



THE "CLOVEN" HOOF

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Ha, Ha, Ha, I'm Laughing* - by Diane La Vey

What element, besides the obvious, in the average person's conception of God and Satan distinguishes each entity's personality? A *sense of humor*--the presence or absence of one. Can anyone picture God telling, taking or enjoying a good joke? The very idea is laughable. *Oh God* would have had no basis for humor were it not for the general consensus that a humorous or witty God is ridiculous.

The Devil, on the other hand, "laughs with demonic mirth," is possessed of a "sardonic wit," and his eyes hold a "glint of wicked bemusement." The farthest God, in his popular image, ever strays from sobriety is a beneficent smile. Satan sniggers with fiendish scorn at God, who sits in his ivory tower emitting nary a chuckle.

This being so, why is a sense of humor the last characteristic usually to be associated with Satanists? Fear? Ignorance? Bad press? Yes, and more. Though most Satanists undoubtedly are at least nominally witty, little importance is consciously placed upon a well developed sense of humor. Partially because we feel Satanism is no laughing matter--we've had more than our share of playing devilled ham for gawking yahoos and snide journalists. Self-directed irreverence is difficult for any minority or revolutionary group. But we must not allow purposeful commitment to the dark side to extinguish the lighter, *balancing* aspects of our character.

When I refer to wit or a sense of humor, I don't mean just the ability to laugh. Any jackass can heehaw. It is the understanding--the *sense*--of what is truly humorous that counts. As with the choice of costume for a masquerade party, it has been said that a person's favorite joke is a key to his personality. (Have you wondered why, on the application for Active membership, we ask the applicant to tell his favorite joke?) But even greater insight can be gleaned from what a person finds amusing without benefit of a prepared script to cue response. Many comedians, for example, are not humorists; they are performers. Their writers are the true wits. If they write their own material they are humorists; if they don't write but are funny, they have good timing and perceptiveness, which allows them to sense and choose what is humorous.

Creative wit is an indicator of degree of intelligence. It promotes discernment which enables one to perceive folly in accepted ideals. The recent remake of *Nosferatu* provides a regrettable example of what happens when one, though otherwise enormously talented and obviously intelligent, lacks the balancing factor of wit. Werner Herzog's spellbinding phantasmagory is shattered by his lapse into silly outmoded religious devices to thwart the vampire. Audience groans and snickers confirm that the spell has been broken. Ever since Polanski's wild spoof, *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, banished the previously obligatory crucifix scene with his mirthful Jewish vampire's response, "Hoo, hoo, hev you got the wrong vampire!," filmmakers mindful of changing philosophical values have avoided such nonsensical affronts.

Were Satanists given to retaining patron saints, a good first choice would be Momus, Greek god of ridicule. Mockery, satire, lampoon, iconoclasm, sarcasm, sardonicism, irony, scorn--all, according to Roget, are comparable. All require humor, all propose examination or introspection of the subject. In a 1954 *New Republic* book review Gilbert Seldes was quoted as saying, "Comedy is the last refuge of the nonconformist mind."

Like our other senses, I believe a sense of humor is innate; creative wit can be developed but not taught. Many make feeble attempts at wit without really comprehending (*sensing*) what

*song by Don McNamee and King Zany, and performed by Otto in *The Great Gabbo*.

is amusing. The results are flat and lack-luster at the least and excruciating in the extreme. Contemporary razzmatazz leads everyone to believe he or she is or should be a wit. Lampshades have never come in so many shapes and hues. Fortunately, if you *do* have the spark, there are many forms of witty expression from which to choose.

A humorist can be jolly, angry, topical, folksy, urbane, crude, whimsical, perverse, crazy--but *not* stupid! A sense of humor presupposes a keen intelligence. Wit requires an ability to see all sides of a situation and perceive aspects which are not readily proffered by the thing under observation. In order to extract the humorous we must watch and listen more creatively. Such perceptiveness prevents us from accepting, without question, whatever is offered. Nothing is sacred, from the standpoint of creative wit, not even ourselves. Why are so many comedians of Jewish extraction? Because they have a legacy of good-humored self-criticism. Freud points to this as the reason "a number of the most excellent jokes...should have sprung into existence from the soil of Jewish national life. They are stories which were invented by Jews themselves and which are directed against Jewish peculiarities." He goes on to say that Jewish jokes made up by non-Jews are not as funny because the Jew is seen as a simple buffoon for which there is no comprehension shown of his true characteristics. If we can laugh at ourselves we can usually have the *last* laugh in any situation. This same sense of the ridiculous saves us from making asses of ourselves by showing up at the local Taco Bell in ritual garb or grandiloquently throwing a curse at the garage mechanic who hands us an exorbitant bill. There are *some* self-styled "devil-worshippers" to whom such antics wouldn't seem ludicrous.

