

The Scroll of Set

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[1] I'm Dreaming of a Black Solstice

- by Don Webb III°

A Setian asked me recently if we can celebrate Christmas. She meant not as a celebration of Jesus' birthday, but taking part in this great folk holiday.

Of course we can. Christmas is probably the most Satanic holiday of the year - it's far outstripped its pagan antecedents of Yule or Saturnalia. It's a time of sensory indulgence - the smell of the tree, the taste of the fruitcake, the companionship of friends old and new. And of course it's an intense time of creativity as we pick out or make presents for the people we love [and practice our LBM by giving gifts to people we want to influence].

At Christmas time the force of desire - that thing that makes Setians seem so alive in comparison to others - is at work among everyone. Go to a mall and drink in all the energy that people are pouring out. Get a member of the OV to go with you and watch how he drinks up that crisp energy.

Christmas is also a time of time travel magic. There are so many things - the sound of a song, the smell of turkey - whatever that suddenly takes us back to childhood. For Black Magicians, such memory tripping has a twofold boon in addition to just being fun. For one thing, we see where we've been in the world - how our path - our experiences have shaped us. And when we feel and wonder on what we've become - all the coincidences, all the special things that had to happen for us to be what we are - we should thank ourselves.

Light a candle in a darkened room and say something like, "I honor the great goddess N. and share with her the memories of my Becoming. My old friend Set fills me with the power to remember, and this is the key to my present joy of my sense of self and to my remembering who I am after this body is gone." Then sit down for a while, treating yourself to your happiest memories. Play some of your favorite music if you like, or eat some special thing that used to be in your stocking on Christmas morning. Think of these memories as sacrifices to a god; you'll want to pick the best ones. And remember above all that this god is **you**.

The second use of the memories that are so abundant at Christmastime is to see what things in your life have always been important to you. Because when you find these things that have

always mattered to you - you have recovered [or, if you prefer Plato's term, remembered] an important part of your divinity. You have begun to see this psyche projected itself into the world already with filled desires and inclinations. When you realize that there have always been parts in your life that have been there, you might think on the words Dr. Aquino used to describe the Black Flame in the *Ceremony of the Nine Angles*:

From the Ninth Angle is the flame of the beginning and ending of dimensions, which blazeth in brilliance and darkness unto the glory of desire.

Now **there's** a very special Yule fire to light!

The Christian church chose the date for Christmas to replace various northern holidays. The idea of December 25 came into use around 300 CE. It kept Christians from going to Mithra's birthday celebrations. Although the Church has stamped out or denuded most of the pagan mysteries, it's interesting to see that the need for a midwinter festival of hope and brotherhood remains. We still have a Yule tree; although instead of having it in the forest for the Elves - we expect the head Elf to come visiting. We still feel that we have to leave out a sacrifice for the elves - although milk and cookies now suffice.

That we still use these symbols to work the soul, reveals that there is a mystery here. It is a mystery of harmony and fellowship. It is the mystery of the tribe, the family, and gift giving. It's also a mystery that if you huddle around the campfire on the darkest of nights, the boogie won't get you. The fearful aspect of Yule has almost disappeared, except in the British custom of reading a ghost story on Christmas - which is why we drag out the Dickens.

So go ahead and celebrate Christmas - not as the birthday of the Magus Jesus - but a celebration of your human roots. Because your human roots are the place your quest for identity starts. Only by finding your human roots can you grow to be more than human. Don't call it "Christmas" (except when speaking to those who cannot hear the Dread Name), call it "Yule".

When you see Christmas trees in public houses, or in your ancestral home, don't despair. Remind yourself of C. G. Jung's remark, "Everything old is the sign of something coming."

The magical opportunities for this holiday are endless - strengthen and Understand the world Indulgence in yourself and others, work a little social change by telling your friends and neighbors about Yule, or seek after the mystery of celebration and gift giving. Let your heart beat high at this ancient holiday. Use it - as all things - as a stepping stone in your initiation.

[2] **Ruby Tablet Status Report**

The *Ruby Tablet* update that Magister Menschel has been working on all year was finally made available at Conclave. All Adepts of the Temple should have received information and order forms either at Conclave, or via mail, by this time. If you haven't, please contact Magister Menschel.

