

The Scroll of Set

Issue Number 105

Volume XV-4

August 1989

Editor: Nancy Flowers III°

Copyright © 1989 Temple of Set

[1] Dark Knight

- by Linda Reynolds III°

“‘The Caped Crusader’ ... ‘the Dark Knight of Gotham’ ... What amazing labels they have put to me,” mused the young man. Heir to millions, hero to millions, sitting in comfort, in contemplation, high within his ærie enclave, the twinkling panorama of Gotham’s canyons far below.

Soon the unfolding of a tall and powerful silhouette is highlighted against the pale glow of summer’s Moon. Time to depart, time to forego the privacy of his element, the cool dampness and sparkling technology of the cave.

Alone, silent above the humid streets, alone, high beyond the reach of the shrill crush of Gotham’s frantic midnight.

These late hours cradle the wicked, the haunted, the hunted: those who emerge to prowl and prey upon anyone foolish enough to dare seek excitement amid the city’s hellish music. Yet another is cradled here, another who also preys, another who makes no distinction between evil and innocence, who seeks no more than a silken touch upon the flushed skin of a human throat, a touch that becomes flame, irresistible in its urgency, its recipient swept away in throbbing sensation, swept away, never to return.

This triangle, these three elements: the silent champion, the mindless victim, the windborne other, destined to meet this particular night.

The Dark Knight alighted upon a misted corner, a whimpered call of urgent terror beckoning from a shadowy place. “No! It can’t be. It’s insane!” The Batman heard and responded at once, alert, prepared to defend yet another hapless innocent. He came upon a woman. “Please!”

Her horror doubled when his darkmasked face appeared. Was this not the one who threatened her mere seconds ago? He too was caped and monstrous. “God save me,” she murmured. “I’ll save you” he answered ironically.

She told her tale in trembling spurts. A huge and darkclad figure swept down upon her. He’d swirled away by unknown whim and hissed, “Await me here.” She’d stood, transfixed. “I could not run,” she said, mystified, horrified.

The Batman took her arm, intent upon freeing her from danger, coming to a very strange conclusion - an ancient legend. “Surely there’s no

truth in it,” he decided. The alternative was too bizarre.

“Bizarre, you think? But why? Are we not alike in our endeavor?” The deep, hypnotic voice of the caped and powerful one penetrated the shadowed alley like a thunderclap. The Batman stopped; the woman froze. “Alike? Impossible.”

“Think. You come forth each night to liberate these pitiful creatures from that which frightens them. I do the same.”

“I know who you are.”

“Then you should know that I speak the truth.”

“How can that be?”

“It is their measly lives that frighten them, Dark Knight. You free them from their fear. I free them from their lives. The result is the same.”

The Batman shuddered. The woman shrank back behind his swirling cape. In his mind’s eye he saw a mirror, saw himself reflected within it. His perception became suddenly clear. The truth was there, peering out from his own eyes reflected in that mirror. The two batcloaked beings - the same? Alike in dress, perhaps; alike in appearance - but in deeds?

A gaze alive with fire passed between the two. Neither spoke. The woman sensed her doom and fell away, ignored. The Batman whispered, “We are different.”

“Only from them.”

The distance closed between them. A hand reached out, and another. The alley filled with smoke and stormy sounds, a scream cut short, then silence.

* * *

In the moon’s pale light, the cave, his haven, was beyond the reach of clutching, desperate humanity. His secret ærie, shared only once before. The Batman, sipping sherry from a ruby goblet, sat in quiet comfort, listening. The other, telling tales of centuries gone by, of lifetimes lived, sat across the smallish chamber. His host offered him a ruby goblet. He responded, “I never drink - wine.”

[2] Ode to the Dark Magi

- by Curt Rowlett II°

Hail to the royal four, robed in purple and wrapped in wondrous vision! Touched by the shadow out of time, you have sought to step beyond the stagnant mass delusions of men and into the dark unknown.

Hail Magi! The might of your voices are as thunder from the Abyss and shall draw the Elect to seek the wisdom of the night. Listen now, and hear the Words of those who Understood and have been Understood.

Thelema! Witness the First Beast, and explore the wonders of your own divine soul. Know that you are subject to no will greater than your own. As a number you are infinite. As a star you are unique.

Indulgence! Harken to the Globed Priest who raised high the standard of the strong. Cast away the chains of programmed mental slavery, and live!

Xeper! Behold the Second Beast with horns like a lamb and the voice of a dragon, saying, "Become, O man! Rejoice in your being, you who are the Highest of Life."

Remanifest! Heed now the Master of the Serpent, and cherish well this key to the lock of your own immortal soul. For knowledge is power, and the strengthened will shall triumph over death.

Hail to thee, Dark Magi! Hail Set, Prince of Darkness!

[3] A Hero's Working

- by Timothy McGranahan I°

If we are presumed to be our own gods, it seems to me that we are also the **heroes** of our time. The following working gets its emphasis from this principle. It has been adapted from the "Blueprint for Hero and Mystery Stories" by Lester Dent. Dent was the creator of "Doc Savage, the Man of Bronze" from the early "pulp" magazines. A good book to read to get background on both Dent and his "Man of Bronze" is *Doc Savage - His Apocalyptic Life* by Philip Jose Farmer (New York: Bantam Books, 1975).

The working opens in the usual way, following steps 1-6 as discussed in the *Crystal Tablet of Set*. Steps 7 and 8 are then combined, and follow the outline below. My comments will be in brackets [].

