The Order of the Vampyre of
The Temple of Set
A Scholarly Study
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The topic

The Order of the Vampyre is an international organization. Its members use the image of the vampyre as a model for their spiritual growth. I first came into contact with the Order of the Vampyre a few years ago when I met one of my informants. I learned that vampyrism does not always have to include the drinking of the blood and that for some people the vampyre represents something more than just the blood drinking living dead that we know from horror films. I found out that there are mature individuals in the world who take the vampyric model seriously and who have sensibly integrated the vampyric model as a part of their own being.

When I looked into what had been written about the Order of the Vampyre I only found very vague descriptions such as J. Gordon Melton’s:

[In the Order of the Vampyre] Vampyrism is a kind of extension of human consciousness into extremes of human desires and behaviour. It is the purpose of the Order of the Vampyre not merely to illustrate (or caricature) these extremes, as artists and novelists regularly do, but rather to identify and understand them. These extremes are the "rages of the raw human soul" that have been all but completely suppressed by the mind’s fear of looking deep within itself.

The official statement of the Order of the Vampyre gave me a little bit better picture of the organization, it reads:

Members of this Order will strive to bring to Life those qualities and aspects of our potential which have long been considered to be dead, undead, or just plain latent… Some of the Order’s present research involves our getting acquainted with the characteristics of the Vampyric Being. We are not looking at the blood-sucking gore that has made Dracula and others like him the archetypical Vampyres of the legend. But we are looking at some of the alleged powers of the creature, such as invisibility and manipulation.

Nevertheless, I remained unclear about how the vampyre is understood in the Order of the Vampyre and about why the vampyre is a good model for their spiritual growth and also about how the members of the Order of the Vampyre use the vampyric model in practice. Since my informant let me know that in the Order of the Vampyre there is no one single approach and practice, I saw no other possibility but to contact as many members of the Order as possible, and to study their practices myself.

The purpose of this paper is to give a general picture of the Order of the Vampyre, of its structure, its beliefs and of its practices. Also, it is my intention to place to Order of the Vampyre in the field of today’s new religious movements.
1.2. Previous research

To my knowledge, the Order of the Vampyre has not been properly studied until now. Researchers such as J. Gordon Melton and Norine Dresser have only shortly mentioned the Order of the Vampyre in their books as a vampiric organization among others.

The study of the vampiric phenomenon by folklorists has mainly focused on folk beliefs about vampires as blood drinking living dead and as supernatural beings. Modern study of vampirism also seems to just concentrate on the phenomenon of blood drinking. Generally, as my smaller proseminar paper An Overlook on the Definitions of the Vampire and Modern Day Vampirism showed, vampires are thought of as mythical creatures and vampirism is thought of as something that is practiced by astrayed teenagers or by the mentally imbalanced.

1.3. Research material

The primary source of information were the answers to a questionnaire that I sent to some members of the Order of the Vampyre. Other sources that I used were the official www-pages of the Temple of Set and other material on the internet connected to the practices of the Order of the Vampyre. In order to define the Order of the Vampyre as a religion and in order to place it on the arena of today’s new religions, I used a book edited by John R. Hinnells called A Handbook of Living Religions and Paul Heelas’ book The New Age Movement. Of the literature that dealt with the Order of the Vampyre I used Norine Dresser’s American Vampires: Fans, Victims and Practitioners and J. Gordon Melton’s The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead. Of the literature that dealt with the Temple of Set I used the Temple’s own publication the Crystal Tablet of Set, that includes the Temple’s founder’s work called Black Magic and the official statement of the Order of the Vampyre. In addition to these I used J. Gordon Melton’s books The Encyclopedia of American Religions and Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America that had chapters on the Temple of Set. I also used a book called Lords of the Left Hand Path by an American Stephen E. Flowers who holds a Ph.D. and is in the USA a well-known scholar, teacher, writer, translator and editor in the fields of contemporary and ancient religions and magical traditions. As a reference I also used the pro-graduate work Setin Temppeli uususkontojen typologioiden valossa (“The Temple of Set in the Light of Typologies of New Religions”) by Minna Rikkinen who is a Helsinki University graduate from the theological department.

1.4. The method

The main method of this study was an interview and the usage of reference material. I conducted the interview through e-mail. I was able to make contact with 12 members of the Order of the Vampyre. I sent each one a questionnaire of 40 questions from basic questions to questions on personal beliefs and practices. I sent a separate questionnaire to the Grand Master of the Order of the Vampyre that had 30 questions. In addition to questions on his personal beliefs I asked him questions about the emergence of the Order
of the Vampyre, organizational questions and questions about the practices of the Order.
Of the twelve to whom I sent the questionnaire I received an answer from 9.

The Order of the Vampyre is a part of a larger religious organization called the Temple of
Set. Because the philosophy of the Order of the Vampyre is tightly connected to that of
the Temple of Set I will give a short introduction to the Temple’s philosophy in chapter
2. In chapters 3 and 4 the main source has been the interview material. In chapter 3 I will
explain the emergence of the OV, its organizational structure and its system of initiation.
Chapter 4 will deal with the beliefs and chapter 5 with the practices of the OV. In chapter
6 I will attempt to place the OV on the arena of new religious phenomena.

2. THE TEMPLE OF SET

2.1. The emergence of the Temple of Set

The Temple of Set is a registered church founded in the USA in 1975. It was founded by
a group of former members of the Church of Satan. The Temple of Set is dedicated to an
ancient Egyptian deity called Set.

2.2. The organization

The Temple of Set is managed by a Council of Nine, that appoints the High Priest and the
executive director of the Temple of Set. The Temple of Set is a corporation owned by the
members of its priesthood (degrees from III° - VI°).

2.2.1. The structure of the organization

The Temple of Set is composed of many different Orders. To clarify its initiatory system
the Temple of Set compares itself to a University where the different Orders represent
different faculties. During their basic education the students of this University can
participate in introductory lectures of the various faculties. At the end of their basic
education the student will choose one of the faculties and "graduate" from there. All the
faculties are a part of the one University and work together with it and the general
atmosphere of that University will affect all of the faculties. One of the many Orders of
the Temple of Set is called the Order of the Vampyre. It focuses on using the idea of the
vampyre in the individual’s initiation.

2.2.2. The system of initiation

The Temple of Set does not accept as its members people who are under 18.

The Temple of Set has six initiatory degrees: Setian I°, Adept II°, Priest/Priestess of Set
III°, Magister/Magistra Templi IV°, Magus/Maga V° and Ipsissimus/Ipsissima VI°.
These degrees are said to serve as recognitions of objective changes in the Initiate’s level
of being. They are not regarded as any kind of rewards.
The first degree, Setian I°, is about mutual evaluation. The Temple of Set has a time limit of two years for the first degree. Within this time the first degree Setian will have to reach the second degree of an Adept II°.

The second degree, Adept II°, is a recognition by the Temple of Set that the individual is an adept black magician and that the Temple of Set is a suitable environment for the individual. The majority of the members in the Temple of Set are not expected to go further than the second degree in the Temple’s initiatory system. An Adept II° is allowed to apply for membership in an Order of the Temple of Set.

The third degree, Priest/Priestess of Set III°, is about elevating from the human level to that of the divine. The Temple of Set describes the third degree as opening a specific door: the consciousness of the individual merges with the consciousness of Set, however, without losing one’s self consciousness or one’s identity.

