts, a glimpse of this peripatetic odd couple must have been rather shocking. Crowley was a towering man, wearing a dramatic black robe and toting a large jewel-encrusted Calvary Cross. Neuburg, small and frail, his shaven head adorned with two tufts of hair, dyed red and twisted into Devil’s horns, trailed Crowley like a stray dog. Even by

⁴ In Crowley’s cosmology there are three aeons, which follow each in succession; (1) The Aeon of Isis, (2) The Aeon of Osiris, and (3) The Aeon of Horus.

⁵ Magick is used by Crowley to distinguish between stage magic or artifice and real changes enacted on the space-time continuum by Will.

⁶ *Aleister Crowley: Magick, Rock and Roll, and the Wickedest Man in the World*. Gary Lachman. Tracher, 2014.

Crowley's megalomaniacal standards, his agenda was immense and possibly delusional. He had acquired the Enochian "keys" of John Dee, and was intent on accessing the promised nineteen dimensions (Aethyrs) of consciousness (alternate realities) Dee described. (Lachman: 118). Crowley engaged in ritual acts of "self-sacrifice" along the way. Neuburg would sodomize Crowley as he invoked the god Pan and wrestled with Dee's obscure magical formulae. During the climax of their journey, Crowley began the extremely complex and dangerous rituals to summon the demon Choronzon by opening the abyss (essentially one of the gates of hell) becoming possessed, and (hopefully) conquering the demon and returning from 'the far shore'. By this time he had achieved the tenth Aethyr of John Dee, and felt he was capable grappling with Choronzon. Many writers frame this event as Crowley's confrontation with his "dark side," a sort of new age spiritual housekeeping. The 'dark night of the soul' is a common theme in the writings of many mystics, but it begs the question of why one should summon such a powerful and evil spiritual entity in order to induce self-reflection.

The following ceremony, sacrificial rituals, and the ultimate possession of Crowley by the demon are legendary events in occult history. As Neuburg sat in a protective circle, Crowley traced a triangle in the sand, and began with the blood sacrifice of several pigeons. In the ensuing events, Crowley appears to have been possessed by some entity. Neuburg described Crowley appearing to him in female forms, as family members, and in other more demonic visages such as a serpent. Neuburg swore that he heard "*Zazas, Zazas Nastanada Zazas,*" issuing from beyond (reputed to have been used by Adam to open the gates of hell). Then it happened—masses of swirling visions exploded around them as space-time was rent apart and the demon entered this world. Crowley eventually tore off his clothes and jumped on Neuburg, attempting to tear his throat out with his teeth. Finally, the ritual ended, and the men returned home (Lachman:

160-162). As with other Crowleyan mega-rituals, some have contended that he did not complete the ritual properly, and thereby left the gate to hell partially open. In his typical modesty Crowley enthused that he viewed the invocation of Chorozon as analogous to Christ's crucifixion, and equated himself with Christ (161).

Neuburg never recovered from this event and lived out the rest of his days a shell of his former self. Crowley, on the other hand, continued his work unabated and added a new component to his repertoire: the use of art, theater, and music to create a combination of ritual and magick practices that could be experienced both as entertainment and as esoteric experience. Crowley used the term "dramatic ritual" for these new hybrid works, hoping to engage the general public with excitement and entice them into Thelemic practices through ecstasy⁷. At the same time, these performances were also rituals that he himself was engaged in, thereby making-public his private occult practices while reaching a tenebrous hand into the mass consciousness. Crowley believed that Art is Magick and Magick is Art—in order to herald and hasten the dawning of a new Magickal Epoch previously secret and forbidden knowledge and ritual practices must be revealed to the world at large (Van Kleeck: 195). On May 9th, 1910 Crowley conducted a ritual with members of his order to summon the demon Bartzabel and employed new methodologies as a first step toward merging ritual and performance. Crowley states,

Here [in the use of a person as a "material basis" to evoke the spirit] was a startling innovation in tradition. I wrote, moreover, a ritual on *entirely new principles*. I retained the Cabbalistic names and formulae, but wrote most of the

⁷ <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeV/ArtofLaw.htm>

invocation in *poetry*. The idea was to work up the magical enthusiasm through the exhilaration induced by *music*.⁸ (Crowley, *Confessions*, p. 633)

Crowley followed this success with his first public staging of “Magickal Ritual,” in this case the intent was to summon the moon for a live audience. The event itself was ticketed, and included music, stage lights, costumes and other accouterments of any entertaining theatrical production. The patrons sat on comfortable cushions and were offered a draught of wine and peyote. The event was a great success (not withstanding the influence of peyote) and Crowley proceeded with a far more ambitious work, *The Rites of Eleusis* (Van Kleek 199-200).