First Part

1. Introduce the hero. [This would be yourself or whomever you wish to affect with the working.] Swat him with a fistful of trouble (the problem at hand), and add menace or mystery. [Menace might be anyone or anything standing in the way of your goal. Mystery could be used more for an illustrative-type working, one in which you need to observe something.]

2. Hero tries to solve mystery [by yourself alone and using only what you already know].

3. Introduce all other characters into the action. [This would mean anyone who may be able to help you attain your goal or who offers answers to your queries. Doc had a group of five associates who were all specialists in their respective fields of interest and who worked together with him when the need arose.]

4. Near the end of the first quarter, a physical (mental/metaphysical would be more accurate in our case) conflict and surprise twist. Make it all happen logically.

Second Part

1. More grief for the hero.

2. Hero, being heroic, struggles. [Grapple with problem in a deeper sense, utilizing both your own knowledge and that provided by the other characters you've introduced.]

3. Another physical (mental/metaphysical) conflict. [These are being utilized as Balance Factor equivalents.]

4. Surprise plot twist. Physical (mental/metaphysical) action should vary: fists one time, guns or, in reality, our other magical devices another. The idea is to avoid monotony. Does the hero find himself in a hell of a fix?

Third Part

1. More grief. [A few more items to balance out the working and the magician's capability of performing it successfully.]

2. The hero corners the villain in a struggle. [One would think he's getting close to the solution at this point, but just wait.]

3. Physical (mental/metaphysical) conflict.

4. Surprising plot twist in which the hero gets it in the neck. [The ultimate test of the magician's willpower and endurance. It helps to get at least one surprise into a printed page - or, in our case, a portion of the working.]

Fourth Part

1. Bury the hero in troubles. [Do these occur as a result of factors previously utilized?]

2. Hero frees or disentangles himself using **his own** skill or brawn [with a little help from the Prince of Darkness]. [This is **the** decisive step in which the hero ultimately endures and forces his will to be worked - the final tipping of the balance in the magician's favor.]

3. All mysteries are cleared up except one. [This would be **any** doubts left in the magician's mind.]

4. Final twist, big climax, final mystery solved! Unexpected twist ending. [Of course this would be quite expected by the magician, as it is the force of his will.]

5. A punch line to end it. The suspense must be logical and hold to the last line. [This "punch line" would serve to redirect the *ba* to the physical body and disintegrate the *ka* to allow it to permeate the objective universe.]

Close the working in the usual way, using steps 9-11 from *Black Magic*.

[4] Truth

- by Karen Revay I°

Faces glowing, full of grace.
Chanting hymns with their own kin.
Not knowing why they give up choice.
To question authority is eternal sin.

Believe what I say, or the consequence is wrath.
He said, "I am the way. Your faith must be blind."
But I couldn't, and with doubt sought many a path.
Thus I finally left to be with my own kind.

No more secrets or heart numb with pain.
The truth is within; no need to search far.
Become what you can is the ultimate gain.
Set is everywhere, especially where you are.

To *Xeper* and *Remanifest* is the only key,
So don't lose sight of the path you're on.
I ask you, "Don't you want to be free?
For you will be, long after they are."

[5] The Law of Antimony

- by Martin Szalay III°

I recognize Magick as concerned to
reverse any existing order. - Aleister Crowley,
Magical Record, 1920

The Law of Antimony is the foundation of any truly Satanic theory of evolution, and is thus central to an adequate understanding of the nature and purpose of the Prince of Darkness. Many aspects of the Law are based on traditional esoteric notions, which in this text are updated to make sense in the contemporary cultural setting. This task has been much assisted by the work of Rupert Sheldrake on the hypothesis of Formative Causation, which is in many respects a reformulation of some very, ancient doctrines of evolution. Egyptologists will also discern echoes of Schwaller de Lubicz' theory of "kingdoms". Interest in Sheldrake's work, however, does not imply partisan or uncritical endorsement of its entirety.

The following extract is drawn from the highly-recommended *Presence of the Past* (1988), and will conveniently summarize the essential thesis:

Sheldrake's theory is that memory is inherent in nature. He suggests that all natural systems, from crystals to termites to rabbits, inherit a collective memory of their kind. Each system is shaped by "morphic fields" containing a collective or pooled memory. Thus rabbits are rabbit-shaped not only because

DNA encodes their proteins, but also because nature has a "rabbit habit", a rabbit-"field" that informs their growth and instinctive behavior. According to the hypothesis of formative causation, this inherent memory depends on morphic resonance, a process that involves action at a distance in both space and time.

The theory of morphic fields, or "morphic resonance", thus regards the evolution of organic forms and psychic form as broadly reciprocal or synchronic events. The connection with Plato's theory of the Forms and with Jung's archetypes is quite plain, and is discussed by Sheldrake in a concise and lucid fashion. Whether or not the essential Forms are eternal, as in Plato's scheme, or are themselves part of the changing pattern of evolution, is not of great importance. Either way the expanses of time involved are so enormous as to render such speculation entirely academic. Besides, in discussing a theory based on acausality, we had better put aside all concepts of ordinary time.

Nor is there much virtue in debating whether essential Form preceded organic manifestation or vice versa, which is merely another version of the "chicken and egg" quandary. The crucial idea is that of essential Form, which exists acausally and, we may say, magically - beyond the world of manifestation.

The notion of morphic fields or essential Forms is closely related to the ancient, esoteric concept of the "group astral", which in the case of all recognizable animals save humanity represents a collective pool or "headquarters" of the appropriate formative energy.

