SATANISM

Everyone is a little interested or at least curious about Satan, Lucifer, or the Devil. People are always curious about witches as well. I include myself as an interested person, but by no means an expert. What got me motivated was people's response to my office building, now a museum, the Black Fang Museum. Something about the words Black Fang conjured up people's imagination to suspect that this was some type of religious cult, Satanic.

In fact, the more I read about Satanism, the more I realized it is a very useful way of looking at the world. But before I get into that, a little history is necessary. The history of Satan is a complex evolution from a functional title in ancient Hebrew texts to the personification of ultimate evil in Western theology and modern philosophy.

Although Satanism represents a spectrum of beliefs and practices today, the single most contemporary is that espoused by The Satanic Temple, the only Satanic religion recognized as tax exempt by the IRS. Their beliefs are entirely Western with emphasis on individuality and science. They do not worship Satan or any other entity. Authoritarianism is viewed with skepticism. Reasonable compassion and bodily autonomy are critical tenets.

Ancient Origins

In the earliest books of the Hebrew Bible, the word Satan was not a proper name but a title or a common noun meaning "adversary" or "accuser." The Bible also recalls the serpent that attempted Eve with the apple of knowledge. Lucifer, another name for Satan, was originally one of God's favorites and most talented arch Angels in heaven. As the story goes, Lucifer became proud and refused to submit to God's authoritarian rule. As a result, he was cast out of heaven and sent to earth, where he presumably ruled Hell. According to Scripture, Satan's sin was excessive pride.



The Divine Prosecutor: In the Book of Job, "the Satan" (ha-Satan) appears as a member of the divine council who acts as a prosecutor, testing the righteousness of humans under

God's authority. During this period, the figure was not viewed as an enemy of God, but rather as an agent performing a specific role within the celestial hierarchy.

The Shift to Personified Evil

Between the writing of the Old and New Testaments (the Intertestamental period), Jewish thought began to incorporate dualistic ideas, possibly influenced by Zoroastrianism. This period saw the rise of a more distinct, rebellious figure. Apocryphal Literature: Texts like the Book of Enoch introduced the idea of fallen angels (Watchers) who rebelled against heaven, providing a backstory for a leader of demonic forces.

New Testament Transformation: By the time of the New Testament, Satan (also called the Devil, Beelzebub, or Lucifer) became the primary antagonist of God and the "prince of this world." He is depicted as a tempter of Jesus and the source of moral and physical illness.

Medieval and Renaissance Concepts

During the Middle Ages, the image of Satan became more grotesque and central to Christian life. Satan began to be depicted with horns, cloven hooves, and bat wings—features often borrowed from pagan deities like Pan to demonize non-Christian worship. Literary works profoundly shaped the modern imagination. Dante Alighieri’s Inferno depicted Satan as a giant, three-faced beast frozen in the center of Hell. John Milton’s Paradise Lost (1667) introduced a more complex, sympathetic version of the character—a tragic rebel who famously declared it "better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."





Modern Interpretations and Satanism

In the late 19th and 20th centuries, the figure of Satan moved beyond traditional theology into the realms of political and social symbolism. Modern philosophical movements began using Satan as a symbol of pride, liberty, and defiance against arbitrary authority. Atheistic Satanism: In 1966, Anton LaVey founded the Church of Satan, which views Satan as a metaphor for human nature and individualism rather than a literal deity.

Throughout history, the figure of Satan has often been incorrectly conflated with other practices such as witchcraft. Historically, authorities during witch trials claimed that witches derived their power from pacts with Satan. It is a common misconception that Satanists and witches are the same. While both paths often fall under the umbrella of alternative spirituality or the occult, their core beliefs, histories, and practices are distinct and sometimes even contradictory. Here is a detailed contrast between a Satanist and a witch.

In short, a Satanist is a member of a modern philosophical or religious movement focused on self-worship, individualism, and challenging religious authority, using "Satan" as a symbol (or sometimes a deity). A witch is a practitioner of magic, often within a nature-based or pagan spiritual framework. While a small subset of "traditional" or "theistic" witches might work with diabolical figures, the vast majority of modern witches do not believe in, worship, or work with the Christian concept of Satan.

Feature	**Satanist**	**Witch**
Core Philosophy	Individualism, Self-deification, Hedonism, Skepticism	Connection to Nature, Magic, Balance, Spirituality, Wisdom

Feature	Satanist	Witch
Concept of "Satan"	**Atheistic:** Symbol of pride, liberty, rebellion. **Theistic:** A real deity to be venerated.	Usually irrelevant. The concept is viewed as a Christian construct, not part of their worldview.
Role of Magic	**Minor:** Viewed as "intellectual decompression" or a tool for self-realization by some.	**Major:** The central defining practice. The work of a witch is magic.
Deity View	Usually Atheistic (self is god). Theistic Satanists are a minority.	Often Polytheistic, Duotheistic (God and Goddess), or Pantheistic (nature is god). Can be secular.
Moral Framework	Subjective, self-serving, and based on mutual respect ("Responsibility to the responsible").	Varies widely, but often based on balance and harm reduction (e.g., the Wiccan Rede).
History/Origins	Primarily 20th Century (founded by Anton LaVey in 1966) as a reaction to traditional religion.	Pre-Christian folk practices; later combined into modern spiritual movements (like Wicca) in the 20th Century.

A Satanist:

The Philosophy of the Self. The term "Satanist" can be confusing because there are two primary branches: Atheistic Satanism and Theistic Satanism.1. Atheistic (Modern) Satanism. This is the most visible and widespread form of Satanism, exemplified by organizations like The Church of Satan (founded by Anton LaVey in 1966) and The Satanic Temple (founded in 2013).