The *Rites of Eleusis* had little to do with Greek mythology and instead presented a sequence of seven rituals separated with a cleansing process after each segment. Crowley’s prose, as usual, was grandiloquent, lugubrious, and aesthetically flat. His major dramatic/ritual work was roundly trounced, and in fact Crowley himself, in a rare display of modesty, critiqued the work. However, it should be kept in mind that the work failed on the *dramatic* level—the rituals were still enacted and, for Crowley at least, the New Aeon was brought one step closer. He continued to write plays, but performances were rare. However, the idea of creating new performative ritual processes became a compelling facet of his continued evolution, and the reverberations of Crowley’s “Magickal Ritual,” I would argue, influence and refashion popular a vast array of mass and elite cultural products on a daily basis.

This work was not merely a lark, a cast-off pastime of a drug-addled aristocrat, but according to Crowley was his mandate and compulsion under the aegis his role as the Great Beast, spoken of in the Book of Revelations. In his channeled text, *The Book of the Law*,

⁸ Van Kleek: 198

Crowley wrote (or his Guardian Angel in the guise of Nuit) “Nuit names the chief officer of Thelema “the chosen priest & apostle of infinite space [...] the prince-priest the Beast,” who is accompanied by his consort “the Scarlet Woman”; later, in verse 32 and subsequent chapters, the Beast is specifically *called* “prophet.”” (Van Kleeck: 196). Outside the conventional restrictions of social mores, outside the battle for sexual liberation and personal empowerment, Crowley elevated himself as a herald of vast cosmic forces that would express themselves in humanity by total transgression of all laws, in accordance with the Will. Sex was a major factor in this enterprise,

The nightmare world of Christianity vanished at the dawn...the detestable mysteries of sex were transformed into joy and beauty. The obsession of sin fell from my shoulders into the sea of oblivion (Crowley, *Confessions*, 75.)

The structure of “Ritual Magick” was (and is) predicated on a mass realignment of individual and society. With this understanding, I will now draw forth some of the threads of this complex tapestry into the later half of the 20th century.

The forthcoming cast of characters, waiting off-stage during the period of Crowley’s fall into obscurity in the 1940’s, suggests a mysterious alignment with Crowley’s visionary mysticism. I will not claim that these particular associations can be taken with full evidentiary weight, but should be understood as outlines of a potential bio-energetic field that has resulted in a dramatic redefinition of the world. The full scope of my argument requires a foray into ancient history ranging from Egyptian mystery schools, the Chaldeans, Yezidis, and various Babylon cults to a detailed exegesis of groups such as The Invisible College, followers of Gurdjieff, Hermetic and Alchemical philosophy, and the topology of contemporary geopolitics. With that

caveat, we will proceed to the mid 1950's, bearing in mind that these are simply snapshots of a vast constellation of forces.

Jack Parsons, founder of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the Aerojet Engineering Corporation, and rocket pioneer⁹ was also a follower of Aleister Crowley. He joined the Agape Lodge and was soon corresponding with the Great Beast, addressing him as “Most Beloved Father.” His natural inclination for all things occult propelled him to a leadership position in the Hollywood lodge (with Crowley’s influence).¹⁰ Parsons experimented with wife swapping (perhaps accurately cuckolding) and eventually connected with L. Ron Hubbard, who claimed to be investigating a black magic ring for naval intelligence on their first meeting (Lachman: 304). Hubbard and Parsons began a series of rituals to bring about the birth of the Moon Child (Luciferian Anti-Christ) based on Crowley’s revealed rituals, with unfortunate consequences. Parsons hoped to find the Scarlet Woman as a mother for the Moon Child, using masturbatory magic and other rituals, while Hubbard seduced his wife. Parsons began to break down mentally, taking on the moniker “Belarion Armilus Al Dajjal Antichrist,” and shortly thereafter dying in an accidental explosion. A sample of his most famous poems allows us a glimpse into his Thelemic enlightenment:

□ "I hight Don Quixote, I live on peyote, □ marijuana, morphine and cocaine,
□ I never know sadness, but only a madness □ that burns at the heart and the
brain.

⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Parsons_\(rocket_engineer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Parsons_(rocket_engineer))

¹⁰ Crowley’s confirmed intelligence connections raises interesting questions regarding their association.

□I see each charwoman, ecstatic, inhuman, □angelic, demonic, divine.□

Each wagon a dragon, each beer mug a flagon □ that brims with ambrosial wine." ¹¹

At age 37 flames consumed him in his laboratory. *Go down in flames. Live Fast and Die Young.* At the same time, he was conducting rituals that propelled the epochal transformations envisioned by Crowley. Robert Heinlein was a friend of Parsons—the Crowleyan agenda of his work is clearly visible as is his tremendous influence in the 60’s counter-culture ethos (*Stranger in a Strange Land.*) Parsons’ poem calls to mind the pitiful Neuburg, a world-class poet reduced to a degenerate wreck and a corpus of “rock and roll” poets. *Do What Thou Wilt.*

On December 6, 1969 Leary alighted from a helicopter onto the Altamont Speedway. The guru of LSD was about to walk into the terminus of the hippie dream and acid-soaked meta-psychotic communalism, as the Stones were finishing off their tinctures in the green room. Leary was onstage for the concert. It was so important that he had to flown via helicopter to attend the “second Wood Stock.” Ironically, the organizers of the event chose to bow out and give up their slot on the bill because of violence. Hard to understand, since the Grateful Dead’s name expressed the underlying tenor of the event—three accidental deaths, vandalism and other violence—wherein the Hells Angels beat to death a young man as Mick flounced and preened in his “rebellious” invocation of Satan. *Great, we made our parents angry. Yeah, we have destroyed Christianity! We’re just letting off steam.* As the bad acid circulated in the damaged nervous systems of the fans, Mick intoned the prophetic words “Please to meet you, hope you guess my name! Because what’s troubling you is the nature of my game.” His leering, faux southern accent

¹¹ <http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/bb/babalon004.htm>

grates on the nerves, but the band has power, a visceral power to move and transform. Ritual Magick? Or just good times gone bad? Rolling Stone magazine featured a cover story on the event on January 21, 1970. They interview a concertgoer regarding the ritual murder,

I think there was two people that stabbed him. One had his hair straight. It was straight and thick, and it was straight back, combed straight back. The front of his . . . you know . . . he combed it back so much that the front of his head was kind of bald . . . getting thin. I know what he looks like but, I can't describe him.

We rubbed his back up and down to get the blood off so we could see, and there was a big hole on his spine and a big hole on the side and there was a big hole in his temple. A big open slice. You could see all the way in. You could see inside. You could see at least an inch down and stuff, you know. And then there was a big hole right where there's no ribs on his back...and then the side of his head was just sliced open . . . you couldn't see so far in . . . it was bleeding quite heavy . . . but his back wasn't bleeding too heavy after that . . . there . . . all of us were drenched in blood.¹²

The issue's cover is emblazoned "Let it Bleed," another popular Stones album. The article continues with a detailed description of the Hunter's injuries by an attending physician. The question arises—after reading the interview do we need three more pages of graphic medical details? Look at the cover of "Let it Bleed," depicting a strange phonographic contraption with seven layers, the uppermost is fruit cake with figurines of the band members, the second a bicycle tire, the third a pizza, fourth a clock face, fifth a film canister, and lower tier a record with an archaic record arm from a Victorola player. The back cover depicts the desiccation these elements—the tire is patched with a red tape and gauze, the record is smashed, the figurines toppled, the album broken and annotated with a pizza slice. Interestingly, given the context of the film produced at the concert and the magazine cover page, the film canister has been opened, and the tape hangs at a right angle to the broken stylus.

