

# The Scroll of Set

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## [1] **Set-X: The Non-clave in New Orleans**

- by Linda Reynolds IV° and Stephen Flowers IV°

The Set-X Conclave is now history. The very roots of this Conclave are steeped in adversity. It had first been planned to hold the Set-X Conclave in London, but this was prevented by the extraordinary publicity generated in the British tabloid press.

Our decision to go to New Orleans was one made in the spirit of returning to an old friend, as we had held Set VII in the Clarion Hotel in the Year XXI. However, again due to publicity and the threats of hate-mongers we were forced to rely on stealth. It was decided that we would indeed hold the Conclave in New Orleans - but it would be an "underground" Conclave. This proved to be well within the capabilities of the Initiates present. When it came to what we gathered for - magic and dialogue with fellow travelers of the Left-Hand Path - Set-X, the "Non-clave," could be described as a total success.

Regardless of whatever atmosphere of crisis and opposition might have been around the Conclave, it was one of the best-attended Conclaves in the history of the Temple. [Well, what else could be expected of a group that has raised the virtue of contrariness to such levels of philosophical sophistication?]

Despite a slight undercurrent of unease, which only seemed to be obvious at the very beginning, all attendees displayed their usual good spirits and willingness to cooperate with whatever safeguards we thought necessary. Although "basic black" was still the predominant color, it never looked as if furtive groups of suspicious looking people were skulking around the hotel. As far as we know, there were few other guests unnerved by what they thought they saw. On the other hand, the alleged enemy - the person or persons unknown who "harassed and threatened" the original hotel site - never made any kind of appearance.

Magistra Reynolds' parlour suite, aka the 24-hour hospitality suite, meeting room, and ritual chamber, served us well. It was lightly overcrowded, but convenient, private, and fairly comfortable once we moved all the furniture around to suit us! Most of the meeting and various workshops were held there.

Set-X was especially marked by the number of workshops held by Initiates in various areas of their

own expertise. Magister Wade held a workshop on hypnotherapy, Adept Ruth Nielsen held a unique workshop on aroma-therapy and herbology, Priestess Lance led a workshop in the use of movement in ritual, and Magister Flowers held a workshop on Runes.

Recognitions either made or formalized at this Conclave:

Adept II°: Elizabeth Reynolds and Brian Zimmer (Ohio), John Widger and Vivienne West (England).

Priesthood of Set III°: Patty Hardy (Massachusetts) and David Austen (England).

This was also the first Conclave at which the newly-Recognized Magistra Nancy Flowers and Linda Reynolds were able to work in the blue.

Many things were discussed at the Priesthood meetings, all of which were of importance and which will undoubtedly lead to further consideration when particular issues are presented to the High Priest and Council in a formal manner.

The Executive Director has received a great deal of correspondence since New Orleans, the vast majority of which reported the good feelings new friendship, new understanding, and generally positive atmosphere Initiates felt at the Conclave.

If people had said it was going to turn out this well - especially on the weekend when we heard the bad news from the Clarion - they probably would have been thought to be dreamers. During those dark days it was easy to forget that Setians don't allow themselves to be put off by the profane gestures of some cross-waving lunatics! We rallied together and crested a gathering which left all of us with supercharged enthusiasm, renewed spirit, and a reminder of how truly marvelous it is to be on the Left-Hand Path.

The main aspect of the whole Conclave which saddened us all was the significant absence of our High Priest, Michael Aquino, and Magistra Lilith Aquino. Their presence would have helped bring our gathering much closer to a degree of perfection.

Magically speaking, the workings which took place were extraordinary. Reports indicate that the scheduled I°/II° working was very effective. Additionally there was another midnight working of the I°/II° Initiates to which the Priesthood was invited.

Magistra Reynolds and Flowers as well as Priestess Lance and Priest Barrett had active roles in a working which was a psychodrama focusing on the vampyric essence. Its transformative effect was quite dramatic and extraordinary.

The main Conclave working was written by Magistra Nancy Flowers. With the assistance and cooperation of all participants, it became a dark and effective journey through various aspects of each Initiate's being.

There was also the joyful and emotional, since everyone got to cry at a wedding ceremony for

Adept Karen Revay and Priest Dennis Mann. Magistra Reynolds wrote the ceremony, officiated at the wedding, and felt honored to do so - and she loved signing the marriage license "Magistra Templi, Temple of Set". [Some bureaucrat has doubtless raised an eyebrow at that.]

Aside from all this there was also a great deal of socializing. Initiates met and talked long into the nights. Expeditions to midnight coffee and pastry sources (especially the "Cafe du Monde"), restaurant hopping, eating here, eating there - you get the picture, we're sure. It was in many ways a typical conclave - and one that shall be recorded in the history of the Temple as the first "underground" conclave.

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**[2] Mark 6:14-29, Matthew 14:1-12**

- by Don Webb II°

It is a fact universally acknowledged that Salome, daughter of Herodias, aroused the tetrach Herod Antipas by performing the Dance of the Seven Veils. Unfortunately the public has come to believe that this ancient, mystical dance is identical to the "hootchy-kootchy". Recent digs at the court of Aristobulus, King of Lesser Armenia [and, according to Josephus, second husband of Salome] have revealed the nature of the dance.

Herod sips the dregs of the Gaza wine, his piggish eyes beginning to cross ever so slightly. Herodias whispers to her curvaceous daughter in the shadows of the thousand-pillared court.

Salome's eyes shine red as they reflect the low light of an oil lantern. Salome approaches Herod and whispers in his right ear. He smirks with lust, hastily dismissing the courtiers and spilling wine on his robe. An erection peeps up from his Roman toga. He can have the mother and daughter too and burn the laws of Moses.

John the Baptist shivers in his cell. Perhaps he should not have condemned the marriage of Herod Antipas and Herodias. Perhaps he should have responded to Salome's advances. He knows he will not see the morning.

Salome begins to gyrate around the throne. The besotted tetrach can smell her musty cleft. She runs her hands beneath her flimsy stola and fingers herself. Herod groans. She pulls forth a stout hempen cord, twenty-seven cubits in length, glistening with vaginal mucus.

She quickly binds Herod to the throne. He has heard of her wild lusts, of her strange needs; he does not protest. She tears her stola from her body. Herod has never seen such perfection: such firm breasts, such a black bush. She dances wildly, wildly.

She pulls two more objects from her quim: a purple lump of gum arabic and a gleaming straight-razor. An anachronism, the razor, but she's in touch with far more than the small-time politics of Mediterranean states.