The fourth degree, Magister/Magistra IV°, continues what the third began. As a fourth degree the individual continues the merging with Set’s consciousness and gains complete understanding of the Æon of Set. The fourth degree is allowed to establish Orders in the Temple of Set.

The fifth degree, Magus V°, has created a completely new model of self evolution for the Temple of Set.

The sixth degree, Ipsissimus/Ipsissima VI°, has brought his/her work to an end.

2.3. About the basic concepts of the Temple of Set

In this chapter I will explain some of the basic concepts of the Temple of Set and of the Order of the Vampyre. These include the subjective and the objective universe; the left-hand path and the right-hand path; Set and white and black magic. I will give here a short introduction.

2.3.1. The subjective and the objective universe

The word *universe* has a special meaning in the Temple of Set. According to the essay Black Magic:

The *Universe* (with a capital "U") is defined as the totality of existence, both known and unknown by humanity. Most people think of this term as identifying the vast expanses of space and the masses of animate and inanimate matter & energy occupying it. The Temple of Set defines that concept as the *objective universe* (with a small "u").
The Temple of Set divides the Universe into the objective universe and the subjective universe. In his book The Lords of the Left-Hand Path Flowers writes:

The objective universe is the natural cosmos -- or world order. This is essentially mechanical or organic, i.e. it is ruled by certain predictable laws manifested in a time/space continuum. The objective universe, including the laws governing it, can be equated with "nature" as well as with "God" in the Judeo-Christian tradition. All of natural science as well as orthodox theology is predicated on the concept that these laws of the objective universe can be discovered and quantified or described in a purely rational manner in the first instance or by "divine revelation" in the other. When considered closely it is evident that what is usually referred to as "God" in orthodox religions is actually identical to that which he is said to create -- the natural/mechanical/organic order - or cosmos.

The subjective universe is the "world" of any sentient entity within the universe. There are as many subjective universes as there are sentient beings. The subjective universe is the particularized manifestation of consciousness within the universe. Usually experience of the objective universe is only indirect as information concerning it must come through the subjective universe. Curiously enough the subjective universe does not seem to be governed by the same natural/mechanical/organic laws as the objective universe -- in fact this is the main distinction between them. The subjective universe has the option of acting in a non-natural way, i.e. free from the limitations of the world of five senses and three dimensions.

In the Temple of Set the subjective universe is understood as the soul, the self and the consciousness. Thus anything that is left outside this self is understood as the objective universe.

2.3.2. Set

According to the beliefs of the Temple of Set the ancient Egyptian deity Set has been a model for the Satan of Christian belief. Flowers explains the interpretation of the Temple of Set about this Prince of Darkness following:

Each particular instance of this soul -- this phenomenon of the subjective universe -- implies the existence of a first form or general principle from which all the particular manifestations are derived. In the most philosophically refined of the schools of the left-hand path this first principle of isolate intelligence is identified as the "Prince of Darkness", or the ultimate deity of the left-hand path. This is the archetype of the Self from which all particular selves are derived. This is also an element of the non-natural universe which objectively belongs to the universe itself. In this way the Prince of Darkness can be seen as an independent sentient being in the objective universe because this is the very principle of that quality in the universe. Humanity is the only species we know of which shares that quality.

In the Temple of Set it is therefore understood that human intelligence is of non-natural origin and that the Egyptian deity called Set represents the giver of this non-natural intelligence.
2.3.3. The Left-Hand Path and the Right-Hand Path

The Temple of Set, by its own definition, represents the so called Left-Hand Path in opposition to the Right-Hand Path. The Temple of Set describes the Left-Hand Path and the Right-Hand Path in the following way:

The Left-Hand Path (LHP) involves the conscious attempt to preserve and strengthen one’s isolate psychecentric existence against the objective universe (OU) while apprehending, comprehending and influencing a varying number of subjective universes (SU).

The Right-Hand Path (RHP) involves the conscious attempt to dissolve or merge the self with the objective universe (OU).

2.3.4. Magic

The difference between white magic and black magic is tightly connected to making distinction between the Left-Hand Path and the Right-Hand Path. Flowers explains the difference between white and black magic:

In a precise sense the distinction between White and Black Magic is simply that White Magic is a psychological methodology for the promotion of union with the universe and pursuing aims in harmony with those of the universe, while Black Magic is such a methodology for the exercise of independence from the universe and pursuing self-oriented aims.

The Black Magic in the Temple of Set is divided in to two sub-groups: lesser black magic (LBM) and greater black magic (GBM). The Temple of Set explains the difference between the two as follows:

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

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

3. THE ORDER OF THE VAMPIRE

3.1. About the interview

The group of informants consists of 4 women and 5 men. Their age is from 24 upwards. One of them is a Canadian, seven are Americans and one of them is Finnish. Their affiliation in the Temple of Set varies from 4 years to 21 years and in the Order of the Vampyre from one year to 13 years. The majority of the informants are also members in some other order of the Temple of Set. Only one of them is not a member in any other of the Temple’s orders. All of the informants have an academic education.
Two of the informants are Adept (II°) of the Temple of Set, five are members of the Priesthood (III°), one is a Magister Templi (IV°) and one is a Magus (V°). One of the informants is a Master of the Order of the Vampire, one is the High Priest of the Temple of Set and one is the Grand Master of the Order of the Vampire, i.e. one of the Order’s founders.

I have presented those answers that best cover the ideas of the majority or in those instances where the answers had much variety to them I have presented them all.

3.2. The emergence of the Order of the Vampire

The Order of the Vampire was founded in 1984. It was founded by two members of the Temple of Set, the other one being The Vampire Harmachis. Both of the founders are still acting Grand Masters of the Order today. The Order of the Vampire was founded as a result of a series of so called MetaMind Workings (see chapter 3.3.3.); these were a series of astral-telepathic experiments. In these Workings the founders of the Order of the Vampire, the Grand Masters repeatedly experienced the manifestation of the Vampire. The identification of the manifestation as Vampyric was done on the basis of various "feelings". According to The Vampire Harmachis "The impressions surfaced as deep-seated feelings of timelessness, of not being constrained to the usual sensory dimensions. There was the ebb and flow - much like a pulse- of what we took to be a universal vampyric energy". He explained that as a result of the manifestation of the Vampire in the Workings "all that was experienced was heightened, quickened by a catalyst". This catalyst they knew to be Vampyric by nature. The Vampire Harmachis also said that he felt "an tangible, audible ‘cry’ from archetypal Forms needing expression, needing contemporary experiences’. The traditional image of the vampire surfaced in some Workings also.

The purpose of the Order of the Vampire, as explained by The Vampire Harmachis, is to "allow individualized expression of the archetypal Vampire". The Grand Masters also wanted the Order of the Vampire to "serve as a conduit or communications medium through which - to the extend that they are ‘real’ and external to us- vampyric Beings would find and refine their expressions, allowing us as human vessels to evolve all that was and is Vampyric into a new ‘race’ of vampyric Beings".