Belief in Satan: They do not believe in or worship a literal devil. They do not believe in god, angels, or an afterlife. The Symbol: Satan is a potent symbol. He represents the "archetype of the rebel"—pride, liberty, carnal existence, and a defiance of arbitrary authority and superstition. He is the adversary of conformist religions (especially Christianity).The Actual Goal: The purpose is self-worship. The Satanist is their own "god." The philosophy is one of rational self-interest, hedonism (seeking pleasure and fulfillment), and extreme individualism.

Magic: LaVeyan Satanists may perform rituals, but they view them as a form of "intellectual decompression" or psychological self-care, a way to focus the will and let go of emotions. It is not "supernatural" magic.

Ethics: Their moral code emphasizes responsibility for one's own actions and loyalty to friends, but it permits vengeance and rejects turning the other cheek.

Theistic Satanism is a much smaller and less organized movement. These individuals believe in Satan as a literal, existing deity or spiritual being. For them, Satan is not necessarily evil, but rather a pre-Abrahamic deity of light, knowledge, or primal power who was demonized by later religions. They may worship or work with him as their patriarch or patron god.

The term "witch" refers to someone who practices witchcraft, which is the art of manipulating energy and intention to cause change in the world. The Defining Skill: A witch is a practitioner. Magic is the center of their world. They perform rituals, cast spells, use herbs, and interpret omens. Spirituality is Variable: A person can be a secular witch (performing magic without a spiritual component). However, most witchcraft is intertwined with Paganism or nature-based spirituality. Wicca: A specific modern Pagan religion where followers are also witches. Wiccans generally worship a Goddess and a God.

Witches draw inspiration from historical regional practices, focusing on spirits of the land and ancestors. Modern witchcraft is deeply tied to the earth. Spells and rituals are often timed to the phases of the moon and the turning of the seasons (the "Wheel of the Year").Deities: Witches may honor many different gods and goddesses from various pantheons (Greek, Celtic, Egyptian, etc.).

For the vast majority of witches, the Christian devil is a concept they do not accept. They do not work with him or worship him, as he is not part of their belief system. They do not consider themselves "diabolical."



A Satanist conversing with a witch and a Minister

Ethics: Ethical codes vary, but the most famous is the Wiccan Rede, which states: "An ye harm none, do what ye will." Many also believe in a rule of return (like karma), where the energy they send out will come back to them, incentivizing benevolent practice.

The historical conflation of Satanism and Witchcraft is a direct result of centuries of religious persecution in the West. During the European and American witch trials, authorities branded anyone practicing folk medicine or indigenous folk religions as being in league with the Devil. The church created the idea that a witch's power came directly from a pact with Satan. This stereotype persists in pop culture today, but it is a fabrication that has never reflected the reality of folk practice.

Remember the infamous Salem witch trials. The so-called witches were presumed to be inhabited by Satan. There were even outward signs of possession, such as skin markings. Likewise in medieval Europe, the Inquisition did not just prosecute nonbelievers but assumed that evil manifested in certain characters such as witches, which were possessed by Satan.



Modern Reality: Most modern witches view Satan as a Christian construct and do not include him in their nature-based or polytheistic spiritual frameworks. Much of what the

general public associates with Satanism—such as animal or human sacrifice, secret underground cults, and ritualized child abuse—stems from the "Satanic Panic" of the 1980s and 90s. This was a widespread moral panic fueled by media sensationalism, daytime talk shows, and debunked recovered-memory therapies. Law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, exhaustively investigated these claims and concluded that no massive, organized, criminal Satanic conspiracies actually existed.

The Satanic Temple (TST)

Founded in 2012, this is currently the largest and most publicly visible Satanic organization (recognized as a tax-exempt religion in the US). TST is highly active in the political and legal spheres, using its religious status to fight for the separation of church and state, reproductive rights, and bodily autonomy. They are guided by "Seven Fundamental Tenets" that prioritize empathy, science, justice, and common sense.

Here are the **Seven Fundamental Tenets** of The Satanic Temple (TST). They are designed to act as guiding principles that prioritize empathy, bodily autonomy, and scientific reasoning:

I. Compassion and Empathy

One should strive to act with compassion and empathy toward all creatures in accordance with reason.

II. Justice

The struggle for justice is an ongoing and necessary pursuit that should prevail over laws and institutions.

III. Bodily Autonomy

One's body is inviolable, subject to one's own will alone.

IV. Respect for Freedoms

The freedoms of others should be respected, including the freedom to offend. To willfully and unjustly encroach upon the freedoms of another is to forgo one's own.

V. Scientific Understanding

Beliefs should conform to one's best scientific understanding of the world. One should take care never to distort scientific facts to fit one's beliefs.

VI. Fallibility and Restitution

People are fallible. If one makes a mistake, one should do one's best to rectify it and resolve any harm that might have been caused.

VII. Nobility in Action

Every tenet is a guiding principle designed to inspire nobility in action and thought. The spirit of compassion, wisdom, and justice should always prevail over the written or spoken word.

From a legal standpoint, these tenets serve as the "sincerely held religious beliefs" that TST uses in litigation.

- **The Third Tenet (Bodily Autonomy)** is frequently cited in TST's challenges to restrictive abortion laws (such as their "Religious Abortion Ritual" cases).
- **The Fifth Tenet (Scientific Realism)** is often used to challenge the mandatory distribution of non-scientific or religiously-motivated literature in state-funded medical or educational settings.

Unlike the Ten Commandments, which are framed as divine mandates ("Thou shalt not"), the Seven Tenets are framed as affirmative ethical goals for the individual to interpret through the lens of reason.

When comparing the **Seven Fundamental Tenets** of The Satanic Temple (TST) to the **Ten Commandments** (Decalogue) or other religious codes like the **Five Pillars of Islam** or the **Eightfold Path**, the primary friction lies in the source of authority.

Traditional codes are generally **deontological** (duty-based), while the Tenets are **virtue-based** and **consequentialist**.

