

The Scroll of Set

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Editor: Linda Reynolds IV°

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[1] An Interview

- by William Pridgen III°

The following questions were asked of me by an Australian gentleman named Ashley Gray. Together with my answers they will be published as an interview in an Australian magazine. For those who may be interested in obtaining a copy, I will provide ordering information in the next *Scroll of Set*.

Firstly could you please explain your title and position vis a vis "Antinomian Apotheosis", etc.?

I am a Priest of Set, which is the third degree within the Temple of Set's initiatory degree system. I am therefore licensed to speak on behalf of the Temple of Set, although I will qualify this by stating that the following answers are my individual views and that other Initiates of the Priesthood may or may not agree, either in whole or in part.

Why did you become attracted to the Satanic and sinister?

I have always been interested in comparative religious studies, mythology, and philosophy. I became interested in the Left-Hand Path because of its emphasis on self-knowledge and responsible individualism.

The Satanic and sinister imagery provided a means for me to escape from the social and religious conditioning of my upbringing. This allowed me the freedom to explore these subjects from an unbiased perspective and thereby make an informed decision. That decision led me to the Temple of Set.

What exactly do Black Magicians do?

Black Magic is what Black Magicians do! The Setian philosophy defines Black Magic as the spiritual methodology of the Left-Hand Path, the goals of which include increasing levels of self-knowledge, freedom, responsibility, and power.

These being the stated goals of the Left-Hand Path, Black Magic is the method by which these goals are attained. This requires talent and ability.

Not everyone has the capacity for Black Magic, just as not everyone has the capacity for painting a masterpiece or performing brain surgery.

Do you have lots of orgies and fun with animals?

If a Setian were to attend an orgy, it would be as an individual, since the Temple of Set is not designed to facilitate sexual activities.

We would hope that most individuals are skilled

in the arts of seduction and are capable of pursuing their love interests in a mature and responsible manner before they aspire to the heights of Setian initiation.

If by "fun with animals" you mean sexual misconduct, then definitely not. Anyone found doing so would be immediately expelled from the Temple and referred to the local authorities.

How about sacrifices?

Because there is no metaphysical concept of "sin" within the Left-Hand Path, the practice of sacrifice is alien to its cosmological and psychological models.

There is a gap between humanity and divinity which the practice of sacrifice actually increases. As Black Magicians we aspire to bridge that gap rather than increase it.

Why is old-school Satanism, i.e. orgies, sacrifices, and Black Masses, so maligned these days?

The picture of "Satanism" we get from the Dark Ages is largely a result of Christian propaganda.

The Satanic religious philosophy, as defined from a Satanic perspective, did not come into being until 1966 CE, although the ideas that helped to shape that religious philosophy are much older.

Examples of such influences would include the Epicureans, Lucretius, Voltaire, Friedrich Nietzsche, Social Darwinism, Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain, Jack London, Existentialism, etc.

I think that one of the main reasons the Left-Hand Path is so maligned these days is because we are now exposing the aforementioned propaganda for what it is.

Is the Temple of Set just another form of elitism?

No more so than institutions in the secular world! The Temple of Set is an initiatory school wherein anyone who wishes to apply for membership is welcome to attempt to demonstrate his competence.

We are not egalitarian in the sense that everyone who applies is welcomed with open arms and then we're all just one big happy family. This wouldn't work in the secular world, e.g. if college degrees were just handed out regardless of whether or not people had earned them.

On the other hand we don't observe people necessarily leaving secular schools in a higher state of being than the one in which they entered.

Since the Temple of Set is initiatory, as opposed to exclusively rational, there are also many other factors which have to be taken into account. In a nutshell the Temple of Set is a meritocracy.

Have Satanism and related dark forms of philosophy been corrupted by New Age self improvement mantras, rather than the good old hedonism and extravagant spiritual rituals of yesteryear?

Not really! The New Agers haven't corrupted Left-Hand Path philosophy, because they generally disassociate themselves from it, whether out of ignorance or spiritual cowardice. They say they aren't Left-Hand Path, and so do we.

Although some of their philosophies may share some incidental characteristics - such as the self-improvement bit mentioned in your question - with Left-Hand Path thought, I would have to say that it is rather hard to corrupt what one does not fully comprehend. Evil can only be overcome by a greater evil or by accident.

Also I wouldn't necessarily equate the Left-Hand Path with hedonism, although Black Magicians generally aren't subject to the same neuroses and hang-ups as the average conditioned human.

Do you congregate with like-minded people? What do you do?

On occasion. Most of the work of Setian initiation is done in solitude, although we do have regional and international conclaves a couple of times yearly.

At these conclaves we generally have meetings where we discuss the Setian philosophy, Black Magic, initiation and individual *Xeper*, which is the factor upon which all else hinges. We also give lectures and presentations which illustrate individual *Xeper*.

Xeper is the essence of the Setian philosophy, and it is an Egyptian verb, infinitive tense, which means "to become" or "to come into being". The result of this is that the process of coming into being is thereby established.

We also have group rituals at these gatherings wherein we explore and illustrate individual *Xeper*.

How do you feel about God and Satan?

Probably the same way most people feel about Zeus and Hercules.

What would life be like if everyone were availed to antinomian apotheosis?

That question is really too hypothetical and speculative (not to mention optimistic) to warrant a serious answer. I will say that I don't think it would necessarily be a good thing.

To what use do you put your Black Magic?

To increase my level of self-knowledge, freedom, responsibility, and power. In essence, to come into being. In a Word, to *Xeper*.

Is putting a curse on someone, e.g. a lover who jilted you, considered good form?

Not necessarily. It would depend upon the specific case and all of the circumstances surrounding it.

Also there are many ways to curse. As the Left-Hand Path is the path of individualism, a consciously-determined code of personal ethics is

of primary importance in evaluating such instances.

What clothes do you wear during magic rituals?

Sometimes a robe, sometimes street clothes; it depends upon the circumstances and who is hosting the ritual.

Who is the most evil person alive?

I don't know who the most evil person alive is, but whoever it is would have to embody the qualities of fear and ignorance to the greatest possible extent.

What is the goal of humanity, its reason for being?

I don't feel that it's my place to say what the goal of humanity as a whole should be. But if I were to venture a guess, I would have to say that the goal of each individual human should be either to find out or to create a personal reason for being.

Do you have a favorite archangel?

Michael!

Can anyone become an Initiate of the Orders in which you are involved?

If they have the capacity. Anyone can try.

[2] *The Munich Declaration*

- by Nikolas Schreck III°

The Munich Declaration is an anthology of Setian visions and divinations inspired by the Set-XVIII Conclave in Munich, Germany. It features the words and workings of attendees of the Munich Conclave:

Adepti Peter Andersson, Trebor Carpenter, Kevin Fordham, Louise Gray, Paivi Haeninen, Nigel Kay, Andrew Nourse, Volker Schlecht, John Wilson; Priests Walter Gallo, Vesa Iitti, Carmel Severson, Bruce Ware, Priestesses Zeena Schreck, Rosemary Webb; Magisters James Graeb, Michael Kelly, Petri Laakso, Robert Menschel, James Severson, Roland Winkhart, Magistra Pat Hardy.

Also included is a transcription of Magus Don Webb's Conclave lecture "Exchange" and the Main Conclave Working. To order, contact me.

[3] *The Sepulchral Voice*

- by Aaron Besson III°

Acting Grand Master, Order of the Sepulcher of the Obsidian Masque

The Sepulchral Voice #1-14, the newsletter of the Order of the Sepulcher of the Obsidian Masque, is completed and available to the Temple of Set. There are two options for acquiring a copy:

(1) Hardcopy versions of the newsletter are available by sending a check or money order for US\$5 to Priestess Carmel Severson.

(2) E-mail copies are available free by request to Priestess Severson at Catsa@aol.com.

[4] A Note on LBM

- by Kristov Harper I°

Lesser Black Magic (LBM) is the influencing of beings, processes, or objects in the objective universe by the application of obscure physical or behavioral laws.

- Michael A. Aquino VI°

Black Magic, Crystal Tablet of Set

A person's *Xeper* will tend to be affected by factors outside the subjective universe of the Initiate. Were this not true, we could all go out into the woods with a couple of months' worth of food and dream our way to godhood. [Cognition and the continuing evolution of the subjective universe are important factors. I am not belittling them - just pointing out that they are not the "all" of *Xeper*.]

Environmental factors influence people to a great degree. Who a person is and how he reacts to all manner of events - change, stress, etc. - is determined in large part by his external environmental factors. The internal environment - the *psyche* - is also heavily influenced by external factors over time, especially in early human developmental stages. [Do not forget that Set is an external factor in the development of the human race, and the Elect in particular.]

One of the factors that sets the Elect apart is that we have seen this. Also the Elect have a desire and a (to varying degrees) carefully developed ability to control the influential external environment (the objective universe) and the effects of it on an individual.

Xeper does not happen in a vacuum. The objective universe influences our *Xeper*, and by exerting control over the objective universe (beings, processes, or objects), we may enhance or retard our *Xeper*. A person or situation may be a hindrance to *Xeper*; this would be a common time for LBM to be used to change the environment (objective universe) to impel this person or situation to become conducive to *Xeper*.

Becoming aware of the influences of external factors does not mean that they no longer have any influence. Rather the awareness allows greater control over the specific effects of these external influences and the nature of the influences (person, situations, etc.) themselves.

LBM is both a technology for detecting the nature and extent of external influences, and a means for exerting some control over them.

[5] Living in the Past

(with apologies to J. Tull, Esq.)

- by Joshua Lepsy I°

Having a record of the past can make a great contribution to the quality of life. It frees us from the tyranny of the present, and makes it possible for consciousness to revisit former times. It makes it possible to select and preserve in memory events that are especially pleasant and meaningful, and so to "create" a past that will help us deal with the future.

Of course such a past might not be literally true. But then the past can never be literally true in memory: it must be continuously edited, and the question is only whether we take creative control of the editing or not."

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi¹

I feel that as long as the Shire lies behind, safe and comfortable, I shall find wandering more bearable: I shall know that somewhere there is a firm foothold, even if my feet cannot stand there again."

- Frodo²

Time bows before my Will.³

So runs the familiar *Crystal Tablet* invocation. Do you take advantage of this?

Many of us have an ideal past. It may be in a single place and time period, like pre-conversion Germania or Heian Japan.

Or it may be more extensive than that. Perhaps your ideal past is in England in the 19th century, but in the Mississippi Delta in the 1930s.

These are the times upon which we look with rose-colored spectacles. This is as it should be. For while the historian may try to minimize what he sees as a "distortion" of something which has an objective reality, the magician can take full advantage of the lens (shewstone!) through which he sees the past, and through which the past will act upon the now.

The past is ours to shape as we will. Augment those aspects with which you resonate. Create from that which is hidden. Mind you, keep your trousers on [for the most part]. It won't do to have a peaceful, agrarian Sparta or an atmosphere of tolerance in 16th-century Spain. But if a few minor details which pop up [and they will] threaten to level your kingdom, feel free to sweep them under the rug or save them for a rainy day.

By remembering this past, it becomes a tool with which you can create meaning. You can empower an action, an idea, or a moment.