¹² <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-rolling-stones-disaster-at-altamont-let-it-bleed-19700121#ixzz3huzwvXB9>

Exactly sixty years to the day Crowley summoned Chorozon while the befuddled Neuburg cowered in abject terror. It seems unlikely that the Stones would be aware of such an esoteric correspondence, given that Crowley was largely forgotten until just a few years before. How could a few people, Robert Frazer and Kenneth Anger primarily, single handedly change the corpus and existential paradigm of the leading rock icons in a matter of months? That is the holy writ in the majority of rock literature and general knowledge. However, since Kenneth Anger, considered by some to be the heir to Aleister Crowley was a regular participant in the Stones entourage, and that he had recently cast Mick Jagger to play Satan in an upcoming film *Lucifer Rising*, it is highly probable that they were aware of the significance of this date. It is common knowledge that Stones were increasingly involved in occult practices and that Jagger was an avid reader of Crowley and other esoteric authors. Other elements of the concert that are questionable include the fact that the venue was changed and only finally announced twenty hours before the concert, toilet facilities were extremely limited, and 300,000 fans attended this “free” event. As a professional musician, I am fully aware of the difficulties of arranging a concert, even a relatively small-scale event. To announce the venue less than twenty-four hours seems ludicrous. Mick Taylor was very upset about the event, describing it as “barbaric.” Richards, the eternal junkie, was quite sanguine, opining that it “was basically well-handled, but lots of people were tired and a few tempers got frayed.”¹³ Satana lamented that they didn’t check the Astrology before the event, and that the stars predicated violence, but “maybe the Stones know something I don’t.”

The question is why would you choose the Hells Angels to be security? Wavy Gravy, a major acid distributor at Woodstock contended that security was unnecessary since ‘people just

¹³ <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-rolling-stones-disaster-at-altamont-let-it-bleed-19700121#ixzz3huzwvXB9>

didn't have time to vibe.' On the anniversary a seminal event in 20th century occult history the hippie dream imploded into clouds of bad acid, violence, paranoia and greed. There are multiple examples to trace the "do your own thing" ethos from the proto-Satanist Graham Bond who claimed to be Crowley's offspring, to the public occult ritual perpetrated by Harry Smith with his esoteric and ritually organized Anthology of American Folk Music (who also claimed Crowleyan parentage), to the Beatles, ad infinitum. This single example hopefully will elucidate certain underground currents hiding in plain sight. Crowley contended that during the ascension of the Third Aeon rituals should be half visible and half obscured. Revelation of the method. The final stage in the occultic transmogrification of mass consciousness.

Returning to the ever-petulant Jagger, swaggering like a punch drunk boxer in his red cape, the mayhem continued, so to the filming and music. Tony Sanchez describes the scene,

"Strangely several of the kids were stripping off their clothes and crawling to the stage as if it were a high altar, there to offer themselves as victims for the boots and cues of the Angels. The more they were beaten and bloodied, the more they were impelled, as if by some supernatural force, to offer themselves as human sacrifices to these agents of Satan." (Sanchez, 201-202)

Jagger was resplendent in his ritual robes. The core of the countercultural revolution was being gutted and he kept singing. Simultaneously spectacle and performance, the low stage height blurred the difference between the "stars" and the "masses," articulating the participatory journey Crowley had envisaged sixty years to the date. The documentary evidence was edited, superimposing a lackluster "Under My Thumb" for "I killed the Czar and his Ministers/ While the nation screamed in pain." Documentary as constructed

reality—the first snuff film or simply a failed concert? Sabbatai Zevi’s voice echoes over the centuries through Jagger’s fevered invocation, “Every cop is a criminal and all the sinners saints.” Is Crowley gazing down and offering a synchronic benediction?

Filmed in 1968 and released in 1970 the film *Performance* starred Mick Jagger as a rock star who has “lost his demon”¹⁴ and lives with two lovely ladies who both partake in his bed. In a disjunctive sequence Jagger suddenly recounts the narrative of Hassan-i-Sabbah and proclaims his epigraph “nothing is real everything is permitted,” and like the Old Man of the Mountain, he watches the Hells Angels end a life—in public, a ritual murder, an act of sheer terror with an inherent force multiplier because of its performative nature ripples through the generations like a tidal wave. At Alamut or in Altamont the actions are similar; both are distanced and refracted by the spectral gaze of simulation, reenactment, imagined fear, and the isolation of the Star above the multitudes.

