

Post Doc

by Ole Wolf, April 2016

Abstract: *In the 1960s, Anton LaVey defined and described Satanism and characterized the Satanic individual in The Satanic Bible, The Satanic Rituals, and The Satanic Witch. The result was an ideology that advocated certain behavior, practices, and opinions meant to implement the best of what religion and psychology had to offer in order to advance mankind into a healthier, more enlightened, and happier human being. LaVey drew heavily on contemporary theories of psychology and religion, and while this was a sound bet at the time, scientific advances in these fields have caused veritable paradigm shifts since then. Much of LaVey's understanding of psychology and religion has been obsoleted by current knowledge, and Satanists leaning on LaVey's teachings will soon be forced to ask themselves how to respond. This article identifies some of the outdated or weakened beliefs and discusses some of the challenges that arise for Satanists wishing to keep up with the times.*

Whenever alleged "truth" is proven by results to be but an empty fiction, let it be unceremoniously flung into the outer darkness, among the dead gods, dead empires, dead philosophies, and other useless lumber and wreckage! (The Satanic Bible)

When Anton LaVey founded the Church of Satan in San Francisco in 1966, he considered his ideas to be a fusion of the solutions to human needs offered by psychology and religion without dragging along the worst of both worlds. This was quite conformable with the psychological hypotheses of the 1960s and by no means controversial. Somewhat unjustly abridged, LaVey's ideas provided "self-therapy" intended to heal man into a healthier being that was not inhibited by outdated, religious principles. You should not feel guilty about personal problems that caused you to behave somewhat abnormally; instead, you should turn these "hang-ups" into "hang-ons" that helped define you as a person. Issues conventionally considered weaknesses should in-

stead be cherished or even define you by changing your demeanor and appearance to match your "odd" personality.

Personal sentiments aside, modern psychology would not recommend LaVey's solution. But this cannot be held against him, because he was largely in step with contemporary scientific work in psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc.

Witchcraft before Hippies

The early members of LaVey's group were undoubtedly people that did not function normally¹. When these people had difficulties finding a partner or a job, the nature of their problems meant that the solutions were improved personal hygiene and rote-learned politeness phrases. The depth of LaVey's self-help sessions appeared to be limited to an opportunity to giggle at sexual innuendos, and one might speculate that perhaps LaVey was wise in keeping them in a make-believe world. What he taught them was not magic but basic social skills and a presumably needful amount of self-esteem by the Devil's blessing.

His 1971 book, *The Satanic Witch* (originally entitled *The Compleat Witch*, 1970), compiles LaVey's extensive study of human behavior and motivation which he bases on anything from formal science to fictional writers appearing to have been keen observers of human behavior. The book has a much lower sales rank on Amazon.com than *The Satanic Bible* (1969) and *The Satanic Rituals* (1976), but it makes sense to consider *The Satanic Bible* and *The Satanic Witch* to be the most important books on Satanism, because the former outlines what LaVey presents as Satanic attitude and philosophy, and the latter is the closest we get to a description of a Satanist's expected behavior in society. In spite of its higher sales rank, it is unclear whether *The Satanic Rituals* is put to any significant use, and it is fair to assume that its main function since its publication is threefold: it documents that Satanic rituals are more than a simple claim; it enables

¹ *Magical Therapy—An Antropological Investigation of Contemporary Satanism*, Edward J. Moody.

Satanism to claim ownership of the rituals, preventing other groups (typically Christian ones) from devising imaginary rituals intended to indict Satanists on similarly imaginary charges; and the book provides the Satanic reader with an illusion of belonging to an occult fellowship, believing that others, somewhere, are performing the same rituals as the reader himself or herself might perform.

The Satanic Bible is undisputedly LaVey's most important book, because it is LaVey and *The Satanic Bible* that every Satanist refers to (although now that plenty of information on Satanism is available online, the book is no longer the sole source of information, so its importance may be declining), regardless of affiliation with the Church of Satan. The Church of Satan makes it clear that *The Satanic Bible* is the foundation of Satanism, and that no revision of LaVey's philosophy is needed or asked for. The organization is obviously motivated to make such statements to emphasize its authority and ownership of LaVey's authority, but one may safely assume it is an honest statement.

However, LaVey passed away two decades ago and *The Satanic Bible* and *The Satanic Witch* were completed almost fifty years ago. Cultures around the world have developed quickly in the intervening years and what was established or new science in the 1960s has today become obsolete, revised, improved, or rejected. Even before LaVey, the Frankfurt School forebode a major transformation of psychology, sociology, and philosophy, and in the 1970s the so-called cognitive revolution finally marked a genuine paradigm shift, and our understanding of human behavior and mind has improved radically since the 1960s. Today, also the so-called sociocultural perspective expands our understanding of human behavior far beyond the realms of biology and evolution and further obsoletes psychology of the 1960s. The 1960s also became philosophy's old age with discarded or revised understanding.

LaVey ends *The Satanic Witch* with the words: "You can't erase millions of years of human response, simply by knowing why you do the things you do. Not if they concern the Rules of the Chase [because] ... man's basic nature will remain the same." In that sense, causes and explanations might be ignored, but it is not that simple. At the time the book was published, it was generally believed that human behavior would (eventually) be entirely explained with sufficient knowledge of human biology. However, we

know today that although our basic biological needs may prompt similarly basic first-level responses, entirely different mechanisms than biology shape these responses as well to yield the nuances, sophistication, and detail where the Devil lurks. No life-form save perhaps the most primitive ones are biochemical black-boxes of "X in always yields Y out" activity. We are part of a highly complex ecosystem of physical environments and many other living beings which shapes our behavior.

In its most primitive form, million of years of human response to, e.g., the desire for mating are largely unchanged but it is impossible to infer anything about human mating rituals from such a reduced foundation. It would correspond to predicting a person's specific eating habits based on the observation that all living beings require nutrition. We would demand significant insight into that person's biography, that is, his or her childhood and upbringing, financial status and social circle, education and political opinions, residences and age, etc. to provide a reasonably educated guess concerning his or her favorite dishes.

The "rules of the chase" may demand mating with an attractive partner, but every age and region has had its own laws of attraction and every culture has had its own rules. A few centuries ago, pantyhoses had not yet been invented, and there was no conflict between stockings and pantyhoses which LaVey finds important in his book. Outside of the 1960s USA, the color of your clothes convey entirely different cues. If you wish to place a person on LaVey's "personality clock" in Britain in 2016, the American vehicle fleet of the 1960s is hardly a safe benchmark. Names may tell you a thing or two about a person (LaVey provides about a page's worth of specific names) and they often indicate ethnicity or social settings, but names are subject to fashion trends (not to mention the fact that most names on LaVey's list are rare outside of the US), and what the name "Joe" might have said about your grandfather is probably not true about Uncle Joe.

Even the basic premise in *The Satanic Witch* that women must manipulate men (sexually) to gain power is crumbling in major parts of the world where nascent sexual equality allows women to determine their own liberties independently of men. Historical and social context are all-important. LaVey thus described what worked *in a specific culture at a specific time*. And as LaVey himself declared in *The Satanic Bible*, bor-

rowing Ragnar Redbeard's words: as environments change, no human ideal standeth sure!²

LaVey cannot be blamed for these mistakes. It would have required highly outreaching work to know better, and this would be an undue demand on any layman. At worst, LaVey overdid his reaction against the hippie movement somewhat when he wrote the book.