She gums his right eye shut. This is not to his liking. She holds his left eye open with her right hand. She pushes the blade onto the surface of the eye near the tear duct. Herod whimpers, afraid to call for his guards or of any sudden movement. Salome peels off the First Veil. She dances the dance of the First Veil.

Herod sees the world of "if", the sad world of it-might-have-been. He sees each of the alternative universes that pour from his actions. He sees the golden road - the path of no errors, no sadness. He weeps bitterly, but not as bitterly as most men, for he is tetrach and the husband of his brother's wife.

Salome dances forward again, the blade flashing wildly. She peels away the Second Veil, and Herod sees the whole of the past. He sees all of evolution in his own breast - slime, fish, ape. He sees the myths of people destroyed. He sees all actions reduced to hormonal excesses and dim electrical storms in grey jello. With this vision he is no longer Herod Antipas, but a higher, less-happy life-form.

The blade arcs across his eye again. As before, the tearing of a Veil is cumulative - he sees everything from the previous visions as well as the new. He sees the future: plagues, wars, bombs, finally desolation. No one cares that his marriage to Herodias violated Mosaic law when strange radiations eat out their eyes. Few even remember the trouble he had with John's cousin, Yeshua ben Joseph.

He does not care, does not flinch when Salome cuts away the Fourth Veil. He sees the Puppet Masters with names like Jehovah, Eris, Vishnu living off mankind like remoras - eating abstract qualities like fear, discord, and conservatism.

The Fifth Veil goes, and he sees that the Masters have Masters in ever-increasing cosmic cannibalism. He no longer knows his name or species.

Salome cuts the Sixth Veil, the last Veil. The final bit of conjunctive is removed. He feels the vitreous of his eye dribble down his cheek, mixing with his beard. His lens sticks to the fat velvet caterpillar that is his upper lip. The bare retina looks upon matter and sees the vast space between proton, neutron, electrons. He sees into these and finds them to be mere ripples of time-space. There is nothing. No one. Time stops.

Somehow, though he has no words for it, he feels her spoon honey into the bloody socket. She sews on the Seventh Veil, her hymen surgically removed before her marriage to Phillip. She puts the

needle and thread back into the dark forest of her pubis - where they had lain since Paleolithic times. All he can see now is Salome. Nothing but Salome. The goddess demands the head of John the Baptist.

Herod doesn't know he can help it, but orders it since she demands it. The ropes have vanished; the gum has vanished; he is alone in the great hall.

He has forgotten his vision. At midnight his guard brings the bloody platter. Salome enters the hall, rubbing sleep from her eyes. Herod Antipas presents her with the head - a birthday present. Herodias smiles in the shadows of the pillars. We see the red fire reflected from her small, perfect teeth.

Salome becomes fully awake. She lifts the head by its hair and kisses the blood-slippery lips. Memory rushes over Herod, and he runs from the hall and puts out his eyes so that he may never be forced to see all.

Salome carries the head into her chamber. She ties it to her skirt along with the twenty-six other heads. She is Kali, Black Destroyer. She dances upon all of the Earth, at all battles, at all gravesides.

Until tomorrow, when she sits to the left of her mother at an interminable state dinner, laughing politely at Pontius Pilate's weak jokes.

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### [3] Overheard at the Set-X Conclave

- by Ruth Nielsen II°

The following snatches of conversation, observation, and self-explanatory phrases were part of the memorable week in New Orleans.

The days preceding Conclave heard many a Setian discuss secret signs, undercover techniques [as in disguises, folks, not bedrooms], and code words. The agreed-upon meeting place, Jackson Square, saw many Setians arrive singly or in small groups, looking for all the world like tourists strolling through the park.

The greeting of undercover Ipsissimus James Lewis, dressed as a Roman Catholic priest: "Domine nos vobiscum." (The Lord be with you.) The response from a former nun: "Et cum spiritu tuo." (And with your spirit.)

Magistra \_\_\_\_\_ kneeling to kiss the hand of Father Lewis. [Ipsissimus Lewis interjects: "I never - and call me 'Monsignor'."] Copies of photographs of the disguised Ipsissimus are being made available for sale to raise money for the Order of Leviathan anniversary party.

"I'm supposed to close up the park, and there's a wedding out there nobody told me about. The priest is still here." - Little old lady in Jackson Square near the church.

"Isn't this great?" A very cheerful young female Setian danced her way across the lawn.

"They let you drink on the streets here as long as it's in a glass."

"Here in New Orleans we don't get drunk; we just get 'satisfied'."

A weary bicyclist [from Texas] dismounting and joining the motley crew of tourists wearing shorts, suburbanites, yuppies, and the ones dressed in black with strange hairdos, all of whom seem to know the priest.

"I run a halfway house for reformed Satanists. We're here on vacation," said Father Lewis to the little old lady.

Special effects were provided by the god Thor as Magistra Flowers called a meeting to order and announced the various events. As she raised her hand and said "the First and Second Degree working", a horrendous clap of thunder and blinding lightning shook the hotel room. New Setians came to attention and were noticeably prompt for all events after that.

A certain Magistra was observed in the French Quarter at a video arcade displaying her IV° expertise on the "*Battlestar Galactica*" game. Bystanders were speaking in what sounded like Enochian as the hours wore on.

Time warp in the elevators: Priest Barrett and a certain Magister leave together but arrive separately to track down a missing rental car. Hertz put whom in the driver's seat?

A certain Priest, soon to be married: "Gee, it's even raining mating bugs!"

"I would have been here yesterday, but my truck blew up in Perdido." [That means "lost in the Abyss".] "As the sheriff was driving me to a gas station, he tells me about 2 kids in the jail who are going to be hanged for being Satanists. I remembered that my medallion and robe were back in the suitcase in my truck. I was hoping these country boys wouldn't take to snooping. So I slipped into my Mississippi accent and acted real cool."

"Princess Lance's workshop on movement ..."

"An assortment of curious oddities were left in my room last night after the I°/II° working. Levitation of furniture to clean up after the working will occur after this meeting."

A new Setian's "initiation": Knocking on a door which is opened slowly by 6'10" Priest Mann in black attire, stern-faced, with his booming whisper: "What is the password?" Answer: "Uh, um, please may I come in?"

Passwords were done away with because no one except Magistra Flowers could remember them. [Editor's note: That's because she was making them up as she went along.]

"You know, after the *ka* business ..."

The Brits left a lasting impression on the New Orleans “pubs”, which are still wondering what all that was about. As Setians gathered for quiet talk in the hospitality room, telephone calls came in from about the city from the “leader of the Brits”, keeping all informed of his state of “satisfaction”.

“I had shark last night, and it was still swimming at 3:00 AM.”