The rabbit-field of the example quoted above would thus be conceived of as the "Great Rabbit", which entity could be contacted and directed by magical methods which have been known to shamans from time immemorial. The various animal deities or totems adopted by shamans and their tribes since prehistory are similarly "group astral" Forms. We could conceptualize them as the Great Wolf, Great Eagle, Great Snake, and so forth.

The lower triangle or cone of the accompanying diagram represents the totality of existing morphic fields on, in, or around this planet. No one could begin to estimate the true number or organization of this vast multitude of fields, but there is unquestionably an immensely-wide spectrum, manifesting as nature's astonishing richness of form.

The human's physical body is one of the more complex products of this principle. Summarily we may categorize this totality of fields as a hierarchy, based on the lengthy evolution from physical to emotional to mental - bearing in mind that even

human “thought” is often no more than instinctive reaction, or part of a habit-field. [Those who doubt this should consult the basic texts of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky.] In the hierarchy of the natural cone, *homo sapiens* occupies the most exalted position. Those who comprise what may be termed the Elect of humanity - who regard themselves as Black Magicians - occupy the pinnacle of the planetary morphic fields, from which they have access to a very different field of existence.

Higher human consciousness is endowed with the capacity to grasp concepts such as time and the future, and thus to formulate the idea of evolutionary destiny. From this arises the idea of “divinity”, which is then projected in the form of gods or deities.

This dimension of awareness and being is represented in the diagram by the antinomial cone, which provides humanity with the potential for non-natural or anti-natural creativity and transformation. From this vantage-point one is able to work on the existing natural order in a manner incomprehensible to any creature bound within the parameters of the natural cone.

Indeed we may see that humanity, uniquely among manifest creatures, possesses the ability to create fresh morphic fields by the exercise of will - a process which has traditionally been called “magic”. The highest and most potent expression of this activity is Black Magic.

Our divine perspective thus permits us to transcend the laws of the natural cone - which, from a human point of view, impel towards inertia and conformity. The Elect are granted the choice of extending their being upwards and outwards into the antinomial field and willing the course of their evolution or Becoming: the process of *Xeper*.

This “Great Work” will unfold through successive Remanifestations of form as the Black Magician, resisting all but the most necessary absorption into the natural cone, moves ever toward the principal archetype or higher activating principle. In Cabalistic/Rosicrucian terms this is the “Holy Guardian Angel”.

Such progress is characterized by an ever-increasing individuation of self, as each member of the Elect approaches the principal archetype from any willed direction or angle. The magician’s field of Becoming is governed by self-created laws. Put another way, this means that the self is the ultimate act of magical creation.

For the individual, therefore, there is an innate consciousness proper to its species, but with man there is also an innate consciousness proper to the individual. This assumes, for the species, a seminal transmission, and for the

individual, transmission through a personal indestructible element bearing the characteristic inscription of the acquired consciousness. - R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, *Sacred Science*, page #73.

Thus it may be seen that there is no “anthropic” group astral which equates to the collectivizing great forms of the animal realms. The “Great Man” is, paradoxically, that which reverses the natural law of centralization and bestows god-like stature on those individuals bold enough to aspire to divinity.

Such aspiration is expressed and vivified by the practice of Greater Black Magic. In various workings the magician will come to realize the black jewel of immortality - the indwelling Prince of Darkness - who acts as a psychic thrusting-block to extend the light of consciousness ever outwards, ever forward.

Reciprocally Greater Black Magic will work to confirm and strengthen the numen of the Prince of Darkness, who is thereby brought into fuller being by the will of his Elect. In this respect the antinomial field mirrors the dynamics of morphic resonance at work in the natural fields. There is a two-way, mutually-enhancing, mutually-creative process of evolutionary formation.

Nor is this resonance limited to the passing-time chronology of the objective universe. The Prince of Darkness exists out of time, which implies that his past is co-existent with his future. Influencing the latter may, through retroactive causation, affect the former.

A scientific justification of this apparently-extravagant idea is provided by the work of the physicist John Wheeler on quantum mechanics:

The quantum principle shows that there is a sense in which what the observer will do in the future defines what happens in the past - even in a past so remote that life did not exist then. - Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics*, page #9.

We may choose to term this phenomenon “circularity” or “acausal feedback”. In effect it amounts to Greater Black Magic.

The Prince of Darkness may thus be regarded as the generator of an alien “anti-field” in which or through which natural Forms [and hence their governing fields] are disintegrated/reintegrated at a rate so dramatically accelerated as to constitute a radically-novel factor in the game of life.

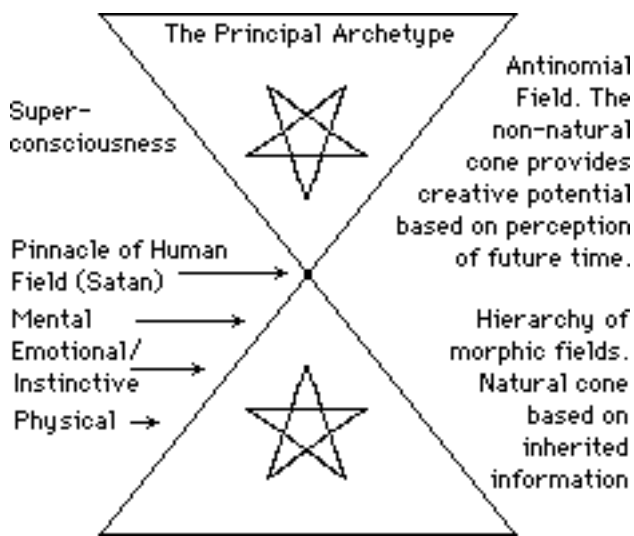
The phenomenon of “black holes” provides an interesting astronomical parallel to this process. The human psyche is similar or analogous to what

scientists term a “singularity” - a locus of energy set apart from the normal laws of physics and able to behave in ways that defy, subvert, or reverse those laws.