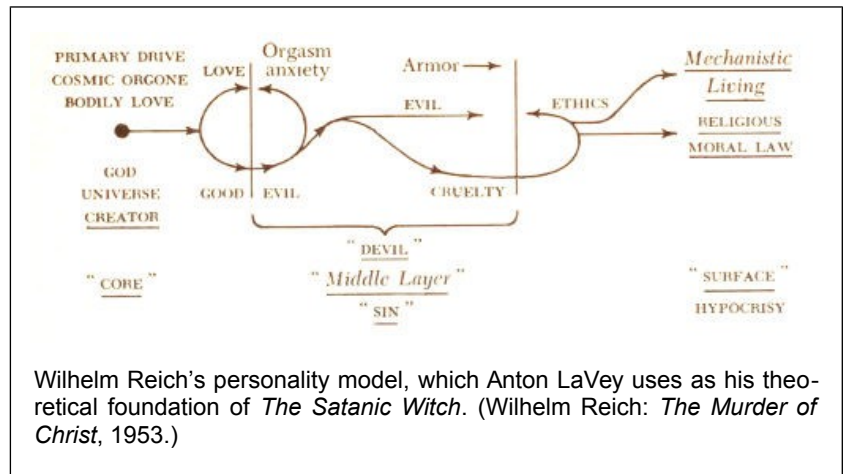
The core hypothesis of *The Satanic Witch* is worse off. To summarize: LaVey assumes that each individual has natural instincts and drives that, ideally, guide us through life. They form the "core" of our personality as an *authentic self*. If we were to react directly to its impulses, we would behave like calm and gentle non-human, non-domesticated animals (more on this auto-civilized animal later). However, millennia of suppression of our natural drives have forbidden the core to manifest itself directly. Entirely in accordance with our usual concept of the Devil, we do not experience the core as our helper but perceive a "demonic" core—a *demonic self*—enveloping the core, and we no longer perceive the core. Our behavior is now shaped by a constant struggle against our demonic self; our behavior no longer reflects the self prompted by a "free" core but rather an *apparent self*, which reflects the struggle against our inner demon.

LaVey appropriated this model from Wilhelm Reich, whose contribution to psychology is today considered historical: he was among the first of Sigmund Freud's disciples to break with Freudian teachings to focus on what is today known as psychosomatics, i.e., the fact that psyche and body influence each other. Reich was thus an important thinker, and he managed to challenge some of the mistakes of his contemporaries. (He then proceeded to focus on a new set of mistakes that, fortunately, never gained acceptance.)

Prior to founding the Church of Satan, LaVey had experimented with "witchcraft" together with his "magical circle." Reich's book with the aforementioned model had only recently been published, and both the title of Reich's book: *The Murder of Christ* (1953) and its rather alternative

theological interpretation of Christian myths have undoubtedly appealed strongly to LaVey.

LaVey did not limit himself to noting, as did Reich, that people fearing an orgasm developed



Wilhelm Reich's personality model, which Anton LaVey uses as his theoretical foundation of *The Satanic Witch*. (Wilhelm Reich: *The Murder of Christ*, 1953.)

both rigid personalities and rigid muscular features—which Reich termed a "character armor"—and expanded the model by claiming that certain personalities were closely coupled with particular body shapes and personal preferences, which he mapped onto his "LaVey Personality Synthesizer." This expansion is on LaVey's own account, because phrenology and similar methods were the superstition of earlier centuries.

Reich's hypothesis had been rejected by better models by that time, and Reich himself had been denounced by the predominant psychological schools. By the time he wrote *The Murder of Christ*, Reich had sunk into a personal tragedy of paranoia and megalomania (which is noticeable in his book). Considering that LaVey reveals a broader familiarity with Reich in his other texts, it is difficult to explain how LaVey could have missed that Reich's model was a mistake. Years later, LaVey explained that the secret of *The Satanic Witch* is to discover the quarry's sexual fetish³, but as will be explained later, this Freudian speculation is also wrong.

LaVey does not mention how to manipulate people to do one's biddings once their initial interest have been sparked using appropriate methods from *The Satanic Witch*. If a similar guide were to be authored today, the generation of interest would constitute only a lesser part. It would be more important to discuss how to coerce people to act against their will, and even the methods of catching their attention would be dif-

2 "The Book of Satan", II, *The Satanic Bible*.

3 "The Fetish Fetish," *The Cloven Hoof* #128, 1996.

ferent. Today, plenty of serious yet easily accessible literature covers manipulation based on psychological insights gained since *The Satanic Witch* was published, and the reason for ignoring major part of the contents of LaVey's book is not that they constitute esoteric knowledge or that they are immoral (because conscious manipulation has already crossed that moral line) but simply that other manipulation techniques are much more effective.

All of this leaves *The Satanic Witch* rather dismantled: the core hypothesis is invalid, and even if the techniques explained in the book worked in spite of LaVey's personality model, they were isolated to a brief chapter in human development in a limited part of the world. Finally, the book entirely lacks descriptions of how to coax others into doing one's biddings because it only provides techniques for catching and, to some degree, keeping their attention.

The Devil in Religion's Claws

The Satanic Bible would appear more resistant to objective analyses, as it primarily serves to present opinions. One may debate the fairness or the meaningfulness of those opinions, but for the most part that would be just: opinions.

For example, one may criticize the use of the Enochian keys because their origin can easily be traced to the two frauds John Dee and Edward Kelley, and so cannot be expected to open any doors in any magical universe. One may also consider their inclusion a rash decision, referring to LaVey's own account in *Might Is Right* (Ragnar Redbeard, 1996) where his ground for inclusion of the Enochian keys was that occult experts had warned against their danger. However, such criticism falls apart because LaVey explains in *The Satanic Bible* that the Enochian keys serve to create a favorable atmosphere, quite in agreement with modern understanding of the composition of religious rituals.

Hence, the entire section entitled "The Book of Leviathan" is in good shape, regardless of what one might personally think of the Enochian keys. LaVey's opening insistence on the authenticity of the Enochian keys is an obvious cock-and-bull story that serves to construct a myth (which will be discussed later).

"The Book of Satan" is similarly resistant to counter-arguments, because it is an incendiary

speech that is intended to excite the reader and as such is permitted a somewhat economical use of the truth. The section is tightly plagiarized from parts of *Might Is Right* by Ragnar Redbeard, and thereby pulls Redbeard's by 1969 grossly outworn social Darwinism into LaVey's philosophy. However, LaVey has avoided Redbeard's blatant racism and far-right extremism (which LaVey in his final years referred to as a self-contradictory, drunken rant⁴) to the benefit of a brief section suitable as an accusation against Christian hegemony. LaVey introduces the section as the just indignation that the Devil would be expected to voice, and that it is about time and well-deserved. It is a chance for The Lord of Darkness to speak, not a genuine critique of religion or an incitement to physical action, so any objections stating that the passage addresses just one kind of Christianity or promotes social Darwinism is not necessarily pertinent. If one is to believe LaVey, these are the purifying flames of Hell, and reasoned objections should be able to survive a little singed hair and a few burned fingers, so to speak—the Devil deserves an artistic license after all these years.

