



BLACK MAGIC

~ BY ~

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INTRODUCTION

Why have **you** come to the Temple of Set? Presumably because:

- (1) You feel that there are metaphysical realities beyond the physical universe, and that this possibility is sufficiently important to you for you to establish whether or not it is true.
- (2) Religions and atheistic/materialist schools of thought to which you have previously been exposed have ultimately impressed you as inadequate to this task.
- (3) What you have heard and read about the Temple of Set suggests to you that it just might have the keys to this puzzle.
- (4) Involved with such keys are unusual skills that you may use, both in pursuit of such metaphysical wisdom and in support of objectives in the physical universe.

Most of the world's conventional religions¹ prefer influence over their members from birth, so that they have the advantage of working with a "blank slate". Knowing nothing else, the child is indoctrinated into the religion, taught that it is the true and only answer to questions beyond tangible experience. If such indoctrination is strong enough, that religion will remain the metaphysical boundary for that individual for life. Using the implied authority of its superior vantage-point, moreover, the religion will attempt to dictate ethical and moral codes for the individual, inculcating feelings for "rightness" and "wrongness" that will flow into his personal behavior and the social institutions he shares with others.

The more primitive and closed the society, of course, the more effective and enduring such religious indoctrination will be. But at various times and circumstances in history, such as the Greek Hellenistic and the Enlightenment eras, and in at least certain advanced cultures today, persons will eventually be exposed to other religions, and non-religions, besides the "inherited" one. The more inquisitive the individual concerning metaphysical truth, the more he may "shop" among such alternatives, looking for **the** one with the [most] right answers.

The Temple of Set not only does not indoctrinate anyone from birth, but it prefers to be at the end of an adult enquirer's "shopping list".

The Setian religion is not something that either can or should be taken on faith, or in the controlled instruction of childhood, or as an antagonistic rebound from any other religion. To be apprehended, understood, and applied correctly, it must be approached only by individuals who have first examined **and discarded** as many alternatives as were available and of interest to them. If any such alternative proved satisfying to an individual, that signals to the Temple of Set that he does not possess the extraordinary drive for metaphysical truth that is required for Setian initiation. He will be content and

¹ What is "religion"? Cf. Vesa Iitti III°, "On the Left Hand of Religion", *Scroll of Set* #XXV-5 (October 1999), in the *Scroll* Back-Issue Collection.

fulfilled at the level he has chosen; were he to attempt Setian initiation, he would soon find it disturbing, stressful, and even frightening.

So your suitability for Setian initiation hinges not only upon the importance of the above four questions to you, but also upon the assumption that you have indeed explored and exhausted as many simpler answers to them as possible. Collectively this experience will provide you a point of personal comparison from which to now evaluate Setian philosophy. Because it is no good if it doesn't make sense to you, and for it to make sense to you, you must be able to visualize and consider contrasts to it.

Please take time to consider whether both of these suitability criteria - the four questions and a reasonable background of alternative experience - fairly and honestly apply to you. If not, you may wish to turn away from the Temple of Set until/unless they do. But if you feel that they do apply: Welcome to our Temple. Enter freely and of your own will.

The Temple of Set provides various publications and communications to present itself and its knowledge to you. At all times it is your responsibility not only to read and consider such information, but to judge it as it is intelligible and relevant to yourself. The importance of this responsibility cannot be overemphasized. The Temple is a vehicle to aid you in **your personal** initiation, so at all times your own comprehension, understanding, and evaluation of your own state of being are essential.

The Temple of Set is committed to the most direct and intelligible presentation of its philosophy possible. Every effort is made to define terms carefully, to avoid vagueness and logical fallacies, and to address important issues squarely. We emphasize this to a degree unmatched by conventional religion, by the "occult subculture", and indeed by most of the academic philosophical community.

Even so we are beset by three continuing difficulties:

(1) Our knowledge base is incomplete and in many cases insufficient to answer certain questions definitively. In such situations we offer what seem to be the most promising theories and hypotheses, and encourage the open exchange of ideas towards the eventual truth.

(2) We exist in a society that, despite its announced commitment to truth and freedom of expression, contains many taboos, morals, and prejudices which make even the discussion, much less the advocacy of certain ideas awkward and occasionally dangerous - even if the ideas in question happen to be logically or factually valid.

Since the Temple of Set is "open to the public" as a formal, legally-recognized religious institution, we must take appropriate care to retain the respect and tolerance of the community in which we exist.

So, while we must and will not shrink from asserting truth as we discover it, we also attempt to do so publicly in ways that will be understandable to that public, and in support only of constructive, non-harmful applications by it.

(3) For the first two decades after its founding in 1975, the Temple of Set was predominantly first an American, then an English-speaking international institution. With the turn of the century, and in no small part to the influence and convenience of the Internet, we are now a presence in many non-English-

language cultures. Beyond the task of direct dialogue, we face the challenge of translating Setian philosophy into non-English languages and idioms. Fortunately many such natives have acquired some fluency in English, and can help to bridge this gulf more accurately and empathetically than the Temple itself could originate. Nevertheless we must remain alert to this difficulty, and seek to minimize it as best we may.

Black Magic is the introductory section in the *Crystal Tablet of Set*, which is the first volume in the *Jeweled Tablets of Set* series - a sort of “encyclopædia” of Setian initiation, whose progressive jewel-colors reflect the medallions of the respective degrees. Thus the *Ruby Tablet* pertains to Adepts II° of the Temple, the *Onyx Tablet* to the Priesthood of Set III°, the *Sapphire Tablet* to the Masters of the Temple IV°, the *Amethyst Tablet* to Magi V°, and the *Topaz Tablet* to Ipsissimi VI°.

Black Magic presents the Temple of Set’s philosophy in its most elemental form. If it makes sense to you here, then it is probable that you will derive increased pleasure and satisfaction from the Temple as you proceed further into its initiatory system. If on the other hand you find that you are having difficulty with these basic propositions, or if you find them unsatisfactory or unconvincing, then it is an indication that you should probably seek out another religious or philosophical environment for personal exploration and expression.

CHAPTER 1: ORIGINS OF THE TEMPLE OF SET

The story of the Temple of Set which you have entered begins in 1966 of what archæologists, in an effort to be non-sectarian, refer to as the Common Era (CE). In that year a man named Anton Szandor LaVey founded the Church of Satan in San Francisco.

LaVey, an imposing, congenial man with a carnival and circus background, had for many years been an enthusiastic but cynical devotee of the occult. He accumulated a unique library containing many works on the more peculiar and obscure facets of human nature, together with the major classics of traditional occultism. Disappointed with the lack of sophistication and practical relevance he saw in existing occult organizations, he decided that he would have to start one of his own to remedy the problem.

In the early 1960s, therefore, he began to conduct “midnight magic seminars” at his home in San Francisco’s Richmond District. By 1965 these had solidified into a formal “Magic Circle”. The success of this Circle prompted him to found the Church of Satan on Walpurgisnacht (April 30) of 1966, which henceforth became known as the Year I Anno Satani (AS).

For the first four years of its existence, the Church remained essentially a San Francisco organization. Group rituals were held every Friday night at midnight at the LaVey residence, while during the week Anton gave lectures on various arcane subjects and taught classes to aspiring Witches and Warlocks.

This fascinating and controversial organization won its share of publicity around the country and abroad, and soon many curious individuals were writing to San Francisco to find out how they too could become Satanists. In 1970 Anton published the *Satanic Bible* (#6K) to summarize the basic tenets of his philosophy.

The *Satanic Bible* did not represent Satan and his fellow dæmons as actual “supernatural” beings, but rather as symbols and metaphors for hedonistic self-indulgence. Other religions in general - and Christianity in particular - were not considered to be deadly foes; instead they were mocked and dismissed as sanctimonious and hypocritical frauds.

The *Satanic Bible* went on, however, to promise results from the practice of simplified and standardized magical rituals. Such rites invoked Satan as well as various other gods and dæmons from many mythological traditions, appealing for and/or commanding their aid in curses, seductions, cures, and the like.

There was thus an oddly-inconsistent feature to the Church of Satan’s philosophy: On one hand it professed psychodramatic atheism, while on the other it assumed the literal existence of dæmonic personages with the ability to hear invocations and the disposition to respond to evocations.

By 1970 Anton LaVey and his wife Diane had begun to feel the strain of endless hospitality, so a decision was made to cease most of the activities at their home in favor of sponsoring local units or “Grottos” of the Church elsewhere in the United States. From 1971 to 1975 the Church thus consisted of a San Francisco headquarters plus some

five to ten Grottos in various metropolitan areas.

Over the years many rumors have circulated concerning the growth and size of the Church of Satan. I have seen figures ranging upwards of 50,000 card-carrying Satanists, with several millions of sympathetic non-members waiting in the wings. In actuality the Church rose from an initial San Francisco membership of about 50 to a nationwide average of about 300 through 1975. There was a turnover of perhaps 30% per year, reflecting the casual, fickle attitude of many of the lower-level members.

By 1973 Grottos had been organized in San Francisco, Santa Cruz/San Jose, Los Angeles, Denver, Dayton, Detroit, New York, Louisville, and Washington, D.C. Like the membership-at-large, these tended to be unstable, short-lived groups, surviving and prospering only as long as a charismatic Grotto Leader was in office.

By 1975 Anton LaVey, having presided over nine years of mercurial individuals and Grottos, reluctantly concluded that, while the philosophy of Satanism had lost none of its popular appeal, the Church of Satan itself was largely a failure. A small, stable nucleus of serious and sincere devotees had indeed developed, but for the most part the Church had served to attract merely fad-followers, egomaniacs, and assorted oddballs whose primary interest in becoming "Satanists" lay in being able to flash their membership cards for cocktail-party notoriety. Anton decided that the Church might as well be converted to a vehicle for his personal financial benefit, hence in May of 1975 he announced a decision to sell the Satanic Priesthood and all higher degrees for funds or objects of value.

Upon founding the Church, Anton had claimed for himself the titles of High Priest of Satan and Magus of the Age of Satan. By 1969 he had begun to ordain others to the Satanic Priesthood (the Priesthood of Mendes), and in 1970 he formalized an initiatory structure of five degrees: Satanist I°, Witch or Warlock II°, Priest or Priestess of Mendes III°, Magister IV°, and Magus V°. Advancement to the II° was based upon a fairly elementary examination concerning the contents of the *Satanic Bible*, but Anton was extremely strict concerning ordination to the Priesthood. Perhaps twenty individuals attained the III° between 1966 and 1975, while during the same period Anton conferred only four IV°s - one of which upon myself.

Anton's 1975 decision to sell the degrees confounded the nucleus of sincere Satanists, myself included, who saw in it a critical corruption of the very institution whose incorruptibility and condemnation of hypocrisy had made it so refreshing and exhilarating.

Seizing control of the Church was impossible; Anton had incorporated it under his exclusive, personal control in 1971, a time when none of us had remotely anticipated his 1975 decision. Our only option was therefore to leave. By mid-June 1975, therefore, virtually the entire nationwide Priesthood of the Church had resigned *en masse*. The Church of Satan as a viable, functional organization was dead, save that the LaVeys continued to use the corporate name and image for private gain as a "business partnership", a status upon which they formally agreed by contract in 1985.

In 1988 Diane [LaVey] Hegarty sued Anton to dissolve the business and divide its assets between the two of them, and this was so ordered by the San Francisco Superior Court on October 28, 1991. Anton subsequently filed for bankruptcy for himself and the

Church of Satan, and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court so ordered, under the dissolution Chapter 7 of U.S. bankruptcy law, on April 29, 1993. Legally as well as essentially and organizationally, therefore, the Church of Satan no longer exists, though continuing attempts to exploit its name might pretend otherwise.

The other three Masters of the Church had all turned tail in June 1975: One, Charles Steenbarger, was a clinical psychologist in Denver who feared that any but the most furtive involvement would wreck his life and reputation; the second, John Ferro, was a self-acknowledged decadent who could not bring himself to take any stand against Anton LaVey; the third, Anthony Fazzini, was the LaVeys' chauffeur, whose appointment to the IV^o a few months earlier had itself been a scandal foreshadowing the June crisis.

As the senior initiate among those who resigned in 1975, therefore, I was looked to for an answer as to what to do next. Should we try to form a "Second Church of Satan", or was the disaster so overwhelming that any such reconstruction would be futile?

In a Working of Greater Black Magic on the night of the North Solstice (June 21-22), I evoked the Prince of Darkness himself. "If this is not the end," I said, "tell us what we may do to continue our Quest along the Left-Hand Path."

The result of the North Solstice Working was a document entitled *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*, professing to be a communication from the Prince of Darkness in his original semblance as the Egyptian god Set. The Æon of Horus and the intermediary Age of Satan were at an end; the Æon of Set had now Come Into Being as a catalyst for a new evolution of the Elect of mankind. We were charged to found a Temple of Set to replace the Church of Satan, and I - like Anton LaVey before me - was Recognized to the degree of Magus and directed to assume the High Priesthood.

As with any Greater Black Magic (GBM) working, the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* will assume different significance to different people. Skeptics might consider it merely a work of fantasy or self-delusion; religious fanatics a message from the Judæo/Christian Devil; old-time occultists an imitation of Aleister Crowley's *Book of the Law*.

There is nothing to gain by debating such points of view. As is discussed later in *Black Magic*, any GBM working is necessarily a supra-rational experience, not a logical, scientific, or artistic exercise. It will be most meaningful to its celebrant, and it may or may not be meaningful or even intelligible to others.

What I **will** assert is that, as far as **I myself** am concerned, the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* was and remains authentic: the *nætic* apprehension of an intelligence "beyond myself" which reduced certain statements, judgments, principles, and symbols to a text.

This text was so meaningful to me that I have since ordered my life and philosophy by its principles. The other founders of the Temple of Set accorded it a similar trust and respect. Even though they had not participated in the working itself, many remarked, they felt that the text itself carried its own aura of authenticity and conviction. In the years that followed, countless others have been moved by it in a similar fashion.

When I accepted the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, it was in a deliberate, reflective way - with a resolve to undertake the creation and care of the Temple of Set

proper, and to patiently allow history to validate or disprove any principles that the Temple might propose or practice. This has remained my attitude ever since that serene and sublime experience.

As for the text itself, I am content to comment upon it as best I can, then let others judge it as they will. For me it is now, as then, a simple, beautiful, and purposeful statement from the sentient being whom mankind has loved, hated, worshipped, cursed, praised, and reviled as the Prince of Darkness. To echo the words of G.B. Shaw in *The Devil's Disciple*: "I promised him my soul, and swore an oath that I would stand up for him in this world and stand by him in the next."

I commenced to Recognize the five most accomplished Priests and Priestesses of the Church to the IV^o: Robert Ethel of the Asmodeus Grotto, Washington, D.C.; Michael Grumboski of the Phoenix Grotto, Detroit; L. Dale Seago of the Yugoth Grotto, Los Angeles, Lilith Sinclair of the Lilith Grotto, New York City; and Margaret Wendall of the Bubastis Chapel & Karnak Grotto, San Jose. We formalized the Temple of Set as a non-profit, incorporated church in California, and by October had qualified for federal and state tax-exempt status. A board of directors - the Council of Nine - was instituted, and a system of local Pylons was established to supersede the old Grottos.

In addition to its emphatic stance against the sort of corruption and confusion that had brought about the downfall of the Church of Satan, the Temple of Set differed from its predecessor in a number of ways. The Church had always courted the public eye; the Temple refused all but the most necessary publicity. The Church had been arrogantly sensationalistic; the Temple was cautiously philosophical. The Church had opened its ceremonies to visitors, reporters, and academic researchers; the Temple's activities were completely closed to non-Initiates. All degrees in the Church had been conferred by Anton LaVey personally; in the Temple the Recognitions of Adepts II^o and of the Priesthood of Set III^o were entrusted to the Priesthood and Masters respectively.

Doctrinally the Temple confronted a number of challenges with which the Church of Satan had never had to deal. First and foremost was the proposition of the very literal reality of Set. Gone overnight was the shaky conglomeration of half-baked anti-Christian dæmonology; in its place was a new conceptualization of the Universe which would gradually mature into the perspective summarized later in this essay.

The guiding Word of the Age of Satan - *Indulgence* - had exhorted Satanists to remain satisfied with a hedonistic approach to an admittedly animalistic life. The Word of the Æon of Set - *Xeper* - held out the promise of an evolutionary divinity to those intelligent, bold, and determined enough to attain it. From a simple, colorful, and easy-going Church of Satan there had emerged a Temple of Set which was bewilderingly complicated, socially obscure, and impatient with complacency.

During its first four years the Temple of Set maintained an average membership of about 100 Initiates, almost all of whom were former members of the Church of Satan. Membership solicitation was felt to be inconsistent with the esoteric atmosphere of the Temple and the intrinsic dignity of true initiation. It proved to be very difficult, moreover, to institutionalize a philosophy as complex and undeveloped as ours. No standardized instructional courses were offered, and any sort of "enthusiastic but ignorant followers" climate was quite unacceptable. Hence we weren't at all certain that

it was a good idea to encourage aspirants who didn't have an *a priori* working relationship with a Priest or Priestess through a local Pylon.

Back issues of the *Scroll of Set*, which you may acquire as explained elsewhere in the *Crystal Tablet*, will take you on a magical mystery tour of the sometimes thrilling, sometimes painful, always interesting odyssey of the Temple to the present day. The picture will emerge of an organization very wise in some ways, surprisingly naïve in others. These are the adventures of the Elect of Set, who are exploring a strange and unprecedented perspective on existence. You are welcome among them: to Will, to Know, to Dare, and to Speak.

In a world smothered by ignorant, fearful, predatory, and hypocritical confidence games masquerading as religions and ideologies, the Temple of Set stands alone and apart - as Set has always stood alone and apart from the careless savagery, the pure hazard that is the natural state of the objective universe. Whether you realize it yet or not, you have opened a door that leads not into a building of marble or stone - but into the wonders of your own divine soul.

CHAPTER 2: ANCIENT EGYPT AND THE ORIGINAL PRIESTHOOD OF SET

The earliest existing evidence of human culture in the Nile valley dates to more than 250,000 BCE, as the remnants of handaxes and other stone tools have been uncovered 50-100' below the Nile's silt terrace.

Sometime between 10,000 and 7,000 BCE, according to conventional archaeology, a most important event took place - the domestication of the wild African goat and the subsequent freedom to begin cultivation of grain. This effectively heralded the beginning of human civilization, as for the first time primitive man was free to turn his thoughts to matters other than a constant search for food.²

Inhabiting a land characterized by the regularity of the elements (behavior of the winds, the Nile, the climate, the Sun, and the skies), the Egyptians sought perfection in stability, harmony, symmetry, geometry, and a cyclical [as opposed to progressive or linear] concept of time.(#20B) Egyptian achievements, correspondingly, were notable in areas such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and architecture.

Egyptian religion and art tend to be oversimplified in many modern treatments, due in part to the absence of verifiable data in later history until the deciphering of hieroglyphics by Champollion in 1822. Because of the destruction and despoliation of ancient Egyptian records and works of art by religious fanatics of later eras, it is estimated that modern archaeologists have at their disposal less than 10% of that country's cultural creations from which to reconstruct its values.³

The Egyptians perceived the Universe as actively controlled by conscious, natural principles (*neteru*) of which Sir E.A. Wallis Budge remarks:

The word *neter* has been translated "god-like", "holy", "divine", "sacred", "power", "strength", "force", "strong", "fortify", "mighty", "protect"; but it is quite impossible to be certain that any word which we may use represents the meaning of *neter*, because no one knows exactly what idea the ancient Egyptians attached to the word. The truth is that the exact meaning of *neter* was lost at a very early period of Egyptian history, and even the Coptic does not help us to recover it.⁴

To the Egyptians, all of "nature" (derived from *neter*) was alive and the direct consequence of the wills of the *neteru*. Nature was intelligible not just through inanimate, automatic, general regularities which could be discovered via the "scientific method"; but also through **connections and associations between things and events perceived in the human mind**. There was no distinction between "reality" and "appearance"; anything capable of exerting an effect upon the mind thereby existed.

² Fairservis, Walter A. Jr., *The Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile*. New York: New American Library/Mentor #MY-843, 1962, Chapters #1-2.

³ Cf. Fagan, Brian M., *The Rape of the Nile*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975.

⁴ Budge, E. A. Wallis, *The Book of the Dead*. New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960, page #99.

Hence a dream could be considered just as “real” and thus significant as a daytime experience.

Egyptian art, literature, and science looked for beauty and symmetry (felt to be indications of divine perfection), rather than for cause-and-effect relationships. Hence Egyptian thought is sometimes called “geometric” as opposed to the “algebraic” thought of Hellenic and later logicians.

Since impressions and appearances substantiated reality, the Egyptian emphasis on portraits and statues of the *neteru* was not merely decorative, metaphorical, or symbolic. Rather an image was a medium whereby the *neter* in question could make an actual appearance in the material world.⁵ Similarly part of something could substitute for the whole as long as the mind completed the connection. Mental imagery created by viewing the portrait of a dead relative, for example, brought that relative to true life.

Egypt was divided into 42 nomes (provinces), each dominated by the priesthood of one or more *neteru*. A particular priesthood might also dominate more than one nome. The monarchy was closely controlled by the various orders of priesthood, with the pharaoh acting as an Earthly deputy of and interpreter for the *neteru*. Governmental, judicial, and political systems were responsible for their ethics to the *neteru*, not to the people. Justice was meted out by viziers (internal roving ambassadors of the pharaoh) and nome governors according to the *neter* of justice, Maat, on an individual-case basis. There was no concept of individual rights against the government, because government was viewed as a system imposed from without by the *neteru*. Similarly each Egyptian, whether high- or low-born, participated in this system. Crime and corruption were of course possible, but inadvisable because of the conviction that vice would be punished severely after Earthly death.⁶

Old Kingdom Egypt was largely insulated from foreign invasion or conflict, hence Egypt spent its early years as a peaceful culture with no standing military. Egypt is credited with invention of the alphabet, as well as the use of currency as a medium of exchange. It is noteworthy for having produced the first national (as opposed to city-state) political system, as well as the most enduring one in recorded history (more than 3,000 years). There was no caste, racial, or sexual discrimination; foreigners were considered “less than human (=Egyptian)”, but could remedy this misfortune simply by moving to Egypt and adopting Egyptian culture.

Egypt was ultimately destroyed by foreign conquerors (Persia, Macedonia, Rome) and her inability to adapt to the continuing competition of foreign cultures. Her New Empire of the Setian (XIX-XX) Dynasties was a protectionist backlash rather than an effort to “civilize” or create a permanent empire [as per Persia, Macedonia, or Rome].

Persons unfamiliar with the ancient Egyptian culture often assume that the Egyptian religion, like those of later Mediterranean civilizations, consisted of a single, integrated pantheon of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses. It is rather the case that

⁵ Cf. Schaefer, Heinrich, *Principles of Egyptian Art*. (#2R) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974. Contrast Egyptian statuary with Greek, Roman, or later European. The “living presence” in the former will be dramatically evident.

⁶ Wilson, John A., “Egypt” in Frankfort, Henri (Ed.), *Before Philosophy*. (#2B) Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1946.

the earliest Egyptian *neteru* were provincial, being patrons of individual cities and districts (nomes). Nor, despite their famous human/beast composite appearances, were they mere “supernatural persons” in the later Greek, Mesopotamian, or Roman mold. While popular stories were woven about them - presumably for popular consumption - the hieroglyphic treatment of the Egyptian *neteru* suggests that they actually represented various aspects of existence - the “Forms” or “First Principles” discussed by Pythagoras and Plato in a more abstract manner.⁷

Intriguingly the *neteru* may have had a physical presence as well. The 30-Dynasty dating system most archaeologists use for ancient Egypt comes from Manetho, an Egyptian priest at Sebennytos in the Nile Delta ca. 280 BCE. Manetho’s dynastic list extends backward before Menes and the I Dynasty date of 3100 BCE: 350 years Thinites; 1,790 years other Memphite kings; 1,817 years other kings; 1,255 years “Heroes”; and before that 13,900 years in which the *neteru* reigned physically on Earth. Obviously this chronology would conflict with the “accepted” prehistory of Egypt as summarized at the beginning of this chapter. Conventional Egyptologists are comfortable only with a “civilization began suddenly in 3100 BCE” scenario, hence Manetho is relied upon very strongly after that date, but swept under the rug prior to it.⁸

Commerce, protective alliances, cultural contact, and finally the unification of the entire nation ca. 3100 BCE resulted in the gradual incorporation of local *neteru* into regional groups, and then into a loosely-knit national pantheon. Local and regional cult centers continued to hold their respective patrons in especial regard, however, and so the character and role of a specific *neter* might vary remarkably from place to place. Individual dynasties also tended to be oriented to particular cult centers, and so the *neteru* in question would be elevated - at least for a time - to the status of national patrons.⁹

The information concerning these cults which is available to modern Egyptologists is both sparse and confusing. Since a given *neter* could be portrayed in a number of different ways, identifying the “core *neter*” is difficult. The images and inscriptions concerning a *neter* were often altered or appropriated by cultists of rival *neteru*. In Christian and Islamic times all “old gods” were considered blasphemous, and monuments to them were regularly defaced and destroyed. By the end of the fifth century CE, knowledge of hieroglyphics had died out, not to reappear until the nineteenth century; meanwhile many “useless” records perished through neglect.

For two reasons the cult of Osiris (Asar) and Isis (Asa) has been emphasized in modern literature: First, it was the last cult to dominate the entire Egyptian nation. Thus it was in a position to do a “final editing” of non-Osirian manuscripts and monuments. Secondly it was described in detail by Plutarch, permitting its study long

⁷ Cf. Reading List Category #2 generally. Also Cf. Winspear, Alban D., *The Genesis of Plato’s Thought* (New York: S.A. Russell, 1940). Also Cf. Aquino, M.A., “The Sphinx and the Chimæra”, *Ruby Tablet of Set*.

⁸ Hoffman, Michael A., *Egypt Before the Pharaohs* (#1M) New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979. Fix, Wm. R., *Pyramid Odyssey* (#1L) New York: Mayflower Books, 1978.

⁹ Ions, Veronica, *Egyptian Mythology*. (#2A) New York: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1968, pages #11-13.

after the hieroglyphic records of the other cults had become unreadable.¹⁰

Set

No records of the ancient Priesthood of Set survived first the Osirian persecution and later the more general vandalism of the Christian/Islamic eras. We know of it only by its reflection, both in the character of Set as he was portrayed symbolically and mythologically and in the nature of Egyptian priesthoods in general. Such details may be studied in Categories #1 and #2 of the reading list. Three significant facts are known about the Priesthood of Set:

(1) Together with the Priesthood of Horus [the Elder], it was the oldest of the Egyptian priesthoods. If we date it to the earliest predynastic images of Set found by archæologists, we can establish an origin of at least 3200 BCE. Working with the Egyptians' own astronomically-based records (#2F), we may approximate 5000 BCE. If we are to assume the final eclipse of the Priesthood at the end of the XIX-XX [Setian] Dynasties ca. 1085 BCE, we are looking at an institution which existed at least two thousand and possibly as many as four thousand years. "In the early dynasties," observes Budge:

Set was a beneficent god, and one whose favor was sought after by the living and by the dead, and so late as the XIX Dynasty kings delighted to call themselves "Beloved of Set". After the cult of Osiris was firmly established and this god was the "great god" of all Egypt, it became the fashion to regard Set as the origin of all evil, and his statues and images were so effectively destroyed that only a few which have escaped by accident have come down to us.¹¹

The "Set-animal" of portraits and hieroglyphic inscriptions has remained the object of considerable controversy. Its long, curved snout, stiffly-upraised and forked tail, and tall, brush-like ears (?) appear to rule it out of any known animal category. The most extensive and thorough treatment of Set's image to date is by H. Te Velde in his classic work *Seth, God of Confusion*.¹² Among the animals he cites as past candidates for the Set-animal are the ass, oryx antelope, greyhound, fennec, jerboa, camel, okapi, long-snouted mouse, aardvark or orycteropus, giraffe, hog, boar, hare, jackal, tapir, long-snouted Nile mormyr, and the Egyptian *Nh*-bird.

¹⁰ Budge, *Egyptian Language*. (#2T) New York: Dover Publications, 1971, page #15. Ions, *op.cit.*, pages #50-55. Fagan, *op.cit.*, pages #34-36. Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, Volume V in *Moralia* (14 volumes), F.C. Babbitt (Ed. & Trans.). London: Loeb Classical Library, 1936.

¹¹ Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, page #181.

¹² The "-th" ending is the result of spellings of "Set" using the Greek letter *theta*. In hieroglyphic writing, according to Budge, the name should be pronounced with a hard "-t" (*Egyptian Language*, page #53). Similarly I write the name of Set's divine consort as Nephys, not the *theta*-heavy "Nephthys". It is fair to point out, however, that the name of Set has appeared in phonetic hieroglyphs in at least a dozen variations (Te Velde [note #13], pages #1-3). The Temple of Set uses the name with a hard "-t", after the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*.

Dismissing each of the above as essentially different from the portraits and statues of Set, Te Velde takes the position that the question cannot be resolved from the information currently available to Egyptologists.

Concerning the hieroglyphic image of Set, Te Velde states that it does not show the characteristics of an actual, living animal, and expresses doubt whether the hieroglyph can be traced to any animal which ever existed in the area of Egypt.¹³

In his magnum opus *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, Sir E.A. Wallis Budge attempts to associate the Set-animal with the Saluki dog of Arabia.¹⁴ By way of evidence he cites the dog's characteristically aggressive nature, ignoring the fact that it displays none of the aforementioned physical features. Hence Budge's identification must be rejected.

One may note that Set was by no means the only "fabulous" creature ever portrayed by Egyptian artists. But he was the only one represented as a principal *neter*, as opposed to a purely-animalistic monster of the *Tuat*.