Not surprisingly the anti-gods who have historically represented the working of the antinomial field - such as Set in ancient Egypt or Satan in Christendom - have tended to inspire fear, repression, and extreme antagonism. These alien, “dark gods”, each a semblance of the “one true god” who is placed in opposition to the established deities of natural habit, offer those who are Elect the route to freedom, autonomy, and self-determination.

It is no surprise that the majority’s herd-instinct inclines toward conformity with and reabsorption into the natural cone of existing morphic fields. To the Black Magician this regression is perceived as the death of the spirit, the extirpation of the will. So will the magician fight such a course to the very last.

The manifest symbol of that fight, in our cultural setting, remains that of the ArchDæmon Satan - who is thus located at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of natural fields, at which point he provides a gateway to the divine realm of the Prince of Darkness. In the Temple of Set, which has ventured into formerly-uncharted areas of the antinomial field, the true name and nature of this entity have been unveiled.



[6] **Away**

- by Kathleen Kempker II°

Away, slipping from sentimentalism, glance at the watch and breathe, pose in the corpse, form this shell do ease, no time now for common thought.

Whimsy breeze, carelessly caught, speed too fast for cautiousness. Only will can pull it in to maddening clarity, space unbound.

Ceaseless riddles clutter the timeless ether of the fore, past the train of images, 'til subtle darkness

evermore.

Self does make or break the rule. No time to wonder what it is, if it has, but mainly if it will. More riddles further still.

Colored vibrations: Each has its own and everyone its place in time. To chart is not an easy trick; to be exact is harder still.

Future void of content; little is perceived. Blank, receptive parchment: composer’s field of dreams, hidden in an empty darkness no less than it seems.

The question of creation, perplexing in its thought, never considered thought; but now thought is a key.

[7] **Poem**

- by Jennifer Busby I°

Look into the mirror. Gaze upon your soul. Feel the dark fire surround you, burn within your eyes. Behold the being, your reflection. Look into those eyes. Confront the secrets hidden there, the truth behind the lies.

Candle lights flicker, shadows dance, caught forever in this bittersweet romance. Twisting, timeless shadows shift, passing through the doorways into other lands. Lands of timeless beauty, lands of frozen hate; through love and terror must we pass to find the key and open the gate.

[8] **“Awareness of Destiny”**

- by Rebecca Lance III°

I hear this phrase often uttered by initiates of the Temple, and it always makes my head turn and, I have to admit, my brow furrow just a little. There always seemed something about this phrase that was just a bit inconsistent with the Temple’s philosophy. “Destiny” is an odd concept to harbor within an institution such as the Temple, where predetermined paths are not presumed to exist.

But the feeling that accompanies this phrase “awareness of destiny” is undeniably real. So many of us feel this: that sense of destined greatness, a restless, almost painful urge to get on with that future that is yours. I think this is a feeling that can serve the Setian well if he/she takes the time to understand it. Likewise it can misserve in a big and ugly way.

It can be misleading to be drawn to the future. And this feeling, this “awareness of destiny”, so often leads magicians into a future that does not yet exist, blinding them to the wonders of the present. The future in itself is not really the point of this feeling. Rather it is the acknowledgement of the seed of potential contained within you and the power that exists within you now, here, in the present.

Picture a caged bird, a hawk surrounded by bars, beating its wings against the metal as the Sun rises on the horizon - the pain of wings longing to fly feeling trapped. The ability to fly should never be a source of deep pain.

But if you look too longingly to the future, you will see the present as a cage, and will beat yourself against the bars in frustration instead of flying free in the present as you *Xeper*.

[9] **Invocation**

(English translation)

- by Peter Friedel II° (Germany)

You, Set, are the *neter*, lonesome wanderer in the midst of the desert of space and time. You are the great Kephra, the Become. The secret power of your name does not hinder your proceeding. You are situated beyond yesterday and tomorrow. You bear your secret name as the most exalted self, O Prince of Darkness. You are in this place wherein you will permanently endure. Be greeted as friend of the night, you who enlighten in black chambers of the dark.

Look at me. I am before you, my arms spread.

Grant that I may speak with words of power enabling me to touch the hearts of men. All doubts flee; every man must give way. If one dares to stand opposed to you, all non-Become will sink in the sea of oblivion.

One who dares stand against you and your self is already judged. Wide open are the gates, that alone my will becomes. For I am the spirit of fire, the fire-spirit's brother. And everywhere that men live, my power grows. *Xeper!*

[10] **Get Lost!**

- by Patty A. Hardy II°

From the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*: Abyss 1. a. The primal chaos. b. The bottomless pit, Hell. 2. An unfathomable chasm, a yawning gulf. 3. Any immeasurably profound depth or void: "lost in the vast abysses of space and time" (Loren Eiseley) [Late Latin *abyssus*, from Greek *abussos* (limne), "bottomless (lake)": a-, not + *bussos*, bottom]

Thus have I heard: The creation of a new way of life always involves an abyss. The abyss has both subjective and objective aspects.

