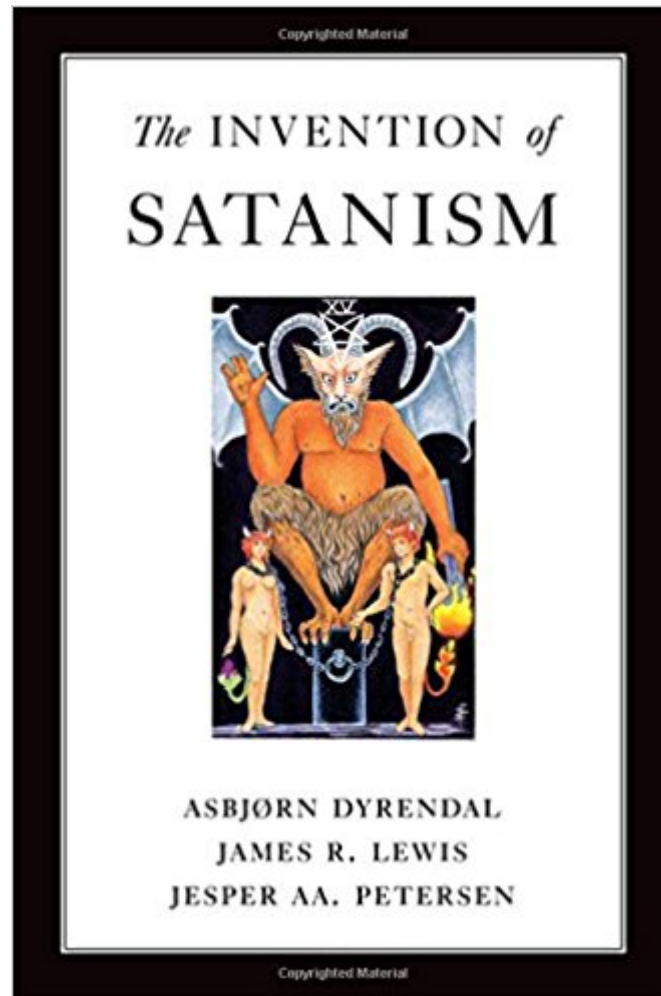




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# The Invention Of Satanism



## Synopsis

Satanism is a complex phenomenon that has often been the source of controversy across social and rhetorical contexts. Some consider it the root of all evil. Others see it as a childish form of rebellion or as a misapplication of serious esoteric beliefs and practices. Still others consider it a specific religion or philosophy that serves as a form of personal and collective identity. In *The Invention of Satanism*, three experts explore Satanism as a contemporary movement that is in continuous dialogue with popular culture, and which provides a breeding ground for other new religious movements. By shifting the focus from mythology to meaning-making, this book examines the invention of Satanism among self-declared religious Satanists. Like all ideologists and believers, Satanists incorporate, borrow, and modify elements from other traditions; the authors investigate how traditional folklore and prior strands of occultism were synthesized by Anton LaVey in his founding of the Church of Satan and creation of the Satanic Bible. Later chapters discuss contemporary Satanist subcultures, demonstrating how Satanism continues to reinvent itself despite its brief history as an organized phenomenon. There are now numerous forms of Satanism with distinctive interpretations of what being a Satanist entails, with some of these new versions deviating more from the historical "mainstream" than others. In this fascinating account of a seemingly arcane and often-feared movement, Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen demonstrate that the invention of Satanism is an ongoing, ever-evolving process.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An important contribution to the field of Satanism studies . This volume functions as an excellent introduction to the subject in addition to establishing central research avenues in the field, supplemented by illuminating discussions of work that remains to be done. The Invention of Satanism will be a good first reference for both specialists and lay readers interested in Satanism, along with those investigating the various and overlapping fields of new religious movements, Paganism, occultism, the subjects of religious rhetoric, and other alternative religious currents and antinomian discourses."--Nova Religio