In "The Book of Belial," LaVey introduces the terms "greater" and "lesser" magic. The latter is the form of manipulation that LaVey provides extensive instructions on in *The Satanic Witch*, and in "The Book of Belial," LaVey summarizes the principles using famed photographer William Mortensen's *The Command to Look* (1937) as explanation together with an emphasis of the importance of odor. One might expect based on the review of *The Satanic Witch*, above, that "The Book of Belial" would repeat the mistakes of the book, but LaVey does not mention the core theory of *The Satanic Witch* at all, and he does not offer any techniques that are restricted to a particular time and culture.

It is true that pheromones and smell affect others but the professional jury is still out on the extent of this influence compared with other factors. The validity of Mortensen's model is unknown but it stands to reason that if someone manages to apply Mortensen's methods for creative portrait photography to draw attention to oneself, then by definition that part works. LaVey allocates two pages to these explanations where again the extent of the manipulation is confined to capturing the interest of other people. As in *The Satanic Witch*, LaVey never speaks of how to

⁴ "Forward," *Might Is Right*, 1996.

manipulate people once their attention is caught. The use of odors and “the command to look” may be considered somewhat devious, and thus appear “witchy” or “forbidden” and hence appropriate for *The Satanic Bible*, but such features do not distinguish these methods from other means of manipulation, which is characterized by the use of false pretenses or concealed means. Today there would be little reason to mention those particular techniques at all if only two pages were available.

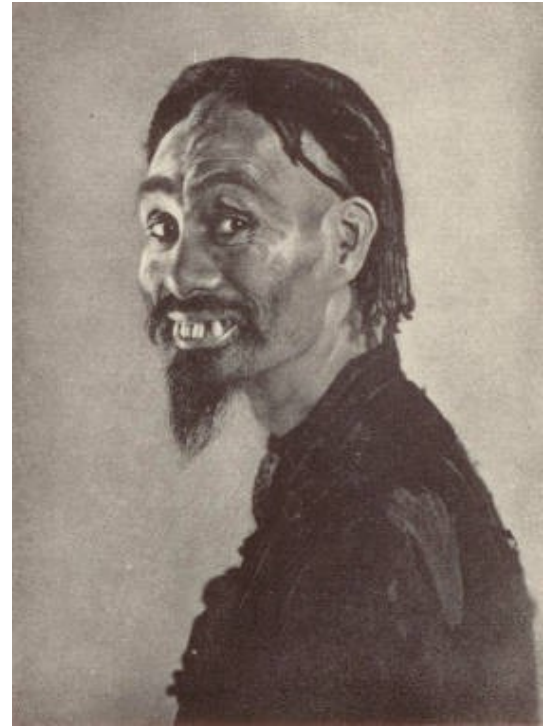
As a result, LaVey’s introduction to lesser magic is wasted at best, and LaVey has provided very poor tools to any Satanist attempting to use his explanation. It is evident that *The Satanic Bible* is not intended to stand alone, hence requiring the reader to expand on the introduction, but it is a mistake to send the novice reader off in a wrong direction with inferior methods.

In Nomine Dei Nostri Satanas...

LaVey defines “higher magic” as rituals and ceremonies, and in contrast to his sources for lower magic, this is an area where centuries of religious practices from many religions provides ample inspiration.

Participants in conventional rituals perform actions and communication that together are thought to cause a change in the real world. But because not every random action in the real world appears to produce change as through magic, the assumption that a ritual will have an effect is usually justified via a mythical plane: the participants of the ritual call upon the forces of a mythical age or they perform the ritual in settings that are clearly different from daily life—typically by using unusual phrases or foreign language, or in (secular) social rituals such as the celebration of New Year’s Eve or Hallowe’en by temporarily suspending some regulations so that ritualized fun and trickery can invoke the “primordial chaos.”

By somewhat boldly asserting that Satanic rituals work only within a context where you deliberately suspend your knowledge of the fact that they have no effect, LaVey can get away with quite elaborate explanations of why they “work.” For example, when LaVey explains that the best time to place an idea in someone’s head is during his dream sleep, and that the magician



Anton LaVey explains in *The Satanic Bible* that lower magic is manipulation where William Mortensen’s “command to look” method is used to catch the target’s attention. But not a word is said about how the quarry is coerced to do one’s bidding once his curiosity has been triggered. (Photo: “The Epicure” by William Mortensen.)

should time his ritual accordingly⁵, LaVey’s explanation is both true and false. It is false because numerous scientific experiments have concluded that there is no such effect; among others during the cold war when both the US and the Soviet Union experimented with any option conceivable that might help them gain an advantage, supernatural ones included. But it is also true because the explanation is part of the myth which the ritual requires.

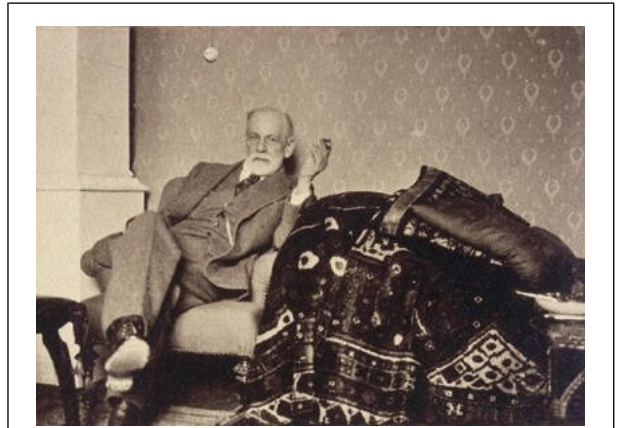
As rituals are concerned, it matters little that the tangible effects of the ritual never occur: within the ritual context, the Catholic priest really transforms bread and wine to flesh and blood by speaking the magical phrase, for example, even if simple scrutiny would prove otherwise. Critics of LaVey who do not believe in magic may disagree with him, but it is impossible to determine who is right, because the two parties apply different criteria for what constitutes a magical effect.

⁵ “The Ingredients Used in the Performance of Satanic Magic,” “B. Timing,” *The Satanic Bible*.

LaVey's argumentation changes context (and hence the criteria for true and false) by the end of his discussion of the value and effect of the Satanic rituals, however, as he explains that: "The purpose of the ritual is to FREE the magician from thoughts that would consume him, were he to dwell upon them constantly⁶," which evidently is not part of the myth of the ritual. If in doubt, LaVey also discusses this phenomenon in the chapter "Love and Hate," and elsewhere in his writings he states that the purpose is to get it "out of your system"⁷ (albeit with the amendment that this will make the ritual work), which at that time was shared by psychologists in Freud's psychodynamic tradition who believed it was beneficial therapy, although Freud and his followers would not have proposed to use rituals to get pent-up emotions out of one's system.

Freud was inspired by thermodynamics and believed emotions to be the energy of (sexual or aggressive) drives that would accumulate like compressed gas in a boiler and become injurious (becoming neuroses) unless they were released. In "The Book of Belial," LaVey similarly speaks of emotion as energy that is transmitted via the rituals⁸ in the intellectual decompression chamber. The rituals described in the following pages of *The Satanic Bible* are thus thought as self-therapy where religion meets psychology, intended to both cure and avoid neuroses. Any need for revision of the rituals must therefore be based on an assessment of the validity of the Freudian, psychodynamic method, and secondarily on whether it is a proper instrument, or possibly which consequences might otherwise be expected.