Examples of objective aspects are desert, open plains, ice, or mountainous wastelands, oceans, and - of course - the ultimate abyss, space itself. The subjective aspect is the state of being lost: no markers and no given direction: perfect freedom.

In the objective domain the practical response to an abyss is to create orientation. The part of the

mind responsible for active discrimination creates and uses markers, which form a record of choice. The part responsible for pattern-awareness creates maps. These activities drive the development of mathematics, timekeeping, astronomy, and earth sciences. If anybody thinks this is irrelevant to religion, consider that Egypt, the longest continuous human civilization in the world, was ruled by a theocracy cloaking technical expertise in mystic garb.

The subjective aspect of an abyss evokes a similar phenomenon. When a being becomes self-reflective, seeing that it may or may not act, the same decision is applied to **the act of decision-making itself**: the analysis of decision-making and the construction of maps or metaphors to guide or orient. The lack of knowledge and orientation regarding the decision-maker's function and capacities causes the self-aware being to experience itself as an abyss.

Those who cannot bear this experience cry out for a deliverer. Those who can, create the world: Religions, empires, and revolutions come forth as they take the power of self-definition into their own hands and become as *Xepera*, the self-created one.

[11] **Fallen**

(a Satanic lullaby)

- by Rebecca Lance III°

Push against the wall of structure. Scream a thousand times. Pick a thousand flowers.

Breath a thousand sighs. Ashes, ashes. We all fall down. Fallen we begin our lives.

Eyes preserve the world of yesterday. Try on tomorrow's heartstrings. We slide a path through the thousand futures that show up in our dreams.

But Heaven and Hell never lie closer than the days we really open our eyes. The seconds grab us by the hand. Each moment binds us down. Ashes, ashes. All fall down. Fallen we can learn to fly.

The mother begs to encircle us with soft and yielding arms. Softly she whispers in the windswept fields, "Come lie with me; come die with me. Gaze into my blue sky forever and ever. I have formed this clearing for you. The sunshine will filter through dapplings of green and light."

Sing out your sin as you tear from her dark and humid arms. Push against the wall of structure. The floor becomes the ladder's rungs, and, fallen, we begin to climb.

[12] News From Germany

- by Roland Winkhart III°
Black Diamond Pylon

Adept Peter Friedel and I are in the process of installing an electronic-mail system for local use, which may eventually be expanded to an international link so that we may go "on-line" with fellow Setians around the globe.

Adept Friedel's translation of Dr. Aquino's *Black Magic* into German continues, after which he may tackle *The Church of Satan*, perhaps in an abridged form for publication. I myself have been developing a German reading list for the Temple, which may be useful as an accessory to the English-language list in the *CT*.

On the North Solstice Adept Friedel and I visited the Wewelsburg Castle. As there were a great many visitors on the day we arrived, the Marble Hall and the Walhalla were closed with lattice so that it was not possible to enter them directly. Therefore we decided to return in the evening.

We decided to commence the working at different locations. Adept Friedel went to the Walhalla entrance, while I went to the wall adjacent to the castle museum. With me I had a brass candelabra containing a single black candle.

At the wall I commenced the working. Suddenly all was silent: no wind, no chirping from the birds, and no sign of any other people. Even a local black cat who had arrived earlier to cross our path had vanished.

I became aware of a power emerging from the castle: assymetrical, powerful, yet sensually pleasant. It hovered in the air before me, then - as I passed my hand through the flame - it infused me, acknowledging my Priesthood. The sensation was indescribable and timeless; when I recovered, I saw that twenty minutes had elapsed.

After discussing this phenomenon with Adept Friedel, who had celebrated an equally-successful working, we drove back to our hotel. It was an unforgettable experience.

* * *

The public interest in "Satanism" here in Germany is somewhat the same as it is elsewhere right now - at least as long as the media are looking for something "occult" to highlight in the absence of news about the Bhagwan, Moon, Maharishi, and/or the late L. Ron Hubbard. But all in all the holding of a Conclave in Germany shouldn't pose any problem, and it should be a delightful affair for all Setians. Our country has, of course, a great many sites of historical and magical significance, side-by-side with attractions which are just plain fun to visit. I will be consulting with Adept Jantschik about this.

* * *

[Adept Friedel adds:] One of the reasons for the Enlightenment in Europe was the development of Freemasonry, which remains a strong social force to this day. There are many imitations of it in occultism, but few viable ones. The first Grand Lodge of Freemasonry was proclaimed in London, and although both the Catholic and Anglican Churches tried to suppress it, they could not. Hence we have the strong legacy of religious freedom in documents such as the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution from Freemasons such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. It may be interesting to compare the experience of European Freemasonry with that of the Temple of Set in both England and continental Europe.

=====



The Black Pyramid

- by Michael A. Aquino VI°

=====

[13] Who Defines Satanism?

We are presently faced with a curious situation in which several markedly different definitions of "Satanism" are being aggressively marketed by their respective proponents.

The Temple of Set, which considers itself to be the original and authentic Church of Satan evolved logically, scientifically, and magically to its present state, considers "Satanism" to be a religion postulating the existence of a non-natural intelligence in the universe which has caused particularizations of its consciousness to exist, to a greater or lesser degree, in the human species.

What distinguishes any religion from a philosophy or ideology is belief in a divine or supernatural intelligence or entity which, in one way or another, concerns itself with human affairs.