3.3. The organization

The number of the members in the Order of the Vampire is confidential information and they do not have an official headquarters. The Order of the Vampire has two sub-organizations which they call Elements. These are the Arkte Element and the MetaMind Element.
3.3.1. Communication

Generally, the members of the Order of the Vampyre work alone, but communication with other members is important. Communication within the Order of the Vampyre takes place through two intra Order newsletters The Nightwing and The Vampyre Papers. The members of the Order of the Vampyre gather together in regional, national and international conclaves. The Vampyre Harmachis explained that the locations and dates of these meetings as well as the amounts of attendants are not public information.

3.3.2. The Arkte Element

Arkte is an Element of the Order of the Vampyre, it was founded in 1994 by the Grand Masters of the Order of the Vampyre. The purpose of the Arkte Element according to it's founder is "the defense and protection of animals, and bringing to Justice those who harm them in any way, including for research and experimentation". Membership in the Arkte Element is not obligatory for the members of the Order of the Vampyre and it is open also to those outside the Order of the Vampyre and in some occasions even non-members of the Temple of Set are allowed to participate in their Workings. The members of the Arkte Element are referred to as Arkte Warriors. The Arkte Element is not a radical action group, according to it's founder "at no time will any physical violence be used… Rather we will Work through magical and practical means to accomplish our goals"

3.3.3. The MetaMind Element

The MetaMind is an Element of the Order of the Vampyre which is open to all members of the Temple of Set. The purpose of the MetaMind Element is to explore and to develop the powers of the mind. It offers a possibility to approach phenomena that are normally considered as paranormal from an initiatory and personal perspective. Developing the powers of the mind means re-acquiring and fine tuning the sensory skills one already has. The MetaMind element attempts to find the hidden/forgotten aspects of skills which are already known such as hearing, vision and touch. Re-acquiring these hidden aspects of our normal abilities will enable paranormal skills such as telepathy, clairvoyance and psychometry. In addition to this, The Vampyre Harmachis says that the MetaMind also attempts to "develop states of empathy with other living creatures; magicians and animals." In this respect the MetaMind works closely with the Arkte element.

3.4. The system of initiation

3.4.1. The GrandMasters

The Order of the Vampyre recognises three levels of skills, knowledge and understanding among its members: 1) the Grand Masters, 2) the Masters of the Order and 3) Initiates. According to The Vampyre Harmachis, the Grand Masters "provide direction and leadership to all other members". They are "policy makers, the final arbiters concerning entrance into the Order".
The Grand Masters also represent "the finely tuned living embodiments of what the Vampyre has evolved into at this stage in history". Only the Grand Masters can recognize a Master of the Order of the Vampyre.

3.4.2. The Masters of the Order of the Vampyre

According to The Vampyre Harmachis, to be Recognized as a Master of the Order of the Vampyre the candidate is expected to have "mastered the principles of the Vampyre, of Arkte, or of the MetaMind". He continues that like the GrandMasters "the Masters of the Order are embodiments of the vampyre; those who project and portray the many faces and masques of this kind of Being effortlessly", and that the "Masters of the Order of the Vampyre are those very few who have Become vampyric expressions, each unique in her or his own way". The Masters of the Order of the Vampyre are allowed to accept new members in the Order of the Vampyre.

3.4.3. The initiates

The Order of the Vampyre chooses its members very carefully and lets only those members of the Temple of Set apply for membership who have been recognized to the second degree of an Adept (II°). The reason for this, according to The Vampyre Harmachis, is "quality control". He says that "the Temple of Set has always claimed to be an elite organization. It’s a collective of those who Will, who Dare, and who Know". The Vampyre Harmachis thinks that membership in the Temple of Set is a huge and public step towards proclaiming one’s noble heritage. Entering an Order will refine the member’s specialities, strengths and elitism. According to The Vampyre Harmachis, restricting membership in the Order of the Vampyre to those who are "well grounded and well rounded in the practice of Black Magic" is the best way to maintain the Order of the Vampyre as an effective environment.

The Vampyre Harmachis says that "all OV members, Grand Masters and Masters included, are expected to participate". The members are expected to be active and to contribute to the Order in some notable way each year. These contributions may take the form of "articles for Nightwing, Vampyric Workings, a proactive stance on behalf of our animal friends, significant correspondence and communication in the Order". The members are expected to use the Order of the Vampyre as a tool for their own development.

The Masters and the Grand Masters of the Order of the Vampyre expect the new applicant to have thoroughly investigated all other Orders in the Temple of Set and to have come to the conclusion that the Order of the Vampyre’s goals are such that they can and want to achieve. The Vampyre Harmachis says, that the Order of the Vampyre is "particularly keen on knowing that members come into the Order with ideas which they’re interested in making into realities".
4. THE BELIEFS OF THE ORDER OF THE VAMPIRE

4.1. The attraction

Before going to the actual beliefs of the informants, I wanted to know where their attraction to the figure of the vampyre had begun and what is it that attracted them to the Order of the Vampyre.

Most of the informants traced the beginnings of their interest in vampyres to vampire films or vampire literature. Only one of the informants got interested in the vampyre as an archetype after joining the Temple of Set. For Tapio, the root of his attraction in the vampyre lies in the fact that he is "interested in things and beings that differ from their surroundings, that manifest individual, autonomous, separate Self" and that the "Vampyre is one manifestation of such Being". Giftzahn, who got interested in the vampyre through works of the Romantic poets, told that "sex and death are perhaps the most primal aspects of existence and they are personified to me in the magnificent figure of the Vampyre". As some of the most fascinating qualities of the Vampyre, Giftzahn mentioned "sensuousness… strength, invisibility, elegance, charm, immortality and the ability to manipulate the objective universe".

Other things that lead to the member’s joining the Order of the Vampyre were with Tapio the need to investigate the "relationship of soul and body" and with Sila an interest toward "exploring facets of the Vampyre and animal human relationships". For Count Yorga it was the need to develop "emotional maturity, self-empowerment and self-esteem" and also the need to work in "an environment which supported the development of the isolate part of human nature, intelligence, self-sufficiency etc."

4.2. Initiation and Xeper

The Temple of Set calls itself an initiatory organization, i.e. their main goal is self improvement. The goal of Setian self improvement is called Xeper. In the Order of the Vampyre part of initiation is simply called the OV process (Order of the Vampyre process). Here I will introduce the informants’ definitions on the central terms initiation, OV process and Xeper.

Count Yorga, a Master of the Order of the Vampyre, defines initiation followingly:

Initiation is the process of self evaluation, which leads to the possibility for several specific states: 1) the recognition & activation of the human legacy, or the possibility/potentiality inherent within human kind’s physical, mental, emotional & spiritual origins, 2) the living of a more comprehensive and interactive life/lifestyle and 3) the transcendence of physical Death towards a greater & singular reality beyond the man-made myths of conventional, monotheistic religions.

Initiation was also defined as "self-actualization" that "is not a single happening but a life-long process" by Tapio and as "reaching a new level of Self realisation and actualisation" by Sila. BlackWulf said that initiation "could be likened to willed
evolution" and Setnakt explained that initiation is "the process whereby latent truths may be made manifest to both the consciousness and the objective world" and "the process of changing the world around one’s self to increase opportunities for freedom, wisdom and pleasure”.

