

SATANISM AND NIHILISM



Satanism, much like nihilism, is a superficially confusing topic with a relatively simple underlying message. Much of the confusion behind Satanism is a direct product of author and observant carnival worker Anton LaVey's own calculated misdirection in the infamous presentation of his book The Satanic Bible. In the 1960s and 1970s LaVey took occult imagery and the mysterious mysticism of traditional witchcraft and devil-worship, as depicted by the Christian Church, and used that as a crafty cover to present his own views and ideas that were quite a bit different, and even antithetic, to those traditional conceptions of Satan worship.

So, right there Satanism is immediately split into two camps, LaVey's Satanism originating in his books and later embodied in The Church of Satan and followers of an ethically-structured philosophy of egoism, and then the traditional body of witchcraft with stories of human sacrifice, and so on, that go along with the occult brand of devil-worship whose adherents really believe in a being called Satan.

There's really nothing more to say about witchcraft and occult Satanism, it's been around in various forms for hundreds, if not thousands of years, and it's all based on imaginary fiction. Nonetheless, the belief, just like the followers, can't be completely ignored because their actions still generate very real and tangible outcome. However, occult Satanism has nothing to do with Nihilism, and little if anything to do with nihilism as philosophy. LaVey's Satanism is far more interesting, and does indeed have at least indirect similarities to nihilism, as many people have already realized.

As an astute observer of human nature working odd jobs at

carnivals, Anton LaVey (born Howard Stanton Levey or Levy) recognized widespread hypocrisy occurring between professed moral values, in this case as generally promoted by the Christian Church, and actual human behavior that is mostly driven by internal, primarily biologically-derived, urges. Realizing this rampant hypocrisy is unhealthy for individuals and society as a whole, and also seeking a path to his own glorification, Anton LaVey made an attempt to rework the moral landscape to better allow people to express themselves as they truly are without being forced to fit into unnatural moral molds that were only being used by disingenuous religious authorities to manipulate people against their best interests just to personally benefit powers in charge.

LaVey wasn't out to make a new God, and even pushed personal ego-worship as a path to make everyone a god, hence the glorification of one's own birthday. But he did want to make a religion, meaning a body of rituals and beliefs that would replace, or at least compete with, those of the dominant religions. But LaVey's Satanism ends up suffering greatly from the heavy-use of theistic imagery. The dark and scary visuals may attract rebels and those rejected by mainstream society, but it only makes the confusion over just what Satanism really is, or should be, even worse. Even the use of the term Satanism directly implies a worship of, or at least a fixation upon Satan. Even more critical than misleading appearances, LaVey's Satanism remains yet another irrational religion claiming one true path to salvation, or perhaps more charitably a philosophy of egoism that resides somewhere between the colorful prose of Nietzsche and Ayn Rand's dry anti-social greed as a worldview. The primary difference remains the use of occult visuals and calculated misdirection.

Nevertheless, and although LaVey's motivation may be open to interpretation, if it was to try and achieve a much needed transformation of the moral and cultural topology to allow everyone to act free from hypocrisy and unhealthy cultural

demands, and to promote appropriately reciprocal behavior towards others, then I wholeheartedly agree with the effort.

In the end it doesn't matter what you believe or think is going to work; the 'will' or the belief that something is achieved through sheer force of confidence is just self-delusion. Magnification of the ego and uncritical belief in self-righteousness, as well as the manufactured hierarchy and elitism that it engenders, continues to inflict terrible harm to the self and others. *Beware the ego delusion.*

It's really not that complicated, but it does take a certain amount of careful effort, and that's why so many try to take the lazy path by placing superficial imagery over underlying substance. What really matters is what we can verify and re-use, the consistent elements and forces of the world around us – that's the brilliance of science and a functional methodology. Fiction may be fine as entertainment, but far too many people are so mentally isolated and socially-insulated that they can't distinguish between robust fact and kaleidoscope fiction, let alone determine actual cause and effect.