In *The Dawn of Astronomy* Sir Norman Lockyer suggests that "Set" seems to have been a generic name applied to the northern (?circumpolar) constellations, perhaps because *Set* = darkness, and these stars, being always visible in the night, may have in time typified it.¹⁵ Since the northern constellations were symbolized by the name of Set, the god of darkness, we should take Set-Horus to mean that the stars in the Dragon (Draco) were rising at sunrise."¹⁶ To support his theory, Lockyer cites the following inscription from royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings:

The constellation of the Thigh appears at the late rising. When this constellation is in the middle of the heavens, having come to the south where [the constellation Orion] lies, the other stars are proceeding to the western horizon. Regarding the Thigh: It is the Thigh of Set; while it is seen in the northern heavens, there is a band [constellation] to the two in the shape of a great bronze chain.¹⁷

Lockyer concludes that the constellation *Draco*, and in particular the star at its head (*Gamma Draconis*), represented Set. If indeed a single star were so regarded, it was probably *Alpha Draconis* (or *Thuban*), the Polar Star at the beginning of the Egyptian civilization. Due to the Precession of the Equinoxes, *Alpha Draconis* will return to the celestial pole at approximately 24000 CE. Since its last appearance there ca. 3000 BCE coincided with the unification and development of the world's first advanced human culture, related calculations based upon the Precession Circle may

¹³ Te Velde, H., *Seth, God of Confusion*. (#2G) Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1977, pages #13-15.

¹⁴ Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*. (#2C) London: Oxford University Press, 1934, pages #87-89. In hieroglyphic and pictorial representations, Set was also the only *neter* shown with red-toned skin. Most of the others were flesh-colored, save that Osiris and his principal attendants frequently had pale green complexions (symbolic of corpse-flesh).

¹⁵ Lockyer, J. Norman, *The Dawn of Astronomy*. (#2F) Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964, page #302.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page #149.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page #147.

yield interesting results.

Center of the original Priesthood of Set was *PaMat-et*, capital of the ancient Egyptian XIX *Uab* Nome. It was called *Oxyrhynchus* by the Greeks. It is located in Upper Egypt at Latitude 28.5N, Longitude 30.8E. Other cities which were centers of the Setian Priesthood were Ombos at 24.5N, 32.9E and Tanis at 31N, 31.9E in Lower Egypt.¹⁸

As a *neter* of darkness and night, Set was the complement to Horus (*Hor - neter* of the Sun and daylight) in predynastic times. So integral was this relationship that the heads of the two *neteru* were frequently shown on a single body (hieroglyphic name *Hrwyfy* “He with the Two Faces”).¹⁹ With regard to the annual cycle, Horus was thought to govern the waxing of the Sun from the South Solstice, while Set governed the waning of the Sun from the North Solstice.²⁰

Again according to conventional archæology, it was in the pre-dynastic Gerzean period (commencing about 3600 BCE) that the first communities of the future Egyptian nation came into existence. The great war of unification commenced in approximately 3400 BCE. After more than two centuries of intermittent conflict between Upper and Lower Egypt, the land was finally united under Menes (or Narmer), the first pharaoh of the I Dynasty.

Together the two primeval *neteru* - Horus and Set - then symbolized the unity and wholeness of the Egyptian nation: Horus as the *neter* of the north (Lower Egypt) and Set as the *neter* of the south (Upper Egypt). This union was represented on monuments by the ritual gesture of *samtau*, showing Horus and Set binding the heraldic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt around the stem of an *AnX*, symbol of divine life.

The roles of Horus and Set as the original state *neteru* of Egypt were further emphasized by the pharaohs’ famous Double Crown (*SeXet*), being a composite of the Red Crown of Horus (*Teser*) and the White Crown of Set (*Het*/“Great One of Spells”).²¹ And the *Tcham* sceptre, with the head and forked tail of Set, became a symbol of power and authority for *neteru* and pharaohs alike.²²

Horus was later adopted into the Osirian mythos as the “son of Osiris and Isis”. Egyptologists generally distinguish the original and the corruption by the terms “Horus the Elder” and “Horus the Younger” respectively. *HarWer* is a form of Horus the Elder combined with *Wer* (“The Great God”), a transcendent *neter* of light. The Sun and the Moon were said to be the right and left eyes of *HarWer*, known as the *Udjat* (“Uraeus” in Greek). At the same time the *Udjat* was also considered to partake of the essence of Set.²³ Mounted both on the *SeXet* and on other national crowns and headgear, the *Udjat* became another symbol of the pharaoh.

¹⁸ Brugsch-Bey, Heinrich, *Egypt Under the Pharaohs*. (#1D) New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1891, page #452. Ions, *op.cit.*, page #63. Carus, Paul, *The History of the Devil*. New York: Land’s End Press, 1969, page #17.

¹⁹ Te Velde, *op.cit.*, pages #68-72.

²⁰ Carus, *op.cit.*

²¹ Ions, *op.cit.*, page #62.

²² Te Velde, *op.cit.*, pages #89-90.

²³ “This is the Uraeus which came forth from Set.” Utterance #683, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, R.O. Faulkner (Trans.). London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

(2) Set was the *neter* who was “different” from all of the others. Too often this is simplified into his being the “evil” slayer of Osiris, hence the personification of “evil”; yet any but the most cursory study of Egyptian religious symbolism is sufficient to dispel this caricature. He was rather a *neter* “against the *neteru*”: the entity who symbolized that which is **not** of nature.

This is a very curious role for a *neter* in Egyptian cosmology: to be a presence and force which alone could not be apprehended by perceptions of the natural senses. Set thus represents the nameless “thing” whose existence we know of by the shadow it casts on things apprehended and things perceived by it: the non-natural “presence of self” in individual intelligent life.

We have generalized the vehicle by which this presence is manifest as the *ba*, spirit, *psyche*, or soul, but increased precision is possible. We must subtract from the *psyche* what is “life force”, and focus our attention on that which remains: **the very awareness of self**. In doing so we have in one sense retraced the path of Descartes to the *cogito ergo sum* proposition. Unlike Descartes, however, we see this phenomenon to be a “thing **totally** apart” which is not an extension of “God” or anything else. Set is the conceptualizer of this principle: the designer. To rewrite the crucial sentence in the above quote from the point of view of a *neter*: “A thing created in the mind thereby exists.”

This is delicate ground to tread, so much more so for an ancient Egyptian civilization whose entire “natural” cosmology was based upon the perfection and harmony of the Universe. Former Director of Cairo’s French Oriental Archæological Institute Serge Sauneron comments:

To understand the attitude of the Egyptians, it is necessary to emphasize the striking contrast between their view of the world and ours. We live in a universe which we know is in perpetual movement; each new problem demands a new solution. But for the Egyptians this notion of time which modifies the current knowledge of the world, of an alteration of factors which forces a change in methods, had no place. In the beginning the divinity created a stable world, fixed, definitive; this world functions as a motor well oiled and well fed. If there are “misfires” - if the motor fades, if one of the parts making it up is worn out or broken - it is replaced and everything starts off again better than before. But this motor would always remain the same; its mechanism, its appearance, its output would always be identical.

If some problem intrigues the mind, therefore - if some serious event arises to disturb the customary order of things - it could not really be new; it was foreseen with the world. Its solution or remedy exists in all eternity, revealed in a kind of universal “manner of use” that the gods defined in creating the universe itself. What is necessary, therefore, is to find in the ancient writings the formula that foresaw such-and-such a case. Before a given event - a physical phenomenon, a catastrophe striking the whole country - the scholar would not seek to discover the actual causes in order to find an appropriate remedy. Rather he would examine with scholarly ardor the volumes of old writings to find out if the event had already occurred in some moment of the past, and what solution had then been applied to it.²⁴

²⁴ Sauneron, Serge, *Les pretres de l’ancienne Egypte*. (#2AA) New York: Grove Press, 1980, pages #118-119.

(3) Despite this unique and disturbing image, or perhaps because of it, Set became the patron of the two most powerful dynasties in Egypt's long history, the XIX and XX. Herein there is an interesting "theological succession":

The early XVIII Dynasty (ca. 1580-1372) was that of the great Amenhoteps, during whose reigns the Priesthood of Amon at Thebes was preeminent. The dynasty disintegrated during the "Amarna period" (ca. 1372-1343) of Akhenaten, during which the solar disk of Aton was considered supreme if not indeed all-inclusive of the *neteru*. When the new XIX Dynasty arose under Rameses I and Seti I, the state role of Amon was restored - but the pharaohs directed much of their personal efforts towards Set. Recounts Sauneron:

The new dynasty in power, careful to appear to be "restoring everything to order", had many reasons for mistrusting the Amonian priesthood. Descendants of a military family of the eastern delta, the new pharaohs were traditionally devoted to a god little esteemed by the masses because of the role that he had been assigned in the death of Osiris. But they preserved nevertheless, here and there, the temples and priesthoods of the god Set.

The Amarnian experience had demonstrated the cost of too abrupt a break with the beliefs central to the entire nation, and of entering into open warfare against a priesthood practically as powerful as the throne itself. Thus the politics of Seti I (1312-1301) and of Rameses II (1301-1235) were infinitely more subtle than those of their predecessors. There was no rupture with Thebes; the constructions continued, and magnificent edifices were raised to the glory of Amon at Karnak, Gournah, and Ramesseum. But it was from the [Osirian] center of Abydos that Rameses appointed the High Priest of Amon. Then he installed two of his sons, Merytum and Khamuast, as the High Priests of Ra at Heliopolis and Ptah at Memphis, and demonstrated by further monuments and political favors his public support of these gods. But finally, wearied of Thebes and its ambitious priests, he departed to build a new capital, Pi-Rameses, in the eastern delta - where he could quietly worship the god dearest to him, with Amon occupying a secondary prominence.

The provincial cities where Set had been worshipped from all eternity - among them Ombos, Tjebu, and Sepermeru - gained new preeminence from the favor accorded by the Ramesside leaders to the god of the Eastern Delta. Above all, Pi-Rameses, the new capital, brilliantly restored the worship that Set had formerly received in the Avaris of the Hyksos.²⁵

During the Setian Dynasties - most probably during the reign of Merenptah - the revolt and "exodus" of a number of nomads (hieroglyphic *habiru*) living in Egypt's Goshen province occurred - or at least did so in Jewish legend. Although "Old Testament" lore states that the original Hebrews were a unified, foreign culture which entered Egypt during the time of Rameses I, there are no Egyptian records substantiating this. It is more probable that the actual participants in any "exodus" were

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pages #183-184.

people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.²⁶ It is possible that the origins of the Hebrews' hated "Satan" derive from one of the honorific titles (*Set-hen* = Eternal Set) accorded the state deity of the regime they were fleeing.

Following the passing of the two Setian dynasties, the increasing influence of a priesthood not courted by the Ramesside pharaohs - that of Osiris - boded ill for the Priesthood of Set. The Osirians recast Set as Osiris' treacherous brother and mortal enemy of Osiris' son - for whom they appropriated the *neter* Horus. Not content with attacking Set personally, they further appropriated his consort and son from the original triad of his cult - Nephthys and Anubis - whom they now described respectively as a concubine of Osiris and a son of Osiris by Nephthys. Comments E.A. Wallis Budge:

Between the XXII and the XXV Dynasties, a violent reaction set in against this god [Set]; his statues and figures were smashed; his effigy was hammered out from the bas-reliefs and stelæ in which it appeared.²⁷

Various reasons for this reaction have been proposed by Egyptologists. It is been suggested that Set fell into disrepute through being associated in the popular mind with the *Sutekh* of the invading Hyksos. Possible, but improbable, as the Hyksos invasion occurred prior to the XIX-XX Dynasties when Set was preeminently in favor - and the presiding *neter* over Egypt's greatest period of imperial glory.

Set's eclipse may well have been due to a more subtle, yet pervasive sentiment sweeping Egypt. As Sauneron and many other Egyptologists have acknowledged, Egyptian philosophy was based upon a millennia-old conviction of the absolute presence and influence of the *neteru*, and in the virtue of a social system in which the preservation of cyclical harmony was all-important. While the New Empire of the XIX-XX Dynasties extended Egypt's influence to Palestine and Mesopotamia, it also made the Egyptians aware that there were many other functioning cultures in which the *neteru* were unknown [at least by their Egyptian names]. Moreover the concept of Egypt as just one among a number of nation-states competing for power and influence in the

²⁶ In his definitive work *Testament* (New York: Henry Holt, 1988), archæologist John Romer states:

Hard evidence of the Exodus event in the preserving deserts of the Sinai, where most of the biblical Wandering takes place, is similarly elusive. Although its climate has preserved the tiniest traces of ancient bedouin encampments and the sparse, 5,000-year-old villages of mine-workers, there is not a single trace of Moses or the Israelites. And they would have been by far the largest body of ancient people ever to have lived in this great wilderness. Neither is there any evidence that Sinai and its little natural springs could ever have supported such a multitude, even for a single week. Several 19th-century vicars recognized this fact within a day or two of the start of numerous expeditions in search of Moses' footsteps. "Escaping from the rigours of an English winter," as one of them says, "in a land of the flock and the tent to which our only guide was the *Bible*" they quickly realized that the biblical Exodus was logistically impossible and that the *Bible* was a most ambiguous guide to that desolate region. The biblical description of the Exodus, then, flies in the face of practical experience. Indeed the closer you examine it, the further it seems removed from all of ancient history.

²⁷ Budge, *The Mummy*. (#1A) New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973, page #276.

Mediterranean, rather than as the one civilization at the center of existence, must have been a most unsettling one to this ancient culture - which previously had been able to discount its neighbors as mere uncultured, barbarian tribes.

Egypt's solution to this problem was to turn gradually away from a glorification of this life and towards an orientation on the afterlife, where such disturbing dilemmas could be assumed not to exist. This would explain the growing influence and popularity of the Osiris cult during the post-XX Dynasty Egyptian decadence, as Osiris was a *neter* of the afterlife. As the Osiris cult portrayed Set as Osiris' nemesis rather than an independent and pre-existing *neter* with no particular interest in Osiris, this would also explain the simultaneous wave of Setian persecution described by Budge. It was characteristic of ancient Egypt that each new dynasty, in an attempt to establish its own "timelessness", often doctored monuments and records to eliminate inconvenient inconsistencies. Presumably the Osirian dynasties followed suit, defacing or rewriting all references to Set that did not support their portrayal of him as a "Devil".²⁸ And that was the distortion of Set which survived in later Mediterranean legend - principally through Plutarch, who described it in some detail in his *Moralia*.⁹

Today the Temple of Set returns to the original, undistorted apprehension of Set. In keeping with our modern levels of knowledge, of course, this image has been both enhanced and refined. Enhanced in that we now understand better than the ancient Egyptians how the material universe functions, refined to exclude those aspects of the human personality that are natural, externally-controlled functions.

At the same time, contemporary civilization's impatience and superficiality - its restless inability to study anything metaphysical in any depth - have tended to condense the delicate, complex study of Egyptian cosmology [presented so well in *Her-Bak* (#2L)] into a crude caricature capable of being digested by modern minds in a few hours at most. Initiates of the Priesthood of Set must resolve to take the time to apprehend and appreciate Set - and the other Egyptian *neteru* - in the same contemplative, reflective, and above all unhurried fashion that their ancient predecessors did. Only then will the magnificence, subtlety, and depth of this metaphysical system be realized and appreciated. Only then can its principles be applied meaningfully within our current environment.

²⁸ Ions, *op.cit.*, pages #72-78. The Osirian legends on this subject are treated comprehensively in J. Gwyn Griffith's *The Conflict of Horus and Seth* (Chicago: Argonaut Publishers, 1969).

CHAPTER 3: INITIATION

The Concept of Initiation

Individuals who find their way to the Temple of Set are known as the **Elect**. This term has a subtle significance of its own. It means “chosen” - but it does not identify the chooser. That chooser may be Set; it may be oneself; it may be pure hazard (#6I). Nor does it imply privilege, aristocracy, or guaranteed success. It is, simply, an acknowledgement that the aspirant stands at these gates which only a comparative few have encountered. Like Parsifal (#14C, #14U), Jonathan Harker (#8B), Her-Bak (#2L), or Nicholas Urfe (#6I), the aspirant either steps forward into the Temple - or turns back into profane existence.

“Initiation” is the term used to describe the experience of an affiliate of the Temple of Set. Since the term is very easily misunderstood and misused, its usage within and by the Temple deserves careful explanation.

In its traditional sense, initiation is induction into the membership of a secret society, hence being entitled to successively more exclusive secrets as the level of initiation rises. There is usually a good deal of occult hot air mixed in with this, in that the candidate is exhorted concerning the excellence he has had to display to be worthy of the honor, the sublime dignity of the initiation itself, and the fearful consequences should he betray its secrets.

Many initiatory societies are little more than financial rackets, while others are more or less sincere in what they are trying to do. Most esoteric knowledge imparted under the guise of initiation is not very useful. Rather it is vague, theatrical, mystical, and inconclusive: *obscurum per obscurius* (“explaining the obscure by means of the more obscure”). The new “initiate” is left with a tremendous feeling of self-importance, but he is unable to explain why this should be the case. Nor can he do anything particularly important with his new knowledge.

True initiation is not simply the acquisition of specific knowledge or skills; it involves a certain approach to the challenges of existence in general. An initiate, like a cat, must learn to land on his feet in any situation in which he may find himself. He does this by the acquired and applied technique of “stepping back to view the situation from outside himself”. He assigns relative importance to it, estimates his options as an actor within it, and seeks to actualize the most enlightened option. He may make mistakes due to lack of information, but he rarely errs on the basis of what he does know. His sense of intuition, moreover, will warn him whenever a situation is not whatever it immediately seems to be. He can then avoid premature conclusions and impulsive actions.

The Temple of Set conceives the process of initiation as a Socratic refutation of confused, imprecise, and unsubstantiated information and thinking. It is the imparting of truth as much as we know it to be, and even more importantly it is the imparting of the ability to pursue truth and to recognize it when it is found.

Wisdom - knowledge of truth - cannot be taught to stupid intellects. A love of and insistence upon the truth cannot be taught to unethical individuals. Hence initiation is not something that can be “done to” someone merely by subjecting him to a series of classes, examinations, and ceremonies. All that the Temple can do - and all that it tries to do - is to spread out its banquet of truths, probabilities, hypotheses, and speculations before aspirants who we suppose to be reasonably sincere. **They** must utilize it, together with such other resources as they may have, to achieve wisdom. Thus do **they** initiate **themselves**.

By its membership and degree system, the Temple merely formalizes the demonstrated levels of this achievement. This is why initiation within the Temple of Set is referred to as a process of **Recognition**.

The term “degree” is used because initiation itself is a constantly ongoing and expanding process. Hence one never attains initiation *per se*; rather one attains a particular “degree of” initiation.

The parameters of each Setian degree also expand as the Temple as a whole increases in wisdom and sophistication. This is in keeping with the principle of *Xeper* (“becoming”), which identifies the process of constantly-expanding personal evolution. “Science **is** not; it is **becoming**,” wrote Bakunin [in *God and the State*, 1882 CE]. “The learned man of today is but the know-nothing of tomorrow. Let him once imagine that he has reached the end, and for that very reason he sinks beneath even the babe just born.”

Within the Temple one does not become party to the “secrets of a degree” by first being appointed to that degree. Rather one, through his pursuit of wisdom and truth, gradually acquires those “secrets” through his own efforts, within and without the research systems of the Temple. If it is perceived that he has reached the level of wisdom and skill appropriate to a higher degree, he is Recognized as being entitled to that degree.

There are no penalties for revealing “esoteric secrets” in the Temple. We exist to **promote** knowledge of truth, not to conceal it. Setians should understand, however, that some of the truths known to the Priesthood of Set can be dangerous to oneself or others if misapplied, just as a loaded gun in the hands of a child is dangerous. Be careful what “guns” of your acquired knowledge you place in the hands of profane “children”.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the concept of **truth** to the *raison d’etre* of the Temple of Set. In the last analysis the Temple is a tool to uncover truth, and a vehicle for its application. Initiatory systems have failed to the extent that they have subordinated it to anything else - impressiveness, wealth, power, luxury, laziness ... the list of excuses, apologies, and rationalizations is endless.

The Temple agrees with Pythagoras and Plato that truth is an absolute **Form** or **first principle**, which may be apprehended in specific instances through a combination of intellectual effort and enlightened intuition. Rigorous examination of the intellectual process - such as takes place in the Platonic *Dialogues* - is necessary to such apprehension. Thus it is important to educate oneself in what is **known**, as well as to develop one’s analytical and critical abilities, before attempting to apprehend the **unknown**.

Intuition - the power or faculty of knowing things without conscious reasoning - is an essential attribute of the initiate. Neither reasoning nor intuition alone will suffice; each must be used in conjunction with the other. Intuition alone can easily become mere fantasy and mysticism, while inductive reasoning can produce “logical” conclusions which are simply wrong.

Initiation, like wisdom and resourcefulness, is an intangible. As you become fluent in the language and skills of Black Magic, you will become increasingly able to Recognize Initiates of the Art when you encounter them. And they in turn will Recognize you for what you are, and for what you are Becoming.

The Two Paths

The terms “Left-Hand Path” (LHP) and “Right-Hand Path” (RHP) are used in different and often incompatible ways by various occultists. Reportedly the terms originated in Tantrism, a school of Mahayana Buddhism in northern India which taught that Buddhahood can be realized through various theurgic practices. For mantra and mudra ceremonies the female was positioned to the right of the male; for erotic rites she was positioned to the left. (#13C) Theosophy’s H.P. Blavatsky felt sex-magic to be immoral and perverse, so she subsequently employed the term LHP to characterize the magical systems she didn’t like, and the term RHP to characterize the ones she did, i.e. Theosophy. Post-Blavatsky the terms have been expanded through popular usage to refer generally to what the Temple of Set defines as white magic (RHP) and Black Magic (LHP).

Most popular-occult organizations, to be sure, use the two terms simply to identify their moral biases. What they consider “good” is RHP, and what they consider “evil” is LHP. After Aleister Crowley left the Golden Dawn, he portrayed it as a “Black Lodge” and his own A.'.A.'. as the “Great White Brotherhood” (#9A, #9C); while on the other side of the fence W.B. Yeats and other G.'.D.'. leaders considered **Crowley** to be the Black Magician. (#10F, #10G)

To further complicate the matter, there have been some deliberately criminal “Satanic” organizations which have avowedly followed the LHP **as defined by those who consider it synonymous with degenerate and destructive practices.** (#6A, #6B) Such episodes have of course served to reinforce the conventional religious image of Satanism and Black Magic as nefarious practices.

So enduring was this stereotype that the Church of Satan found it very difficult to break free from it during the entire decade of its existence. All sorts of creeps, crackpots, criminals, and cranks pounded on the door of the Church, assuming that it would excuse and encourage whatever social shortcomings they embraced. The Temple of Set has avoided this problem, presumably because “Satan” is popularly associated with “evil” while “Set” is largely unknown outside of Egyptological circles.

The Temple of Set’s LHP orientation is, as noted above, a function of its definition of Black Magic. No moral or ethical stances are implied by the terms LHP and RHP per se, since they refer to **techniques** and **systems** rather than to the ends to which they are applied.

As defined within the Temple of Set:

- The **Left-Hand Path** (LHP) involves the conscious attempt to preserve and strengthen one's isolate, psychecentric existence against the objective universe (OU) while apprehending, comprehending, and influencing a varying number of subjective universes (SU).
- The **Right-Hand Path** (RHP) involves the conscious attempt to dissolve or merge the self with the objective universe (OU).

[Concerning the terms "Universe", "objective universe", and "subjective universe", see Chapter #4.]

To the Setian, the LHP is neither "good" nor "evil"; it is merely an avenue towards knowledge and power. While he may consider the RHP fruitless and even ridiculous, he likewise forbears to pronounce moral judgments concerning it. Indeed, some of the Temple's most valuable information comes from individuals and institutions who are/were thoroughly convinced that they are/were treading the RHP.

Followers of the RHP are those whose stated goal is egocentric merger with the objective universe [which they confuse with the Universe as a whole]. They wish to harmonize their actions with it, attune their intellects to what they consider the God-intellect of the Universal Consciousness, and thus partake of the immortality and divinity presumably characterizing that Consciousness. This is the theoretical *nirvana* of the Buddhist, the Jainist, and the Hindu; the "salvation" of the Christian.

The dilemma, of course, lies in the problem of "destroying" the ego and then continuing to prance about the Earth thinking, talking, writing, and acting as an obviously still-egocentric being who is just as obviously **not** One with the objective universe. The classic example of this is once again Aleister Crowley, who defined the grade of Magister Templi (8)=[3] to identify an initiate who had successfully achieved this objective-universal merger of consciousness, then went on to define the higher grade of Magus (9)=[2] as characterizing a magician of sufficient will and power to force a change in the state of being of that same universe. This is a conceptually impossible achievement if one is **already** identical with that universal state of being.

Hence it is a postulate of the Temple of Set that the attainment of Magister Templi (8)=[3] is the end of the line for a true follower of the RHP. If he truly destroys his psychecentric consciousness and attains *nirvana*, he becomes something akin to the prototypical Tibetan or Christian monk - a simple, childlike, unemotional, unegotistical animal who no more thinks of disturbing the objective universe than does an otter or a Sequoia redwood.

Those who claim attainment to Magus display either (a) a fall-back to a state of psychecentrism, hence a lower RHP grade, or (b) their *de facto* adherence to the LHP. Since the object of the LHP is to strengthen and exalt the psychecentric consciousness as something distinct from the objective universe, the characteristic action of a Magus V^o is indeed a mark of supreme initiatory success.

Similarly, a Magister Templi IV^o of the LHP is one who gains total Understanding of the objective universe from an **external, personal** point of perspective - and who complements this with a similarly-total Understanding of his own subjective universe.

Self-proclaimed gurus of the RHP are not usually inclined to adopt simple, pastoral, self-effacing, redwood-tree lifestyles. Rather they preen themselves by assuming regalia, offices, and wealth dazzling to the ego - while insisting that such luxuries are their rightful due precisely because they have set such a good example in no longer caring for them.

When confronted with the glaring hypocrisy of such positions, they retreat behind a smokescreen of religious mystery, mystical ambiguity, and “initiatory” secrecy. If in positions of sufficient power, they persecute, imprison, torture, and/or kill their critics. It is one of the more contemptible curiosities of human history that such snake-oil salesmen are never at a loss for wide-eyed, worshipful, stupefied followers.

The RHP societies which are of interest to the Temple are those which, whether accidentally or deliberately, have widened the knowledge-base of Black Magic. Almost every conventional religion of serious historical consequence falls into this category, as each has worked out various psychological approaches to the “human equation” to explain it, indoctrinate it, and/or control it. The Setian is accordingly invited to approach the subject of comparative religious philosophy as a most useful tool. (Category #3)

Certain religious or philosophical bodies took a more-or-less deliberate jump in the direction of magic. Some of the more notable of these - professing the RHP - are discussed in Categories #4, #9, and #10 of the reading list. You do not have to be an expert on any of them to be a competent Black Magician, but you should know enough about their particular fields of research to consult their histories, writings, and records as they may be useful to your own interests and endeavors.

Does the Temple of Set view itself as being in competition with or in diametric opposition to the RHP? No. We consider ourselves as magicians who have a clear understanding of what we are doing, why it works, and where we would like to go with it. We assess the RHP as being at best innocently confused and at worst hypocritically deceitful on all three counts. It is a behavioral phenomenon of natural humanity. It is not dangerous because of its esoteric wisdom, but rather because of its occasional, animalistic fits of exoteric unwisdom. The Black Magician treats it as one does any other dangerous, primitive, emotional animal; he views it from a distance, where he may learn from it and appreciate its beauty while remaining prudently out of reach of its teeth and claws.

Initiatory Degrees of the Temple of Set

The Temple of Set defines initiation in terms of six formal degrees. They are: Setian I^o, Adept II^o, Priest or Priestess of Set III^o, Magister or Magistra Templi IV^o, Magus or Maga V^o, and Ipsissimus or Ipsissima VI^o.

This is not a simple progression for the “typical” Setian to use as a barometer of success. While each degree has certain connections with the others - which accounts for

their integration into a single system - each degree is also a thing unto itself: a state of being highly distinct from those above and below it. Hence a Priest III° is not simply “3/4 a Magister IV°”, nor can the IV° be attained merely by becoming very good at the work of the III°.

Here the parable of the horse and the cart may be cited: One cannot fix on the “glamor” of initiation - the formalized degree - as a goal and expect to get anywhere. Even if the trappings are acquired through “ticket-punching” and the projection of an artificially-impressive image, both the individual and the awarding agency will ultimately feel contempt for the farce in which they have been participating.

Rather the individual must strive to awaken to, comprehend, and actualize all of the powers latent within his intelligence and psychocentric being. As he accomplishes this, **true** initiation takes place - whether or not it is formally recognized by an outside agency. Because the Temple of Set is composed of initiates who understand this principle, however, true initiation is recognized and formalized by official designations on a Temple-wide basis. Hence the term “Recognizing” of degrees rather than “awarding” or “conferring”.

Ancestry and Evolving Definition of the Grade>Degree Titles

The titular structure of the Temple of Set’s degree system dates back to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a turn-of-the-century Cabalistic/Egyptian magical society that flourished in Britain.²⁹ [See reading list category #10.] The grades (as they were then called) of the G.'.D.'. were:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Sephirah Attribution</u>
Neophyte (0)=[0]	[None]
Zelator (1)=[10]	Malkuth
Theoricus (2)=[9]	Yesod
Practicus (3)=[8]	Hod
Philosophus (4)=[7]	Netzach
Adeptus Minor (5)=[6]	Tiphareth
Adeptus Major (6)=[5]	Geburah
Adeptus Exemptus (7)=[4]	Chesed
Magister Templi (8)=[3]	Binah
Magus (9)=[2]	Chokmah
Ipsissimus (10)=[1]	Kether

This elevenfold system was keyed to a Hebrew Cabalistic concept known as the “Tree of Life”. According to the Cabala, the Universe and all of its contents derive from a manifestation of God termed *Ain Soph Aour*, the Infinite or Limitless Light. Issuing

²⁹ Priest Leon Wild notes that the Golden Dawn’s grade titles were adapted by one of its founders, Dr Wynn Westcott, from the elder *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (founded by Robert Little in 1866), which in turn had adapted them from the *Gold und Rosenkreuz*, a Prussian occult society (founded 1757?). Cf. Christopher McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason: Eighteenth-Century Rosicrucianism in Central Europe and Its Relationship to the Enlightenment*. Brill Academic Publishers, 1997, ISBN: 9004095020.

from this source are ten emanations or *Sephiroth*, being progressively coarser or more materialistic manifestations of God. As the G.'.D.'. initiate ascends from one level of mental existence to another, then, he supposedly is that much closer to the purely spiritual existence of God.