The newly-expanded *Ruby Tablet* contains enough material to fill two 3-inch looseleaf binders. There are 328 articles, from 1 page to 84 pages in length.

The *Ruby Tablet* is operated as a break-even publication (one which makes no profit, but also imposes no drain on the Temple's Treasury). As such its price is subject to change whenever printing or postage costs change. The prices will also change as new updates are added to the *Tablet* in the future. Current prices will always be maintained on Glinda, and will be available from the editor on request.

Speaking of the future, one session of the recent Conclave was devoted to discussing the future of the *Ruby Tablet of Set*.

Several "must have" items were discussed, as were possible reorganizations of the *Tablet*, and several current and potential problems and opportunities for the *Tablet*. The goal of this meeting was to help us think about possible issues that must faced in the next several years by the growing, multi-volume, and eventually multi-media, *Ruby Tablet*.

Topics included:

(1) the use of archives or sections to allow the *Tablet* to be purchased in reasonably small pieces.

(2) the use of assistants to reduce the editor's workload.

(3) the implementation of a comprehensive subject/ keyword index which covers not only the *Ruby Tablet*, *Crystal Tablet*, and *Scroll of Set*, but all Order and Pylon newsletters, books on the reading list, and possibly other significant works as well.

(4) the use of "reading list levels" or a similar system which could indicate that some articles are "read me first" or "for extended/advanced study."

(5) the interface of computer technology within the *Tablet*. (As of this writing we have begun uploading much of the *Tablet* to Glinda for immediate access by all Adepts, at no significant cost to the Temple. We are looking at other computer-oriented possibilities such as hyper-stack linkages between articles and reader feedback to articles.)

(6) the inclusion of video and audio contributions to the *Tablet*.

(7) the inclusion of physical objects (sculpture, paintings, etc.) within the *Tablet*.

Some of the work is needed soon [and is scheduled tentatively for the year XXVII], while other work may be a decade away. Anyone interested in joining a small group of volunteers who will be working on these and other areas should contact Magister Menschel.

[3] **Comment to Priest Don Webb**

- by Carla Kelly I°

You know, there are a lot of things inside ourselves that we may not even want to face, but not only do we have to face them - we've got to love them. And when you do, that Darkness is really exciting, because it's infinite, sensual and a challenge!

[4] **Pylon Reports**

Asmodeus Pylon - by Paul F. McAtee II°

Inspired by the beauty and majesty of the Black Flame and its nature when being embraced mutually through Setian group functions and workings, it had been decided that a Pylon should be formed to officially exalt the Flame and keep it burning to its fullest potential in this geographic region.

Thus on September 23, XXVI ÆS the Asmodeus Pylon was officially consecrated to act as a sanctuary for Setians in Lincoln, Nebraska and its surrounding communities. We of Asmodeus would like to extend our most profound thanks to those initiates both within the Gates of Hell and without, who joined us in the working on the 23rd, as well as to those who provided us with support and encouragement in other ways.

The special interests of Asmodeus will focus on discussion of techniques and personal experiences in LBM endeavors. This was simply the greatest area of interest of the founding members of the Pylon, and Asmodeus, according to the *Satanic Bible*, a Hebrew devil of sensuality and luxury, emerged in our minds as being a force appropriate to the realm of LBM,. Thus we chose to work in the light of this *neter*.

As senior initiate, Adept Paul McAtee will act as Sentinel and further information may be obtained by writing to him. An irregular publication entitled *Grimorium Asmoday* is in the works.

Thus it is that I call first upon Asmodeus to guide man in perception of truth and error, for before him lie great trials, and he shall not face the consequences of his options lightly. - The Statement of Asmodeus, *The Diabolicon*

Gates of Hell Pylon - by Darrell Gilliam II°

XXVI ÆS - a year which shall remain in our minds for quite some time! It seems to have been a year for several "firsts" and many new changes.

Setians from all over the U.S. had a chance to meet in Chicago for the first time, to participate in a large Setian gathering for a not-for-Conclave reason; the Conclave Set-XII was the largest in Temple history; we have seen many Recognitions this year in almost all degrees. Now, the Gates of Hell Pylon would like to take this opportunity to share its newest changes.