In spite of Freud's fame and influence as the "father" of psychoanalysis, Freudian theory and practice is now considered obsolete and erroneous to a degree that has prompted some schools of psychology to even accuse Freud of stalling development in psychology for decades. We are now certain that theories based on Freudian theory are bound to be invalid. This was unknown at LaVey's time, but even Freud would have considered LaVey's notion of releasing one's suppressed feelings through intense, ritualized feeling of hate or sexuality as radicalized and misguided, because Freud considered sublimation (i.e., the transformation of drives to constructive, contributive behavior) as much more



The rituals in *The Satanic Bible* are Freudian self-therapy whose purpose is to prevent emotions from building up. But today we know that Freudian therapy is a mistake with potentially damaging results. (Picture: unknown source.)

mature and civilized. It is obvious that the substance of LaVey's rituals in *The Satanic Bible* evaporated with the realization that Freud's hypothesis of suppressed feelings as the reason for "many physical and emotional ailments⁹," as LaVey puts it, is if not invalid then highly overrated. We know today that humans have many other needs, famously illustrated by Abraham Maslow in his hierarchy of needs, and that, e.g., stress and social isolation are key to many psychiatric disorders.

This answers the question whether LaVey's rituals in *The Satanic Bible* provide the correct instrument with a plain "no," and any further investigation of their efficiency seems uninteresting. It is worth noting, however, that if Freud's hypotheses had had merit, the answer would still be no: According to Freud, neuroses arise because the suppressed feelings are unknown and impossible to realize (because a defense mechanism will be triggered to prevent the realization), and can only be discovered by an external therapist. Once realized, it ceases to be a neurosis and treatment is no longer required. However, in LaVey's rituals the feelings are known, and hence there is no risk of build-up according to Freudian theory.

It is beyond the scope of this document to analyze what the results of the rituals might otherwise be but we know that Freudian psychotherapy has had devastating effects for numerous patients. If Satanism is intended as a constructive amalgam of religion and psychology, the Freudian speculations must be rooted out entirely.

⁶ "The Ingredients Used in the Performance of Satanic Magic," "D. Direction," *The Satanic Bible*.

⁷ "Ravings from Tartarus," *The Devil's Notebook*.

⁸ "The Theory and Practice of Satanic Magic," *The Satanic Bible*.

⁹ "Love and Hate," *The Satanic Bible*.

LaVey may provide a soothing reassurance that the forces of darkness are lenient towards bad pronouncements of their names¹⁰, but if the rituals in *The Satanic Bible* are supposed to accomplish Freudian self-therapy, they may summon demons with no helpful intentions.

LaVey's explanation of why higher magic works in the beginning of the section is also clearly recognizable in the scientific legacy of the 1960s and before. Carl Jung had conjectured that what Freud had thought of as emotional energy was a distinct "psychic energy," and Jung's hypothesis had gained widespread acceptance at LaVey's time where psychologists and many others believed that this psychic energy might be conveyable between individuals. LaVey guessed that higher magic involved the transmission of psychic energy, so a ritual should aim to maximize the emotional intensity. But, aside from the energy involved in any biological process, we know today that there is no such psychic energy. If higher magic does work, it is certainly not because of LaVey's explanation. He seems to have sensed being on thin ice, however, because he notes in *The Satanic Bible* that no-one knows why higher magic works¹¹, and his speculations should be considered wrong but understandable as they were contemporary beliefs.

In *The Satanic Rituals*, which is marketed as a companion to *The Satanic Bible*, the psychoanalyst Thomas Szasz is named as one of LaVey's sources of inspiration where LaVey compares Satanists' criticism and opposition to the general society with the role that Szasz attributed to mentally ill people. Szasz believed that mental disorders do not exist and are merely the reaction of healthy individuals to a sick society, and that medicine is the attempt of religions to maintain control over mankind in a secularized society. His anti-psychiatry made him famous in the 1960s but today Szasz has drifted entirely out of the psychology textbooks save as an example of mistakes made during the history of psychology. Szasz' influence is now found among organizations such as Scientology, not in the sciences, and any reference to Szasz as an inspiration is a warning sign. LaVey's use of Szasz appears to be constricted to appreciating various forms of (sexually) deviant behavior as fetishes to be valued as "hang-ons" instead of being vexed by them as "hang-ups." Today, deviant behavior is generally

not considered a disease (for example, homosexuality has been removed from the WHO's list of mental illnesses, albeit not until 1990, and transsexuality remains to be removed), and even personality disorders are not considered diseases or disabilities until they cause moderate, tangible problems for the afflicted person or society. It is no longer necessary to lean on Szasz-class pseudo-science to defend a male who enjoys to watch women wet their pants. However, when LaVey compares Satanists with people that only Szasz would consider healthy people, LaVey basically argues that Satanists are mentally ill!

Of course, now that many forms of "deviance" must no longer hide in the darkness and the Internet enables people to find communities in which to share their interests, and in which particular hang-ons are considered normal and positive, history may have outpaced LaVey.

The Satanic Rituals adds an array of rituals that LaVey combined from various sources. As is the case for the Enochian keys, any skepticism against LaVey's claims of history and authenticity depends on his intention. As historical accounts they are evidently untenable but as part of the myths surrounding the rituals, the claims become *stories* designed to construct an imaginary world around the individual rituals and need not be true. It is reasonable to view them as deliberate myths.

The first ritual, "The Black Mass," specifically addresses former Christians, who for one reason or another find it difficult to leave their former faiths behind. The ritual repeats a Christian ceremony in such a perverted form that afterwards the participants presumably will never be able to take Christianity seriously again—it is Satanic magic's answer to pretending that the audience is naked when you wish to conquer your fear of public speaking.

This may appear intuitively sound, but modern understanding of rituals suggests otherwise. It is not only the Devil's altar that turns everything upside-down, as LaVey introduces *The Satanic Rituals*. The distortion of everyday situations is key to all rituals, as mentioned before, and serve to in part *affirm* reality in the same way that hooligans who commit vandalism remind everyone, including themselves, of what is right and wrong.

When Christian thinkers imagine the Satanic mass, they describe it as reverse of their own virtues as they can, because a sharp contrast illuminates how much better they themselves are.

¹⁰ "Concerning the Rituals," *The Satanic Rituals*.

¹¹ "The Theory and Practice of Satanic Magic," *The Satanic Bible*.

The worse Satan and his disciples can be purported to act the better are you for not being one of them, which LaVey, too, explains in the chapter “The Black Mass” in *The Satanic Bible*. So, when LaVey creates a ritual that genuinely perverts a Christian ceremony, he inadvertently supports the Christian mind-trick: the participants in the ritual experience an inversion of the Christian ceremony, supporting their feeling that genuine Christian ceremonies are different and much more reasonable, quite contrary to the intention. The use of blasphemy and sacrilege on holy objects only confirms their status of special importance instead of diminishing it. In addition, the Christian myth of the black mass is reinforced when the ritual repeats it, and the participants become less aware that it is in fact a parody. Today one would approach the problem of a lingering faith differently, assuming that the purpose of the black mass is self-therapy like the rituals of *The Satanic Bible*, applying the same outdated and possibly harmful technique. A modernized ritual would use today’s best therapeutic practices, so a modern “cognitive black mass” would attempt to identify the participant’s undesired so-called schemas (patterns of thought and behavior) and learn to work around them instead.