You need to write a poem which will move hearts? 15th-century Japan is your thing? Remember Ikkyu. Feel what he must have felt when composing a similar poem [a bit of sake is in order here!]. Write.

Are you going to recite said poem to the lady [or lad] of your dreams? Become the bright, bold Icelandic youth risking minor outlawry for his amatory presumption.

There are dangers. Anachronism is fun. It will also make you Quixotic. To do a working involving Forseti to win a law case is one thing; show up at court in tenth-century style linen breeks and a tunic and you're courting trouble, your forbears at the Althing notwithstanding.

Remembrance of the past should be used sparingly too, or its effectiveness will decrease.

Just as importantly, the future should not be forgotten; the spirit of the past will go only so far.

Have fun. Hey, what are you doing with that lance? Wait, those are windmills!

I warned you. *Xeper.*

Notes

1. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1990; pg.133.

2. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*. New York, NY: Ballantine, 1991, Part One: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, pg.96.

3. Michael A. Aquino VI^o, *Black Magic, The Crystal Tablet of Set*. San Francisco, CA: Temple of Set, 1996; Chapter 6, pg.6.

[6] Construction of the Pentagonam

- by Patty A. Hardy IV^o

Here is the construction of the averse pentagram using compass and straightedge, based on Michael Schneider's *A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe*. I have added commentary concerning each step.

To begin it is necessary to draw two circles that overlap. This creates the *vesica piscis*, the known universe in which the pentagram will ultimately crystallize.

The two circles can be seen as the objective and subjective universes. They must not be identical, nor may they be wholly separate; their interplay is necessary to provide the realm in which the pentagram to come into being.

Draw a line connecting the circles' centers and a vertical line up the middle of the *vesica piscis*.

Put the point of the compass at the point of intersection of the horizontal and vertical lines. Open the compass to the point where the horizontal line meets the edge of one of the circles. Turn the

compass to create a circle within the *vesica piscis*. This circle, which lies within the interplay of the objective and subjective realms, is the natural self.

Using the same setting of the compass, construct a second circle whose center lies at the intersection of the horizontal line and either of the large circles. Here the natural self undergoes a change in its "center of gravity" or organizing locus. This may involve the self moving towards the objective realm, or into the subjective realm. Either way something new comes within the boundaries of the self (the perimeter of the small circle). The small *vesica piscis* created by this change is the place where the measure of the pentagram will arise.

Draw a vertical line across the small *vesica piscis*. Contemplating the change between the natural self as it began and the new condition of the self, a center which is neither can be conceptualized.

Place the unmoving leg of the compass at the center of the small *vesica piscis*. Open the compass to place the pencil at the bottom of the small circle within the large *vesica piscis*. Swing the compass up to cross the horizontal line. From the perspective created not by the preexisting interaction between the subjective and objective realms, but by changes in the self, the relation of the self to the known universe and the possibility of further self-change (other centers of gravity or organizing loci) are considered.

Put the unmoving leg of the compass at the bottom of the small circle, and open the compass to the point where the arc has intersected the horizontal line. Now swing the compass down until it crosses the small circle. This new point plus the point at the bottom are the first two points of the averse pentagram.

Using the same compass opening, walk the compass around the small circle to mark all five points. If you have been very, very careful, the fifth mark will be the same as the first. If not, start at the bottom again and walk the compass around the circle in the other direction. The correct points will lie between each pair of marks.

Connect the five points. The pentagram has been come into being within the Two Lands. Who understands the algebraic meaning of the Hermetic saying, "As above, so below", understands also that once it has come into being, the pentagram is indeed independent of the circle.

[7] The Typhonian Akademy

- by Matthew Mitchem II^o, K.Tr.

Announcing the foundation of the Typhonic Akademy under the patronage of Setnakt of the Order of Setne Khamuast!

On this day, the 29th of July the Birthday of Set, I give to him, and to his Temple this Gift.

The *Typhonis Akademia*, henceforth the Akademy, is founded to explore the Sokratic method (dialectic) and Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy in the Æon of Set. Furthermore the Akademy seeks to train individuals for the furtherance of Platonic principals in the World of Horrors.

Plato is held in high regard by those who claim to be LHP and RHP practitioners. His influence is a primal root of both the Temple of Set and Western Christianity.

In the Akademy we will explore modern issues in the light of Plato. Our foundational study is a two-year curriculum in the philosophy of Plato, based on the Cannon of Iamblicus, a 3rd-century neo-Platonist.

The Akademy is structured as a school. There are two stages of affiliation, Akademic and Student. It is expected that all of those who enter the Akademy will stay to be called Akedemics. Each Akademic may take up to three Students a year; these will usually be I°/II° Setians.

Entrance into the Akademy will require petition to an Akademic. Included in the petition shall be a 6pg.+ paper on the question "What is philosophy?". This will be evaluated by the Akademic, who will hand-pick his three Students for each year. An Akademic may take a maximum of three Students, he is, however, under no obligation to take the maximum. The limits on enrollment are to help ensure excellence in Students and in attention by the Akedemics.

The First Class of Students of the Akademy has been named: Adept Erik Scanlan, Priest William Pridgen, and (awaiting a response) Adept Connell Monette. A call for applications will be posted in the *Scroll* when the time comes for the next Class.

The work of the Akedemics is to teach Platonist philosophy in the Akademy, and to continue the philosophical quest past their own education. All Akedemics are Students. All Students should become Akedemics.

"Akademy" is spelled with a "k" to distinguish it from the "academy" of universities and institutions of higher education which grant academic degrees.

All III°+ Initiates of the Temple of Set may have access to the curriculum. However naming as an Akademic may come only after the curriculum has been completed under an Akademic.

O Set, son of Nuit, great of strength, hope of all hearts is thy name. Protection is at the hands of thy holiness. I am thy son. I present to you the Akademy of Typhon. The name of this

day is *Naktab*. I will rise in might to be like you.

- Don Webb V°

Seven Faces of Darkness, p. 47

[8] **Recognitions**

The Recognition of James Severson as a Magister Templi IV° was announced by High Priest Don Webb on July 19, 1998.

Daniel S. Ayres was Recognized as a Priest of Set III° by Magistra Pat Hardy on July 21, 1998.

Craig L. Hunt was Recognized as a Priest of Set III° by Magistra Lilith Aquino on July 25, 1998.

Marco Grubert was Recognized as an Adept II° by Priest Nikolas Schreck on July 29, 1998.

Brian Hardee was recognized as an Adept II° by Magistra Linda Reynolds August 1, 1998.

Robert Koole was Recognized as an Adept II° by Priestess Mariko Kawaguchi on June 21, 1998.

Wayne Michals was recognized as an Adept II° by Priestess Marie Kelly on July 26, 1998.

David Stein was recognized as an Adept II° by Priest Eardley Scott on June 27, 1998.

[9] ***The Manual of Vampyric Alchemy***

The Manual of Vampyric Alchemy is a brief introduction (15,000 words) to Vampyric magic as a mode of *Xeper*. Created by Don Webb for the Order of the Vampyre, it is available to OV Initiates and Masters of the Temple for a small donation (to be determined soon).

"If I'd had this, I could have been a contender." - Count Dracula

[10] ***Episteme and the Left-Hand Path***

- by James Graeb IV°

The phrase "Left-Hand Path" (LHP) has a variety of connotations ranging from Indian Tantric systems to Egyptian pharaonic practices, especially those of the XIXth and XXth Dynasties.

This article suggests that the phrase also applies to Plato's philosophic method and its unfolding in the Renaissance in what is referred to as "Neoplatonism". Neoplatonism is also one of the principal origins of what today is referred to as the "Cabala", such that, properly understood, the Cabala also embeds LHP methodologies. This latter point will require a separate article. This article will focus on the Platonic methodology.

The previous statement flies in the face of generally-accepted views that the Cabala is of Jewish origins and involves a Right-Hand Path (RHP) approach involving surrender to a higher power.

While the Cabala as it is known today certainly does draw on Jewish mystical traditions, this article proposes that the Jewish mystical tradition of the Cabala is secondary, and that, properly understood, the Cabala and esoteric initiation systems based on advancement up the Tree of Life, are best worked if their LHP origins are brought to the forefront, and separated from the hodgepodge of contemporary pseudo-understanding that seems to clutter the shelves of modern occult bookstores.

The assertion that Plato was one of the pioneers of LHP initiation is a bold and controversial statement, yet one that I hope I can elucidate in this article.

As most of you are aware, Plato was the student of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle.

Socrates is perhaps best known as the founder of western philosophy because it is Socrates who is credited with beginning the method of critical questioning, often referred to as the Socratic method.

Although very valid arguments can be made that philosophy reaches back to Egyptian and Mesopotamian times, thousands of years before Socrates, we will assume for purposes of this article that Socrates is generally credited with being the first “real” philosopher because of his Socratic method.

Plato took Socrates’ method and developed it into something he called “the dialectic method”. Before we examine the dialectic, perhaps we should inquire into the goal of this method.

If you read a modern philosophy book or a translation of Plato done within the last 300 years, you will likely find that Plato sought “knowledge” as the goal of dialectical training. That’s not what Plato was after. Plato was after *episteme*, which is a Greek word that has a number of connotations over and above mere “knowledge”.

The post-Enlightenment notion of “knowledge” as some intellectual apprehension is a very pale cousin to Plato’s notion of *episteme*. The translation of *episteme* into the English word “knowledge” does a great disservice to Plato.

Episteme is perhaps better translated as “understanding” in the sense that “understanding” connotes both a direct *noetic* apprehension as well as a grasp of the discursive thought-processes captured in the Greek word *dianoia*.

Those of you familiar with Plato’s famous “divided line” from Book VI of the *Republic* will recall that the highest state of apprehension, which Plato called *gnosis* or *episteme* was a result of a direct *noetic* apprehension of the Forms, together with an ability to give an account of that mystical experience, in a cogent and comprehensive manner.

To claim to have *episteme* or *gnosis* without being able to have (1) a direct experience or apprehension of the object of *noesis* free from discursive thought and (2) a cognitive grasp (*dianoia*) such that one could explain oneself in the face of Socratic questioning would indicate to Plato that the claimant to *episteme* was in error in his claim to have *episteme*.

Thus to assert *episteme* was no small matter, and the whole goal of philosophy, as Plato conceived it, was to bring about a state of *episteme* in a lover of wisdom.

Episteme connoted a state of psychological or spiritual attainment such that one could have *episteme* of the timeless realm of the Forms themselves.

Thus the spiritual or psychological state of the student was critical to whether or not *episteme* could be achieved.

What one had *episteme* of was not pieces of everyday knowledge, such as lists of facts, but the First Principles underlying all existence, the realm of the Forms (*eidos*).

Plato saw these three aspects of attaining *episteme* as interwoven. The goal of dialectic was not just to come to “know” but to transform the would-be student into a being who was capable of having *episteme* of the First Principles of the Universe.

Given that the foregoing may suffice to show that Plato had a real initiatory element in his philosophy, I need to establish that Plato thought that this initiation occurred via the LHP.

By “LHP” here I mean a rejection of external authorities as being the final word on something and a self-reliance by the student such that the individual’s own path was highlighted or emphasized, and the group path disparaged.