As of 10/31 Adept Timothy McGranahan accepted the position of Pylon Sentinel, having served approximately two years as a Gatekeeper. He is also a member of the Order of the Trapezoid and soon the Order of the Python. We of GOH are pleased to have him in this position, and we know he will continue in the footsteps of those who have served before him. Congratulations, Adept McGranahan! Also, as many of you already know, he and his new bride Setian Danielle McGranahan were the magnificent hosts of the Chicago regional conclave.

GOH will also be starting a study group this month. This will be an open forum discussing specific topics chosen by the group. The topics will be of philosophical and Magical principles pertaining to Temple interests. Anyone interested in this type of project should contact me.

GOH is also proud to announce that its current membership stands at 45. We have seen tremendous growth over the last year. You will notice GOH becoming a lot more active in the next few months as a remanifestation of the metamorphosis that has been taking place throughout the last year.

If you are geographically isolated or just haven't found a local group - get involved! That's what GOH is all about!

Consideration is again being given to another get-together for early spring XXVII. Watch your mail and be prepared - you won't want to miss it.

I would like to take this opportunity and speak personally on behalf of the GOH Pylon and say "thanks!" to Adept Clayton Bozeman. Thank you for the time, energy, and effort you gave during the time you spent as our Sentinel. You proved you were truly dedicated - while serving your country in the Middle East, you continued to accomplish what was possible from a distance. We will be forever grateful. Again, thanks!

Luciferian Pylon - by William Van Patten II°

On Halloween XXVI ÆS, the Luciferian Pylon Came Into Being with the sponsorship of Ipsissimus James Lewis. This Pylon is designed to further its members' *Xeper* by allowing them to

partake of the benefits of a group setting. This shall be done through a systematic study of the Mysteries of the Temple of Set.

Luciferian Pylon shall serve the needs of those Setians located in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. While LP is local, it will accept any member who feels drawn to the image of Lucifer.

If you have any questions or would like to receive the Pylon's 6-page informational letter, please feel free to write the Sentinel, Adept William Van Patten.

[5] Apply Yourself to this Setian Standard

- by Robert Menschel IV°

One of the challenges of the Setian approach to magic is to apply everything we learn towards producing positive change in our lives and our selves.

Applying operative magic is "easy". You want something changed, so you work your ritual and do whatever else is needed in order to bring about that change. When you've succeeded, then you've adequately applied yourself.

But applying illustrative magic is not so automatic. You perform a ritual, and achieve a revelation about yourself, about your *Xeper*, or about anything else of importance. You feel good about it [as well you should]. Then what?

Unfortunately most occultists stop there. They've gained insight and knowledge, and rightly feel proud of that achievement. The true Setian goes two steps further:

(1) Apply that knowledge. Ask yourself, "So what? What can I do with or about this knowledge? How can I use this knowledge to change things or change me for the better?" Answer the question, then work to make that change.

(2) Measure the effect of your activity. Were you able to have a significant impact on your life? What significant changes took place? How are you better off?

Develop the habit of asking yourself these questions, and of making real changes in your life, and you will always continued to *Xeper* and Remanifest!

[6] Leviathan in San Francisco

- by James Lewis VI°

Breathes there a Setian whose heart does not beat faster at the realization of a Conclave's approach? With cardiovascular systems bordering on tachycardia, the members of the Order of Leviathan met in San Francisco for Set-XII. Although three of our Order could not be present in

person, those attending Indulged in the sheer pleasure of being with those of our blood, OL-affiliated or not. To those members of the Order who were not there, you certainly were not forgotten! Perhaps Set-XIII can see us all together again.

The Order's meeting opened its doors to a limited number of guests at Set-XII, and with Adept Le-Riche and Ipsissimus Lewis making taped recordings of the gathering, we found ourselves covering a good bit of ground. Folders containing the current *Trail Of The Serpent* and copies of the OL Rite were distributed, and recipients found themselves with a treat in the form of "The Pnekrotic Fragments", a collection of Lovecraftian parodies dating from the days of the COS.

Our meeting covered topics such as the new Master of the Order designation, plans and options for the *Trail*, some views on Set, a special set of comments for Adepti aspiring to the Priesthood of Set, and a discussion of the objectives of the OL Rite.

The floor was opened thereafter for questions and feedback. These took the conversations from the past to the future, Magical Diaries, and the pros and cons of performing the OL Rite a la *Rocky Horror Picture Show* - a suggestion the Grand Master gave a thumbs down sign to. (It would have been difficult to have gotten the costumes on such short notice, anyway, given the fact that Halloween was upon San Francisco.)