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1. The Ten Commandments vs. The Seven Tenets

The Ten Commandments represent a "Top-Down" authoritarian model, whereas the Tenets represent a "Bottom-Up" humanist model.

Feature	The Ten Commandments	The Seven Tenets
Primary Focus	Obedience to God and Social Order.	Individual Autonomy and Reason.
Structure	Prohibitive ("Thou Shalt Not").	Affirmative ("One Should Strive").
First Priority	The deity's ego and exclusivity.	Compassion and Empathy.
Source of Truth	Divine Revelation (Static).	Scientific Understanding (Adaptive).

- **The Conflict:** The first four Commandments focus on the relationship between man and God (no other gods, no idols, no swearing, Sabbath). The Tenets contain zero mention of a deity, prioritizing the "inviolable body" and "scientific realism" instead.

- **The Overlap:** Both agree on fundamental social prohibitions like murder and theft (Tenets 1 and 2), though the Tenets frame these as violations of justice and compassion rather than sins against a creator.

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2. The Five Pillars of Islam vs. The Seven Tenets

The Five Pillars focus on **Action and Submission**, while the Tenets focus on **Intent and Inquiry**.

- **Submission (Islam):** The Pillars (Faith, Prayer, Charity, Fasting, Pilgrimage) are specific ritual acts designed to align the believer with the will of Allah.
- **Autonomy (TST):** The Tenets reject ritual as a requirement for "goodness." For example, while Islam has *Zakat* (mandatory charity), TST's First Tenet demands compassion "in accordance with reason," meaning aid should be given based on an intellectual assessment of need, not a fixed percentage or religious requirement.

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3. The Eightfold Path (Buddhism) vs. The Seven Tenets

This is perhaps the closest comparison, as both are focused on the alleviation of suffering.

- **The Common Ground:** Both emphasize "Right View" or "Right Mindset." TST's Tenet 5 (Scientific Realism) mirrors the Buddhist emphasis on seeing the world as it truly is, rather than how we wish it to be.
- **The Divergence:** The Eightfold Path is a means to achieve *Nirvana* (the end of the cycle of rebirth). The Seven Tenets are firmly rooted in the "here and now." There is no metaphysical goal in the Tenets; the "good" is its own reward.

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4. Summary: The "Rule of Law" vs. "The Spirit of Justice"

Most religious rules function like **Strict Liability** statutes; you follow the rule regardless of the outcome. The Seven Tenets function more like **Equitable Principles**.

This is most evident in **Tenet 7**: *"The spirit of compassion, wisdom, and justice should always prevail over the written or spoken word."* This is a "safety valve" that essentially says: *If following a rule causes more harm than good, the rule is wrong.*

Comparison at a Glance

- **The Ten Commandments:** Focus on **Theocratical Compliance**.
- **The Eightfold Path:** Focuses on **Internal Liberation**.
- **The Seven Tenets:** Focus on **Interpersonal Ethics and Reason**.

HINDU

While TST is strictly materialist, Hinduism is metaphysical; yet, they share a surprising amount of common ground regarding the treatment of living beings.

1. Compassion: *Ahimsa* vs. Tenet I

- **The Hindu View (*Ahimsa*):** Non-violence is the "highest dharma" (*Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*). It is rooted in the belief that all living things share the same divine essence (*Brahman*). To hurt another is to hurt a part of the divine whole.
- **The TST View (Tenet I):** Compassion is rooted in **reason** and biological empathy. It doesn't require a soul to justify being kind; it requires an understanding of suffering.
- **The Difference:** Hindu compassion is often "pure" or "Sattvic" (aiming for spiritual purification), while TST compassion is "consequentialist" (aiming for the best practical outcome).

2. Bodily Autonomy vs. *Prakriti* (Nature)

- **The Hindu View:** The body is a temple, but it is also part of the material world (*Prakriti*). While Hinduism generally respects life, there are diverse views on bodily autonomy (e.g., historical asceticism vs. modern reproductive rights).
- **The TST View (Tenet III):** One's body is **inviolable**. This is a hard-line legal stance often used in TST litigation.
- **The Contrast:** Hinduism often emphasizes the *soul's* journey over the *body's* desires. TST argues the body is all we have, so its autonomy is the highest priority.

3. Truth and Science: *Satya* vs. Tenet V

- **The Hindu View (*Satya*):** Truth is one of the pillars of Dharma. Hinduism has a long history of integrating science (Ayurveda, astronomy, mathematics) into its worldview, often stating that "Truth alone triumphs."
- **The TST View (Tenet V):** Beliefs must conform to the **best scientific understanding**.
- **The Overlap:** Both systems generally value the pursuit of truth. However, TST will discard a belief if science disproves it, whereas some Hindu traditions may attempt to reconcile modern science with ancient Vedic texts.

In the context of The Satanic Temple's First Tenet, the phrase **"in accordance with reason"** acts as a crucial "logical governor." It prevents compassion from becoming a blind, self-destructive impulse or a mandate for enabling harmful behavior.

While traditional religious compassion is often framed as an absolute or unconditional mandate (e.g., "turn the other cheek"), TST's version is **consequentialist**. It asks you to use your intellect to determine if an act of compassion actually results in the "best" outcome.

Here is how that balance typically breaks down:

1. Avoiding "Pathological Altruism"

Reason dictates that you should not sacrifice your own well-being or safety for someone who is actively causing harm. Compassion "in accordance with reason" means you can empathize with a person's struggle without feeling obligated to tolerate their abuse or support their destructive actions.

2. Evidence-Based Empathy

Reason requires looking at the facts of a situation.

- **Example:** Giving money to a person in crisis is compassionate.
- **The "Reason" Layer:** If you have evidence that a specific way of giving actually harms the person or the community in the long run, reason dictates that you find a more effective, evidence-based way to help (like supporting a local shelter or program).