Wit is perhaps the best key to understanding the Balance Factor. If you know what is funny, you also know what isn't. And if you know that, you have a pretty good idea of what is important and what isn't, when to push and when to pull back. (Some of the funniest moments are those spent in total silence following a remark or action by an unsuspecting straight man/woman.)

Countless volumes have been devoted to analyses and critiques of comedy. It is not my intention to add to that heap. Here we are concerned with subjective comedy--the humor which we ourselves create and which colors our conduct.

From a Satanic standpoint, the *pleasure* derived from the results of our wit is sufficient incentive for the conscious development of same. Freud, in his *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious*, states "...witty activity is...not to be designated as aimless or purposeless, since it has for its aim the evocation of pleasure in the hearer. When we do not use our psychic apparatus for the fulfillment of one of our indispensable gratifications, we let it work for pleasure, and we seek to derive pleasure from its own activity. I suspect that this is really the condition which underlies all aesthetic thinking...we have established a connection between the technique of wit which is partly controlled by the tendency to economize*, and the production of pleasure."

We have all experienced that curious, almost physical, sensation which comes with inspiration, the thrill of discovery, the exhilaration when something finally "clicks" in our mind. The psychic kick we get offers surcease from the humdrum and/or tension of our daily lives. "Wit-work" produces something similar. This essay was prompted by my own growing awareness of that phenomenon and what triggers it. The mental impulse relative to humor, which mimics physical sensation, was incomprehensible to me, and, apparently, to others as well. Considerable research revealed a surprising paucity of anything definitive on subjective/creative wit. Who would have thought it would be "Doctor Freud to the rescue!" In the following discussion of wit as an inspiration, Freud sums up what I had been able to conceptualize in my own mind but unable to effectively relate to others concerning the *sensory* response to our own creative wit:

"It is true that it is common to hear one say 'I *made* a joke,' but one feels that one behaves differently during this process than when one pronounces a judgment or offers an objection. Wit shows in a most pronounced manner the character of involuntary 'inspiration' or a sudden flash of thought. A moment before one cannot tell what kind of joke one is going to make, though it lacks only the words to clothe it. One usually experiences something indefinable which I should like most to compare to an absence, or sudden

*Freud refers here to a peculiar form of condensation or compressing as applied to thought and expression. But he cautions that laconism is not necessarily wit.

"drop of intellectual tension; then all of a sudden the witticism appears, usually simultaneously with its verbal investment. Some of the means of wit are also utilized in the expression of thought along other lines, as in the cases of comparison and allusion. I can intentionally will to make an allusion. In doing this I have first in mind (in the inner hearing) the direct expression of my thought, but as I am inhibited from expressing the same through some objection from the situation in question, I almost resolve to substitute the direct expression by a form of indirect expression, and then I utter it in the form of an allusion. But the allusion that comes into existence in this manner having been formed under my continuous control is never witty, no matter how useful it may be. On the other hand, the witty allusion appears without my having been able to follow up these preparatory stages in my mind. I do not wish to attribute too much value to this procedure, it is hardly conclusive, but it does agree well with our assumption, that in wit-formation a stream of thought is dropped for a moment which then suddenly emerges from the unconscious as a witticism."

At the risk of being accused of making a Freudian shift, for anyone who still is not convinced of the value of wit, this should grab you. A sense of humor is sexy! In polls taken on the subject of sexiness or attractiveness, a good sense of humor always rates high. This is because wit subliminally suggests many things other than just fun and games. Humor is an unparalleled tension breaker. Creative wit and heightened perception, as we have seen, are inseparable qualities. So, assuming all other signals are go, that perceptiveness better enables one to appreciate a partner's good points and understand any shortcomings. (Nothing is worse than being thought appealing for all the wrong--perhaps even nonexistent--things.) And, lastly, love of pleasure and intensity of emotion are concomitants of wit.

Satanists deal in the paradoxical. We turn things around, upside down and inside out in our pursuit of knowledge. It, therefore, follows that our approach to humor would tend towards the inverse, or unpopular. Satan is, after all, the accuser and represents the opposition. To us, up is down, black is white, "good" is "evil," left is right (correct?). So don't feel deficient if much contemporary humor makes you cry; witless comedy is indeed lamentable. If you view *Animal House* and "Saturday Night Live" as quaint you are tuned to USF (the Ultra Satanic Frequency).