The G.'.D.'. grades of Zelator through Philosophus were concerned with an understanding and mastery of the “elemental” forces governing the **physical** plane. The three Adeptus grades - which collectively comprised the Second Order of the G.'.D.'. (the Order of the Red Rose and Golden Cross) - raised the initiate to **spiritual** levels of apprehension. The grades of Magister Templi through Ipsissimus were considered **Astral** grades beyond incarnated human manifestation; hence none of the three G.'.D.'. leaders (Westcott, Mathers, Woodman) professed a claim to them. As Dr. F.I. Regardie observed in *The Golden Dawn* (#10B):

It is impossible for the ordinary individual to understand those above the grade of Adeptus Minor, and individuals who lay claim to such exalted grades, by that very act place a gigantic question mark against the validity of their attainment. He that exalted is humble. And to have tasted that which is conveyed by the Adeptus Minor grade is so lofty an experience that few in their right minds, unless they were extremely saintlike in character, would consider themselves as having passed officially to a higher spiritual state.

It is perhaps more to the point to say that the criteria for advancing even to the Second Order were such a confusing and inconsistent mixture of Cabalism and Osirian Egyptian mythology that any sort of objective evaluation of one's initiatory level became impossible. Grade-promotion within the G.'.D.'. thus became largely a matter of politics and personal favoritism, with the undergoing of initiatory rituals and the memorizing of corresponding esoteric trivia being a secondary consideration (#10F, #10G).

After breaking with the G.'.D.'. , Aleister Crowley determined to purify its grade system in his *Astrum Argentum* ([Order of the] Silver Star). He described the A.'.A.'. system in an appendix to #9K entitled “One Star in Sight”. It was a change from the G.'.D.'. concept only insofar as it was redesigned to coincide with the concepts of initiation set forth in the *Book of the Law*. Certain grade names were added or altered, and there was a general lessening of “pure” Cabalistic emphasis:

The Order of the Star called S.S. is, in respect of its existence upon the Earth, an organized body of men and women distinguished among their fellows by the qualities here enumerated. They exist in their own Truth, which is both universal and unique. They move in accordance with their own Wills, which are each unique yet coherent with the universal will.

They perceive (that is, understand, know, and feel) in love, which is both unique and universal.

The order consists of eleven grades or degrees and is numbered as follows. These compose three groups: the Orders of the S.S., of the R.C., and of the G.D. respectively.

THE ORDER OF THE SILVER STAR

Ipsissimus (10)=[1]

Magus (9)=[2]

Magister Templi (8)=[3]

THE ORDER OF THE ROSY CROSS

(Babe of the Abyss - the link)

Adeptus Exemptus (7)=[4]

Adeptus Major (6)=[5]

Adeptus Minor (5)=[6]

THE ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

(Dominus Liminis - the link)

Philosophus (4)=[7]

Practicus (3)=[8]

Zelator (2)=[9]

Neophyte (1)=[10]

Probationer (0)=[0]

(These figures have special meanings to the initiated and are commonly employed to designate the grades.)

The general characteristics and attributions of these Grades are indicated by their correspondences on the Tree of Life, as may be studied in detail in the *Book 777* (#9M).

Student: His business is to acquire a general intellectual knowledge of all systems of attainment, as declared in the prescribed books (Appendix 1 of #9K).

Probationer: His principal business is to begin such practices as he may prefer, and to write a careful record of the same for one year.

Neophyte: Has to acquire perfect control of the Astral Plane.

Zelator: His main work is to achieve complete success in Asana and Pranayama. He also begins to study the formula of the Rosy Cross.

Practicus: Is expected to complete his intellectual training, and in particular to study the Qabalah.

Philosophus: Is expected to complete his moral training. He is tested in devotion to the Order.

Dominus Liminis: Is expected to show mastery of Pratyahara and Dharana.

Adeptus (without): Is expected to perform the Great Work and to attain the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

Adeptus (within): Is admitted to the practice of the formula of the Rosy Cross on entering the College of the Holy Ghost.

Adeptus (Major): Obtains a general mastery of practical Magick, though without comprehension.

Adeptus (Exemptus): Completes in perfection all these matters. He then either (a) becomes a Brother of the Left Hand Path or (b) is stripped of all his attainments and of himself as well, even of his Holy Guardian Angel, and becomes a Babe of the Abyss, who, having transcended the Reason, does nothing but grow in the womb of its mother. It then finds itself a -

Magister Templi (Master of the Temple): whose functions are fully described in *Liber 418* (#9G, #9H, #11D), as is this whole initiation from Adeptus Exemptus. See also "Aha!" His principal business it to tend his "garden" of disciples and to obtain a perfect understanding of the Universe. He is a Master of Samadhi.

Magus: Attains to wisdom, declares his law [see *Liber I vel Magi* (#9G, #9H)], and is a Master of all Magick in its greatest and highest sense.

Ipsissimus: Is beyond all this and beyond all comprehension of those of lower degrees.

The grade system of the A.'.A.'. was the one known to Anton Szandor LaVey when he instituted the degrees of the Church of Satan. Following the founding of the Church, he had assumed the degree of Magus, but it was not until the year V/1970 that a full, formal system was introduced.

As will be clear from a reading of #6K, the Church of Satan rejected the Cabalistic concept of initiation altogether. In VII/1972 and again in X/1975 I wrote the official descriptions of the degrees for the *Cloven Hoof* newsletter. Abridged from the latter article:

Satanist I°: When the Church accepts an applicant, it permits the extension of its power, influence, and reputation to that person. Because the majority of Satanists pursue personal interests not directly connected with the Church organization, the I° - which grants membership benefits but entails no reciprocal responsibilities - is ideal for them. In this context it is an end in itself and should not be regarded as merely a "training" degree. The title of the degree serves to emphasize this; one is either a Satanist or one is not.

Witch or Warlock II°: While the I° implies the Church's acceptance of endorsement by a certain individual, it does not certify the Church's reciprocal endorsement of that individual as an effective and accomplished Satanic magician. When we do make such an evaluation and decide that the Satanist in question is adept at comprehending and utilizing the contents of the *Satanic Bible*, the II° is granted. In one sense the II° is the highest recognition possible within a true Satanic order, because Satanism is characterized by diversity of individual technique. Once the Church is satisfied that a certain member is a capable magician, that is all that need be said.

Priest or Priestess of Mendes III°: In other churches the priest or minister is simply a semi-professional or professional organizer, demagogue, and ringmaster. He is also considered to be a shepherd, charged with the moral and spiritual guidance of his flock. The Satanic Priest is altogether different in concept. He is chosen for ordination not by other humans, but by the Powers of Darkness, who accentuate his characteristics and achievements in such a fashion as to identify him as Elect to the Council of Nine. Once declared Elect by the Nine, an individual has the choice to accept or reject formal ordination. If he declines, he retains full control of his Will and continues normal existence. Should he accept, he will find that his life will be warped in unforeseen and often strange directions, as the Powers of Darkness actualize the Will of Our Lord Satan through him. Simultaneously he will come to wield powers that will permit no obstacle to stand before him. The Satanic Priesthood takes its name from the ancient Egyptian Priesthood of Set, which was centered in the vicinity of Mendes (*Ba-neb-tett*) and Tanis during the latter days of the empire.

Magister IV°: This degree is conferred by the High Priest in one of three designations: Master of the Cavern (Magister Caverni), Master of the Temple (Magister Templi), or Grand Master (Magister Magnus). The degree and its designations refer to the recipient's expertise and scope of magical influence.

Magus V°: This is the highest degree conferred within the authority of the Mandate of the Church of Satan, reflecting the Will of the Prince of Darkness himself. Presently it is held only by Anton Szandor LaVey. Like the IV°, the V° is a measure of an individual and not the designation of an organizational function.

My first policy statement as High Priest of Set concerning the degree system of the Temple of Set was contained in a July 15, X/1975 letter to the founding membership, abridged as follows:

As I have said or written to several of you individually, the true degrees are properly neither 'rewards' for past achievements nor 'incentives' for future ones. Rather they are a form of recognition of an individual's position at a point in time. This concept applies to all five degrees.

In the Church of Satan degrees I°-III° were conferred by Anton Szandor LaVey, either with or without the aid of a formal, written test or questionnaire. The IV° was conferred by him without any guidelines at all. The V° he assumed, being justified in doing so by the Infernal Mandate.

The Temple of Set will operate differently. It is my feeling that any person who is rightfully a III° has the judgment to recognize a I° or II° individual, and therefore should be empowered to do so. Persons may join the Temple as Setians I° directly through the Executive Director, but **no** I° will be able to advance to II° unless he has interacted with a III°+ and demonstrated to that official that he is deserving of the higher degree.

The same holds true for the III°, except that it will now be IV° officials who perform the evaluation. A IV° should be able to recognize a person who is Elect to the Priesthood. The criteria are both too complex and too subtle to be encapsulated into any written examination.

The same again holds true for the IV°, with one difference in that the High Priest, upon making a IV° Recognition, must secure confirmation from the Council of Nine.

The concept of the I° today is the same as it was in X/1975. Such information and resources as the Temple has to offer are placed at the disposal of the new Setian, and using both these and other tools he or she is expected to take the initiative to become an Adept in the Black Arts. No standardized criteria are used by the Priesthood in performing II° evaluations, since "every man and every woman is a star" and thus will apply the Art in a different manner.

It remains necessary for an aspiring Setian to seek out compatible contacts from among the Priesthood, so that his or her achievements can be known and appreciated for what they are. Here the initiative for contact is decidedly the responsibility of the I°, and III°s will expect to be contacted for advisory and evaluative purposes. Priests and Priestesses III° who are available for contact are included in the Temple of Set Intercommunication Roster elsewhere in the *Crystal Tablet of Set*.

An Adept II° is Recognized by the Temple of Set as a competent Black Magician. This statement is never made lightly. Like an academic or professional degree, the II° signifies not so much the passing of examinations as the "licensing" of the recipient to practice the Art in a knowledgeable, ethical, and professional manner. Unlike the I°, in which one may remain no longer than two years, there is no time limit for II° Temple

affiliation. It is expected that the majority of Setians will hold the II° for Earthly life.

II°s, like I°s, partake of the benefits and services of the Temple and have no reciprocal obligations save to respond promptly and courteously to contacts from the Priesthood. The Temple of Set remains committed to individualism, and it deliberately avoids intrusions into the prerogatives, interests, or privacy of the I°/II° membership. Reciprocally it is assumed that I°/II° Initiates will conduct their lives and personal affairs in such a way as not to jeopardize the dignity and ethical reputation of the Temple.

When constructing the Church of Satan's degree system, Anton LaVey deliberately opted for the medieval-sounding "Witch/Warlock" designation for the II° rather than the more esoteric-sounding "Adept". Part of the reason for this was LaVey's preference for the colorful imagery of traditional Satanism, but he was also wary of being tainted by the goody-two-shoes/Cabalistic connotations of white-light "adeptships".

The Temple of Set, in searching for the single term most descriptive of the II°, ultimately concluded that "Adept" was it. Like the Church of Satan, we see no reason for half-a-dozen variations on this title; one either **is** Adept in the Black Arts or one **is not**. Thus you could say that, as compared to the A.'.A.'. system, the transition between the Temple of Set's I° and II° would correspond to a transition between the (1)=[10] and (7)=[4]. Obviously this is not a sudden transition, but the Temple of Set feels that any sort of graduated subdivision of the process, as in the G.'.D.'. and A.'.A.', is not helpful in our particular situation. As Adeptship in the Black Arts is non-standardized, there is no one path toward it to be incremented.

As was the case during the Age of Satan (I-X), the III° is the most essential and significant distinction recognized by the degree system. The I° and II° are intellectual measurements and so constitute a strengthening of the purely human mind to its maximum potential as such. The III° identifies a transition from a human state of being to that of a divine being - ordained by, consecrated by, and sacred to Set. The IV°-VI° are characterized by certain additional attributes, but none of them approaches the III° distinction in essential sublimity and sanctity.

Just as the II° represents the height of personal identity, and glory to be taken in that identity via application of the Black Arts, so the Priesthood involves the opening of a very special kind of door: the merging of the consciousness, indeed the personality, with that of the Prince of Darkness himself. In this Working the Priest or Priestess in no sense loses personal identity or self-awareness; rather one's consciousness is augmented, energized, and strengthened by that of Set. Hence the Priest or Priestess - when acting as such, for "Priesthood" is a deliberate **act**, not an office - is something more than human, something more than the individual whose human visage appears before onlookers. At such times he or she is not "possessed", but is rather become a veritable living Temple indwelled by the presence of Set.

It is impossible to overemphasize how alien this concept of Priesthood is from that of conventional religions, in which it is merely a paid profession and/or bureaucratic function for the promulgation of various institutions calling themselves "religions". As Black Magic is merely a tool for use by magicians, so the Temple of Set as an institution is ultimately a vehicle for the identification and formalization of the Priesthood of Set,

through whose souls flow the current of the Æon of Set. Each Priest and Priestess of Set is a Temple of Set: a *psyche* so purified, educated, consecrated, and initiated that it has become a fit medium for the Prince of Darkness. Nowhere is this more succinctly illustrated than in the ultimate admonition of the Egyptian sage to Her-Bak, at the culmination of the latter's initiation as a Priest [in #2L]:

O Her-Bak. O Egypt. You are the temple which the Neter of Neters inhabits.
Awaken Him ... then let the temple fall crashing.

It is difficult to describe degrees beyond the III° for I°/II° readers of the *Crystal Tablet* without resorting to specialized terminology intelligible primarily within the Priesthood. Ultimately, to fully Understand one of these degrees is to be deserving of Recognition to same. Some general characteristics, however, may be discussed.

As the Priesthood constitutes a merging of the individual soul with that of Set, so the Magistracy constitutes an expansion of that merger to a full apprehension of the Æon of Set. The Master knows not only the consciousness of Set, but the reach of that consciousness and the resultant view of creation and existence it embraces. All particular phenomena are evaluated, placed, and balanced within the continuum of the Æon by the Master, and such adjustments in events as the Master makes are for Æonic purposes - some of which may be obscure or even imperceptible to those below this degree.

Setians interacting with Masters of the Temple are tempted to assess them merely as "senior Priests or Priestesses", and indeed every Master is first and foremost an Initiate of the Priesthood, invariably with a long and distinguished III° record. But the IV° is neither just an administrative promotion nor a reward for distinguished service; it is an initiatory state of being in **itself**. Onlookers - and Masters themselves - lose sight of this at their peril.

Aleister Crowley, who felt that the grade of Magister Templi (8)=[3] was indeed attainable by incarnated humans, suggested that such attainment - the successful "crossing of the Abyss" - necessitated the annihilation of the personality and one's absorption in the Universal consciousness. The fallacy of this, of course, is that an (8)=[3] **continued** both a particular existence and a particular perspective. The initiate might insist that he possessed no further separateness from the cosmos, but the very act of insistence necessitates the sensation of such a distinction. A discussion of what this implies for holders of the (8)=[3] A.'.A.'. is beyond the scope of this paper.

The degree of Magus - V° Temple of Set/Church of Satan, (9)=[2] A.'.A.'. / G.'.D.'. - identifies a Master who has "stepped outside" the totality of the existing Æonic formula to alter it in an evolutionary way. Such alteration may result in the inauguration of a new Æon, or it may result in an improvement in or strengthening of the current Æon. The change itself may be massive or subtle; but it will invariably be alien to preexisting values and will thus tend to be viewed skeptically or suspiciously. Implementation of the change is spoken of as the Task of a Magus, and undertaking of such a Task amidst the resistant inertia of All Else is called the Curse of a Magus.

The degree of Ipsissimus - VI° Temple of Set, (10)=[1] A.'A.'/G.'D.'. - was treated evasively by Aleister Crowley, most probably because his claim to the lower grade of Magus had already caused him such difficulty. [Initiates of higher degrees soon learn to their annoyance that a proportionate percentage of their time is devoted to defending their suitability for such exalted titles. The temptation is to refuse to admit to them altogether, so that one may get on with one's Work unpestered.] In any case, an Ipsissimus is essentially a "successful Magus": one whose Task is complete.

Inherent in such completion is a unique perception of the new Æonic inertia which has resulted, placing the Ipsissimus at once within and without the Æon itself. To function as an Ipsissimus, he must work to perfect and harmonize not only the created or modified Æon, but also its entire relationship with preexisting and potential Æons. Thus he enhances the Work of the Magi; thus he ensures that the Understanding of the Masters of the Temple is not futile because of factors beyond the æon in which they tend their gardens.

It is the Curse of a Magus not to be Understood, in that he has set out to define and promulgate something alien to the existing inertia of magical philosophy. It is the doom of an Ipsissimus to Understand a great many æons simultaneously: to see how they may be exclusive yet complementary, independent yet interrelated, sequential yet coincidental.

The Initiate of any degree of the Priesthood (III°-VI°) may function in a lower degree than the highest one attained, and in fact usually does. About 90% of all Priesthood functions take place at the III° level, with most of the remaining Work characteristic of the IV°. V° Work is sharp and "surgical" in nature, and that of the VI° is usually - but not always - too subtle to be noticed.

Of all the difficulties encountered by the Temple of Set - and its predecessors - since its inception, none has caused greater damage to both the institution and the individuals involved than abuses of the degree system: generally the result of rash, egotistical lunges towards what the ambitious person perceives simply in terms of increased social status. As I would hope this essay points out, such efforts by the unqualified merely result in a handful of air insofar as the individual is concerned - but accompanied by the very real hazards of trying to function in a hyperdemanding capacity without the necessary skills to do so if one somehow succeeds in *pro forma* Recognition.

It is the sacred purpose of the Temple to Recognize each of its Initiates carefully, responsibly, and appropriately - and to encourage each and every Initiate to attain to his or her greatest potential. Let us remember too that there is intentional symbolism in the fact that all medallions - from I° to VI° - are identical save in background color. No Setian is "better" than any other Setian by virtue of holding a particular degree - only more well-traveled along certain kinds of paths. The more we perceive one another as fellow-travelers with meaningful experiences to communicate, the more we can maximize the very real benefits of the degree system as it was conceived to function.

Æons

As far as most occultists are aware, references to æons began with Aleister Crowley's much-advertised Æon of Horus, which he proclaimed to have followed first the Æon of Isis (roughly pre-Christian paganism) and then that of Osiris (roughly 2,000 years of Christianity). Since Crowley's understanding of Egyptian mythology was essentially that of the Osiris/Isis/Horus trinity, this tied Western civilization up into a nice, neat package.

Not only was Crowley responsible for bringing about the Æon of Horus, we are told, but that of Osiris as well - in a previous incarnation as the High Priest of Osiris [and Priestess of Isis] Ankh-f-na-khonsu. The detailed story of this is told in his memoir of that incarnation, "Across the Gulf", in *Equinox* #I-7:

But Thoth the mighty god, the wise one, with his ibis-head and his nemys of indigo, with his Ateph crown and his phoenix wand and with his ankh of emerald, with his magic apron in the three colors; yea, Thoth, the god of wisdom, whose skin is of tawny orange as though it burned in a furnace, appeared visibly to all of us. And the old Magus of the Well, whom no man had seen outside his well for nigh threescore years, was found in the midst; and he cried with a loud voice, saying, "The Equinox of the Gods!"

And he went about to explain how it was that Nature should no longer be the center of man's worship, but man himself, man in his suffering and death, man in his purification and perfection. And he recited the Formula of the Osiris as follows, even as it hath been transmitted unto us by the Brethren of the Cross and Rose unto this day ...

In his own writings Crowley does not indicate where he came by this concept of "æons" or exactly what is meant by it. A little detective work, however, takes us back to the days of the Golden Dawn and the writing of a book entitled *Egyptian Magic* (#10I) by Florence Farr, Scribe of the G.'.D.'. , in 1896. This book, part of a 10-volume series *Collectanea Hermetica* edited by W.W. Westcott, contained a very interesting chapter called "The Gnostic Magic of Egypt", from which the following quote:

Let us first consider the essential principles of Gnosticism, which are briefly as follows:

First - A denial of the dogma of a personal supreme God, and the assertion of a supreme divine essence consisting of the purest light and pervading that boundless space of perfected matter which the Greeks called the *Pleroma*. This light called into existence the great father and the great mother whose children were the æons or god-spirits. That is to say from the supreme issues the *nous* or divine mind and thence successive emanations, each less sublime than the preceding. The divine life in each becoming less intense until the boundary of the *Pleroma*, or the fullness of God, is reached. From thence there comes into being a taint of imperfection, an abortive and defective evolution, the source of materiality and the origin of a created universe, illuminated by the divine but far removed from its infinitude and perfection.

Now the Gnostics considered that the actual ruler and fashioner of this created universe and its beings good and evil was the *Demiurgos*, a power issuant from *sophia* or wisdom. By some it was said that the desire of souls for progression caused

the origin of a universe in which they might evolve and rise to the divine.

The Gnostics definitely believed in the theory of cycles of ascent and return to the evolutionary progress of worlds, ages, and man; the ascents & descents of the soul; the pre-existence of all human souls now in worldly life; and the surety that all souls that desire the highest must descend to matter and be born of it. They were the philosophical Christians.

The rule of the Christian church, however, fell into the hands of those who encouraged an emotional religion, destitute of philosophy, whose members should be bound together by personal ties of human sympathy with an exalted sufferer and preacher rather than by an intellectual acceptance of high truth.

The Gnostics dissented from the creed then being taught, on the ground of the inferiority of the hero-worship of Christ to the spiritual knowledge of the supernal mind, which they considered he taught.

The Gnostics were almost universally deeply imbued with the doctrines of Socrates and Plato; and a religion of emotion and reverence, combined with moral platitudes, did not seem to them of a sublimity sufficiently intense to be worthy to replace the religious mysteries of Egypt, India, and Persia, the theocracy of the Jews, or the sublime truths hidden in the myths of Greece.

In *Religion in Ancient History* (#3A) S.G.F. Brandon comments:

In his "First Epistle to the Corinthians" Paul had occasion to contrast his teaching with that of other systems known to his readers. In so doing he was led to give this significant account of his own: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to naught: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (ii. 6-8).

In our official English translations the proper meaning of this passage is obscured at two crucial points. The Greek word translated as "world" here, severally in its singular or plural forms, is *aion*, which does **not** mean this physical world or Earth, but "time" or "age".]

Paul's use of *aion* here accordingly shows that he was thinking in terms of an esoteric system of "world-ages" that probably derived ultimately from Iranian and Babylonian sources, and that in various forms was much in vogue in current Græco-Roman thought. Next the words translated as "rulers of this world" (*archontes tou aionos toutou*) do not refer, as is popularly supposed, to the Roman and Jewish authorities who were responsible for condemning Jesus to death. They denote dæmonic beings who were associated with the planets and believed to govern the lives of men on Earth.

As Farr and Brandon both go on to observe, Gnostic Christianity was regarded as a very serious threat to the Christian church and was intensely persecuted. Had it become prevalent, the 2,000 years might have evolved very differently in Western civilization - with a very intellectual, philosophical, and initiatory religious climate instead of the intolerant, ferocious, and ignorant horror of dogmatic Christianity.

Now we are beginning to see this term æon in a new light, if I may be excused the expression. The Æon of Horus is not just a period of time when ideas symbolized by Horus are dominant. Rather it is a *Ding an sich*, a noumenon: something of purely

rational apprehension, not perception by the senses.

Thus in what I might term the LBM sense, an æon is simply **an attitude which one chooses or is conditioned to adopt**. This is what I mean when I say that different people “exist in different æons”: that a Jew, Christian or Moslem exists in the Æon of Osiris, a Wiccan in that of Isis, and a Thelemite in that of Horus.

Accordingly, while I consider æons “pyramidal” in sophistication, after the fashion of Plato’s “pyramid of thought”, I see no reason to consider them time-sequential, with each new one superseding and obliterating the one before it.

In an LBM sense, therefore, the population of the world continues overwhelmingly in the grip of the Æon of Osiris, the best intentions of Aiwass notwithstanding. The Æon of Isis is the next influential, followed by that of Horus. The Æon of Set, highest on the pyramid and most difficult to comprehend and indwell, is the “smallest” and most exclusive of all.

As with the degree system, it would be very difficult if not impossible to spend all of one’s time in a “higher æon”. When we go about our affairs in the profane world, we are usually Osirians, peering with curiosity and vague alarm at ecological activists (Isis) or avant-garde artists (Horus). Yet we experience periods of Isis and Horus too - and, when we wish to, that very rarefied Æon of Set.

Crowley, who suggested that æons were periods of time in “catastrophic succession” - I presume in order to more forcefully advance the cause of the Æon of Horus - predicted in the *Equinox* #I-10 that following the ÆH “will arise the Equinox of Ma, the goddess of justice. It may be a hundred or ten thousand years from now (1913), for the computation of time is not here as there.” In 1921, in his “new comment” to *Liber Legis*, Crowley speculated that the next æon would be that of Thmaist, third officer in the G.'.D.'. Neophyte ritual. On the other hand, he continued, “It may be presumptuous to predict any details concerning the next æon after this.”

That is essentially my attitude as well. As Magus of the Æon of Set, I am an Eye in that particular Triangle [or Shining Trapezohedron], as it were. The only one who knows for certain what the next-conceived æon will be, if indeed there should be one, would be the Magus or Maga who Utters its word.

Above I made reference to æons “in an LBM sense”. Is there a “GBM sense” as well? Indeed there is, but - like Her-Bak - you are going to have to reflect very carefully upon it to apprehend it.

Seen through the lens of GBM, an æon is in fact a living entity, in which its initiates are “cells”. This is the secret which the Gnostics brought from antiquity, and which so frightened the Christian dogmatists. The “god” of an æon is thus a creature of the total magical and philosophical energy of material beings who are initiates of that æon, i.e. who are aware that they are “components of the god”. [Are you now beginning to see the ancient origins of Hegel’s concept of an “overmind”?]

Understood in this sense, a GBM Working is a way of the “part’s” reaching out to contact, experience, and/or express the “whole”. This is why true GBM is not even remotely like “prayer” as the profane practice it. Nor is it mere meditation, in which the mind of the meditator merely extends to its own limits. It is the greatest secret, and the greatest fulfillment, of unique existence.

Once an æon is apprehended in this way, a great many veils fall away, a great many mysteries of what magic is/ why it works are revealed, and indeed the entire “why” of human consciousness is explained. All you need is the *noesis* to perceive it. Don't be concerned if you don't attain such *noesis* the moment you finish your first reading of *Black Magic*. It is there; and when you are ready for it, It will be ready for you.

The Pentagram of Set

Symbols do not represent the thing itself, the actual phenomenon. It would also be wrong to think that they are purely and simply schematic formulæ. In operational research the model is not a small-scale or simplified model of a known object; it is a possible approach to, or means of getting to know this object. And it is outside reality, in the mathematical universe.

The next requirement is that the analogical machine constructed on this model should enter into an electronic trance so that it can give practical answers. This is why all the usual occultist explanations of symbols are useless. They look upon symbols as if they were schemas that can be interpreted by intelligence at its normal level and so lead immediately to an apprehension of reality. For centuries they have been treating in this way the St. Andrew's cross, the swastika, and the star of Solomon, but have contributed nothing to a study of the profound structure of the universe.

Einstein, with his sublime intelligence, was able, in a flash of illumination, to catch a glimpse of the space/time relationship, but without completely understanding or integrating it into his scheme of things. To communicate his discovery at an intelligible level, and to help him recapture his own illuminating vision, he drew the sign *lambda* representing the trihedral angle.

This sign is not a schema of reality and means nothing to the mass of mankind. It is a signal, a rallying cry to all workers in the field of mathematical physics. And yet all the progress made in this field by the greatest intellects will only succeed in discovering what this trihedral symbol evokes, but will not be able to penetrate the universe where the law of which this symbol is an expression actually operates. At least, at the end of this forward march, we shall know that this other universe exists.³⁰

The inverse pentagram against a circular field is known as the **Pentagram of Set**. This insignia constitutes the Seal of the Temple of Set, and it is also used to identify the six magical degrees of initiatory membership.

³⁰ Pauwels, Louis & Bergier, Jacques, *The Morning of the Magicians*. (#4B) New York: Avon, 1963.

The pentagram is one of the most ancient symbols known to mankind, dating from prehistory.^{31 32} It is significant mathematically in that it precisely embodies the ratio *phi*

³¹ Don Webb IV^o: “William Arnett’s *The Predynastic Origin of Egyptian Hieroglyphs* (1982) shows that the pentagram existed side-by-side with the five-line star, which became common use in the protodynastic Naquada region (a Setian site). Five-pointed stars were found at Gerza and Tarkhan, all Upper or Middle Egyptian protodynastic sites. The Tarkhan has a five-pointed star in a circle attached to a boat - one of the first signs of the journey through the *Tuat*. Arnett dates all of these to 3500 BCE, but I suspect for various reasons that they’re about a thousand years earlier.”

³² Patty Hardy IV^o:

At the Set-XIV Conclave in London I was asked if the pentagram were definitely known and used in ancient Egypt. I could do no better at the time than state that Pythagoras had spent 22 years there and then started up his Brotherhood in Magna Græcia with the pentagram as its supreme secret and badge of recognition.

Now I have archæological data. After much soul- and budget-searching, I obtained one of Guy Brunton’s three volumes on the Qau and Badari excavations sponsored by the British Museum. Flipping through the volume, I found a half-page of Old Kingdom pot marks that included two definite and unmistakable pentagrams - one cut into the clay before firing by the potter, one scratched onto the pot by its owner. The bread pot with the potter-cut pentagram was thought to be from the IV Dynasty. Brunton remarks on “the noteworthy pentagram used in quite different ways and at different periods” in speaking of these pot marks.

After that I decided to go back to Brunton’s Matmar expedition notes and found a crude pentagram among the pot marks documented there, again on a pot thought to date to the Old Kingdom.

I then consulted Flinders Petrie’s Tanis expedition notes published nearly forty years earlier. There I found among the sketches of items from Defenneh near Tanis a pentagram marked on a sealed vessel dated to the XXVI Dynasty.