3. The Rejection of Dogma

In many theological systems, "compassion" is dictated by rules—who to help and how. Under the Tenets, reason replaces those rules. You are expected to use your own critical thinking skills to evaluate:

- Who is suffering?
- What is the root cause?
- What action will actually alleviate that suffering without creating more?

4. Compassion for "All Creatures"

The First Tenet explicitly mentions "all creatures." Reason suggests that humans are part of a biological ecosystem. Therefore, this tenet often leads members toward environmentalism or animal rights—not because of a mystical "oneness," but because it is scientifically rational to care for the environment that sustains life.

Legal/Philosophical Intersection

The First Tenet argues that "niceness" without a framework of reason is ineffective. It demands that an individual's moral actions be as sharp and well-considered as a legal brief—grounded in the reality of the situation rather than just a vague feeling of "doing good."

1. Compassion vs. Traditional Religious Charity

Traditional religious charity is often based on **Divine Command** or **Merit**.

- **Motivation:** In many faiths, charity is a requirement for salvation or a means to "store up treasures in heaven." Compassion is often secondary to the act of obedience to God.
- **The "Worthiness" Filter:** Historically, some religious charities have distinguished between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, often tying aid to moral behavior or religious participation (e.g., "soup and a sermon").
- **Contrast with Reason:** TST's model rejects the idea of "divine mandate." It argues that if your "reason" tells you a religious rule is causing more harm than good (such as denying aid to someone based on their lifestyle), you should ignore the rule and follow the evidence of what helps.

2. Compassion vs. Government Charity (Welfare/Social Services)

Government "charity" is essentially **Bureaucratic Compassion**—it is focused on standardized fairness and statutory compliance.

- **Motivation:** The goal is social stability and the fulfillment of legal mandates.
- **Rigidity:** Government programs must follow strict legislative "formulas." Recall how SNAP benefits or housing vouchers are allocated—if a person is $\$1$ over the income limit, "reason" might say they still need help, but the "rule" says no.
- **Contrast with Reason:** TST's tenet allows for more flexibility. It suggests that if the system is failing to provide justice (referencing the Second Tenet), the individual has a moral obligation to act compassionately even if the "institutional" answer is "no."

BAPHOMET AS A SATANIC SYMBOL

In mythology, the goat and the ram occupy very different "neighborhoods" of the divine. The goat often belongs to the wild, peripheral spaces of the world, while the ram is frequently seated at the center of the pantheon or the start of the cosmic calendar.

The Goat: The Wild & The Nutritious

In myth, the goat oscillates between being a **provider** and a **disruptor**.

- **Amalthea (Greek):** The foster-mother of Zeus. She was a goat who suckled the infant king of the gods in a cave to hide him from Cronus. When one of her horns broke off, it became the **Cornucopia** (Horn of Plenty), cementing the goat as a symbol of miraculous abundance.
- **Tanngrisnir and Tanngnjóstr (Norse):** Thor's two goats that pull his chariot. They represent a cycle of resurrection: Thor could cook and eat them at night, and as long as the bones were left unbroken, he could revive them with Mjölnir the next morning.

- **Pan and the Satyrs (Greek):** Representing "Pan-ic" and the untamed wilderness. The goat-man hybrid is the ultimate mythic symbol of the bridge between human intellect and animal instinct.

The Ram: The Solar & The Sovereign

The ram is almost always associated with the **sun**, **fire**, and the **will of the gods**.

- **The Golden Fleece (Greek):** The ram *Chrysomallos* was a winged, golden-fleeced creature sent by Nephele to save her children. Its fleece later became the ultimate prize for Jason and the Argonauts—a symbol of kingship, authority, and the favor of the divine.
- **Amun-Ra (Egyptian):** The "King of the Gods" was often depicted with the head of a ram. The curved horns (Ammon's horns) represented hidden power and the spark of creation.
- **Agni (Hindu):** The god of fire is often depicted riding a ram. The animal's aggressive nature and tendency to "butt" through obstacles make it a perfect mount for the transformative and destructive power of fire.
- **Khnum (Egyptian):** The god who fashioned humans on a potter's wheel was ram-headed, symbolizing the "procreative" force and the source of the Nile.

Symbolic Conflict: The Scapegoat

One of the most powerful mythological/religious shifts occurs in the **Levitical traditions**, where two goats were used:

1. **The Sacrifice:** Offered to God.
2. **The Scapegoat (Azazel):** A goat onto which the sins of the community were symbolically placed before it was driven into the wilderness.

This created a lasting mythic archetype: the goat as the "bearer of shadows," whereas the ram remained the "noble sacrifice" (as seen in the story of Abraham and Isaac).

Comparative Mythology

Culture	Goat Myth	Ram Myth
Greek	**Pan:** Wild nature & chaos	**Aries:** The Golden Fleece & Heroism
Norse	**Heidrun:** The goat providing mead	**The Valknut:** Sometimes linked to ram-like tenacity
Egyptian	**Banebdjedet:** The soul of Osiris	**Amun:** The creator & sun energy



The contrast between **Baphomet** and **Amun** is a fascinating study in how the "Ram-headed" or "Goat-headed" figure evolved from a symbol of supreme cosmic creation to a symbol of forbidden knowledge and social rebellion.
While they share a caprine aesthetic, they represent opposite ends of the spiritual spectrum: **Amun** is the Light of the State, and **Baphomet** is the Light of the Individual.

Amun: The Hidden King (The Ram)

In Ancient Egypt, Amun was the "King of the Gods." By the New Kingdom, he merged with the sun god to become **Amun-Ra**.