Plato didn’t like ideas taken from the community, received opinions, and unthought-out assumptions. In almost all the dialogues of Plato, Socrates quickly disposes of an opponent who offers nothing but the community’s received opinions. This clearing of the path by Socratic questioning is the first stage in Plato’s dialectic.

This first stage parallels our modern emphasis on “antinomian” attitudes.

The whole business is really about learning to think for yourself and learning that indeed you are pretty ignorant after all. How many of you know Copernicus’ proof that the Sun revolves around the Earth? How many of you have read Copernicus? How many just believe the Sun goes around the Earth because “everybody knows it’s true”?

The second stage in the Platonic dialectic is to begin the search for your own answers, your own questions, your own truth.

Here Socrates acts as a midwife, helping the student to come to term with the seeds of his own ideas. Socrates doesn't purport to teach anyone, and he often proclaims his own ignorance, but he does hold himself out as a midwife of *episteme* - as a teacher in the only real sense of the word.

This self-reliance that Plato is trying to convey here is that of the dialectic - and, I would suggest, the LHP.

Neither Socrates or Plato tends to "teach" you something in the way modern educational systems try to teach. In fact Plato has nothing but contempt for the Sophists who claim to be able to "teach" people how to be virtuous or excellent. How, Plato asks, is it possible to "teach" such really important matters?

If you will accept for the time being that the Socratic method and the Platonic dialectic are essentially LHP, then we are on our way to understanding why Neoplatonism was the "philosophy" that embraced the Hermetic teachings of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the mystical insights of Islam and India, and the Jewish mystical tradition.

These traditions were embraced by Neoplatonism not only because they contained a bunch of really neat esoteric stuff [although I'm sure that played a part], but because if you claimed a personal transformation such that you had *episteme*, then you should be able to give an account that made sense, regardless of whether you were explaining it in terms of Christianity, Islam, or the Chakras. Your *naësis* and *dianoia* would be cross-cultural since with your *episteme* you are in contact with First Principles.

In other words, if one truly has *episteme* of First Principles, then it should be possible to put together a synthetic system that coordinated the mysticism of Ibn Arabi with the notions of the *Ida* and *Pingala* of the *Kundalini*. The basic framework of Plotinus, with his Nine Emanations from the One, could serve as a framework upon which one could weave one's *dianoia* and demonstrate one's *episteme*.

The Neoplatonists could have picked something other than the system of Plotinus, with its Nine Emanations from the One, but Plotinus' thought had a lot more going for it that just this cosmological aspect, all of which will have to wait for another article. However, please note that Plotinus' cosmological system is of Indo-European origins, in that it has its origin in Greek thought.

Following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the Neoplatonic cosmological system based on Indo-European thought became mixed with the Jewish mystical tradition as that tradition spread throughout Europe, resulting in the origins of the *Cabala*.

Most Semitic religions are RHP-oriented; hence the confusion of Jewish mysticism into Neoplatonism distorted Plato's LHP methods into ideas of self-surrender. Plato's original notion of *episteme* is about as far removed from self-surrender as a system can get.

The real blow to LHP Neoplatonism was not so much the Jewish mystical tradition, but the state of affairs in Europe circa 1492. The Inquisition was at its full height, and given the Christian background in which Neoplatonism and Hermeticism existed, claims to *episteme* were dangerous. After all the Pope didn't want Catholics striving under dialectical training, with Socratic midwives, in search for personal *episteme*. The Church wanted to quiet these troublesome tendencies and was willing to resort to force if need be.

Thus LHP Neoplatonism and Hermeticism went underground and became various esoteric schools of thought, culminating in such varied entities as the Golden Dawn, the *Fraternitas Saturni*, and other occult groups.

To understand the roots of these occult groups, one has to go at least as far back as Plato and discover what his methodology was and how it worked. While this article has only touched lightly on many of the ideas presented, it has hopefully shown that Plato was right all along and that you can't trust your textbooks too much.

The goal of Plato's system was the attainment of individual *episteme* which *episteme* the student had to attain to on his own. All a true teacher could do was act as midwife to the birth of the student's understanding. This essentially LHP notion has been lost from view in the plethora of books by alleged occult experts packaged and sold over the counter.

Yet even this quick review of Plato's thought will show that the roots of the Left-Hand Path run very deep and can be seen by anyone with the eyes to see.

[11] The Setian Mythos Project

- by Lauri Jean Crowe II°

Over the past several months Priest Crowe and I have been collecting and compiling Setian works of creativity for the Setian Mythos Project. This is an exploration of sci-fi, fantasy, and horror fiction, poetry, and art as a vehicle of bringing a subjective creation into an objective form of modern mythology.

These tales and images have a basis in the Setian philosophy, Satanism, and Black Magical practice.

The goal of this exploration is to showcase the talents of various wordsmiths and artists within the Temple of Set to create an ever-evolving Setian

mythos.

The premier issue of *The Setian Mythos* is due for publication this coming *Naktab*, and annually thereafter.

For further information on guidelines for submissions or acquiring a copy of *TSM*, please feel free to contact either Priest Crowe or myself.

[12] Rite of the Deep Ones

- by Aaron Besson III°

In tribute to the Year of Cthulhu Rising, I will be facilitating the Rite of the Deep Ones during the international conclave this year.

This will be an underwater working. Setians interested in taking part in the working will be required to do the following **before** conclave:

(1) Contact me.

(2) Learn to snorkel.

(3) Buy snorkeling equipment (goggles, snorkel and flippers). [You may be able to rent them on site, but be prepared for it to cost you.]

(4) Read *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* by H.P. Lovecraft.

Dialogue with interested parties may occur regarding participation in the working. The location of the working will be held secret until a half hour before we go to the site.

[13] On the Remanifestation of the MetaMind Element

- by Shawna Thompson II°

What exactly is the MetaMind Element? That is a question I have kicked around on several occasions, the first being when I first entered the Temple and noticed the MetaMind section in the reading list. That got my curiosity going. I later also read the term a few times in *Nightwing*, (the newsletter of the Order of the Vampyre) but still had no idea as to what it actually meant.

Finally I wrote to Magister Neilly requesting that I be sent a copy of *InterSections*, the newsletter for the MME, having heard that one might obtain a copy upon request. It arrived shortly thereafter. I was ecstatic, both as a result of its contents and from having heard from one of the Temple's more reclusive Masters. "Aha!" I said, "This is something I do now!"

Black Magical experimentation with various states of consciousness and later analysis of the resulting effects. Everything from lucid dream experiences to what would appear to be actual OOBes, various intuitive or meta-mental processes (these generally appear to occur when one is in a highly emotionally charged state), or "long distance communication".

This can entail, but is not limited to the meeting of minds in a ritual setting. To quote Magister Neilly: "The ritual 'context' is but one of many mediums/environments we can use as a springboard; it's a [un]natural outgrowth for Setians to go in this direction."

This exact sort of experiment actually took place in the last meta-mental working in May 1997, wherein participants, "traveled" to a predestined location known as the "Black Soil". "The Black Soil" (aka *Khem/Xem*) was how the Egyptians referred to their ancient land.

Hence the MME has some of its roots tied into both the Temple at large and the Order of the Vampyre. Thus the MME is not limited, and is open to all Setians Temple-wide.

This does not mean that all Setians can or will absorb its messages, teachings, or methods at the same level. There are various complexities involved and backgrounds necessary towards comprehension of a thing, which is especially true here.

Those who are familiar with some of the practices that I briefly mentioned will readily understand why I make this point. From my own perspective and per my own background, I readily embraced the MME with a certain understanding, based on past experiences, experiments, and research, all the while appreciating the fact that there may be much that I still have to learn regarding the subject of my interest.

By the same token, not everyone will come into an element like this one with a past history of research and development. This is often how fresh perspectives on previously untrodden ground are won.

Due to the nature of the work, it may be necessary for a Setian I° to initially work very closely with a senior member (someone well-versed in the various levels of MM experimentation). This would be a reflective/learning experience for both. Learning how to effectively communicate and process such experiences can be difficult and quite complicated.

"The Black Soil" had my immediate attention, so after I had completed reading *InterSections* front to cover I immediately set out for the "Black Soil" myself.

The nature of my experience was extremely Vampyric, which is not surprising considering that the OV emerged in part, from the MME. However I was not really aware of this at the time of my own experiment, having not yet received the charter.

Since that time I have had the distinct honor of being the first to become a member of the MME outside of its original founding members.

The purpose of the original working was for all participants to increase their own MM presence by

sinking into the “Black Soil” and leaving a signature of their essence there, thus also becoming aware of the MM presence or essence of one another.

What exactly is an individual’s “signature essence”? Just as each person’s handwritten signature, fingerprints, or DNA is indisputably his own, one’s “signature essence” can be thought of in much the same way. It is the Black Magician’s “potency”, an energy that emanates solely from him.

This energy or essence can be sensed in oneself and others, even over distances, as was proven with the MME’s last experiment. Some of the original participants’ perceptions were astoundingly similar.

Nevertheless “hits and misses” will not be where the true value of such an experience lies. When working with these types of experiments, it is one’s own personal perceptions of self that unlock the hidden doors of the mind - for which the MME creates a very fertile ground

To quote Magister Neilly: “The vistas of our minds, singly and collectively, are where our longevity, strengths, and creations exist.”

One of the things that used to frustrate me endlessly was my desire to find a scientific explanation for why and how these things work. Not that this was a bad thing altogether, as one needs to stick as closely as possible to facts when dealing with these matters, and try to avoid useless mystical explanations that serve only to obscure what is really happening.

I have also learned that there are not yet scientific means in place to adequately take the mystery out of the truly mysterious.

I do know however, that I want to have these types of experiences, and I want to be able to use them in a practical way. That I can and will continue to do as a Black Magician, regardless of the difficulties I may encounter while trying to analyze or communicate them effectively.

This in and of itself is a path to *Xeper*, and offers the possibilities to walk where many have feared to tread.

The MME describes within itself a higher or second order beyond the state of normal mental or conscious functionality. This encompasses memory or the reflective side of the brain as well as the intellectual or cognitive faculties, as well as the very principles of inspiration and enthusiasm.

From the place of magic, where the right and left sides of the brain are synthesized, it can also encompass that faculty known as the *Agathodaimon* or high(er) self.

This is actually highly specialized self-work, which has not yet to my knowledge been introduced into the MME. I mention it here because this is the

place, from my own experiences, to which such experiments can ultimately lead.

Strengthening one’s metamental presence, which the MME is designed to assist one in doing, can bring about a strengthening of one’s personal or “signature essence”, which can possibly attract or strengthen this faculty within the Initiate.

Once this, the “*dæmon lover*” or *Agathodaimon* - as Magister Kelly, Priest Pridgen, and others have referred to it - is ascertained, a Setian may then begin to consider the possibilities of a life within or beyond death. This is not something we can prove or disprove, of course, but it is something for which we can prepare as a distinct possibility while exploring the unknown within our deeper selves.

The MME is open to all Setians and, although a “function” of the OV, is not limited to it. The presence of the MME resonates throughout the Temple, making itself known on deeper and/or higher levels of self-consciousness.

Any dark soul interested in opening the gates of the MME should contact Magister Neilly, Director.