The OV process, according to Count Yorga, is "to make life a vital and interactive experience" and "through this gain deeper insight into both the Self and the possibility for a ‘subjective immortality’ beyond physical death”. For Setnakt the OV process "is one of recreating the totality of life into a magical working". Tapio explained the OV process as "doing Initiation with the Vampyric role-model, about Coming Into Being through it, and in the process creating personal understanding and manifestation of Vampyre". For Giftzahn the OV process is a "matter of discovering, Working with, shaping and creating the Vampyric Essence within the initiate’s own psyche”.

The goal of the OV process, according to Count Yorga, is "to transcend this ‘life´ with as many opportunities for further experience and most importantly ‘memory´ than is normally the case”. Other informants saw the goal of the OV process as "self-transformation" and "self-actualization", "obtaining understanding of ourselves, nourishing and enriching our lives” and as Giftzahn put it "achieving Life in Death… surviving the process of death as an intact consciousness and having the power to Remanifest as a noble of Set on this plane or another for as long as I desire”.

Xeper is a term on which the philosophy of the Temple of Set is built on. The High Priest of the Temple of Set, Setnakt, tells that Xeper is an Egyptian term which means "I have come into being”. Setnakt says that the term Xeper "reflects the one truth that any sentient being can be sure of - that his or her existence is both real and his or her responsibility”. According to Setnakt "it is a truth that makes one aware of one’s divine nature as well as acutely aware of the need to steer one’s human nature in a direction that is unique”.

Count Yorga described Xeper as "an active process and/or transformative oriented endeavor". He clarified that "through effective investigation and action an individual can experience transformation of himself, his environment and possibly the other individuals within that environment”. According to Count Yorga Xeper is a "self-referral process" and "serves to further reinforce that fact that ‘change´ is possible in one’s awareness and ability to act as a direct result". For Sekhmet, Xeper "is an elevated change in the state of Being that can lead to Initiation” and for Sila Xeper means "to willfully increase the manifestation of your own Being”. Lady Aphanos explained Xeper as a "willed self-evolution that comes about as a conscious response to situations in your life”. She also said that Xeper is "the process of distilling one’s life into the components which are needed vs. which are not needed and should be changed”. This way, according to Lady Aphanos, "energy is freed up to invest in the creation process”. Giftzahn further clarified that "the basic principles of Xeper are self-trust and hard work".
4.3. The Vampyre in the Temple of Set

4.3.1. Breaking the traditional model of a vampire

The Order of the Vampyre is not interested in the traditional image of the vampyre "the blood sucking gore" as it is referred to in the official statement of the Order. This chapter will attempt to clarify how the vampyre of the Order of the Vampyre differs from the traditional image of the vampire. Also, how the term vampirism is understood in the Order and what part blood plays in the informants mindset, if any.

The essence of the Vampyre, according to an essay that was recommended to me by an informant, will be found when all the negative qualities of the image of the traditional vampire are distilled. What is then left is an "extremely sensual, sexual, aristocratic, magically and physically powerful Being". According to this essay if a person learns to emulate the powers of the vampire preserving its elegance and aristocracy a magical personality/persona that can be called a Vampyre will be born. The Order of the Vampyre distinguishes its archetype from the traditional vampire by using the old English spelling of the word. The Vampyre is a person who emulates the best qualities of the mythical vampire and uses them as tools for his/her own transformation. According to The Vampyre Harmachis, "The Vampyre is a Living, Awakened creature which seeks to immortalize its core Self or soul". Whereas a vampire "is the popularized Hollywood version of the ´undead´ (read unthinking or unaware) and static creature which seems to exist only to gratify its physical needs".

Vampyrism in the Order of the Vampyre, according to The Vampyre Harmachis, is "the act of Being a Vampyre". The Vampyre Harmachis clarifies: "when you first emulate, then assimilate, them apply what you have assimilated in an individualized form, you are putting to practical use what you have come to understand, what you have internalized". He has also said that emulating on its own is not important in the Order of the Vampyre, "emulating the traditional vampire is not one of our goals…. we are interested in tools… such practices are subject to alteration, to being redefined or even to be discarded". According to The Vampyre Harmachis, vampyrism in the Order of the Vampyre has nothing to do with the so called psychic vampirism. Psychic vampirism, according to The Vampyre Harmachis, "shows a complete lack of regard and respect for one’s fellow Initiate and more often than not is ´practiced´ by non-Initiates".

Blood, which is often connected to the traditional vampirism that we have come accustomed to from vampire films, serves only as a metaphor in the Order of the Vampyre. According to Count Yorga blood as a metaphor stands for two things; "1) the need to respect life and 2) the need to push the envelope at the same time". He continues that "if a balance is found, Xeper can become the result". According to Sila "blood is an essential life giving element; blood and life are both very precious things". BlackWulf says that there is "an alchemical angle to blood being equated with life and the Vampyre ´metaphorically´ drinking blood drinks deeply of life. So the Vampyre is one who is actually rooted firmly in life". Giftzahn thinks that human blood contains "the secrets of
our existence - past, present and future". She explained that "in seeking the Darkness within ourselves we access the Mysteries of Life and Death, not only of our race but of ourselves". According to Setnakt the Order of the Vampyre sees that "the quintessence of life should be enjoyed to the fullest by those who would live as gods, not reserved for such fictional entity as YHWH". For Sekhmet blood is "symbology and an affirmation of the `immortal´ life force within".

4.3.2. The reality of the Vampyre

All the informants thought of themselves as being Vampyres. From the answers to the questionnaire I could distinguish that there are at least two different theories (and combinations) within the Order of the Vampyre about what the Vampyre is. According to the first theory a Vampyre is its own species/race (either ancient or in the process of being born). According to the other theory a Vampyre is an exemplary model for self development and the Vampyre is only as real as individuals manifest it as part of their own being.

According to The Vampyre Harmachis the Vampyre is "an ancient Being, an archetypal creature that lived prior to man’s emergence, lives even now, and will survive man’s (spiritual) decay". The Vampyre Harmachis explained that before the Order of the Vampyre was founded he had felt the existence of something that he thought of as alien, either extraterrestrial or metaterrestrial. This something he thought of as being vampyric race separate from the human race. According to The Vampyre Harmachis this alien life-form is still evolving and dependent on human beings.

According to Giftzahn "these ancient ones (Vampyres) are sublime beings closely aligned to humans". Nevertheless, Giftzahn thinks of the Vampyre as another species because "they are more than what they seem, they exist in the realms of myth and legend." Giftzahn also commented that "there are humans who emulate Vampyres… in this respect, Vampyres are human, but I do think it’s possible we (humans) are evolving into another species." According to Lady Aphanos the Vampyre is "more than a human being, more than an animal, but not an altogether different species". For her the Vampyre "acts as a bridge between internal personal evolutionary stages of one’s own consciousness. It is not exactly preconsciousness, but it partly stems from an awareness of primal states of Being". Lady Aphanos said that the Vampyre represents also "the evolved Self, and the Self that is directing the flow of essence from the present state-of-being".

Count Yorga thinks that the belief in the existence of Vampyres is "relative to ones definition" and adds that according to his definition they are real because he claims their implied legacy. According to Count Yorga "a Vampyre in essence inspires a desire for human perfection and progressive transformation, which potentially goes beyond the idea of a specific separate species". Count Yorga feels that he is a human being but also a Vampyre. Being a Vampyre gives him "a greater realm of possibility toward mental, emotional and spiritual evolution".
Setnakt does not believe in the existence of Vampyres. Tapio does not believe in the existence of Vampyres "if the term vampyre is defined traditionally - as a living corpse who sleeps days in a grave and at nights drinks the blood of the living" Tapio does believe however, in the existence of vampires "if by the term is meant a human being who seeks Self-actualization via Work on the role-model of a Vampyre" . Sila thinks of herself as a Vampyre simply because she consumes life from other living things in order to perpetuate her own.

