

# The Scroll of Set

---

Issue Number 86

Volume XII-5

October 1986

Editor: Constance L. Moffatt IV°

Copyright © 1986 Temple of Set

---

## [1] Shadow Over New Orleans

- by Michael A. Aquino VI°

I don't think we settled on New Orleans as the location for Set-VII because of its reputation for being haunted. The primary reason was rather one of "new horizons": We try to move the conclave locale around each year, so that transportation costs are spread around more evenly over the years. Also it is fun to go somewhere you haven't been before, and often a conclave provides the excuse to go ahead and do what you were "always planning to do sometime but never got around to".

We always try to locate a conclave where there is at least one Setian "expert" or at least "near-expert" who knows where to go and what to see, and how not to get ripped off. Priest and Priestess Flowers graciously handled the on-site reconnaissance this year [although they are from Texas]. So I think we'll be off to a reasonably good start. We're contacting the Chamber of Commerce in New Orleans to see if we can get some complimentary tourist packets for each attendee, to be available upon arrival, so that you can plan your free time most productively.

Setians being what they are, I assume that everyone's more than ordinarily interested in the "dark side" of New Orleans - which cherishes its reputation as the United States most haunted city. I have not spent any time there to speak of, so must rely upon eldritch tomes for specifics ... and here are some of them:

### Museums:

Musee Conti Wax Museum: 917 Conti St. Daily 10AM-5:30PM. "Tour the fascinating and sometimes bizarre history of New Orleans. Meet Lafitte the Pirate, the haunted house of Madame LaLaurie, Marie Laveau and her Voodoo dancers. See Mardi Gras in miniature, plus the eerie Haunted Dungeon." Allow one hour. This place advertises "group rates", so we'll take a poll at the Clarion and see how many are interested, and if we can get a discount.

New Orleans Wax Museum: 327 Bourbon St. Daily noon-midnight. "See New Orleans the way it was 100 years ago, including Storyville (the old red-light district). Visit a fabulous Mardi Gras with some of the world's most famous people. See some of New Orleans' most bizarre crimes of passion -

all beautifully portrayed in dozens of authentic scenes with over 100 life-size wax figures imported from France.

Voodoo Museum: [See *Runes* #IV-3, May XXI] 724 Dumaine St. Daily 10AM-10PM. "This is one of the most unique museums in the world, bringing together the old as well as the present-day Voodoo in New Orleans. Featuring Marie Laveau the Voodoo queen and exciting occult displays." Also group rates.

### Tours:

Voodoo Tour: [Run by the Voodoo Museum; see *Runes* #IV-3] Tuesday-Saturday 1PM (approximately 3-1/2 hours). "Tour includes the Voodoo Museum, the Witchcraft Shop, Congo Square, the Mortuary Church, Voodoo Drugstore, haunted houses. Visit Marie Laveau's tomb, travel along the mysterious Bayou St. John, where the Voodoo queen held her secret rituals, and meet a practitioner or two." \$15/person.

### Swamp Tours:

There are about a half-dozen different swamp/bayou/river tours, so if you like alligators you might want to check them out. We'll have more information available at the Clarion.

### Cemeteries:

New Orleans Cemetery #1: A mysterious "woman in white" is said to prowl here at night. She has a penchant for hailing taxicabs at the front gate. It is said that New Orleans cab-drivers are accordingly reluctant to make pick-ups here at night, so be sure of your transportation if you go there at night! It is here [in a tomb marked "Laveau-Glapion"] that Marie Laveau is interred. Her ghost is also reported to have been seen, both in this cemetery and at her 1020 St. Ann Street cottage.

### Haunted Houses:

Lalurie Mansion: 1140 Royal Street. In the early 19th century Madame Lalurie became notorious for sadistic abuse of her slaves. "Today it is said that if one passes the restored mansion on certain nights, screams from the spirits of the tormented slaves can be heard coming from the attic and the courtyard. In the 1960s there was an upsurge of poltergeistic activities. [See *Runes* above.]"

Beaugard House: 1113 Chartres Street. Home of CSA General Pierre Beaugard after the Civil War. "After World War II there were rumors about Civil War battlefield sounds coming from the walled-in garden." [See *Runes* above.]

Marie Laveau Cottage: See "N.O. Cemetery #1" above.

Griffon Mansion: 1447 Constance Street. This building was also notorious for the maltreating of slaves. Two Southern looters, confined in the attic prior to trial, tried to pass themselves off as Union

soldiers by - among other things - repeated singing of "John Brown's Body". When they learned they were to be shot anyway, they slew each other with pistols. Since then "there have been many reports of two white-faced soldiers wearing blue uniforms standing at a third-floor window, bottles in hand, singing 'John Brown's Body'. On other occasions the rattling of chains followed by bellowing and screams have been heard." One terrified maintenance man later saw two pairs of boots go marching down the hall - with nothing visible above them - while "John Brown's Body" echoed in the background. Excavations following a storm in August 1951 revealed a secret, underground passageway from the house to the street.

