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The Devil's Party: Satanism In Modernity



Synopsis

Recent years have seen a significant shift in the study of new religious movements. In Satanism studies, interest has moved to anthropological and historical work on groups and individuals. Self-declared Satanism, especially as a religion with cultural production and consumption, history, and organization, has largely been neglected by academia. This volume, focused on modern Satanism as a practiced religion of life-style, attempts to reverse that trend with 12 cutting-edge essays from the emerging field of Satanism studies. Topics covered range from early literary Satanists like Blake and Shelley, to the Californian Church of Satan of the 1960s, to the radical developments that have taken place in the Satanic milieu in recent decades. The contributors analyze such phenomena as conversion to Satanism, connections between Satanism and political violence, 19th-century decadent Satanism, transgression, conspiracy theory, and the construction of Satanic scripture. A wide array of methods are employed to shed light on the Devil's disciples: statistical surveys, anthropological field studies, philological examination of The Satanic Bible, contextual analysis of literary texts, careful scrutiny of obscure historical records, and close readings of key Satanic writings. The book will be an invaluable resource for everyone interested in Satanism as a philosophical or religious position of alterity rather than as an imagined other.

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Customer Reviews

"With the possible exception of Petersen's earlier collection, *Contemporary Religious Satanism*, this is perhaps the strongest introductory volume on the varieties of Satanic institutions. Faxneld and Petersen's introductory essay, while not a traditional historiography, positions the volume nicely in

the current academic literature. Altogether The Devil's Party consists of careful scholarship, arguing convincingly for the importance of the study of the Satanic milieu...I have recommended it to a handful of students in the past year and it has, without exception, received positive reviews."--Nova Religio

Per Faxneld is a research fellow at the department of the History of Religions at Stockholm University, Sweden. He has written several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on Satanism and Western Esotericism, co-edited *Förborgade Tecken* ("Hidden Signs" H:Ströms, 2010) - a book on Esotericism in literature - and is the author of *Mörkrets apostlar* ("Apostles of Darkness", Ouroboros, 2006), a study of early Satanism. His research focuses on gender issues in Satanism, and the literary roots of contemporary religious constructions of the Devil as a hero and helper. Jesper Aagaard Petersen is associate professor at the Programme for Teacher Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). He has published extensively on modern Satanism, is the editor of *Contemporary Religious Satanism: A Critical Anthology* (Ashgate, 2009) and the co-editor of *Controversial New Religions* (Oxford, 2005) and *The Encyclopedic Sourcebook of Satanism* (Prometheus, 2008). He has a Ph.D. from the Department of Archaeology and Religious Studies at NTNU with the thesis *Between Darwin and the Devil: Modern Satanism as Discourse, Milieu, and Self* (2011).

Extremely solid academic text on contemporary religious Satanism. Recommended.

Although very well researched, it reads slowly due to academic verbiage.

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