It seems that “Das Tierdrama” may be better thought through. The participants dress like animals but must repeat the litany from *The Island of Dr. Moreau* by H. G. Wells where they declare themselves human. With this nearly dual inversion, *reality* seems unreal in a way that needs compensation and it is not unlikely that the effect

of the ritual is that its participants are confirmed in the belief that man is indeed an animal.

The purposes of the rituals and ceremonies are not always clear. LaVey describes the purpose of “The Black Mass” and the baptism rituals, the latter being fairly obvious. “Das Tierdrama” is a ceremony that is evidently intended to confirm the seventh Satanic statement that Satan represents man as an animal, but LaVey makes it explicit only by introducing the chapter with the text “The Seventh Satanic Statement.” According to LaVey, the ritual “L’air Epais” is performed at the initiation as a sixth degree Templar, whenever that is supposed to happen to a Satanist. The ritual (which LaVey refers to as a ceremony) simulates the awakening of the flesh through symbolic death and rebirth, but again LaVey does not explain any specific connection to Satanic philosophy. One can only conjecture about some connection with the first Satanic statement that Satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence. The remaining rituals—“Die Elektrischen [sic] Vorspiele,” “Homage to Tchort,” “The Statement of Shaitan,” “The Ceremony of the Nine Angels,” and “The Call to Cthulhu”—stand alone, with no opportunity to realize any other connection with Satanic ideology than their occult references.

LaVey tends to use the terms “ritual” and “ceremony” somewhat differently than is customary in classical ritual theory, but it is nonetheless reasonably straightforward to determine which is which. LaVey’s rituals in *The Satanic Bible* and *The Satanic Rituals* are consistent with modern understanding of rituals in that they disassociate themselves from everyday experience using odd expressions or foreign language. In *The Satanic Rituals*, LaVey has made an effort to create the important myths for the rituals that lend them their authenticity (within the fantasy worlds of the rituals, that is) and strength, and with the exception of “The Black Mass,” nothing indicates that they have the same self-therapeutic purposes as the rituals in *The Satanic Bible*. In this sense the rituals in *The Satanic Rituals* are more desirable. But the rituals stand alone, and with little other intention that to make the participants do something that has a demonic touch.

The purpose of ceremonies is to maintain a community (a fact that LaVey, too, notes in *The Satanic Bible*¹²) where you meet and assert your difference from other groups by performing the



Only few of LaVey's rituals and ceremonies leave clues to their specific link to Satanic philosophy. (Picture: Unknown source.)

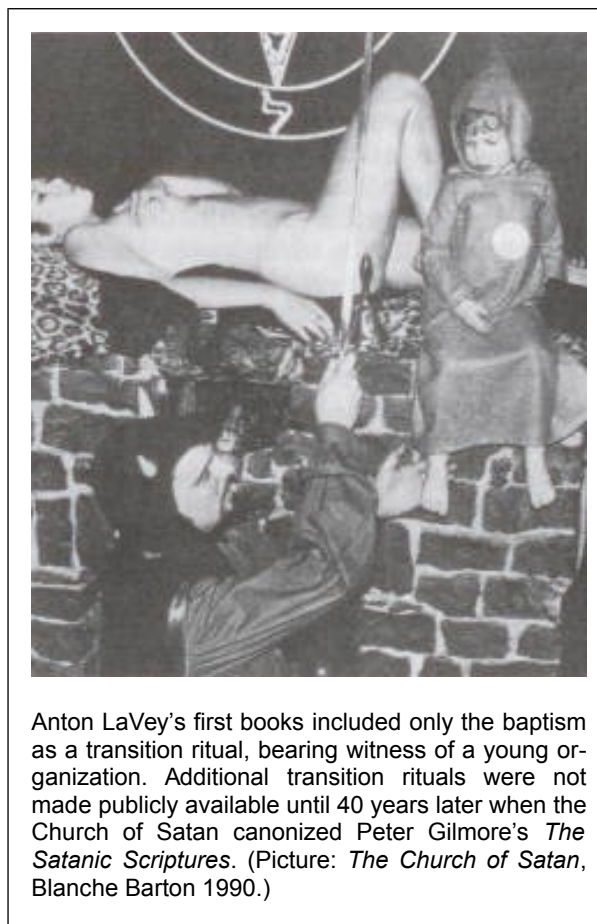
12 “The Ritual, or ‘Intellectual Decompression,’ Chamber,” *The Satanic Bible*.

ceremony. LaVey created a few ceremonies that touches a few traditions and philosophical points that he found relevant, but made no attempt to tie them together with special occasions or specific Satanic themes¹³, and he described no practice for celebrating the holidays that he defined. In the end, LaVey's ceremonies do not meet their goals. The ceremonies are also not designed to encourage participation by children, nor are they suitable for propagating Satanic principles to children. This further weakens the ability of the Satanic ceremonies to function as bearers and maintainers of a genuine culture.

Transition rituals serve to mark the transition from one state, status, or life phase to another. The early Church of Satan performed the transition rituals of baptism, weddings, and funerals, but LaVey included only the baptisms in *The Satanic Rituals*. There was no mention of weddings, funerals, or baptism of adolescents. This bears witness of a young organization where only adults have felt a need to mark their entry, and later had children, and of a small organization where weddings and funerals were rare. Part of the reason may be that a Satanic wedding would be somewhat meaningless without being a legal contract, and adolescent baptisms would straddle an ideologically uncomfortable fence between the innocent child and the corrupted adult (more on that later). However, it was possible for members in the priesthood to access, e.g., the wedding ritual so that they could perform a Satanic wedding, so the reason for non-disclosure may be have been a need to stay in control: most religious groups place the authority to performs weddings, funerals, etc. in the priesthood as a means of control—and often payment. The Church of Satan has recently added *The Satanic Scriptures* (2007) by Peter Gilmore, high priest after LaVey, to its core scripture, and *The Satanic Scriptures* discloses the wedding and funeral rituals. This addition indicates that by now the Church of Satan has either matured and grown, or it has stopped providing the service.

The rituals and the ceremonies are nonetheless still weakly linked to Satanic philosophy, and without a socially binding function, LaVey's rituals and ceremonies lack the pathos argument for keeping groups alive and passing its ideas on through generations and to new members. In

¹³ Although LaVey published, e.g., "Suggested Enochian Keys for Various Rituals and Ceremonies" in *The Cloven Hoof*, June 1970, for all practical purposes such information is lost to most Satanists. Even so, it is of little help.



Anton LaVey's first books included only the baptism as a transition ritual, bearing witness of a young organization. Additional transition rituals were not made publicly available until 40 years later when the Church of Satan canonized Peter Gilmore's *The Satanic Scriptures*. (Picture: *The Church of Satan*, Blanche Barton 1990.)

their existing form, they force Satanism to be a "vampiric" religion that does not produce new Satanists itself but must instead fetch them from other traditions. If one is to make predictions about the possible lifetime of Satanism, the question becomes: how long can Satanism stay attractive enough to lure a sufficient number of new "victims" into its lair before the vampire dies of thirst? One may question whether LaVey even gave this much thought, considering that he believed that Christ would be merely "[a] well-known folk myth"¹⁴ by the year 2000 and that by 2002 the Devil's reign would have attained maturity¹⁵ and hence be able to sustain itself.