Set-XIII may see the Order's meeting open for more guests. I will be with the Masters of the Order over the next month or two for their opinions, as well as those of the II° and III° affiliating.

The Order's Rite was a revision of "The Manifestation of Essence," performed earlier this year at a small regional Setian gathering. In it, participants conceptualized their Magical aspirations, either generally or in a specific manner, and committed the symbol of those goals to the Flame, thereby releasing it into the two universes for nurturing and later fulfillment.

The effect of standing before the altar of Set with such a request and resolve can be both solemn and momentous to the soul taking such a stand. I suspect that the results of each Initiate's determination may not show itself openly for anywhere from weeks to years, and yet the individual self standing before the Dark Lord's altar has begun the further process of change.

All too soon we found ourselves preparing to bid San Francisco farewell and head out to our respective homes. We were far richer in magic and philosophy for having attended and partaken of the treasures of the Conclave. The fires that were lit and stoked are now building in intensity. Let us look

forward to that which will Remanifest.

[7] Editorial Arena

"Can you measure the magical skill of practitioners of the LHP by their material comforts, stature, rank, or power within society, etc., or lack thereof?"

Brian Zimmer III°:

Striving to meet society's standards in the pursuit of wealth, position, etc. often becomes a display of servility to that society unless these things are also pursued as goals defined by the self as valid and important. Very often, however, such motivations become facile and are more in line with Age of Satan materialism than Æon of Set ideas concerning Initiation. Conversely the inability to meet the basic requirements of adult self-sufficiency can likewise communicate a certain state of being and level of initiation.

Kevin J. Aagaard II°:

My first thought was that it would be ludicrous to judge a Setian solely on the basis of social and material achievements, and then I looked it over from every angle. In the end I still hold to my first conviction.

In one sense, wouldn't it be easy to just be able to look at a person's social and financial standing and rank them accordingly? In this case, my in-laws would be III° or IV°, when in reality they are nothing more than mindless robots - very rich robots, but robots nonetheless.

I would find it odd if the Temple of Set would ever want to use the judgment criteria of a society which stands for many things the Temple does not. If we could get anything we wanted from magic, how many of us would be employed by someone else right now? But we are, and that shows there must be some limitations on what an individual Setian can do to objective reality.

Mind you, I don't believe there are any limitations on personal development, but I think there are plenty of limitations on how much a Black Magician can affect objective reality. And, of course, o/r all too often affects our personal (subjective) reality and development.

So it seems we have more working against us than for us. In a sense I think so. How to survive and still continue to *Xeper* without losing one's mind: That is the question. And I think Set and the organization of the Temple are the answers. That is why the Elect have come together, so that they can have a vehicle in which to *Xeper*, a community of like-minded souls to ease the pain that sometimes comes with *Xeper* and Remanifestation.

We also ought to think about objective and subjective realms for a minute. Since a Setian actively seeks to differentiate himself from the universe instead of becoming one with it, it is an error to look at the universe outside ourselves as a reflection of our inner state. In other words, if we *Xeper* properly, one would expect the worst imaginable things to happen at least for a short period of time. It is never an easy process for the Initiate to split off from mass consciousness.

If everything is going perfectly in your life as you *Xeper*, you are probably not doing anything. Pain has been one of my greatest teachers. I would never have begun to *Xeper* unless the pain of being aware, but lost in the Deadly Desert, had always been with me - that longing to go home, to find the Setian consciousness within.

The inverse pentagram is Set's symbol. The upright pentagram is the symbol of mankind. We have inverted the socially mandated evolution and are striving to become more than just human, just consumers, just robots. The trick is trying to do this and fit into an antagonistic structure at the same time. Where do you draw the line, how much do you compromise? Some of us do not actively seek power [in the conventional sense] and material comfort. We only seek what we need so that we can continue to *Xeper*. But admittedly it is hard to *Xeper* much at all when you don't have a roof over your head or something to eat.

But I have seen it done. The person I learned most from before I joined the Temple was a wandering Native American. He had little money and often slept in his car, but his essence was impeccable. He made nature wake up as he passed by, and sang songs of such beauty and power that one knew they could only have come from the heart. His philosophy was similar to that of the Temple, and my first work with the darker, demonic aspects of the subjective/ objective universes was within a sweat lodge.