2606 Royal Street: Haunted by the ghost of a Creole-looking lady, Madame Mineurecanal, sometimes accompanied by a little white dog. Madame is supposed to have committed suicide [and killed her dog] in the early 1900s.

Then of course there's the Clarion Hotel, which will never be quite the same after November XXI.

---

## [2] **Khem, Sekhem, and Sekhmet**

- by Mitchell Wade III°

Frankly I have always found references to Khem (or *Xem*) rather puzzling. I entered the Temple of Set well after the controversy surrounding it had at least slowed to a simmer, and the concept I continually found certain members of the Priesthood grappling with seemed to elude my grasp altogether. Nor, I must admit, did I really even feel the need to reach for this shadowy and mysterious principle.

One of the reasons for my reticence was my firm conviction that as a Black Magician my path was one of magic rather than of vague mysteries. Mysticism is generally inimical to Black Magic. One of the reasons for that is its tendency to become an end in itself. The Left-Hand Path is not one of mystification but rather of active becoming or being.

I learned from the High Priest recently that the original perception of Khem was simply as a focus for the *Xeper* process. It would seem that when that focus becomes blurred or vague, it leads the Black Magician into the murky realm of the passive mystic.

Thus I was content to ignore this enigmatic Form until I could perceive it as something tangible enough for me to work with. I encourage you to do the same. It is worthy of note that there are those of the Priesthood who consider the work of Khem to be an objective of III° Initiates, and there are those as well who are simply uninterested.

My interest was sparked recently while reading Part 2 of *Her-Bak: Egyptian Initiate*, entitled *Ba and Ka*. I had chosen to read the seven chapters of *Ba and Ka* according to the instructions given in the introduction to that section. This meant reading and rereading each chapter in a specific sequence whereby the reader becomes better acquainted with the concepts introduced. On my second reading of the *Fourth Day of Ba and Ka* it suddenly struck me that I was reading about Khem. On page #198 I came across an interesting and possibly enlightening discourse from which I will now quote:

*Khem* is the secret place of generation, the dark and hidden center that hides the Neter or incarnate word until the time for manifestation.

Perhaps this is Kemit, the black earth, and one of the names of Egypt. It is in this "secret place of generation" that *Xeper* gestates and from which this Neter emerges.

*Khem* is the living chaos that arises with the incarnation of an active fire, destructive or generative, such as the fire of lightning or seed.

I interpret this "active fire" as the Setian Fire or the Black Flame. We know that the nature of this Graal is such that it can be both destructive and generative.

*Khem* is the dark chaos that gives birth to light without knowing it, as a mother doesn't know her child until the moment of delivery. In the vulgar tongue, Khem means ignorance.

In "Why is *Xem* Necessary?" (*Scroll #XII-4*) Priest Roger Whitaker states: "*Xem* is the dream of the Old Ones. The silent mechanizations of the gift of creative genius ... the Gift of Set which lies mostly in silence as the process of recognition comes into being." I would only add that you don't know where you are really going to end up until you get there - not that you don't have some idea or goal, but that until this is attained, it remains, for the most part, unknowable and unknown.

Sekhem is the power that creates darkness by annulment of two abstract principles from which the concrete proceeds. It is Khem's effective power, the destructive power from which conception arises: The male and female factors would make nothing without this pitiless force that wills the destruction of one form for the conception of another and the appearance of a new life.



Here what is described as the “active force” of Khem resembles very much the dialectic process. This is synthesis, a central focus for the *Xeper* of the Black Magician. Herein lies the explanation for why early enthusiasts of *Xem* referred to themselves as “AlXemists”.

Sekhem is the liberator of the constituents of the *ka*. It is Sekhem that effects the difficult disengagement so as to prepare a basis or form for the *ba* and the conception of a new spiritual being in the Tuat. The personification of Sekhem is Sekhmet, who is the disintegrative aspect of Hathor in the gestation of the new being after death and of Mut in the gestation of earthly creatures.

This is the denouement of this discourse as far as I am concerned. In presenting us with Sekhmet as the personification of the effective force of Khem, Isha Schwaller de Lubicz has provided us with a clearly distinguishable and particular First Form or Principle. We now have a Neter to aid our Understanding of Khem; something we can work with. In the process of demystification this is pay dirt.

In closing I would like to point out that *Her-Bak* is largely an intuitive approach to ancient Egyptian philosophy as opposed to an archaeological one. It should be borne in mind, however, that with Khem the Temple has found itself, more often than not, in a realm that has very little to do with archaeological “fact”. Therefore I invite the reader to investigate the conclusions of Mme. de Lubicz with his own magical lens to determine their validity for himself.

Concerning the view that Khem is principally the province and prerogative of III<sup>o</sup>+ Initiates, it may be worth noting that statues of Sekhmet were traditionally carved from black onyx.

