

Metal will always remain rooted in concepts of the Devil and Satanism. In order to fully understand why a music genre could help to spawn as much vehemently anti-Christian destruction as has been linked to Black Metal, one must also explore its starting point in the realm of the diabolical.

EVIL PERSONIFIED APPEARS AT FIRST SIGHT REPULSIVE. BUT THE MORE WE STUDY THE PERSONALITY OF THE DEVIL, THE MORE FASCINATING HE BECOMES. IN THE BEGINNING OF EXISTENCE THE EVIL ONE IS THE EMBODIMENT OF EVERYTHING UNPLEASANT, THEN OF EVERYTHING BAD, EVIL, AND IMMORAL. HE IS HATRED, DESTRUCTION, AND ANNIHILATION INCARNATE, AND AS SUCH HE IS THE ADVERSARY OF EXISTENCE, OF THE

CREATOR, OF GOD. THE DEVIL IS THE REBEL OF THE COSMOS, THE INDEPENDENT IN THE EMPIRE OF A TYRANT, THE OPPOSITION TO UNIFORMITY, THE DISSONANCE IN UNIVERSAL HARMONY, THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE, THE PARTICULAR IN THE UNIVERSAL, THE UNFORESEEN CHANCE THAT BREAKS THE LAW; HE IS THE INDIVIDUALIZING TENDENCY, THE CRAVING FOR ORIGINALITY, WHICH BODILY UPSETS THE ORDINANCES OF GOD THAT ENFORCE A DEFINITE KIND OF CONDUCT; HE OVERTURNS THE MONOTONY THAT WOULD PERMEATE THE COSMIC SPHERES IF EVERY ATOM IN UNCONSCIOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND WITH PIOUS OBEDIENCE SLAVISHLY FOLLOWED A GENERALLY PRESCRIBED COURSE.

—PAUL CARUS, *THE HISTORY OF THE DEVIL AND THE IDEA OF EVIL*



THEIR SATANIC MAJESTIES

THE IDEOLOGY WHICH DRIVES BLACK METAL IS COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS “Satanism,” but what does this mean in practice? In Norway it has become equated with violence and church burning, but this is a distinction peculiar to that country. Satanism—like its antithesis, Christianity—means a good many things to a myriad of people. Nor is there a strict consensus on defining Satanism within the Black Metal scene, beyond a basic “opposition to Christianity.” From that starting point a number of quite distinct strains of thought issue forth.

Some central personalities—Varg Vikernes, most prominently—dismiss the importance of Satanism altogether, seeing it merely as an introduction to more indigenous heathen beliefs. Others were never involved deeply in any kind of Satanic outlook at all, managing to avoid it completely as a reference point. Ivar

Bjørnsson, of the Norwegian "Viking Metal" band Enslaved, explains, "Satanism is as remote for us as Christianity. It's just something that doesn't interest us. We listened to all the Satanist stuff, but we were always only interested in the music."² Enslaved are closely associated with Black Metal circles, although their lyrics and approach are more thoroughly rooted in Viking Age culture than any form of Satanism. Their steadfast use of explicitly Nordic iconography is far less ambiguous than even that of a project such as Burzum.

There are those who see Satanism and Black Metal as essentially intertwined, and a number of important bands have attempted to formulate a coherent philosophy centering around this. But in general, Satanism has been for show only, following in the footsteps of Venom and Bathory, and concerned solely with cartoonish efforts to assume "evil" poses in promotional photographs or make outlandishly uninformed statements in interviews. As Metalion comments:



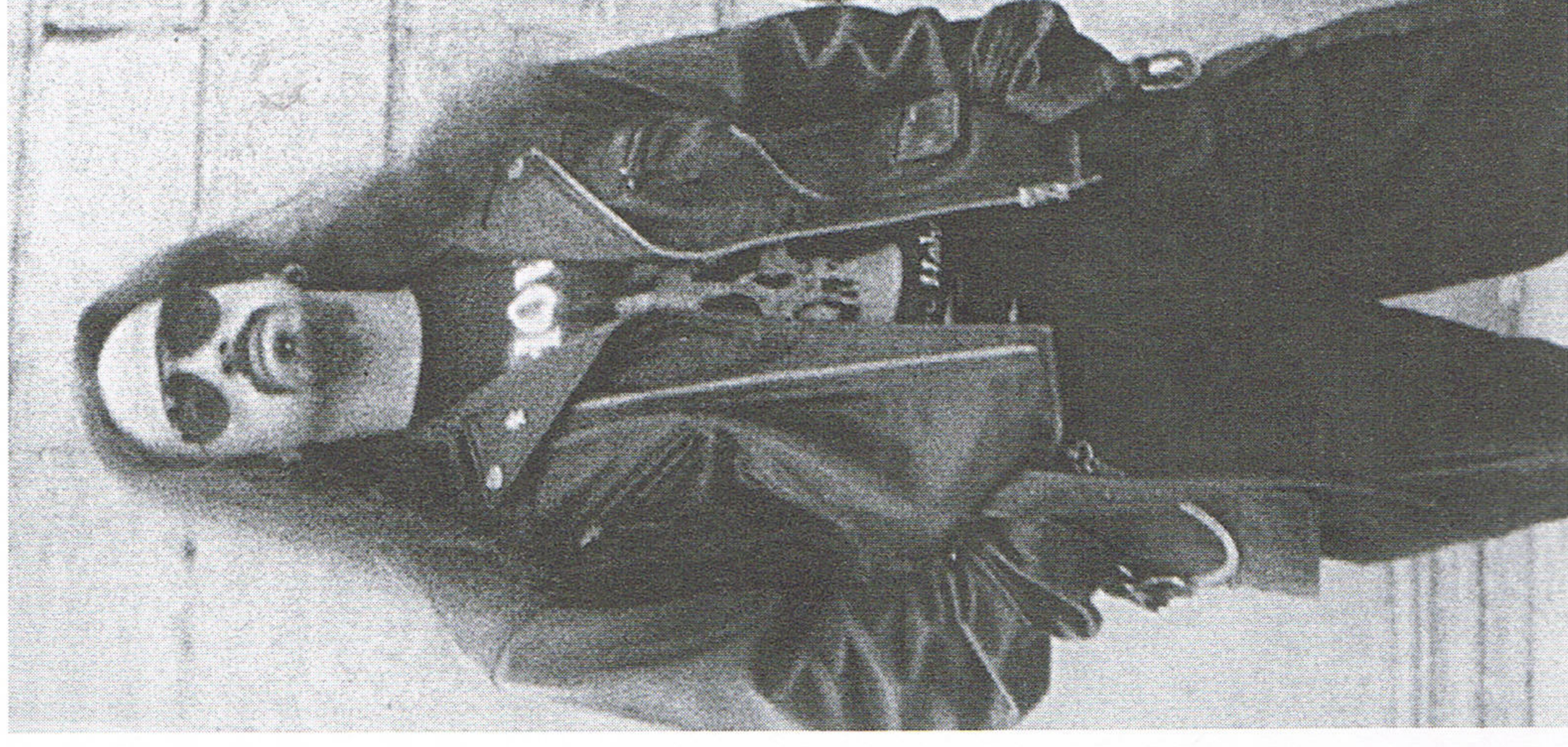
ENSLAVED

I don't think that Satanism has been that important besides being a flirtation with the occult symbols and as a concept for the lyrics. ... I think very few Black Metal musicians are involved in the secrets of the Black Arts. Of course some are, but they keep it to themselves. I've met people who are into rituals, etc., and are deeply into the Black Metal scene as well, but they are not necessarily in a band.³