So how can we judge the magical skill of Setians? Probably a variety of factors. Knowledge, efficacy of workings, determination and application, the will to *Xeper*, etc. But I think the best way is through the knowledge of the heart. Regardless of outward status or huge financial reserves, I think a Setian can be known in essence almost immediately. I am confident that any Priest or Priestess in the Temple would have no problem identifying one of the Elect.

Amanda Osborne II°:

One's outward appearance is not an indicator of magical ability. Likewise neither is one's material wealth. The Black Magician may be exercising his will by not spending money on creature comforts.

Instead he is spending it to further his *Xeper*. The Black Magician may choose not to acquire wealth, status, or position in the mundane world for the same reason.

Appearance and financial wherewithal should never be used as an indicator to assess any person for whatever reason. A Black Magician's ability can easily be discerned by the Elect. The Black Flame burns bright and shines out of the eyes of all competent Black Magicians. The Black Magician knows who is adept and who is not. Just as one can be a vampyre without being a member of the OV, magically one can experience other levels of initiation consciously or even unconsciously.

Magical ability should be measured by one's knowledge and how bright the Black Flame burns within.

Darrell Gilliam II°:

Do you have an amount of money with which you are comfortable? Does your financial situation take care of the things you want taken care of? Are you satisfied with the role you play in society? Are you comfortable with where you are in your job at this point in your life?

If your answers to the above questions are "yes", then in my opinion your magical skill in controlling the material aspect of your life is successful. To say we can measure one's magical skill based upon his social/financial status would first of all be wrong, and secondly could lead to a repetition of the fall of the COS in year X. However if Black Magicians claim to be successful and do not fulfill the expectations they have placed upon themselves, then it could pose questions in my mind.

If I have an expectation of my self for this time frame in my life, it is up to me to meet that expectation. To go beyond your personal expectations is great if you feel you need to do so. The question becomes: What is important to that magician?

To work upon my self and become confident in my self will cause me to become a successful person in the eyes of my peers and employers. When they feel this self-confidence in me, they will inevitably offer better positions and higher pay. I feel more successful to be able to turn down an advancement in work or society because I have what I want and need, rather than accept an advancement, jeopardizing my free time and work time in order to fulfill the expectations I have placed upon myself in reaction to my peers' expectations of me.

When assessing someone by their bank account, home, car, etc., and saying it depends on the quantity of such things to measure their success, actually you are looking at what they don't have in comparison

to some set standard. [Example: they only have "\$x"; they can only afford brand "x" car.] In order to truly assess what someone has you must look through the "Temple lens" and into the individual to see if they are successful in fulfilling their own expectations.

The poorest-appearing person may be the richest and strongest person you ever met.

My question is this: If a person is spending so much "magical time" making his material self rich, how much time is he able to spend enriching his magical self?

Next Issue's Question:

Despite charitable posturing, mainstream religions foster hatred toward non-believers, resulting in most of this world's grief. How would the world situation differ if the majority walked the Left-Hand Path?

P.S. Feel free to comment on any of the previous "Editorial Arena" questions!

[8] When the Night has Come

- by Diane Russell I°

When Darkness creeps in, blanketing me with its cool mist, I feel safe and comforted, for the Prince of these hours guards over my essence as I dream of his presence nearby.

In this blackness of nocturnal retreat, no judgmental eyes descend upon my face, pondering my very being with hypocritical philosophies for the woman I am daring to antagonize profane society.

But when daylight bleeds into my night, it is time once again to paint on a mask for those reverent of the thorn-crowned, knowing soon the night will come with its mighty shroud to overshadow the meekness of day.

[9] The Call

- by Tammy R. Hilburn I°

Flying low, breeze the sea, gather up thy garment - Fly!

It took time to consecrate with splash of wine the dripping fish, Direction of the splatter? Byzantium isn't on the map.

So I'm driving down the road. Draconis - that's my homestead. The phone appears and then rings twice. I turn, I whirl, I answer.

[10] What are the Elect?

- by James B. Severson II°

The Elect are people who have taken a direction of personal development into the idea of divinity that is themselves. Individuality. The Elect are people who have made a commitment to themselves, a commitment to self-study and self-knowledge. Through this experience of knowing themselves, they will create themselves to be more than human in the true sense of the word.