[14] Scribes of the House of Life

- by Lauri Jean Crowe II°

Within the Order of UART we examine the bifurcated process of initiation - that which takes place within our Temple work, and that which occurs in the World of Horrors.

This is exemplified within the *temenos*/studio structure - the former being the core of the artist’s subjective universe, and the latter the face the Initiate shows to the objective world at large. It is this duality which makes us effective artists and magicians and ties intimately to the reason that I, as Tchass, chose the name *Sesh Per Ankh* for the Writer’s Guild.

Sesh Per Ankh translates as “scribe of the House of Life” and was a facet of Ancient Egypt, although its Remanifestation into the Æon of Set takes on a slightly different meaning than it has historically.

This combination of *sesh* (writing) and *per ankh* (house of life) places the Initiate who chooses written communication as a path to *Xeper* in both the subjective and objective worlds as he acts: within a living temple, his life expressed in his work.

Historically “the House of Life” had a variety of connotations depending on whose text was read. However, in each reference I have come across, it was associated with the scribes of the temples in ancient Egypt: their work of copying, collecting, and creating written testimonies and documents of magical incantation and ritual of the culture.

The House of Life was seen as a building, or perhaps a small group of buildings, in which the library of a temple was kept and the scribes, as custodians of knowledge, studied. In addition to their individual studies, scribes compiled and preserved written accounts of the life of the people, from simple accounts and rolls of members in office to involved magical spells for healing.

The position of the scribe was theoretically open to all members of the society, although it was most likely closed to the commoners, from whom the priests and scribes kept their magical papyri. The thinking behind this was that the papyri contained information so powerful that it could be extremely dangerous and an abuse and misuse of power in unskilled hands.

This concept is evidenced if we look to a Coptic version of the *Bible* in which the pharaoh asks for the *spheransch* or “interpreters of dreams”. This term, which translates as “magician”, is thought to be a corruption of *sesch per ankh*.

The work of the scribe was not easy. Training for the position was strident, tedious, and oftentimes harsh, with an emphasis on first copying the work of others, which would assure that the scribe was exposed to many different ideas and would acquire a certain knowledge of geography, history, arithmetic and the foreign phrases of cultures with which their own society interacted. The training of the scribe was dubbed a practice designed to “teach the ignorant to know everything that is”.

The Egyptians termed the House of Life, and its work “the necessary art”. This is how I view written communication within the Temple. Written correspondence is the primary means of contact for the new Initiate. Without an effective handle on this medium, one’s initiation can be markedly stilted.

As we proceed further in our initiation, there are often more opportunities for communication available in other media, more face-to-face contact, telephone interaction, etc. However we still utilize writing as a primary tool for communication of *Xeper* in our articles throughout the Temple’s publications. In essence, writing is a “necessary art” for the Black Magician within the Temple of Set.

Some of us choose to develop this tool, this art, further and make it a primary aspect of our initiation, synthesizing subjective and objective universes into a sovereign world-view espoused in print. These are the *sesch per ankh*, the scribes of the Temple of Set, the magicians of the House of Life.

[15] Personality Model

- by Simone Lohmeier I°

One’s personality is a most difficult structure to explore. Several models and theses have been tried. My own view is based partly on a model that is often taught in Sociology. However I would like to propose a subtle addition for your consideration.

In my view the human personality consists of both the facets a person is able to develop and the roles a person plays in everyday life.

The Facets

The personality is seldom so simply structured that it develops only one character. It is rather a highly-complicated structure that seeks to act according to every situation in the proper way. Thus different patterns of behavior are often needed.

To visualize this, consider the color spectrum that is used to explain the structure of light:

White light consists of three main colors: yellow, cyan, and magenta. When these three tones are mixed, any color can be achieved. So, for example, green is a combination of yellow and cyan.

All three tones together make white light. So if you arrange the colors in a circle, where they touch one another and cross each other in the middle, you will see the spectral colors in a circle around a core of white light.

Similarly a person develops different traits which can be put together in certain “sub-personalities” that act upon the situation in which they feel invoked. Hence in one situation, a person is mostly a sensitive poet who enjoys the silence of nature, while in the next is an aggressive broker waiting for the best chance to sell his product for high profit.

All these “sub-characters” or facets are part of the same individual. They do not act according to their own wills, as they are only part of **one** will-enabled individual.

All of those facets have the same center or core. Just as the three primary colors combine in white light, the different facets combine to produce the real personality of an individual.

Colors are also a function of light. They can be seen only because when white light falls upon a surface, the colors not represented are absorbed and the color of the surface is reflected. This is the reason why in darkness no colors can be seen, white surfaces have reflective qualities, and colors can be seen in their true shades only in white light.

White light cannot be seen itself. It helps to make colors and shapes visible, but itself remains hidden. The same applies to the real core of a person. If someone has an uncertain grasp of what

he believes his real self to be, it will be difficult for him to describe it; it is simply beyond perception.

I myself had to learn this the hard way when trying to explain the concept to a fellow Setian.

The more objective a person's perception of his vices and virtues, the better his personality facets can be identified. Since most people tend to ignore or rationalize certain facets, however, it remains difficult for them, much less others, to see the entire picture.

The Roles

"Roles" represent the character of someone in the way he acts upon others and in the way that others superficially perceive him.

This model is often taught in Sociology. It describes a person's habit of creating a personality most appropriate for display in daily life. So if a woman experiences a normal day from breakfast to dinner, she will probably have played the roles of her husband's wife, her mother's daughter, her boss' secretary, the chairman of any committee in which she's involved, etc.

These roles are not necessarily virtual constructs. In many cases people tend to integrate such roles so well into their real personality that they become facets. This is more possible when a particular role appeals to the person rather than seeming a mere duty.

When I do not get along well with my boss, for instance, I "play" the role of his submissive clerk rather than thinking that this role is the "actual me". [Of course I might bring LBM to bear on any such situation!]

Conclusions

It is often hard to distinguish whether a particular character trait is a facet or a role. But it nonetheless remains part of an individual's character.

Those interested in searching for their "real selves" might find this facet/role model useful. It has worked well for me in my own continuing quest for self-knowledge.

I decided to write this article for two reasons:

First I tried to describe this model to a fellow Setian a few weeks ago, but found that it was yet not fully developed as a concept. Later I refined it and considered the result worthy of presentation.

Secondly, when I read the *Crystal Tablet of Set*, I encountered Magus Webb's "Egyptian Anthropology" article. It reminded me of my own model in the way, the hidden "I" and the "own Ennead" were presented.

Maybe this is a sign that I will be able to apply this model for my own quest as well. We will see what time and I myself make of it!

[16] Ethan Olsen Birthday

Adept K. Brent Olsen and his wife Jennie H. Olsen are pleased to announce the First Coming Into Being of their new son, Ethan James Seth Olsen, on July 12, 1998.

[17] A New Beginning

- by Kevin Crim I°

For my first article in the *Scroll*, I decided to write about how I came to be a member of the Temple of Set.

My descent into darkness began when I was very young, about seven years old. I developed a strong interest in things of a dark nature, horror movies, vampires, werewolves, etc.

This did not go over very well during my years in Christian elementary school. I remember having to write "I love Jesus" 25 times in a row as punishment for bringing a copy of *Friday The 13th* to school to show some of my friends who did not believe that my parents would allow me to watch such a film. I was told that "God" did not approve of me watching such things. This upset me very much, and being the rebellious child that I was, I decided that I did not care what "God" thought.

I was 12 years old when I first read a copy of the *Satanic Bible*. I enjoyed this book very much. From that day forward, I was determined to develop myself as a Satanist.

Satan revealed himself to me to be the god of all the things in life that I loved most. I felt a great deal of joy with the revelation that I could become my own god. Before this day, I was unaware that such a religion existed. I gained a new outlook on life. A life with endless possibilities.

When I was around the age of fourteen, I formed a local Satanic group that consisted of mostly kids from my junior high school (I was now out of X-ian school). We held meetings at local coffee houses, and we conducted group ceremonies in my garage at home.

I had a rather difficult time, however, convincing my 14-year-old friend Sarah to act as the "Living Nude Altar". After a lot of reassurance that she had nothing to be ashamed of [believe me, she did not], she finally agreed to bare all for Satan.

This group lasted for about one year. Towards the end, many of our members had either moved or moved on to do the "new cool thing", whatever that was. I, however, was determined to continue my journey along the Left-Hand Path.

I never did join the Church of Satan. However I did think about it a time or two. I just did not see that organization as having anything more to offer

other than their books, which I already possessed.

I was 16 when I first encountered the Temple of Set. I had read the information letter on the Internet and found it to be very informative. I was very interested in Setian philosophy and desired to learn more. The only problem was that I was not yet 18 years old (a policy with which I still do not agree), and thus could not join the Temple.

I would not let that stop me from learning as much as I could from an outside perspective. I searched the Internet and found many Setian documents that provided me with more information on the Temple of Set. I even managed to obtain a copy of the *Crystal Tablet* from an ex-Setian..

About a week after I turned 17, I attended a lecture given by Magus Webb at the Hellhouse of Hollywood, owned by Priest and Priestess Schreck III°, at that time both Adepts II°. I found this lecture to be very informative. It was an event to be remembered.

Later that year I became an employee at Hellhouse of Hollywood. This experience gave me many opportunities to educate myself on public relations concerning the Left-Hand Path, as well as a medium for meeting and educating others who were sincerely interested in the LHP. I did have to deal with my share of complete wackos as well, that just happened to walk through the door. Even dealing with them, at times could provide great entertainment.

I continued my employment at Hellhouse of Hollywood until Priest and Priestess Schreck's decision to convert the store into an international mail order service.

About two weeks after I turned 18, I sent in my letter requesting membership within the Temple to Magistra Reynolds and was accepted. By the way, at some point in between sending in my letter and receiving my acceptance package, I moved to Texas. Shortly after I was accepted as a Setian I° (about a month), I attended my first Conclave. I plan to write about my Conclave experiences in a future article.

I feel that my decision to become a member of the Temple was a very significant step in my journey along the LHP. I look forward to a long and prosperous affiliation with the Temple of Set as I continue to strive towards self-mastery and godhood.

[18] Response to "You Know How Couples Pick" by Brian Karasek

- by Jennifer Chen I°

In my opinion, the first thing that binds a true relationship is the point of departure that allows both individuals to make the personal choice of interaction within the other's subjective universe.

To me an ideal relationship should not be based on the sole foundation that each person must share the same views, belief system, or interests. Rather, as the Executive Director pointed out, there are many relationships that are "mixed" and yet remain harmonious.

Of course there is no denying that two people who can enjoy the same tastes and views have an easier time "vibing" with each other, but this is entirely dependent on the individual - and all persons are different and at different levels in their lives.

This harmony or spiritual resonance between two happy people is entirely a case of what each individual seeks to gain and expect from the relationship. A Setian who is dating a non-Setian has his own reasons of why he has chosen to be with that person.

Perhaps, in an old fashioned sense, the connection between the two goes beyond subjective/objective parameters if the relationship is a truly intense and strong one. There are advantages and disadvantages to everything and certainly relationships are high up on that list.