At “Felix’s” - **the** place to eat raw oysters: “I will **not** eat raw oysters - unless they are smothered in horseradish sauce!” A certain Adept from Wisconsin ate her words as Priest Barrett mixed up a smashing sauce of horseradish and other nameless, devilishly-hot things. Tears flowed, and only copious amounts of Mexican beer would “satisfy”. [The moral: Never say “never”.]

After an orgy of eating raw oysters, someone at the table announced, “Hey, you know these are aphrodisiac?” “Oh, no! Now what do we do?” Pause. “Hey, waiter, bring us some more.”

A certain Magister who does not eat oysters was observed grinning broadly as his Magistra wife enthusiastically dug into another dozen.

“The Order of Leviathan initiation ceremony is scheduled for Sunday at midnight in the bayou. We have a boat rented. All will wear their ceremonial robes and medallions. After the invocation all will jump into the alligator- and snake-infested water. Those who survive and climb back into the boat will be accepted into the Order.”

Only the Grand Master Ipsissimus Lewis was able to keep the appointment with the demons of the deep, as all other Order members had flights leaving Sunday evening [and you know what non-refundable tickets are like]. He has been heard from since, so it is assumed he is still at the helm of the Order. Let’s hear it for the Grand Master.

Begniet Wars: an event that occurs at 3 AM when over-tired Setians descend on the “Cafe du Monde” for *cafe au lait* and powdered sugar-encrusted begnietts ... and indulge ... and leave staggering from fatigue and “too much”, covered in powdered sugar, carrying shoes, and singing [X-rated] nursery-school rhymes.

At a local “Craft” shop: “I’ll give you a real deal on a Voodoo doll - \$15. Well, you’re visiting - make it \$10. Here, honey, buy some love candles.”

Wide-eyed new Setian after first working: “Was **that** supposed to happen?”

“What **did** all these people have to eat tonight? Geez, what bad breath!” a Priest commented after the general working. “And then they come up to me with their mugs full and put their arms around me, and I feel this trickle down my backside. Hey, who planned this anyway?”

Hint: When thou plannest a wedding, don’t feed mufflattas laced with garlic if a working is to follow.

No amount of champagne will wash down garlic breath. We tried.

Magister Neilly made a very brave attempt to remain standing amidst all the garlic vapors, stating his leather trousers were so tight they were sure to keep him upright.

Those who participated in this historic “non-event” where the Children of the Night triumphed over the blind who say they walk in light ... You know we laughed and cried and cheered each other on, and now miss each other terribly. Share your memories, so the year will pass quickly until we meet again.

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#### [4] Open Letter to All Setians

- by Robert Menschel IV°

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you will read elsewhere in this *Scroll*, I have been chosen to serve as Chairman of the Council of Nine. I accept this honor and responsibility, and I hope we all look forward to pleasant and productive times.

Looking for and expecting the best, I nevertheless feel it’s time to put forth a gentle reminder of some of our dangers, and of the need for awareness of our exposure.

Behold, it is I who call you, because you are the Guardians of the Æon of Set, zealous in what you do.

The Analysis and Commentary of the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* calls this a salutation to the Council of Nine. It is that, but I have always also read it as a call to all Setians to be Guardians: Guardians of the Æon, of the Temple, and of your personal *Xeper*.

One source of danger to the Temple and the Æon, and to all of us, is obvious - the death-oriented religions and their followers, and the acts to which their fears and jealousies can lead them. This danger rises and falls, and varies from location to location, and it impacts upon different Setians in different ways.

We know of this danger. We are reminded of it repeatedly. We are taking and will continue to take steps to reduce the overall, long-term danger to each of us and to Set’s Temple.

Any Setian who is concerned about his or her position, options, exposure, or responsibilities in this arena should contact me or any other member of the Priesthood, and we will work with you to answer your concerns.

A second source and class of danger does not give us such clear messages of warning. This danger rises and falls also, and it endangers some

Setians while leaving others untouched. This is the danger of a lack of balance, a lack of dedication, and the danger of human politics entering into the Temple of Set.

The risk of imbalance increases as more and more Initiates speed their personal *Xeper*. The risk of politics increases as our membership increases. Our membership is increasing, approaching new highs, as is our individual and united *Xeper*.

Yes, our best strengths are what expose us to these dangers, and history has proven that even our more senior Initiates can succumb to these problems on occasion.

It behooves all of us to be on our toes, and to be aware of anomalous behavior by any of our fellow Setians. Not only can we protect ourselves and the Temple from damage, but when caught and "treated" early enough, we can usually help any lost Setian regain balance and recover *Xeper*.

For what danger-signs should we watch? Like our Initiates, this deviant behavior is quite variable and unpredictable, but it all exhibits two common characteristics: (1) a tendency to suppress individuality and freedom, qualities required for complete *Xeper*, and (2) it often "feels" wrong to those who witness such behavior.

Now I don't want everyone watching everyone else for signs of psychosis, nor do I want everyone calling me to report someone else's idiosyncrasies. I do not expect nor want problems. And I have confidence that all Setians, Initiates of every degree, will understand this and will continue to work on their personal *Xeper*, working closely with as many other Setians as you can; for this is the best thing we can all do for ourselves and for the Æon.

But if questionable behavior should occur, please bring it to the attention of a Councillor so it can be examined and dealt with quickly and discreetly.

With Set's help, and without any interference from Murphy, we shouldn't have to mention this topic again for a long time.

Halloween and other festive times are approaching. I feel strongly positive and confident about our future, and I want everyone to share my confidence. Enjoy the coming months, and may life be pleasant as you *Xeper* and Remanifest.

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### [5] **Satan's Disciple?**

- by Adam Campbell I°

"Satan's Disciple" was the bold heading that met the eye of Melbourne's newspaper readers on July 28. The heading referred to Richard Ramirez, better known as the "Night Stalker". Most of the readers of the *Scroll* are probably familiar with the case, so I will not go into it here. There is enough

murder and gore around without my recounting the details.

What really bugs me about the whole affair - apart from the nature of the crimes - are two things: one, that Ramirez should dare excuse his actions "in the name of Satan", and two, that the press should make so much of Ramirez' claims to be a "Satanist".

Throughout the ages people have always justified their crimes in the name of whatever may be convenient at the time. This is not new. Often it is used as an excuse to legitimize a crime.

Common examples of this are the Christian's and Moslem's "in the name of God/Allah". Other criminals may use this technique to justify or rationalize their crimes and destructive desires to themselves. In this way they can drop responsibility for their actions into the lap of someone else (usually a god) and relieve themselves of any guilt they may feel. This is indicative of their lack of character and general foulness of being.