For some of the informants the Vampyre simultaneously exists outside of the self and as a part of their own psyche. According to Gifzahn the Vampyre is "both an archetype and a self-created existence". For some the Vampyre exists only as part of their own psyche; as according to BlackWulf "we are one and the same… these qualities simply show to lesser and/or greater degree depending on the situation I’m in". The Vampyre is, according to Setnakt, "a persona, a construct that filters the world for the psyche. It is as real or unreal as membership in a political party, a religion or a fraternal order".

### 4.3.3. The essence of the Vampyre

What makes a Vampyre? All of the informants mentioned presence as the most important characteristic of the Vampyre, and more precisely the quality of it. According to The Vampyre Harmachis "Vampyric Presence is unmistakable, yet difficult to identify. It is a paradox.". Characteristic about this Presence is that it always arouses strong emotions in those who encounter it, he said. Other attractive characteristics of the Vampyre mentioned by the informants were the gaze, magnetism, charisma, dedication to self-shaping, physical and mental awareness and sensuality.

As to the Vampyre’s relevance to Setians, according to Setnakt the Vampyre has two characteristics which Setians connect to their higher selves: 1) The higher self is immune to the events of life and death, but not totally immortal, 2) the Vampyre makes possible a higher state of consciousness (seeing a Vampyre in a dark alley awakens). In addition to this Setnakt said that "a `vampyre` is a human being that has adopted a lifestyle that emphasizes sensuality, mystery and solitude as methods of creating themselves". According to Sekhmet "a Vampyre is literally a Child of the Night and is most often born into it. It can be learned, however." Sila said that the Vampyre is "one that takes nourishment from life and as a result increases the potency of their presence in the world". Love of life was also mentioned as an important characteristic of the Vampyre.

At the time when the Order of the Vampyre was being founded, it's Grand Masters found that it was hard work to push the limits of contemporary vampyric understanding . They felt that "the Vampyre existed, that it had not been given its due nor expression". They also discovered the duality of the Vampyre, the noble and the bestial and understood "the value of the two polarities and its expression".

The two polarities: the noble and the bestial were explained by Tapio. According to him the "Noble Self is composed of one’s rational, logical, conscious, separate Self - this is the Self that is able to take into consideration in its actions past, present and future, it is
able to consider what is good and evil, it is able to consider values and give meanings to things. Bestial Self is composed of one’s instinctual, biological, unconscious, natural aspects”. Tapio further explained that "human beings, like Vampyres, are an interesting mix of Noble and Bestial being. Unlike most humans, Vampyres are well trained in their Self-understanding and have harnessed, rather than suppressed, their bestial beings in intensifying their existence, in their desire to develop and know themselves and in their desire to live to the fullest”.

The Vampyric essence, according to Count Yorga, has following qualities: "1) a sense of Nobility, 2) an understanding of the Bestial, 3) the reflection of Glamour, 4) the duality inherent in Sensuality and 5) the draw of personal Magnetism" Count Yorga sees the Vampyre "as a source for accessing those same qualities". According to Count Yorga "the Vampyre is the emotional, passionate and ´hungry´ part of the human psyche… part most connected to the animal kingdom". Count Yorga says that "the Vampyre is also the psyche’s more noble and/or regal face. Those qualities that inspire men for great feats of creativity, courage and daring". He also said that the powers of the Vampyre are "the dreams of a race trying to find itself again: 1) Power over one’s self, 2) Sensuality - the quest for Self Love, 3) Immortality - the desire for the Self to continue and 4) The Draining of Life to Support its Own… the Vampyre devours the ´world´ to feed its fascination for life."

4.3.4. The Vampyre as an aspect of Set

For all of the informants the Vampyre is a manifestation of Set, the principle of isolate intelligence, in one way or another. According to The Vampyre Harmachis "the Vampyre is ´as´ Set; an alien life form which may make its presence known to man, and which in man may further evolve an develop" He also said that the Vampyre "is a facet of Set, one of many Neters that complete a fascinating collective known as Black Magic". Tapio told that Set represents the principle of isolate self-consciousness and "the Vampyre is one specific manifestation of that principle". According to Sila "both [the Vampyre and Set] are composite beings, beings that are self transforming, beings that can bestow life or destroy it. Gods of Beauty, of Majesty and of Chaos." According to Sekhmet the Vampyre like Set "is a deity of the night sky, and as such, is a Creature of the Night. He is also immortal, so he shares many things with Vampyres". Sekhmet also said that Vampyrism is an aspect of Set’s being, but that he is much more. For Setnakt "the path of the vampyre is one of the ways to emulate Set". And finally Giftzahn told that "the figure of the Vampyre commands attention, just as Set does. Both are war-like and disruptive of the status quo."

4.4. Beliefs about death

In the Order of the Vampyre death is approached both metaphorically and as the death of the body. Death is understood as a metaphor for either stagnation or the process of self-renewal and the idea of one’s own death is used as an energy source. On the other hand, life beyond death is sought after.
Count Yorga thinks that death can be understood in two ways: "1) to die within life when one would stop `seeking after the mysteries` or 2) the death of the body".

4.4.1. Death as a metaphor

When asked how death is perceived in the Order of the Vampyre, Setnakt answered "death is the aspect of our biology that gives us the most meaning. It is a constant call for urgency, for strength, for self love and for dissatisfaction. Death, as the greatest motivator that a magician may know, is (sadly) our one true adviser."

In addition to physical death, BlackWulf mentioned "the `metaphysical` or `alchemical` death wherein there is a process of rebirth through the breaking down of the existing structures". In a similar way, Tapio saw death as "a necessary element in Initiation". According to Tapio "death is about leaving past modes to approach existence and about moving to new consciously chosen, better ones in order to become a more autonomous Being". According to Setnakt the images of death are used "to remind us of death to insure the urgency - the sense of life - that such knowledge brings". To Sekhmet death represents "the Great Initiation, the beginning of the Mystery".

4.4.2. Life after death

The idea of Vampyric immortality, for some informants, stood for the process of developing one’s own consciousness strong enough to transcend and survive physical death. The Vampyre Harmachis sees "the Way of the Vampyre a method of setting in place all the Works necessary for continuing Life-after-life". The Vampyre Harmachis also said that "there is an almost bittersweet sense of timelessness that the Initiate-Vampyre is thrust into during certain Workings" and that the task of the members of the Order of the Vampyre is to "remember this taste always, so when the juncture of physical death is reached, we will step into That which we've remembered, promulgated or created".

Count Yorga perceives his life in three layers: "1) my physical body and its genetic and racial tendencies, 2) my mind-emotion-ego complex and 3) the higher Self". According to Count Yorga the physical body and the mind-emotion-ego complex exist in the three dimensional world and the higher Self exists in a fourth dimensional space. According to Count Yorga’s understanding "if one can tap effectively into this fourth dimensional space and in turn use it within the 3 dimensions, more memory of such a Self after the system shock of death will potentially be present".