The World According to Satan

"The Book of Lucifer" distinguishes itself from the other sections of *The Satanic Bible* by its use of intellectualization and reason, which may explain

¹⁴ "The Black Mass," *The Satanic Rituals*.

¹⁵ "The Unknown Known," *The Satanic Rituals*.

why this appears to be the most commonly discussed section among Satanists.

The Satanic Bible was compiled hastily using a number of independent texts that LaVey had written on Satanism, in order to meet an aggressive deadline set by the publisher. Especially “The Book of Lucifer” consists of these so-called “rainbow sheets”¹⁶ and articles from the Church of Satan’s periodical, *The Cloven Hoof*, and there is little development or coherence between the chapters of this section. “The Book of Lucifer” mostly seems to be part elaborations on “The Nine Satanic Statements” and part answers to “frequently asked questions.” If LaVey’s understanding of Satanism was broader than the texts included in *The Satanic Bible*, then this is permanently lost, and the reader may conclude that Satanism and the opinions and dispositions of Satanists are fully defined in its chapters. Whether the texts create a Satanic *gestalt* or *The Satanic Bible* is just the sum of its parts will depend on the reader.

“The Book of Lucifer” makes extensive use of negative definition in its description of Satanism: Satanism is defined through declarations of what Satanism *is not* (i.e., the negative). The negative definitions consist of claims detailing how religious people think and act, and what mankind’s role is thought to be in a religious universe. Hence, Satanists take responsibility as opposed to Christians, who blame the Devil or expect God to take the initiative. Satanists are their own gods as opposed to Christians, who externalize God. Satanists are allowed to hate as opposed to Christians, who love their enemies. Satanists believe only in a life before death as opposed to Christians, who long for a life after death. And so on.

The use of negative definitions is both valid and most powerful but has three obvious weaknesses: firstly, you make yourself dependent on the group that you define yourself against. For example, Christian groups use the Devil as their counterpart whom they may assign any negative characteristic that they believe to contrast, and thus appear as the better alternative, making the Devil a necessity for their definition, because as we know: Satan has been the best friend the church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years!¹⁷ When LaVey similarly uses Christianity as a negative definition of Satanism, Christianity becomes the best friend of Satanism, be-

cause LaVey makes Satanism dependent of Christianity.

Secondly, a negative definition narrows the scope of the definition to the characteristics that can be meaningfully attributed to your opponent. In *The Satanic Bible*, LaVey bases his arguments on the structures and world-view of the exclusive, Abrahamic religions, which cannot easily be applied to inclusive, polytheistic, shamanistic, or even godless religions where mankind’s role in the universe and interplay with gods is another matter altogether. Although LaVey lists demons of other and earlier cultures, these cultures rarely considered their demons to be enemies, and a number of LaVey’s accusations (such as “turning the other cheek” or his description of sexual ethics) is confined to one particular religion. As a result, Satanism becomes a movement that can exist only in the West because Satanism is made dependent on Christian—at least Abrahamic—traditions and patterns of thought. For the same reason, the negative definition caters only to people who can relate to the “negative” group. If Satanism were to exist elsewhere, LaVey only argues that gods come and go but all become the Devil in the end, and that Satan is merely the most recent designation of the Prince of Darkness.¹⁸ In another time and place, Satan might have been called by another name but today *The Satanic Bible* addresses only an audience to whom the name “Satan” bears meaning.

(LaVey uses a fair amount of energy criticizing Eastern religion and modern witchcraft, but mostly on themes that they largely share with Christianity. One should view his opposition to these movements as mainly prompted by their position as ideological competitors.)

Thirdly, the negative definition may be wrong. Mythical figures invented as negative counterparts will not complain, and no-one will learn that they are “actually” different, but references to existing phenomena may be challenged, putting one’s claims to the test. This is the case in *The Satanic Bible* where LaVey makes accusations against Christians, who (unlike their god) exist and may be examined.

There are literally tens of thousands of Christian groups throughout the world with unique interpretations of Christianity. This makes it meaningless to think of Christianity as monolithic except on trivial issues such as the fact that Christians have a concept of a god and some Jesus,

¹⁶ Hand-outs printed on colored paper that Anton LaVey and his followers distributed to people attending their seminars.

¹⁷ The ninth Satanic Statement.

¹⁸ “Prologue” and “Hell, the Devil, and How to Sell Your Soul,” *The Satanic Bible*.

and that they refer to themselves as Christians. Any more detailed than that, and you must clarify which one among the tens of thousands of Christian groups you are referring to. Generalizing across a large number of groups (or all of them?), as LaVey does, makes it impossible for any position to qualify as Christian, because it will inevitably contradict a very large number of Christian groups. Any such generalization will immediately present an overwhelming number of examples of Christians who do not fit the description.

Not surprisingly, LaVey finds that Christians behave differently than he claims Christianity to be, but in LaVey's perspective, the death throes of a god is recognized by its priests and followers beginning to play the Devil's game¹⁹. LaVey therefore sees it as "Some Evidence of a New Satanic Age" when Christians behave like Satanists rather than the Christians LaVey believes them to be. The truth, however, is both uplifting and depressing: for the most part, Christians are not the fundamentalists that LaVey makes them out to be, but not because a new Satanic society is rising. It is simply because LaVey invents a sort of Christianity that is as mythical as the Devil of the Christians to bolster his arguments.

In the 1960s one might accept LaVey's model of how and why humans invent religions and gods, but since then entire scientific fields within sociology and psychology have been established for the scientific study of the behavior, emergence, development, use of scripture, doctrine, and authority, etc. of religious groups and individuals, and in spite of many internal disagreements on the precise definitions and processes characterizing religion and religious thought, it is clear that LaVey's models are lacking. Nothing seems to indicate that humans invent gods because we cannot accept having an ego. It is also wrong to believe that various gods would be invented by single individuals (not even in cults where the founder claims the existence of a hitherto unknown god), because religions develop, inspire, and emanate from each other and because today we know that human behavior and thought imply a completely different set of rules for the creation of gods and religions.

It is somewhat unimportant that LaVey utilizes an invalid model to criticize existing religions (because although his criticism is faulty, they still deserve criticism!). It is more questionable that LaVey applies the same model when he encour-

ages Satanists to become their own gods: if gods are not created the way LaVey asserts, he hands the reader poor tools for the construction of the god whom the reader is to become. *The Satanic Bible* constructs Satanism as dependent on Christianity, and the casting mold for the new gods outlines a deformed result.

LaVey's anti-Christian point of departure is directed at a limited audience that makes Satanism a Christian byproduct, and as a result he largely recruits Satanists among lapsed Christians. But religious and social critique need not focus on Christianity to reach almost the same conclusions as LaVey. His unprofessional and outdated anti-Christianity can readily be replaced with well-founded religious criticism and social criticism without violating Satanic values and conduct. Such a revision might even appeal to other audiences than Christian renegades who to some degree pester other Satanists with their religious morals and reasoning that they find it difficult to abandon.