What also annoys me is the media's blow-up of Ramirez' claim to be a "Satanist". This is, of course, to help sensationalize the case, thereby increasing the dollar-value of the event for the media. It also has the effect of reinforcing the image of Satanism as a destructive, insane, and generally criminal activity. There are many people in the community who would like to see this image continue. They have a lot to gain from this.

If Ramirez had been a member of a "respectable" **Christian** church, would his religion have been mentioned? Would titles like "Christ's Disciple - Murderer" or "Night Stalker is a Christian" have grabbed the headlines? No, everybody knows that Christians are "good" and Satanists are "bad". At least this is the image in the community at large. It is an image instilled strongly in their minds. Although it is only an image, it is a reality to them. We must be careful and do our best to change this. We must make these lunatics and criminals take responsibility for their actions.

It is clear that our battle to give legitimate Satanism and the Temple of Set the recognition they deserve as a sane, constructive, and vital religion has a long way to go. We must try. Someday in the future we will succeed.

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### [6] **Invocation**

- by Andrew Nourse I°

Push back the ichor of holier-than-thou. Send their crusade back from whence it came. Let any who would climb to power on our backs be cast down as a rider from a wild horse.

Let those who would "expose us for what we really are" do exactly that and no less.

Let truth be seen as truth and fiction as fiction. Those who sell fiction as "God's own truth" must answer to their own deity as well as ours.

Make us a space, a place to work our will. Let those who would participate find us. Let those who would interfere lose their way.

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### [7] **Incense for a Wedding**

- by Ruth Nielsen II°

The following recipe was designed for a special event, the marriage ceremony of Priest Mann and Setian Revay.

1 tablespoon of Canada Snakeroot (wild ginger).

2 tablespoons of Damiana leaf.

1 teaspoon of rice-size frankincense tears or powder.

2 droppers musk essential oil.

3 dropper sandalwood essential oil.

(3 droppers = 1/2 dram or so, or 20 drops = 1 dropper).

This incense was prepared at the time of the early New Moon, when it was in the sign of Libra, an air sign. The mixture was ground in a lava-stone mortar and pestle, and was the first batch made in this new vessel.

The frankincense tears were ground first until soft and crumbly. Then the Canada Snakeroot was added and ground down about halfway. Next came the Damiana leaf. This was ground into the mixture, adding some of the oil to make the mixture more cohesive. The oils further softened the frankincense so that it was easier to work up. It is not a good idea to add the oils to the frankincense in the beginning, as it gets too sticky.

The mixture is slowly ground until it holds together when pinched and the particles are fairly well ground, but not so as to be unable to tell what each is.

Canada Snakeroot grows wild in the northern woods. It is on the endangered species list for Wisconsin, so I imported it from Canada. It is not related to ginger at all, though it is often called "wild ginger". It is a ground-creeping root. It sends up two stems, each of which has a 3-inch velvety leaf in the shape of a perfect heart. In between the stems is a 3rd stem on the tip of which is a goblet-shaped flower edged in 3 chocolate-brown or purple tips. This plant does not transplant well. It grows in semi-shade of hardwood forests. Ours grows among the linden and maple trees. This root is considered an aromatic and fits into the first category of an erotic-stimulating fragrance. I have found that it serves as well as sandalwood, and the two together make an exquisite incense or sachet for love rituals.

Damiana leaf has been used for many centuries as a healing herbal tea for emotional turmoil. It is said to foster love among those who drink it. Actually it is a very tasty tea, which makes it easy to test its reputation as an aphrodisiac. This herb is also very fragrant, reminding one of the scent of the sweetest alfalfa fields in bloom.

Frankincense has long been identified as the material for incense - in fact is often used by itself as such. Its sweet, resinous fragrance blends well with the other items in this mixture, and the quantity could be increased if desired.

The musk oil used was synthetic and is a high-quality one at that. It is one of the few synthetic oils I use, as most have caused allergic reactions in people I've worked with. This oil was chosen by the bride as her favorite fragrance of the ones available.

Sandalwood oil represents the groom. It is a highly-prized oil as is the musk, and is used to induce states of ecstasy in religious or erotic situations. Heavy use of these fragrances can also induce lethargy or sleep.

To use this incense, light a charcoal disk (Three Kings charcoal disk). After it is thoroughly sparking, place a pinch on the hot coal. It will billow up with a sweet smoke that is more long-lasting than many other incenses.

This recipe and information are offered to all Setians for their personal or Temple use. Please do not give this out to other individuals.

I have not found any incense on the market, either hand-made or commercially, that does not contain artificial color or binders, or synthetics. By making your own you can have control over the substances in your environment which you breathe when doing your most important work.

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### [8] **Majesty VIII**

- by William E. Farnsler II°

Sweet draughts of the milk of being, opiate and stimulant, a demon sings beyond evolution's loss of will. I was thinking of me again.

Haze swirls around grey wraiths, shark and wolf, circling in impersonal awareness. I was thinking of power again.

Unmoved by the memory of love, sleek and cold, a tiny room of distrust in your heart. I was thinking of you and me again.

Rust-reddened iron bars, bereft and blind, illegitimate souls bury the keys they seek. I was thinking of man again.

Gliding on warm black wind, seen and not, rising from the secrecy of the black box, I was thinking of night again.

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## [9] Work

- by Jennifer Busby I°

Stillness within. Then a silent scream, swallowed in the blackness of a desperate loneliness, yet a loneliness as such that is not a longing for another, but an overwhelming desire to Become that which I feel within: to enter into that aloneness, to embrace that which is truly individual within me, to wrap myself in my self. For that I shall willingly burn - burn in this exquisite fire as a bright star in the blackness of the night sky.

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## [10] The Order of the Python

Magistræ Linda Reynolds and Nancy Flowers are pleased to announce the Coming into Being of a new Order, the Order of the Python.

“Python” was the name of the dragon or serpent sacred to Apollo at Delphi. A child of Earth, she was nurse to Typhon. Python gave her name to the oracle, Pythias, at Delphi, the place sacred to the Muses. The Muses, who embody and inspire the arts, were originally goddesses of springs. They also taught the art of divination. The spring at Delphi, Castalia, was regarded as one of the many mouths of the River Styx.

The Order of the Python is dedicated to the arts in all of their many manifestations. The symbol of the Order is the Python entwined in scales. The scales of Maat weigh her feather of truth against a heart. It is only through the serpent of self-knowledge and in truth that true art is made manifest.

The Co-Grand Masters of the Order invite all II°+ members of the Temple who are interested in exploring themselves through artistic expression and sharing these inner truths, to contact either Co-GM. The Order anticipates publication of the work of its members on a quarterly basis, using various alternative methods, including video tape, cassettes and newsletters.