---

### [3] **New Pylons are Announced**

Priest Roger and Priestess Colleen Whitaker are pleased to announce the formation of the Gates of Hell Pylon. It is the intent of the Gates of Hell Pylon to reach those Initiates who are geographically distant from other Setians and who are isolated from personal, magical interaction with others. There are no prerequisites for Pylon membership. All Setians who are willing to engage in meaningful, magical dialogue with Priest and Priestess Whitaker and other Pylon members are welcome to participate.

The Gates of Hell Pylon will not operate as a strict structure or routine. Rather it will shape its essential form through the interaction and interests of those members comprising the Pylon network. A

biannual newsletter, *Flames from Hell*, is planned for Temple-wide distribution. Any member of any degree is invited to join in our work. Simply write to Priest Whitaker.

Priestess Linda Reynolds recently announced the formation of the Ab Anpu Pylon, which will be represented in part by the Bennu bird, symbolizing the rebirth of a concept and a being too long dormant. The Pylon will not be a physical one, but rather a gathering of spiritual beings, separated by distance but together in the ways which only we can be.

What I have envisioned is that we will communicate with one another on paper - but the messages coming forth will be from the Hearts of each of us. I will then gather those messages and compile them into a new publication entitled *The Anubis Stelæ*. It will not be filled with articles or reports, but rather it will be filled with the poetry of life - the reflections, impressions, thoughts, emotions - heartfelt outpourings from those within the most magical community on this planet. Of course poems and artwork are always welcome, as are anything and everything serving to strengthen the bonds of love and spiritual kinship we share.

Priest Mitchell E. Wade has announced the coming into being of the Antywey Pylon. In his words:

Antywey was the name of Set in his aspect of Set-HarWer worshipped in certain nomes of old Khem as a pair of falcons. I have chosen to use this title for the name of a new Pylon in the San Francisco Bay Area. A pair of falcons will serve as its crest.

Setians interested in partaking of the programs and fellowship the Antywey Pylon will have to offer are welcome to contact me through the Temple address. I invite those who may be traveling to or through the San Francisco area and who would like to visit the Pylon to write as well.

In the September 10th edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* there was reported an event that I interpreted as being particularly auspicious for the chartering of the Antywey Pylon. It was observed that a pair of Peregrine falcons had made their home on the Mutual Life Building in San Francisco. From this perch they have taken to feeding on pigeons. Anyone interested in finding out more about Antywey I refer to H. te Velde's *Seth, God of Confusion* (#2G)."

---

#### [4] III° Recognition: Nancy Flowers

The coming into being of Priestess Nancy K. Flowers of Austin, Texas took place on September 13, XXI at a meeting and working of the Los Angeles area Set-Amentet Pylon, held in the adytum of Magistra and Magister Moffatt's home.

A ceremony of ordination to the Priesthood of Set was held in ritual under the direction of Magistra Moffatt. She was aided by Priests Dennis Mann, Robert Menschel, and Mitchell Wade. Also present were Magister Robert Moffatt and Setian William Farnsler. Priest Wade of San Francisco prepared the music for the ordination of his Texas friend.

Priestess Flowers, known magically as Jeh, is a CoSentinel of the Bull of Ombos Pylon in Austin and is the editor of *Vox Tauri*, the Pylon newsletter.

Sharing in the ordination through a simultaneous working were Dr. Michael A. Aquino and Magistra Lilith Aquino, Magister Robertt W. Neilly in Toronto, and Priest Stephen Flowers in Austin.

---

#### [5] Thunderstorms vs. Humidifiers

- by Jim Grady II°

I am at heart a hopeless romantic. I like to believe this the reason for my exhilaration during late-night thunderstorms, especially if you throw in some Wagner.

Of course there are those who would point to the ionization of the air being the sole cause of my enthusiasm. I have disagreed but taken heed and searched for various ways of ionizing ritual chambers. At this I have been disappointed - not because the means don't exist, but because they don't provide me with the aesthetics I desire.

Ionizers are out there - "aisle 8, next to the humidifiers" - and I'm sure they must be reliable, because the same company produces my blender, and that has chugged along for years. But something is missing: the romanticism of the mad doctor! The crude force, sound, and frenzied light that come from a Jacob's Ladder, Tesla coil, or Van de Graaf generator!

My preferences led me to consider building my own equipment. I later admitted that I was inept with electronics and sought out those who professed knowledge. To my dismay a Jacob's Ladder, if remembered at all, is now referred to as a "Frankenstein thingamabob". I summarily gave up.

Early September found me in a small shop looking for books and waging a heroic but hopeless battle against dust, cobwebs, and misplaced stacks of periodicals. In tripping over one such stack I

came across *The Science and Mechanics Handbook Annual #7*, 1958, No. 557. This information was taken from the inside front cover. The outside merely says *Science Experimenter* Volume 1.