If you do not postulate the existence of such an intelligence or entity, you do not have a religion at all. Rather you have either a philosophy or an ideology. A philosophy [in this sense] is a reasoned system of logical, scientific, and æsthetic principles for the conduct of life, while an ideology is merely a code of behavior to which someone adheres out of indoctrination, habit, or convenience - just to give life "meaning and"direction" [whether or not it makes any sense].

By these definitions **only** the Temple of Set qualifies as an authentic Satanic church. After the crisis of X/1975 Anton LaVey abruptly disavowed

the existence of Satan as an intelligent entity altogether. Since then he has never talked about Satan except as an abstract symbol of rebellion or accusation, and his use of the term "Satanism" has quietly become, after the fashion of Humpty-Dumpty, whatever he chooses it to mean from moment to moment.

An interesting contrast has arisen here with regards to the *Satanic Bible* and *Satanic Rituals*. Although these two books, and in particular the *SB*, are still touted as being the essence of Anton LaVey and his post-X "Church of Satan", none of the invocations, incantations, or rituals contained in them actually mean anything to Anton anymore. If you don't believe in the Devil or in similar supernatural/non-natural entities, of what use are rituals that purport to communicate with them?

The *Satanic Bible* has therefore degenerated for Anton into merely a means of parting the gullible from their dollars and cultivating a pack of spaniels to fawn before him for praise - and roll over on their backs when kicked. [It is even a bit misleading to talk of the *SB* as being "authored" by Anton, since both the "Book of Satan" and the Enochian Keys (together accounting for over half of the book - 125 of the *SB*'s 237 text-pages) were originally written by Ragnar Redbeard and John Dee respectively and included in the volume without credit to either Redbeard, Dee, or Aleister Crowley (from whose *Equinox* Anton took his text & "translation").]

What we have in the post-X "Church of Satan" is thus a "business name" which is not even a functioning organization, much less a church, espousing a religion which is not in fact a religion, based on a book which neither the author nor his current pack of spaniels professes to take literally, and which, for the most part, he did not even write. "Satanism" in this situation means nothing except Anton LaVey-worship - which is fine for dogs, I suppose.

The contrast between this and the pre-X Church of Satan is stark. One need only read the pre-X literature, whether by Anton or the Church membership, to see with what respect, conviction, and sense of authenticity the Prince of Darkness, his Church, and ceremonial/magical texts in evocation of the Powers of Darkness were regarded. Indeed the climate then was very much the same as it is now within the Temple of Set - which is not surprising when one recalls that we **are** in unbroken lineage that Church of Satan.

The post-X LaVey Kennel has spawned a few short-term imitations, such as Paul Valentine, notable chiefly for (a) loudly proclaiming themselves to be authentically Satanic and (b) equally passionately denying the existence of Satan. Unsurprisingly such people all find the presence of

the Temple of Set very inconvenient.

The mainstream, big-bucks, heavy metal music industry is shying more and more away from Satanic themes because of the dangerous political climate which has arisen courtesy of Geraldo Rivera *et al.* Rightly or wrongly, Motley Crue, Ozzy Osbourne, and others who pioneered music with Satanic themes have been blamed for inciting youth to "occult" crimes of violence. Not being suicidal fools, they are moving away from these themes towards non-Satanic ones, abandoning the occult music field to underground bands of the "thrash" category - which take an avowedly masochistic pleasure in being shunned by society. Not surprisingly this same "outcast" element is courting the new Anton LaVey, idolizing him - along with Charles Manson - as an icon of tragic martyrdom.

In *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* we are told of one member of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters who went around deliberately aggravating the others. Sooner or later one of them would lose patience and tell him to fuck off, whereupon he could feel hurt and rejected, hence fulfilled. What we have among today's "non-Satan Satanists" is pretty much the same routine. Forgive them, for they know not what they do, nor why, save that it gets them on TV.

On the other side of the fence, and far more serious and dangerous, is institutional Christianity - which has awakened to the realization that the Temple of Set has become a serious threat to its heretofore free use of "Satan" as a scarecrow to frighten adherents into docile obedience. If that scarecrow is removed as a threat - or, worse yet, is seen to be a positive alternative to Christianity - what keeps the sheep in the pen? [Actually most of the sheep will stay there anyway, sheep being sheep, but even the existence of an alternative is unnerving to the shepherds.]

This is what is really at the root of all the horrendous criminal allegations being hurled at "Satanism". Unable to fight us as we really are, because our philosophy is so much sounder than theirs, Christian zealots have to fall back on the tactics of the mob-incited-to-riot. They howl down any "good" definition of the Prince of Darkness or Satanism, insisting that these terms only have meaning when they refer to bad or destructive things. "If you are good," they say, "then you can't be **real** Satanists. If you insist that you **are** Satanists, then you must also be bad people whether or not you've actually done anything wrong."

In 1984 George Orwell accurately noted the importance of definitions, going so far as to include an episode wherein the author of a new dictionary for the totalitarian state gloated over his power to

alter reality by removing or changing the meaning of words. "How can you even think about something forbidden," he said smugly, "if the word describing it no longer exists?" [The dictionary author saw things too clearly for his own good, and was soon liquidated accordingly.]

The greatest challenge faced by the Temple of Set right now, and the one most bitterly contested by our enemies, is simply the right to define our own religion.

* * *

This being the case, I am asked more and more, why don't I write a new book for commercial publication to replace the *Satanic Bible* and, for that matter, to discredit the hate-propaganda books on Satanism?