The disenchanted psychedelic guru Leary, watching in the wings, was compelled by chance, mystical force, or artifice to reenact the Crowley’s ritual near Bou-Saada in Algeria a few years later. Like the communal energy that was invoked in the summer of love and fractured into the self-absorbed ‘me generation’ of the ’70’s, Leary’s gnostic empire of psychedelic stupor was curtailed by a ganja bust, and miraculous prison escape into the parts unknown. Leary lived as a gypsy, but finally found his life’s mission through a serendipitous acid trip in Algeria. In his hagiography this event is surely the most seminal, as it binds together (the root meaning of *religion*) all the threads of his life into a divinely (or demonically) mandated plan. With his traveling companion and fellow

¹⁴ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_(film))

*nashare*¹⁵ they dropped acid ‘somewhere in the African desert.’ The experience they had was revelatory for both.

Walking in the desert, they ingested a heroic dose of high grade LSD and soon intense visions began to manifest. While Leary is circumspect, Barritt recounted the full details in his book *The Road of Excess*, describing the intense visions of entire histories of the world, floating pyramids, a cosmic ferry boat between life and death, and an ascent into the moon. In the morning, Leary walked in circles reciting Enochian magic spells, refusing to communicate with Barritt. In the mist, Barritt saw a figure approaching him—Dr. John Dee. Several months later, relaxing in Leary’s pad in Switzerland Barritt picked up a random book that turned out to be Crowley’s confessions and was astonished to discover that, not only had they been at the same location, but had experienced the same revelations as Leary. Leary was overcome with the feeling that he was directly connecting with Crowley and began to study all the literature he could get his hands on. He even claimed at times to be a reincarnation of Crowley, here on earth to bring “freedom and love,” and obsessively mused that his “programming” was the causal factor of all the events in his life. Leary’s autobiography merged the titles of Crowley’s *Confessions* and *Diary of a Drug Fiend* into *Confessions of a Hope Fiend*. On an interview a few years before his death he admitted that he was fulfilling Crowley’s vision through his entire life’s work.

Rock-and-roll creates a ritual space, filling the vacuum left between youth and maturity, between law and freedom, filling the void left by the decline of traditional values with deities who create lifestyles to be emulated. It is primarily performative and spectacular, living in images, films, and fashion. Altamont was as much a real event as a

¹⁵ An Urdu term indicating one who lives for ecstatic experiences through drugs.

meta-fictional narrative. As the Stones watch the footage of the Hunter's murder, Jagger remarks, "You couldn't see anything. It was just another scuffle."

For every Jagger and Jimi Page there are multitudes of musicians and fans that did not fare so well on their ascent of the Celestial Ladder—multitudes of unknown rock'n'roll Magick practitioners stream through concert halls and bars, broken and debased. G.G. Allin is surely the omega point of this dark philosophy, but the rock landscape is strewn examples, both tragic and grotesque. Graham Bond was a highly influential English blues musician who helped develop the early rock scene in England and jumped started the careers of artists such as Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce, and John McLaughlin. A serious heroin addict, he used LSD to kick his habit. This resulted a manic obsession with Alestier Crowley and ritual Magick. Believing himself to be Crowley's son, he produced several albums dedicated to "dramatic rituals" and Magick, eventually ending up in a mental institution and throwing himself under a train at age 36.¹⁶ Skip Spence, the original drummer for the Jefferson Airplane began consuming LSD in large quantities, meeting his divine "Master" (as per Crowley), and spent the rest of his days in a mental institution. He ranted, "I'm a derelict. I'm a world savior. I am drugs. I am rock and roll." (Szatmary, 167). In 1969, Rocky Erikson of the 13th Floor Elevators was sentenced to three years in Rusk State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Upon his release he denied ever playing in the band, stating that he was only interested in the devil and the

¹⁶ While Bond remains an obscure figure, there are several decent online sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_Bond; <http://classicrock.teamrock.com/news/cult-heroes-no-47-graham-bond/>; <http://www.teamrock.com/features/2014-05-08/graham-bond-the-devil-inside-2>

occult. (Shapiro,143). And so on, ad infinitum. Sid Barrett, Phil Spector, Brian Wilson, Keith Moon. The mythology persists.