Want a Van de Graaf generator? 150,000 or 250,000 volts? The plans are on page #39. What about a Tesla coil? If 60,000 volts will do, see page 65. A Wimshurst static machine? The plans on page #115 provide 60,000 volts. Even the lowly Jacob's Ladder found a spot on page #136, and it's good for 15,000 volts.

All these projects have complete and easily-understood plans along with helpful hints about not frying yourself. You may have to substitute parts that have become dated, but if you're like me, you might find it preferable to aisle 8.

---

#### [6] Jeh

- by Nancy Flowers III°

I Become as a vessel of the Nile, the Lapis Elixir, immortality's pyre, Serpilion, Semenda, phoenix' fire. As Jeh I awaken the serpent; as Jahi the terrible lust; as Druj, leader of dæmons, destroyer of trust. Destroyer of day, I invoke thee. I become thee. I name myself Jeh.

---

#### [7] Ruby Tablet Status Report

- by Michael A. Aquino VI°

The *Ruby Tablet of Set* - that part of the *Jeweled Tablets of Set* available to Adepts of the Temple, has been in a state of near-suspended animation for longer than I care to remember. The problem has never been one of lack of interest, but rather of the time necessary to get this document into a state of update justifying its release. I have been hoping that a block of reasonably-free time would present itself in the last couple of years, but this just hasn't proven to be the case. There are just too many front-burner events and "necessities" taking place.

On one hand, I don't like to see the Temple publish anything for its membership that is not in complete and #A-1 condition. On the other hand there is understandable impatience on the part of many Adepts and members of the Priesthood to see **something** on the table, so that it can at least be utilized in an "as-is" fashion pending eventual refinement.

I have recently discussed this with the Priesthood, both in individual contacts and via the Priesthood newsletter *Hieroglyphs*. What will happen is this:

Priest Roger Whitaker has volunteered to take on the Editorship. At Set-VII I will give him the camera copy (as complete to date - about an inch-thick stack of paper). Together with Executive



Director Wade, Whitaker will develop a system for making the *RT* available for any II°+ Initiate.

*RT* submissions will go directly to Whitaker, and he will announce the availability of update packages as a significant amount of updates becomes available. [If he tries to do this on a piece-by-piece basis, he'll go nuts!] As is the case with other special publications of the Temple, the donation asked for each basic *RT* and update package will simply cover the cost of reproducing, packaging, and mailing same. High-quality photocopying will be used.

The initial *RT* is bound to be a bit fragmentary - far more so than I would prefer - but the alternative is simply to sit on the entire *RT* until it's swollen to six inches or more. Most II°+s have indicated that they'd like to have a shot at it as it now is, so that at least the current-update process can get underway. So we'll try this out and see how well it flies.

The concept underlying the *RT* bears a little more discussion. It has sometimes been described as an "encyclopædia" of Setian magic and philosophy. It is more accurately a collection of papers written by Setians, classified by topic and the author's degree, in both exoteric and esoteric areas of interest. It is further broken down into "ritual" and "non-ritual" sections.

It is loose-leaf and keyed/ cross-referenced to the reading list where possible. The idea is to build up an integrated body of Setian knowledge from Setians past and present. Its loose-leaf design is deliberate, since the *RT* is intended to be added to [and subtracted from] as appropriate.

*RT* deletions are made only when an item becomes obsolete or superseded, not just because a Setian has left the Temple for any reason. Controversial items will sit side-by-side with generally-accepted ones. Editorial comments will be deliberately designed to display items in appropriate context, but not to either exalt or downplay.

My policy as High Priest is that all information within the Temple of Set will be available to the lowest degree-level possible unless there is a sound and sensible reason for withholding it. [For example, respect for Setians' personal privacy keeps the full membership roster restricted to the III°+ level.]

Since its inception in X/1975, the Temple has never believed that "occult secrets" are to be artificially kept from initiates of any degree. Our point of view is that, if you are able to understand and appreciate something, then you are ready for it. The only judgment that the Priesthood has to make is one of a very general "magical and philosophical maturity" on an individual's part. I'm sure we've all seen the soap operas which can result from giving sensitive information to individuals who are

intellectual adults but moral/emotional infants. That is what we're trying to avoid.

It has further been my policy that, if the Temple errs in the handling of information, it err on the side of placing **more** rather than less trust in its Initiates. We could have a perfectly trouble-free Temple if we hogged everything so close to our chests that no one knows nothing about anything or anyone. But that does no one any good either. So we try to get as much as we can out to our Initiates. If that means occasional soap opera, well, we just live with it as best we can. Hopefully there will be less soap as we go along.

The remaining two sections of the *Jeweled Tablets* - the *Onyx* (III°+) and *Sapphire* (IV°+) *Tablets* - are in good shape, although Priest Menschel (Editor of the *OT*) has been treading water on that item waiting for the *RT* to show up so he could avoid overlap.