So here are instances of the pentagram used to mark vessels in both Upper and Lower Egypt, in both early and late dynastic times. In all these cases the pentagram does not appear to be an ornament or decorative element; it stands by itself, without apparent reference to any other mark or inscription. Since I have only three expedition reports in my possession, and all three included an instance of a pentagram cut or scratched into pottery, it seems evident that the pentagram was known in great antiquity. It was found not on stelæ or tomb paintings, but on pottery found in graves, suggesting that the symbol predates the strict artistic canons and religious formulæ governing the work of scribes and artists in pharaonic Egypt - or arises from some tradition outside them.

What has been said so far concerns figures which are unmistakably pentagrams. The five-pointed star - in its simplest form a five-rayed asterisk - is found everywhere in Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions and art. One never finds six-pointed stars or hexagrams. A seven-pointed star is the symbol of Seshet, who appears to be a female *neter* of records and site plans. She is always portrayed at the founding of new temples and monuments, either with reed-pen and tablet in hand or assisting the king in driving the first peg that will be used to stretch cords during the foundation’s layout. [Using the stars of the Thigh to orient the foundation is frequently mentioned in the text for these scenes.]

as the ratio between any longer and shorter line section within the pentagram.^{33 34}

In ancient Egypt *phi* was known as the Sacred Cut. It was employed in all important construction and artwork. For instance, one-half the base of the Great Pyramid divided into the apothem equals *phi* accurate to 4 significant figures.^{35 36}

The Greeks too used *phi* in art and architecture, naming it the Golden Mean or Golden Section.³⁷ A “Golden Rectangle”, where the *phi* ratio is equal to the relationship between the longer and shorter dimensions, appears in the works of artists Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer, and George Seurat. In 1876 Gustav Fechner, a German psychiatrist, conducted experiments which concluded that the vast majority of people “preferred” rectangles in this shape.

phi also appears in nature. Most spiral growth in nature, notably phyllotaxis (the growth of leaves and flowers), follows the Fibonacci series, where each number in the series is equal to the sum of the two preceding numbers, ie: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34... As this series continues, the relationship between successive numbers approaches *phi*.³⁸

The Sacred Cut (or Golden Section) divides a line into unequal sections where the smaller is to the larger as the larger is to the whole. Similarly, a Golden Rectangle is one which, when divided into a square and smaller rectangle, the smaller rectangle is also a

³³ The concept and significance of *phi* may be studied at length in H.E. Huntley’s *The Divine Proportion* (#12D), as well as in related works in Reading List Category #12. As of this writing there is also an excellent website devoted to *phi* at: <http://www.geocities.com/jyce3/>

³⁴ The lines of the pentagram reflect the Golden Mean. Each inside angle of the central pentagon is 108°. Each inside angle of the five points is 36°. Every line segment of the pentagram divided by the next shorter segment yields:

$$\begin{array}{l} \sin 108^\circ \\ \text{-----} = 1.618033988749894848204586834365638117720309180\dots \\ \sin 36^\circ \end{array}$$

³⁵ I am particularly grateful to Setian Rodney Scott of Australia for his meticulous corrections and refinements to the *phi*-mathematics summarized in this section, as well as in the previous notes concerning it by other Setians.

³⁶ Assuming that the base to be 440 cubits and the apothem 356 cubits, then the apothem divided by 1/2 the base yields:

$$\begin{array}{l} 356 \\ \text{-----} = 1.6181818\dots \\ 440 \times .5 \end{array}$$

³⁷ This entire idea seems to have died with the fall of ancient Greek civilization; it was not rediscovered until the 16th century, when Lucas Picioli published *Divina proportione* with illustrations by Leonardo da Vinci.

³⁸ The Fibonacci series was named after mathematician Leonardo Pisano Fibonacci . The 23rd number of this series is 28,657, the 24th; 46,368;

$$\begin{array}{l} 46,368 \\ \text{-----} = 1.6180339882053 \\ 28,657 \end{array}$$

Golden Rectangle. Or, algebraically, $\phi^2 = \phi + 1$.³⁹

This, then, is the “secret” of the pentagram - a fact overlooked completely by most occult “authorities” of history. All “magic pentangles” - generally embellished with Cabalistic graffiti of one sort or another - amount to an unconscious effort to use the innate power of the pentagram even though not recognizing it for what it actually is. The pentagram as used by the Temple of Set is retained in its pure form, so that the beauty of ϕ is undiluted and undefiled.⁴⁰

It is portrayed inverse to imply change and movement in place of stasis and rest, and also to proclaim the evolutionary dialectic of thesis contrasted with antithesis to produce synthesis - instead of a foreordained and unavoidable absolute standard.

In occult tradition the inverse pentagram has also symbolized Black Magic or Satanism as opposed to the White Magic of Cabalists and polytheists, symbolized by an obverse pentagram.

The Pentagram of Set is enclosed in a perfect circle (a function of π), representing the mathematical order of the objective universe. The pentagram does not touch the circle, however, signifying that the Powers of Darkness are not derived from or dependent upon that order.

Silver is the traditional color of the night, as gold is of the day. In recognition of the role of Set as Prince of Darkness and counterpart to the [Horus] light of day, the Temple of Set casts the pentagram in silver. Silver has also signified initiatory and exclusive religious systems as opposed to open, mass-oriented ones.

The background color of each degree medallion possesses distinct significance. The color white (I°) represents the newfound freedom of the mind from myths, misconceptions, and doctrines resulting from fear and superstition.

An Adept II° wears the pentagram against red. Of all the gods of ancient Egypt, Set alone was portrayed in red, and red has also been the traditional color of life-oriented religions; the Blood is the Life.

Those who are Elect to the Priesthood of Set III° wear the Pentagram of Set against black, symbolizing the individual’s consecration by the Prince of Darkness.

A Master of the Temple IV° wears the Pentagram of Set against blue, the traditional color of the most advanced and accomplished initiates (such as the Philosopher-Kings of Plato’s *Republic* or the Priest-Kings of Atlantis).

³⁹ Some further properties of ϕ :

$$1 + \phi = \phi^2; \phi + \phi^2 = \phi^3; \phi^2 + \phi^3 = \phi^4; \text{ad infinitum.}$$

$$\phi = (1 + \sqrt{5}) / 2$$

$$\phi = 1 + 1/(1 + 1/(1 + 1/(1 + 1/(1 + 1/(1 + 1/...))))))...$$

$$\phi = (\sec 72)/2 = (\csc 18)/2 = 1/(2 \cos 72) = 1/(2 \sin 18) = 2 \sin 54 = 2 \cos 36 = 2/(\csc 54) = 2/(\sec 36)$$

⁴⁰ *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*. The Church of Satan again displayed the pentagram inverse, but only together with the other symbols which comprise the Sigil of Baphomet. The Moorish name referred to by Set is obviously the name “Baphomet”. “Khar” is the name of the Egyptian XVI Nome, whose capital was *Ba-neb-tett*, or Mendes, and whose god-figure was the famous Goat of Mendes, notorious during the Ptolemaic period of decadence as a symbol of sensuality.

A Magus V^o wears the Pentagram of Set against purple, the traditional color of royalty, because he is distinguished from the Masters of the Temple by being Tasked by the Prince of Darkness with the Utterance of a Word.

An Ipsissimus VI^o wears the Pentagram of Set against gold. The symbolism of this color is known to the Masters of the Temple.

An Honorary Setian (a non-Initiate of the Temple so designated by virtue of distinguished service to the Temple or Æon of Set) wears the Pentagram of Set against green, symbolizing the natural universe in which the recipient dwells. In this case the Pentagram of Set appears in gold, symbolizing the non-initiatory character of this honor.

The full-size (2" diameter) medallion of the Temple of Set may be worn with formal, semi-formal, or casual attire, but never with such garb as to reflect ill upon its dignity. Under ceremonial circumstances Initiates of degrees I^o-III^o wear it together with a black robe trimmed in the individual's degree-color (I^o=white, II^o=red, III^o=silver). Initiates of degrees IV^o-VI^o wear either robes of the appropriate degree color or black robes trimmed in the individual's degree-color. III^o+ Initiates may wear a black clerical collar.

CHAPTER 4: THE BLACK MAGICAL THEORY OF THE UNIVERSE

What is “Theory”?

Before advancing the theory identified by the title of this chapter, it may be useful to review just what any “theory” is - and what it is not.

Definition: **A theory is an organized set of ideas about reality.**

Why is theory useful? (1) It enables data to be ordered. (2) It requires that the criteria of selection of problems for analysis be made explicit. (3) It is an instrument for understanding similarities and differences.

Theories can be **descriptive** (classifying a phenomenon or placing it within a conceptual framework) or **prescriptive** (advancing a set of norms or values).

One must assess a theory either as (1) a passionate statement or (2) an honest attempt to state truth.

A theory should be critiqued on the plane of its logic and internal consistency, **not** on the basis of its popular acceptance and influence [this echoes Plato’s condemnation of what he derisively called the “democratization of truth”].

The only absolutely general standard of rational criticism is that a theory mustn’t contain mutually-contradictory propositions.

Types of Theories

Ethical theories express some degree of preference or distaste about reality in accordance with certain a priori standards of evaluation. Some ethical theories state ideal goals towards which reality ought to be changed. [Chapter #5 contains ethical theories.]

Metaphysical theories are attempts to discover the ultimate nature of reality transcending the observable. [This chapter contains metaphysical theories.]

Empirical theories are generalizations about observable realities. [This chapter contains empirical theories preliminary to and supportive of the metaphysical theories presented.]

A **political** theory is a disinterested search for knowledge of political and social reality. It is a set of empirically-validated, logically-ordered, and functionally-related propositions about the actual political behavior of individuals and societies. It contains (1) factual statements about the existing posture of affairs, (2) causal statements about probabilities, and (3) value statements. [Chapter #5 contains political theories as an illustration and application of the ethical theories treated.]

The Universe

Before one can venture an intelligent decision concerning what to do with one's existence, one must know what that existence is and in what environment it is situated. Many of history's major religions and philosophies came into being in order to address this problem. While some of their proposed explanations are aesthetically and/or emotionally attractive and have gained many devotees, this in itself does not make any one of them **true** - merely popular.

The Temple of Set proposes its solution after having considered and dismissed the alternatives as **untrue** in whole or in part. We consider our position to be the only correct one - not because we are intolerant of competition or comparison, but rather because we do not accept the notion of co-existing but incompatible "truths". If there is an evident fallacy or unknown factor in the truth as we understand it, then we must address and if possible correct it - or at least identify the fallacy or factor and qualify the stated truth accordingly. But to say "ours is just one approach, and many others are just as good" is an evasion of responsibility and would reduce the concept of "truth" to merely a matter of whim [or popularity].

The **Universe** (with a capital "U") is defined as **the totality of existence, both known and unknown by humanity**. Most people think of this term as identifying the vast expanses of space and the masses of animate and inanimate matter & energy occupying it. The Temple of Set defines that concept as the **objective universe** (with a small "u").

The issue of the origin of the objective universe is crucial to conventional religions and most philosophies. There are two alternatives:

- (1) Something created it at a point in time, or
- (2) It has always existed, and therefore no creating agent was/is necessary.

Since infinites of anything can only be theoretically conceptualized, and then with great difficulty (#20F), most people tend towards alternative #1. If this alternative is true, then there is more to the Universe than the objective universe. There must also be a medium for the existence of a Universal intelligence - a medium which is neither matter nor energy nor empty space. This medium must **itself** extend infinitely back into the past; otherwise it in turn requires a creator - a "superior god" - at a prior point in time.

Hence either alternative ultimately requires that time be extended backwards to infinity. Similarly the existence of the objective universe necessitates the extension of time infinitely into the future. Time ceases to exist only when that which it exists to measure - the entire objective universe - ceases to exist. (#20B) [Note: The concept of "time" can be applied beyond the objective universe to the Universe, as well as to other sub-universes, but these applications are not immediately relevant to the present discussion.]

The aforementioned alternatives #1 and #2 are mutually exclusive. Which one is correct and why?

By selecting #2, **atheists** say that there is nothing more to existence than the objective universe; they think that it is in fact **the** Universe. Their rationale is simple: They see no convincing evidence of anything which is not matter, energy, or space. Therefore they assume that nothing else exists.

Agnostics differ from atheists in that they theoretically put off judgment, remaining open to the possibility that new data may become available which will resolve the question one way or the other. By contrast, an atheist believes that the question can be adequately resolved on the basis of the existing level of human knowledge.

Adherents of religions select alternative #1. For one reason or another, they believe that they have the necessary evidence. The vast majority, of course, have not thought the question through with any degree of precision. Rather they have made their decision as an act of **faith** (unsupported, non-rational trust) in the wisdom of others in whose opinions they have confidence.

It is a waste of time to discuss philosophy with anyone who bases his position on articles of faith, because he will not question them as long as he clings to them. He must first admit to the possibility that his faith can be challenged on **rational, factual** grounds before any meaningful dialogue can occur. Most persons who are comfortable with faith to begin with are reluctant to do this. The most one can do in a dialogue with a faith-adherent is to discuss lesser issues with him, bearing in mind that he will accept or interpret the conversation only **within** the context of that faith.

Leaders and teachers of religions, assuming that they are sincere and intelligent individuals, either feel that they have sufficient empirical evidence for the existence of one or more divinities or, in lieu of such evidence, admit that their position is an irrational act of faith.

Perhaps the most famous example of the former attitude is Thomas Aquinas, who attempted to prove the necessary existence of God through Aristotelian logic. Since Aquinas was “reasoning” towards a conclusion that was dogmatically-predetermined, however, much of his “logic” is crude and propagandistic - failing, for example, to address the aforementioned aspects of the concept of time. Aquinas just assumed that the objective universe “had” to have been created at some point in time; hence the prior existence of a “creator” (i.e. God) was proved.

Critics of Aquinas, such as William of Occam [of “Occam’s razor” fame] and Roger Bacon pointed out the faults and gaps in Aquinas’ “logic”. At the same time, as Europeans emotionally inclined towards some kind of Christian view of existence, they sought a way out of the problem by just accepting a Christian cosmology as an admittedly-irrational act of faith - much as a child, upon being shown that the “evidence” for Santa Claus was forged by parents, might say, “I don’t care; I believe in him anyway.”

Once irrational faith is accepted as a valid starting-point, of course, “truth” according to any religion becomes a function of obedience to the individual(s) or book(s) whose authority to define the faith is generally accepted.

True philosophy differs from faith or ideology in that philosophy is a **disinterested** search for truth, wherein the outcome of the search is **not** predetermined by dogma.

While there have been many post-Aquinas attempts to logically demonstrate the existence of God, all have ultimately suffered from one or more of the same fallacies. Present-day religion, both Christian and non-Christian, has *de facto* abandoned the effort and has tacitly acknowledged the necessity for non-rational faith. The result is a variety of religions which have substance only because (a) of the glamor they have gained through existence for a period of time ["They've been around for umpteen centuries, so they **must** know what they're talking about!"] and/or (b) they focus attention on their practical actions - such as fancy buildings, ceremonies, charities, social work, etc. - rather than on their core principles.

The Temple of Set is not comfortable with a position which, no matter how workable its spin-offs, is ultimately founded on a base of sand.

Aspirants to the Temple come to us because they do not accept the premise that rational curiosity must be limited to the objective universe.

They also have confidence in the capacity of higher human intelligence to reach beyond the frontiers of scientific (i.e. strictly-objective universe) knowledge to at least some aspects of the Universe without having to fall back on irrational fantasy or faith. Moreover they consider this quest to be an important, even crucial one, as they feel that the ultimate, essential reason behind the existence of mankind - or at least a certain, unique quality in mankind - is to be found only through such exploration. They reject the fence-sitting posture of the agnostic as an act of mental laziness, holding that there is sufficient information available to commence, if not to immediately complete the quest.

The Psyche

What is it that has impelled so many curious and dissatisfied individuals throughout history to try to break through the perceptual limits imposed by alternative #2?

The answer lies **not** in the flimsy, foolish arguments for conventional religion, but rather in the real, observable phenomenon of humanity **itself**. We perceive something in our own state of being that does not seem to be explainable in terms of the objective universe. We are not satisfied that we can be explained or defined merely in terms of electro-chemical equations, even very elaborate ones. There is, we feel, something **else** within us - something unique to each being and ultimately more essential than our objective, physical substance. First identified as the *ba* by the ancient Egyptians, it became the *psyche* of the Greeks and eventually the "soul" in modern language. From *Webster's International Dictionary*:

ba: The living, immortal, eternal, and ultimately divine living soul in Egyptian religious belief represented as a bird with a human head and believed to leave the body at death and return eventually to revivify the body if it is preserved.

soul: (1) The immaterial essence or substance, animating principle, or actuating cause of life or of the individual life. (2a) The psychical or spiritual principle in general shared by or embodied in individual human beings or all beings having a

rational and spiritual nature. (2b) The psychical or spiritual nature of the universe related to the physical world as the human soul to the human body ...

Note the connection which is presumed or postulated to exist between the human soul and the Universe. This connection has also been referred to via the term *logos*. Again from *Webster's*:

logos: (1) Reason or the manifestation of reason conceived in ancient Greek philosophy as constituting the controlling principle in the universe: (a) A moving and regulating principle in the universe together with an element in man by which, according to Heraclitus, this principle is perceived. (b) A cosmic governing or generating principle according to the Stoics that is immanent and active in all reality and that pervades all reality. (c) A principle that, according to Philo, is intermediate between ultimate or divine reality and the sensible world ...

Atheists and agnostics - including sub-species such as logical positivists, materialists, humanists, etc. - are uncomfortable with the religious connotations of the term "soul". They usually refer to the same phenomenon as "self", "ego", "mind", or "consciousness". Within the Temple of Set all words referring to the phenomenon are used more-or-less interchangeably, with distinctions being made in specific cases as necessary.

Essential to the notion of the soul is the sensation that it is somehow alien to the physical body - a passenger in a vehicle, so to speak. It is the "ultimate you" that, through the machinery of your physical brain, moves your arms and legs, sees through your eyes, hears through your ears, and in other ways interacts with the objective universe. If you lose 20% of your body in an accident, however, you do not lose 20% of this soul. Is it simply a freakish by-product of the brain's natural functioning - an illusion or delusion incidentally caused by interactions of electrochemical energy? (#19G) True, when damage is done to the brain, the consciousness fragments. This is also true when the brain deprives itself [through sleep] (#19E) or is deprived of [through sensory deprivation] (#19N) contact with the objective universe.

Many efforts to prove that the soul is not a mere function of the material brain have centered around ideas of reincarnation, ESP, out-of-the-body ("astral") travel, hauntings, and the like. The idea is to demonstrate that the consciousness can and does exist apart from the physical brain. Such efforts range from the serious and sophisticated (#18D, #19H) to the ridiculous. Fear of death motivates many such efforts and colors the results; we seek reassurance that our being will not vanish with the death and decay of our physical body. (#18A) But the search can also be motivated by honest curiosity, and **that** is the *raison d'être* of the Temple of Set.

The key which we apply to this problem is what Eric Hoffer refers to as "the unnaturalness of human nature". (#17D) The soul or self does not behave as though it were merely a "sum total" of the brain's sensory and manipulative capacities, combining and recombining inputted information as though it were an "organic" electronic computer. It has a sense of identity, a sense of uniqueness, a sense of distance and differentiation from everything else that exists. It has characteristics which are

something more than instinctive and something less than logical; these are called “emotions”.

Most significantly, perhaps, are the creative soul’s thought prerogatives and dispositions. We don’t just think to survive or to react to external stimuli, B.F. Skinner notwithstanding. We think creatively, spontaneously, abstractly, and aesthetically. We conceive, design, and construct non-natural concepts, arguments, processes, and objects. And we can distinguish between the natural and the non-natural - something that would be a logical impossibility if the consciousness itself could not extend beyond the natural.

To demonstrate this capacity to yourself, consider something as simple as a Möebius strip. Your consciousness rebels at a phenomenon which it perceives as “against the law”. As a matter of fact, the various Möebius phenomena are not “against the law”; there is an entire field of mathematics - topology - which is concerned with the properties of geometric configurations subjected to various transformations. But here it is not the phenomenon itself but rather your **reaction to it** which is significant. The revulsion you feel is a manifestation of something in you which possesses the **power** to view the order of the objective universe from **outside**. (#20H)

The philosopher Immanuel Kant approached this power of the soul from a somewhat different angle. He referred to it as humanity’s ability to **assign meaning** to natural phenomena - to recognize, appreciate, define, categorize, rank, and otherwise determine the importance, relevance, and significance of an event or object in nature. “Objects of experience,” he said, “are never given in themselves, but only in **experience**, and have no existence outside it.”

Schopenhauer went a step further, holding that the individual will is the source of **causality** itself, of which space, substance and time are mere derivations.

Friedrich Nietzsche discussed the power in terms of the higher intellect’s ability to **build horizons** for itself beyond mere recombinations of the known. (#16B) Plato defined this suprarational quality of the mind as *næsis* and held that it was capable of perceiving the eternal, transcendent principles of all existence beyond even the most rigorous reasoning (*dianoia*): the **Forms** or **First Principles**. (#12C, #16F)

This power of the soul is thus both **apprehensive** [reaching beyond the limits of the objective universe] and **creative** [enabling one to generate meaning, to initiate existence]. This creative aspect may be called the **subjective universe** to distinguish it from the objective universe.

The subjective universe and the objective universe contain mutually-incompatible elements of definition, but they also blend into one another. For example, we use the subjective universe to assign meaning to the objective universe, and we regularly rely upon our knowledge of phenomena in the objective universe to give us “building blocks” to construct objects in the subjective one. [Many “fantasy creatures”, for example, can be broken down into “parts” of natural animals.]

The ability of any intellect to generate and operate the subjective universe is not automatic [beyond the level of ordinary imagination]. It must be deliberately learned and exercised. The experience of such perspective and power can be exhilarating and stimulating; more often - to those unprepared for the sensation and psychologically

unable to accept it - it has been frightening.

Man does not like the idea that he doesn't fit wholly and completely into the natural scheme of things. Hence he has sought an ally in a personalized "God" that created him as a wholly natural pet project [for example, pre-"fallen" man in the Garden of Eden]. He has invented religious and social codes that give him a sense of conforming to the natural order of the objective universe. He has built cathedrals and monuments to reassure and reinforce this sense, and he has even had his dead body buried with rites commemorating his inclusion in it. These very acts, ironically, expose his secret dread that his conscious self - his soul - does **not** belong to it. When that part of him which **does** belong to it - his physical brain and body - separates from his consciousness and remains purely a component of the objective universe [through physical death], he fears that his consciousness, unlike his physical shell, will not obey the [objective universal] law of conservation of matter and energy. Rather it will cease to exist.

While fearing the death of his self-consciousness, ironically, man has also sought to punish it for its existence. He has mythologized it as devils or, in Western Judæo/Christianity as the Devil. (#3A, #3B) He has tried to drive it out of his mind through psychological coercion (#14E, #19L) as well as through physical punishment ranging from simple fasting to the tortures of the Inquisition. And of course he has tried to pretend that it is really not there at all - that any activity by the soul which is not harmonious with the objective universe is simply disease: madness and mental illness. (#19R)

Nonetheless the soul endures. It has survived all efforts to destroy, distort, disguise, or sublimate it - for none of these efforts has ever actually succeeded in touching it. At most they have succeeded in damaging only the physical medium for its expression.

The Immortality of the *Psyche*

Perhaps the most important contribution of the original Church of Satan (1966-1975CE) was its focus upon and glorification of the *psyche*, even though its original ambition was to downplay that concept in favor of mere fleshly gratification.

As we Satanists explored the implications of Anton LaVey's initial, dramatic statements in the *Satanic Bible*, it gradually became evident that any focus upon oneself presupposes the **separateness** of that self from everything else. Flesh is found to consist of natural substances, and most of our lower-level thought processes - what Plato would class as *pistis* and *eikasia* - are similarly found to be little more than conditioned responses to external stimuli. As the Satanist continued his search for the "thing that was exclusively himself", he was forced to increasingly more complex introspection, resulting ultimately in a philosophical and metaphysical crisis that would only be resolved in the more precise philosophy of the Temple of Set.

In the Temple the *psyche* became the acknowledged focus of the Setian's initiatory quest. The logical mind and the fleshly body were not disdained, but seen rather as interpretative and communicative devices both between the *psyche* and its existence in a material universe, and between various *psyches* (i.e. between individual Initiates).

Subsequently this led the initiated *psyche* to confront the implications of an existence which is radically distinct from the material. The existence of the *psyche* as something **not** the product of natural forces - created and energized by Set - necessitates comprehension of its future beyond finite interface with the natural/material.

Historically the issue of the *psyche* has been gradually oversimplified into a “this-life-only” (TLO) vs. a “life-after-death” (LAD) debate. As the debate has raged throughout many ages and mythologies, these two alternatives have tended to become mutually exclusive.

The TLO proponents have passionately denied that anything of “this life” can continue past the destruction of the fleshly shell, even though they have no **positive** proof of the simultaneous extermination of the *psyche*. Since they can no longer detect its presence through their own fleshly interfaces with material existence (the five senses), they **presume** that it no longer exists. When challenged on this over-extension of logic, they retort that the burden of proof is on the challenger ... to prove that a posthumous *psyche* exists by establishing a material/5-sensory channel of communication with it.

Most publicized efforts to do exactly that have been predictably ludicrous at best and fraudulent at worst: seances, reincarnation fantasies, and “ascended master” rubbish. Materialists have felt secure in ridiculing such antics, and one cannot entirely blame them for claiming that their own position has thus been validated by default. By strict scientific and logical criteria it has not.

At the other extreme are the LAD advocates. They have faced the interesting problem of trying to make a convincing and attractive case for something whose existence they cannot demonstrate to any of the five senses. Rather than address that challenge directly [as the Temple of Set does], they take the easy way out and sell their product by attacking the TLO competition. They portray “this life” as merely a test of obedience, on which the individual will be judged at the point of transition into LAD - which they hold to be far more important because it is eternal.

Since uninitiated humans fear the unknown and prefer to be safe rather than sorry, the LAD merchants have been able to use fear and threats as effective propaganda devices. Although they are in effect “selling a totally undetectable and unverifiable product” for the greatest price the customer can conceivably pay (a lifelong abstinence from various pleasures) they have been generally successful - as is attested to by the unbroken grip of LAD religions, from Osirianism to Christianity, on the bulk of humanity throughout its recorded history.

Within the Western cultural tradition it is rarely realized that its two major religions - Christianity and Judaism - are actually at extremes apart on this issue. Christianity in all of its many forms upholds LAD as reason for abstinence in “this life”. Judaism, on the other hand, insists upon TLO and absolutely rejects justification for human behavior on any grounds other than YHVH’s direct instructions to living humans. Comments Arthur Schopenhauer in *Parega* #I, 13:

The Jewish religion proper, as described and taught in Genesis and all the historic books until the end of Chronicles, is the crudest of all religions because it is the only one which has no theory of immortality - not even a trace of it. Every king and every hero or prophet is buried, when he dies, with his fathers, and there is an end of the matter; no trace of any existence after death; indeed, as if intentionally, every thought of this sort seems to have been removed.

Schopenhauer is only partially correct. The ancient Hebrews drew no distinction between human souls and the animating force common to all animals (*nephesh*). Although some part of this animating force was thought to survive the destruction of the body, it was regarded with superstitious terror and referred to ambiguously by the terms *elohim* and *rephaim*. By the 2nd century BCE Hebrew doctrine had changed to include the revivification of the material body, but Hebrew theologians never extended this principle to the Pythagorean/Platonic concept of an independently-surviving *psyche*.

Not surprisingly the original Christians continued this Jewish tradition of corporeal revivification, using the Greek term *psyche* to mean much the same thing as the Hebrew *nephesh*. In Matthew 10:28, where the soul is mentioned as distinct from the body, their posthumous reunion is promptly suggested. The most conclusive example of this doctrine, of course, is that of Jesus' own material resurrection [as in Luke 24:36-43], but by the time of Paul the distaste with which sophisticated Greeks regarded this "animation of corpses" (*anastasis nekron*) induced that apostle to modify Christian teachings in the direction of Pythagoreanism. Paul was further aware of - and presumably sought to overcome - the challenge of Gnostic and Hermetic Christianity, being a blend of basic Christianity with various Egyptian and Hellenic mysteries.

[The 1945 discovery of thirteen original Gnostic codices at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt has shed much light on the ideas with which Paul had to compete. The codices themselves date to 350-400 CE but are probably copies of 2nd century CE originals.]

In I Cor. 15:35 and II Cor. 5:1-2 Paul offers a mixture of Pythagorean and Hebrew ideas, whereby the posthumous soul is given a "spiritual body" (*soma pneumatikon*) which nevertheless requires a bodily form. Despite Paul's efforts, Christianity has never succeeded in breaking free from the notion of reanimation of the original corpse, which at least has been grist for the mill of horror-film producers.

Since humans are accustomed to considering Judaism and Christianity as slight variations on a single theme (monotheism with humanity as a slave or pet), this actual chasm between the two belief systems has usually been overlooked, leaving Christians and Jews somewhat confused as to why they don't get along with one another very well. They have tended to persecute one another for all sorts of stupid reasons, century after century - when they weren't temporarily distracted by crusades against the "infidel" Moslems or extermination campaigns against "heathen" Aztecs and Incas.

The crude anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany is notorious, but what is not so well-known is that its roots could be found in a far more subtle comment on Schopenhauer - by Dietrich Eckart, initiate of the *Thule Gesellschaft* and mentor to Adolf Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg. In 1919 Eckart wrote:

It is now evident that a people which completely denies the existence of life after death must limit all of its thoughts and endeavors to the present world, to earthly existence; it has no other choice. But a people can only grow up with such an emphasis on worldly matters if it fundamentally lacks any need for immortality, which in turn is possible only if there is no trace of feeling in its basic character for the **eternal** in mankind. Wherever the soul manifests itself, no matter how faintly, a sense of immortality necessarily follows. The individual is not always consciously aware of this; indeed there are many who **refuse** to understand it - who are so ignorant concerning the concept of immortality that they habitually denounce it, even while their unselfish actions clearly reveal that each one of them senses the soul and therefore eternity within himself.

Although Pauline Christianity attempted to appropriate the Pythagorean/Platonic concept of the “soul distinct within and ultimately freed from the body”, the new religion proved unable to sustain this concept without the conceptual vehicle of the body. Christian artistic representations of posthumous Paradise are invariably sterile and dull, while wicked souls’ adventures in Hell are usually twisted and tortured fantasies caricaturing the most desirable pleasures denied in this life. It will be recalled that Christ’s ultimate promise upon his Second Coming was to reunite all souls with their ex-bodies, so that they would once again enjoy their original corporeal shells.