Sekhmet, Setnakt and BlackWulf had no beliefs on life after death, because they did not have any personal experience or provable knowledge about it. Tapio’s focus was on this life, he said: "before trying to have self-conscious existence after physical death one should seek to have a self-conscious life while still living in the flesh". According to Giftzahn "if a person’s will is strong enough, there is a possibility for that consciousness to survive the separation from the physical envelope" but that "how long and how strong is also a matter of speculation". According to Sila "life is continuous, we may continue as
spiritual entities or return to the physical form”. All of the informants believed that their Work within the Order of the Vampyre will affect the possibility of their own life after death proviso, according to Sekhmet, “if there is any”. BlackWulf commented that he is “less afraid of death after being in the Order of the Vampyre” than he was before.

4.5. The Order of the Vampyre and other organizations

The most important factor that separates the Order of the Vampyre from other vampiric organizations, according to The Vampyre Harmachis, is "the degree to which members of the Order of the Vampyre are committed to the exploration and evolution of those things within the Self which are truly vampyric". In The Vampyre Harmachis’ opinion, other vampiric organizations either a) are fan clubs, b) appear prone to radical, even violent behaviour or c) desire pure vampyrism but do not have the resources or expertise. He also mentioned that the Order of the Vampyre is the only vampyric organization he is aware of that has such strict conditions for membership.

According to Setnakt the Order of the Vampyre in comparison with other vampiric organizations "is much less silly". He said that in the Order of the Vampyre "there is a commitment neither to dogma nor to thoughtlessness" and continued that in the Order of the Vampyre "there is a commitment to inquiry and practice, the former purifies the soul and the second increases worldly power". In Tapio’s view, the Order of the Vampyre is "the most philosophical, most challenging, most capable of reaching for the Essence behind the myth". Sekhmet said that all other groups she has seen only play with the image of the Vampyre. According to Sila the Order of the Vampyre "is Initiatory: it has depth and maturity, a focus centering on the growth of the individual". Giftzahn answered that other vampiric organizations offer a "quick fix" because "many if not most people don’t want substance… Real Work and change is too threatening and too hard". Giftzahn continued "this is the main reason the Temple of Set and the Order of the Vampyre are right for only a select few."

4.6. The members’ attitudes towards the beliefs of the Order of the Vampyre

Unlike many other religious organizations the Order of the Vampyre has no dogma nor a common, obligatory religious practice. This becomes visible in that how, for instance, the members of the Order of the Vampyre hold very different concepts as the most important to themselves.

Both Count Yorga and Giftzahn mentioned "the manipulation of the objective universe" as one of the most important concepts within the Order of the Vampyre. For Setnakt, Tapio and The Vampyre Harmachis it was "the polarity of the noble and the bestial and the control of that duality". BlackWulf mentioned "responsibility for one’s actions and the mastery of one’s own universe as well as the self-transformational aspects”. Count Yorga further added "the development of internal sense of isolate intelligence… to more completely understand the processes of life as a preparation for physical death and to increase my sensitivity towards beauty within this human existence and those in general who would challenge stasis of ignorance and unconsciousness". For Sila the most
important concepts were "Essence of Life and animal bonds". For Lady Aphanos the most important concepts are "that each individual knows that they are in essence the Source of their own immortality and that it IS possible to know, communicate and consciously experience many levels of timeless essence, both individually, with other humans and also with other living creatures".

The relationship of the members of the Order of the Vampyre to the Order itself is clearly instrumental. The vampyric model is not necessary the best model for their initiation, according to some of the informants. For Tapio "it resonates well with my view on how an autonomous individual would exist in the flesh and pursue his Initiation". For Setnakt the model of the Vampyre "helps me find the one model that will work for me, a model hidden with the darkness of my soul". For Sekhmet the Vampyre is a tool that "awakens powers that are very deep and dormant most of the time. It is a style of relating to the world, but not my only one". Only two of the informants saw the Vampyre as the best model for their Initiation: Sila told that the Vampyre incorporates both humane and animalistic sides of her nature and Giftzahn said that "the Vampyre is both noble and tragic". She sees this as "a metaphor for human existence… from this foundation the Vampyre can struggle with his or her own inner landscape".

When I asked The Vampyre Harmachis about his future visions for the Order of the Vampyre, he answered that he sees "an Order which continues to empower its members and its Masters, tight integration and major inroads being made between the ARKTE and MetaMind Elements, an Order which has more regional and local meetings, and finally an Order which has always recognized itself as a satellite 'Temple of Set' to being one which continues to act as such and contributes to the general Temple movement in this direction".

5. THE PRACTICES OF THE ORDER OF THE VAMPYRE

The skills that the members of the Order of the Vampyre consider characteristic to the Vampyre and that they seek to emulate and study, in addition to the afore-mentioned meta-mind skills, according to The Vampyre Harmachis are for instance the use of voice, "through tone, inflection, pacing and a variety of other techniques, we in the Order [of the Vampyre] are interested in the intensity, directness and effectiveness of our communications", and communication through the eyes "the infamous 'Command To Look'... the ability to attract and hold a gaze. According to an essay recommended to me "the 'Command To Look' can be practiced by experimenting with styles of dress and cosmetics, and via a projected Will". Other Vampyric skills mentioned by the essay are 'superhuman' strength, 'invisibility', 'shapeshifting' and mesmerism. According to the essay "'superhuman' strength can be developed via weight training, using various strengthening and flexibility exercises. 'Invisibility' can be learned by studying certain martial arts, such as Ninjutsu. 'Shapeshifting' can be accomplished via pathworkings, trance states, and lycanthropic magic as well as astral projection. Mesmerism can be learned by studying mesmerism and hypnotism and also through psychology". In addition to these, the Order of the Vampyre concentrates on developing the powers of imagination and visualization and the use and the study of art, literature and music.
5.1. Vampyre Workings

The descriptions of ritualistic Workings show clearly the Temple of Set’s Black Magical approach: everything is done in order to empower one’s Self or to increase one’s personal power. Also, the descriptions of the Workings show the idea of the dichotomy of the universe - the subjective/the objective - typical to the Temple of Set. And the attempt to affect the world from this viewpoint.

According to Tapio a Vampyre Working "is about Working with different aspects of the archetype of the Vampyre within one’s own subjective universe in order to further one’s Initiation". He further explained that a Working "is by its nature operative, illuminative or both". To clarify he continued that "operative Workings can seek to change some aspects of one’s subjective universe according to one’s Will" whereas "illuminative Working is more introspective by its nature, it aims to deepen one’s experience, sense and understanding of the Self". Tapio said that his reason for performing Vampyre Workings is "to gain more knowledge, power and understanding".

According to Sila the goal of a Vampyre Working is "to create change. To establish my Will". She went on to say that the "energy [in the Vampyre Workings] is used as a catalyst, to perform a certain task, to initiate and gain influence". Gifzahn told that "a Vampyre Working may draw both on the Essence within and from the Essence of my fellow Vampyres as is necessary. It draws upon the Sex/Death energies which I use to either create or destroy something in my subjective or objective universes". For Setnakt Vampyre Workings are "on going, and performed whenever another sees you or you see yourself in a mirror". Sila mentioned that "a Vampyre’s Work is never done! I am Working almost constantly". The majority of the informants did not perform Vampyre Workings on a regular basis, but only when needed. Sekhmet performs a Vampyre Working "always on All Hallow’s Eve, but mostly whenever a storm comes through".