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## [11] Commentary

- by Ronald L. Barrett III°

Symbolism and meaning are very important elements of and for initiation. Symbols are magical tools created and employed by the Black Magician in order that he may change his environment, and his self, toward his consciously-desired goals. It is through symbolic complexes such as language and ritual that profound magical changes have been, and continue to take place within individual Initiates, the Temple, and the Æon.

Language is a system of symbols, and “Satan” is a word that is used in the English language. Thirteen years ago, when I was 13 years old, I began my journey along the Left-Hand Path by defining my self with a word. I was in the throes of puberty, testosterone pumping through my body, when it began as a loud whisper and rapidly emerged as a silent scream.

I am a Satanist.

No need for exclamation marks. The statement has “the command to look” built directly into the text. It was more fun than yelling the word “fuck” in Sunday school. In just a few seconds I had wiped clean years of Judæo/Christian indoctrination, and all its externally-imposed, false morality. *Tabula rasa*; rebirth.

About the only thing I really knew about Satanism at the time was that I was a Satanist, but that was all that really mattered. My journey had begun, and I had a lifetime ahead of me.

I am now in my thirteenth year as a Satanist (XIII R.B.), and the thrill remains. I have traveled a great distance in half my life thus far. I have evolved into a more refined, mature Black Magician; I have Come into Being as a Setian, a Knight of the Order of the Trapezoid, a Priest of Set. Yet these symbols by which I define my self [or perhaps vice-versa] do not serve to exclude, but rather to develop that original dark seed of consciousness. I am still a Satanist.

As a “Satanist” I identify myself with the Prince of Darkness. However the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* contains the following words: “No longer will I accept the bastard title of a Hebrew fiend.” For the Prince of Darkness “Satan” is a derogatory term, an insult. It is analogous to calling a Black person a “nigger” (originally a slang term used by southern Whites who probably could not pronounce the word “Negro”). It identified a sentient being, dark and strange in appearance, who had been forcibly abducted from another culture and redefined as a farm animal. Sound familiar?

So by continuing to call myself a “Satanist”, does it not follow that I am operating outside of the Æon of Set and perpetuating an insult both to myself and to the Prince of Darkness? Not so, because both the word and its meaning hold true only for *Set Hen* in his present form, not myself. I am a Setian, and yet I continue to wear the horns because they help me to generate the chaos I require in order to bring about my favorite flavor of Remanifestation, that which I define as “alchemical transformation”.

Transformation is a process of change in which the starting material is broken down into predetermined components; and these components are retained, thrown out, and recombined with new

components to form a new composite whole. Likewise, in *Xeper*, this Initiate transforms the material of his self as he moves toward a higher order. In order that I may Become greater than I already am, I must partly destroy my self; and to do this I must generate chaos.

I have found many descriptions of this chaotic state. There are analogies in the study of chemistry and in the symbolic endeavors of the alchemist, as well as in the liminal state of “anti-structure” used by anthropologists to describe a state of undefined identity when neophytes from primitive cultures ritually transition from one status to the next.

Nietzsche’s Zarathustra said, “I love those who do not live, except by going under, for they are those who cross over.” It was chaos that Satan ArchDaimon turned to in the Great Seraphic War; it is the “ruin of symmetry” by the seventh angle that allows the dominance of the fourth and ninth angles over the sixth; and the Pentagram of Set is “shown inverse, that creation and change be exalted above rest and preservation”.

The Age of Satan was such a chaotic, liminal state. The Prince of Darkness was the composite Set-HarWer, and that time was “to bridge the expiring Æon of HarWer and the forthcoming Æon of Set”. On the human plane the members of the Church of Satan turned Christianity on its head, thereby freeing themselves of its stasis and death; just as I did thirteen years ago. I reflect the layers of the æons in my self, and so by proclaiming myself to be a Satanist, I too created a void whereby creation could take place.

I sense my Coming into Being as a Priest of Set has many vectors parallel to those of the Prince of Darkness. But while I certainly have great aspirations, I am not him! I am like him, and I *Xeper* toward him; but while he may be perfected(?), I still need a lot of room for change. By identifying my self a “Satanist”, I carry the Seventh Angle with me, and invoke it in a willed effort of sustained change. It is my will to go under, to turn my experiences on their heads in order to continually Remanifest the opportunity of *Xeper*. This is the generation of darkness, the war against stasis and sleep, the Remanifestation of the great revolution. This is the essence of Satanism.

So why do I hate this article so far? Because the article is too neat and compact [at least in my head], and the argument is not. Bring on the chaos, and let’s see what can be transformed.

The issue of Satanism vs. the philosophy of the Temple of Set comes as a result of the increasing awareness of our presence by the profane world. The reaction is one of ignorance and fear. My first impulse would be to tell these people that their fear is simply a perfectly healthy reaction to the semi-

conscious awareness of just where human potential is leading the Elect of mankind. But it probably wouldn’t be appreciated. So when my landlord discovers that the “nice young man downstairs” has a chamber of horrors in his storage room, I need to resort to LBM; and to resort to LBM I need a good grasp of the semantics of the situation.

Here’s the problem as I see it:

As humans it is our supernature to have meaningful experiences and express them with complexes of symbols. The experience of meaning by way of symbols can touch a whole range of feelings within us, and thereby enrich our lives. It also requires some effort, and doesn’t always make us happy. When an individual human opts not to consider meaning, and instead goes straight from symbol to emotion, he begins dying inside. His ability to critically reason decomposes to the point that even the meaning of his emotions is reduced to the binary categories of positive and negative, “good” and “bad”. Thus “democracy”, “American flag”, “freedom”, and “God” are “good” (positive stimulus); and “communism”, “Noriega”, and “Satan” are “bad” (negative stimulus).

It is by this means that a culture dies. Men go to war and are willing to risk their lives for “flag”, “freedom”, and “God”. They are equally willing to kill the “communists” and the “Satanists” without ever being able to tell you what all those words meant. There is a war of “good” and “bad”.

The problem comes when two entirely different cultures (us and them) share the same symbols. To many it does not matter that we claim a different meaning, because meaning was never the issue. The issue, for those who would move against us, is that we represent negative stimulus & fear; and that is “bad”.

The status of the word “Satan” in the global village is an interesting one at present. The binary theme of duality continues to thrive in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Additionally this world-view has dominated many persons who consider themselves atheists or agnostics. It is still fashionable among large populations of humans to deny responsibility for their psyches, and store the “goods” and “bads” of their conscious in an unconscious containing two diametrically-opposed entities. This is the preferred method, because it allows them to conserve brainpower otherwise used toward finding meaning in a complex universe, and to divert their energies toward other useful tasks such as excretion and procreation.