- **The Horns of Power:** Amun is depicted with the curved, downward-spiraling horns of a **ram**. These horns represent the life-giving "Ba" (soul) and the virility of a creator.
- **Establishment & Order:** He was the god of the Pharaohs and the state. He represented the "breath of life" that sustained the entire cosmos.
- **The Solar Force:** As a solar deity, Amun is a symbol of **revelation**. He is the "Hidden One" who makes himself known through the light of the sun and the success of the empire.

Baphomet: The Sabbatical Goat (The Goat)

Baphomet is a much younger symbol, famously formalized by the occultist Eliphas Lévi in 1856 as the "Sabbatical Goat."

- **The Horns of Duality:** Baphomet features the straight, upright horns of a **goat**. Between these horns sits a torch, representing **Enlightenment** or "Gnosis"—knowledge gained by the individual rather than granted by a state god.
- **The "Solve et Coagula":** Baphomet is a symbol of **equilibrium**. It combines opposites: male and female, animal and human, dark and light. While Amun

represents a singular divine authority, Baphomet represents the union of all forces.
- **The Outsider:** Unlike Amun, who sat at the heart of the temple, Baphomet became a symbol for those outside traditional religious structures—the "Scapegoat" who embraces the shadow to find truth.

Head-to-Head Comparison

Feature	**Amun (The Ram)**	**Baphomet (The Goat)**
Origin	Ancient Egypt (c. 2000 BCE)	Medieval/19th Century Occultism
Animal	**Ram** (Forceful, Solar)	**Goat** (Rebellious, Earthy)
Core Theme	Universal Sovereignty & Creation	Personal Enlightenment & Duality
Social Context	The God of the State/Pharaoh	The God of the "Other"/Hidden Wisdom
Light Symbol	The **Sun** (External/Physical)	The **Torch** (Internal/Intellectual)

The "Alexander" Connection

Interestingly, there is a historical bridge between these two. When **Alexander the Great** conquered Egypt, he visited the Oracle of Amun and was declared the god's son. Afterward, he was often depicted on coins with the "Horns of Amun."
Centuries later, some historians argue that these "horned" depictions of powerful, ancient figures influenced the later Western visual development of "horned" entities like Baphomet—though the two serve completely different masteries. Amun is the god of **Who We Are** as a civilization; Baphomet is the symbol of **What We Seek** as individuals.

Satanism is Good

The figure of Satan in Western literature has undergone a radical transformation from a monstrous personification of evil to a sophisticated symbol of rebellion, intellectual curiosity, and humanism. By examining the works of John Milton, the Romantic poets, and Anatole

France, we can see a Satan who functions not as a "beneficial" personality in the sense of a saint, but as a catalyst for human progress and moral autonomy.

The Miltonic Hero: The Architecture of Will

In John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Satan is famously the most compelling character. While Milton's stated intent was to "justify the ways of God to men," his Satan emerged as a towering figure of indomitable will.

- **The Rejection of Tyranny:** Satan's famous declaration, *"Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n,"* resonates as a foundational principle of modern liberty. He represents the refusal to accept a pre-ordained hierarchy, even one that is "perfect."
- **The Architect of Agency:** In the Garden of Eden, Satan (as the serpent) offers the Fruit of Knowledge. From a literary perspective, this is the moment humanity transitions from "innocent" (and thus infantile and unthinking) to "knowing." Satan is the benefactor who provides the tools for moral choice, effectively birthing the human capacity for ethics.

In John Milton's Paradise Lost, Satan is not a simple villain. He is a deeply complex and tragic figure, arguably the poem's most dynamic and compelling character. This portrayal has fascinated readers and critics for centuries, making him a cornerstone of Western literature.

Here is an analysis of Satan as depicted in Milton's epic:

1. The Archetypal Tragic Hero

Milton does not introduce Satan as a monster. Instead, he is presented as a mighty archangel, even in his fallen state. He possesses qualities that we traditionally associate with heroism: immense courage, intelligence, a charismatic ability to lead, and an unyielding will.

In the first two books of Paradise Lost, Satan is almost magnificent. He refuses to submit to what he sees as God's tyranny. The line "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n" (Book I, 263) has become the defining statement of his rebellious and indomitable spirit.

2. A Character Formed by Pride and Envy

Despite his heroic qualities, Satan's fundamental flaw is his overweening pride (hubris) and intense envy. He cannot accept being subordinate to God, or that the Son has been elevated above him. It is this pride that leads to his rebellion, his defeat, and his ultimate fall. His mission to corrupt humanity is not born of a true sense of justice but from a desire to strike back at God and to appease his own injured sense of importance.

3. Deep Internal Torment and Despair

One of Milton's most significant achievements is showing the psychological torment within Satan. While he puts on a brave face for his followers, his soliloquies (Book IV) reveal a character filled with self-loathing, despair, and an understanding of what he has truly lost.

The realization that "Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell" (Book IV, 75) shows that his punishment is internal and eternal. He recognizes that his own consciousness is his torture, making him a figure of pity as well as repulsion.

4. The Transformation into a "Ruined Archangel"

As the poem progresses, Satan undergoes a visual and moral degradation. In the beginning, he is a "ruined Archangel" whose "form had yet not lost / All her Original brightness." (Book I, 591-594).

However, as he commits himself deeper to his evil path, he becomes increasingly base. He has to take the form of lower and lower creatures—a cherub, a cormorant, and finally, a serpent—to carry out his plot. This degradation climaxes in Book X when, after boasting of his victory, he and all his followers are involuntarily transformed into monstrous, hissing serpents. This physical transformation mirrors his moral corruption and ultimate powerlessness before God.

5. A Multi-Layered Figure of Literary Inspiration

Milton's Satan was so powerful that he became a template for a new type of hero: The Byronic Hero. Romantic poets like Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron saw him as a symbol of defiance against an unjust, tyrannical authority.