Just Another Animal

LaVey joined the contemporary human potential movements that thought of the human being as a creature that is prevented from functioning well because a faulty and limited society places constraints on the true nature of mankind. The opinion that humans have an "authentic" self, much like Reich's "core" self, which needs to liberate itself has been popular ever since and has only recently been challenged. LaVey considers our authentic self to be our carnal nature, our distinctive feature being viciousness arising from our "divine spiritual and intellectual development."²⁰ LaVey does not clarify whether our viciousness is caused by our intelligence per se, or because it is shaped by religious thinking, but the latter is assumed to have an important influence on the human animal's bad temper considering that he mentions it.

The nature of other animals is implied to be comparatively ideal, and one senses across LaVey's writing that he is positive towards territorial struggle and violent behavior in the hunt for food. But biologists, who similarly acknowledge such behavior as survival mechanisms are often shocked to observe animal behavior in areas that are far from biological imperatives. There are nu-

¹⁹ Some Evidence of a New Satanic Age," *The Satanic Bible*.

²⁰ The seventh Satanic Statement.

merous reports that wild animals in their natural habitats go on killing sprees, bully each other, steal, perform group rape or necrophilia, attempt to mate with other species or evident “minors,” commit unmotivated assaults—indeed, virtually any crime short of tax evasion.

Should a Satanist then be like lion on its path... and kill any cubs that are not his own in order to take over a pride of lions? The answer is evidently no, because LaVey goes to great lengths in *The Satanic Bible* to explain what Satanists would never do, possibly to the relief of the children of some families. Apparently when humans behave “un-Satanically,” it is because we are not animals, but one has to wonder what excuse non-human animals have. A Garden of Eden (granted, in which territorial fights and predatory instinct is allowed) does not seem convincing if the path is a reconciliation with our inner animal, because although it is a mistake to think that humans are anything but animals, the opposite of a mistake is not necessarily the whole truth. If Satan represents man as just another animal, LaVey clearly hopes that our horned role model has civilized ambitions with us, because an animal self on equal hoofing with other animals seems frighteningly bad when we glance at the behavior of other animals. The “natural” animal simply is not the ideal creature that some psychologists and the emerging New Age movement portrayed five decades ago.

The idea of children as the “natural human being,” or “natural Satanist” in LaVey’s terms, is similarly contradicted by tragic discoveries of “feral” children. As noble savages, the mythical children who were raised by wild animals—Mowgli, Tarzan, Romulus and Remus, and others—were pictured as having superior strength, intelligence, and morals, because they represent man in his pure and uncorrupted state, but reality’s Tarzan is no king of the jungle. Because of lacking socialization with other humans such children develop massive cognitive deficiencies, and are in every practical sense retarded. Similar tragic discoveries are made in certain orphanages, although grave under-stimulation bears part of the blame. It is evident that socialization is required.

Souls Come Cheap These Days

LaVey’s use of children and animals as Satanic role models invites criticism but it is fair to just

conclude that the idea of children and animals as “authentic” versions of the human animal needs revision. Their purpose to LaVey is to illustrate a variety of values and points rather than being role models to be emulated, that is, they serve as social criticism and are themselves unimportant for the discussion. Used as an *argument*, they become problematic, however, and once the still generally accepted idea of a “healthy” state of being that is “damaged” by society begins to fade, the children and animals may need to be replaced with more formalized social critique.

The use of children and animals to illustrate philosophical points is consistent with LaVey’s numerous examples of historical people that LaVey uses as examples of Satanists in *The Satanic Bible* and other of his writings: the Pope and any dictator for not being subject to the powers of other people, Charles Finney (the author, not the minister) for summoning demons to answer human self-deceit, Jack London for longing for adventure and lycanthropy on the brink of society, Wilhelm Reich for his ability to think outside of the (ahem...) box, Hitler’s regime’s use of symbolism, Ayn Rand for demanding meritocracy, Grigori Rasputin for his alleged occultism, Sir Basil Zaharoff for his machiavellian methods and demonic appearance, Soren Sorensen Adams for inventing the “joy buzzer” for fun and especially banter, Benjamin Franklin for participating in Sir Francis Dashwood’s much later named “Hellfire Club,” Leonardo da Vinci for his revolutionary thoughts, Mark Twain for often being the Devil’s advocate—and many others. Some of these people that LaVey characterized as *de facto* Satanists seem to qualify simply because they used demonic imagery or because they were accused of occultism.

Such sources of inspiration are useful to illustrate philosophical points, but one would think perhaps a little more than a specific feature would be required, and that most of them would deny having made any pact with Lucifer. It is perhaps for this reason that LaVey cautions in *The Satanic Bible* that not everyone with earthly power deserves to be called a Satanist²¹ but he does not mention how they disqualify. Not that there is any shortage of explanations of what Satanism *is not* in *The Satanic Bible* (cf. the previous discussion about negative definition), and it would be trivial to demonstrate the *non-Satanic* features of most of his Satanic role models. It ap-

²¹ “The Black Mass,” *The Satanic Bible*.

pears that “pro”-Satanic behavior scores points while “anti”-Satanic behavior does not incur penalties, and that certainly lowers the bar for qualifying as a Satanist to the level where you may have joined the Legions of Darkness on the day you uttered your first profanity. It seems as if LaVey’s criterion for being a Satanist is an entirely different one than his official explanations: if the world is a stage on which we are all actors, the Satanists are the celebrities, because the only common feature across LaVey’s role models seems to be that they are famous. (At this point some observers may scornfully remark that the members of the Church of Satan are characterized by a peculiar lack of intellectuals for the benefit of people declaring themselves musicians, authors, artists, or performers in spite of standards that are mediocre and below.)

The choice of inspiration does illustrate a number of important points but they risk doing more harm than good. To provide a meaningful definition of a Satanist, it must be possible to determine when someone isn’t. LaVey’s extensive description of what Satanism is not appears to have no importance after all, his choice of role models considered. It may well be a core premise of sociology that outsiders cannot deny any group its claims and faith, but if the merchant on the religious market allows anyone to purchase the bad-guy badge and be a Satanist without payment, then what is the point of Satanism?

Unless Satanism distinguishes itself from the rest of society by clarifying who is and who is not a Satanist, and stays consistent, Satanism becomes merely various individuals’ fantasy of being different, which they happen to share with everyone else, regardless of faith or belief. This goes unnoticed while the individuals stay by themselves, but once a Satanist begins to interact with other Satanists, everyone realizes that they have immensely little to agree on. When quarrels between Satanists arise quickly on social media, the reason is not only that Satanists are expected to have a massive ego and refuse to let others set expectations but also that the Satanists are confronted with the reality that Satanism is so inclusively defined that there is nothing particular to agree on. When everyone is a Satanist, nobody is a Satanist, and the mutual accusations that the opponent is not a Satanist are thus ironically precise in everyone’s case. It is especially complicated to identify an authority that may settle any disputes when everyone is his or her own god,

leaving no external authorities. Gods may not be created equal but this has never prevented any of them from challenging each other. LaVey had the authority to decide who were fit for the Church of Satan, but he is now dead, and the Church of Satan itself has pursued alternating policies in regard to membership requirements.