Per Setians I have encountered, many started out their relationships dating a "non-member". Eventually it came to pass that their partners made the personal decision to finally join. This was the case for myself, and from the point where I was "at", the decision to join became apparent to me because the awesome magnitude of *Xeper* and what it stands for has actualized my life in many ways.

The Temple encourages the ability of one to forge his own path to Becoming. Thus we are all on our own. For Setians in relationships, I think that there is the definite, respectful understanding that a person must "seek and find" at his own pace, free of influence, bias, or pressuring factors.

The most beneficial thing for the two would be support and sensitivity, free from judgmental factors.

Certainly the Temple's premise can be considered a selfish one, but selfish in the sense that all of us are taking control of our lives, aiming towards personal self development. And no two periods of transformation are alike.

I have experienced pain and the feeling of loss, but ultimately I realized that the unhappiness was something I could change. Relationships must possess the strength to grow, as well as the freedom-allowance between two people that puts them on different yet equal planes in the manner of respect for each other. Dissatisfaction toward a person for not sharing the same beliefs automatically places expectations and limitations on the other. We seek happiness for ourselves, and no one else is responsible for it. *Xeper*.

[19] **The Dangers of Invisibility**

- by Richard Gavin II°

One of the obvious dangers of being a Black Magician is how members of profane society react [or overreact] to our presence in the universe.

Like all other intelligent life-forms, human beings utilize a variety of tools and techniques to avoid peril. A common practice for magicians is the use of invisibility. This type of "homogenizing" can be very useful when we are dealing with clients, employers, or in some cases family.

From a mundane/natural viewpoint, invisibility is beneficial. But from a magical/initiatory perspective, it can be dangerous.

The danger of invisibility lies in the fact that very often when we say we are "magically" guarding ourselves, we are really just ignoring any potential initiation for the sake of convenience. This is not to say that strolling into the office in full ritual garb is appropriate, nor is it wise to hang the Seal of *Runa* up next to your store's business hours. But we can work at work. In my opinion we should do so.

Since the governments of the world do not yet subsidize magicians, most of us are forced to spend a great deal of our lives chasing the almighty dollar. There are many Setians who truly enjoy their careers. Applaud them, for they have been weaving their magic to enrich their everyday lives. But for those who may not be engaged in the job of their choice, here are some possible ways to improve the situation:

1. **The resumé game:** Always keep a stack of polished resúmes on hand. Periodically mail one or two to any establishment you fancy. This practice works especially well after a bad day, when you're trying to decide which one of your superiors you are going to "hex" first. Mail off a resumé instead. Don't concern yourself with your qualifications, just get your name out there. Apply for anything from a bank manager to a casket maker. Even if you know nothing about either of these things, it may pry open a few doors of opportunity.

2. **Don't save your magic for the weekend.** Bring an intriguing book with you to read on your coffee break. Don't be afraid to answer questions from curious co-workers. Just because most people regard meaningful dialogue as queer and useless doesn't mean that everyone you work with feels that way. You'll be amazed to discover how many intelligent people wear protective armor from 9 to 5 for the same reasons you do.

3. **Develop your passions for profit.** Many Setians run their own mail-order companies in addition to their day job. Others publish magazines

or sell their art. You may not be able to supplement your income with these endeavors, but you may find it highly rewarding and magically refreshing. Cast your magic out into the world if you wish. Bring mystery to your local shopping district. A prime example of this kind of magic would be Priest and Priestess Schreck's "Hellhouse of Hollywood".

4. **Don't waste your free time.** You are no doubt a very fascinating person. Continue to make yourself more fascinating by indulging yourself every day. Writing fiction has been my long-time passion. Unfortunately I am unable to support myself solely through my art. But I still write every single day without fail. I submit manuscripts and continue to polish my work. If I don't, then the chances of my becoming a professional novelist are slim. Use your free time to manifest your dreams.

5. **Know when to take a breather.** Avoid burning out from your job if at all possible. A sneaky but sometimes necessary way to avoid this is to take advantage of so-called "sick days". If you're nearing the end of your rope and it's only Tuesday, call in with the flu. But don't waste the day in bed. Read, catch up on correspondence, take a long walk alone and ponder how different you are from many people who care only for their career. [I don't recommend pulling the sick-day scam too often, but I guarantee that even the most stiff-collared supervisor fibs for a day off every now and then.]

The suggestions above are just that. They are not cast in stone. You may have a dozen other tricks up your sleeve. Be sure to use them!

Remember that in the business world, despite all of its apparent prestige and power, it functions unconsciously. Many of the tricks you pull will go unnoticed. But always remain safe. You'll know when you're crossing the boundary between self-interest and just plain laziness.

This article was meant to inspire you to make your workday more interesting and fun. It isn't a slacker's guidebook. Always regard your magical ability as a gift. This gift does not automatically make you superior to those around you. Think of it as that exercise machine you received last Xmas. It's a wonderful gift, full of possibilities. But it won't do your body a damn bit of good if you aren't willing to turn it on, monkey around with the dials, and take a few spills.

[20] **Setian Psychological Awareness**

- by Mark Martin I°

The first things that used to come to mind when someone mentioned psychology were "boring" and "bullshit". Now the word "awareness" is foremost in its description. Awareness and a

freedom from the dogma and ideologies that an uninitiated society and government force upon us, awareness of my character defects, my goals in life and within the Temple, and what I must do to achieve them as well as creating challenges within my self.

What I've learned from life, as I've led it so far, is that:

(1) You can't outrun your problems or fears. You need to face them with courage.

(2) Absorb what is useful, and discard what is useless. Yet nothing is ever totally useful or useless as you progress. Time and *Xeper* show that much.

(3) Keep an open mind.

(4) Anger is 99.9% useless.

I already had a pretty fair grasp of the above, or so I thought. Then with the prodding of several of the Priesthood and a very patient Magister, I bit the bullet and read *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* as well as *The Prince* and *Flow*. These were not the dull and boring books that I remembered from high school. These opened a door to the awareness of which I'm writing.

"Awareness", by definition is "conscious, knowing, informed and cognizant." - *Webster's*. What I hope to do with this article is to cover three areas of awareness which I am attempting to fructify.

The first area is the *ego* and outward projections. For myself, the last ten years seemed to be me being mean, nasty and rude with an attitude that would make a wolverine with hemorrhoids run away. I still carried around an ex-Marine mentality, while outside I was caring, humorous, and very loving (according to my better half). I also knew that I possessed these qualities, but wanted to project a different person.

Why the facade? Why the anger? Because I was trying to be something and someone I wasn't. Oh, of course I am that person who learned how to kill, but why project it on those who don't deserve it?

Everyone likes to be liked, and for me it was so natural to bullshit my way into somebody else's space. But then again, if someone doesn't like you for who you are, well, that's on them, not me.

By forgetting the egotism and letting me be me, it's much easier on people I meet, as well as on myself. Lesson in awareness #1: *Ego* and Outward Projections.

Self-control has always been a problem for me. I have prided myself on the fact that I've studied the martial arts for 18 years now and possess several black belts and a black sash.

The discipline learned in the dojo was fine in the dojo, or if I got into a fight. Out in the world I never applied it. I was self-centered and the center of my own universe.

I am practicing empathy towards others and awareness of my thoughts, words and deeds. I don't need to have things my way all the time, and those times are when I need to chill out, step back, take a look and see what's really going on.

This practice of stepping back is also very useful when I'm doing an Astral working. Is this where I really want to be? Do I need to react in the way I want, or does it require merely a response?

So far these practices are working in keeping me centered and cognizant that what I do affects others. I can't set a time limit on these aspirations and goals, but I know that if I keep on with this cycle of *Xeper* and Remanifestation, in time I **will** become that man and have achieved those goals.

I cannot force myself to be calm at all times, but as long as I stay aware of the factors and influences that grate on my nerves, I am able to greet them as challenges, not problems. Awareness lesson #2 in mentality and spirituality.

To be aware in the third way is to be aware physically, of my body and its needs. Of course rest and food are the demands, but in order for my performance in a ritual, say, I couldn't do it under the influence of some controlled substance.

I will never condemn anyone for his use of mind-altering substances [Set knows, I've been there and done that!], but I know that total conscious awareness is necessary if one is to grow, learn, and remember anything done during said ritual.

To keep oneself in at least fair shape is good not only for the body, but for the self-esteem it produces. A clear-headed, focused magician will accomplish more in the SU and the OU than a drunken sot any day!

Intensity and emotional content are the keys to a successful operation. If one is impaired, the true will is impaired, and delusions and desires take over. Awareness of the physical capabilities and limits is my third lesson.

I look at myself now and what I used to be. Problems are now challenges, making me stronger, giving me more questions to ponder, more books to read, as well as an awareness of what I need to do to make my life happier, more productive, motivated and disciplined.

In my journal the goals that I need to keep the cycle of *Xeper* and Remanifestation going, actually manifesting in my daily life, are the reward for my awareness. The Gift of Set is not a pipe dream. It becomes a reality with the right attitude and a focus on awareness.

I hope this has at least made you ponder a bit. If I have done that, then this article has accomplished its purpose. I welcome any comments and other points of view. Until next time, I remain yours in Set!

[21] The Spiral Maze of Thulask

The Psychology of
a Setian's Possible Entertainment
- by Tony Pizzini II°

Breakthrough Beyond Transformation (video; 108 minutes, Lightworks A/V, 1996).

I agonized over whether to include this for review or not, and for a number of reasons. First of all, you either know what this is/was and are/will be interested (for/against) or you don't and you aren't! It's a nearly two-hour, well-edited talk given by a rather controversial writer.

I correspond with a number of people who, because of my association and/or respect with/for, I am constantly having to defend (one example being German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen). So if mention of the name Whitley Strieber sets your bells and whistles going, and you want to argue/fight/stop by here and take me for a nice little ride, I recommend as an alternative, joining the appropriate Net newsgroup and flaming to your heart's content there. I can argue from now until Pisces (about 2,100 years from now) and so will Whitley and hey/yo it's a waste ...

Whitley is outrageously humorous, angry, nervous, philosophical, and on dangerous ground (File Under X) ... and why did this review disappear from its disk the first draft around?

* * *

Antonin Dvorak: Symphony #9 in E Minor, Op. 95. (London/Weekend Classics, 1967/1988).

Also known, more famously, as "From The New World." Dvorak (1841-1904), who came from a tiny Bohemian town 45 miles north of Prague, was a butcher before he was a composer and indulged in the completely harmless hobbies of trainspotting (not the addictive sort) and birdwatching (the feathered sort).

Upon beginning his musical education and too poor even to buy paper, a piano, or a 64-track mixing console, he became quite taken with the music of Wagner and Liszt. The Wagnerian influence can be heard to good effect near the end of this piece's First Movement.

He moved to New York City in 1892 (was CBGB open then?), where he not only started making a lot of money, but wrote this piece (well, NYC and a town in Iowa), which is based on African-American, as well as his home country's folk songs. Predates Serialism, Stravinsky's rhythmical wildness, and is beautifully Romantic. Makes me think of the NYC side of the Staten Island Ferry Terminal at 2 or 3 in the morning; you've got a half-full bottle wrapped in a bag, a taser in your pocket; you lie down on a bench and

just close your eyes.