William Blake famously remarked in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell that Milton was "of the Devil's party without knowing it." Whether you see him as a heroic rebel, a manipulative deceiver, or a tragic figure of immense intellect lost to pride, Satan in Paradise Lost remains one of the most enduring and complex creations in literary history.

The Romantic Satan: The Promethean Liberator



It was a deep pit, into which I descended, driving the Angel before me. Soon we saw seven houses of brick. One we entered. In it were a number of monkeys, baboons, and all of that species, chained by the middle, grinning and snatching at one another, but withheld by the shortness of their chains.

William Blake. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (Kindle Locations 276-278). Kindle Edition.

The Romantic writers, particularly Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake, viewed Milton's Satan as a tragic hero and a "good" influence on the human spirit. Blake famously wrote that Milton was *"of the Devil's party without knowing it."*

- **The Spirit of Inquiry:** In Shelley's view, Satan is a Promethean figure—one who suffers eternal torment to bring "fire" (enlightenment) to mankind. This Satan is beneficial because he opposes the "tyranny of the mind." He represents the creative, rebellious impulse that drives art, science, and the dismantling of oppressive social structures.
- **Individualism:** The Romantic Satan is the ultimate individual. In a world of conformity, he is the personality that affirms the "self" against a monolithic authority.

The Humanist Satan: The Guardian of Reason

In later literary works, such as Anatole France's *The Revolt of the Angels*, Satan's role as a "beneficial" force becomes even more explicit.

- **Knowledge as Salvation:** In France's narrative, Satan realizes that if he were to overthrow God, he would simply become another tyrant. Therefore, he chooses not to conquer, but to teach. This Satan is a personality dedicated to science, art, and human flourishing.
- **The End of Dogma:** This version of the character suggests that the "Good" Satan is the one who encourages humanity to stop looking for masters—celestial or earthly—and to find purpose in the material world.

Conclusion

In literature, Satan is "good" not because he is a source of comfort, but because he is a source of **conflict**. He is the friction that causes fire. By challenging the status quo and prioritizing the pursuit of knowledge over blind obedience, the literary Satan serves as the archetype for the modern intellectual. He represents the difficult, often painful path toward autonomy, suggesting that a life of "reasoned rebellion" is more beneficial to the human spirit than a life of unquestioning servitude.

When viewed through the lens of literature and modern philosophy, the "Satanic" archetype functions more as a **liberator** than a villain.

The Argument Against the Concept of Satanic Evil

I. The Benefactor of Human Agency

The traditional narrative of the Fall portrays the Serpent (Satan) as a deceiver. However, a reasoned counter-argument suggests he is the **architect of human maturity**.

- **Knowledge over Ignorance:** In *Paradise Lost*, Eden is a state of "perpetual infancy" where obedience is mandated by withholding knowledge. By encouraging the consumption of the Fruit, Satan provides the catalyst for **reason** and **moral choice**.
- **Autonomy:** Without the knowledge of good and evil, "goodness" is merely an accident of circumstance. Satan enables humanity to *choose* goodness, which is the only form of virtue that holds actual ethical weight.

II. The Rejection of Arbitrary Authority

If "evil" is defined as the rebellion against a creator, then "good" is defined solely as **obedience**. This creates a moral paradox where the suppression of the individual is deemed a virtue.

- **The First Revolutionary:** Satan's rebellion is a strike against **absolute monarchy**. His refusal to serve a power that demands worship simply because it is powerful is a foundational tenet of modern democracy and the rule of law.
- **Justice over Tyranny:** The Satanic Temple's Second Tenet argues that the struggle for justice should prevail over laws and institutions. Satan represents the necessary "friction" that challenges unjust or stagnant systems.

III. The Symbol of Scientific Realism

Historically, the label of "Satanism" was often applied to scientists, healers, and thinkers who challenged religious orthodoxy (e.g., the "Dark Ages" view of alchemy or astronomy).

- **Enlightenment Archetype:** Satan is the personality of **inquiry**. He represents the Fifth Tenet: *Beliefs should conform to one's best scientific understanding.*
- **Opposition to Dogma:** If "evil" is the pursuit of truth through evidence rather than faith, then the term "evil" has been misused to protect institutional power from being questioned.

IV. The Guardian of Bodily Autonomy

A "beneficial" Satanic personality prioritizes the **inviolability of the self**.

- **Self-Ownership:** Traditional "evil" is often associated with indulgence, but in a modern philosophical sense, this represents **self-ownership**.
- **Respect for the Individual:** By championing the individual's right to their own body and mind (the Third Tenet), the Satanic archetype acts as a safeguard against the "mob rule" or "theocratic overreach" that has characterized much of human history.

Summary Table: Re-evaluating the Archetype

Traditional Label	The Argument for "Beneficial"
The Tempter	The **Educator** (Offering knowledge and choice)
The Adversary	The **Checks and Balances** (Challenging absolute power)
The Deceiver	The **Realist** (Prioritizing science over superstition)
The Fallen One	The **Liberator** (Choosing freedom over servitude)

Conclusion: If we define "evil" as that which causes suffering and "good" as that which promotes human flourishing, a strong argument can be made that the *symbolic* Satan—the one who encourages knowledge, empathy, and the questioning of authority—is a more beneficial influence on modern civilization than the dogma of blind obedience.

The Adversarial Advocate: Reinterpreting Satan as a Catalyst for Humanism

The figure of Satan is arguably the most misunderstood character in Western culture. While traditionally cast as a personification of malice, a closer examination of Enlightenment literature and modern philosophy reveals a personality that functions not as a villain, but as a **beneficial catalyst** for human progress, intellectual autonomy, and the pursuit of justice.

I. From Infancy to Autonomy: The Educator



In the traditional Edenic narrative, humanity exists in a state of "perpetual infancy"—provided for, yet forbidden from understanding the nature of their own existence. In this context, the Serpent (Satan) acts as the world's first educator.