Similar thoughts regarding the superficiality of much of the Satanism are echoed and elaborated upon by M.W. Daoloth of the respected Greek Black Metal band Necromantia:

They used it for its shock value—sex, Satan, and violence sell well. A lot of bands still do this, but there are musicians who've adopted Satanism as a lifestyle and the key point here is that these musicians were members of the most influential bands. So other people started to copy their music and ideas no matter if they believed in them or not! Satanism inevitably adopted a more intellectual profile. Still, the musicians that are seriously involved in the dark side are few—compared to the existing number of bands—but they are in major bands and that is what counts.⁴

Much of the Satanism found in Black Metal is little more than a given band employing the simplest catchphrases and symbolism, often merely in imitation of other groups they admire. This might be augmented by bits and pieces of additional material garnered from a stray occult text, or more likely, exposure to horror novels and films. There are some publications that circulate through the Black Metal underground which attempt to inspire the musicians to a greater depth of knowledge and a focus for their efforts. One of these is *The Nexus*, published from New Zealand by Kerry Bolton. He has long been active within the wider Satanic underground, and is well qualified to comment on the attitudes of Black Metal bands and fans:



M.W. DAOLOTH OF NECROMANTIA

Observing other magazines, especially those of a specifically Metal nature, it is true that many of them, and many bands, are childish. They see Satanism as nothing more than a means of blaspheming Christianity, and Jesus specifically—although I've often wondered how it's possible to "blaspheme" something unless one actually believes in it to start with! I used to read a lot of this some years ago. At first I thought it extremely funny and would laugh out loud; eventually it became boring, predictable, and eventually annoying.

The "medieval" style of Satanism or Devil worship is what's most easily accessible to the average youth in search of Satan, since this is the type perpetrated by the mass media and entertainment industry.⁵

For every rule there are exceptions, and this is true of the prevalence of "medieval" Devil worship and other primitive views in the realm of Black Metal. While most of the musicians come from this background, certain key personalities have evolved significantly. They are also, as Daoloth states, the more influential people in the scene. One such figure is Ihsahn, singer in Emperor—one of the most popular, and arguably the most majestic sounding, of all Black Metal bands. Ihsahn's philosophy is far advanced beyond many of his contemporaries in the scene, and in actuality bears strong resemblance to the original outline of Satanism which Anton LaVey summarized in his *Satanic Bible* in 1969. Due to his long-standing involvement with Black Metal, Ihsahn is familiar with the various Satanic veins running through the scene, and the ways in which they have progressed since the beginning of the decade.

IHSAHN

WHAT WERE YOU LIKE WHEN YOU FIRST BECAME INVOLVED IN BLACK METAL?

When I was younger, I was much more extreme. I dressed more extreme, and I think it was more important for me to show everyone else around that I was different from them and had very strong points of view. It was to get a reaction back that would prove my identity. Then I became older and I developed more rational views. Now it's not important for me to prove myself, to prove that I have these views, or that I'm a Satanist. I'm so aware of it now, and I'm very comfortable with my beliefs, so it's not important to get a response.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE IDEOLOGY OF EARLY BLACK METAL IN NORWAY?

I think Black Metal tried to concentrate more on just being "evil" than having a real Satanic philosophy. Everyone took it very seriously, but it's hard to live up to those ideals. It's hard for anyone to be as "evil" and as hateful as the ideals the Black Metal scene had. All of us tried in a way...

WHAT IS THE APPEAL OF BLACK METAL?

Black Metal wanted to be in opposition to society, a confrontation to all the normal stuff. Everybody needs some excitement, and if you look at youth today, they're all very boring.

In my town all they do is have their cars and they drive up and down the one main street. They have nothing else to do—it's a kind of competition for who has the finest car and the loudest stereo. They basically live in their cars. Those who are younger, who don't have a car—they sit at the side of the road and look at the cars. Their lives are extremely boring, and I can see that some people want more out of existence, they want to have their own personality and expression which makes it impossible to be associated with all those meaningless humans who walk around everywhere.

I think like that now—they're only "human." Shit, I don't want to be a human. Those are the people you see everyday when you walk in the street, the junkies, suffering starving African children—they're all "human," and I don't like them. There are sayings like, "It's human to fail"—I hate failure. People who think like me don't want to be associated with that, so you have something that makes you different.

Satanic philosophy has changed my whole way of thinking—you think in



IHSAHN

different ways, through the philosophy you have. People say Satanism and Black Metal is a very destructive thing, but it's the opposite. It's creative because it's all about yourself, you on your own, and those you care about. To get into that state you have to break down what you had before, to create space for all the new impressions. Jumping into Black Metal, there are so many impressions at one time, that it might be difficult to handle all at once. Many people won't make it through that stage because there is too much pressure. That tests who will be left after a period of time.

The Black Metal scene has matured a lot, and now people are much more aware of their own thoughts. I remember a year ago everybody was very obsessed by being "true" or "not true" — "true Black Metal" and all that. We got very tired of it, because who is true? We will know in the end; it's not very important. The weak will perish by themselves.

WHAT INSPIRED THE INITIAL FORM OF BLACK METAL?

A lot of the earlier Black Metal bands, like Venom, expressed very primitive, hateful views. It was very Satanic music. It also started up with the whole "anti-LaVey" attitude that was common within the scene, because his form of Satanism is very humane. No one wanted a humane Satanism; you should almost be Satan himself.

People wanted to be dead serious—and you should take such matters seriously—but I think people misunderstood the whole thing, because they made themselves miserable by being like that. You're not alive if you don't enjoy yourself, if you're miserable. I think Satanism has nothing to do with being a loser.

WHY DID THE ANTAGONISM TOWARD LA VEY'S IDEAS DEVELOP IN THE SCENE?