The *Crystal Tablet* has been through an intense series of updates and expansions over the past couple of years, and is now a respectable "basic reference document" for Setians. You can expect to see periodic updates to it either in chunks or in bits and pieces along with Scroll mailings.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that the guiding philosophy behind the *CT* is that it provides you a set of tools, and an integral philosophy underlying their use - and that you must **then go out and use those tools and that philosophy yourself**.

All too often I hear some new Initiate saying: "Well, I read the *CT* and it was all very interesting, but now what else do you have to stimulate me?" The Temple of Set is a cooperative forum for Black Magicians, and an authoritative means for evaluating and "credentialing" them, but it should **never** be regarded as an "entertainment" device. We could configure ourselves to do that, but in that case we would be something other than an authentic Temple of Set in the precise sense of that term. I don't think I need to belabor this point - it is certainly emphasized enough in the *CT* itself - but it occasionally merits restating.

---

## [8] Book Review (sort of):

### *The Equinox #III-10*

- by Michael A. Aquino VI°

Two very significant things happened to the "Berkeley" O.T.O. in mid-XX/1985: A U.S. federal court decided that it was legally [at least within U.S. jurisdiction] **the** O.T.O., and its Caliph (senior initiate and chief executive) Grady McMurtry died.

The organization took several months to "shake itself out", and what ultimately resulted was the election of a New Yorker by the name of William

Breeze (formerly, I understand, with 93 Publishing in Canada) to the Caliphate. Another New Yorker - James Wasserman, a publisher once with Samuel Weiser and now with Inner Traditions - became the new Grand Secretary General. [We understand that James has recently resigned in favor of Antony Iannoti, a previous GSG from Berkeley who has moved to NYC.] Bill Heidrick of San Anselmo, California retained his office as Grand Treasurer General.

Breeze began his administration with two notable changes to the "Berkeley system":

(1) He concealed his name behind the pseudonym of "Hymenæus Beta" and decreed that the identities of the other principal officers should be similarly concealed. [This was a doomed decree in the case of GTG Heidrick, who was and is well-known by his ordinary name.]

(2) The O.T.O. newsletter - the *Magical Link*, formerly edited by Heidrick in a pleasantly bohemian style - emigrated to New York and now appears in immaculately-typeset elegance. A clear effort to "dress up" the O.T.O. seems underway. Despite the culture-shock of all this, the Berkeley brotherhood seems to be making a valiant effort to cooperate. [To appreciate the effort involved & sacrifice demanded, you have to spend a little time in Berkeley.]

My own position with regard to all of this is somewhat ambivalent. The Temple of Set and the O.T.O. are not connected in any formal way, although they have been informally friendly for several years [since Israel Regardie introduced us]. The "Crowley legacy" is only a small part of the Temple of Set's range of interests, while it is the "whole of the Law" for the O.T.O. At the same time we trace our lineage and authority back through the Church of Satan to the *Book of the Law*, which places me in the "wild card" position of being heir to Crowley's supernatural authority [not his organizational office] as the Beast 666.

While the O.T.O. and its officers are concerned with improving that organization in accordance with the model laid down by Crowley in the "blue" *Equinox* #III-1, therefore, I am more interested in the underlying **intent** of Crowley, which was simply to promote the apprehension and development of the individual "True Will" (alternatively the "Holy Guardian Angel") by whatever device he could - organizations, plays, poetry, journalism, and personal interaction.

Ironically it is Crowley's very genius which got in his way. His concepts and writings are so artistic, abundant, and elaborate that it is all too easy for a Thelemite to just luxuriate in them endlessly, measuring "initiation" according to "how much Crowley you know". And Crowley himself, while

stating a few warnings against this kind of imitation [see below], was sufficiently vulnerable to flattery to enjoy and even encourage it. During his lifetime initiates of the A.'.A.'. and O.T.O. rose and fell purely on his autocratic whim, and generally according to the extent they fed the fires of his vanity. Those initiates who survived his death with high grades or offices were accordingly individuals who, whatever else their differences, were united in their unquestioning adoration of him.

The history of the Crowley organizations after the passing of their founder was predictably marked by the spectacle of (a) bitter feuding between pretenders to authority, and (b) a race to see who could adulate Crowley the most. One is reminded of the medieval Protestants and Catholics slaughtering each other over who was the "more authentic" Christian!

The court decision in favor of the "Berkeley" O.T.O. came about because of an unusually abrasive pretender by the name of Marcelo Motta, who so infuriated so many Thelemites that they joined forces to pound him into the ground [which they did]. Nothing unifies "competitive Christians" like the presence of a "Satan"!

The O.T.O. is now in a state of post-Motta euphoria, which is accented by its new elegance. The real question is what will happen after the honeymoon's over. Will it settle down into comfortable organizationalism, with Crowley "stuffed and mounted over the mantelpiece" for all to worship, or will it become a functional vehicle for individual initiation, with Crowley regarded principally as a respected trailblazer? Early indications are inconclusive. The *Magical Link* is almost entirely Crowley-rah-rah, but it's had only a few issues to establish rapport with the membership. It may relax a bit once the new regime grows more comfortable in the saddle.