A Guide for the Discontented - by Anton Szandor La Vey

The economy of the Western world in general and the U.S. in particular is dependent upon dissatisfaction. The concept of planned obsolescence has its roots in the ease with which Americans can be made to feel dissatisfied and disenchanted. Long ago, it was discovered that the most magic single word in the vocabulary of success is *new*. That word instantly translates to "better," "improved," "desirable," "fresh," "clean," "easier," etc., etc. When a baby is born, when life first emerges in any form, it is *new*. Millions of years of conditioning have conveyed a positive connotation to something *new*. For most, it cannot be changed. For a few, it can at least be evaluated.

Let's see how important newness really is:

1. Will it do what the old did as well?
2. Will it do more than the old did?
3. Does it take up less usable space?
4. Is it stronger?
5. Is it lighter weight?
6. Is it less complicated?
7. Can it be repaired as easily or easier?
8. Is it more visually pleasing?
9. Is it more comfortable?
10. Does it make you feel more acceptable or secure?

Of the above questions, number 10 can be considered the most pertinent. An affirmative answer to it can override a "no" answer to the other nine. For most, "newness" means stylishness and stylishness translates to trend and conformity. Conformity. The soothingest satori of the magical state which is entered into with mental ease and financial burden. The main difference between "conformity" and "style" lies in how much money you have to spend.

In order to conform, one must only unthinkingly like whatever is popular and advocate it (evangelize?) to his fellow conformists. To be stylish costs more, as one must wear it, drive it, live in it, sit on it, or pay admission to it. Either way, one must reject or discard the contemporary once it becomes outmoded.

Classicism Can Show Class

An art connoisseur knows that every age or era produces its own art forms. What was stylish in one era often becomes classic in another, but only the passage of time (or a finely honed sense of classicism) will tell. True to formula, it takes one to know one, and a person who is attuned to the elements of universal appeal (line, form, sound) can extract the classic from the craze. Don't mistakenly reject vulgarity. Vulgarity, like evil, is usually a convenience employed by the "pure and good." Mae West is a perfect example; she is certainly not trendy or stylish, but in the essence of classicism, she undisputedly has class--infinitely more class, with her powder and paint and sequins, than the majority of boutique-clad women who are many years younger and secretly terrified of rejection.

Appreciation of art can be learned. Love for it cannot. That's why, in the course of music appreciation a composition can be understood and respected, but not voluntarily listened to for gut reaction on a repeated basis. It's easy to fake a love for the classical in any form, much like faking an orgasm. Can you find enjoyment in repeated experiences that you and you alone have discovered? Can you read the same book many times because you like it so well? Would you rather do something you enjoy repeatedly, than seek new stimulation, regardless of lack of quality of the new interest? If you truly enjoy something, is it not disturbing to dismiss it for specious pleasures? Just because something is new, doesn't mean it's better, unless it confers acceptability upon you.

The New Old

Concurrent with contemporary conformity is the fake-orgasm mania for collectibles and ersatz nostalgia. Many people are turned on to old stuff now who never were before. Why? Because it is "safe" to go ga-ga over old stuff now. Some would explain that because of the trials and tribulations of today's chaotic world a retreat into the simpler and cornier joys of the past are in order. That is a half-truth. If it were not "safe" to wax enthusiastic over the good old days and acquire their trappings, most nostalgia buffs would still throw "old crap" away instead of paying premium prices for it. There used to be a slogan employed by antique dealers: "We buy junk and sell antiques." Now, true to conformist overkill principle, there is no more junk. At least not visibly.

The Dilemma and Solution

If you have read this far, you can understandably arrive at this quandry: The economy is based on planned obsolescence. If not through breakdown, diminished trend and style demoralize the consumer into shifting into a newness. Paradoxically, the "new old" escape is often more costly, more time-consuming, and almost as heavy-handed in its conformity. Where then, *does* one find individuality--or rather, how? To a Satanist, the ability to survive as a non-conformist can be exasperating, but it can also be exhilarating and profitable. The new puritanism (a backlash of the permissiveness of the sixties) can open new vistas of exploitation if one has the talent and imagination. In a society wherein everything is a big deal and assertiveness training is given to kids, the masses will soon assert themselves into worthlessness, just like their money is fast becoming. The Satanic answer is to cultivate these three abilities:

HUMILITY, IMAGINATION, and UTILIZATION

The best part of all is that you can start with no more capital than you already have.

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If your address label reads 11/XIV or 12/XIV, send \$10 renewal (\$15 couples) and address label. This is your only renewal notice; you will receive no second notice! Here's wishing you a salacious Solstice and a salubrious Year XV! . 2NOV SHMOZ KAPOV?