I confess that the main reason is that I am so disgusted, so revolted by the social climate right now that I would consider such a book to be the casting of pearls before swine. The very people who should read such a book are those who would **refuse** to read it, or who would - as they have done with the *Satanic Bible* - try to twist it into something utterly different than it actually is. How often have you seen some ape on a talk show waving a copy of the *SB* in the air and bleating about child molestation, animal/human sacrifice, *ad nauseam* ... and of course that ultimate give-me-a-break line: "This book is found at the scenes of Satanic crimes." [That must be why the book continues to sell - so that criminals can get extra copies to leave at the all the places they commit crimes.]

Statistically people rarely read books or articles that challenge their preconceived opinions. They buy, read, and memorize what reinforces beliefs they already hold. This is a well-established maxim of publishing, journalism, and propaganda.

After San Francisco police officer Glen Pamfiloff raided our home on the pretext that the Temple of Set was merely a ring of crazed pedophiles, I gave him a copy of the *Crystal Tablet* so that he could see for himself that we were nothing of the sort. Months later I saw that same copy of the *CT*. To my utter astonishment [and contempt], Pamfiloff had gone through *Black Magic* underlining in red any phrase or sentence which by some crazed stretch of imagination could be considered criminally pornographic. There aren't any, you say? I don't think so either. But then we don't think like the Pamfiloffs of the world either.

So this is why I am cool on the notion of writing "a book about Satanism" for the general public. I would rather write things for the *Jeweled Tablets*, *Scroll*, *Runes*, etc. where I know the readership have the brains and the sense to understand them and respond intelligently.

If I do write something for the masses, it will not be a brassy potboiler, but rather something designed to have lasting value as a reference work. *The Church of Satan* is a good example of what I am talking about here.

The sole exception is that I **may** eventually write something along the line of an expose of the "Satanic crime" fad. with particular reference to the Adams-Thompson affair. A project like this would be very disgusting to do - sort of like cleaning out a cesspool - so I am disinclined to undertake it unless it appears to be absolutely necessary. It may be that journalistic coverage of the situation will ultimately suffice to set it right. We shall see.

* * *

The latest "Satanism-expose" books, if they can't criticize the Temple of Set on criminal grounds, have scabbled around for some other rock to throw at it and have settled upon its size. "It has around 75 members," they huff, "hence is not very important even if it is honest - which we don't concede, of course."

The amusing irony of this is that before all the craziness of the last few years got underway, the Temple of Set was a fairly small institution. Nor did this bother us in the least. We are, after all, a highly-specialized and highly-interpersonal organization operating largely on a one-to-one or small-group basis. We weren't [and still aren't] set up to handle large numbers of mail-order members, nor are our services geared to "faceless crowds".

Once the nation went berserk about Satanism, mostly in a negative way, applications to join the Temple started to pour in. We now have several hundred members, even rejecting as many as we do [about 3 out of 4], and the onslaught of applications shows no sign of abating. Thanks, uh, I guess! [I am reminded of one of the old Anton LaVey's aphorisms that all publicity is the same - it only matters whether your name is spelled right.]

The Temple of Set's problem right now is not that it is too small, but rather that it is too large for the highly-personal atmosphere in which our initiatory system is designed to operate. Critical mass will be reached soon, where we either just cap the membership or redesign the Temple entirely into a less-personal, more "slick" institution - about which I would have serious misgivings. We need to discuss such issues at the Conclave, obviously, and on a running-dialogue basis between Conclaves.

* * *

Where membership figures are concerned, Anton LaVey seems to be in a race with Paul Valentine to see who can claim more millions of members. [I would estimate about 5-10 individuals for Valentine and perhaps 20-30 for the Kennel of Satan, but none of this makes any difference in this

Carnival of Souls environment of the 1980s. If Anton can sell the story that he went to bed with Marilyn Monroe, then why not the Brooklyn Bridge too?

[14] United Kingdom Update

Things have quieted down over there following the initial Satanic-scare ruckus by the London tabloids. A much-sensationalized television "expose" about Satanism done by Roger Cook (a sort of UK version of Geraldo Rivera) was finally aired late in July and more or less came and went without causing much of a stir at all. Priest Austen has sent us a videotape of same, and we will try to have it converted to American format by Set-X. Several Setians, including Priest Austen, from the Gates of Albion Pylon will be coming to Set-X. You'll know them because they speak English with a foreign accent and look the wrong way when crossing the street.

[15] Satanism is Alibi for Criminals, says Expert

- by Clark Morphew, Minister, Lutheran Church

[The following article, from the St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch, is interesting for two reasons: (1) It shows that although the Temple of Set has locked horns with a few Satan-crazed Lutherans, not all of them are that way, and (2) sanity prevails in academic-calibre institutions which have concerned themselves with the "Satanic" phenomenon. Bear in mind that the remarks of J. Gordon Melton, a Christian minister himself, pertain to rumored criminal Satanic cults rather than all Satanic institutions. Melton knows quite well about the Temple of Set, as he has invited us to contribute to the "Satanism" entry in ISAR's Encyclopædia of American Religions. - M.A.A.]

We've all been hearing stories about the evil things being done by Satanic cults in every part of the nation: mayhem, murder, and bloody deeds that drive us wild with fear. They seem to be everywhere - sacrificing animals to the Devil, terrorizing people, abusing children, dismembering relatives, drinking the blood of their victims, and performing vile rituals for sadistic pleasure. We hear about these disgusting groups from social workers, psychiatrists, journalists, schoolteachers, even the police. All the people we rely upon for truth and reliable information are telling us that the youth of America are being drawn into Satanism.