All of which is quite a prelude to a book review - but it is necessary if one is to understand and assess the book in question. The Crowley feud extended over into the *Equinoxes* as well, with Motta and probably one or two others putting out issues. This latest one, published by the "New York" O.T.O. under the Thelema Publications imprint, is that organization's attempt to bring the *Equinox* to heel as well.

Now the *Equinox* began its history as the periodical of the A.'.A.'. , not the O.T.O. - which was a German organization whose periodical was the *Oriflamme*. When Crowley, disillusioned with the organizational viability of the A.'.A.'. , moved in on the O.T.O., he brought the O.T.O. into increasingly more *Equinox* exposure at the tail end of Volume I. And it definitely hogs center stage in the "blue" *Equinox* - by which time Crowley seems to have



chucked any organizational effort on behalf of the A.'.A.'. , using it only as a “mysterioso” backup to his O.T.O. efforts.

The O.T.O. differs from the A.'.A.'. in two fundamental respects [well, at least one of them is fundamental, if you will pardon the pun]:

First, the O.T.O. is very simple from an organizational standpoint, being a variation on the Masonic model. The A.'.A.'. was a variation on the Golden Dawn structure, which was far more subtle, abstract, and difficult to administer.

Secondly, while the A.'.A.'. was “pure Thelema” - being wholly a vehicle for the identification and exercise of one’s True Will, the O.T.O. was simply Masonry with a “hidden secret” - that secret being sex magic. Despite a lot of esoteric camouflage, the idea behind sex magic is that if you pork someone while making a wish, you get it (IX°). Even better is anal sex (XI°), while masturbation can be resorted to if there are no partners handy (VIII°).

Sex magic is what Anton LaVey would call a great scheme for getting laid, since your justification is impressively presented to be “a great mystical awakening or magical working”. Thus you avoid the tedious business of trying to concoct other “meaningful” excuses and justifications.

So you could say that sex magic **does** work - as a Lesser Black Magical device for getting laid. As a Greater Black Magical device for accomplishing anything else, of course, it is preposterous. It violates the entire premise of Black Magic, which is that the effective Working requires a **focus of the will**, not the loss of one’s self in what the French so aptly term “the little death”. [Note that the lust ritual in the *Satanic Bible* employs focus of the will to guide events towards a lustfully-gratifying conclusion; it does not use sexual consummation as a medium for this focus, but rather as a ceremonial conclusion to the working.]

While sitting in the courtroom watching Judge Legge preside sternly over the Motta-Berkeley slug-out, I couldn’t help wondering if he had any idea he was ruling on which group had legal claim to anal sex as the supreme religious sacrament in the United States. I rather think not!

Anyhow, the present-day O.T.O. is sort of painted into a corner by this situation. It has built up a rich lore of non-sex-magic writings, which enable initiates so inclined to concentrate on things less carnal. But always in the background, lurking like Sauron in Mordor, is the doctrine of sex-magic-supreme: the “Sanctuary of the Gnosis” - or the “Temple of the East”, if you prefer the hidden meaning behind the O.T.O.’s name (whose initials intentionally form the Omega/Tau/Omega of the male genitals).

Over the years, in my correspondence first with Regardie, then with the Berkeley O.T.O., I took regular issue with the twin hags of sex-magic and Masonic gobbledegook that cling to the back of the O.T.O. concept. I argued, in my usual tactful fashion, for the jettisoning of the O.T.O. system in favor of the A.'.A.'. , which is free of both crippling defects and is, furthermore, “pure Thelema”. But the O.T.O. is a known quantity, easy to run, while reinstating the A.'.A.'. would entail a vast effort.

The standard line among contemporary Thelemites - invoked again by Breeze in his introduction to *Equinox* #III-10 - is that the O.T.O. is the organizational vehicle of Thelema, while the A.'.A.'. exists as a personal, mystical, quasi-astral path above & behind the scenes. The justification for this line is that Crowley used it himself in his later years [Cf. *Magick Without Tears*, etc.].

This is just so much bullshit. The organizational structure of the A.'.A.'. was clearly laid out in Volume I of the *Equinox* and elsewhere, and the “mystical line” was later used by Crowley simply to cover the embarrassing fact that the A.'.A.'. had fallen on its ass after the defections of J.F.C. Fuller and other crucial early members, and after the quasi-heresy of C.S. “Achad” Jones. Anton LaVey pulled much the same stunt in X/1975, when he attempted to cover up the disintegration of the Church of Satan by saying that it had “gone underground”.

The apparent purpose of *Equinox* #III-10 is to bring together in a single, easily-obtainable book the essential organizational documents of the O.T.O. To that extent it does its job well. If you are a new O.T.O.er, you can read this book and get just about everything on the O.T.O. that Crowley included at the tail-end of *Equinox* Volume I and in the “blue” *Equinox* #III- 1. You also get a selection of some basic Thelemite documents, such as the *Book of the Law* and the Gnostic Mass.