The Christian concept of “Satan”, being as it was a crude scarecrow of everything Christianity didn’t like, was thus as “confused in reverse” as Christianity itself was. This is clearly evident in Anton LaVey’s *Satanic Bible*, wherein Satan is said to stand for indulgence in fleshly life and rejection of posthumous judgment. As Anton plagiarized from Ragnar Redbeard’s *Might is Right*:

Life is the great indulgence - death the great abstinence. Therefore make the most of life - **here and now!** There is no Heaven of glory bright and no Hell where sinners roast. Here and now is our day of torment! Here and now is our day of joy!

Viewed in this context, the Church of Satan’s initial Satanism was, in effect, Judaism with a YHVH who would let you do anything you wanted rather than one who was a vengeful sadist. Yet both systems - the nice (Satanic) one and the vicious (Jewish) one - came to a screeching halt at the grave. [Anton explained the many *memento mori* decorations of his home as reminders of death’s being just around the corner, hence of the need for Satanists to get as much out of life as possible.]

Elsewhere in the *Satanic Bible*, however, Anton made a statement which, while largely neglected during the Church of Satan’s span of existence, is one of the more crucial in his entire philosophy:

If a person has been vital throughout his life and has fought to the end for his earthly existence, it is this ego which will refuse to die, even after the expiration of the flesh which housed it ... It is this vitality that will allow the Satanist to peek through the curtain of darkness and death and remain earthbound.

Here Anton's concept of life was still the TLO one common to Judaism and his original Satanism. In wishing to live rather than die, he could conceptualize immortality only in terms of an **extension** of TLO through force of will. He likened it to the refusal of a child to go to bed when there is something exciting going on; in this sense it was a denial that there could be any kind of life for the *psyche* other than "earthbound life". To "go to bed" is not to move into another mode of existence, but simply to cease to exist. Anton's original Satanism thus combined a "friendly YHVH" (Satan) with the promise of endless material existence for the *psyche* - providing that the *psyche* could project the strength and coherence of will necessary for that existence.

As discussed at length in my *Church of Satan* history, Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan were never able to resolve the dilemma of Satan's actual existence: Was he real or just symbolic? If he were real, it would seem to open the door to the entire **Christian** concept of the universe. If on the other hand he were merely symbolic, then he didn't really exist as a self-conscious, willful force which could actualize Satanists' ritual-magical desires or which could even care about the existence of the Church of Satan. In that case magic would be reduced to mere stage-trickery, and the Church itself would be nothing more than a club for spooky psychodrama.

The Temple of Set resolved this dilemma in 1975 CE by asserting the actual existence of "Satan" (as Set - the original, pre-Judæo/Christian entity) while at the same time removing the concept of his existence entirely from the Judæo/Christian tug-of-war.

The essence of the *psyche*, stated Set in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, is such that its existence is neither dependent upon the material nor imprisoned in it for testing or task-fulfilling purposes. Rather the physical body provides a vehicle in which the *psyche* can **become aware of itself and then reach out towards the limitlessness of its conscious existence**. [It is this process which the Temple defines by the hieroglyphic term *Xeper*.] "This life" may be likened to a springboard or launching-pad towards the *psyche*'s ultimate Self-awareness and state of Being.

As for Set, he neither cracks a whip over humans in TLO nor sits in judgment over them in LAD. Rather he is understood as the source of the **potential** for *Xeper* in each human animal. Whether or not each individual recognizes this potential and takes steps to develop it (what **we** mean by "initiation") is not Set's prerogative, else **his** own *psyche* would simply displace the one within each self-aware human.

In conceptualizing the existence of the *psyche* in a non-physical environment, let us reflect first upon the wisdom of ancient China. *The Secret of the Golden Flower (T'ai I Chin Hua Tsung Chih)* (#19S) is the principal philosophical text - in its oral-tradition origins - of the religion of the Golden Elixir of Life (*Chin Tan Chiao*) which developed during the T'ang Dynasty in the 8th Century CE. Its reputed founder is the Taoist philosopher Lu Yen, student of the Master Yin-hsi (for whom Lao Tzu is supposed to have written the famous *Tao Te Ching*).

Richard Wilhelm (translator of the English volume) summarizes the *Golden Flower's* argument as follows:

Tao the undivided, Great **One**, gives rise to two opposite reality principles, Darkness and Light, *yin* and *yang*. These are at first thought of only as forces of nature apart from man. Later the sexual polarities, and others as well, are derived from them. From *yin* comes *K'un*, the receptive feminine principle; from *yang* comes *Ch'ien*, the creative masculine principle. From *yin* comes *ming* (life); from *yang* comes *hsing* (essence).

Each individual contains a central monad which, at the moment of conception, splits into life and essence (*ming* and *hsing*). These two are super-individual principles and so can be related to *eros* and *logos*.

In the personal bodily existence of the individual they are represented by two other polarities, a *p'o* soul (or *anima*) and a *hun* soul (or *animus*). All during the life of the individual these two are in conflict, each striving for mastery. At death they separate and go different ways. The *anima* sinks to earth as *kuei*, a ghost-being. The *animus* rises and becomes *shen*, a revealing spirit or god. *Shen* may in time return to *Tao*.

If the life-forces flow downward - that is, without let or hindrance into the outer world - the *anima* is victorious over the *animus*; no "spirit body" or "Golden Flower" is developed, and at death the ego is lost. If the life-forces are conserved and made to "rise", however, the *animus* is victorious and the ego persists after death, attaining *shen*.

Such illumination was not limited to the orient. It was attained by the initiates of the Western world as well. As so carefully illustrated in *Her-Bak* (#2L), it was one of the central secrets of the ancient Egyptian Priesthoods:

What is life? It is a form of the divine presence. It is the power, immanent in created things, to change themselves by successive destructions of form until the spirit or activating force of the original life-stream is freed. This power resides in the very nature of things. Successive destruction of forms, metamorphoses, by the divine fire with rebirth of forms new and living is an expression of consciousness. It is the spiritual aim of all human life to attain a state of consciousness that is independent of bodily circumstance.

What I have just said concerns the living spirit bestowed on the man already quickened, like every living thing, by a rudimentary soul, which makes of such a man a creature superior to the animal-human kingdom. He who recognizes the divine meaning of life knows that knowledge has but one aim, which is to achieve the successive stages that liberate him from the perishable. For things die only in their body; the spirit, the divine Word, returns to its source and dies not. Unhappy is the *Ka* that fails to recover its soul.

This Egyptian wisdom survived the destruction of ancient Khem in the form of the Pythagorean/Platonic doctrine of transmigration of the *psyche* as evidenced by *anamnesis*:

SOCRATES: Those who tell it are priests and priestess of the sort who make it their business to be able to account for the functions which they perform. Pindar speaks of it too, and many another of the poets who are divinely inspired. What they say is this - see whether you think they are speaking the truth. They say that the soul of man is immortal. At one time it comes to an end - that which is called death - and

at another is born again, but is never finally exterminated. On these grounds a man must live all his days as righteously as possible. For those from whom

Persephone receives acquittal for ancient doom,
In the ninth year she restores again
Their souls to the Sun above.
From whom rise noble kings
And the swift in strength, greatest in wisdom,
And for the rest of time
They are called heroes and sanctified by men.

Thus the soul, since it is immortal and has been born many times, and has seen all things both here and in the other world, has learned everything that is. So we need not be surprised if it can recall the knowledge of virtue or anything else which, as we see, it once possessed. All nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, so that when a man has recalled a single piece of knowledge - "learned" it, in ordinary language - there is no reason why he should not find out the rest, if he keeps a stout heart and does not grow weary of the search, for seeking and learning are in fact nothing but recollection. - Plato, *The Meno*

When most people think about "immortality", they imagine a simple continuation of their immediate, conscious perceptions and impressions. That is, the moment-to-moment "reinforcements" that we all experience daily, and which - by being "not ourselves" - continuously form a kind of propping-up wall enclosing (hence "defining") that amorphous feeling we are accustomed to calling "ourself".

It is this "self" that most people fear to lose in the event of bodily death. They simply don't know how else they could know themselves to **exist**. Take away the reinforcing "hits" from the outside, material universe, and the "amorphous feeling" evaporates into nothingness, they fear, like going under a general anesthetic (which also, but temporarily, "removes all hits").

The Initiate is challenged to find, in the words of Dr. Raghavan Iyer,

... not the shadowy self or false egoity which merely reacts to external stimuli. Rather there is that Eye of Wisdom in every person which in deep sleep is fully awake and which has a translucent awareness of self-consciousness as pure, primordial light.

This is accomplished through reflective, non-reactive thinking. Thus the individual becomes aware of his authentic self (*psyche*, soul); and upon activating this as the locus of his consciousness, looks outward at phenomena **at the same depth**. In other words, the superficial "self" looks out at its level and sees natural events - like bodily pleasure/pain, blue sky, ringing telephones, time defined by clocks and calendars, and so forth. The core or true self, however, exists as a *neter* and, when looking outward, sees a universe not of the works of other *neteru*, but of those *neteru* themselves. One "machine" sees other "machinery"; one "creator/operator" sees other "creator/operators".

The *anamnesis* or “remembered knowledge” experienced by the slave boy in the *Meno* is perhaps more accurately described as the superficial mind reaching in to the core mind for bits of its immortal, eternal wisdom. But this is akin to reaching for a coal in a hot fire. It is distressing to do, and the result can be held only for a fleeting moment without further distress. The superficial self, which through material “hits” continuously reassures itself that it is **the only** self, is shaken by exposure to its falseness, its nothingness. It backs away from such “close encounters”, dismisses them as “illusions”, “fantasy”, “imagination”, etc., and hastens to rebuild its fortress of material-sensation “walls”. [The fright felt by the superficial self at threats to its authenticity results, among other things, in the lashing-out of neoskepticism. It is an axiom of the neoskeptics that the superficial self of stimulus/response is and must be the **only** self.]

Immortality of the self **is**. Your ability to align your consciousness with your *neter*, rather than your superficial, animal, illusion of “self” is *Xeper*.

These ancient initiatory keys to immortality were energetically attacked and suppressed by Christianity, as that cruel religion correctly perceived that fear of death was one of the most powerful weapons it could use to enslave humanity. It was important that death be taught as something hideous and final, from which the only escape was surrender to Christ - by which, of course, Christian churches really meant themselves. Those areas of non-Christian Europe which had escaped, at least for a time, domination by this numbing propaganda, continued to preserve the truth. In *For Freedom Destined* (#14U) Dr. Franz Winkler observes:

In ancient times the secrets of man’s true nature, and of the forces that determine his fate, were contemplated in the great temple universities of paganism all over the civilized world. Though men were fully aware of the important role that heredity plays in the shaping of the physiological and psychological organism of a human being, they did not think that the innermost core of the human being was the product of purely biological forces. This innermost core, called by the Greeks the *entelechy* or *daemon* of man, was credited with qualities unique to the individual, apart from the characteristics of the body he inhabited. The concept of *entelechy* corresponded roughly with the Judæo-Christian concept of an immortal soul.

Most pagan creeds held that the human *entelechy* neither begins nor ends with life on Earth. Man’s ‘mortality’ referred merely to the fact that his self-awareness ceased with the death of his body. The immortal gods differed from mortal man by the continuation of their consciousness. Since ancient ideas on the mystery of birth cannot be separated from pagan philosophies about the soul’s supersensible existence, certain concepts generally accepted in the pre-Christian era should be mentioned. According to pagan theology, consciousness after death could reach one of three levels. The first level was the one allotted to the average man: dreamlike, with almost complete absence of memory and self-identification, called *Hades* in Greek, *Hel* in Germanic mythology. The second was accessible to the true hero, the man whose deeds of courage and creativeness distinguished him from ordinary mortals. The Greeks called this state of consciousness the *Elysian Fields*, the Germans *Walhalla*. The third level was reached by those who could soar beyond the narrow limits of Earth-bound consciousness and thus bring new impulses into the world. Already while they still lived in a mortal body, their awareness had assumed divine status. Their souls after death, in the language of mythology, were lifted to the stars.

Is attainment of the immortality of the *Ba* or *psyche* a technique which the individual has to “learn”? Must one hurry to do so, lest one’s body expire before the trick is mastered? Quite the contrary, as the sage in *Her-Bak* emphasized, this immortality is **innate in all conscious beings**. You have it **already**, by evidence of that same consciousness which enables you to read and comprehend these words. It is nothing which the Temple of Set “confers” on you; rather it is something which conventional churches have tried to trick you out of, and which materialistic science has denied simply because it is an aspect of existence which **transcends** science [hence is not subject to “scientific proof”]. Further from Winkler:

Life’s appearance as “meaningless” stems basically from man’s materialistic concept of himself. If his innermost nature were merely biological, complete fulfillment of his appetites and the acquiring of wealth would satisfy his longing for happiness. Since they do not, an atmosphere of hopelessness is enveloping our generation, especially our youth. In an affluent society where all material ways out of such frustration have been found wanting, drugs, perversions, and the thrills of crime are now being used as desperate means of escape from the intolerable boredom. Well-meaning efforts on the part of the authorities to stem the tidal wave of juvenile delinquency and drug-addiction will therefore bring scant results, until the following simple truth has been fully accepted by parents and teachers:

Happiness, love, and compassion are spiritual faculties that during centuries of neglect and misunderstanding have withered and grown weak. Unless they are nursed back to health, man will despair of life and eventually throw it away in a mass suicide by nuclear destruction. But how can we care for what we no longer comprehend? Modern science, admirable in its achievements on a material plane, has proven ineffectual in the understanding of intangible values. This limitation, while freely admitted by the small number of truly creative scientists, seems to elude the average intellectual. And the failure to recognize this limitation adds to the delusion that natural science in its present form can be the judge of religious or spiritual truth.

Making modern man’s plight even more serious is the fact that his materialistic delusion of himself not only deprives him of wisdom and happiness, but acts also as a pattern in whose dreary image he tends to reshape his nature. Consequently more and more personalities emerge who think and act virtually like robots. They know no happiness and have no perception of objective morality.

We have grown wise in the analysis of the material world, have expanded the scope of our perception to outer space and to the world beneath the atom. But objective inner experience has faded almost entirely away, and it has left us groping in the dark for the true image of ourselves.

It is the function of the Temple of Set, as of the ancient Egyptian priesthoods, the Pythagorean Brotherhood, and the Platonic Academy before it, to inspire its Initiates to awaken to that knowledge which is latent within their consciousness and needs only to be appreciated as such. Winkler rightly points out that, the more highly initiated one becomes, the more one can experience such prerogatives of *Xeper*. But this is a matter of perspective and proportion, not of the quality of immortality itself.

It is all too easy to perceive “life” as only the active functioning of one’s material body. Such an attitude fosters a disease of the *psyche* far worse than any of the body. It numbs you to that immortality which is inherent in the Gift of Set, and it makes you the

prey of everyone who, in the profane world, seeks to control your life by threats against your body.

The Prince of Darkness

So the non-natural soul - the personalized, subjective “reflection” of the “Devil” - has proven its existence many times over, and in a variety of contexts and semblances. But what of the **Form** behind **all** such particularized manifestations - a creative source or **First Principle** of whose essence all non-natural souls partake? What of an actual, uniquely-existing “Devil”?

During its 1966-1975 CE existence, the Church of Satan regarded its own mythology with a mixture of emotional fervor and intellectual uncertainty. The Church came into existence not as the result of a philosophically-deduced need, but rather as a spontaneous gesture of exasperation with and contempt for the hollowness and hypocrisy of conventional social and religious morality. The Church was thus a “statement” - a glove thrown down - not of that morality *per se*, but rather of humanity’s impudence in announcing goals and standards for itself which it had neither capacity nor intention of attaining. Satan, as the accuser and rebel, was the inevitable symbol for this statement.

Having rejected conventional options, however, the Church found itself in the position of having to construct an alternative approach to morality. The result was an imprecise blend of personal hedonism with a rather cynical, Hobbesian attitude towards the rest of society. Those able to achieve self-indulgent lifestyles - Satanists - should do so without qualms; ordinary people should be coldly exploited as befit their unimaginative and conservative behavior- and thought-patterns. [Cf. Aristotle’s doctrine of “natural slavery”.]

As for Satan himself, the Church began by making much of the sinister glamor of the Devil, both in its early rituals and in media coverage. In the *Satanic Bible* (#6K) Anton LaVey proposed a simple identification of the Devil with any and all forms of pleasurable indulgence. Together with a lampooning and debunking of conventional religious dogma, this identification constitutes the principal theme of that volume’s “Book of Satan (authored by Ragnar Redbeard)” and “Book of Lucifer (authored by LaVey)”.

But then the *Satanic Bible* becomes oddly vague. Satan himself is never really defined, save as an allegory, semantic term, and/or symbol of the subjective, creative self. On page #62 it is said that “most Satanists [think that Satan] merely represents a force of nature - the powers of darkness”. It is then implied that these “powers of darkness” are simply natural forces which neither religion nor science has yet identified or attempted to employ. The *Satanic Bible* advocates using them for Indulgence - and that is where the discussion of Satan stops. The reader is then thrown somewhat off the track, because the phraseology of the rituals that follow recasts the Devil into one or more of his traditional, anthropomorphic molds.

The paradox of conventional Satanism was that the Devil was understood to be a force of **nature**, thus being derived from and ultimately dependent upon “God” in some

way. He may make a lot of noise, but in the final analysis he is part of the same all-inclusive machinery of the Universe/God; even his “rebellion” is part of God’s Universal scheme. Satanists, accordingly, might be able to play a good game - but ultimately the deck is stacked against them. They cannot win.

The Church of Satan avoided this paradox by the simple technique of refusing to confront it directly. An atmosphere of psychodramatic atheism prevailed. Satan was ceremonially invoked with great fervor, but in non-ceremonial surroundings even the most die-hard Satanists hesitated to take a position concerning his reality. If references to his existence were made, they were vague, cautious, and hypothetical.

This attitude prevailed throughout all levels and branches of the Church. Even Anton LaVey, when speaking of the Devil, was wont to employ such euphemisms as “the Man Downstairs”, or to speak more cryptically of “forces”, “vibrations”, “angles”, and “atmospheres”.

In addition to the “stacked deck” paradox, there was a second motive for this reluctance to grapple with the issue of the Devil’s existence: the unspoken acknowledgment that atheism is ultimately untenable. Throughout the objective universe there exists rigid adherence to principles of physical and natural behavior; we may call this “order” or “consistency”. It is because of this consistency that we can predict events in the physical, chemical, biological, and mathematical sciences. Scientists term such predictive patterns “laws”.

[There is a school of philosophy called **subjective** or **voluntaristic idealism**, in which an effort is made to define nature as merely a creation of the mind, an objectification of the will (Fichte, Schopenhauer), but the subjective idealists have not been able to **prove** that the objective universe is in fact a mental construct - for precisely the same reasons that they can challenge the assumption that it does not enjoy objective existence apart from perception. Like their predecessor Descartes, they are ultimately forced to the assumption that one must accept the evidence of the senses as reliable and to some extent impersonal.]

Recalling Thomas Aquinas’ failure to demonstrate the existence of God through logic, and the consequent relapse of Christianity into a faith-based system, rational minds of the Enlightenment era approached this “ordering” of the objective universe in two significant ways:

First there is **pantheism** (sometimes called **monistic idealism**), whose most noted advocate was the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). According to pantheism, God and the Universe are one and the same substance; everything that exists or occurs is an aspect of God. Being neither separate from nor independent of the Universe, God has no personal qualities. [It should not be supposed that Spinoza meant this as an “attack” on God after the fashion of Nietzsche. Spinoza’s recommended attitude for human beings was what he termed the “intellectual love of God” through a generalized appreciation of nature.]

The perception of an “enforced” system of order or consistency throughout the entire objective universe, however, led some philosophers to induce the necessary existence of something external and superior to that universe. Conceptually the objective universe cannot “regulate” or “order” itself. Hence another school of thought -

deism - arose, its most noted proponent being Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) of Leipzig. Deists differed from pantheists by postulating a superior and independent God, but one who, after creating the cosmos and its laws, refrains from tampering with them. Hence such a God never intervenes in human affairs or fortunes, whether or not he is interested in them.

The Church of Satan adopted an essentially deistic attitude towards cosmology: “God” probably exists, but since he doesn’t involve himself in human affairs, there is no reason to court his approval. Opening the door to the existence of “God”, however, opens the same door to the existence of another intelligent entity apart from the objective universe. The Devil can thus exist in theory. Is there any evidence that he does in actuality?

The Enlightenment philosophers assumed mankind to be compatible with, hence included in the order of the objective universe. Human behavior was just another kind of science to be explored and mastered. [It is no accident that the Enlightenment saw the birth of “social contract” theories of government, based on speculations about the “natural ordering” of human society.] But, while social contract approaches to government and politics have enjoyed some measure of success in the subsequent centuries, they have by no means demonstrated their inclusion of individual creative power and the force of will. At the close of the 20th century, most of the great social contract experiments, if they have survived at all, have mutated into a kind of technological Machiavellianism in which **individual** drive, leadership, and fortune determine the shape of the present and the direction of the future.

We confront, therefore, a scenario in which nature is increasingly exposed as a consistent, interrelated machine - and in which the human intellect is increasingly exposed as something which has defied all attempts to relegate it to a function of this machine. Mankind displays a potential for intellectual external-perspective and willful creation that is in sharp contrast to everything else that is known concerning this Universe.

Consider the vast intellectual gap between mankind and every other species on the planet. One has only to walk into a major library to sense the breadth of this gap. Much is made about the relatively high intelligence of chimpanzees, dolphins, etc.; yet the most intelligent of their number cannot remotely compare with even the most primitive examples of *homo sapiens*. Moreover, say physiologists, even the most exalted levels of human intelligence and knowledge have been attained with only 10-20% of the reasoning potential of the human cerebrum. How and why did humanity acquire this freakishly high intelligence potential?

While anthropologists can chart the **stages** of prehistoric human evolution to the limits of available data, they remain unable to explain **why** the entire phenomenon should have occurred at all. The best they can do, in textbook after textbook, is to say that “man developed high intelligence because he needed it to survive”. According to this theory, proto-men were lacking in speed, strength, fighting teeth & claws, and other physical attributes necessary for survival. Mutants with greater intelligence tended to survive through cunning, sustaining their descendants, while less-intelligent groups died out. This process, repeated over some five million years, resulted in *homo sapiens*,

the prototype of Cro-Magnon, Neanderthal, and Modern Man.

The escape clause in this theory is the time factor: Five million years is plenty of time for almost anything to evolve into almost anything else. Besides, the anthropologist will say, the entire primate development process can be traced to origins some **fifty** millions of years ago. Hence the condition of Modern Man isn't as startling as it would be had it happened "overnight".

All well and good, but there are at least two problems with this proposition. One is that proto-man was just one of **many** animal species fighting for survival over the millennia. If his brain could evolve through processes of natural selection, then why did the brains of other creatures not similarly evolve - at least a **little**? The fact is that the brains of other creatures have remained practically the same size while man's has "evolved". This is **inconsistent**, and it will be recalled that the hallmark of the objective universe - and deistic proof of God - is its **consistency**. By the law of averages - which applies to natural selection as much as to anything else - there should have been at least **some** species other than man evolving in intelligence at least partway to the human level. There is none.

The second problem arises through application of one of the bastion theories of Darwinian natural selection. It is that nature always takes the easiest way out - that selection favors the less-complicated adaptation over a more complex alternative. When a time of famine favors species able to reach higher for herbal food, longer-necked giraffes survive. We do not see short-necked giraffes with wings. A more-or-less easy physical modification must first **accidentally occur** in a species; thereafter selection takes place against those who do **not** possess the characteristic. That is the way evolution actually works. (#17E)

But there is **no** explanation for human brain evolution in the laws of natural selection. The biophysical factors of a sophisticated brain are far too intricate. A proto-man trying to adapt to hostile environments through brain modification would have died out long before such external stress as he could bring to bear on his brain would have any effect upon that organ [if indeed they would have any physiological effect at all]. In the case of proto-man, natural selection would occur in favor of almost anything else **besides** the brain. He would become stronger, hairier, tougher, meaner, and faster. According to natural selection, you and I should be gorillas.

But we are not gorillas. Indeed, as our intelligence has made life progressively easier for us, we have become weaker and more vulnerable physically. We are healthier and more long-lived only because our intelligence has enabled us to produce medicines to stave off diseases, and dietary standards to maximize our health and growth potential. We have controlled environments to fend off the elements, and have developed weapons to fend off other creatures. Take away our abnormal intelligence and mankind would die out or be killed off within a few generations. Because of our brain, then, the natural evolution of the rest of our body [which would normally operate in favor of an **unaided** tougher, more disease-free physiology] has actually operated in **reverse**. Once more this is **inconsistent**.

There is a corollary to the second problem. It is that natural selection, when it does occur, does not overcompensate. If conditions allow all giraffes with four-foot necks to

survive, there is no reason for the species to evolve in the direction of forty-foot necks. **If** the human brain were presumed to be the product of natural selection, why should it possess intelligence greater than that required to raise man to stone-age culture? More than that, why should it possess the capacity to be ten times smarter than it is **today**?

If human high intelligence is a violation of objective universal law, how did it occur? There are two possible explanations: accident or deliberate cause. If **accidental cause** is assumed, then the accident would have had to be both a major violation of the law and one which sustained itself over several millennia. And if there were one such accident, the laws of probability would necessitate others in lesser degrees [and greater numbers]. In all of the many manifestations of life and evolution with which we are familiar, we know of **no** other such accidents. Natural law's grip on everything else besides ourselves appears total and inescapable. We are left with the second explanation: **deliberate cause**.

During the Age of Satan (1966-1975 CE) a certain "racial memory" of some prehistoric change to the natural course of human evolution seemed to be asserting

itself.⁴¹ The most spectacular and explicit example was the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Arthur C. Clarke's variation on the theme of his earlier novel *Childhood's End*. (#17A) In

⁴¹ Patty Hardy IV^o: This "racial memory" has acted powerfully on the imaginations of those who watched such presentations during our first decade. Academics once hostile to any hint of "outer mysteries" have admitted to their ranks a new field, Cognitive Science, devoted to the Gift. This multidisciplinary field arose in response to the realization that neither psychologists nor neurologists nor computer scientists nor evolutionary biologists could independently hope to fathom the complexity of the human mind.

It is a fledgling field, but one that I think holds promise - and of course concerns a topic of great significance to us. The continuing remanifestation of the First Thought, and the ensuing dialogue with the Other present at the birth of the First Thought, is **the** mystery.

Have a look at Merlin Donald's *Origins of the Modern Mind* as well as Gerald Edelman's *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire*. Both of these take the approach that the mind is a web of complex associative chains whose creation requires specific topological features of the brain (or whatever - Edelman says he's not a "carbon chauvinist", though he makes very clear that the mind is **not** algorithmic). Both attempt to explain how this neural architecture might have arisen.

The evidence presented by Donald and Edelman was of two kinds: clinical and archaeological. Study of aphasias, specific types of impairment of language ability, has allowed neurologists to figure out that language appears to be "spread" over two different regions of the brain. The parietal-occipital-temporal associative area, or Wernicke's area, receives and associates information already processed in specialized regions of the brain. It is known to be **one** of the two areas where damage impairs language ability. Broca's area appears to be specifically involved with speech itself.

Among other examples, a case was presented of a person having seizure activity of an unusual kind: he lost the ability to comprehend language for several hours at a time. During these seizures he recognized what was happening and tended to activities that required no language comprehension; at intervals he would turn on a radio to check to see if his seizure was over! The types of activity he pursued without the ability to understand language nevertheless implied reflective and purposeful thought at a level beyond what we see with apes.

From the perspective of a cognitive scientist, it looks as if Wernicke's area handles temporal sequencing of sensory feedback and voluntary motor action. From an evolutionary perspective, this is precisely the capability that would have developed to go from "monkey see monkey do" to self-directed learning, emulation, intentional repetition, self-evaluation and eventual mastery in a human learning how to flint-knap or weave a basket or paint cave art or perform a ritual dance. None of these things require speech! But they **do** require a capacity for abstracting, reviewing and replaying. From the linguistic perspective, this would solve the grammar problem, the fact that human infants learn to speak without enough exposure to language to reconstruct a grammar: rules of grammar are being constructed, not from hearing sentences, but from abstract models of reality created from experience. From **our** perspective, this cascading ability to isolate elements of experience, pay attention to them and imbue them with meaning, evaluate them, and will change in the subsequent flow of experience is **the ability to Come Into Being**.

The archaeological evidence involves looking at artifacts left by different species of Homo and Australopithecus, judging complexity of the actions required to produce these artifacts, and examining fossil cranial endocasts to make some guess about the gross morphology of the brain. It appears - this is still a topic of dispute - that Australopithecus, while bigger-brained than our modern apes, shows no sign of the development of Wernicke's area that seems characteristic of Homo from Homo erectus onward.

(This would also explain why apes like Koko pick up sign-language vocabularies but show no acquisition of grammar: they don't make abstract models of experience. I've heard nothing to indicate that Koko finds anything unusual about ASL, except that the cat doesn't understand it. Compare this to Helen Keller's electrifying account of "getting" her first sign.)

2001 proto-man's intelligence was artificially boosted by a rectangular monolith. In *Childhood's End* the same operation was performed by an extraterrestrial creature looking precisely like the traditional Devil. Presumably the spectacle of a tribe of man-apes thronging around Satan would have been a bit too shocking for audiences; hence the use of the more abstract monolith in the film. Intriguingly the monolithic Satan-symbol provoked no adverse criticism from viewers, religious or otherwise. Once the religious myths are removed, the "fall" of man is seen as his **rise**.

Such a 2001-style tinkering with human intellectual evolution would have had to occur at the genetic level, and presumably [so as to be sustained by normal reproduction] over an extended period of time. So we are looking at a subtle process, not a sudden, dramatic event [as in Adam & Eve's apple-munching or Prometheus' fire-giving]. We do not have sufficient knowledge of genetics or of the brain's physiology to estimate how such tinkering might have taken place. That it did in fact take place is indicated only - but inescapably - by the presence of the *fait accompli*.