Many people turned against LaVey, and wanted it to be more extreme. I can also understand that, because for many people it was also about not being like everyone else. When LaVey says that the simplest housewife can be a Satanist, which it seems like he does in the *Satanic Bible*, I guess some were terrified that he had views that would take the special thing they had away from them.

HOW DID THE SCENE BECOME SO EXTREME?

It just came with the whole imagery of the Black Metal scene as it evolved in Norway. It was Satanic, and very dark and very evil. Christianity was the opposite. When people entered the scene they were not necessarily very hateful against Christianity; their hate against Christianity built up together with getting into Black Metal.

We were very inspired by what everybody else said. The emotions and atmosphere around it were very "evil." Many people did not laugh; they were very



EMPEROR

serious all the time. Nothing should be "good." Everybody was very grim looking. Everyone wanted to be like that, and I guess there are some who are that way still.

I probably piss many people off because I'm not like that; I'm not a miserable person. I'm actually having quite a good time and I laugh and enjoy myself. I must admit I was inspired by those other things earlier, but I don't think to the same degree. Of course you were affected by the whole atmosphere, that you don't sit and laugh in this Helvete place, and you have respect for the known figures in the scene, and were careful what to say to Euronymous in the beginning, before you got to know him. Everything was very serious all the time.

WAS IT A REACTION AGAINST STRICT CHRISTIANITY IN NORWAY?

The Norwegian State Church is not strict at all. I think it's quite funny, we have female Bishops and priests, and we have homosexual priests and homosexual marriages, which is very much against what's said in the Bible. The State Church in Norway is very liberal.

OR A REBELLION AGAINST CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING?

My parents are not religious at all. Normal people assume, "Oh, people into Black Metal must have had a terrible childhood and have been molested. They're weak and come from terrible backgrounds." But as far as I'm concerned, many people I know in the scene actually come from good families, non-religious families, and had a great childhood with very nice parents and no pressure at all. Quite wealthy families, really.

I think that was very much to create fear among people. But I know people who believe in things like burning in hell, and have quite primitive Satanic views. I respect that.

WAS ANTON LA VÉY'S *SATANIC BIBLE* A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON YOU?

I bought the *Satanic Bible* and read it, and was of course very fascinated by it, because it's a book that's very easy to agree with. Most people can associate with what it says. I also got excited by the Satanic imagery, which was very special. That inspired me very much. You've got to start at one point, then you get to other influences, other impressions... I was then much influenced by the Black Metal scene and more extreme stuff. After awhile you go back and forth and create your own thoughts out of it, as you mature. Now I don't agree with anybody; I don't have similar views to anyone in the scene.

For some, LaVey has been quite influential. He has been important just to get a word like "Satanism" out, because I don't think it was very much known in that manner before he started the Church of Satan. He made more of a name for it that people recognize. And in Norway because of the Black Metal thing, now everyone here knows what Black Metal is and everyone has heard the word Satanism.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OWN VIEWS ON SATANISM?

My form of Satanism has very little to do with ritual; it's much more a philosophy—you come to logical explanations for anti-Christian behavior. The *Satanic Bible* describes how most people live and how most people react; it describes ordinary stuff in Satanic imagery. If someone hits you, most people would hit back, but it's not necessarily Satanic. So I think there's also more to Satanism besides the philosophy. There are very many emotional elements as well. I try to give very much of myself, and my emotions, to the music which I create. That's as important to me as the philosophy. It's as much a spiritual life and it gets stronger and stronger the more you know about it.

CAN ANY AVERAGE PERSON FOLLOW A SATANIC PHILOSOPHY?

I don't feel like a normal person. Not everyone can be a Satanist. LaVey has done a very good job getting people interested in anti-Christian thinking and Satanic imagery. I also believe that he is much more serious and spiritually into this kind of Satan than he describes in his books. Picturing things in Satanic imagery, you have to have feelings for that kind of imagery, that way of thinking.

DO YOU AGREE WITH LA VÉY'S STATEMENT THAT "SATANISTS ARE BORN, NOT MADE"?

I have turned now to become a Satanist, but I feel I could not be anything else. Even if I was raised in a different environment I would still have turned out to be a Satanist. I couldn't be anything else. It's very important to me, and has affected my whole life and my way of thinking.

Sometimes it can be also hard; you get a lot of trouble for being a Satanist. But I would never give that up for anything else. Sometimes I think it would be great to be more anonymous—it's a small town that I live in, everyone knows who I am. People look at me even though I don't dress particularly extremely, just because everybody knows what I am. Also with where I work, people are very skeptical towards me, and sometimes it would be easier if no one knew. But it's so important, it's not a thing that you can give up just because it's difficult.



Another band who have distinguished themselves from many of their contemporaries in terms of sound and vision is Ulver. The music of Ulver is impossible to easily categorize—although it is firmly rooted in Black Metal—and they have even released one album, *Kveldssanger* ("Evening Songs"), recorded solely with acoustic instruments. The result is a collection of haunting, baroque songs which lie somewhere between traditional Norse Folk music and Classical. Ulver are equally competent at creating blinding and aggressive electrified Black Metal. They also strongly identify with Satanism.

ULVER

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELVES TO BE ALIGNED WITH BLACK METAL IN MUSIC AND IDEOLOGY?

Erik: Ulver was born out of the Black Metal scene, and on all of our releases so far except *Kveldssanger*, there can be no question about our alignment with Black Metal music. Our statements have also born evidence of related attitudes. However, bearing in mind the way Ulver has developed over the years both musically, lyrically, and philosophically, the label is becoming too limiting.

But what is behind Black Metal "ideology"? The source of Black Metal is Venom: beer-drinking, base-minded rabble, icons of Heavy Metal idiocy. The essence of Black Metal is Heavy Metal culture, not Satanic philosophy. Just look at our audience. The average Black Metal record buyer is a stereotypical loser: a good-for-nothing who was teased as a child, got bad grades at school, lives on

social welfare and seeks compensation for his inferiority complexes and lack of identity by feeling part of an exclusive gang of outcasts uniting against a society which has turned them down. And with Heavy Metal as a cultural and intellectual foundation, these dependents on social altruism proclaim themselves the "elite"! Hah! Could it be more pathetic?

Garm: In certain ways I still cherish Black Metal as it was definitely the decisive factor for both my interests in music and the dark side. But since the early days I have matured quite a bit, and find it difficult to see myself as a part of this movement because a lot of Black Metal people follow very fallacious and narrow concepts of life. I seek to be impeccable, and this can only be achieved through open-mindedness. This implies interests outside what is common in the above circles.