So what to do? Is the Temple a “Satanic” organization? Over the last couple of years we have all seen the stakes involved in how we represent



ourselves to the profane world. We are all sure of the advantages and disadvantages of concealment and openness. It is very much an issue of Lesser Black Magic: How do we go about altering the environment in such a way as to make it optimally conducive to the *Xeper* of the Temple?

The question cannot be answered before we define some specific evolutionary directions for the Temple. We who call ourselves Satanists may see increased confrontation with the growing "Tree in the North". On the other hand, by giving the profane their semantic victory, would this not be a major step towards isolationism in the Temple? Are we to fight the harder battle for control, and manipulate the universe to change the mind of men, or do we use the just the right amount of LBM to be left alone?

The goal determines the method, or: *Solvo verba et exita.*

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## [12] Set-X

- by Don Webb II°

Crucible of nameless essence which opens the wells of being, night of alchemical testing where consciousness found its other, linger in my memory. Arise, dragon of dreams and visions! I cast you into the world everlasting to work your scarlet will.

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## The Black Pyramid

- by Michael A. Aquino VI°

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## [13] Set-X After-Musings

Veterans of Temple of Set Conclaves know that every one of them is a unique event, and Set-X was certainly no exception. Scheduled in the midst of the still-simmering anti-Satanism hysteria of the "fundamentalist '80s", it was moved first from London to New Orleans [to avoid the witch-hunt mania in England] and then almost cancelled altogether when violent threats against it began to be received by the hotel (which, after hosting Set-VII in XXI, was happy to have us back).

Due primarily to the determined efforts of Magistræ Linda Reynolds and Nancy Flowers, however, Set-X "went underground", switched hotels, and was conducted on schedule. Almost all of those who had pre-registered showed up for this "Nonclave", and it was a charming success - right under the noses, as it were, of would-be picketers,

protesters, and assorted anti-occult creeps.

Since our first Conclave at the Santa Barbara Miramar Hotel in October X, the Temple of Set has always conducted its Conclaves openly and without excessive concern for security. The reason for this is that throughout the 1970s and early 80s we were not facing this fundamentalist/witch-hunt atmosphere in the country. Nor, as an institution in which virtually everyone knew everyone else as a personal acquaintance, did we have to be concerned about individuals among the membership with ulterior/destructive motives. [We had only one such parasite - Gini Scott - who was booted out in disgust when her attempted exploitation of other Setians was exposed.]

What Peter, Paul & Mary once referred to as the Great Mandala has spun onward, however, and the exciting idealism of the 60s and 70s has given way to the medieval brutishness of the 80s - which shows every indication of crawling on into at least the early years of the 90s. The lesson of history, as Hegel and other dialecticians observed, is that it does swing between extremes. Each new generation supposes its pendulum-swing towards freedom to be a final triumph over Mordor, yet ever, to their surprise, they turn to find themselves attacked again by new bands of orcs.

What has perplexed me most about the present witch-hunt climate is that the populace which is so stupidly sustaining it is the **same** one which lived through the enlightened times of the 60s/70s. It ought to know better. The Church of Satan and then the Temple of Set worked their barbed tails off for over two decades explaining their theology and philosophy to society, and we thought we had long since got the message across. Now it seems as though the public has a memory of six months' maximum, and a learning capacity roughly on the level of Kipling's Bander-Log. So here we go again!

A selection of different LBM skills are called for in this situation. LaVey-vintage Satanism may be what the majority of humanity practices all the time, but [as Anton also noted] that same majority is just as emphatic that this **not** be acknowledged: that human wantonness be concealed beneath a hypocritical veneer of Christian piety.

The Socratic truths which the Temple of Set speaks will thus never go down with the masses much better than Socrates' own, even if the majority of the public were capable of becoming Setians [which they obviously are not]. Our position in society will accordingly remain delicate, requiring us to tread the fine line between too much secrecy (breeding suspicion, crazy speculation, and surprise attacks) and too much public relations activism (attracting well-meaning but unsuited applicants and

giving the Temple an irritating sort of ISKC/Moonie public image).

Is the Temple's existence worth the effort? Indeed it is. Without the Temple of Set, society would be divided into those who exist in a 1984-like mentality of materialism-cum-drugs (from television down to "crack") and those who have reacted to this depressing "reality" by immersing themselves in elaborate, acknowledged fantasies.

Unlike the former, the Temple of Set insists upon a psyche-based dimension to mankind beyond the animal, which angers the materialists and their drug-dealers (such as the conventional churches).

Unlike the latter, the Temple of Set insists upon the reality of its vision, refusing to excuse or apologize for it as mere escapism. This angers many "occultists" and New-Age dilettantes, who rightly assume that it exposes and shames their own lack of depth, sincerity, and commitment.

These same features which make the Temple of Set so provocative to external society also impact on it internally. Despite the careful wording of our informational letter and the *Crystal Tablet*, we still get some individuals who join for the wrong reasons - many going so far as to tailor their applications to paint a picture of themselves which is not reflective of their actual interests, motives, and outlook, just so that they will be accepted into this mysterious Shaolin Monastery called the Temple of Set. Some of these expect the Temple to be materialism-cum-[fake Satanism] drugs in the model of the post-X Kennel of Satan. Others expect the Temple to be escapist fantasy: a *Star Trek* convention from which you never have to go home & return to your 8-5 job.

It is neither of these things, because both are self-deceiving illusions. The Temple of Set is dedicated rather to the truth about the human experience - which is neither as animalistic as the materialists make it to be, nor as vaporous as fantasy-freaks paint it. We prowl about in that fascinating twilight zone which is on the cutting edge of what non-Initiates regard as "reality", but which is nonetheless tied to it by very actual links of logic, science, and art. True Black Magic involves the apprehension, knowledge, and use of just these links.

The 1980s have taught us the lesson that, while the Æon of Set may indeed provide us with a Yellow Brick Road towards personal initiation, not everything we find along that road is going to be pleasant. Legends, heroes/heroines, and history, however, are not made because someone did something easily. In the words of Magus Enzo Ferrari: "Ferrari has good moments and bad moments. It is not the winning that is important but the fighting. It is easy to stop in the bad moments.

This is the spirit of Ferrari. It is not something that is logical."

Dreams don't die; they don't wave goodbye  
Unless you let them go and watch them die in  
fury.