What you **don’t** get, however, is anything about the nature and structure of the A.'.A.'. - beyond the “line” referred to above. And there are many passages in the book which make sense only if you know, for example, what an A.'.A.'. Magus (9)=[2] is. In fact, unless you know your A.'.A.'. lore, Crowley’s design for the O.T.O. is always going to be unintelligible to you.

This is probably not apparent to the present O.T.O. leadership, most of whom have long since digested the A.'.A.'. [and G.'.D.'.] vernacular. But if I were a brand-new I° O.T.O., I would have a lot of unanswered questions after absorbing *Equinox* #III-10. [Even the inclusion of “One Star in Sight” would have made a big difference. But that would have brought the A.'.A.'. conspicuously before the reader’s attention - which is exactly what #III- 10

seems to be trying to avoid.]

In addition to the iconization of Crowley himself, #III-10 also serves up a rather pristine overview of the O.T.O. and its leadership over the decades. To anyone who has followed the 1947-1985 soap opera at all - and it is unparalleled in occultism for suds - this presentation of O.T.O. history as a serene, dignified, and logical sequence is more than a bit comic.

There is a rather sizable section at the end of the book devoted to a profile of Kenneth Anger and a listing & discussion of his films. This is fine as far as it goes, as Anger is an interesting subject. Whether or not knowledge of Anger's films is crucial to O.T.O. initiation is another question. I will digress to make one point about Anger which I think deserves mention - and which I have not seen made to date: He deserves, in my opinion, full credit for the concept of filmmaking which - two decades later - has surfaced "aboveground" as music video. Anger's *Magic Lantern Cycle* is far more subtle than MTV, of course, but he first mixed the ingredients of that particular stew.

So is *Equinox* #III-10 a good thing? Yes and no. Most positively, it exists. By doing so it makes at least some important Crowley writings readily available to aspiring Thelemites who can't otherwise obtain them [at a reasonable price].

Is it a well-balanced "basic handbook of Thelema"? No, because it avoids the essential and central lore of the A.'.A.'. and also obscures the fundamental sex-magic principle of the O.T.O., aside from which all of its philosophical writings and rituals are just a Crowley-variation on Masonic fluff. If what you really want is Masonry, then you'd be on more productive ground joining one of the many conventional Masonic organizations instead of tying yourself to the questionable reputation of the O.T.O. [which, per Crowley's unfortunate prescription, is also stuck with endorsing unrestricted drug use].

I haven't met William Breeze yet, so can't judge him as an individual. But Bill Heidrick and Jim Wasserman are nice, sincere people - and I gather from the Magical Link that the O.T.O. membership is generally an upbeat, enthusiastic group who are pitching in to help their new Caliph in his programs. We are faced with the odd situation of a bunch of people devoting a titanic amount of effort and impressive cooperation towards getting a machine into the air that, by all sane logic, shouldn't be able to fly at all. That certainly ought to count for something. And the O.T.O. has always behaved very decently and respectfully towards the Temple of Set, and that too ought to count for something.

So I find myself, as I have for some years now, kind of shaking my head and wishing them success

in keeping their strange contraption in the sky. I mean, like I said, the damn thing **is** flying!

I admit that my visions can never mean to other men as much as they do to me. I do not regret this. All I ask is that my results should convince seekers after truth that there is beyond doubt something worth while seeking, attainable by methods more or less like mine. I do not want to father a flock, to be the fetish of fools and fanatics, or the founder of a faith whose followers are content to echo my opinions. I want each man to cut his own way through the jungle.

\*\*\*

One of the reforms which I introduced into the A.'.A.'. was the abolition of all obligations of secrecy. They were never useful except as temptations to people to break them. The secret knowledge has quite adequate warders. I have learnt that I have only to tell the truth about almost anything to be set down at once as a liar.

- Aleister Crowley, *The Confessions*

---

### [9] **Book Review: *The Black Flame***

by Stanley G. Weinbaum

New York: Avon Books, 1969

- reviewed by Jim Grady II°

The world is in ruins, the victim of a long and costly war. Civilization is thrown back to medieval times with numerous warring city-states. All the knowledge of the previous world is lost - or so it seemed.

What has now become N'Orleans attracts the last of the scholars who see the "magic" that has been forgotten. They form the "Academy" and spend their days poring over the books left behind by the "Ancients". One of these scholars, Martin Sair, pursues the study of medicine and discovers the secret of immortality, which he discloses to Joaquin Smith. Smith, the Master, has a dream of reuniting the world. To realize his desire he rallies an army around his black banner bearing the Midgard Serpent and marches north.

The Master is accompanied by a young lady (his half-sister), who is described as being "Satanically beautiful". This creature, Princess Margaret aka the Black Flame, shows a wonderful knowledge of the human condition and manipulates people with uncontested ease. She too is immortal, and accompanies the Master on his 7/800-year-long conquest of the world.