A definition that is both inclusive and exclusive, providing clear indications about who is and who is not a Satanist is required if Satanism is to be transformed from (claims about) being a common thread throughout History to a directed ideology that can be shared and followed by Satanists. This makes it necessary to tighten LaVey’s definition, which in practice is too vague to make sense. Such elaboration and clarification will never manage to reduce Satanism to “one thing,” preventing new and different Satanic organizations from emerging, but more rigorous definitions will reduce their internal disagreements and thus help them stay alive.

In the Shadow of Hindsight

It is relatively straightforward to localize additional mistakes in both premises and arguments throughout *The Satanic Bible*, but in spite of what the preceding review might lead one to think because it only briefly mentions elements that “hold water,” the intent is not to discredit LaVey’s works. LaVey built on contemporary knowledge and assumptions for the most part when he wrote *The Satanic Bible* and *The Satanic Witch*, and no-one can demand more than that. On the contrary: in spite of his conservative views, LaVey was part of the progressive wavefront of humanist movements, and he outlined a unique philosophy.

But nearly fifty years have passed since then, and in particular within the fields of his interests have science and knowledge developed explosively from near ignorance to independent scientific fields today: with few, primitive precursors, psychology, sociology, and social sciences have only been established as real sciences after his time. It is clear today that LaVey largely drew upon theories and ideas that were yet undisputed but have today been replaced by far superior models and explanations that have passed the tests of science. We have become wiser on several accounts since LaVey wrote his key books that defined Satanism and Satanists. The bitter ad-

mission today is that we must concede that not only was LaVey wrong on several key premises, he also drew an array of invalid conclusions. Satanism meets its own accuser and we have a wicked problem to explain: how do we react when the Devil demands that we question all things and we learn that we ourselves are wrong?

This problem is far from new within ideological groups and there are two solutions: either pretend that nothing has happened and attribute any mistakes to the followers and in particular people who disagree, or redefine the early scripture as historical and pass that which you consider core ideology on in new doctrines. It is probably yet too early to declare a “New Satanism,” because LaVey and his writings still hold too much authority to compete against them using only charisma and communication. It is also yet impossible to ignore LaVey and his writing and hope that no-one notices.

The Church of Satan has consistently opted to insist that there are no mistakes in *The Satanic Bible* and that there is no need for revision of LaVey’s scripture. *The Satanic Bible* continues to serve as the foundation for the Church of Satan (and in their opinion, Satanism per se) in its original version. In recent years, the Church of Satan has added Peter Gilmore’s *The Satanic Scriptures* to their core scripture, and in that sense has proven ready for *amendments*, but unless one considers the change of candle colors to be a revision of *The Satanic Bible*, none of the essays in *The Satanic Scriptures* alter any of LaVey’s standpoints or arguments. A significant part of Gilmore’s book consists of articles commenting on specific events of which several can be assumed to be forgotten within the foreseeable future and soon become irrelevant even to the Church of Satan.

Gilmore’s talents as an author notwithstanding, the publication of *The Satanic Scriptures* meets the expectation that the new high priest should contribute with “some book” rather than serving as a considered ideological supplement: the function of the book is to legitimize and establish Gilmore as an authority. LaVey had (and still has) authority as first mover, by virtue of his ultimate book title, and through his colorful persona, and in that sense possessed the mandate as the Black Pope. Gilmore, however, has only the organization and thus an institutionalized authority. He must demonstrate that he deserves to assume the infernal mandate, and the publication of *The Satanic Scriptures* and the canonization of the book



Anton LaVey passed away in 1997, and Satanism thus lost its primary authority. A few years later the Church of Satan lost “the black house,” leaving the world with only LaVey’s writing and secondhand narratives. His first daughter, Karla LaVey, considers herself the ideological heir to her father’s legacy but does not acknowledge the Church of Satan. (Photo: Ole Wolf, 1997.)

as ideological foundation is part of the battle for the mandate. (When Michael Aquino broke off from the Church of Satan in 1975 to establish The Temple of Set, the otherwise diligent Aquino chose the significantly less taxing solution where he let Satan revoke the infernal mandate and bestow it on Aquino. Such simple maneuvers are only possible for believers, however, and Gilmore must take the laborious road.) But book is only the organization’s inward need for Gilmore to justify his mandate. It is not clear whether the book has any ideological significance or influence on Satanists both within the Church of Satan and on the open devil’s market. Any influence is minor, however, because as a newly declared part of the philosophical foundation, the book offers only few additions as opinions that Gilmore believes Satanists should share, most of which may be summarized as American nationalism and republican conservatism. This helps Gilmore because fellow American Satanists will have much in common with him, but at the cost of maintaining the Church of Satan’s ethnocentrism. For now, the routinization of LaVey’s charisma (cf. Max Weber) is Gilmore’s appoint-

ment by qualified staff, which in the Church of Satan is comprised of the (mythical?) Council of Nine.

A revision of *The Satanic Bible* is an explosive topic to the Church of Satan. If the Church of Satan refuses to revise the book, or at least its significance, its obsolescence will only become more evident as current insight becomes common knowledge, and the Church of Satan will find it difficult to use it authoritatively. Gilmore seems gifted and well-written enough to be able to revise *The Satanic Bible* to a current or more timeless form, and a clever revision could add greatly to his authority. But if the Church of Satan thus acknowledges that LaVey's authority is open for debate, the organization will erode LaVey's authority and will find it difficult to use LaVey and his books as their trademark authorities. This problem will only become more pronounced while the Church of Satan lays claim to being rational Satanists and is thus vulnerable to inquiry and criticism based on science. Occultists, on the other hand, face no such danger.

Satanist outside of the Church of Satan do not have this problem. The Church of Satan's aggressively orthodox stand that either you are uncritical against LaVey and similarly loyal to the Church of Satan, or you are no Satanist, may even motivate other Satanists to explain why they can certainly be Satanists and use, or at least lean on, LaVey without including the Church of Satan in the package and without attributing infallibility to LaVey. Paradoxically, the dissemination of "moderate" voices that maintain LaVey's Satanism

as a continuously modernizing philosophy may even let the Church of Satan slipstream along and avoid passing into oblivion when steadily fewer people will find the Church of Satan's ageing views meaningful.

The alternative to orthodoxy is modernization. In this case, Satanic groups will declare LaVey historic in varying degrees and present the ideology in new scripture where the authors preserve what they believe are the essence of LaVey's original works. The present article has argued that there are several problematic areas in LaVey's primary works and has implied some pointers towards modern-age improvements; but specific contemplation or suggestions is beyond the scope of this article.

Satanism cannot compete with psychology; psychologists are better at that. Satanism cannot compete with philosophy; philosophers are better at that. Satanism cannot compete with religion or social affiliations; religious organizations are better at that. But Satanists can, like LaVey, contribute with values. The challenge is to maintain them and keep them up-to-date, to learn by our mistakes, and to devise methods for passing them on to others instead of requiring individuals to convert from other religions. Satan now points his bifid barb of Hell at His followers and shows us two directions: either into the darkness of forgotten authorities and moth-eaten books or through the gates of Hell where the fires are nourished with rejected dogma, broken truths, and shattered beliefs.