Punk rock arose as an alternative to the self-sanctimonious “peace and love” proffered by the hippies. Mark Perry, editor of the fanzine *Sniffin’ Glue*, contends that “Getting into the Sex Pistols wasn’t like, ‘Oh, I like this new band.’ It was really a lifestyle choice. If you got into the Pistols, you changed your life. That’s how dramatic it was” (Szatmary, 244). Sid Vicious, the Pistols’ notorious bass player died of a heroin overdose at the ripe old age of 21. G.G. Allin personified the extremes of punk rock. He claimed on the Geraldo Rivero show that his whole body was a ‘rock-and-roll’ temple; his blood, feces, urine, and semen were all sacraments.¹⁷ GG’s shows were fueled by alcohol, drugs, and the rage he felt while singing the violent, perverted, and hate filled lyrics to his songs.

“Covered in his own blood and feces, he would prowl the stage stalking the weak or the people he thought were just attending the show to see a spectacle. He was a ticking time bomb ready to explode on anyone who dared to cross him or stand in his way. You could have been his best friend before the show, worst nightmare during the show, and his bitter enemy in the aftermath of the show.”¹⁸

Ironically, his birth name was “Jesus Christ Allin.” In last interview in 1993 he proclaims his status as a both a revolutionary and a pied-piper “I am the underground messiah. If you have kids out there, they’re my kids. I’m going to own those kids.” He later proclaims his messianic mission, “I am the king. I am the messiah. I rule the rock and roll underground.

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wbej9YNg1yg>

¹⁸ <http://www.ggallin.com>

I'm bringing us to a revolution-against the government, against the police, against any form of society that is trying to put us down.”¹⁹ The true icon of “do what thou wilt,” offering freedom from all restrictions and discipline, freedom from all boundaries and authorities. Mirroring Crowley’s personal practices and the animalistic rituals enacted by his followers at the Abbey of Thelema. Dead at age 36.

In conclusion, this complex tapestry of associations, historical events, and trans-historical mysticism, while empirically documentable, raises a host of questions and possible interpretations. Guy Debord’s prescient analysis of contemporary society offers one interpretive framework, “Separation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle...Power draped itself in the outward garb of a mythical order from the beginning...The spectacle preserves unconsciousness as practical changes in the conditions of existence proceed. The spectacle is self-generated, and makes up its own rules: it is a specious form of the sacred... In the course of this development all community and critical awareness have ceased to be”(20-21). What are the self-congratulatory narratives, the construction of rock gods, and barely understood mass rituals but a ‘specious form of the sacred’? Debord again: “ The spectacle’s function in society is the concrete manufacture of alienation” (23). The communities created at Woodstock and Altamont, the imagined communities of listeners identifying themselves with outlaw heroes in teenage attics and basements, and the deification of the “star” as a reflection of all that is desirable in life are, in actuality, vectors of alienation. The deeper meanings of the pivotal events in the 1960’s are lost to a great majority; ignoring the strange synchronicities and hidden occult elements, or even embracing them, the incandescent images and ultimately empty communal experiences are

¹⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yIAK_5_j5c

projected into history through constant reinforcement. “By means of the spectacle the ruling order discourses endlessly upon itself in an uninterrupted monologue of self praise” (*ibid.* 19), seducing the audience into ever-increasing debasement and alienation, as distant laughter reverberates from secret grottos and resplendent mansions.

Of course, this could all be the antics of an experimental generation, and simple coincidence. Or are these rituals in deadly earnest? Crowley’s hidden hand manipulates destinies from beyond the grave; every burned-out acidhead a ritual oblation on the altar of excess and hedonism. Regardless of the final truth of the matter, the power of images to shape and alter minds, the retraction of the real and the usurpation of the sacred by disconnected spectacles, and the amplification of esoteric antinomian cultic practices reflect a decaying and life-negating culture. To unconsciously participate is to embrace and celebrate the very soul-crushing machinery one is supposedly rejecting.

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