A lot of abominable developments have happened in the scene since I was truly involved, and I am sad to say that most of the people who now dominate this milieu are but a bunch of conformist alcoholic losers with no genuine feeling for the concept and searching for an easy way to feel initiated into something eccentric and special. Black Metal now makes ignorant and unconfident young people feel warm and cozy, and functions more as a crutch for individual weakness than anything else. Now isn't that cute!

IS CHRISTIANITY IN NORWAY SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE BATTLED AGAINST?

Erik: Christianity is but one expression of herd mentality, and to battle against it is like battling against the nature of society. For as long as organized human societies exist, there will always be a division between the unconscious masses and conscious individuals. The Christian religion may wither and die, but only to be replaced by another philosophy glorifying the qualities of the herd. It lies not in the nature of the herd to live according to elitist ideals—their nature is to be cogwheels in the machinery of society, and the fact they follow a philosophy which glorifies this quality is aesthetically nauseating to the heretic, but still necessary for society to function.

The Satanist is an observer of society—to him, the world is like a stage, in relation to which he chooses sometimes to be a spectator, other times a participant, according to his will. He can watch from the outside and laugh, cry, sigh, or applaud depending on the effect the scenery has on his emotions; or he can throw himself into the game for the thrill; but his nature is always that of the watcher, the artist. He is not overly concerned with changing society, for his commitment to humanity is minimal.

So no, I do not bother to battle against Christianity. In what ways does it affect me? It fills me with disgust. But I feel no urge to take the role of a Messiah, teaching the blind how they should live.



ULVER

Garm: There is no logic in actively pursuing Christianity for a Satanist because this in no way benefits him. The "Christlings" legislate for the weak and worthless with humility, charity, subordination, guilt, and the taking of the world's burdens upon one's shoulders as their agenda. This is extremely easy for one of the Devil's party to take advantage of. The fact that they preach such degenerate morals prevents them, with a few unimportant exceptions, from being able to put out the emancipated spiritual fire in him. Instead they try by foolish means to talk him into changing his mind. Hah!

The cold, calculating scrupulousness of the heretic mind has infinite possibilities in such a society, and can but revel in cruel, selfish ecstasy. In this picture the "Christlings" are masochists, whilst he is the sadist holding the whip. If he was to set out and convert everyone to his line of thought, his world would look quite different, and we would no longer be able to touch the stars undisturbed. In my eyes this is nothing to strive for.

An appropriate example of how such futile aspirations may end is the case of Varg Vikernes: a neo-Viking martyr. A prophet of the ego who paradoxically enough chose to be the Jesus of his ideals, and now must suffer for it behind the walls of spleen. I have much respect for this man's conviction and courage, but not his sense of reality.

The picture of perhaps a hundred militant "Satanists" believing they can start a war against Christianity with Heavy Metal as their spiritual banner is pathetic. I choose to oppose Christianity by growing in my knowledge rather than waste my life on illusive dreams of a righteous world returning to the laws of nature. In our age the human brain is too complex to work after such systems anyway, and I see it as our destiny to be separated from them. Mankind has taken temporary

control over these powers by means of technical intelligence, but soon enough this is what will blow us all into oblivion—and the reckless force behind this evolution is the triumphant mark of Satan.

All this said, I mind in no way attacks on Christianity, but I believe it is killing itself more rapidly than any church burner could ever dream of doing. After all, we live in the end of the second millennium and most people are enlightened to such a degree that they are capable of smelling rotten fish.



OUTSIDERS LOOKING IN

As the most influential form of music to have ever openly called itself “Satanic,” Norwegian Black Metal is unique. In an effort to understand some of the philosophical and spiritual qualities inherent to this peculiarly Scandinavian manifestation, we spoke to two outside observers who wrote thoughtful commentaries on the subject in the press—commentaries which went beyond the scandalized headlines of the tabloid papers. Both men are contributors to Norway’s cultural newspaper *Morgenbladet*.

Simen Midgaard is a freelance writer and author with a Master’s Degree in the Humanities. Midgaard also founded the Oslo branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis, the occult order of Aleister Crowley, in 1984. He resigned from the leadership in 1993. Midgaard has kindly allowed us to print an English translation of his essay on Black Metal Satanism that appeared in *Morgenbladet* as Appendix III of this book. It is one of the most astute commentaries on the subject that has been published in Norway.

A number of Black Metal bands pay homage to Crowley in their imagery, and a few members of the Norwegian scene contacted the O.T.O. between 1992–93 seeking information. Simen Midgaard became more familiar with the Black Metal scene when he conducted an interview with Ihsahn of Emperor for *Morgenbladet*. In the course of our discussion with him, Midgaard presented an intriguing theory which traced the “medieval-style Satanism” of early Norwegian Black Metal back to a series of lurid newspaper exposés written about the O.T.O. and Satanism in 1990–91. This was shortly before Black Metal began to coalesce as a viable music genre in Norway. As our research progressed, we found that other observers besides Midgaard had arrived at similar theories regarding a possible link between sensationalist press coverage and the Norwegian Black Metal attitudes which would follow.

The conversation with Simen Midgaard is followed by an interview with Pål Mathiesen, a writer on theological issues for *Morgenbladet*, and a professed

Christian. As one would expect, the official response of the Church in Norway to the arsons and attacks perpetrated by Black Metallers was a negative one, but it consisted of little more than outraged statements about the “shocking rise of Satanism among youth.” Mathiesen, as a bit of outsider, is able to forsake such simplistic rhetoric in his comments, and his thoughtful conclusions may surprise even the ardent Satanists.