The CD also contains Bedrich Smetana's (1824-1884, also Czech) "Vltava (The Moldau)," the second in a cycle of six tone poems known as "Ma Vlast (My Country)". Another composer whose musical tendencies were quite nationalistic.

This short (11 minute) piece describes the journey of the River Vltava from its source to the sea", and is also very decompressing in a peaceful sort of way. For some reason, I even think of Wagner's "Das Rheingold" from the *Ring* when I hear this.

Lineup includes the Vienna Philharmonic and the Israel Philharmonic; they are, in this instance, charged with the crime of very little sonic transparency.

* * *

The Butthole Surfers: *Locust Abortion Technician* (Touch and Go, 1987).

Among the tiny handful of bands that actually are Isolated from the mainstream of Rock. Gibby, Paul and King, who have stuck it out for around 18 years and nearly as many recordings now, were gigging around constantly when my wife's and my band, Panic, were in full bloom.

They scored a major deal a few years back; Zep's bassist produced them; then came "Hairway to Steven", and some fans began to back away - exactly the same thing that happened to Hüsker Du and X.

This "morality and gender-bending" group of friends (along with ever-changing bass players) have influenced (and been acknowledged as influences on everyone from ... to ...). Wild, wild experimentation (tape loops, backwards sections, wrong recording speeds, dozens of overlapping vocals), straight Rock songs, hardcore, incredibly damaged satires of everything from Country to Metal; this is not by any means to everyone's taste.

The above-named recording begins with a humorously benign invocation of Satan, segueing into a demented (yet elegantly head-banging) version of Black Sabbath's "Sweet Leaf." Their "The O'Men," also found here, may be the ultimate sendup of Death Metal.

I have determined that this band creates postmodern Rock (meaning it pays tribute while making fun of); some of this stuff is nearly impenetrable, if at times highly offensive, and like the Grateful Dead, they appear to not understand, themselves, how it has the effect that it does on listeners. Their songs "Lady Sniff," and "Moving To Florida" found on the CD "The Hole Truth ... and Nothing Butt" (Trance Syndicate, 1995) should give you an idea why their Website links ultimately lead to the Church of the Subgenius' own.

King (the drummer) runs his own label and is involved in the more electronic projects Drain and The Jack Officers, as well as BRAINWASH - online 24-7 alternative radio at

<http://m2.monsterbit.com/brainwash/>

If you haven't, download RealAudio (free) from www.real.com to listen to the show.

* * *

Allanah Myles, *Rockinghorse* (Atlantic, 1992).

Myles is from Toronto, Canada. She has said in print that "vengeance has fueled my songwriting from day one". This is her second CD. Out of three, and a fourth just released, *Arival* (ARK 21/Virgin) ... actually I'd pick either; the new one is unplugged, bluesy, and, based on the lyrics alone, has been denounced by one reviewer as a "dangerous, predatory vixen".

Even though she claims influences ranging from The Pretenders to Leonard Cohen, the Zep/Heart (and occasional Stones) influence is undeniable in some songs.

There are quiet songs here, and then there are songs that kick hard. Her voice though is the star. Smoky, sultry, with a hint of sandpaper (Miranda Richardson as Queen Mab).

She appears to have more of a following in Europe and her home country than in the U.S., and I would imagine this to be true for a number of reasons, not the least being that the rock biz has been gender-challenged from day nine.

Check it out: between August '96 and August '97, the RIAA (Record Industry Association of America) reports that there were approximately 28,000 releases in the U.S."; this wouldn't even include independent releases! ... and somewhere in between LBM-Master Madonna and Kula Shaker there were those whose first taste of a major label contract ended in lawsuits and substance abuse programs.

Myles somehow, in the face of the odds against her, is still working.

* * *

Rhino Home Video planned to release on July 21st of this year, a Boris Karloff 7-pack: *Alien Terror*, *Cult of the Dead*, *Destination Nightmare*, *Jack The Ripper*, *Torture Zone*, and *The Veil*. I'm not sure of the price or if there are plans for European distribution. So far it's VHS NTSC.

[22] Notes from *Neheh*

- by Don Webb V°, High Priest of Set

Concerning *Xeper*

The eternal Word of Set, *Xeper*, an Egyptian verb meaning, "I Have Come Into Being", is at the depth of all truly human experience. However the deep knowledge that we are responsible for our own

creation is too great a strain on most of mankind. Although we draw from the core of all human action, we are not for all humans.

Xeper is the Becoming of being. Life is possibility.

There are different models of human experience. One would tell us that we are **being** - some set of permanent ideals that need merely to be expressed by finding our true wills (and adding the letter "k" to magic). Others would tell us that we are **nothingness** - that all of the parts of ourselves exist only at this moment - and that an inspired craziness would be the good.

In the Temple of Set we choose a path between those extremes. We are interested in the Becoming of being. We believe that there are parts of us that are fixed and stable, but largely hidden from our direct perception except at those moments of extreme clarity, when we can truly say "I have Come Into Being".

But we also believe that being can be acquired - from the rationally intuited and inspired use of the seemingly accidental parts of our lives. This gives each of us not only the possibility, but the responsibility for creating our own worlds.

The process by which *Xeper* can be discovered by each human is unique to that individual. The summation of that process is found in the eleven-word formula: "The target need not be perfect, but the method must be."

Any magical process is aimed at imperfect targets. You are sick, so you aim a spell at your body. You have a bad job, so you aim a spell at your employment possibilities.

You do not aim a spell at a perfect target - you don't find a ten-dollar bill in the street and do a ritual on it to make it an eleven-dollar bill.

The lifelong magical work of changing yourself obviously begins with an imperfect self. [That part is pretty easy for humans to come by; I believe that there are over six billion imperfect selves to work with right now.]

The method, however, must be perfect. It is not a simple matter of knowing your wants and abilities. What if you had had the chance to design your life when you were nine years old? You'd be pretty damn miserable right now - even if you did own all the Hot Wheels ever made.

So the goal at which you are aiming is partially hidden within you, and it changes as you acquire more being.

The method you use to choose your goals derives from your experience of *Xeper* - not from my words, or some book, or some guru you have met.

Your goals will change, because they are only approximations of your *Xeper*. The method of

picking them relies on your only true guide, your own experience consulted in times of great clarity.

Xeper is the eternal Word of Set, by which he accomplishes his goals in this and other worlds of Becoming. Set, god alternately revered and loathed in ancient Egypt, is the god of separation from the cosmos. His name in Egyptian means “isolator” or “elector”. The “Satanic pride” in which we indulge as Setians is by becoming Set-like. We do not worship this entity, but use him as a role model.

Most religions would teach that we are part of the universe. The Setian rejects this, and accepts the responsibility for his own success and failures - just as Set, his spiritual father, does on a divine scale.

If an acorn falls from a great oak, it contains all the necessary potential to be a great oak. But the acorn’s job isn’t to rot so that it can be absorbed by the root system of the oak. It doesn’t seek unity. Instead it seeks to become another oak, which in its own time will make its own acorns.

Love does not consist in my being at one with the soul of my lover, but in contemplating all the things that make her special and unique from me and from the rest of the cosmos. If I were at one with her, the amount of love in our private world would be halved.

With each new soul that claims for itself the heritage of the Prince of Darkness, the amounts of love, mystery, intelligence, magic, play, music, memory, beauty, and victory all increase in the cosmos. In fact it is only through self-development of individual men and women that such qualities **can** increase. To desire unity with the universe would be to turn your back on being part of such work. It may be fine for the weak, but not for us: The adventure is too strong, the goals too worthy.

The ultimate goal of one who sees the model of *Xeper* is not to spit “*Xeper*” back into the world, but to create a world by his words and deeds. The enactment of this model cannot but help to cast *Xeper* into the objective universe.

In the religions of the *hoi polloi*, the great good is spreading the religion. These are religions of foundation (*nomos*). They want to teach three things: (1) This is what the cosmos looks like (you are here). (2) This is where every good person is supposed to go (you can be there). (3) There are laws for the *psyche* that are as fixed as those in the observable universe.

If that “good news” were true, it would be the moral and ethical imperative of every thinking being to spread the message.

However we know that this is not the case. We know that the *psyche* is not bound by laws exterior to it. Or as most Setians would say: “What works for me may not work for you.” This simple truth places us in opposition to the mechanistic laws of

the universe; we are **anti-nomian**.

We teach this: (1) For the secret and the few, there is way of escaping some of the laws of the cosmos. (2) The greater the freedom from the cosmos you obtain, the more likely that you will determine your afterlife. [My afterlife will **not** be your afterlife.] (3) The properties of the *psyche* are acquired by a willed process, *Xeper*, the Becoming of being.

Our imperative is to speak to the secret and the few about who we are. Why is this? Because in their choices they clarify our own.

We see the failures and success of others, working with the same knowledge that we (when we are our best) possess.

Some remain in the Temple as brief a time as a decade and can point to the world they have made. The majority of these several worlds are and must be outside of something as small as the Temple.

Others may cling to their Temple-reality because they have done naught in the world. They did not use the Word of worlds. *Xeper* is not theirs, although they will have served Set’s eternal purpose by keeping his Word alive.

The Setian Path

At first **separation**, the process of freeing oneself from what one has been told.

Most people cannot do this. In the worst cases this is manifest by new members who create elaborate cosmologies that “reconcile” Setian philosophy with previously-held cockamamie cosmologies.

When you are the most **separate** from the cosmos, you change more quickly. This is the great secret that Michael Aquino brought to us. It is a profoundly antinomian message in contrast to the age of “oneness with all things”. It is - if properly understood and taught by the Priesthood of Set - the key to our power. It is at the heart of the truly antinomian character of Setian universe: the use of a subjective approach to the subjective universe, which ultimately is the key to dominion.

Secondly **synthesis**: putting together an interior world picture.

This is very hard to do. Most people would rather pick up someone else’s - LaVey, Crowley, Spare, Blavatsky, Webb, etc. - existing picture.

The picture empowers them by giving direction to their actions. It both determines lines of inquiry and world building. That is to say it makes you think hard about some things and become stronger in that virtue. And it helps you pick what you want to do today: Vacation? Start a business? Take or teach a class? Paint a painting?

Thirdly **reintegration**.

This is very hard to do. If we remain creatures

of dreams, we may be happy and lucky, but we do not achieve the self-deification that is the sign of the Word of worlds. We have to go into the world and make it. We must fashion our kingdoms.

In this process many will follow, but a few will come to us and say: "What was your secret? How did you manage to have a happy, powerful life?"

To them, for our own education and enjoyment, we give the secret. By the revealing the model of *Xeper*, we create for ourselves fit companions, just as the Prince of Darkness creates such companions for himself.

This is not a one-time process. This process goes round and round and round. Each time the effects are greater. Each **separation** strengthens strong self-knowledge, self-commitment, and healthy self-love. Each **synthesis** shows us more how the cosmos works, and how we can work if we create ourselves according to our self-discovered plan. Each **reintegration** brings increasing amounts of pleasure, wisdom, and power.

With each turn of the spiral force, we bring more people to the Temple. With each turn we further a common understanding of *Xeper*, which must always lag far behind our individual understanding. With each turn we create worlds within and beyond ourselves. And on a cosmic scale with each turn, we increase the sum total of possibilities and potentialities in the cosmos.