- Paul Kantner, "The Wheel"  
*Jefferson Airplane*,  
CBS Records, 1989 CE

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## [14] The Black Mass: An October Meditation

In *Scroll #XV-2* Adept Patrick Spriet of Belgium treated us to an analysis of the "Huysmans Black Mass" of unprecedented detail and historical accuracy. The interest in Spriet's article, together with general public confusion concerning the nature and place of the Black Mass in modern Satanism, together with the coming of Halloween (always a famous time for such whispered-about events), prompt a few additional mutterings on this subject:

The Black Mass of Christian legend was merely a propaganda device used by medieval Christian institutions in order to terrorize their members against anything non-Christian. [Much the same tactics are being used by present-day Christian fanatics and extremists to attack other religions generally and the Satanic religion in particular.] I have encountered no evidence that anything like the Huysmans Black Mass was ever conducted in actuality. It appears only in fictional accounts, most prominently, as Spriet discussed, J.K. Huysmans' novel *La-Bas* (*Down There*).

The authentic *Missa Solemnis* as reprinted in an abridged form in Anton LaVey's *Satanic Rituals* and in unabridged form in my *Church of Satan* is a completely legal religious ceremony. Its purpose (as conceived within the Age of Satan) is to criticize the god of another religion which has abused our religion and our god. Thus it occupies exactly the same place in Satanic religious ritual that the Rite of Exorcism does in Catholic religious ritual. This is a point Setians should not hesitate to bring up the next time Satanism is chided for having a ceremony that insults another religion. Any Catholic university library will have copies of this charming Christian document.

It should be noted that the Black Mass is a private ceremony for Satanists only. The Church of Satan and Temple of Set have never compelled anyone, member or not, to attend or witness the *Missa Solemnis*. This ceremony is conducted only for individuals who request it, and then in private ceremonial facilities.

[By contrast, I must add, many unwilling persons have been forced to undergo Catholic exorcisms during the last two thousand years - usually with accompanying torture and eventual execution once the “devils” had been “cast out”. Even today, when Christian churches are prohibited by secular law [not by their own initiative] from torturing or killing those who resist their indoctrination (= are “possessed”), they usually manage to impose varying degrees of penance or even physical punishment on those whom they exorcise.]

The *Missa Solemnis* contains statements and judgments which would be offensive to a Catholic. Similarly the Rite of Exorcism contains statements and judgments which are extremely offensive to Satanists. For example:

I exorcize you, filthy spirit, every invasion of the enemy, every phantasm, every legion, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ... Otherwise, if you do not obey my orders, I condemn you eternally to the farthest depth of Hell, and may your penalties increase a hundred thousand and a thousand times a thousand thousand times more than the pains of those who suffer in the deepest chasm. Again I command you to obey my orders under penalty of going for all time to the pool of fire and sulphur from the mouth of which comes out a two-edged sword, and may it devour you through all time according to God's ordinance in that loathsome place ...

In his *Satanic Rituals*, in the section concerning the Black Mass, Anton LaVey writes: “While the Black Mass maintains the degree of blasphemy necessary to make it effective psychodrama, it does not dwell on inversion purely for the sake of blasphemy, but elevates the concepts of Satanism to a noble and rational degree. This ritual is a psychodrama in the truest sense. Its prime purpose' is to reduce or negate the stigma acquired through past indoctrination. It is also a vehicle for retaliation against unjust acts perpetrated in the name of Christianity.”

Further concerning these two points:

(1) Reduce past indoctrination: The Setian/Satanic religion has always placed great importance on freeing the individual from crippling, self-destructive superstition and indoctrination. By satirizing and lampooning a vehicle of psychological control and intimidation used by a Satanist's former religion to keep him docile and fearful, we demonstrate the impotence of that vehicle and effectively free the individual from its domination.

A Black Mass is tailored to its participants by the officiating Priest. A Black Mass employing Christian symbolism would not be meaningful for persons with crippling inhibitions or superstitions stemming from Buddhist or Islamic indoctrination. The Christian- symbolism Black Mass, however, was naturally most appropriate within a Church of Satan membership which had generally come from a Christianity-dominated background.

(2) Retaliation against unjust acts perpetrated in the name of Christianity: Christianity has been hurling the most vehement and unjustified abuse at Satan and Satanism in its rituals, literature, statements, and actions for the past two thousand years. The genuine Black Mass is a reaction and a response to this campaign of vilification.

Although Christian intolerance and persecution of “heretics” date from antiquity, attacks on non-Christians grew steadily. More times than can be counted the populations of conquered “heathen” cultures were given the choice to convert or be put to the sword. Wars such as the Crusades were regularly funded and fought simply to spread Christianity's sphere of control, taxation, and exploitation. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance witnessed the uninterrupted slaughter of accused witches and Satanists throughout Europe.

Not content with just murdering “infidels” and “heretics”, Christians invented history's most ghastly torture devices for prolonging their death agonies: iron masks that were heated red-hot then spiked to victims' faces, iron maidens, racks, boots, screws, and back-breaking wheels that are still preserved in scores of European museums. If unfortunates survived such tortures, death by burning at the stake was their reward. Accused Satanists tortured and killed in the European witch-craze have been estimated by historians as at least 13 million.

To this may be added the Thirty Years' War, the extermination of whole pre-Columbian civilizations, and the Christian pogroms against Jews which set the stage for the Nazi holocaust of this century. Christianity's history is awash in the blood of those who either tried to escape it or who simply wished to live their lives free from it. We have good reason to reject it as a terrible plague of intolerance, misery, and cruelty - in its historical record a stark mockery of the messages of peace, brotherhood, and love it insists that it represents.

If the more bigoted, vicious, and fanatic elements of contemporary Christianity did not go out of their way to try to harm us, there would doubtless be no motive for the *Missa Solemnis* ever to be performed. It would become merely a historical curiosity. But if the Temple of Set's religious beliefs are flagrantly distorted and misrepresented by Christian

propagandists, and if its internal affairs are violated and its Initiates terrorized, then obviously the anger and resentment which inspired Satanists to create the *Missa Solemnis* are justified.

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### [15] **An Incomplete Witch**

Anton LaVey's *The Compleat Witch* has just been reprinted as *The Satanic Witch*. Because of all the anti-Satanic mania, relatively few bookstores will probably dare to carry this item, just as most of them are now afraid to carry the *Satanic Bible*. You may be able to order one directly from the publisher, however (Feral House; Post Office Box 861893; Los Angeles, CA 90086). The jacket price is US\$9.95.