The Elect are those who walk the trail alone, those who do not depend on the illusions of the current human experience to create and mold their world; they desire and will to be the center of their own universe. For it is only here in this personal universe that the Black Magician can create his desire and express it into his objective environment. Unlike the profane, however, this is done with understanding of the "how" and the "why".

The Elect realize that the self is ever in a state of change. The Black Magician encourages this change and desires to understand it as the process unfolds before him, in both the subjective arena and its objective expression. They are the investigators of the so-called "hidden realms" - realms of knowledge and understanding. They strive to dive below the surface to the source of their experience, to find the Forms of their expression and perception, to bring these Forms to life within their conscious awareness. They live the Dark Dream and work the Dark Trick, immortality of the individual existence.

The Elect are students of life, love, understanding, and individual existence: divinity. They never stop becoming students, for they realize knowledge and experience are infinite in both the subjective and objective realms. It is the seduction and the thirsting for the unknown that is the process of *Xeper ... Xepera Xeper Xeperu!*

[11] Recordings Available

- by Roger L. Whitaker, Honorary Setian

I receive several requests for copies of my Tonally Angular compositions, and for the parameters of *Die Elektrischen Vorspiele* every year. These have been unavailable since 1987. I recently remastered the original and have made a limited number of copies available to Temple members. The copies that are currently going around are 4th-generation copies of extremely poor quality. These are straight from my master tapes, and have been electronically enhanced and remixed.

My newsletter goes out to only a handful of OIT associates, and I know that there is interest in

these recordings beyond the confines of the Lodge. Copies are available only on high-quality cassette and the cost is for the cassette and shipping. There are three tapes available:

1. *Hell on Earth: Musick for Conscious Beings*. Three compositions designed for maximum angular atmospherization. Cost: \$7.50.

2. *The Runic March*. Single, lengthy composition utilizing advanced T.A. forms. Cost: \$5.00.

3. *Parameters for "Die Elektrischen Vorspiele"*. These are the parameters suggested by Anton LaVey in the *Satanic Rituals*. Cost: \$5.00.

All three cassettes are available for \$15.00, which includes the cassettes, shipping and accompanying essays. Send check or money order made out to "Roger Whitaker".

[12] Set-XII Conclave

- by Lilith Aquino IV°

Beasties, Goblins, & Setians ... The Set-XII International Conclave was held in San Francisco, California during Halloween week. And what a mystical, magical time it was! We were greeted with open arms and warm hospitality by San Francisco, which was exciting since this is the international headquarters and "home turf" of the Temple!

Many Setians who came from other parts of the country and outside of the U.S.A. remarked to me that it was such a delight to feel so free, and to wear their Pentagram medallions so openly. It was a joy to watch everyone having such fun and sharing so much of all S.F. has to offer. The weather was gorgeous, the hotel staff were great [they were fascinated by us, they told me], the banquet dinner was fabulous, and the fellowship & magic were intense.

I'm not trying to make those of you who wanted to, but were not able to attend feel bad. But to those who had the option, and were able to, and chose not to attend: Well, you really missed an incredible experience. Ask anyone who was there. And do try to make it next year. We have already chosen the location and general time period. It will take the rest of the year to work out details, and it will be some months before any information is available, but watch the *Scroll* for future updates. I cannot stress enough how important it is to experience at least one Conclave along your path to *Xeper*.



The Black Pyramid

- by Michael A. Aquino VI°

[13] Fore- and Afterwords

Nothing particularly to pound my lectern about this time, save that Set-XII was a delight and, as usual, a unique opportunity to meet new friends and harass old ones. A few notes from the meetings:

- We are going to add something to the admissions informational letter that family/spouse compatibility with one's membership is important. If a Setian complains that a parent, spouse, etc. may discover hidden copies of the *CT*, *Scroll*, etc. and trashcan them, that's a Setian who should get a private post office box and a secure storage area for personal effects. For that matter, if you live in a family environment highly intolerant of your religion, you should probably consider whether it's a good idea for you to be a member of the Temple of Set at all until/unless you have resolved your domestic situation to make it harmonious.

- Although Conclaves have now expanded to Wednesday-Sunday, there are increasing sentiments for "more time". We are now thinking about making them an entire week in length, with the bulk of "essential" activities stuffed into the culminating Friday-Sunday period.