Concerning Lesser Black Magic

One of the reasons to practice LBM is the need to create a loosening in the warp and weft of the world, so that your will comes to have more and more of an effect on what is already conditioned and created. This sort of loosening is needed for and creates four effects. They are:

Freedom Without: The ruling paradigm of the world is (and must be) one of stability. We are in an unspoken social contract with everyone we meet: "I'm not going to change; you're not going to change."

Setians, as by-product of their *Xeper*, are undergoing **constant** change, particularly in their early stages of their initiation. So people are often bewildered, angry, or distrustful of them.

In the world, social control is maintained by spending most of our time talking about the trivia of life in great detail. We tell each other where we eat, how our car is running, and so forth. Slowly we each build up a picture of one another in our minds, and base all of our actions and expectations on that picture.

If you allow your friends/co-workers/family to know everything about you, they will have a handle on how to make you act, bad feelings when you show freedom; and worst of all they will continually

reinforce **their** image of you on you.

People tend to be "enablers". They are willing not only to support you in your alcoholism or drug-abuse, they will support you in anything that furthers their picture of you.

So the Setian must do three things:

One, he must project a slightly mysterious image, so that as change processes occur there are no bad feelings against him.

Secondly, the Setian must project an idealized image of what he wishes to Become, so that social forces reinforce that idea. If you tell people that you are a scholar, they will praise you/help you with scholarly things. This is a matter of managing external realities to obtain internal ones.

Thirdly, the Setian must avoid letting others know too much about weaknesses that he is trying to overcome. It's all right if he talks to his therapist about this, but not to the guy in the next cubicle at work - because the latter will aid you toward bad behavior as much as good.

In essence here is how others must be led to think of you: "I don't have too good a handle on Joe. He's complex and full of nice surprises. But I do know he works really hard to better himself."

Freedom Within: This is the flip-side of the above.

One of the ways people create themselves is by constantly telling lies about themselves.

You have seen and heard it around you. It can be the successful woman who goes around talking about how incompetent she is, or the least-attractive of all men who goes on about being Don Juan.

Suddenly it hits you: They really **believe** it. But the depth of this revelation seldom hits you.

You have just seen one of the most easily-manipulated aspects of self creation - yea, that holy thing we call GBM.

You too can use it, simply by making a list of your faults - let's say you're bad at keeping your word - then telling people: "I am good at keeping my word."

Hearing yourself say things in your voice will affect your Becoming on a deep level. If you can combine this with the effect above, you are on your way to making yourself and your world.

Protection from Revelation: I learned this years ago from a friend who ran a swinger's club. Even in the fairly liberal environs of Austin, this is a questionable occupation, and not the best way to introduce yourself to, say, your dentist or realtor, not to mention your daytime boss.

However one of the first things that my friend would tell anyone was that she had orgies at her house.

She would always tell it in a joking tone. For example: "I am busy this weekend because of that

orgy I have every month.” The joking manner made most people assume that she was kidding. However over the years people would find out and either be amused or hostile, but in the latter case she always pointed out that she had told them from the beginning. Telling the truth as though it were a joke can keep the truth from biting you later.

I always told my friends before I went off to conclave that I was going to a meeting of the international Satanic conspiracy and could “say no more”, wink, wink. They figured I was off doing some smutty or slightly illegal thing, but when I finally went public about my Temple affiliation, no one was able to accuse me of lying to him or hiding anything.

Creation of the Network: This is the magical culmination of the first three effects.

If you change your fellow beings into believing that you are interesting and skilled in some area in which you are working to become skilled, they will act as your eyes and ears.

If you tell them you are a scholar, they will introduce you to their cousin, who happens to be the best scholar in the field.

If you tell yourself that you are reliable and daring, you will be able to follow up on leads that people are quite happy to give you. [They see themselves as not daring enough to do so.]

If you have lead them to believe that you are in some way connected with some occult secret too dire to talk about, they will come to see you as a powerful person, and desire to connect you with other powerful people in their lives. [They will want to show you off to the other people they respect/fear/desire.]

In short, the external reality you have crafted will come (in the most unexpected of ways) to have the people you would have dreamed of knowing in it.

This latter effect is of use only if, while you have created this illusion of being what you wish to be, you have done hard work in actually becoming it. Then when you have that chance meeting with the film director, occult scholar, or gallery owner that your carefully-planted LBM seeds have brought about, you will have something real to show the world at the right time.

If you don't develop the reality to match the lies, you'll merely be laughed at. Of course to do long-term LBM like this, you must have profound knowledge of who you really are, what you really wish to become, and a sense of how to get there from here.

In this regard I will leave you with a magical slogan of Austin Osman Spare: “What is a lie but a mistimed event?”

In the meantime, look for notes from your own future. *Xeper*.

[23] **Temptation of the Black Medallion**

- by Felipe F. Perez II°

The temptation of the black medallion is a beast which the Setian Adept may face at some time in life.

The temptation of the black medallion is the pursuit of the III° as a goal.

The temptation of the black medallion can slow down, hinder, mutate or outright destroy the initiation of an Adept.

The temptation of the black medallion can be vanquished and banished if recognized and treated by the self.

The temptation of the black medallion is a mysterious beast which can penetrate and prowl around the minds of Adepts who seek after it. It is a destructive beast and can do nothing but obfuscate perspective of self, life, catapulting you into the merry and insidious land of the nonsensical and rotting waste.

The temptation of the black medallion is acceptance of the III° as a goal. It is a device created by the Adept which fashions a stronghold within the subjective universe and orients all of that Adept's work and efforts toward that objective. It is an impelling desire to be Recognized as a Priest or Priestess of Set, which cannot be quenched by logic or reason. It is as if a part of consciousness which knows not reason has created a purpose for itself and will stop at nothing until it achieves what it wants.

The temptation of the black medallion is not some silly desire to wear a black medallion for the sake of merely doing so. I don't think anyone who perceives the black medallion as a trinket or views the III° as a ladder-climbing reward would have been Recognized to the II°.

The temptation of the black medallion is the perception and understanding of the III° as the goal of one's *Xeper* & Remanifestation.

To consciously seek after the III° succeeds in creating the loathsome beast of which I write. This beast is a careful predator which, once being evoked by its victim, engages in battle until death. It is not a beast with fangs, claws, or bushy paws, but an act of GBM executed with a lack of knowledge concerning the III° and thus a misguided and potentially destructive one.

This working need not have occurred through ceremony with black robes and flames, but through thought and speech; it is the identification of the III° as the embodiment of whatever one wants or perceives it to be and proceed to direct *Xeper* towards it.

The temptation of the black medallion can only be brought upon the self by the self. As with all GBM Workings, the effects are potentially unknown by the magician and may consume him entirely by making him work toward a goal he cannot and does not understand.

An Adept of the Temple of Set cannot work towards the III° as a goal because he cannot know what quantifies being a Priest of Set. If he did, he would be Recognized as such.

I am an Adept and do not know what the III° is; thus it would be impossible for me to work towards the III° as an objective. In attempting to do so [which I did when I did not know what I know now], I would be working towards illusionary ends which would eventually root me in a realm of pure fantasy and irrationality.

The melancholy seduction of the Adept by the beast which is “seeking the III°” can consume him entirely. Many Adepts have left the Temple directly or indirectly because they were not Recognized to the III°. These individuals were once productive Setians, yet at one time or another, they invited the temptation of the black medallion into their lives and had their minds and pursuits disfigured and directed towards tangents which led them to the end of their initiation within the Temple.

It is not uncommon to see such ex-Adepts sprout in other organizations and be given the lofty titles which they so desired; now they can prance around here and there calling themselves “Priests” and “Priestesses”. These only-in-certificate “Priests” and “Priestesses” are the masters of hypocrisy and self-deceit; they are failed Adepts.

Ridding oneself of the magical beast, or rather undoing yourself of it, is possible. This particular wolfsbane is a self-transformative one. You can overcome the temptation of the black medallion by focusing your will and work on yourself instead of goals which are external results and appearances of inner operations.

Undoing yourself of the unblessed beast which is the temptation of the black medallion, is accomplished through work on oneself. In order to truly and completely be free of consciously or unconsciously seeking the III°, you must uncover within yourself something more important upon which to focus; something that makes the black medallion and Recognition to the III° irrelevant.

If you are an Adept and Recognition to the III° is irrelevant to your goals, then you have slain the beast. Once the temptation of the black medallion is defeated through work upon oneself, it disintegrates from the mind in a blinding flash, and suddenly you become aware of the marvelous and infinite possibilities which constitute the Ruby Plane.

To overcome the temptation of the black medallion is to be free to choose and work and free to choose to work. If you perceive the III° as a goal, you are making a statement that you are not working on yourself and your initiation, and may lack an understanding of what initiation is. Rereading Chapter #3 of *Black Magic* may be in order, otherwise the III° would be irrelevant to you.

I am an Adept of the Temple of Set and thus Recognized as a competent Black Magician. Being Recognized to the II° does not make you a great Black Magician, but it informs you that you know how to create sparks and fires with the volatile tools found in the *Crystal Tablet*. Being a II° means you can also get burned by those tools if you are as careless as I was.

I overcame the temptation of the black medallion. During the period of time I faced this inner beast which I cultivated through misuse of GBM, I found myself and initiation abruptly halted and terminated to an extensive degree.

Once I realized the folly of my desire for the III°, I was startled to discover that I could not rid myself of it through reasoning or logical argumentation. I had created an inner beast which would not respond to my commands and did indeed vampirize all aspects of my life.

Through work on myself in the form of illustrative GBM, I was able to overcome this beast. The moment the III° became irrelevant to my initiation, I found true freedom unlike any I had ever known before.

The temptation of the black medallion was an ordeal which took me on a wild and often pointless odyssey for nearly two years, and now I marvel at what I am, can do, and can be. To be a dweller of the Ruby Plane is a most marvelous state of being, and to know the III° as irrelevant to one’s initiation is to be further aware and assured that one’s *Xeper* is directed by and towards what matters most to the LHP magician, and that is oneself. Be careful what you wish for.

I thank Priest and Priestess Severson for their words during my struggle with the beast I created, as well as for the idea of writing this essay. It is my wish that the words I have arranged in this composition aid and inspire those who may find themselves today or tomorrow facing the beast which is really the self seeking outside what is only found within.

[24] **Project Neteru**
- by K. Brent Olsen II°

In religion deities are used as factors of external counter-will forces. They are usually seen as being forces that dominate the things that are in peoples’

lives which they perceive as being outside of their control. Sometimes this is used to explain nature, but often there is a tendency to place responsibility on the gods instead of maintaining self-responsibility. This is done to avoid the feelings of guilt which are associated with acknowledging one's own will and being self-responsible.

Another purpose of a deity in religion is to exemplify acceptable behavior. People fear being different from everyone else. By developing a moral code and backing it up with an omnipotent god, people define for themselves what is acceptable behavior. Therefore they don't have to accept their own behavior for themselves, but instead create an external object to accept their behavior for them. People don't want to be self-judges; they want others to judge them, and they want others to judge them well, while they fear being judged poorly.