5.2. Work within the Arkte and the MetaMind Element

The informants’ Work within the Arkte element can be divided into two areas: 1) animal protection for its own sake and 2) the attempt to bring the animalistic side of the Self closer to the individual.

I asked how the informants’ Work within the Arkte element is important to their own Initiation and how do they Work in practice for the animals. Setnakt, CountYorga and Sila told that the Work within the Arkte element helps them get closer to their own physical and biological being. For Gifzahn the Arkte element puts her in touch with her compassion and connects her with her animal nature. Sekhmet told that she is a "Protectress of Animals by nature"and BlackWulf pointed that the Arkte element isn’t that important to his Initiation, but it is something he does because it is a cause he believes in.
What is Arkte Work like in practice? Count Yorga and Sekhmet told that they work actively for animal rights and Setnakt told that he writes letters on behalf of wildlife. Sila’s occupation involves work with animals and she studies "the relationship between man and animal from natural history to their religious significance past and present". Count Yorga works as a volunteer in an animal wildlife sanctuary. Sekhmet and Setnakt both have animals and according to Setnakt playing with pets is part of Arkte Work. Setnakt and BlackWulf also mentioned shamanistic work being part of their Arkte Work. According to Giftzahn the Arkte Work puts her "in touch with ancient streams of communication"; this way Giftzahn has been able to Work with for instance dolphins. She told that in this kind of interaction the Initiate Works together with the animal "we played and healed something in the world".

The MetaMind as well as Arkte Work gives Giftzahn an opportunity to learn ancient forms of communication. For the informants the main purpose of the MetaMind element seemed to be to practice hidden (possibly ancient) forms of communication. According to The Vampyre Harmachis the MetaMind is the medium through which the Vampyre communicates. The Vampyre Harmachis explained that during "a metamental/vampyric experience the Setian is Aware". In Workings when several people achieve that state of Awareness the task "is to form a link with the mind and ‘nervous system´ of another Initiate" The Vampyre Harmachis said. He also told that his desire is "a sharing of Setian minds; not merging, but a true form of empathy or commune". Count Yorga told that he uses the MetaMind element "to push the limits of my mind outside the confines of my body and senses". For him the practices of the MetaMind included "Astral projection experiments, meditation (psychonaut), sensory deprivation experiments etc." According to Setnakt the MetaMind teaches the receipt and sending of subtle signals "a practice essential for any magician".

5.3. The Vampyre in the initiate’s daily life

The emulation of the Vampyric model has a very pragmatic role in daily life for many of the informants. Tapio commented that he seeks to enhance his self in his body, person and psyche and that he seeks to have good health. Tapio also mentioned that he practices Yoga in order to strengthen the Vampyric presence in his persona and that he uses the skills in lesser black magic "in order to have my interaction with others as fruitful as possible for myself and for the other person(s)". For BlackWulf the vampyric model has integrated into his daily life. BlackWulf uses "the tools" he has gained "in such things as negotiating with clients as an overt example". Sila often uses "verbal and non-verbal forms of communication with people and animals". According to Sila "daily life brings interaction with others providing a wonderful playground where one’s Will may take form and be exercised". Sekhmet uses the vampyric model in daily life only "if I wish to influence someone in that way" but "mostly in ritual".
5.4. The effects of the work with the Vampyre

The informants told that the work within the Order of the Vampyre had in one way or another strengthened and refined their sense of self and their abilities to influence situations and often it has also increased their respect for life.

As a result of the work within the Order of the Vampyre, Sila told that her dreams that she thought would never be realised have become a reality. Count Yorga said that he appreciates things in general more. He also said that he seems "to have developed a better ability to cast off unwanted and/or unneeded personal behaviour" and also to rid his life of "distracting influences (people, places or things)". BlackWulf has gained a renewed conviction in his self and confidence. According to Gitzahn membership in the Order of the Vampyre has given her an entirely new respect for herself and for her latent powers. She told that she feels stronger, more confident and enigmatic” and that she no longer needs to rely on external validation for her existence. She also told that she was learning to take more responsibility for her decisions and actions. Setnakt simply commented that he gets better service in restaurants, airport counters and so forth.

6. THE ORDER OF THE VAMPIRE IN THE FIELD OF NEW RELIGIONS

In this chapter I will attempt to place the Order of the Vampyre in the field of new religious phenomena. I will use the categorizations by Hinnels and Heelas as grounds for comparison. I will also look at the definition given by the Temple of Set itself, as introduced by Flowers. In the end, I will introduce the informants’ opinions as to how they see the Order of the Vampyre as a religious phenomenon.


According to this categorization, in my opinion, the Order of the Vampyre represents the so called magical family. According to Hinnels, the practices of the magical family of alternative religions include the practice of magic as an essential part. Hinnels defines magic as an art where cosmic and paranormal forces are used in order to achieve wanted results. Hinnels divides magic into high magic and low magic. The purpose of high magic, according to Hinnels, is to achieve a change in the magician’s own consciousness. The purpose of low magic, according to Hinnels, is to achieve changes in the surrounding world; changes such as healing, getting a better job, improving one’s love life or cursing an enemy.

Hinnels’ definition of magic is analogous to the Order of the Vampyre’s with the exception that the understanding of the source of magical skills may differ. The Temple of Set perceives that a human being has the ability to create gods.
Hinnels further divides the magical family into three sub-groupings: ceremonial magic, witchcraft and satanism. According to Hinnels, ceremonial magic concentrates on the practice of high magic, i.e. the changing of one’s own consciousness with magic. Witchcraft practiced in the western world today, is a form of a polytheistic nature religion that is based on the worship of the mother goddess. Satanism, according to Hinnels, is the worship of the Devil and the magic of the Satanists consists of the invocation of the Devil and his demonic legion. According to Hinnels Satanism is a magical religion with a central goal of abandonment of Christianity and attacking against it. According to Hinnels, for modern Satanists the figure of Satan represents a giver of wisdom and a builder of an individual ego.

Out of these sub-groupings the Order of the Vampyre is closest to ceremonial magic and to Satanism. It must be noticed however, that the Temple of Set is not an anti-Christian movement. Rikkinen, for instance writes that the philosophy of setianism is not based on anti-Christian thinking nor was the movement born to stand against the Christian culture alone. It stands against the overall way the man-god relationship is perceived and understood. The Temple of Set is not a Satanic movement by its own definition either. The archetype of Satan is perceived in the Temple of Set as a too limited a model for the development of the Self.

Paul Heelas, in his book The New Age Movement describes the characteristics of New Age movements in great depth. According to Heelas’ criteria, the Order of the Vampyre cannot be called a New Age movement. None of the three basic elements of a new age movement mentioned by Heelas are in accordance with the Order of the Vampyre. 1) The Order of the Vampyre or the Temple of Set do not emphasize that there is something wrong with the lives of their Initiates. Rather, the Initiates are expected to be adept magicians before they join the Temple of Set. 2) The Order of the Vampyre does not attempt to experience god in the same way as in a new age movement. The Order of the Vampyre does attempt to awaken the initiate’s own godhood, but this will not create a connection to God and to nature - on the contrary, it will create a greater separateness from everything else. 3) The Order of the Vampyre does not attempt on ridding the Initiate from his/her ego, but to strengthen and deify the individual’s whole Self (the bestial and the noble sides of it).