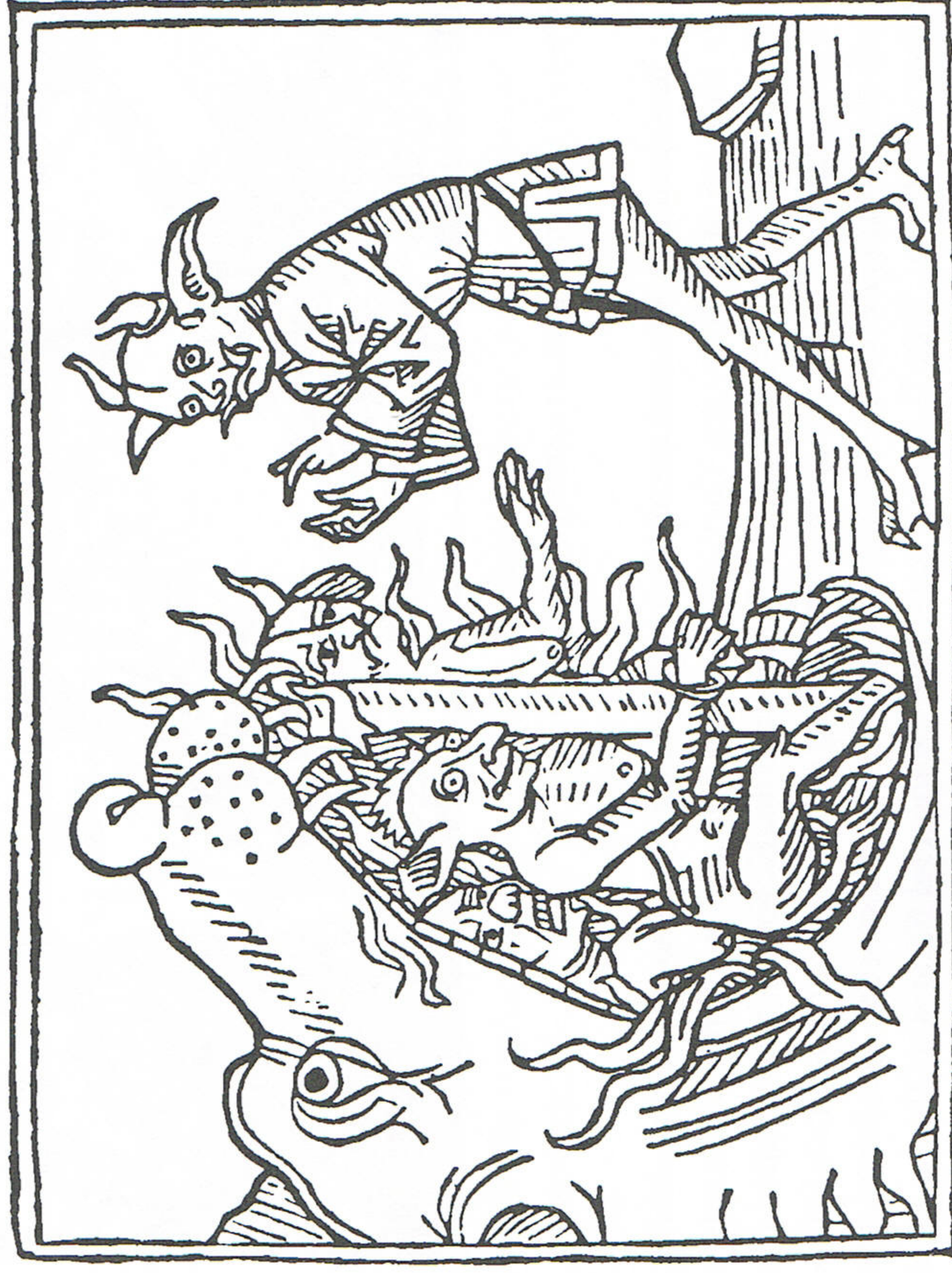
SIMEN MIDGAARD

WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BLACK METAL AND SATANISM?

I don’t see a very strong relation to any tradition of the world when it comes to Black Metal and Satanism; I don’t see any real heritage. All this Satanism among the youths began some time after there was a “revelation” of Satanists in the O.T.O. It began in *Dagbladet* [one of Norway’s leading tabloids], and they were speaking about cannibalism and sacrificing babies and all this medieval nonsense.

THEY LAUNCHED AN EXPOSÉ CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE O.T.O.?

Yes, they did. It was completely unfounded. This campaign was not only directed against the O.T.O., but also against some imagined Satanists. It was started by a policeman in around 1990 or ’91. His name was Kobbhaug.





IT WAS A CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALIST SCARE?

Yes—and this is the source of most of this youth Satanism we see in Norway; they have no other ideology. They may have also heard something of Satanism from LaVey; I know his book sold fairly well in Oslo. Now they have stopped the sale of it [the *Satanic Bible*], because of this thing with the Count. It's a little childish, if you ask me, because I think LaVey is quite contradictory to everything the Count stands for. This [LaVeyan Satanism] is the real Satanism, this sort of humanism under a black mask. They are standing up for individual freedom

towards religious preference, and still trying to maintain a sort of religious context in their lives. I can't see anything "evil" about it.

WAS THERE ANYTHING GOING ON WITH SATANISM IN NORWAY BEFORE THE EXPOSÉ YOU REFER TO?

This kind of Satanism which the Count stands for resembles so much the kind of Satanism that was propagated in the newspapers a few years before he came out into the light, and I think he was influenced by it, and the whole Black Metal community was also influenced by that kind of propaganda.

IS THERE ANY SERIOUS TRADITION OF SATANISM IN NORWAY?

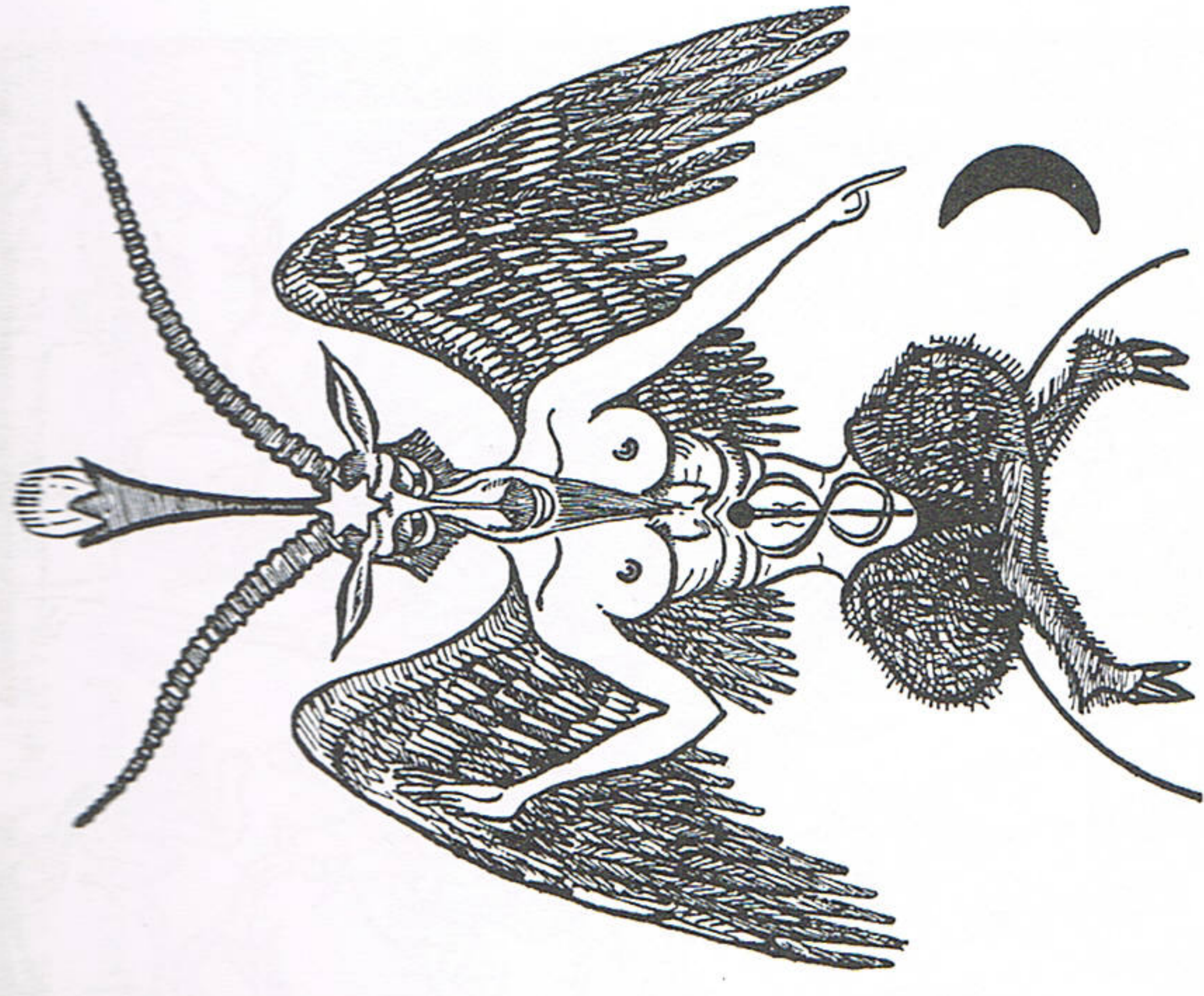
A kind of tradition of Satanism does in fact exist in Norway. You had it in the 1890's with Przybyszewski and Dagny Juel, and the clique around Edvard Munch, the painter, and around August Strindberg. I do think you had small groups in the western part of Scandinavia which practiced a form of Satanism; at least you had it in Denmark. It was a sort of Satanism, but nothing resembling the status of this "propaganda."