There are few casualties in this war. Many chose not to resist the Master's advancing army. He shows a remarkable tolerance, even to those who



would kill him. He establishes law, virtually eradicates crime, appreciates art, and searches for the mathematics of the "Ancients". Despite this there are those who call him "evil". Minor revolts flare up, and the reader finds himself relieved when the "evil" Master stamps them out.

And the Black Flame? In one description: "She's dangerous - poisonous - deadly! You mustn't even look at her. She's driven men - I don't know how many - to suicide. She's killed men - she's tortured them. Don't ever go near her, Tom! If she saved you, it wasn't out of mercy, because she's merciless - ruthless - utterly pitiless!"

Unfortunately the beginning of the book seems a little hackneyed and the ending rather anticlimactic. However the middle is engrossing, and some of the observations are intriguing.

---

### [10] Alien

by Julie Stout II°

Alien one, like me, where do you come from? What is your true purpose? I know there is more to you than you have shown us. Reveal yourself to me, won't you? You see, I'm also an alien, but to my own race.

---

### [11] O.K.,

#### Let's Make Some Heads and Tails ...

- by Michael A. Aquino VI°

[Ed. note: The following was written in the year XX by Dr. Aquino to a new Initiate who had asked some questions of him.]

Human life is seen as something "distasteful and disgusting" precisely because we can conceptually contrast it to something better. [It is this ability to conceptualize something other than the natural universe that is, as I have said in *Black Magic*, the "proof" of the existence of Set and of the cosmology of the Temple of Set.]

So, unlike other religions, we have no "justification" for the irritations of natural existence in terms of it being a ticket into a better afterlife, etc. We are here in fleshy shells, and the environment is sometimes pleasant, more often annoying, and occasionally downright painful.

When a child finds out that Santa Claus doesn't exist, all of the bananas and cookies left by the fireplace are recognized as futile gestures. When [enlightened] humanity finds out that there is no God to care about religious antics, there is an immediate sense of futility.

This is best expressed in existentialism, in which the overwhelming "alone-ness" and **entire** responsibility for not only the commission but the

judgment of one's actions is recognized to rest with the individual. Existentialism is inadequate because it throws up its hands in despair having asked the question; then it takes a kind of masochistic pleasure in merely continuing to suffer with this dreadful knowledge.

In my quest for wisdom I went through the classics of existentialism during 1968-9 CE - the year prior to my decision to join the C/S. I turned to the C/S not because I felt it offered an immediate solution, but because it **opened the door to a possible solution** instead of just writhing in self-pity. I have since concluded that my decision - and the presumption on which it was based - was well-justified.

Set is not YHVH with a long nose, who will "justify" your life by officially "approving" of it or you. Set merely [!] took an element out of the natural universe and gave it a **separate consciousness**. You are thus in the position of "justifying" and "approving" your own conscious existence - which is what we mean by saying that a self-aware Setian is his or her own god.

The magician's ability to create - and to personally move in and out of - a number of subjective universes as "variations" upon the natural/objective one is what frees him from being worn down by the "3D nitty-gritty" you snarl about. Why should you care if the OU doesn't "validate" the SUs? That is **your** prerogative.

It is a bit early in your initiatory journey to know just what the degree system measures. [Actually the knowledge of the human tragedy in its entirety is a characteristic of the IV°, which is a degree very close to Buddhism in its Understanding. "All is sorrow," said the Buddha, and urged escape from the tragedy of being human by means of nirvana, or the obliteration of the individual consciousness. A Magus V° **creates** a conceptual "way out". There was no "Magus" for existentialism, but there was for Satanism - and then for the Æon of Set as well.] [We'll get around to Ipsissimi some other time.]

You should be very glad that there is no savior around. A savior removes your prerogative to be your own god and assumes it himself. Would you prefer that I "validate" your existence? It might be a short-term relief, but in the long-term you would come to miss that prerogative - unless you are what Aristotle called a "natural slave", or what Setians would call a natural animal without the Gift of Set.

If you think about it for awhile, I think you will also decide that, having tasted godhood - with all its loneliness and self-responsibility - you would not exchange it for a gilded cage. [Cf. the *Star Trek* episode "Who Mourns for Adonis?", I think the title was, in which Kirk & Co., after running around

the galaxy as “gods”, declined to become pets of Apollo.]

Similarly I would never accept a “saviorship” role. I might think that I could do much good, but it would be limited to (a) my conscious interaction with my “disciples” and (b) to my ability to retain an undistorted perspective. So there might be a short-run success - but at the almost inevitable expense of a long-run failure. There is no better example of this than Anton’s. You are who you will to be, and you are anywhere [including Jupiter] you will to be.

You are the one who cares, and about such things and for such reasons as you determine. You may admit various factors from the OU, but you may also admit various factors from one of more SUs.