What's different about this edition? The title, first of all. It is an odd change, since [back in 1966-1975] Anton deliberately avoided qualifying the term "witch" as "Satanic" or otherwise. Rather he maintained that it was originally and unavoidably a Satanic term, which Wiccans were trying to appropriate for its "Satanic shock" glamor while at the same time falling all over themselves to protest that they were most certainly **not** Satanists. [Unsurprisingly now that Satanism has become an even more "dangerous term in the 1980s, Wiccans now avoid the term "witch" more and more, preferring to call themselves "Wiccans" or "pagans".]

Nevertheless the title-change from *Compleat* to *Satanic* is probably engendered less by Anton's concern about Wiccans than by a more Barnumesque desire to capitalize on the term "Satanic". Most people these days don't know the historical significance of "complete" anyway, and would probably just assume the book's title to be spelled incorrectly.

The text of the book is unchanged from the 1970 original as far as I can tell. This edition sandwiches it in between a preface by Zeena LaVey and a postscript by Blanche Barton. I can't say that the preface, in which Zeena recounts her experiments as a schoolgirl with the book's sexual prescriptions, is either very complimentary to her or a palatable preview for adult women who do read the book. As for Barton's postscript, it appears to be simply her latest effort to maintain control of Anton's image and work.

The original *Compleat Witch* was written by Anton with substantial input from Diane LaVey, to whom Anton dedicated the book along with daughters Karla and Zeena. It is disturbing to see that, in this new edition, Diane's name has been purged from the dedication. In the current edition of my *The Church of Satan*, therefore, I have added a postscript to the *Compleat Witch* chapter quoting

the original dedication in full:

To my two favorite witches - my daughters Karla and Zeena, my wife and High Priestess Diane, and to all the witches - complete and incomplete - who, by their lives and antics, made this book possible.

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### [16] **Batman: Film Noir for the Kali Yuga**

One striking feature about the "Satanic hysteria" craze, both in the U.S.A. and abroad, is that the terms "Satan", "Satanic", and "Satanism" have developed a kind of "automatic badness" of their own - much like the term "communism" in the 1950s - despite the fact that the vast majority of the people who salivate when they hear, read, or speak these terms haven't the vaguest idea what they actually mean.

I encountered this phenomenon most dramatically during the Vietnam war, where on one side the Americans were firmly resolved that they were fighting communism (despite the fact that they couldn't define it) and on the other side the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were just as firmly resolved that they were promoting communism (despite the fact that they couldn't define it either). Not only was it a tragic and a pointless war in humanitarian and geopolitical terms, but it was a war fought without a reason which either side understood.

The United States (and probably a good slice of the rest of the world) is only now emerging from a summer of Batmania, sparked by the dramatic *Batman* movie. In the stifling, ideal-barren social climate of the 1980s, the masses have turned from sunshine heroes such as Superman to brooding anti-heroes such as Batman, whose crusade for justice is infused with an intense, vengeful malevolence. The Temple of Set saw this coming [hence the addition of #16N to the reading list almost three years ago].

Again as in Vietnam, however, it is clear that not many people are really aware of the psychological forces at work here. Most people who put on a Batman T-shirt are not making a political statement about vigilantism; they just "thought it was a neat movie".

The Black Magician, however, wants to know why such things are so attractive and compelling.

*Batman* combined popular frustration about the disintegrating urban climate of the 1980s with an abrupt, emotionally-satisfying "solution by violence". A villain (the Joker) who was clearly and simply evil was provided, thus avoiding the annoying problem of judging someone else's

morality. Victories by the Batman aroused feral cheers from the audience rather like those evoked by Charles Bronson's first vigilante-killing in *Death Wish*.

Nostalgia was a powerful factor, as Batman is a character whom many adults remember quite sentimentally from their childhood comic-reading [and teen-age television-watching] days. Indeed it is fascinating to compare the reactions of adults who have seen this new movie with those of a younger generation to which Batman has been [at least until now!] a far less central feature of childhood fantasy.

Added to all of this - and the most powerful feature of the film as far as I am concerned - were breathtaking and atmospheric sets, the like of which have not been seen since the UFA films of Weimar Germany. *Batman* was an architectural festival of the Law of the Trapezoid, with magnificent symphonic music [and I am not talking about Prince's noise-spasms] to match.

While Jack Nicholson's clever, mincing portrayal of the Joker lent comic relief to the film, I thought it somewhat out-of-synch with the rest of the *Metropolis* atmosphere. There was nothing in the least humorous about the original Joker [of the early *Batman* comic books]. He was wantonly, gloatingly ferocious. It was never quite clear whether he was even human at all, as his corpse-like complexion and ghastly *risus sardonicus* gave him the aura of some fantastic creature only distantly related, like Wilbur Whateley, to the human race. [#16N will give you a pretty good idea of this original Joker, by the way.]

Had the Joker been portrayed in this blood-curdling manner in the current film, however, the result would certainly not have been a PG-13 movie. It would have marked a new extreme of *noir* film, to be sure!

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## [17] Matamoros Retrospective

Enough time has now passed after the discovery of the ritualistic gang murders at Matamoros, Mexico for the first generation of books about this incident to hit the stands. Some *Geraldo*-grade books, of course, splash "Satanic" and "Satanic cult" all over their covers and within their texts, capitalizing once again on the kneejerk lure of this word.

The hard fact remains, however, that Satanism had **nothing whatever** to do with the Matamoros murders. The individuals in question were **not** members nor prior members of any Satanic church. They did **not** worship Satan in any semblance.

Nor, as a close examination reveals, were they practitioners of any organized religion. While investigators have drawn comparisons in their activities to Voodoo, Santeria, and/or Palo Mayombe, what the gang actually practiced was a unique, primitive conglomerate of superstitions which included seeking the "favor of fate" by human sacrifice and fetishistic use of the body parts.

The most objective book I have come across so far is that by Jim Schutze: *Cauldron of Blood: The Matamoros Cult Killings* (Avon Books #0-380-95997, 1989). I recommend that any Setian who has encountered accusations about Matamoros as "Satanic" take the time to read this work, as it will enable you to definitively refute such propaganda.

That incidents such as Matamoros occur is obviously tragic. In a world, however, where only a miniscule segment of humanity has been civilized, much less educated in philosophy and metaphysics to any meaningful degree, the masses will still invent superstitions and rites to answer life's troubling questions. I suppose it is because one considers one's own life so important that control over the lives of others (including ritual harm and/or murder) is thought to be valued by whatever supernatural fantasies are being supplicated.

As is obvious to any Setian, the conventional religions of society are only superficially less bloodthirsty, having given up their own versions of human sacrifice (burning of heretics, etc.) only when secular society offered them a choice between reform and extermination. Look for them to continue to project such horrors as Matamoros upon anything other than the superstitions they themselves have bred into ignorant people.