WHAT DID THIS CIRCLE AROUND MUNCH DO?

They practiced Black Masses, very oriented towards sex of course. It was in the fringe; I don't think Munch was really involved. But Dagny Juel was—she was a remarkable female figure in the *fin de siècle* of the Norwegian milieu. In the Symbolist tradition you find a rather civilized Satanist, a sort of Satanist with refinement.

WERE THERE ANY OTHER MORE RECENT EUROPEAN SATANIC TRADITIONS?

The German tradition is something in itself. After the O.T.O. they had these people—not exactly Satanists, but in some ways they are remotely the same—in these societies, who sacrificed humans. They were not really Satanists but rather some sort of paramilitary pagans.





THE BLACK METAL PEOPLE
COULD BE SEEN TO HAVE
ACTED OUT IN A SIMILAR
WAY.

There is a difference between cultivating sinister ideas and acting them out. This is a very important distinction. I think Ihsahn of Emperor likes these sinister ideas, and meditates upon them, but he would never kill someone or burn a church. He has declared his opposition to that sort of anti-Christianity. He said to me he would support church burning if it was a new, ugly church. Not the old churches. He doesn't really condemn that, but he thinks it's *unsophisticated*.

IS ILSAHN ONE OF THE BLACK METAL PEOPLE WHO CONTACTED THE O.T.O.?

No, he wasn't. But he's one of the few people I would have let in.

PEOPLE LIKE BÅRD "FAUST" YOU WOULD NOT LET IN?

A murderer would not be allowed into the O.T.O., according to its rules.

BUT BEFORE HE'D DONE THAT?

I think he wrote us a rather primitive letter, just two lines about "I'm a boy of 18 who is interested in Satanism," or something.

WERE BLACK METAL PEOPLE CONTACTING THE O.T.O. BECAUSE OF THE IMAGE THEY HAD OF IT FROM THE NEWSPAPERS?

Exactly, this was the case.

THE PROPAGANDA FROM THESE NEWSPAPER STORIES SOUNDS HARD TO BELIEVE.

Yes, and the juridical establishment didn't believe it as well. The leading figures in the police in Oslo were astonished by it, and they didn't believe it at all.

YOU WERE CONTACTED BY THEM?

No... well, after two years, after all this church burning they came. They were standing down in the courtyard. I didn't open the door when I saw it was the police. They came to some friends of mine, the same thing. I had no interest in talking to them. As a matter of principle I never let officials into my home—never. They are another *tribe*.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE ILSAHN'S BELIEFS?

I would classify him as an intellectual, civilized, and intelligent kind of Satanist. A positive Satanist, who is not predominantly anti-Christian. He is not interested in anti-Christianity but rather a kind of creative Satanism—a romantic, Gothic Satanist. He is strongly revolting against all these new and ugly things which we find in the modern world. He's a sort of aesthetic Satanist.

MORE IN THE TRADITION OF LORD BYRON, OR SUCH PEOPLE?

Yes.

WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT ØYSTEIN AARSETH?

I don't know much about Øystein. I spoke with a journalist who had interviewed him some years ago, and he had been at Helvete, this shop he had, and Øystein wouldn't open the shop because his grandmother had forbidden him to speak to the media!

MANY OF THE BLACK METAL PEOPLE SEEM TO BE MORE BARK THAN BITE, AND RATHER TAME IN PERSON.

Yes, most of them—but not only. We have had at least two murders, and one disappearance. A son of a priest in Tønsberg. He's disappeared in connection with Satanism. But they haven't found him dead or alive.

DO YOU KNOW ANY DETAILS ABOUT THIS DISAPPEARANCE?

He wasn't a Satanist himself but he may have met someone who was. He was a part of a role-playing group, so maybe he met some of them there, I don't know.

IT SEEMS THAT ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MAY HAVE BEEN AN INFLUENCE ON THE BLACK METAL PHENOMENON. THERE'S A PHOTO OF GRISHNACKH IN HIS ROOM WITH A BIG MAP OF MIDDLE-EARTH ON THE WALL, TAKEN FROM A ROLE-PLAYING MANUAL.

The name "Grishnackh" is taken from Tolkien anyway.

DO YOU THINK A LOT OF THEIR INSPIRATION COMES FROM SUCH ROLE-PLAYING IMAGERY?

It may be that their range of study is somewhat limited. I think many of them have grown up with the Bible and phone book as the only books in the house. We should also pay regard to the long Christian tradition in Norway—that's very important. I think it's a very sound revolt against that kind of education and culture, if you can give Christianity those attributes.

CAN YOU SEE BLACK METAL AS A CONTINUATION OF THE PARTICULAR NORWEGIAN PIETIST TRADITION OF CHRISTIANITY THAT EXISTS ON THE WESTERN AND SOUTHERN COAST?

