

Temple of Set Reading List

Category 13: Sex in Religion and Magic

as of February 26, 2003

MA: Sex and magic have never been very far apart. This is both because sorcerers and sorceresses tend to be rather sensual individuals, and because the sexual **drives** (as distinct from sex *per se*) can be used for purposes of ritual magic. Historically Black Magical societies have been accused of being obsessed with sex; a Black Magician might well retort that his/hers is the rational & mature approach, and that the critic is suffering from a bad case of Judaic/Christian repressed/sex neurosis/hysteria. A problem with "sex-magic" has been that many practitioners, in an effort to over-compensate for the aforementioned neurosis, have plunged into sex in the most animalistic way possible - as an indulgence for its own sake. This, for example, was the presumption of the Church of Satan. Aleister Crowley, however, employed his "sex-magical" practices as a means to attain an ecstatic state of being appropriate to an ulterior, conceptualized goal - a fact almost totally lost on his latter-day disciples, who more often than not either ignore the sexual component in his Workings or become obsessed with it. The Temple of Set proposes an integral, non-compulsive, comfortable, and relaxed interrelationship between sex, aesthetics, and love - the neglect of any one of which will inhibit the efficacy of whatever magical Working is involved.

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DW: The only commandment here is to know yourself. Whether you choose to overcome boundaries or practice what you know; whether you choose a lot, a little, or none; your practice of safe, sane, consensual, adult sexuality must be absolutely and ultimately your own. Let your sense of beauty, which is to say Ma'at, be your guide.

13A. *Eros and Evil* by R.E.L. Masters. NY: Julian Press, 1962 [later paperback edition published]. (TOS-3) MA: "The definitive reference work on the subject. Basically oriented towards a classical Christian concept of Dæmonology, but encyclopedic in its coverage nevertheless."

13B. *The Sacred Fire* by B.Z. Goldberg. NY: University Books, 1958. (TOS-3) MA: "A history of sex in religion, valuable primarily as an in-depth supplement to #13A - the main differences being that Goldberg seems a little less obsessed with the subject, and that there is an interesting section dealing with the concept of revolt (sexual and otherwise) against repressive religious environments."

13C. *Sexuality, Magic, and Perversion* by Francis King. Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1971. (TOS-3) MA: "You have to hand it to King for picking a catchy title! Yet this is a rather thorough survey of the influence of sex in a number of contemporary cults, religions, and magical societies around the world - the Wiccan 'great rite', the auto/hetero/homosexual magic of the O.T.O. VIII°/IX°/XI°, etc. A good update to #13A and #13B. The data dealing with the Church of Satan are so fragmentary and misleading, however, that the author's care in researching other environments must be doubted as well. Use more as a starting point for further research than as a definitive source."

13D. *The Compleat Witch* by Anton Szandor LaVey. NY: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1970. Reissued as *The Satanic Witch* with an Introduction by Zeena Schreck, Feral House, Los Angeles, 1989. (COS-1) (TOS-3) MA: "Although the more earthy passages in this book put off many readers who were expecting 'more of the *Satanic Bible*', LaVey often maintained that it was the best of his three books because it contained the most Lesser Magic. [It could just as well be included in category 23.] Tucked away amidst the pages are some very incisive comments concerning human traits and motivations and how both may be recognized and manipulated in day-to-day contexts. By no means 'just a sex book', though a background in Church of Satan history is necessary to understand the author's point of perspective. Chapter 8 of #6N reviews #13D in detail."

13E. *Odoratus Sexualis* by Iwan Block. North Hollywood: Brandon House, 1967. (COS-3) AL: "The use of odors in magic."

13F. *Magica Sexualis* by Emile Laurent and Paul Nagour. North Hollywood: Brandon House, 1966. (COS-3) AL: "Contains some little-known lore."

13G. *How to Make a Man Fall in Love With You* by Tracy Cabot. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1984. (TOS-3) Hether Payne III<sup>o</sup>: "Despite the tacky title, this book contains excellent LBM lessons for both men and women. It is a good crash-course in basic psychology that teaches you how to make people feel truly understood, to build trust, and to persuade through various techniques such as 'mirroring', 'anchoring', 'casting a spell', etc. I have found it very potent information and accordingly would warn Setians to be careful how they use it - or they may not be able to rid themselves of the object of their magic. This book is somewhat the opposite of Anton LaVey's *Compleat Witch* in principle and in theory, but I feel it to be of equal importance."

13H. *Carnal Alchemy* by Crystal Dawn and Stephen Flowers. Smithville: Runa-Raven Press, 1995. DW: "The Temple of Set neither advocates nor forbids sado-magical activities between consenting adult magicians. If you are inclined to explore pleasure and pain, and want to use this practice for self-transformation, then this is the best book available - if you can guide your practice by love. If you're not so inclined, this is an entirely boring book useful only for shocking your friends. Hence it has no rating, and is mentioned merely to remind the Setian that no topic is taboo as long as its investigation harms not the mind, the body, nor the potential unfolding of the soul."

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F13A. *Dracula*. 1979. Frank Langella, Laurence Olivier, Donald Pleasence, Kate Nelligan. MA: "This film is placed here rather than in Category #8 because Langella's interpretation is that of the vampire-as-lover, and because the impact of that interpretation, particularly upon female audiences who saw this film, proved to be remarkably powerful. In contrast to more traditional Draculas (such as Christopher Lee, who merely 'used women for feeding' while playing his vampire as a power role), one receives the impression that Langella's Dracula exists only for love, having, over the centuries, found all other ambitions to be transitory and shallow. This sensitivity of his, in contrast to the mundane romantic infatuations of Mina's human beau, makes Dracula worth the sacrifice that woman understands her historic role in love to be. It is significant that the 'normal' humans in this film will stop at nothing to destroy the **example** of Dracula, shaming as it does their own petty sexual power games."

F13B. *The Story of O*. S.N. Prodis, Paris, 1975. Video: Independent United Distributors. Corinne Clery, Udo Kier. Just Jaeckin director. MA: "This is not a film about sadomasochism at all, but about the degrees of mutual surrender that love involves. O willingly endures the ordeals of Castle Roissy simply because her lover wishes her to, then emerges not as slave but as goddess for the three men - her lover, her taskmaster at the castle, and finally Sir Stephen - who are devoted to her. The atmosphere of her new divinity confuses, then obsesses a female friend of hers, who ultimately is drawn to Roissy for a similar initiation. Perhaps only the French, who are able to portray even the most outré and graphic forms of erotica without the slightest hint of obscenity, could have made a film such as this. It is a mirror to its audiences of what sexual and sensual maturity involves - and how remote from that maturity most persons of either sex actually are."