The "ancient astronaut" theories of van Däniken et al. may be dispensed with peremptorily. The human body displays an organic constitution completely compatible with those of other Earthly species, and alien astronauts could not have taught anything to a proto-man whose intelligence had not **already** developed to a high level. There are a great many genuine curiosities of antiquity which suggest that mankind's advanced intelligence made its presence known long before the recorded civilizations of Egypt, Sumer, China, etc. (#5) But, despite torturous efforts to interpret toys or Meso-American murals as "spaceships", evidence of alien astronauts on Earth remains conspicuous for its absence. [There is always the possibility that a passing spaceship paused here for a picnic-lunch, and that humanity evolved from garbage left behind.]

Mankind's inability to detect the author of our "high intelligence experiment" should not be considered as evidence that he does not exist, but simply that he has not been located. Nor, one may add, has mankind been actively looking for him. Instead it has been off first on the wild-goose chase of religious-creationism, then on the wild-goose chase of natural selection (as applied to the brain). Nevertheless he exists; the conclusive evidence exists. To quote Walt Kelly's Pogo: "Us is it."

Such is the current level of extension of the Temple of Set's cosmology within the reference points of the objective universe.

To sum up: We know that there is evidence for the existence of an intelligent entity distinct from the objective universe and thus in incidental, if not deliberate conflict with its laws. For whatever its reasons, it has instilled in humanity the potential to enjoy the same external perspective, as well as the intelligence to do so with deliberate, creative purpose. Some humans sense this potential and thrill to it; we call them the Elect. Most others do not think precisely and rigorously enough to detect it in themselves; or, if they do, they fear it and try to sublimate, repress, or destroy it. Hence they have represented our Mysterious Stranger as the Devil. We know him by his most ancient name of Set.

The Temple of Set is thus an association of the Elect to honor Set, exalt his Gift to ourselves, and exercise it with the greatest possible wisdom. As Set is a metaphysical entity, apart from the objective universe, he may be described as a "god" as conventional society employs the term. In this sense the Temple of Set is a religion - not one which is

based on irrational faith, but one which derives its core principles from exercise of the evident Gift of its *neter*.

The Objective and Subjective Universes

The cosmological premise of the Temple of Set is that there is one **Universe**, consisting of the totality of existence. Within it are the **objective universe** (whose components occupy time and space) and each sentient being's **subjective universe**. The subjective universe may be thought of as one's personal perspective on the objective universe, together with any self-created phenomena one wishes to add to it. In the "exclusive" objective universe, a house is simply a geometrically-coordinated, gravitationally-braced and weatherproof arrangement of certain kinds of molecules. As various individuals design, decorate, occupy, or view the house, however, it is imbued with characteristics assigned to it by them (cf. Kant in Chapter #4). It now exists in their several subjective universes, and it may continue to exist there even after the "objective" house has been demolished.

As various people discuss the house, moreover, their subjective concepts concerning it will be exchanged. Thus subjective universes may themselves overlap. This is another way of defining "intellectual affinity", and it is also a precondition for affection and love.

It is open to question whether an individual can detect the existence of the objective universe at all, save through the "distorting medium" of his subjective universe. Rene Descartes' famous statement "I think; therefore I exist" was the result of his attempt to batter through his subjective universe to secure evidence of the objective one's reality [and his existence within it]. The Irish philosopher Berkeley disputed Descartes, claiming that the objective universe does not exist - that such reliable data as we have concerning it are merely agreements or similarities between our several subjective universes. The creator and "enforcer" of these similarities, Berkeley continued, is the divine mind (i.e. a God or gods).

Berkeley's philosophy is called **immaterialism**. It was followed by two offshoots: **solipsism** and **subjective idealism**. Solipsism disputes the existence of a divine mind, and indeed of any other individual minds. To the solipsist, the Universe consists of "nothing but myself and my ideas". The physical world, including the human beings populating it, are simply figments of one's imagination. [If one should be "attacked" by such a figment, the sensation of the fight and the bruises resulting from it would be viewed by the solipsist as unpleasant fantasies of his mind originating, beyond his conscious control, in its subconscious depths.]

Subjective idealism, whose most prominent proponent was the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, was an approach to immaterialism that seemed to be "less absurd" than solipsism. Fichte began by acknowledging that neither materialism (the existence of nothing but the objective universe) nor immaterialism (the existence of nothing but the subjective universe) can be established. A philosopher must arbitrarily accept either one or the other as a point of departure, then construct his theories from that platform.

Fichte opted for immaterialism. He felt that he existed, per Descartes' maxim. But, unlike Descartes, he didn't trust in God to subsequently impart to him reliable sensory impressions of an objective universe. He postulated the original existence of a mental essence divided into the **ego** (the sensation of the self) and the **non-ego** (sensations of things not perceived as the self). This mental essence is more impersonal than the subconsciousness of the solipsist. The essence is a sort of "supermind" which transcends all particular ego and non-ego manifestations.

As noted above, Fichte chose the premise of immaterialism and from it developed the philosophy of subjective idealism. His successor, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, chose the premise of materialism and from it developed the philosophy of **objective idealism**. In its simplest form, this philosophy imparts reality to the objective universe, making all subjective universes simply aspects of it. Hegel's objective universe, however, is not a physical substance. Rather it is an all-embracing, absolute mind which is racing through its many ideas to reconcile them, refine them, and ultimately realize itself through them. This is the "evolution" of the Universe, and is what Hegel referred to as the historical "dialectic" of thesis/antithesis > synthesis.

Endless debates rage concerning these and other metaphysical theories. This is not the place to attempt to resolve them. They are introduced in elemental form simply in order to illustrate the role that the concepts of the subjective and objective universes play in them. They are "building blocks": points of reference. This is how they are employed in the Temple of Set.

Using these building blocks, the individual may conceive of himself as a self-conscious, intelligent entity who confronts the objective and subjective universes from a point of external perspective. [Whether this external perspective extends to the subjective universe is open to question; this is like asking the mind whether it can get outside itself! But for our purposes an external perspective on the objective universe, together with a realization of the subjective universe, will suffice.] The challenge of existence is thus how to approach both universes intelligently and rewardingly.

There are two essential approaches to each universe, which may be termed **natural** and **non-natural**. There is thus a total of four possible approaches: (1) natural/objective, (2) non-natural/objective, (3) natural/subjective, and (4) non-natural/subjective. Each will now be discussed in turn.

The Natural Approach to the Objective Universe

The natural approach to the objective universe is to endeavor to blend in with it, to harmonize with it, to become one with it. In one mythological context or another, this is the goal of all conventional religions, which view man's estrangement from the objective universe as something "out of adjustment" at best and "sinful" at worst. Ironically, however, a fundamental paradox is involved which makes such a goal of reunification impossible. The paradox is that the very **desire** to attain union with the objective universe evidences the individual's essential **separateness** from that universe. It follows that **any** conscious act relative to that universe - even one which seeks to approach it - is an exercise of that separateness. Hence to be **aware** of one's

disconnection from that universe is to **remain** disconnected from it.

Jesus Christ is reputed to have said that, to enter Heaven, one must be “as a little child”. To put it another way, such a person would have to radiate an innocent, selfless passion for the harmony of the Universe; he would be unable to conceive himself as apart from it.

The irony of Christ’s admonition, however, is that **neither innocence nor selflessness are products of the rational intellect**. Hence he was stating a truth that those listening to him could do nothing about, whether or not they understood or agreed with him. One cannot “decide to be innocent” or “resolve to be selfless”. One can conduct one’s life **as though** one were innocent and selfless, of course - and be a nice person who does nice things for others in the process. But beneath all appearances, all affectations, the **actual** state of the soul remains as it is: either animal/natural or human/enlightened, either asleep and ignorant or awake and all too aware.

It is nothing short of horrifying to review the record of man’s efforts to “get at” the state of the human soul. He has cruelly tortured the body and the mind, even destroyed life itself in efforts to suppress or exterminate the “Satanic” state of self-awareness and pride in personal existence. He has concocted innumerable religions and substitute-religions purporting to be able to snuff out this flame; they have used every conceivable combination of drugs, incense, pageantry, recitation, ritual, and even Thomistic-style “logic” whose conclusions are safely predetermined by faith-derived axioms.

All such tricks are ultimately to no avail. At most they confuse, distort, and lull - but in the end “are all spirits, and are melted into air”. They are false, useless, meaningless, and tragic - tragic in the sense of the ancient Greek dramas: futile efforts of an Œdipus struggling pathetically to evade what the gods had decided **must be**.

Such efforts to deceive the consciousness into believing that it has been accepted into the objective universe are defined by the Temple of Set as **white magic**. It will be noted that this definition is far broader and less value-laden than pop-occultists’ use of the term. White magic embraces not only all conventional religions, but all pagan or nature-worship ideologies as well. To the Temple, the only distinction between them is one of style and imagery, not of underlying substance.

Atheists and logical positivists attempt to create the illusion of man’s inclusion in the objective universe simply by refusing to admit to the possibility of any alternative. Such individuals brusquely deny that anything worthwhile exists in the subjective universe, which they consider useful only for fantasy and escapism. Such natural/objectivists thus include Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hume, and Marx, as well as the Sophists of Hellenic Greece and the later Stoics of the Hellenistic and Roman eras of Mediterranean culture.

When confronted with metaphysical issues, natural/objectivists profess annoyance at such “useless” speculation. They pride themselves on practicality, on common sense, and on material gain. If they are involved in religion at all, it is only as a means for social or political influence, as in Rousseau’s contemptuously-advocated “civil religion” - or in order to “scratch the itch” [with as little intellectual bother as possible] of the sublimated feeling that there just might be something more to the Universe than their bourgeois materialism.

The Non-Natural Approach to the Objective Universe

If one assumes that one is an independent entity moving about in the objective universe, and that one cannot merge one's consciousness with it - that all attempts to do so are mere illusions and delusions - then one approaches the objective universe as a tool to be used for personal satisfaction. Natural/objective religionists are regarded as irrational, and natural/objective atheists are regarded as ignorant.

The non-natural/objectivist makes a careful study of the objective universe from his self-realized external perspective, and he includes in that study consideration for the subjective, metaphysical forces that influence human disposition and behavior. He then applies his knowledge to entities and events in the objective universe, to control or at least influence them in accordance with his will. This is defined by the Temple of Set as **Lesser Black Magic (LBM)**.

It will be understood that competence in this art gives the practitioner enormous power to affect situations in ways that could scarcely be understood by those involved, even if they were aware of the various forces being brought to bear on them. It thus follows that rigorous education in ethics is an absolute necessity for would-be Black Magicians - else through ignorance, immaturity, or impulsiveness they bring about unjustified or even unnecessary damage or destruction. As has been noted, the objective universe is in a state of **natural equilibrium**, and any adjustment to it risks disrupting that equilibrium. Some adjustments are tolerable, and some are even beneficial. But some which seem positive at first glance may be harmful in a larger perspective, as in the extermination of "harmful" mountain lions which ultimately results in overpopulation and mass starvation of their natural prey.

The adept practitioner of LBM is thus not a crude predator; he is an adjustor, a manipulator, a meta-physician. He does not practice his art for petty egotism, but rather for the greater satisfaction which he derives in the experience and exercise of his wisdom - which as a by-product invariably satisfies whatever material goals he may deem appropriate to the situation. (#6D, #6I, #6K, #6R, #6S, #23)

A second non-natural approach to the objective universe is actually a simplified, directed application of Greater Black Magic (GBM) [see discussion below] towards the solving of problems or adjustment of situations in the objective universe. This special application, bridging the gap between GBM and LBM, is called **Medial Black Magic (MBM)**. It is discussed in Chapter #6.

The Natural Approach to the Subjective Universe

The atheistic natural/objectivist, as stated above, regards subjective impressions as unreal and unimportant save as escapist entertainment. This is the realm of science-fiction and fantasy writers, of escapist movies, of commercially-driven artists and musicians. Their litany - an invariable identifier - is that their work has no usefulness apart from the emotional pleasure it brings and such allegorical references as it makes to "realities" in the objective universe. The occasional writer, artist, philosopher, or

musician who refuses to disclaim the more “disturbing” aspects of his work as mere entertainment - as in the case of Wagner, Crowley, von Stroheim, Nietzsche - is liable to be dismissed as an eccentric at best or condemned as a madman at worst. **Profane society fears few things more than recognized genius which is not directed towards “safe, predetermined” goals.**

The religious natural/objectivist, who creates subjective experiences for himself to reinforce his sense of inclusion in the objective universe, accepts the reality of the subjective universe only insofar as his sensations of it provide that reinforcement. When they do not, they are labeled heresy, fantasy, or mental disease. Once again the determining factor is the relevant religious dogma, against which all subjective experiences are measured and evaluated.

The common factor in both natural/objectivist approaches to the subjective universe is that it is rigidly regarded as insubstantial, impotent, and unreal. It can thus be cynically endorsed and even cited as authority when convenient [as the more successful conventional religions have done]; and it can just as easily be ignored when inconvenient or unprofitable. It is a **plaything**. Except to the extent that they have fallen victim to their own artificially-induced delusions, religious leaders/white magicians comfortably ignore their “gods” whenever it suits their purposes to do so. Or, if in a position to “interpret” said gods, they do so with a calculated eye to their own comfort and advantage.

It is one of the great oddities of human civilization that such transparent frauds attract any adherents at all, much less world-wide followings. John Fowles has suggested that it results from mankind’s psychological starvation for mystery. “If no one will write new detective stories,” he observes, “then people will still read the old ones.” (#6I/*Aristos*)

The Non-Natural Approach to the Subjective Universe

The individual with a non-natural (“Satanic”) sense of self-awareness need not confront the subjective universe directly. He may be content to use it symbolically, as a device for emphasizing and formalizing his LBM goals. This was the approach of the vast majority of those who affiliated with the Church of Satan from 1966 to 1975 CE. Many of the Church’s most exotic - and seemingly literal - rituals are thus correctly understood as LBM psychodramas. As such they could be startlingly effective. What had begun as a somewhat tongue-in-cheek exercise in monster-movie theatrics and social satire evolved into an increasingly more focused search for the principles behind such effectiveness. It was this search which culminated in the metamorphosis of the Church of Satan into the Temple of Set in 1975 - minus those who were unable or unwilling to see past the original psychodramatic concept.

The theory and practice of non-natural interaction with the subjective universe is defined as **Greater Black Magic** (GBM). It involves first the exploration of one’s subjective universe, other subjective universes which may be involved, and relevant portions of the objective universe to their conceptual frontiers [if not limits]. There follows a precise, coherent, and deliberate focusing of the will of the creative self to

adjust features of the subjective universes (personal and others') to the desired state, which may or may not be "real" in the objective universe.

The concept of magic postulates that there is a tenuous "link" - generally referred to as the **Magical Link** - between the objective and subjective universes. Hence a change occurring in one will have at least a partially similar effect in the other.

It is easy to explain why the objective universe should influence the subjective one, but explaining the reverse influence is rather more difficult. It is the active application of the link conceptualized by Fichte, through which application the concentrated energies of the **ego** create "patterns" in the over-reaching mean essence, which patterns in turn create related, if not completely identical "patterns" in the **non-ego** part of the mental essence - which is that which defines and binds together the laws of consistency in the objective universe. [If you are intimidated by Fichte, go see the original *Star Wars* film and you'll get the general idea.]

GBM is difficult to conceptualize, difficult to master theoretically, and difficult to practice reliably - but it **does** work. It may take effect in greater or lesser degree, but in any given case it is virtually impossible to predict that degree.

The chances of success in a GBM working are presumably improved if one does not attempt too great a "distortion" in the laws of consistency of the objective universe, and if one applies extraordinary energy to the corresponding phenomena in the subjective one(s). One must also take advantage of every cooperative force in the objective universe to enhance the working, using GBM to "tip the balance" rather than do the whole job. Thus GBM is ideally supported by LBM, though the converse is not true. Anton LaVey referred to the consideration of peripheral factors in support of a GBM working as the **balance factor** in magic. (#6K)

Recently the term "Medial Black Magic" (MBM) has been introduced to describe GBM Workings of a very simple, directed design with the specific and exclusive purpose of influencing the objective universe. MBM workings have no effect on the subjective universe.

It is in the process of making the preliminary exploration of the subjective and objective universes that the Black Magician begins to discover and ultimately to know how things really work. He exists wholly in neither the subjective universe [like a mystic] nor the objective universe [like a materialist]. He regards neither one as a toy, nor denies it reality. He moves back and forth between the two with increasing ease and expertise, influencing the Magical Links between them and thus **causing change in accordance with his will**. (#6K, #9K)

In the process he becomes wise, but because he considers both universes when giving opinions, non-magicians may consider much of his wisdom as folly. It is not; it merely takes into account more dimensions of a particular problem than onlookers are able to see. A magician who accumulates extraordinary wisdom of this "mixed" type is said to possess **Understanding**.

One is taught to become expert in natural approaches to the objective universe through conventional education in the social and physical sciences, and in natural approaches to the subjective universe through the arts. The Church of Satan taught the theory and practice of LBM, and the Temple of Set adds to that the theory and practice

of GBM.

Just as education in natural approaches cannot guarantee that one will become competent in applying that education, so education in non-natural approaches cannot guarantee that one will become adept in their exercise. Many would-be magicians accumulate much “textbook learning”, yet prove unable to do anything with it. It may be because they don’t try to apply it, or because they don’t have the talent for it, or because they don’t have the intelligence to really understand it. The Temple of Set, as is the case with other ethical, initiatory institutions in history, teaches theory and Recognizes expertise in that theory. It cannot guarantee expertise in practice.

Comment to Chapter 4:
Setian Philosophy - Natural vs. Non-Natural Religion
- by Stephen Flowers V^o

We live in an age heavily influenced by the ideals of Romanticism. In this age to say that something is “natural” is to equate it with something “good, right, and moral” - so saith the Gospel According to the Cereal Box (a contemporary American icon). For the most part this emphasis on the natural has been a positive development, and has been used as the chief battering-ram against the edifices of monotheistic totalitarianism. But this can be considered only a provisional weapon in the fight to return to a more spiritual heritage. It seems that “Mother Nature” can be fairly easily substituted for “God the Father” - so easily, in fact, that we might suspect that “Mother Nature” is none other than “God the Father” in drag.

Before we go on, two important concepts must be defined and their synonyms explained. **Natural** indicates that which is the product of regularly-occurring organic or mechanical processes in the objective universe. It might be worth pointing out that the word **natur-al** is derived from the past participle of the Latin verb *nasci* (to be born).⁴² So too are all of the words using this stem, i.e. **nat-ion** (people sharing ancestors). All of these originally have to do with organic or physical relationships.

Many systems of thought have had no trouble distinguishing between the natural and the non-natural. The ancient Greeks knew well the difference between *physis* (nature) and *psyche* (spirit). Modern German academic faculties have no problem drawing the distinction between the Natural Sciences and the Intellectual Sciences (which we call the “Humanities”).

The Right-Hand Path (RHP) essentially teaches that these two categories are illusions, and that in reality the two are identical. Its solution is to subordinate the “illusion” of self-awareness, of the *psyche*, to the “reality” of God, Nature, or whatever.

The Left-Hand Path (LHP) solution is simpler. It teaches that the two categories we are capable of perceiving as being distinct are in fact just that. The distinction is the result of the existence of the principle of isolate consciousness within the Universe, and the presence of the Gift of that Intelligence within individual members of the human species. The LHP solution is then to cultivate and nurture this intelligence as a separate and unique quality, that it may *Xeper*. *Xeper* leads to individually-determined freedom.

In the history of religion and philosophy, we have seen many examples of how natural and non-natural systems can harmoniously interact with one another. In Japan, for example, we see how the native or ancestral religion of Shinto has been supplemented by the introduction of the sometimes non-natural [and certainly non-native] Buddhism. The typical Japanese is today both Shinto and Buddhist. Each system fulfills a special function in the religious life, and provides a special set of religious options to the modern Japanese. Shinto puts a person in touch with the collective, eternal life-force and vitality coursing through the nation, while Buddhism provides a method of individual enlightenment - which may emerge on either the RHP or the LHP.

The same thing can be seen in the philosophy of Plato. He did not think that all people should be trained in the fashion of his Philosopher-Kings. The traditions of the belief in the gods and goddesses of the Hellenic civilization were to be cultivated and continued; but beyond this there was to be a system of philosophical inquiry and enlightenment of the self based on direct knowledge of the objective Forms (*næsis*). This *næsis*, however, is a non-natural step for humans to take.

Both natural and non-natural religions or philosophical systems can and do coexist in single cultures or societies. Each supports the other. This achieves the Platonic ideal of a whole and evolving society.

⁴² And, apparently, further back from the ancient Egyptian *neter* (a **Form** or **First Principle** = a “god” or “goddess” of the Universal existence). - M. Aquino

Such coexistence is not possible in a truly Christian world. Christianity reduces the non-natural to a natural or organic/mechanical model [whether Christians appreciate this or not], and falsely elevates that model to the level of “super-nature”.⁴³ There is really nothing “super-natural” about Yahweh; he is, as the Gnostics well knew, merely a personification of the natural/organic laws.

Natural religious systems are most effective for organizing and maintaining natural structures in society, in the objective universe, and within those segments of the subjective universe of the believer which still may be dependent on organic models. On the other hand, non-natural systems are most effective for the understanding and conscious development of the Self, which in turn may have an effect on the subjective and objective universes themselves.

These are the most effective uses of the two systems. But as Black Magicians we must always return to the agent of any usage - to the user - for our ultimate perspective.

The philosophy of the Temple of Set is not a natural religion; it is essentially a non-natural one. It is perhaps the most sophisticated and self-conscious exponent of this point of view that history has yet seen.

When outsiders hear of some of the “non-natural” rhetoric employed in Setian discourse, they sometimes think that Setians advocate the wanton destruction of nature. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just because Setians are capable of going beyond nature does not imply that we find it useless or in any way hateful.

Just because a person is capable of thought does not mean that he or she will cease such natural activities as feeling, eating, or having sex. The individual, however, may turn these activities into thought-provoking experiences. In transforming natural functions into spiritual experiences, humans exercise their non-natural prerogative to go beyond the bounds of organic existence. In going beyond the bounds of nature, the human does not come merely to understand divinity, but rather to exercise it. That is the aim of non-natural religion.

⁴³ According to Thomas Aquinas, *natural law* embraces all universal phenomena, humanity included, save for revealed instructions of God to the human consciousness (*divine law*). Only God himself was, as the source of *eternal law*, exempt from these “proclaimed” ordering of things. The self-consciousness of mankind, to the extent that it obeys the *divine* and *natural law* of God in the issuance of human law, is dutiful and acceptable. The presumption of that self-consciousness to the prerogatives of *eternal law* itself - as the Black Magician does - is “sinful” - the “crime” of Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden, as it were. - M. Aquino

CHAPTER 5: LESSER BLACK MAGIC

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.

LBM is an **impelling** (encouraging, convincing, increasing of probability) measure, not a **compelling** (forcing, making inevitable) one. The object is to make something happen without expending the time and energy to make it happen through direct cause-and-effect.

In order to receive celebrity treatment in society, for example, one may work for many years to become a genuine celebrity. On the other hand, one may simply represent oneself outwardly as a celebrity, behave correspondingly, and receive much the same deference. One risks being exposed and embarrassed, but such risk is small if the magician is skilled in his assumed character. (#23F)

All LBM is a variation on this basic theme. It involves everything from simple tricks of misdirection to extremely subtle and complex manipulation of psychological factors in the human personality. While it requires less time and effort **in application** than overt, direct methods, it is more intellectually demanding and requires extensive practice.

In addition to their basic personalities and logical thought processes, all persons have likes, dislikes, fetishes, strengths, weaknesses, and emotional emphases. These are broadcast through direct communication, habits, dress, style of life, career patterns, choice of friends, and the like. In normal social or business contact, one usually sees only the “tip of the iceberg” of this character makeup. This is because individuals in modern society are accustomed to project and display only those parts of their characters which they feel are advantageous in a given situation. (#13D)

The magician, like Sherlock Holmes, must habitually look for clues to the rest of the iceberg - if possible without the subject’s being aware of this. If the subject realizes that what Wilhelm Reich called his “character armor” is being probed and penetrated, he will react with distrust, annoyance, and antagonism. (#19T)

The purpose of such an analysis is not necessarily to deceive or exploit the subject. Most often it is simply to gain a better picture of him or her, so that subsequent dialogue and encounters can be more fruitful and comfortable for both parties. It is often remarked that the company of a magician is stimulating and pleasing. Much of this is due to the magician’s automatic, almost subconscious tailoring of his mannerisms to a style most effective in a particular situation.

The philosophers Gurdjieff and Ouspensky were fond of saying that most people spend their lives “asleep” - meaning that they are content to allow their behavior to be governed by instinctive or logical reactions to external stimuli. (#19B) As you undertake to look beyond surface impressions of individuals, you will probably be surprised - and even dismayed - at how applicable this reproach has been to your own life-style.

As you attempt to form more perfect pictures of people and events around you, and as you begin to resist a life of merely reacting to stimuli, you will find that you “wake up”. To be “awake” in this sense is to be in a condition of stress, since you will be making deliberate decisions about many things which you previously dealt with semi-consciously [hence semi-intelligently]. You will be able to sustain this level of mental activity and concentration for only brief periods of time. It is not necessary for you to irritate and exhaust yourself by trying to extend those periods. Rather keep the ability to “awake” close at hand, ready to summon when appropriate.

In addition to self-determined personality traits, human beings are influenced by a variety of physical factors of which they are generally unaware. If the magician is aware of them, he is in a position to take them into account when assessing a subject’s present or probable future behavior. (#19, #20E, #22L)

This process of investigating the conscious and subconscious factors governing a subject’s behavior is neither quick nor easy. To be done correctly, it requires careful research (which may prove difficult and be regarded as an invasion of privacy) as well as an acquired expertise on the part of the magician to interpret the results carefully and objectively. Because of time and resource limitations, the magician must usually settle for something less than a complete picture. The more incomplete the picture, of course, the more margin for error in the emergent picture.

The distinction between LBM and merely being a good amateur psychologist is that the magician is specifically interested in behavior determinants which are obscure and consciously unknown to the subject. The magician’s object is to assess the individual without it being apparent that he is “practicing psychology” on him. The result is frequently that the deductions and consequent actions of the magician appear mysterious and even supernatural.

The best illustration of this - as well as an excellent way to gain practice in LBM [and enjoy doing so ... and run minimum risk of offending test subjects] is stage magic. (#23A-D) The stage magician must assess his audience, guide their attention unsuspectingly in certain controlled directions, and accomplish seemingly impossible things right in front of their eyes. Some stage magic depends upon slight-of-hand, some upon trick props; but all of it depends upon the magician’s developing the skill of manipulating obscure tendencies in onlookers’ behavior. [It can even be done through the medium of the printed page. To get the saliva going in your mouth, all I need do is ask you to think for a moment about a very bitter, juicy lemon ... which you can taste in your mouth ...]

One of the more exacting types of stage magic is **mentalism**, wherein the magician creates the illusion that he can read minds, predict behavior, and determine subjects’ choices. The most impressive mentalist routines require rigorous training in memory and other mental gymnastics on the part of the magician. Mentalism is the most mysterious and “occult” field of stage magic, and its techniques are most adaptable to LBM in general, so its study is particularly recommended to you. [Do not scratch your left ear during the next five minutes, or you will run a serious risk of tripping over something in the next 24 hours.]

Books and materials dealing with stage magic and mentalism are available in magic shops [as opposed to “occult” shops]. If you live in an area where there doesn’t seem to be such a shop at all, consider a search on the Internet. Most magic shops have mail-order catalogues and capabilities.

Professional stage magicians emphasize that they are entertainers, and their acts are usually accented with comedy, props, and “patter” to reinforce this image. This sets the audience at ease by allowing it to feel superior to the magician; he becomes a “court jester”. Aficionados of “serious” occultism generally shy away from stage magic because (a) they are afraid to appear comical, and (b) they fear that their “true” occult accomplishments will be written off as tricks by those on whose awe they psychologically depend.

The Black Magician should not make this mistake. Stage magic, in addition to being good training and good fun, is extremely useful in LBM operations. In such circumstances, of course, the tinsel, patter, and props are absent; the magician deliberately sets out to impress the subject with something he will regard as “supernatural”. When stage magic is **not** presented in the context of entertainment, it can be quite impressive and even frightening.

Use of the Tarot for fortune-telling purposes is a good example of this. The Black Magician regards the Tarot, as he does everything else in magic, as a mere tool - a mirror to reflect aspects of his own mind and the minds of others. He attributes no intrinsic powers to it at all. When he uses it to “tell fortunes” or “read omens” for others, he never trusts blindly in the cards to reveal anything. Rather he decides beforehand what he wishes to tell the subject [and why], then causes specific cards to appear ... or causes the subject to “freely” choose one or more particular cards ... or, if he doesn’t want to bother with slight-of-hand or “card forces”, merely “interprets” whatever cards do appear as he desires. It should be easy for you to see that the “pick a card” technique of the stage magic entertainer is disarming and amusing, while the same trickery applied to a Tarot reading can be mysterious and impressive.

To the extent that you become known as a Black Magician, people will want to see you “do magic”. Most of them have no truly legitimate reason for this; they just want to be entertained. They would probably find the actual experience of GBM mystifying, perhaps extremely frightening, perhaps dull - certainly not comprehensible to a bystander with only a casual interest. Assuming that you want to accommodate such persons at all, you will save yourself a good deal of trouble, time, and annoyance by treating them to some stage magic suitably disguised as “the Black Arts”. Your audience will have a better time - and so will you!

So far we have discussed LBM on an individual or small-group basis. It is also a useful technique in mass situations. The governing principle remains the same: to impel behavior at the subconscious level, to control people without their realizing how or why they are being controlled. LBM applied to the mass falls under the twin headings of **politics** and **propaganda**. If you find this disappointingly self-evident, don’t go ahead to the next chapter quite so fast. **The only difference between politics and stage magic is one of scale**. There are certain things you are intended to see, say, and do; and the politician’s actions are planned and carried out accordingly. Rarely will the

apparent rationale be the real one.