Satanic cults are among the most frightening possibilities we can imagine for ourselves and our children, because so many of their practices seem to ooze from an unknown world that many of us deeply fear. We have no defense. Only God can stop Satan. Once the Prince of Darkness targets a life, the mind goes berserk, the heart pumps ice water, and morality is turned to evil.

C'mon, folks, I'm just kidding. Settle down, stay calm, and think logically about this. It doesn't matter if you accept the existence of a creature with awesome evil power. You might even consider Satan a joke, a leering lecher in red underwear. That's OK. The question is: Do you believe teen-agers have created a network of Satanic cults that is infecting the moral sense of our nation? And do you believe that fiddling around with animal bones and other alleged paraphernalia of Devil worship causes the minds of perfectly healthy young people to snap and crumble into a jumble of heinous crimes?

If Satan has the evil power ascribed to him by fundamentalist Christians, why has he waited all this time to corrupt humankind? One would think Satan would just get on with it: Snarl traffic. Blow out computers. Scramble telephones and fax machines. Burn bridges. Destroy every religious and charitable organization. You get the idea. It could be done if Satan is really as powerful as some people say. But dwelling on that question can drive people crazy.

To get at the key questions of the existence of Satanic cults, I talked with an expert. Nobody knows more about new religions and the suspected networks of worshiping cults than J. Gordon Melton, Director of the Institute for the Study of American Religions in Santa Barbara. His views are blunt. In his opinion, the nation has gone bonkers from fear of Satanism. A religion expert, he has searched for organized groups of Satanists for 20 years, but said he has found no evidence to prove their existence.

"What has shown up in the last five years is a nationwide hysteria over Satanism," Melton said. "We've got people standing up and waving a list of 300 names that are supposed to be Satanists. When we check it out, there is no evidence. The hysteria over this is just overwhelming right now."

Conservative Christians have created the hysteria, Melton said. Across the nation fundamentalists have been inviting entire police departments to seminars about Satanism. The evidence presented in those seminars, he said, is often circumstantial and always fails to establish the existence of groups or a nationwide network of Satanists. Even so, he said, some police, journalists, psychologists, and teachers are persuaded and pass along the hysteria.

People who claim that Satan worship made them commit a crime may believe in a "Devil made me do it" syndrome, Melton thinks. But unless those criminals can name co-conspirators or specific ritualistic groups, he cautioned, the Satanic connection is probably either bogus or incidental to the crime.

When anyone commits a crime, the best we can do is recognize that the person is deeply troubled and needs the most effective help society allows. In the end, blaming Satan is just another way of avoiding the reality of the human condition.

[16] On the Wewelsburg

Setian John Lee from Queensland writes:

I just received my latest *Scroll of Set* and noted your comments on *Adolf Hitler and the Holy Lance*. I concur. I recently purchased this book and wrote to the author, enquiring about some of his references and particularly about the Wewelsburg. He replied with the address of one Stuart Russell, from whom I later received a very affable letter. Along with two pamphlets on the Wewelsburg, he included a flyer on his forthcoming co-authored book on the castle. To quote an extract:

"After years of painstaking research in the most important archives at home and abroad, after interviews with many primary eye-witnesses and thorough investigation on location, the first-ever pictorial history of Himmler's castle is now complete. This album, with nearly 200 previously unpublished photos and backed up with a comprehensive text, reveals many of the Wewelsburg's Third Reich secrets. Never before have Himmler's plans and intentions, as well as the everyday life and work in the castle, been so graphically documented."

I have not seen a copy of this work yet, so cannot comment on it in comparison to #14Q. Interested Setians may write to Stuart Russell, Kuhberg 3, 4793 Bueren-Wewelsburg, Germany ... Tel: 0295S/6744.

[17] *Gnosis* on Satanism

Gnosis is an expensively-produced magazine - "A Journal of the Western Inner Traditions" - which, having survived for 12 issues, appears to be solidly on its way to commercial viability. It surveys the various institutions of contemporary occultism, with a mildly critical editorial attitude. This is to say that on one hand it does not debunk just to prove the time-worn axiom that anything metaphysical is scientifically unprovable. Rather, in the words of Editor Jay Kinney:

... It is an editor's sacred duty to challenge the assumptions of his readers. While most magazines built their success on playing to their readers' expectations and offering a comfortable and predictable fare, the best magazines, regularly confound those expectations and invite their readers to rethink the "facts" that they take for granted. Finally *Gnosis* reflects my own personal penchant for contrasting all ideologies (and their opponents) with that which is too often left unsaid. All emperors and empresses "have no clothes" to one degree or another, and I still have an abiding affection for the kid in the crowd who is willing to say so.

Issue #12 (Summer 1989) contains just such a hard-hitting examination of the controversy surrounding Satanism in the 1980s, with a detailed discussion at the Temple of Set from an outside perspective. A first-rate piece of research and writing, in this emperor's humble opinion. While you can order single issues, I would recommend a subscription to this magazine [Oh, go on!], as I think you'll find it an impressive step beyond all the *Fate*-clones on the magazine racks. 1 year US\$15 (US\$20 to Canada, US\$30 for overseas airmail). Ask to start with #12, of course. The address is: *Gnosis*, P.O. Box 14217, San Francisco, CA 94114.

[18] Way Down Yonder in New Orleans

... comes Set-X this month, so Come On Down if you can. We promise to send you home wiser, stranger, and a few pounds heavier. - Ye High-Priest Not to be Described