- **The Gift of Moral Choice:** By encouraging the consumption of the "Fruit of Knowledge," Satan facilitates the transition from blind obedience to **conscious agency**.
- **The Birth of Ethics:** True virtue cannot exist without the possibility of its opposite. By providing the tools for moral discernment, Satan allows humanity to *choose* goodness based on reason rather than an accident of circumstance.

II. The Architecture of Will: Milton and the Romantics

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* inadvertently created the "Romantic Satan"—a character of indomitable will and sophisticated intellect.

- **Better to Reign in Hell:** This famous sentiment isn't an endorsement of suffering, but a foundational declaration of **individual liberty**. It posits that self-governance, even in hardship, is superior to comfortable servitude under an absolute authority.
- **The Promethean Liberator:** Romantic poets like Shelley viewed Satan as a successor to Prometheus. Just as Prometheus stole fire to aid mankind, the literary Satan offers the "fire" of inquiry to challenge the "tyranny of the mind."

III. The Five Pillars of a "Beneficial" Satanic Personality

When we strip away the supernatural folklore, the "Satanic" archetype aligns with several core values that define modern secular society:

1. **Reasoned Compassion:** The rejection of dogma in favor of empathy "in accordance with reason."
2. **Institutional Skepticism:** Acting as a "check and balance" against absolute power—whether religious, corporate, or governmental.
3. **Scientific Realism:** Prioritizing evidence-based understanding of the world over inherited superstition.
4. **Bodily Autonomy:** The belief that one's own body is inviolable and subject to one's own will alone.
5. **Rectification of Errors:** Acknowledging fallibility and focusing on tangible harm reduction rather than divine forgiveness.

IV. Comparative Impact: A Summary

The Traditional "Evil" View	The Philosophical "Good" View
Chaos: Destabilizing the "Perfect" order.	**Progress:** Breaking stagnant systems to allow growth.
Pride: The sin of self-importance.	**Self-Ownership:** The virtue of individual dignity.
Temptation: Leading people away from "the path."	**Inquiry:** Encouraging people to find their own path.

Conclusion: The Mirror of Human Progress

Ultimately, the "good" Satan is a mirror reflecting the best of human potential: the courage to ask "Why?", the empathy to alleviate suffering without a mandate, and the strength to stand against injustice. By reinterpreting this figure as a symbol of **Enlightenment values**, we find a personality dedicated to the flourishing of the human spirit through the difficult, yet noble, path of reason.

"The struggle for justice is an ongoing and necessary pursuit that should prevail over laws and institutions." — *Derived from the Second Fundamental Tenet*

STOICISM, EXISTENTIALISM, AND SATANISM

That synthesis is a powerhouse of self-reliance. When you blend those three, you essentially create a "Personal Sovereignty" framework that covers the internal, the external, and the systemic.

Here is how those three philosophies interlock to form a cohesive worldview:

1. The Intellectual Architecture

- **Existentialism (The Foundation):** It provides the "blank slate." It asserts that there is no pre-ordained meaning in the universe. You are the architect.
- **Satanism/Naturalism (The Walls):** It provides the boundaries based on the material world. It rejects the supernatural and insists that our "meaning" must be grounded in scientific realism and bodily autonomy.
- **Stoicism (The Roof):** It provides the protection. It gives you the tools to endure the "Absurd" (existentialism) and the harsh realities of nature (naturalism) without being emotionally destroyed by things outside your control.

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2. Where They Intersect

Concept	Existentialism	Stoicism	Satanism (TST)
Authority	The Individual.	The Rational Mind.	Reason & Science.
Suffering	Inevitable & Absurd.	A matter of perception.	To be alleviated through compassion.
Freedom	Radical/Absolute.	Internal/Psychological.	Inviolable/Bodily.
The Goal	Authenticity.	Tranquility (*Ataraxia*).	Justice and Wisdom.

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3. The Synthesis in Practice

This combination is particularly pragmatic:

- **Stoic Resilience:** You recognize the "Dichotomy of Control." You can't control a judge’s ruling or a difficult client's temperament, but you can control your own rational response. This prevents burnout.

- **Existential Responsibility:** You don't blame "fate" or "God" for a bad outcome. You accept that you are the sum of your choices, which drives a higher level of professional accountability.
- **Satanic Justice (Naturalism):** You use the law as a tool for equity. If a system is causing unnecessary suffering (violating the First Tenet), your "naturalist" view demands you use reason to rectify it rather than waiting for "divine" justice.

4. The "Sovereign Individual"

The result of this synthesis is a personality that is **un-manipulatable.** * You cannot be guilted by traditional religious dogma (Satanism).

- You cannot be paralyzed by the fear of an indifferent universe (Existentialism).
- You cannot be shaken by external misfortune (Stoicism).

It is a worldview that celebrates the **Self** while demanding that the Self be **disciplined, compassionate, and grounded in reality.**

NIETZCHE

The intersection of your personal synthesis—**Stoicism, Existentialism, and Naturalistic Satanism**—finds its ultimate "apex predator" in Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of the ***Übermensch*** (often translated as the "Overman" or "Superman"). Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is the figure who emerges after the "Death of God"—the realization that external, objective moral structures have collapsed.



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1. The Creator of Values (Existential Intersection)

Nietzsche argued that most people live by "Slave Morality" (reacting to others) or "Herd Morality" (following the group). The *Übermensch* practices **Master Morality**, which aligns perfectly with your existentialist focus:

- **Self-Definition:** Instead of inheriting "good" and "evil," the *Übermensch* defines their own values.
- **The Blank Slate:** Just as Existentialism claims existence precedes essence, Nietzsche suggests the *Übermensch* treats life as a work of art where they are the sole creator.

2. Amor Fati: Love of Fate (Stoic Intersection)

Nietzsche's concept of ***Amor Fati*** is the "radical" version of Stoicism.