"Studies of the esoteric and the occult have matured into a strong research area within the history of religions, and Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen have been at the forefront all the way. Their new book offers a state-of-the-art discussion of Satanism and the occulture in which it thrives. Based on facts and primary sources rather than hearsay, Satanists are presented as people, and as makers of religion." --Mikael Rothstein, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Southern Denmark and Guest Professor at the Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas

"The Invention of Satanism is a groundbreaking book on two counts. It does not simply rehearse the story of a legendary Satan who symbolizes ultimate evil in Christianity. Rather, it focuses on real, contemporary satanic movements populated by individuals who openly identify as Satanists. Even more impressive and innovative, the authors ground their analysis in hard data from texts, interviews, surveys, and national censuses, bringing contemporary Satanism to life." --David G. Bromley, Professor of Religious Studies and Sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University and Founder and Director of the World Religions and Spirituality Project

"This valuable volume demonstrates that concern about Satanism has not dissipated; it will always be a part of the cultural background of modern Western societies, but is ever-changing. The three authors, all well-known scholars, document the modern history of Satanism and how it is evolving, adding to scholarly knowledge about this fascinating and important cultural phenomenon." --James T. Richardson, co-editor of The Satanism Scare

Asbjørn Dyrendal is Professor of Religious Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway. James R. Lewis is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Tromsø, in Tromsø, Norway. Jesper A. Petersen is Associate Professor at the Programme for Teacher Education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway.

Don't let the title of this book deter you this isn't propagandist "Satanism isn't a real religion/spirituality" or Christian apologetics. I say this because if you are anything like me, even

after reading the description, reviews and perusing the table of contents, it really had me wondering. Any of us who read much of satanic literature know that now-a-days, there is ALOT of crap out there with Satanism slapped on it. With the above said, this is a really refreshing work, and I have to highly commend Dyrendal and the other authors/compilers for doing such a work. It is nice to see academia finally coming out of there shell, and taking Satanism seriously, and not in a Satanic Panic or dismissive way. Dyrendal and the other authors are all academics, though they never state in this work, I would assume that they are either extremely open minded, or are Satanist of one stripe or another themselves. This book covers a lot of ground, and the overarching point, is the "invention" of Satanism, this is quite accurate, because before the onset of COS, Satanism was really just people embracing Satanic ideas or imagery, basically to get their kicks, but really not going any further then the occasional oddity or small "fraternal" group. It was really with the coming of Lavey that Satanism began to develop/evolve over time into a serious, pragmatic and practical religion that it is. Now not much time is given to Theistic style Satanism, and I don't think that this is necessarily because the authors hold the opinion that somehow that it isn't relevant, but I just don't think it fits the scope of the book. Plus, I happen to be of the opinion, and I feel that the authors would agree when I say that Satanism really didn't come into its own, as something other than just reverse Christianity until the coming of Lavey. Now that is not me saying that Lavey holds claim to everything under the satanic umbrella, but, he broke the mold, and paved the way for Satanism to evolve and grow, in whatever stripe after him. The two downsides of this book, are well the price, yes its hardcover, well bound, good quality paper, but it costs a lot of money for a book as low on page count as it is. But, the authors cram in TONS of information on every page. which leads me to the second issue, the book is kind of academic, I say "kind of" because even though it certainly is an academic text in approach and its language, it quite frankly is well done enough, that the writing isn't as dry as hell all of the time, there are a few moments in the book where it gets pretty dusty, but overall it is well done. In conclusion, would I recommend this book, yes, but with a caveat, if the academic study of Satanism interests you, as well as its roots and a look at its development in the vein of Lavey, or other forms of contemporary Satanism which were inspired or came after Lavey, then you will love this book. But if you are looking for anything in the theistic vein, then you aren't going to find it here. Overall this is a high quality book, and I am really glad to see Satanism gaining such academic studies as this one!

A very thorough view of Satanism. So much so that this is more a textbook then casual reading but the information within is worth the, at times "dry reading" it contains. Highly recommend!

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