- A European-based International Conclave is now planned for Set-XIV in XXVIII/1993. Set-XIII will be at an east coast location in the U.S.

- Again, for those of you who may not be familiar with the policy & why: The date & location of each year's Conclave is provided to all II°+ Initiates and to I° Initiates by III°+ sponsorship only. This is to help ensure that details concerning the Conclave don't leak out to persons who might picket it/harass Setians, etc.

- Although I will process copies of *The Church of Satan* for anyone who wants them, I recommend you wait, as in the near-term I plan to update it again.

- December sees the paperback release of Raschke's *Painted Black*, with [minimal stipulated] corrections to the sections concerning the Temple of Set and myself [see *Scrolls* #XVI-5 & XVII-1]. Even so the book remains a turkey. See the following comments by Richard Noll.

- In XXVII: Look for continued "big" *Scrolls* [Thanks to Editor Reynolds and you very impressive contributors!], a continually-expanding Glinda, and a regional Conclave in Europe to help

get people's minds set for a "big one" across the pond the following year.

• I hope everyone ate a lot on "Thanksgiving" (Christian ritual animal sacrifice day) and is primed to enjoy the Winter Solstice ("Christmas" to the profane).

[14] Give Me That Old-Time Religion:

Two Books on the Modern Satanism Scare

- by Richard Noll

The Skeptical Inquirer, Volume 15, Summer 1991.

[Noll is a clinical psychologist at the Center for Preventative Medicine, the Graduate Hospital, Philadelphia.]

Painted Black by Carl A. Raschke. New York: Harper Paperbacks (ISBN 0-06-104080-0), 1st paperback printing January 1992.

In Pursuit of Satan: The Police & the Occult by Robert Hicks. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991.

In the 1980s the American media reported with alarming frequency that people who, individually or in groups, allegedly committed criminal activities did so because of their belief in and their active worship of "Satan", "the Devil", "Lucifer", and other supernatural perpetrators of evil. Communities throughout the United States [and then Canada] began to express serious concern about the secret existence of such groups within their midst, and claims made about the activities of these "Satanic cults" seemed to be universal in their agreement. The most persistent claim is that there is a vast underground network of Satanic cults in North America, and perhaps around the world, that threatens our civilized society. These cults allegedly have maintained a secret existence for hundreds or perhaps thousands of years, and it is claimed that:

- they kidnap and "ritually" abuse children;
- the abuse is physical and sexual and leads to the development of mental illness later in life, particularly dissociative disorders like multiple personality disorder;
- they engage in cannibalism and perform infanticide;
- they engage in the ingestion of blood & other bodily fluids and sometimes excrement;
- they engage in sex orgies and perform sexual deviations of all sorts;
- in perpetuating the abuse, they use "ritualistic" paraphernalia such as candles, magic circles, robes, altars, etc., all of which are related to the worship of Satan;
- the Black Mass is performed, often with human or animal sacrifices.

The two books under review here take diametrically opposite positions on this controversy. Both purport to sift through the evidence pro and con for the existence of Satanic cults and the influence of Satanism in the commission of criminal acts. Unfortunately only one of these books - a magisterial analysis of the issue by Robert Hicks - can command respect as a truly helpful attempt to weigh the scientific status of these claims. Carl Raschke's book, especially considering his credentials as a professor of religious studies at the University of Denver and the author of many books with theological themes, is a disappointment. It is designed more for the audiences of television talk shows than for informed readers who want a more balanced survey.

Raschke is out to fight the great dragon as he sees it: Satanism as an ideology and a highly virulent one at that. As in most publications of this nature, in Raschke's book Satanism as a concept is deified as a threat but never cogently defined. Just what is Satanism? The closest Raschke comes is in the introduction:

Satanism is a sophisticated and highly effective motivational system for the spread of violence & cultural terrorism, all the while hiding behind the cloak of the First Amendment. It is an ideology that has found a strategic application in the criminal underworld, even if it was not invented there.