Propaganda is the use of political techniques for a variety of behavior-control objectives besides those normally associated with “politics”. The content of the propaganda can be true or false, and the apparent origin of the propaganda can be true or false, and the propaganda can be beneficially intended just as easily as it can be nefariously intended. High school presentations to frighten youngsters away from venereal disease exposure are propaganda, every bit as much as the infamous “brain washing” techniques of the North Koreans.

Modern society is engulfed by power-seeking disguised as altruistic politics, and by propaganda disguised as information. There is no exception, just as there is no free lunch. This is so important that I will repeat it: **There is no exception, just as there is no free lunch.** (#23E, #23G) The point to be taken is not that you should become paranoid and antisocial. The point is rather that you should accustom yourself to looking for actual motives and purposes behind the presented ones. Hence you will be able to make your own decisions based on your position relative to the actual motives and purposes. It is really that simple, and it is not hard to do. [Once you develop the habit of doing this, you will be astonished at how easily you used to be led around by the nose!]

The major political motives, ideas, and ideologies of Western society are dissected for you in #14P and throughout category #16. #19L and #19P will expose you to basic propaganda theory. By all means pursue advanced research in either topic as time and interest move you.

Ethics in the Use of Black Magic

As you become adept in LBM, you will be tempted to use it for all manner of personal gratification. The more skilled you are, the more you will be inclined to think that you can get away with almost anything. The governing factor is not whether you can or can't, but rather whether your consciously-determined ethics allow you to.

As you begin to direct your life independently of morals, codes, and customs imposed upon you by the politics and propaganda of society, you will have to assume the responsibility for your own ethics. **Only if you are known to be a strictly ethical individual will your rejection of social norms be tolerated.** Otherwise you will be ostracized and probably persecuted by society. If it cannot be sure of controlling you, it will tend not to trust you to control yourself intelligently unless you make it very clear that you can do precisely that. In that case society will tend not only to tolerate you, but even to respect and admire you for the unique, creative being that you are. The following section discusses ethics in greater detail.

Before one can consider the proper place of ethics in Setian behavior, “ethics” as a term must be raised from a vague sentiment to something more concrete. It is, unfortunately, one of those terms whose elusiveness has made it all too susceptible to casual and cursory use. “He’s an ethical person,” we say - and leave it at that. What **are** ethics? How can we identify them, and how should we judge them?

Ethics, alternatively called **moral philosophy**, seeks to distinguish what is good from what is bad and to formulate justifiable reasons for making such distinctions.

As a branch of philosophy, ethics is a **normative** science; that is, it seeks to identify principles of good and evil that transcend social, cultural, or political convention (social contract theory).

Beyond a merely normative approach to ethics is **metaethics**, which seeks to investigate normative currency-terms such as “good”, “evil”, “justice”, “ought”, “right”, and “wrong”. The neutrality and objectivity of metaethics depend on the assumption that such terms are not dependent upon moral beliefs (such as religion). The metaethical concept of **naturalism**, advanced by theorists such as John Dewey and Herbert Spencer posits that moral terms have a basis in scientific fact. **Intuitionists** agree that moral terms have an external, reliable basis, but attribute it to self-evident (“I know it when I see it”) qualities.

Challenging intuitionists and naturalists are **moral skepticists** who insist that moral terms are completely arbitrary. **Emotivists** claim that such terms have no capacity for being true or false in themselves, and that the people who use them are simply stating their emotions about an issue. **Subjectivists** maintain that moral judgments state subjective facts only about attitudes, not the objects of those attitudes. And **Imperativists** insist that moral judgments are actually “commands” in another guise, hence do not focus at all on criteria of truth or objectivity.

When even its basic language terms are so fraught with controversy, normative ethics is off to a rough start. Beyond this are arguments over the criteria for making any kind of moral judgment. **Teleologists** maintain that the morality of an action is determined solely by its consequences. Some teleologists, such as Plato, insist that the perfection of the self is the correct consequence; hedonists say that it is mere pleasure; utilitarians counter that it must be the greatest benefit to society. **Theologians**, such as Aquinas, Luther, et al., dispense with teleology altogether in favor of obedience to proclaimed or perceived morality from a God or gods.

The sharpest attack on ethics generally comes from **egoists** such as Thomas Hobbes and Friedrich Nietzsche (cf. his *Genealogy of Morals*) [and Ragnar Redbeard!], who consider all ethics as verbal camouflage to conceal the reality that all actions are merely in the interest of the stronger (who by that same strength dictates all definitions of “justice”, “right”, etc.). The egoist position was represented in the Platonic Dialogue *The Republic* by Glaucon, and went on to form the basis for Enlightenment “social contract” theories (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau), wherein “justice” and related terms became simply (!) matters of agreement and contract between the people of a society.

Accordingly it is not surprising that practical problem-solvers shy away from metaethical issues and try rather to address questions in terms of what are generally called **descriptive ethics** - the customs and standards of a given culture which serve as measurements of rightness and wrongness within that culture. An acceptance of descriptive ethics as ethics leads to an attitude of **ethical relativism**, according to which there is no standard for judging right and wrong apart from the cultural environment of specific situations. Hence the killing of humans by humans may be “ethical” if sanctioned by a judge or national sovereign, but the identical act may be

“unethical” if undertaken by an individual, regardless of reasons.

Until the Enlightenment of the late-17th and 18th centuries, ethical philosophy was completely metaethical; standards of good and evil were accepted as being prescribed by one or more divinities or divine principles (*neteru*, Forms). It was humanity’s task not to determine ethics, but rather to understand and obey divinely-ordained ethics.

The ancient Egyptians perceived the Universe as actively controlled by conscious, natural principles or “gods” (*neteru* in hieroglyphic). To the Egyptians, all of “nature” (derived from *neteru*) was alive and the direct consequence of the wills of the *neteru*. Nature was intelligible not just through inanimate, automatic, general regularities which could be discovered via observation, but also through **connections and associations between things and events perceived in the human mind**. There was no distinction between “reality” and “appearance”; anything capable of exerting an effect upon the mind thereby existed. Justice and virtue were sought in manifestations of beauty, symmetry, and harmony, and were personified by the goddess Ma’at.

In contrast to the Egyptian view of humanity as being a harmonious component of nature - symbolized by the pharaoh’s position as half-divine deputy of the *neteru* - ancient Mesopotamian tradition posited humanity as something estranged from the gods. Virtue in Mesopotamia was thus understood as obedience to the willful desires of the god(s), not harmony with their natural principles. Mesopotamian kings sought the “right ruling” of their communities in accordance with the Akkadian principle of *shulmu* (later the Hebrew *shalom*), a term meaning not just “peace” but the community well-being that engenders peace. In the Hebraic system, God is not intelligible through reason or logic, but rather through prophecy and the history of events, whether or not the events’ outcomes seem situationally appropriate (**theodicy**). The Hebraic presumption of a “covenant” between mankind and a divinity reflected the notion that mankind is given a “mission” and/or a “destiny”, and that virtue lies in the fulfillment of that mission/destiny - whether or not it is aesthetically palatable or even understandable. Herein lie the roots of a certain kind of “outcome-justified” thinking that is prevalent in modern culture.

The ethics of Plato reflect his commitment to **teleology**, the doctrine that purpose and design are apparent in nature, and that natural phenomena move inexorably towards certain goals of ultimate self-realization. [The opposite of teleology is **mechanism**, which describes phenomena in terms of **prior causes** rather than presumed destination or fulfillment. Modern science is thus mechanistic.]

In his *Dialogues* Plato, through the character of Socrates, endorsed the Egyptian and Pythagorean model of human virtue as a particularization of Universal principles (an application of his famous “Theory of the Forms”). Such Forms or principles could be apprehended through rigorous exercise of the higher faculties of reason (*dianoia*), leading to an intuitional or *nætic* apprehension of the good - and a simultaneous veneration of it for its own sake. This process Plato referred to as the *dialectic*, meaning self-teaching through the examination and refutation of logically- or factually-imperfect concepts.

In Plato’s *Republic* Socrates is unable to directly refute Glaucon’s egoist charge that justice is merely a rationalization for the prevailing of the interests of the stronger.

Socrates can only suggest, through the analogy of a perfectly-harmonious “republic”, that it is more natural for a man to be just if his psyche is healthy and each part is doing its proper work. The virtuous state is held up as “the *psyche* writ large”.

Aristotle, the most famous of the early mechanists, laid the groundwork for situational ethics by denying that virtue, truth, beauty, and the other Pythagorean/Platonic Forms existed in an absolute sense. Such values, as they applied to humanity, were rather to be sought in moderation between unacceptable extremes in specific situations: Aristotle’s doctrine of the “golden mean”.

Until this point in human history, ethics and politics were inseparable; the individual’s good and the community’s good had to be pursued together; there was no such thing as “personal ethics within an unethical state”, nor “an ethical state comprised of unethical citizens”. The sins of Œdipus necessitated not only his blinding but his exile, and Socrates’ challenge to the harmony of Athens was considered sufficient grounds to condemn him to death. Socrates himself acknowledged this principle, accepting his execution as a “cure” of his function as a kind of social “illness” - albeit one whose impact would ultimately strengthen the Athenian political culture.

In the Hellenistic era - the period following the conquests of Alexander the Great - ancient mankind lost its innocence. Elaborate philosophical systems dependent upon specific cultural deities were discredited when other cultures with different philosophies and different gods were seen to be doing just as well - and perhaps better. Materialism was the order of the day, and the power of ethics to influence society was denied by the **Cynics** and **Skeptics**. If virtue had any place in human affairs, it was in one’s personal conduct. **Epicureanism** held that virtue could be found in the happiness of the soul, and that such happiness was to be pursued by disassociating oneself from the corruption of society. **Stoicism** also despaired of social ethics, but insisted that personal ethics were to be pursued by one’s labors within the social fabric rather than apart from it.

The importance of Stoicism to the subsequent path of Western civilization can scarcely be overemphasized. Stoics, like Aristotle, sought validation of knowledge in sense-experience rather than through abstract logic or intuition. A wise man, said the Stoics, can distinguish reliable impressions (*kataleptika phantasia* = “grasping impressions”) from ethereal ones. Humanity is integral with nature; virtue is to be found in reason-based endurance of the natural flux. Thus if evil comes to the good man, it is only temporary and not really evil, since in the greater sense it is natural. The Stoic thus accepts the fortunes and misfortunes of life calmly, seeking to avoid passionate loss of objectivity. The Stoics’ ideal was a gradually-evolving “world society” (*cosmopolis*) transcending geographic and cultural divisions.

Stoicism was the primary ethical force in the Roman Republic and Empire, and it is not surprising to find its core principles adopted by early Christianity. Augustine’s doctrine of the “two cities” reflected the Stoic notion of a virtuous soul co-existing with a flawed social system. By the medieval era, the “two cities” had been refined into Thomas Aquinas’ “hierarchy of laws”, with social and political “human law” placed firmly beneath [church-] revealed “divine law” and Stoic-derived “natural law”. The contradictions and corruptions of such a climate spawned Machiavelli.

Niccolo Machiavelli (after whom the Devil began to be called “Old Nick”) sought to prescribe wise conduct (*virtu*) for Italian princes faced with unavoidable problems (*necessita*) brought about by factors beyond their control (*fortuna*). Contrary to his church-propagandized image, Machiavelli was constantly and intensely concerned with the establishment of the ethical society, and his manipulative techniques were justified in his eyes by the “best political results under the circumstances” that he expected as the eventual outcome. **Precisely** quoted, the famous passage from Chapter #18 of *The Prince* reads:

In the actions of all men, and especially of princes who are not subject to a court of appeal, we must always look to the end.

While Machiavelli advocated the tacit manipulation of society for deliberate [and ultimately virtuous] ends, early Protestant theorists such as Martin Luther and John Calvin regarded ethics as being beyond the rational reach of mankind. The basis for ethical behavior, they said, is that a righteous man will automatically incline towards such behavior, not because it is logically or empirically justified in itself. Salvation (=attainment of righteousness) is attainable only through the complete surrender of oneself to Christ. This constituted a rejection of medieval scholasticism, and of the “logical ethics” arguments of Aristotle (whom Luther called “this damned, conceited, rascally heathen”) and Aquinas. The impact of the Protestant Reformation was to remove the rational basis and responsibility for either personal or social ethics, replacing these with the notion of ethics as a suprarational article of religious faith - to be selectively invoked by spokesmen for that religion.

With the social-contract theorists of the 17th- and 18th-century “Enlightenment” came a renaissance of reason - including as the negotiated basis for ethics. Thomas Hobbes, after Glaucon, denied the religious tenet of a “supreme good”, seeing in its place only material self-interest and gratification. Hobbes’ prescribed social contract was thus a negative one, establishing an atmosphere of truce between citizens who would otherwise savage one another mercilessly. Such a contemptuous view of humanity evolved forward into many “lower” ideologies of contemporary society, most conspicuously communism. “Hobbes,” Karl Marx is said to have muttered, “is the father of us all.” It should be pointed out, however, that Hobbes’ reputation for harshness came not from personal preference, but rather from a coldly practical analysis of what makes human beings behave unpleasantly towards one another. Previously “evil” had been excused as a theological force, or as the result of “original sin”, i.e. something for which rational individuals could not be held exclusively responsible. Hobbes denied such excuses.

In contrast to Hobbes, John Locke suggested that social-contract nations could exist on a **positively cooperative** basis of mutual interest. It is important to note that Locke’s prescription was based not on idealistic abstractions (such as ethics), but rather on attainable material objectives: “life, liberty, and estate”. Like Hobbes, he sought to design a society reflecting “basic man” rather than one espousing unattainable ideals and expectations. Locke’s positively-cooperative assumptions and prescription for

limited government based upon majority rule formed the philosophical basis for the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution, to include the latter's Bill of Rights [against the government]. Locke recommended a "reasonable Christianity" - a faith which, while satisfying personal religious desires, would play only a symbolic and ceremonial role in political decision-making.

The history of social-contract ethics does not cease with John Locke, but his ideas, as immortalized in the aforementioned documents, ordained the ethical atmosphere of United States political culture, in which the Temple of Set is principally based, to the present day. This atmosphere may be summarized in five general maxims:

- (1) Government based on law is a positive institution, not something to be eliminated in an ideal society.
- (2) Good government is a construct of the people and is responsible to them (social contract theory), not to a higher religion, destiny, or ideology.
- (3) The will of the people is best ascertained through the opinion of the majority, which thus determines "political truth". [It is precisely because there is no authority superior to such majority opinion that Locke placed certain "inalienable rights" of all humanity beyond the reach of government.]
- (4) As society is based upon cooperative self-interest, so the attractions of such self-interest - for example, private property - must be preserved and enhanced as beneficial and indeed vital features of that society.
- (5) There is an intrinsic dignity in the individual human life which must be accepted and respected as an article of faith.

To the Lockean frame of mind, these values are, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, "held to be self-evident"; they are beyond debate, beyond compromise. Nevertheless many other cultures do not accept them in whole or part - and **do not necessarily see this as a deficiency** in their social structures.

As the United States aged sufficiently to develop a sense of and regard for its own history, "pure" Lockean theory became leavened with a measure of ethical **conservatism**: an acceptance of certain things as "good" simply because they have continued to be tolerated over an extended period of time.

Conservatism was elevated to a deliberate ethical philosophy by David Hume, who defined the morally good as what one **ought** to do according to prevailing passionate custom. Hume denied that the good could be ascertained by dispassionate reasoning. Reason, he said, is useful only to discover the most practical or sensible approaches to problems. Hence virtue and vice are products of **sentiment**. Virtue is not approved because it is "intrinsically virtue"; it is considered to be virtue because it meets with passionate approval.

The point of this brief tour through certain key concepts in the evolution of ethics is simply to show clearly what all too many people perceive only dimly and imprecisely - how the United States has developed its "official ethics". If this background is **not**

understood, Setians cannot clearly understand why certain ethical norms are expected in this country - or understand why some foreign cultures “mysteriously/unreasonably” reject those norms ... often on what **they** consider to be ethical grounds!

The science of ethics is not peripheral or incidental to the Temple of Set; it is **central** to it. Whether people hold a certain opinion or behave in a certain way is critically influenced by whether or not they believe themselves **justified** in so doing. Once “rightness” or “wrongness” is established, specific LBM Workings will be interpreted accordingly. In order to be effective, a magician must first **recognize** and **consciously appreciate** the ethical components of his designs that are particular to their cultural point of origin.

Earlier in this chapter it was demonstrated that Western civilization’s efforts to apprehend “truth” - and to answer the integral question of whether “truth” and “the good” are inseparable - have been arduous and frustrating. The United States emerged at a moment in history - the Enlightenment - when reason reigned supreme, and so the values of the Enlightenment’s most optimistic and practical political philosopher, John Locke, were incorporated into our Constitution.

Lockean values have served us reasonably well these past two centuries, but what of those countries who have “worshipped strange gods”? What do they know of “the good”, and in what respect - if any - do they hold “the truth”?

The principal social contract theorists - Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau - viewed the state as a **man-made** construct, justifiable only as it might serve the interests of its citizens. The first of the two great challenges to this preeminence of the individual came from Georg W.F. Hegel, who insisted that the state is **prior to man**.

Hegel conceived of the Universe as the manifestation of God’s mind seeking complete self-realization through a process called **dialectic idealism**. As applied to our particular planet, it is the concept that the history of the world consists of part of the spirit of God, manifesting itself through the collective spirits of mankind, moving onwards through logic (the dialectic) towards completion. An existing idea (thesis) is criticized and partially refuted by its opposite (antithesis), resulting in a more perfect product (synthesis). Hegel felt the **organic state** to be the manifestation or reflection of the dialectic of God’s mind in the world. Accordingly it might well proceed in ways and towards goals which are not necessarily the sum total of the ways and goals of the individual human minds within it.

The task of national leaders, according to Hegel, is thus to apprehend the “spirit of the state” (*Volksggeist*) and to make their decisions in support of its furtherment rather than for the citizens who may chance to populate it at a given point in time. The Enlightenment values of individualism and rights against a government were considered by Hegel to **limit** freedom: Since they reduce the scope and power of the whole, they serve to limit possibility.

Hegel plus a heavy dose of 19th-century Wagnerian **Romanticism** pointed the way to the state-cults of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Germany in particular sought to displace the sense of life-consciousness from the individual human being to the state. Most Germans were able to achieve this only in a mundane sense - in a kind of ecstatic selflessness created and sustained by propaganda. But the “monk-knights” of the pre-

war SS could disdain, even willingly embrace the death of the individual human body according to the doctrine that disciplined personal consciousness could be transferred to a larger life-form - that of the Hegelian state - and that individual sacrifice towards the strengthening of that life-form would actually contribute towards one's greater immortality. In a very real way incomprehensible to the mundane mind, therefore, all of the individual-death references in the SS - such as the *Totenkopf* insignia and ritual pledges of "faithfulness unto death" - were in fact arrogant affirmations of immortality. To Dr. Rauschning Hitler remarked:

To the Christian doctrine of the infinite significance of the individual human soul and of personal responsibility, I oppose with icy clarity the saving doctrine of the nothingness and insignificance of the individual human being, and of his continued existence in the visible immortality of the nation. The dogma of vicarious suffering and death through a divine savior gives place to that of the representative living and acting of the new Leader-legislator, which liberates the mass of the faithful from the burden of free will.

Both National Socialism and Fascism are now episodes in history, but the principle which underlay their phenomenal power and impact - the organic state as prior to its citizens - remains very much a force in the contemporary international environment.

In the United States, social and political truth is arrived at via the methods specified in the Constitution, all of which are based on some combination of direct or representative voting. Our national perception of truth is thus democratic - an approach which John Locke would consider eminently reasonable, but one which would affront Plato and Hegel. To them, truth was/is an **absolute principle** - not something to be determined by whim, much less by the masses. Plato held that truth could be attained through the dialectic of human philosophical enquiry; Hegel insisted that only God could consciously employ such a dialectic, and that the most humanity could hope for was to sense its reflection through the dynamics of the state.

What is it we see when we look at the many "democracies" and "republics" of the world and perceive them to be behaving not as vehicles for the benefit of their individual citizens, but rather as cultural amœbæ of ethnocentric, even xenophobic passion which contemptuously sweep aside appeals to reason? A few are relics of ancient theocratic systems, but most have shed this worn-out skin only to regenerate it under the guise of the *Volksgeist*.

One may indeed communicate with the citizens of such cultures as individuals, but to influence the culture as a whole one may not appeal just to the citizens' individual desires. Rather one must speak to the interest of whatever it is that they perceive their "national spirit" to be. To seek to "Westernize" it - to alter citizens' conception of the state into a social-contract model - is to attack not a set of rational opinions, but an **article of faith** which is perceived to be the very fountain of truth and ethics.

The second great challenge to social-contract individualism came, of course, from Karl Marx. Marx was strongly influenced by Hegel, but believed that Hegel had made a fundamental mistake in using **nations** as the basis for his dialectic and in relating it to a divine manifestation or purpose. Marx considered the dialectic to be a function of

economic struggle between social classes, and he denied the existence of any supernatural intelligence, calling all religion “the opiate of the masses”.

Marxism, sometimes called **dialectic materialism** to distinguish it from the dialectic idealism of Hegel, is a theory of socialism that identifies class struggle as the fundamental force in history. Increasing concentration of industrial control in the capitalist class and the consequent intensification of class antagonisms and of misery among the workers will lead to a revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat and the subsequent establishment of a classless, utopian society.

Marx, like Hegel, premised his ideas on a **necessary, inevitable process of history**. Thus communism would eventually come to pass, no matter what capitalism tries to do to stop it. The other side of this coin is that there is nothing Marxists can do to speed it up; their society must first evolve to the “last stages” of decadent capitalism. This didn’t suit V.I. Lenin, who wanted to accelerate evolution a little. His prescription for doing so was the so-called “dictatorship of the proletariat”, under which a communist elite would force-march the masses towards their eventual paradise. The state apparatus would then “wither away”.

As in the case of Hegelian state-preeminence, communism cannot simply be challenged or refuted by appeals to individual self-interest. To a serious Marxist, history is again moved by far greater forces than the wills of individuals who may chance to inhabit it at a given point in time. Marxist states view the advanced capitalist cultures as social bombs collectively approaching critical mass; their desire is accordingly to avoid being caught up in the desperate external adventurism, including apocalyptic warfare, which they expect deteriorating capitalist nations to employ in an effort to stave off their inevitable communist revolutions.

Communism [to use the label by which modern Marxism is generally known] incorporates two attitudes towards the truth. The “greater truth” - the materialist dialectic - is considered to be absolute, and adherence to it is once again supra-rational: an **article of faith**. Why an article of faith? Because the people, if given the sole power to determine the government, might revolt against it again - particularly if it is not [as per Locke] designed to facilitate their pursuit of personal interests. The option of further revolution must therefore be removed - by representing the Communist Party as the “priesthood” of a “god” higher than that of the people themselves. In service to this “god”, lesser ethical issues are unimportant - and indeed heretical if they confuse or inhibit the greater truth.

When capitalists seek to “reason” with communists, they fail to realize that they are regarded as ignorant, corrupt, or deluded **by their very inability to see and accept the “great truth”**. A sincere communist does not reason with such an opponent any more than with a child; he seeks rather to placate, deceive, or otherwise control him.

To communicate with a communist theoretician is thus a difficult task. One must first establish basic rapport by displaying an understanding of, if not an agreement with Marxist theory. Immediate goals of mutual interest may then be pursued jointly insofar as they do not intrude into ideological realms where the communist’s position must necessarily rigidify.

A curious and paradoxical picture emerges from this examination of communist vs. capitalist ethics. In the West we are accustomed to regard the United States as a religious society, and to condemn communism for its “godlessness”. In communist countries theorists disdain Western adherence to religion and take pride in communism’s “state atheism”. But is this picture borne out in practice?

Locke advocated a national structure in which supreme wisdom lay in the will of the citizenry and in which organized religion played only a symbolic and ceremonial role: in his words a “reasonable Christianity”. Our governments have since approached our national and international problems under the presumption that **the free will of the human beings directly involved will order the course of events**. This is vintage Enlightenment-thinking, and to date the United States has seen no reason to subordinate it to any “higher authority”. In terms of its political decision-making processes, the United States behaves **atheistically**.

On the other hand, communist leaders do **not** consider themselves able to control or influence the passage of events as free agents. They may make minor adjustments here and there, but the basic course of the future is above and beyond their control, locked in place according to Marx’ principles of historic determinism. Like the ancient Mesopotamians, they perceive themselves as the incidental tools of a “god” - whose name just happens to be Dialectic Materialism instead of Baal or Marduk. In terms of its political decision-making processes, communism behaves **theistically**.

Where ethics are concerned, therefore, capitalism holds itself fully responsible for its own, while communism considers any and all “minor” ethical abuses automatically justified if in service of its “god”. This is a very crucial point - and it explains why the United States goes through such persistent agonies of self-criticism while communist countries such as China and the late Soviet Union shrug off far more horrendous excesses.

[At the conclusion of the 20th Century CE, the Soviet Union dissolved into constituent quasi-capitalist states. Communism as a political and economic phenomenon has revealed its fragility. It will be interesting to see what happens to communism as a “religion”.]

The Black Magician contemplating a particular LBM working must therefore determine not only whether that working will be ethical in his eyes, but also ethical according to the cultural mind-sets of all other parties to the working: participants, objects, catalysts, witnesses. To label a working “good” or “evil” by some knee-jerk, propagandistic formula is entirely inadequate. [Formula “good/evil” values are merely appropriate for the profane masses, who can’t - and don’t want to - understand anything more precise.]

There is thus no easy answer to the question of whether a given magical act is “good” or “evil”. In itself it is ethically neutral. As Machiavelli so clearly observed, it is the **result it produces** which will be judged - and then it is up to the magician to determine what judgments - by which judges - will be important. Successfully conducted, such an assessment will not only reinforce the success of a given working; it will also ensure that the magician correctly anticipates the **actual** consequences of its immediate results.

This chapter was intended to achieve two goals: First, to alert you to the fact that everyone in the world is practicing LBM on everyone else, usually unconsciously and usually extremely unskillfully. Second, to advise you that, as you become sensitive to its use on you - and skilled in your own use of it on others - you can accomplish a great deal.

You will now have to go out and **study** the aforementioned subjects, **practice** them, and become **fluent** in them before they will be of any real use to you. Just reading this chapter and assuming that you “get the message” is **not** sufficient.

It is perhaps appropriate to conclude with a brief but necessary warning: As an association of Adepts in LBM, the Temple of Set could not function cooperatively if its Initiates practiced this particular Art on one another, no matter with what good intentions. You are trusting the Temple and its sages to **enhance and Recognize your self-initiation** - not to mislead or exploit you for lesser/ulterior purposes. You must reciprocate in turn. So remember this point and remember it well:

Do not - ever - attempt to control another Setian through LBM.

Because he trusts you not to, his usual guards will be down, and you may think him easy to influence in this way. Nevertheless it is just a question of time before either your “victim” or another Setian realizes what is happening, whereupon you will find yourself facing probable expulsion.

In all contacts and communications within the Temple, be straightforward, direct, and open. In profane society you might be pounced upon as a “mark” or “sucker” for such behavior, but within the Temple of Set you will find yourself trusted and respected as a fellow Initiate and magician.

CHAPTER 6: GREATER BLACK MAGIC

You have already been exposed to two sharp distinctions between the Temple of Set's principles and those of other religions, philosophies, and occult doctrines. The **first** is that, while we do not consider logical positivism as being sufficient to explain the Universe, we **do** consider it a necessary foundation upon which to build such an explanation. Sound metaphysics must be in keeping with what is known about related subjects in physics, else the metaphysics are simply articles of faith. "Faith" is how one excuses a belief he cannot justify through any rational or logical criteria.

To become an Adept in the Temple of Set, therefore, it is not enough to feel blind trust in and enthusiasm for its doctrines. The Initiate must know how those doctrines came to be realized as being most probably true. He must understand the reasoning behind each proposition. Initiation implies not just knowing **how** but also knowing **why**.

The **second** distinctive characteristic of the Temple of Set is its utilitarian approach to white magic and LBM. The former, embracing all conventional religions and occultisms, is assessed simply as fraud and/or self-delusion. The Temple of Set has no self-appointed mission to cure the mass of humanity of fraud or delusion, so we ignore white magicians as courteously as possible.

In the previous chapter's discussion of LBM, you have seen that many social and scientific techniques used casually, ignorantly, or inexpertly by the rest of society are utilized by the Black Magician to realize his immediate goals in the objective universe. (#6I) You have further seen that mastery of LBM does not come quickly or easily, and that it is by no means a substitute for cooperation with society's accepted rules of competition, survival, and prosperity. It is a specialized technique for use in situations which appear to be ideally adapted to it, and it is generally used as an enhancement to more ordinary techniques already in play.

All this is probably not what you expected when you entered the Temple of Set. You anticipated a secret society, comfortably law-abiding but deliciously "sinister" in its pageantry - something both more novel and more exotic than Rosicrucians, Masons, Wiccans, and the like. You have now seen the Temple expose and explain the fabric of human interactions. It has done this not to amuse you, but to tear the blindfold from your eyes: to lead you out of the cave wherein you were chained. After you finish blinking at the light, you face the question of how best to use this new clarity of vision.

Many of those who joined our predecessor institution, the Church of Satan, were somewhat confused by the *Satanic Bible's* approach to magic. First, in the "Book of Satan", it scorned all belief systems and reduced all gods and demons to simple fantasies and psychological crutches. But then, in the subsequent Books of "Lucifer", "Belial", and "Leviathan", it promised satisfaction in return for appealing to various demons through ritual. The official apology for this seeming inconsistency was that rituals are mere psychodrama: play-acting for emotional gratification. But the reality was that the rituals were performed with complete seriousness throughout all the Grottos of the Church,

and that they in fact yielded the results they ostensibly promised, at least to some degree.

The Satanic Priesthood gradually concluded that, although the mythological imagery of such ritual might be *prima facie* inaccurate and inconsistent, the particular type of mental and willful concentration achieved during ritual did in fact exert an effect upon both the celebrant and the objective universe. To the celebrant it seemed that, as his concentration and projection of will increased, the normal barriers of space and time began to recede. The celebrant's subjective universe appeared to force its way into the objective universe in a limited, focused fashion.