So when people worship, they tend to worship a loving god, or a god who is omnipotent and judges them and people like them favorably, usually while judging people different from them unfavorably. This is the purpose of religion: so people do not have to recognize their own responsibility and feel guilty, and to have a force that accepts them as being basically good.

So in an initiatory philosophical system of the Left-Hand Path variety, of what use are a bunch of gods? In the Temple of Set gods are recognized as First Principles or *neteru*. They are metaphors for our values and vices. They are symbolic representations of the ideas that are important to us. Yet they seem to have a presence to them, some sort of independent being: not quite a compelling force and certainly not a system of morality by which to judge good or evil; just an independent spirit, something akin to an æon but sometimes not quite so developed.

One of our duties in the Temple of Set is to identify this force that gives these *neteru* an individual presence of being, if there is one, and to identify its usefulness to us as initiatory tools. In order to do this we must individually form intimate interpersonal relationships with these forces, observing and communicating with them, in order to understand them better.

That is the purpose of this project and others like it: to develop intimate connections between individuals and *neteru*.

One of the questions that we must strive to answer is whether these *neteru* existed as prehuman principles or are human-created principles. Are these beings shaped by us, or are they shapers of us, or are they something entirely different? What is their nature in relationship with us?

To answer these questions we must study our relationships with them phenomenologically.

Statistical research here is completely useless and untestable. There are no numbers that could be given that would not simply reflect subjective experiences. Therefore, as in all things in our world, we can only approach this through our subjective experiences.

This project is designed to take place during a year-long period. It is divided into two phases: **invocatory** and **contemplation**.

The **invocatory** phase is the time when we will be developing our relationships with these beings. The **contemplation** phase is the time when we will be thinking about our relationships with these beings, trying to understand the nature of these relationships as well as the nature of the beings.

The beings who will be invoked will be preselected out of a number of gods and goddesses from classical mythology and fiction, half from each group. Based on answers to a questionnaire explaining their interests, all participants will be assigned a god or goddess with whom to work. Thus participants will be assigned to gods or goddesses who fit their personalities. They will receive a great deal of information on the gods or goddesses to whom they are assigned, and are free to seek for more information as they wish.

Each participant will perform invocations and Greater Black Magical ceremonies appropriate to these beings over several months, developing a working relationship with each being in question, and will record experiences in a journal.

During the final months of the project, each participant will explore his journal and write a series of essays describing aspects of his relationships with the being. Afterwards each of the essays will be compiled and published in some format that will be made available Temple-wide.

While this project is sponsored by the Gate of Pergamon of the Gates of Hell Pylon, it is open to participation of Setians generally. If you are interested, please contact me.

[25] *Terra Incognita*

A Guide to Dark Destinations

"A White Zombie in Haiti: Red Voodoo in a Black Magical Dictatorship"

- by Nikolas Schreck III°

One of the most popular clichés of Western vacationing is the familiar scene of the American relaxing under tropical blue skies on a Caribbean island, the very picture of packaged paradise. When applied to a visit to the Caribbean island of Haiti, something is definitely wrong with this picture.

Yes, there is beauty in the rugged and mountainous terrains, the coral reefs, and the vibrancy of the folk culture of the island its

residents refer to as *Haiti Cherie* (Dear Haiti).

At the time I visited what is officially the second-oldest republic in the Western hemisphere [after the U.S.], it was also a dangerous and crumbling dictatorship ruled by torture and sudden disappearances, abysmal poverty, and a palpable atmosphere of imminent crime. These aspects of Haitian life were not touted in the tourist brochures.

I had accompanied my father, a military historian specializing in the Napoleonic era, who was completing some first-hand research on the life of Haiti's legendary rebel general Toussaint L'Ouverture.

My primary concern, as would be expected of any self-respecting, budding Black Magician, was the shadowy folklore of the zombie and of secretive Voodoo rites.

I must shamelessly admit that my knowledge on this subject derived almost entirely from the distorted picture gleaned in such antiquated but evocative cinematic fare as the 1934 film *White Zombie*, starring Bela Lugosi.

When I was there, Haiti was controlled by "Baby Doc", the island's corrupt young dictator and heir to a terrifying tradition.

Haiti had been tyrannized by the brutal hand of the Duvalier family since 1957. The founder of this dictatorial dynasty was Dr. Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier. Duvalier was nominally a Roman Catholic, but buttressed his total control over Haiti by publicizing his role as the official High *Houngan* of Voodoo. This made Haiti something of a magical dictatorship, the authority of its government based largely on an understanding of the self-proclaimed "President-for-Life" Papa Doc as spiritual leader of the nation. Some priests of the *Voudon* religion secretly refuted this claim, describing the murderous Duvalier as a *bokor*, a Black Magician.

This legacy lived on in the Haiti I visited, a country whose humid tropical nights still throbbed with the beat of Voodoo drums. The dark poetry of such romantic and picturesque traditions was undercut by the sure knowledge that the bloody work of the sadistic Duvalier police was also being carried out.

This suspicion was played up by Duvalier, who combined his government-by-terror with exploitation of his people's ancient magical beliefs.

His secret police were known as the *Tonton-Macoutes*, which is Creole for 'bogey-men'. Dressed in black suits and hats, and always wearing black sunglasses, they traveled in twos through Haiti, intimidating any political opponents by their deliberately sinister apparel and manner. Torture and cruelty were their stock-in-trade.

To a Westerner the *Tonton-Macoutes* would have seemed frightening enough. To the Haitian,

steeped in the *Voudon* mythology, they also symbolized the forces of the underworld and of darkness.

One of Haiti's darkest gods is Baron Samedi, the dreaded lord of the crossroads, god of death and radical transformation. Baron Samedi was traditionally portrayed as a man in black suit and hat, sporting sunglasses. Baron Samedi, like Loki or Set, stands outside of the pantheon of orderly gods, a threat to harmony.

Baron Samedi is also connected with the zombie, the living dead. Some students of Haiti speculate that he is not originally from the African tradition of Voodoo, but may be a remnant of the original aboriginal magical practice of the Arawak Indians, who inhabited Haiti long before the French colonists or their African slaves.

The original Indian form of Baron Samedi is a product of the Indian cult of the *zemi*, from which the words *zombie* and *samedi* are both probably derived. The earliest form of this Indian death god is a black form wearing a blindfold.

The related Aztec god of the underworld, Tezcatlipoca, also a blindfolded patron of crossroads and transformations, has been considered the Mesoamerican form of Set. The black sunglasses worn by the Haitian secret police were a latter-day version of Tezcatlipoca's blindfold as transmuted into modern Haiti.

The tantalizing idea of Baron Samedi as the Haitian Set certainly bears further research and could widen the cross-cultural understanding of the Prince of Darkness.

The culture shock between the fictional portrait of the Voodoo island and the stark reality of the actual place created one of the most important initiatory experiences of my youth. The word "surreal" is bandied about rather cavalierly. The Haiti I experienced actually deserved to be called "surreal".

Out of that experience I developed a lifelong fascination with some aspects of the complex Haitian magical tradition that I will sketch briefly here.

Before analyzing these obscure but important Black Magical traditions, it's necessary to clarify some common misconceptions concerning the nature of Voodoo.

Setians should understand that despite its sinister reputation, this spiritual practice, formally known as *Voudon*, is actually very much of the Right-Hand Path. An elaborate synthesis of African cosmological practice, *Voudon's* rites are firmly dedicated to harmonizing with the forces of the cosmos, summoning and placating all-powerful deities through the mechanical ceremonies of a priestcraft, and is centered on the desired state of

becoming possessed by entities known as the *loas*, thus temporarily removing one's will and self-individuation.

While Roman Catholicism is the official religion of Haiti, it is only a shallow, more socially acceptable overlay on the true religion of *Voudon*. The Voodoo *loas* and the Catholic saints are neatly dovetailed, and the general drive towards harmonizing with a paternal benevolent God are the same.

Voudon's emphasis on animal sacrifice is a dominant feature and this highlights the subservient practice of giving gifts to the gods, hardly the action of a tradition leading towards self-deification.

I witnessed several Voodoo rituals held in the mountains of Haiti, but these were merely theatrical simplifications of the actual ceremonies performed for gullible tourists. Through the offices of a dapper gentleman who was the government-sanctioned host to the few Westerners who visited Haiti, we were allowed to see a portion of one authentic *Voudon* ceremony, which consisted of the sickening slaughter of several birds, goats, and other animals.

This experience completely opened my eyes as to *Voudon's* lack of rapport with my own magical views. I soon learned that it was not *Voudon* that was linked to the powers of darkness, but an entirely separate tradition; the feared and supposedly malevolent way of the *bokor*.

The most powerful mortal personage in the *Voudon* religion is the *houngan*, who mediates contact between the devotees of *Voudon* and its pantheon of god-forms.

In contrast to this arbiter of cosmic harmony is the *bokor*. The *bokor* is despised and feared by the legitimate, pious practitioners of *Voudon* exactly as the Western Black Magician is ostracized by our own mainstream religion.

There are two branches of *Voudon*. The *Arada*, known as White Voodoo, is the socially-acceptable form. *Petro*, or Red Voodoo, is what we would understand as Black Magic. Haiti, like ancient Egypt, considers red, not black, to be the symbolic color of "evil" magic. The deities of *Petro* are often red in color, which mirrors the fact that the Lord of the Red Land, Set, was traditionally depicted with red skin.

In comparing the attitude of the Black Magical *bokor*, who works for his own ends, to the *houngan*, who serves the gods and the community, the scholar of Haitian culture Maya Deren has written:

Magic is an individual action, undertaken because the cosmos is not believed to be benevolent by nature, or at least not benevolent to that person.

This statement may be compared with Magus Webb's oft-repeated assertion that the first step on the Left-Hand Path is to realize that life isn't fair. Deren adds:

Magic is not based on a confidence in the character of cosmic forces, nor is it concerned with improving their condition in any respect. On the contrary it is dedicated to the means by which some portion of those forces may be "tapped", channeled, and focused to some personal end.

The magician, or the one having recourse to magic, sees himself as separate from, in competition with, or even bitterly opposed to the collective and the cosmic good.

Where the religious man would pray for rain - knowing it will fall upon his neighbor's field as well as his own - the magician is jubilant and triumphant if he succeeds in controlling and focusing the shower precisely within the limits of his own fence.

This is a succinct description of the difference between the Red Voodoo of the *Petro* branch of Haitian magical practice and the RHP way of *Arada*. It also serves to prove that wherever the Setian travels, the Left-Hand Path may be found, in forms quite unlike those we might expect.

I read recently that as Haiti collapses further under the tension of civil war and economic doom, the old *Tonton-Macoutes* have made something of a comeback.

Despite the harrowing and sometimes life-threatening experiences which I experienced in Haiti [not all of which are relevant to this article], I am glad I explored that heart of darkness. That tragic but enchanted island awakened aspects of magical understanding in my *psyche* that still resonate within me and could not have been created in any other location.

Initiatory travel is not always a pleasure cruise. The comfort associated with most concepts of voyage are actually inhibiting to the Black Magician's need to cross forbidden thresholds.

Priest Iitti wrote insightfully in a recent *Scroll* of the importance of the taboo-breaking aspect of travel. To those Setians who share these sentiments, the mystery of Haiti calls.