To back up this belief in the threat of Satanic ideologies, Raschke lumps all the disparate evils & aberrations of history and of present society into a grand amalgam held together by the glue of Satanic ideals. The underlying message to the reader is that a grand conspiracy of Satanism is operating to tear apart our society. It is the single dynamic force that unites the drug-crazed teenager who draws pentacles on his murder victim with Adolf Hitler & the "occult underground" of the Third Reich, Charles Manson, international drug cartels, transnational terrorist organizations, child pornographers, Anton LaVey & the Church of Satan, Michael Aquino & the Temple of Set, the McMartin Preschool case, Dungeons & Dragons, the Matamoros murders, Alice Cooper, the Rolling Stones, Ozzy Osborne, Aleister Crowley, "Night Stalker" Richard Ramirez, *ad infinitum*.

Quite a **large** as well as nasty kettle of rotting flesh this Satanism business is, isn't it? Most informed readers who know better than to believe in this sort of magical thinking in which everything is interconnected with everything else and is therefore implicitly a conspiracy, need only look at the photographs in the center of Raschke's book, for

they thematically lump together most of the rogues & infidels mentioned above and essentially sum up the Gospel According to Raschke: Satanism is all around us, it's bad, and it's our job to fight it.

Although a professor of religion and author of several books on the subject, Raschke makes a number of misinterpretations of the historical evidence of Satanism as an ideology & movement in his chapter entitled "The Occult Underworld". He pleads for reconsidering conspiracy theories, and he then sets about mangling the known evidence we have for the beliefs & practices of heretical sects like the Cathars and the "Luciferians", who were not devil-worshippers but a sect of Waldensians (not "Cathars" as Raschke has it). Raschke, though, tells of them worshipping black cats and kissing toads & buttocks.

Many other factual mistakes occur in this chapter. Raschke's knowledge of the historical literature concerning Satanism or "diabolism" is apparently limited. I have found an overwhelming lack of evidence for sects or groups or activities of these sorts throughout history. [See my manuscript *A Brief Bibliographic Review of works Related to Alternative Hypotheses of the "Satanism Scare" of the 1980s*, 1990.] It was only at the end of the 19th century that the Black Mass and a philosophy of Satanism are recorded among the pastimes of the decadent upper classes in France. There is no evidence of the Inquisitors stumbling upon a Devil-worshipping cult or any performance of the familiar Black Mass that inverts the Roman Catholic rite (but with a few salacious additions). All of this is more fantasy than reality, as British historian Norman Cohn so skillfully documents in his book *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch Hunt* (NY: Basic Books, 1975), which is an essential historical reference for placing the present scare into a historical context.

Raschke has a bone to pick with anyone who dares to challenge the threat of Satanism to our society. Kenneth Lanning, a Supervisory Special Agent of the FBI who has been one of the most influential critics of claims of Satanic crime, is charged with being one of the "best friends" of "Satanist criminals". Without addressing Lanning's publications or conference papers in which he presents his analysis of the evidence for his critical position, Raschke merely resorts to an *ad hominem* argument, charging that Lanning writes with "the literacy, the research sophistication, and the rhetorical finesse of a high school sophomore". Lanning's work is never addressed, nor is the work of any other skeptic challenged in depth and on its own merits.

Intellectuals are suspect too. In his preface Raschke boldly asserts that "the American intelligentsia has a tremendous capacity for what psychologists call 'denial'. The trained academic mind has a difficult time accepting that there are people who could willfully do evil for the sake of doing evil." Raschke, it seems, is interested only in rhetorical flourish. He does not seem interested in considering disconfirming evidence or opinions. This book, even though written by an academic & an intellectual, is therefore not recommended.

On the other hand, Robert Hicks' book *In Pursuit of Satan: The Police & the Occult* will be considered the definitive volume on this issue for some decades to come. It is a classic in its genre. Hicks presents the evidence for both sides of almost every issue involving Satanism in our society.

Hicks' book is a cogent, relentless critique of the evidence for the influence of Satanism. "Occult" crime, day-care-center controversies (including the McMartin case), the Matamoros incident, Dungeons & Dragons, the subculture of mental health professionals concerned about Satanism & its alleged creation of multiple personalities, and many other topics are discussed in depth & with exemplary scholarship.

It would be impossible to survey every topic Hicks covers in his 420-page tome, but those interested in the issue of Satanism are strongly advised to make his *In Pursuit of Satan* the one book on this controversy that they simply must own. It is that good, that comprehensive, and that important. Hicks is to be congratulated on his intellectual breadth and his peerless research.