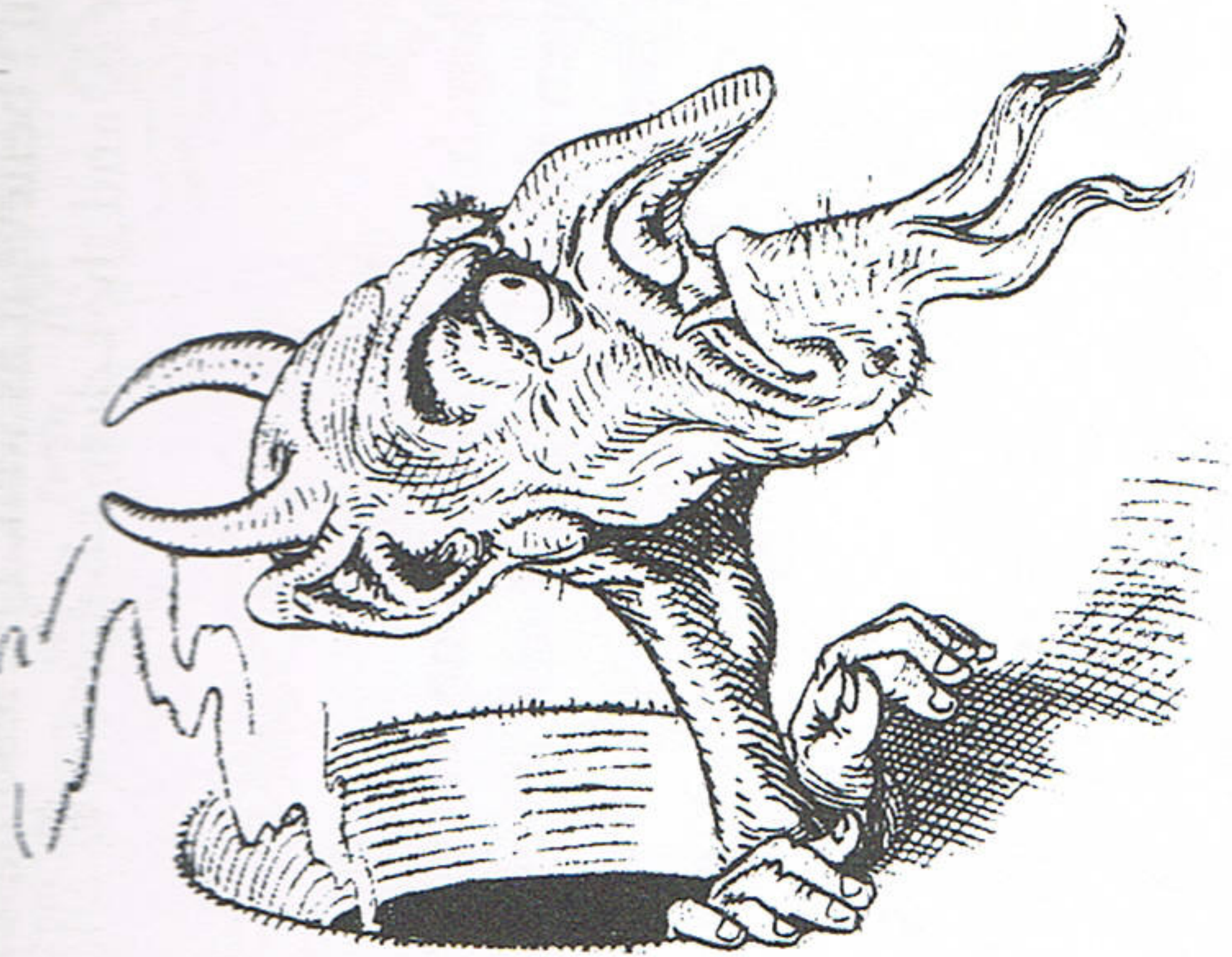
Yes, it continues it because of its fanaticism, and it's a simple standard of truth, which is sort of positivistic in an extremely primitive way. There is no kind of irony, for instance. They believe in the book without any reference to the world. They are not able to see things without it. They have no concept of relativism. It is just like Fascism in Italy or Nazism in Germany. You have this low church culture which predominates in the small communities.

DO YOU SEE ANY REASON WHY BLACK METAL BANDS WOULD HAVE A ROMANTICIZED NATIONALIST IDEA ABOUT NORWAY?

Yes, if they can connect it to the paganism, then you have a romantic affinity. Without that I don't think it would play a very important part. But I don't think they are particularly educated in this aspect of nationalism itself, really.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SATANISM AND PAGANISM?

Just the anti-Christianity. That's the connection.



THERE SEEMS TO BE A GENERAL SHIFT FROM THE MORE MEDIEVAL-STYLE SATANISM TO AN INTEREST IN PAGANISM, AND A DARK OBSESSION WITH NATURE. DO YOU THINK THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE HEATHEN WORLDVIEW MIGHT BE?

I don't think they understand very much, in general! But of course Satan is a Judeo-Christian person, and if they are going to get rid of Judeo-Christianity, they will have to get rid of Satan as well, as a matter of fact. He is a sort of Trotsky in the revolution, when it comes down to it. Satan is useful in the Christian world. It's a point to consider, because it's logical—if you are going to be consequently anti-Christian, then is Satan just a mediating figure?

SOME OF THE HEATHEN BANDS HAVE REJECTED SATANISM COMPLETELY, LIKE ENSLAVED.

I don't think the romantic Satanists are going to creep over into this, because these people have managed to make a positive thing out of Satan. Those Satanists whose only motive is to revolt against Christianity will have to get rid of Satan, because he's a part of Christianity. The other ones who seek a positive Satan, will of course not have any need to.