Some characteristics of a new age movement mentioned by Heelas do fit the Order of the Vampyre, but not enough to justify defining of the Order of the Vampyre as a new age movement. The Order of the Vampyre does not, for example, accept the idea central to new age movements that the human soul is, in its essence, one with God and nature (or the natural order).

In my opinion, the only religious classification that the Order of the Vampyre fits in, outside the Temple of Set’s/Order of the Vampyre’s own, is the magical family as defined by Hinnels. To a similar classification comes also Minna Rikkinen, a Theology student from Helsinki University in her pro graduate study called The Temple of Set in the Light of Typologies of New Religions. Using the typology of Bryan Wilson, Rikkinen also classifies the Temple of Set as "a manipulative response to the world".
Rikkinen writes that "in the Temple of Set manipulativeness means that its deity (separate self consciousness) is a force that is being used by increased consciousness and by using the developing consciousness as a tool in every day life. The manipulative movement is visible in Setianism also in that one does not try to separate oneself from the world nor the surrounding society but one aims to live in it and to use it".

The Order of the Vampyre and the Temple of Set defines itself as a Left-Hand Path organization. In his book Lords of the Left-Hand Path, Stephen E. Flowers divides the left hand path further into the Immanent Branch of the Left-Hand Path and the Transcendental Branch of the Left-Hand Path. According to Flowers the approach of the Immanent Branch to magic is instrumental. Flowers explains that the Immanent Branch concentrates only to the outside world. The Transcendental Branch of the Left-Hand Path is based on a psychocentric model. According to Flowers the Transcendental Branch is idealistic and its magical methods are based on eternal forms and archetypes. The isolateness of human intelligence of the surrounding cosmic order is accepted and considered a good thing. Flowers continues that in its highest form, the Transcendental Branch concentrates on the subjective universe; on the separation of the self from the cosmic order and the development of that self into an eternal and powerful form. In the Transcendental Branch, according to Flowers, self deification has an important part. According to Flowers the Temple of Set represents the Transcendental Branch of the Left-Hand Path.

I also asked the informants themselves, how they see the Order of the Vampyre as a religious phenomenon. These were their answers: the Order of the Vampyre is "a specialized tool used for Self exploration"; "a magical school"; "a Black Magical practice or style"; "a fraternal society, not unlike Freemasons". The informants did not consider the Order of the Vampyre as a separate religious organization but as a part of the Temple of Set. According to Giftzahn the Order of the Vampyre is "an opportunity, a challenge and an adventure; a magnificent journey of my soul. It does border on a religion in that it is highly subjective. But the only god that is honored is the Self."

7. SUMMARY

The Order of the Vampyre is a complex and a well organized establishment. They have a structured hierarchy with the Grand Masters, Masters and the initiates. The Order of the Vampyre also has two sub-organizations which they call Elements, these are the Arkte Element and the MetaMind Element. All of this functions under the auspices of a larger organization called the Temple of Set.

The Order of the Vampyre uses the the idea of the Vampyre as an initiatory tool. The Order of the Vampyre’s understanding of what a Vampyre is differs from the commonly known, popularized image of the vampire that is familiar from vampire books and films. Vampyrism in the Order of the Vampyre does not include blood and blood is relevant to the informants only as a metaphor for life.
On the basis of my study the origin and the reality of the Vampyre can be understood in various ways in the Order of the Vampyre. The Vampyre can be thought of as an alien life form, existing outside man’s imagination as an autonomous being or it can be thought of as a fictitious character created by man. For some the Vampyre existed only in their minds and for some independent of their own thoughts. All of the informants thought of themselves as being Vampyres according to their own definitions. The Vampyre’s qualities in its essence are similar to the majority of the informants. The informants wrote about presence, state of being, charisma, magnetism and sensuality as being some of the traits of the Vampyre that they were attempting to emulate, making it clear that the Order of the Vampyre has little to do with just looking vampyric. The purpose of the Work with the Vampyre varied from vitalizing one’s life and self exploration to ensuring life after death. According to The Vampyre Harmachis the purpose of the Order of the Vampyre is to ensure the emulating of an individual Vampyric essence and its use. However, The Vampyre Harmachis also saw the manifesting of the Vampyric essence as a channel for possibly existing alien Vampyric life forms.

Through emulating the Vampyric skills, the informants told that they could better manipulate the objective universe in order to enrich their own lives. For many the Vampyric model also offered an efficient method for self exploration. With many the practice of Vampyric skills had increased self confidence and removed fears. All of the informants saw that the possibility of life after death had increased as a result of emulating the Vampyric role model.

The Order of the Vampyre sees itself as being different from other vampire organizations in that it offers more hard work to its initiates, is less easy to become a member of, has no dogma and is more mature than other organizations. For the informants Work in the Order of the Vampyre is on-going self-exploration that seems to have no end. They work with the archetype of the Vampyre in ritualistic Vampyre Workings and in everyday situations. The purpose of their work is to attain both subjective and objective power and understanding.

The Order of the Vampyre fits well in the field of today’s new religions. Under Hinnels’ classification the Order of the Vampyre falls in the category of a magical family. The initiates of the Order of the Vampyre practice ceremonial magic as Hinnels calls it. They attempt to change their own consciousness with the help of magic. They do this by using the image of the archetypal Vampyre which they consider to be an aspect of Set, the principle of isolate intelligence. As Set is connected to the figure of Satan as the giver of wisdom and a builder of an individual ego, the Order of the Vampyre could also be called Satanism as described by Hinnels but not completely. Their central goal is not to attack against Christianity. According to their own definition the Temple of Set together with the Order of the Vampyre represent the Transcendental Branch of the Left-Hand Path.

This study revealed to me that Setian Vampyrism in its essence is positive. At its heart lies respect for life, sustaining of life and making life more interesting and more interactive for oneself.
The Temple of Set's example for a formula of a ritual Workings has 11 parts:

1. Prepare the [Ritual] Chamber
2. Dress For Working
3. Ring the Bell [nine times]
4. Light the Black Flame
5. Invocation [of Set]
6. Drink from the Grail
7. Summoning the Elements [under Work]
8. The Working
9. Extinguish the Black Flame/Close the Gate
10. Ring the Bell [nine times]
11. Utter the Traditional Closing Words: "So It Is Done!"

The Temple of Set suggests that the dominant colour in the chamber be black and candles be used for light-source. According to this model the ritual chamber should also have an altar. On the altar there should be a candle and a grail and other things the Initiate sees appropriate. The Temple of Set stresses that in no circumstances are children to be allowed in the ritual chamber during Workings, because they might misunderstand them. It is also stressed that no living creature is to be sacrificed in Setian Workings. According to The Temple of Set an Initiate may dress for the Working as s/he pleases. By ringing the bell nine times the Initiate honours the Council of Nine, the administrative directors of the Temple of Set and indicates the beginning and the end of a Working. The lighting of the Black Flame opens the gate between the magician and the powers of darkness. The grail symbolizes Truth; The Temple of Set emphasizes that the contents of the grail may never be blood. The Working itself is described as astral projection in the strictest sense. In the Working the Initiate projects his/her Will into the future.

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