What this meant for the fledgling Satanist was an experience of the "blurring of reality". It was often disturbing and distressing, just as the experience of hallucination or schizophrenia can be disturbing and distressing. (#19G) A ritual working differed from psychosis, however, in that the magician's own mental coherence - his sense of identity and ability to organize his thought - remained unimpaired. He knew precisely what was happening: where each universe began and the other one ended, what he wished to do, and how to increase, decrease, or halt the experience.

As the Satanist became increasingly familiar with the sensations of ritual magic, his fear of it would disappear and he would become proficient at creating precisely the blend of universes desired. The need for objective universe props (a physical ritual chamber) to create a suitably dramatic atmosphere lessened, as did the need for texts, incantations, and scripts. Ultimately a stage would be reached where the experience and exercise of ritual became a completely automatic one for the magician, who could now blend his subjective universe with the objective one and accomplish changes in it as delicately as a skilled surgeon might wield a scalpel.

An individual's subjective universe, to be sure, is extremely fluid. It may closely resemble the objective universe, or it may become bizarre and fantastic. Many clinical schizophreniacs are simply those who have lost the ability to distinguish the subjective from the objective, and who in some cases are at the mercy of their subjective mental imagery. (19X)

Clinical schizophrenia is usually involuntary - the result of a physically diseased or injured brain, or of extraordinary psychological stress. A danger of ritual magic is that the experience may become so intoxicating that the underlying sense of perspective upon and balance between the two universes may be neglected or abandoned, resulting in an uncontrolled blending process. The magician is still in control of his will, but he is unable to accurately distinguish the elements of the objective universe from those of his subjective one. He makes mistakes, which appear in his subjective universe as inexplicable abortions of his previously effective desires and creations. Ultimately he may lose all control of his consciousness, becoming a paranoiac and/or a megalomaniac.

The old myth that you will endanger your soul if you dare to experiment with Black Magic thus has more than a grain of truth in it. Not because some fiend in red underwear is going to drag you down to Dante's Inferno in punishment for your blasphemy, but rather because you are now exercising your mind in the deliberate conception and construction of its own external frames of reference. If you do this with prudence, intelligence, and sensitivity, the result will be a more excellent state of being

(=initiation). If you do it impulsively or carelessly, the result could be disastrous.

The Temple of Set thus repeats the warning in its introductory literature: **Black Magic is dangerous**. LBM is dangerous because it can tempt the individual to unethical abuse of the technique (#6R, #6S), while GBM is dangerous because its practice makes possible the destruction of the perspectives of the rational consciousness. (#7C)

You are thus admonished to be **extremely careful** when working with either technique. You should seek out and study the relevant texts from the reading list thoroughly, experiment cautiously and judiciously, and by all means seek - **and heed** - the advice of the Priesthood in matters of doubt. Each Priest and Priestess has accepted the responsibility to advise Setians and Adepts of the Temple concerning the increase and use of their magical powers, but each Priest and Priestess also has the power to summarily expel a Setian or Adept from the Temple if LBM or GBM is being used irresponsibly.

It is now appropriate to explore the phenomenon of GBM itself. What is it, how does it work, and how may the Setian begin to experience it?

Greater Black Magic (GBM) is the causing of change to occur in the subjective universe in accordance with the will. This change in the subjective universe may cause a similar and proportionate change in the objective universe.

Examine this definition. A deliberate effort is made to alter one's subjective frame of reference, so that a thing which used to be conceptualized one way is now conceptualized in another. A distasteful situation may be adjusted to produce a favorable outcome; a live enemy may be adjusted to be thwarted or nonexistent; a desire of any sort may be realized.

Magical manuals from the medieval grimoires to the *Satanic Bible* have discussed the use of imagery as an aid to this conceptualization. Perhaps the most stereotypical example of this is the sticking of pins into a wax effigy to cause harm. In Walt Disney's *Dumbo* the little elephant was given a feather to hold with his trunk. He was told that it was a magic feather which would enable him to fly - and he did so by flapping his ears. When he eventually lost the feather, he started to fall, until he was told that the feather was really nothing more than an ordinary feather. As soon as he realized that **he** was the source of the "magic", he flapped his ears again and regained altitude.

Photographs, wax images, talismans, music, fires, swords, statues, and indeed entire ritual chambers have no more **intrinsic** magic in them than Dumbo's feather. Their effectiveness in magic, again like Dumbo's feather, comes from their **significance to the magician**. If he grants them certain powers in his subjective universe - if he credits them with atmospheres, auras, curses, or blessings - they will assuredly have them. They will possess these qualities absolutely in the subjective universe.

Once this occurs, the phenomenon of the **Magical Link** between the subjective and objective universes will transfer a portion of the quality to the items' objective mass. The potency and endurance of the transfer depends upon the skill and willpower of the consecrating magician, the scope of the working, the amount of distortion in the

objective universe attempted, and a wide variety of physical and environmental factors which may range from sunspot activity to a sore toe which intrudes upon the magician's concentration. Perception and activation of the imbued qualities by another magician will similarly depend upon the skill and willpower which he brings to bear upon such objects.

The implications of this principle are fascinating. Among other things it explains why sophisticated magical workings based on a variety of different gods or pantheons have worked. It makes **no** difference whether the gods be socially generated (like those of ancient Greece) or personally created (like those of H.P. Lovecraft). It makes **no** difference whether the Enochian Keys be phrased in honor of YHVH (as in John Dee's diaries), in honor of Satan (as in the *Satanic Bible*), or in honor of Set (as in the *Word of Set*). Accusations of heresy, blasphemy, and/or inauthenticity - whether historically justified or not - are simply barking up the wrong tree from a magical standpoint.

Another implication of the operational principle of GBM is that there is a large amount of it "loose" in the objective universe by individuals who are generating it without calling it by that name and without even realizing what they are doing. Every time we have an "objective impression" of something possessing a quality which its physical characteristics do not substantiate, we are sampling the results of a GBM operation on the objective universe. [#4J(1)(2), #6O]

To take a few common examples: Snakes and rats are usually thought to be sneaky and evil, birds and cats beautiful; smog and sludge unnatural, trees and flowers natural. Many subjective universes agree upon and reinforce such interpretations, and in the objective universe it becomes increasingly difficult to identify the phenomenon in question without the subjectively-imposed "overlay". [Such overlays may also be called "biases", "prejudices", or "points of perspective".]

We are thus the victims of a world-wide GBM epidemic which has manifest itself as political ideologies, artistic æsthetics, advertising, social morality, etc. We cannot honestly say that we "live" in the objective universe, but rather in a crazy-quilt of subjective overlays on the objective universe. The first thing the magician must do is realize this; the second thing he must do is attempt to see and understand the actual objective universe through all the camouflage. The third thing he must do is attempt to change parts of it carefully and precisely through his own magical workings, both LBM and GBM.

The "unconscious" GBM of profane society works because of sheer mass, as a herd of buffalo will break through a fence that would easily stop any one of them. At the same time this profane effort is chaotic, unreliable, and ultimately random in its consequences.

Attempts to control such massive social forces have been made by many political and religious leaders throughout history. All have failed in whole or in part, even when the illusion of control could be created. (#14A, E, F, J, K, L, V; #16I) The individual Black Magician cannot change the objective universe through raw force; his is only a single, isolate will. He **does** possess, however, an understanding of how GBM works and the consequent ability to narrow his use of it to a precise, directed focus. It is this focus that enables his workings to succeed.

If you have never undertaken GBM Workings before, some of the preconditions for them may strike you as unnecessary, even adolescent. Be patient, and you will come to see why they are not.

You may think that you possess great powers of imagination, particularly if you have some skill at art, music, writing, or some similar form of creative expression. Consider, however, that your soul - which communicates with the objective universe through your brain - constantly receives reinforcement of objective reality through your five physical senses. This reinforcement tends to act as a kind of “shock absorber” to your mind, cushioning and compensating for all ideas that do not correspond to objective parameters.

What you will be doing in a formal GBM working is to change the signals which are received by your five senses, bringing them into harmony with the concept on which you intend to focus. Thus you prepare for a working by constructing an artificial environment in the objective universe most closely attuned to it: a **ritual chamber**.

There is no “official” design, nor required contents for a Setian ritual chamber. Our reading list illustrates how widely our interests vary, and a working emphasizing any one category of that list [or any other concept] would require appropriate accoutrements.

Thus a “classic Black Mass” in the most delicious tradition of Gothic horror novels might recreate the atmosphere of a gloomy, medieval crypt. A ritual utilizing spacial/dimensional concepts might make use of odd, Expressionistic angles, optical illusions, mirrored or irregular lighting effects, and atonal or unharmonious sound effects. Workings concerned with space may take place under the starry sky in a desert, where the absence of reflected light from cities reveals the cosmos in all its glory ... or in planetariums, observatories, or astrophysics laboratories.

The more care you take to find or create the proper environment, the more potent the working itself will be. This is not just because a more elaborate ritual chamber is more exciting and evocative, but also because the very act of preparing it and anticipating the working contributes to the momentum of the working proper.

The “ritual chamber” is not merely the room or open area in which you operate. The concept extends to everything apart from your self - including your physical body. You must be in good health, or sufficiently in control of your mental state of being not to allow physical maladies to intrude upon your concentration during the working. You must be awake and alert. You must be visibly [to others, if it is a group working] and mindfully [to yourself] clothed and/or costumed as appropriate. Your goal is to exclude all sensations which clash with the focus of the working, and to reinforce all sensations which enhance that focus.

Address all five of the physical senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. At the very least, take steps to ensure that no disharmonious sensation is received. As you become increasingly familiar with GBM, you will become more expert at creating environments to facilitate it. Do not expect to get everything exactly right the first time. And, of course, there may be circumstances rather beyond your complete control, such as mechanical background noise in urban areas - or crickets in rural ones!

You have prepared yourself and your ritual chamber. It is the appropriate time of day or night [or you have blocked out all sensory inputs dictating the time], and your assistants and/or fellow magicians are present. You are ready to commence the working itself.

You may use a full script or an outline, or you may proceed extemporaneously. Each has advantages: the script for formality and a sense of historical accuracy, extemporaneous speech for its sincerity and spontaneity, and an outline for a blending of both. Make your decision not on some assumption of what you “ought” to do, but rather on the basis of what **feels right** to you. You might use the text of a 4,000-year-old Egyptian incantation - but you may wish to change two words in it. Do so! Use a pre-prepared selection of gods and/or dæmons, or create some new ones yourself. Neither type is “inauthentic”. **Gods exist as they are evoked to meaningful existence by the individual psyche.** (#6I, #6K, #9K)

Every thought, statement, and action during the working should be directed towards its object. If your preparations have been thorough, you will find that you can attain far greater concentration - and maintain it for a longer span of [objective or subjective] time - than you suspect. Following the ritual you should not be surprised to feel correspondingly exhausted and drained of energy.

It is not uncommon for a magician to find himself carried away by a ritual he is doing. The experience is so impressive, so wonderful, so overwhelming that he becomes obsessed with it both during and following the working. There is a very simple rule of thumb which should be applied in situations such as this, and it is: **Bear in mind that the ritual itself is/was a personal, subjective experience.** If you wish to impress other magicians with it, you must translate that experience into a form that is comprehensible and meaningful to **them**. If you succeed, they will share your interest and enthusiasm, at least to a degree. If they are not interested or enthusiastic, do not condemn them for it. Either you have not explained it carefully enough to do justice to it, or it simply isn't as relevant to **their** subjective universes as it is to **yours**. If you become antagonistic or resentful, you will accomplish nothing save to lessen your stature in their eyes.

As was discussed in Chapter #5, human beings are accustomed to projecting particular pictures of themselves into others' subjective universes. This is a common LBM phenomenon. In GBM the magician does not wish to present an artificial image at all, but rather to unveil his innermost self. He is thus highly vulnerable and highly sensitive to external influences.

Usually - particularly in the case of novice magicians - GBM workings are best performed alone. If anyone else is present, it should only be someone who is so trusted by and attuned to the magician that no self-consciousness intrudes into the working. The more individuals present, the greater the risk of the working deteriorating into a “living theatre” show, with each presenting an artificial image to the others.

Under no circumstances should you permit any non-Initiate of the Temple of Set to be present at a GBM working as an “observer”, “student”, “interested friend”, or even “potential member”. In a working you necessarily behave in an uninhibited fashion, which will be extremely disconcerting to someone who is still wearing his

character armor. No matter how good his intentions may have been, he will still react by defensive, condescending denigration of the working. He is **compelled** to do this in order to protect and reinforce his insecure, confused self-image. The inevitable patronizing comments will be annoying to you, awkward for him, and certainly unhelpful to any profane friendship or rapport between you.

If an acquaintance wants to find out what Black Magic is like, invite him to join the Temple of Set just as you did. If he isn't that interested, he probably doesn't have the self-discipline and strength of will necessary for success in Black Magic. He will be much happier in some variation of a white magical environment, where pageants and shows proliferate [disguised as "rituals", "masses", "religious ceremonies", or similar solemn play-acting].

Other Setians of the same or less-advanced degrees than yourself should be present only as participants - never as bystanders or observers. Only members of the Priesthood may be present in a non-participant capacity. They have a Recognized motive to enhance and encourage the success of the working, not to intrude upon or otherwise preempt it.

You undertake a GBM working because you want to **understand** something or because you want to **change** something. The former type may be referred to as an **illustrative** working, while the latter is often called an **operative** working. Each takes effect by expanding and/or altering your subjective universe, which then exerts a corresponding and proportionate influence upon the objective universe - and other subjective universes - via the Magical Link phenomenon.

A "law" in science is "a statement of exclusive cause and effect". By this exacting standard the Magical Link is not a scientific law; nor is it consistent, reliable, or duplicatable. This is because it is **not** an influence or process involving **only** the manipulation of matter or energy in the objective universe, though a GBM working may include such manipulation. But the essence of GBM is its effect upon the subjective universe(s) of the magician and/or others, which are **not** controlled by the laws of the objective universe. And such subjective universes are inescapably the "lenses" or "windows" through which the objective universe is perceived, assigned significance, and interpreted. That is how and why operative GBM - and the Magical Link - works.

Do **not** underestimate the subtlety and complexity of this phenomenon. To become adept in GBM requires comprehensive reorientation of your attitude towards your sensory inputs and outputs, and the way in which you realize, signify, and process information between input and output. It is essential that you exist, so to speak, at a far higher and more precise level of consciousness than the profane individual involved in the same flow of information. This is a **great** stress, which even among experienced magicians can be sustained for only brief concentrations of time and effort. Start simply, and pursue more complex GBM as you develop experience in it and a feel for it.

You should never insist upon a complete alignment of related phenomena in the objective and other subjective universes as a result of a GBM working. Such would call for a far greater concentration of energy over a far greater period of objective time than a single mind can project. When you seek to cause change, therefore, look for fulcrums which need only be nudged to set a desired chain-reaction in motion. Consider the most

opportune times and locations for change. And do enough preliminary research to ascertain that the picture you have of the preexisting situation is a reasonably accurate one - else you may unknowingly change it for the worse.

Ideally the magician should never use GBM when LBM will suffice, nor should he use LBM when intelligent, conventional actions will suffice. Much of the effectiveness of magic is due to its exclusiveness, its esoteric glamor. To overuse it, or to use it for vulgar purposes, is to cheapen it. One does not use fine china to serve hot dogs for lunch. Keep magic something special in your life; consider it a sacrament and a testament to the eternal majesty of your soul. Then you will find that it will dignify and sanctify your being, and will raise you above profane humanity. To echo Pythagoras: "Thou shalt be an immortal god, divine, no longer mortal."

There is no standard sequence for a GBM working. Each is tailored to its object and to the magician undertaking it. You will find many texts, instructions, and sample scenarios in Temple of Set resources such as the *Jeweled Tablets*, the *Scroll of Set* (including its back-issue collection), and the Temple Intranet. These are tools which others have used successfully, for the specific purposes indicated. You may use any such tool for its original purpose, or pick and choose parts of various tools, and/or construct entirely new tools of your own. The more you work with GBM, the more fluent you will become with these options.

The Temple of Set, in keeping with this philosophy, has no "official" GBM working rules. It is our position that "the text of another is an affront to the self". The following sequence is thus provided as an **example** of how a GBM working might be undertaken. You may adapt it as you desire, or you may create workings which are uniquely your own.

* * * * *

1. Prepare the Chamber

Choose a time and location suitable to your theme, considering privacy, comfort, and its psychological impact upon you. Decorate it as appropriate.

Black is the traditional color of Black Magic [stands to reason!], because of its mystery, solemnity, and capacity for dissolving sensory limits and barriers. Paint or drape a room in black and you will see that it **expands** rather than confines the space. Flat black is more effective at dissolving barriers [imparting the sensation that you are "floating in space"], while gloss black creates a mirror-like effect that suggests an "angular matrix" about you.

Other evocative colors may be used, but avoid white, pastels, and "head shop" posters. Natural wood, earth, or stone is excellent; some of the most effective chambers are constructed from/in unused attics or cellars.

Lighting should be by candles, fires, electric candles, or colored light sources. Ultraviolet light may be used with great effectiveness because of the "sparkle" that it imparts to the atmosphere, the negative ions it generates (#22L), and the exotic visual effects it produces. Avoid using it in conjunction with pre-designed UV-sensitive

pictures or posters, and conceal the light-source if at all possible. **Avoid looking directly into ultraviolet light tubes, especially for extended periods. Avoid also extensive or concentrated exposure to ozone gas, whether from UV or electrostatic-generation sources.** Use minimum necessary lighting - one or two candles rather than a dozen. You can see much better in semi-darkness than you think you can. [Rituals may also be conducted wholly or partially in complete darkness, which is one way of creating an “instant ritual chamber” in the midst of an otherwise unsuitable environment.]

If you use recorded music, take care that it is not so rigidly sequenced that you have to march the working in time to it. Otherwise the music, not you, is conducting the working. “Workings” designed around musical or visual effects are “pageants” and thus fall under the heading of LBM - designed to influence audiences or specific participants.

An altar may be constructed out of almost anything of convenient size. When it is serving as an altar, ensure that it is not used for any other purpose. Indeed this holds true for **all** ritual implements. A ceremonial dagger or knife will not be the worse for being used to carve a turkey at dinner, but in your subjective universe you will never regard it in quite the same way if you suffer it to be used for mundane purposes.

Behind and above the altar should appear the Pentagram of Set in silver or red against a black field. Prismatic (fresnel) material is fine for the Pentagram, and other colors may also be used if meaningful to the magician. If any other emblem is used, as in a specialized or historical working, it should be displayed either beneath the Pentagram or in another location entirely.

Atop the altar should be [at minimum] a bell, a goblet or chalice (hereafter called the Grail), and a central flame source (which may range from a large or ornate candle to a small oil or jellied-fuel brazier). The flame source should ideally produce a blue-black or blue flame; Sterno is ideal; an electronic-lightning source such as a Tesla coil or “Eye of the Storm” will also suffice. Any texts required for a ritual may be placed upon the altar, as may additional candles, sword, knife, dagger, staff, and/or wand. Add whatever else you desire, from talismans and statuettes to flowers and foliage.

The Church of Satan used to use a naked female as a “living altar” centerpiece, ostensibly to symbolize carnality and the living Earth. It was a nice idea in theory, but it proved difficult in practice. It is always awkward for one person to be nude while everyone else is clothed. An attractive “living altar” tends to distract participants’ concentration, while an ugly one can be repellent; and of course no two people see “beauty” and “ugliness” in the same way. A large, sturdily-built altar platform is necessary, and sex always gets in the way with questions concerning the appropriateness of male altars for female heterosexuals or male homosexuals, etc. By all means use a “living altar” if you wish to, but don’t feel he/she is essential or even desirable for a successful working.

No protective circles or pentacles on the floor [or anywhere else] are necessary, though you are welcome to add them for dramatic or symbolic purposes. Since the Black Magician is at One with the Powers of Darkness, he needs no “protection” from them. Nor, it may be said, are circles or pentacles the slightest deterrent to these Powers, save in the subjective universe of a superstitious white magician.

Children should **never** be allowed to attend any GBM working. They will not understand it, may be frightened by it, and may wrongly represent it to others. Pets may be present only if they can be depended upon to enhance, not to disrupt the atmosphere.

Under no circumstances is any life-form ever sacrificed or injured in a Black Magical working of the Temple of Set. Violation of this rule will result in the offender's immediate expulsion and referral to law enforcement or animal protection authorities.

The purpose of this statement is to prohibit any intentional taking or injuring of life in such a working. Obviously this applies to the bigger, more visible, more tangible, more familiar humans and animals. But just as certainly it applies to **any other** life-form over which you have aware, discretionary control. If you crush some captured ants, or burn a living plant, etc. in a ritual, then you are in violation of this principle.

It is the element of "aware, discretionary control" that is key here, because at issue is your respect for the phenomenon of life *per se*. Beyond the reach of your senses, you cannot reasonably exercise such control, and that is that. Probably every time you open and close your mouth while uttering incantations, you crush to death a great many microscopic residents of your teeth and gums. And you are certainly not expected to perform magic only in a laboratory "clean room"! Use common sense, compassion, and especial sensitivity, and you will fulfill the intent of this guideline.

2. Dress for Working

Dress however you wish, as long as it reflects the serious atmosphere of the working. The Temple of Set medallion appropriate to your degree should be worn. There are no color or design guidelines or restriction concerning magical clothing and costumes. If a robe or cowled robe is worn, however, it should be black. Colored trim or cords for black robes, if used, is traditionally keyed to the Temple's initiatory degrees: I°=white, II°=red, III°=silver, IV°=blue, V°= purple, and VI°=gold.

3. Ring the Bell

The bell, which should have a deep, melodious tone rather than a sharp, tinkling one, is used to formalize the beginning and end of the working. It should be tolled nine times, either towards the altar or at the four points of the compass as the magician turns counterclockwise. The number 9 honors the Council of Nine of the Temple of Set. The magical significance of the number 9 is also discussed in "The Unknown Known" in #6L, as well as in Pythagorean lore (#12).

4. Light the Black Flame

The central flame source on the altar symbolizes the Black Flame of Set, which brought isolate self consciousness to higher life. It is the willful act of rekindling this Flame on the altar which opens a "Gate" of communication between the magician and the Powers of Darkness.

5. Invocation

IN THE NAME OF SET, THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS, I ENTER INTO THE REALM OF CREATION TO WORK MY WILL UPON THE UNIVERSE. O MAJESTY OF SET, HEAR ME, LOOK UPON ME, AND GO WITH ME UPON THIS JOURNEY. ENFOLD ME WITH THE POWERS OF DARKNESS; LET THEM BECOME AS ONE WITH ME AS I AM BECOME ONE WITH THE ETERNAL SET, WHOSE SEAT IS BEHIND THE CONSTELLATION OF THE THIGH. AS I SEND FORTH MY MOST EXALTED AND SUBLIME SELF, ARM IT WITH THE PENTAGRAM OF SET AND WITH THE SCEPTRE OF TGHAM THAT IT MAY DEFY ALL CONSTRAINTS, DISMAY ALL CHALLENGERS, AND CAST DOWN ALL THAT IS MOVED TO APPEAR AGAINST IT.

LET THEN MY EYES BECOME THE EYES OF SET, MY STRENGTH BECOME THE STRENGTH OF SET, MY WILL BECOME THE WILL OF SET. AS A FIRE IN THE DARKNESS I AM BECOME; AS AIR IN THE SKY I AM BECOME; AS EARTH IN SPAGE I AM BECOME; AS WATER IN THE DESERT I AM BECOME. I DWELL IN THE FANE OF THE FLAME OF BA. TIME BOWS BEFORE MY WILL, AND I AM LORD OF LIFE, DEATH, AND LIFE IN DEATH. HEAR THEN THIS DOOM WHICH I PRONOUNCE, AND BEWARE THE KA WHICH NOW COMES INTO BEING THROUGH THAT ART WHICH IS MINE TO COMMAND.

6. Drink from the Grail

The Grail should contain any pleasing liquid, the more unusual and aromatic the better. The liquid need not be alcoholic and **must not** be blood. [The use of blood for ceremonial purposes would represent the destruction of a life-force. The magician respects blood in its proper vessel, the body, and does not degrade it.]

The liquid may be imbibed only by the celebrant, or it may be shared with others present. If it is to be shared, the liquid should appear initially on the altar in a suitably ornate flask, then be poured into individual goblets or chalices by the celebrant or an assistant during this phase of the working. It is not recommended that more than one participant share a single goblet. [The goblets need not match; each participant may wish to bring the one from his own ritual chamber.]

In the Church of Satan the Grail was called the "chalice of ecstasy", and its contents symbolized the elixir of life.

In the Temple of Set it assumes an elder and more esoteric identity. The pre-Christian Grail is one of the most ancient and powerful symbols of the European Black Magic tradition (#14B, C, D, U). It symbolizes Truth in its purest and most sublime Form. The Grail is ever sought, never found by the profane, for they fear Truth even when they profess otherwise. Should they chance upon the Grail through innocence or accident, they dash it from their lips in terror or, upon drinking from it, come hideously to grief for their rashness. Only the Initiate of the Left-Hand Path may dare to drink from the Grail with impunity, and only he shall see it brought forth before him whenever he desires. Woe to him who drinks from the Grail with deceit and falsehood in his heart; it shall consume him utterly.

“The Knights of the Grail live from a stone of purest kind.
If you do not know it,
It shall here be named to you.
It is called *lapsit exillis*.”

- Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parsival*

“*Hic lapis exilis extat precio quoque vilis
Spernitur a stultis, amatur plus ab edoctis.*”
[This insignificant stone is indeed of trifling value.
It is despised by fools, the more cherished by the wise.]

- Arnold of Villanova, *Rosarium Philosophorum*

7. Summoning of the Elements

The magician now calls upon the living creatures and inert elements whom/which he wishes to observe or control. He may do this by using their conventional names, or by invoking symbols of them in isolation or combination (gods, dæmons, chemical or alchemical symbols, images, musical themes, or other media of description). He weaves around them the appropriate context of his subjective universe, thus creating what he wishes to Come Into Being.

8. The Working

Upon construction of the working environment, the magician proceeds to enter it, observe what he desires to, and change what he wishes to. This is a precise, methodical, carefully conceived and executed action. It is “Astral projection” in the strictest sense. (#9G/H “Liber O”, #9K)

Briefly the technique is this: The magician constructs within his subjective universe a “magical double” or *ka* (Goethe’s *Doppelgänger*). This is an idealized entity whose precise characteristics may vary from working to working. He then, by an act of will, transfers his soul or *ba* to the vehicle of this *ka* and then executes his will in the subjective universe. This may be completely disassociated from the physical body of the magician, or it may be closely aligned with it. Physical alteration of imagery in the ritual chamber may play a part, as may actions and expressions through the magician’s material body.

At the conclusion of the working, the *ba* is redirected to the physical body and the *ka* is disintegrated. The elements of the subjective universe specifically summoned for the working are released into their normal contexts, there to influence their objective counterparts.

Vast amounts of advice concerning “Astral projection” and the construction and use of a magical double have been proffered. There is no one best technique which works for everyone. You will have to experiment, turning your mind and consciousness “in upon themselves” to explore, understand, and control their functions and parameters. Be careful and gentle with yourself. Do not hesitate to ask the Priesthood of Set for advice if in doubt.

9. Extinguish the Black Flame/Close the Gate

10. Ring the Bell [as in Step #3].

11. Utter the Traditional Closing Words: “So It Is Done!”

* * * * *

Medial Black Magic

Over the years we have become accustomed to the Temple of Set’s two major divisions of Black Magic: Lesser (LBM) and Greater (GBM). By the former we generally refer to applied/scientific/manipulative magic; by the latter to introspective ceremonies of *noetic* solemnity.

It is easy to focus strongly and exclusively on either one or the other of these two categories, so much so that we miss that grey area wherein they blend. Let us call this **Medial Black Magic** (MBM).

MBM involves the use of the Magical Link in its simplest, most direct form in an operative context. Unlike LBM, in which the magician uses forces and features which are **of** the objective universe to accomplish his goal, MBM has similar goals but uses metaphysical means - the Magical Link - to realize them. It is not as “pure” as true GBM (which has no purpose other than itself).

The beauty of MBM is its simplicity and directness. It requires only so much formality as you feel appropriate to what you wish to do. Grimoires, spellbooks, even the famous curse/ lust/compassion rituals of the *Satanic Bible* are needlessly overcomplicated and are just so much window-dressing for persons who need such “training wheels” to work up a proper mental/magical state of concentration.

Dark Shadows, that charming occult soap-opera of the 1960s, got it right. When Angelique the witch felt the need to curse, confound, or [rarely!] help someone, she would simply light a candle, or gaze into a fireplace, or stare at the Moon, and dictate her will. And so it would come to pass. Seances and Tarot readings worked, not because they were elaborate frauds or because the people participating in them were gullible fools, but because the participants approached them with simple open-mindedness.

However, and this is an important point, MBM is not just “making a wish” or “saying a prayer”, because these things involve no will, nor even sincerity. MBM requires your **will** that the result you desire actually occur.

Unlike LBM, there is no calculable cause-and-effect. If you are using proxemic magic (LBM), you can reliably count on keeping someone in a room, driving him out of it, altering his mood, etc. because of the physiological and psychological principles you are applying. As a stage magician (also LBM) you can trick or control people by things that may **seem** to be MBM but aren’t.

When you resort to MBM, you enter that Twilight Zone between physics and metaphysics. The Link may or may not work, or it may work in some unexpected way [not necessarily to your satisfaction]. You may try MBM and get good, regular results. You may get nowhere and conclude that, for you anyway, it is a waste of time and an

intellectual insult. Or you may find it a kind of mix of the two.

As a rule of thumb I would say: Never use LBM when ordinary interaction will suffice, and do not resort to the uncertainties of MBM when LBM will suffice. And don't forget that old Balance Factor: Don't try to accomplish something of GBM scale with a simple candle-lighting of MBM "will investment".

Keeping MBM simple doesn't mean that you can't use more elaborate systems for it if you prefer. Just keep the horse before the cart, i.e. don't feel that you are forced to recite some long, dreary ritual text to accomplish something. A more direct ritual, which you understand and will coherently, will serve you better.

And the final, inevitable word of caution: If you look for something long enough, you **will** find it. If you want something hard enough, you **will** get it. Accordingly you had better take the time to think the whole business through beforehand and be reasonably sure that you **do in fact want** to find or get "it". It is usually easier to change or halt LBM in process than MBM.

THE BEGINNING



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