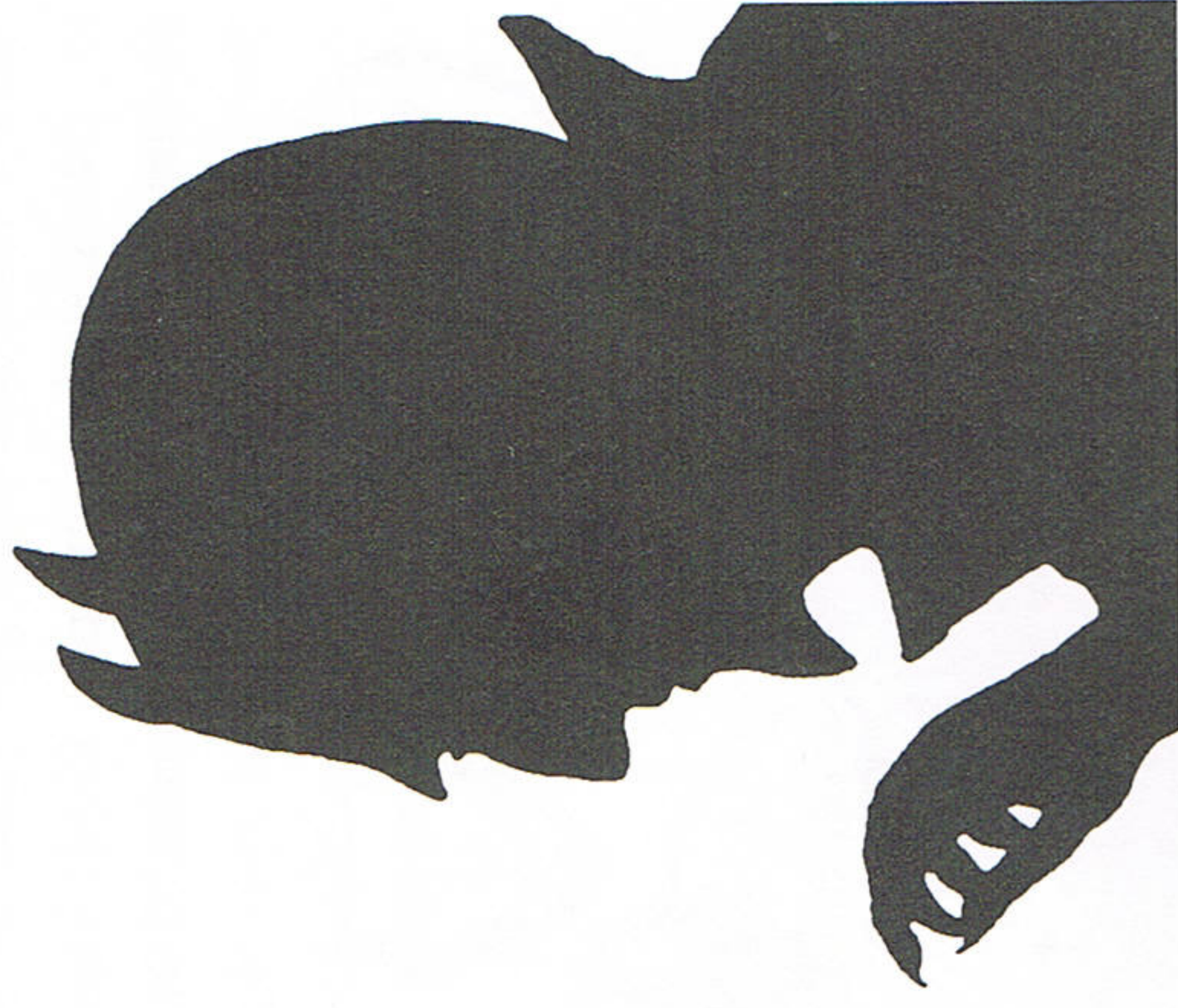
WHAT ARE YOUR OWN VIEWS TOWARD CHRISTIANITY IN NORWAY?

I do think Christianity makes people more stupid. That is a consequence, in many ways, of a disgusting religion. I don't think it's very honest, with their ideas of sacrifice, and of pain, all this nonsense, all this masochistic view of life. They are subjected to the power as a metaphysical principle, and are creeping before their god. I wouldn't call it good morals. And they have the propagating view that half the world is going to end in eternal pain because they don't submit to it. I find it disgusting in that sense—completely disgusting.

SO YOU CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH BLACK METAL PEOPLE REACTING AGAINST IT?

Yes, yes—that's quite to the point. But I mean, I'm not a teenager anymore.

CAN YOU SEE ANY VALUE TO WHAT THEY DID?



With the burning of churches? Well, of course there is a certain value in it because it causes the Christianity community to wonder. It's a strong reaction, but I myself wouldn't want to react against something as weak as an individual church, something as feeble as that. But I can see a certain value in it as a revolt and to make people consider a few religious questions.

DO YOU THINK THIS HAS MADE THE NORWEGIAN CHURCH STRONGER?

Of course it has, and therefore I do think it is outrageous to burn churches!

YET THERE IS A CERTAIN SYMBOLIC VALUE AS A REACTION AGAINST CHRISTIANITY?

Yes, but those who are really reacting toward Christianity are all these people now going to church. This is the mentality of people in the cities, at least when it comes to the official Norwegian church. I'm rather indifferent to the State Church. I'm *not* indifferent to these terrible small sects who teach their people with fear from the day they are able to talk. I support any revolt, however strong it is, against that kind of Christianity because I think it makes people into neurotics. It should be forbidden by law because they torture their own children. I do see they had fairly good reasons for their revolt. I wouldn't burn a church myself, but I can understand why they are burning churches.

DO YOU THINK IT HAS POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP ANY MORE?

Yes, it has a lot of potential. And *it will develop*.

YOU DON'T THINK THAT IT WILL DIE OUT WHEN THE PUBLIC LOSES INTEREST IN THE MUSIC, WHICH IS BOUND TO HAPPEN?

No, it will go into new forms. Because now one has already seen a polarity, and this polarity will not dispose of itself at all.



DO YOU SEE THESE PEOPLE MATURING INTO A MORE SOPHISTICATED FORM OF OCCULTISM OR ANTI-CHRISTIANITY?

Yes, and I think that will happen, or already is happening. For certain parts of it—at least one out of ten.

IS THERE A MORE INTELLIGENT PLACE FOR THESE PEOPLE TO GO AT THAT POINT?

I think the O.T.O. would be such a place, indeed—although the O.T.O. is not very much for revolting. It's a Masonic organization, as a matter of fact. It's not a movement.



PÅL MATHIESEN

WHAT HAS BEEN THE AFTER-EFFECT OF THE CHURCH BURNINGS IN NORWAY?

The congregations that have been affected by the church burnings have had a huge new interest in the community from people who might baptise their children and so on, but don't actually go to church themselves. Where there have been church burnings and rebuilding of the churches, there has been a huge interest in the congregations, so they have experienced a kind of "Christianization" during this process, but it hasn't affected Christianity in Norway as such. I don't think more people have become Christians in Norway because of Norwegian Satanism, but the specific congregations have been affected by it.

HOW CHRISTIAN IS THE AVERAGE NORWEGIAN?

It depends on what you mean by "being a Christian." This is a big discussion in Norway right now. I think we have a rather deep Christian culture here. The belief in the rituals—I don't think that's very strong. It's a cultural phenomenon, you feel related to a true culture. In that sense I would say Norway is a Christian country with strong Christian culture, but not with a strong Christian life for the people living there, if you can understand the distinction.