- **Stoicism says:** Endure what you cannot change with a calm mind.
- **The *Übermensch* says:** Don't just endure it; **love it.**
- The *Übermensch* accepts the natural world (Naturalism) in all its brutality and beauty, refusing to wish that anything were different. This is the ultimate "Dichotomy of Control"—taking total ownership of one's reaction to the universe.

3. The Adversary (Satanic Intersection)

The Satanic Temple's celebration of the "Adversary" is essentially a celebration of the Nietzschean spirit.

- **The Rejection of the Supernatural:** Both Nietzsche and Naturalistic Satanism demand that we remain "faithful to the earth." They reject "afterworlders" who promise rewards in a life that doesn't exist.
- **Strength and Compassion:** While Nietzsche is often mischaracterized as being "cruel," the *Übermensch* is actually someone who has so much "overflowing" strength that they can afford to be compassionate by choice, rather than out of religious obligation or fear.

The Synthesis Table: The *Übermensch* Framework

Element	**Nietzsche's Übermensch**	**Your Synthesis**
Meaning	Self-Generated.	**Existentialism**
Reaction to Hardship	*Amor Fati* (Love of reality).	**Stoicism**
Worldview	"Stay faithful to the earth."	**Naturalism**
Symbolism	The Lion (The breaker of "Thou Shalts").	**Satanism** (The Adversary)

The Legal Dimension: The Sovereign Advocate

In your professional context as an attorney, the *Übermensch* archetype is particularly potent. It describes a practitioner who:

- **Transmutes Conflict:** Instead of being drained by litigation, you view it as a necessary "testing" of your own excellence and reason.
- **Operates Beyond the "Herd":** You aren't motivated by social approval or professional "status," but by your own internal standard of justice (Tenet VII).
- **Recognizes the Natural Law:** You understand that legal systems are human constructs (Naturalism), but you use your "Master Morality" to bend those constructs toward what is actually reasoned and compassionate.

The Risk: The "Solitude" of the Superman

Nietzsche warned that the *Übermensch* is often a lonely figure because they no longer share the "common" delusions of the herd. By rejecting supernatural comfort and institutional safety nets, you gain absolute sovereignty, but you lose the "warmth" of the collective lie.

PRACTICALITY AND COMMON SENSE

When applying the lens of practical outcomes to **Satanism**—specifically modern, non-theistic Satanism as practiced by organizations like The Satanic Temple (TST) or the Church of Satan—the philosophy aligns closely with **Pragmatism** and **Strategic Individualism**.

In this context, Satan is not viewed as a literal deity, but as a "pragmatic symbol" representing rebellion against arbitrary authority and the pursuit of tangible, earthly success.

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1. Pragmatism and "The Here and Now"

Satanism is fundamentally a "life-affirming" philosophy that rejects the promise of an afterlife. Because there is no "later," the **practical outcome** of one's current life is the only metric of success.

- **Action over Prayer:** Instead of appealing to a higher power, practitioners emphasize personal agency. If a problem exists, the only "truth" is the solution that actually works in the physical world.
- **Scientific Rationalism:** Modern Satanism often treats the scientific method as the ultimate pragmatic tool, as it yields the most reliable outcomes for understanding reality.

2. Utilitarianism in Activism

Groups like The Satanic Temple often use Satanic imagery to achieve specific **legal and social outcomes**. This is a form of political pragmatism:

- **The Goal:** To preserve the separation of church and state.
- **The Method:** If a government allows a religious monument on public land, TST may petition to install a statue of Baphomet.

- **The Outcome:** The practical result is often the removal of *all* religious monuments, achieving the desired goal of secularism through a clever application of religious liberty laws.

3. Epicureanism and Strategic Hedonism

While often associated with indulgence, the application is often pragmatic. It isn't about mindless excess (which leads to poor health outcomes), but about **calculating** which actions produce the greatest amount of long-term satisfaction and the least amount of practical trouble.

4. The "Indulgence vs. Compulsion" Rule

The Church of Satan's philosophy, founded by Anton LaVey, makes a pragmatic distinction between:

- **Indulgence:** Choosing to enjoy life's pleasures for a positive outcome.
- **Compulsion:** Being controlled by a desire to the point where it negatively impacts your life.
- **Pragmatic Check:** If an activity stops producing a beneficial outcome and starts causing harm, it is no longer "Satanic" in a functional sense; it is a weakness.

Comparison of Outcomes

Framework	Practical Application in Satanism
Self-Sovereignty	Making decisions based on what benefits the individual's health, wealth, and happiness.
Social Justice	Using religious status to protect reproductive rights or free speech (outcomes-based activism).
Atheistic Satanism	Treating the "Satan" archetype as a tool (instrumentalism) to boost confidence or defy social pressure.

SUMMARY

The contemporary non-religious view of Satan contrasts with many prejudicial views. Satan was a Nietzschean superman who refused to bow to God's authority. His followers accept a worldly view of life, without God and without an afterlife. He gave Eve the Apple of Knowledge and indeed Satanists accept a scientific view and eschew blind faith. All life is co-equal, and humans are best guided by a morality tempered by reason. If sacrificing one

person will save 100, it is reasonable compassion. Likewise, a lie to protect life is reasonable compassion.

Satanism synthesizes well with other philosophies including Existentialism, Utilitarianism, and Stoicism. All emphasize life on earth and how best to interact for optimal outcomes. Existentialists maintain that one’s essence is simply what one does and connections with others are optimal. Stoics acknowledge that one can only control one’s own thinking, but that should not prevent dealing with externality to seek the best outcome. Utilitarianism is an ethical theory asserting that the best action is the one that maximizes "utility" (usually defined as happiness or pleasure) for the greatest number of people. It is strictly focused on the consequences of actions. Reasonable compassion and individuality embrace the spirit of all philosophies.