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Left-Hand Path Magic and Animal Rights

Kennet Granholm

ABSTRACT: The Left-Hand Path is a controversial form of new Esoteric spirituality, often labeled Satanic, and often perceived as entertaining right-wing political sympathies. It is therefore important to note that two of the most prominent Left-Hand Path groups—the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge—foster animal rights ideologies, something which is generally considered leftist. Animal rights ideology would seem to be a less than perfect fit with the epistemological individualism, goals of self-deification, and antinomian approaches to predominant religious culture—fundamental elements in Left-Hand Path philosophies. It has nonetheless become an integral part of both the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge. In this article I examine the manifestations and possible reasons for the rise of the apparent paradox of animal rights ideologies in the Left-Hand Path.

The Left-Hand Path is a specific development of contemporary Western Esotericism, which places the individual at the absolute center of attention, aims at the deification of the practitioner, and often involves unconventional spiritual practices. Many, but not all, of the groups and ideologies which I include under this term have often been labeled Satanic.¹ Groups and individuals identified as Satanic are regularly accused of a number of social deviances, including animal sacrifice and murder,² child molestation,³ and, perhaps most frequently, right-wing political sympathies and racist ideologies.⁴ However, when examining groups in this category, one finds radical ideologies of a totally different sort. Since the 1990s, many of the Left-Hand Path groups most frequently accused of right-wing sympathies have actually adopted ideologies of animal rights, vegetarianism, and ecology—political concerns that are

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commonly labeled leftist. This is a significant development, especially when considering the somewhat different image projected on these groups.

The material I use in this article consists of interviews with members of Dragon Rouge and the Temple of Set, as well as internal documents and literature by representatives of both groups. The interviews with Dragon Rouge members were conducted in 2001 as part of the research for my Ph.D. dissertation.⁵ The interviews did not specifically relate to vegetarianism or animal rights, but these issues were addressed in the answers I received. As the material was somewhat old, I contacted a number of the interviewees to enquire if their positions had altered in some way, and if they wanted to add anything. I conducted two interviews with Temple of Set members in 2007, and one of these related specifically to vegetarianism and animal rights issues. The insider material I use deals with the basic premises of the respective groups, and is not available to the general public.

This article first discusses the field and definition of Western Esotericism, in particular with reference to the transformation of Esotericism through time, as well as the concept of the Left-Hand Path, a genre of spirituality that thus far has received almost no scholarly treatment. In addition, the groups studied, the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge, are briefly described. I have also included a short section on the development of animal welfare, animal rights and vegetarian ideologies and groups in the West. After this I examine how these ideologies occur and are manifested in the two groups studied.

POST-SECULAR ESOTERICISM AND THE LEFT-HAND PATH

Western Esotericism (hereafter referred to simply as Esotericism), as described by Antoine Faivre, is “an ensemble of spiritual currents in modern and contemporary Western history which share a certain *air de famille*, as well as the form of thought which is its common denominator.”⁶ These spiritual currents are characterized by the idea of correspondences; the view of nature as imbued by a divine presence; the primacy of imagination and mediation by higher beings as ways of accessing Esoteric knowledge; and the goal of spiritual transmutation.⁷ Two secondary characteristics, the idea of a common core of truth in several or all religions, and the gradual transmission of spiritual knowledge by authorized teachers, are also common components of Esoteric spiritualities. Western Esotericism, as defined by scholars, can be regarded as properly having come into existence during the Renaissance, when different forms of religious practice and philosophy were combined under a common frame of reference.⁸

The specific characteristics of Esotericism will, of course, vary in different historical contexts. Wouter J. Hanegraaff identifies the processes of rationalization and secularization in the Enlightenment as factors

which transformed Esotericism profoundly.⁹ According to Hanegraaff, the Enlightenment heralded the birth of secularized forms of Esotericism, also termed occultism, characterized by adaptation to the new ideals of rationality and reason; the broadening of the scope of influence and source materials to non-Western cultures and non-Christian religions; the adoption of an evolutionary paradigm in regard to the spiritual development of humanity; and the application of psychological interpretive models of Esoteric doctrines.¹⁰ It should be noted that Hanegraaff's unorthodox use of the term secularization is problematic. He sees secularization as a historical fact, and interprets secularization as "a profound *transformation* of religion"¹¹ rather than the decline of religion. I have to agree with Christopher Partridge when he writes that the approach taken by Hanegraaff leads to a "thicket of terminological and theological problems."¹² This is mainly a terminological problem, and on the whole Hanegraaff's account of the transformation of Esotericism is sound.

Naturally, the transformation of Esotericism is an ongoing process. Like Hanegraaff, I believe that the view of magical (and by extension, Esoteric) traditions as "dynamic, diverse, and subject to continuous historical change"¹³ must be assumed. In contemporary society specific forms of Esotericism, which can be regarded as late-modern developments of post-enlightenment Esotericism, can be perceived.¹⁴ I have chosen to call these developments "post-secular."¹⁵

Whereas occultism entails the adoption of scientific rational ideologies, post-secular Esotericism involves critique of these ideologies and attempts to "re-enchant" the human existential world. Re-enchantment can here be understood as an active effort to acknowledge and embrace affective and analogical thinking and action, set in a discursive reality in which rationality is unable to provide a full account of existence. A key point is the awareness of the ideology of instrumental causality, and the subsequent rebellion against it. This does not mean that post-secular Esotericism is essentially traditionalist in character, but it is often anti-modernist. Scientific rationality has not been abandoned altogether, but is increasingly often combined with more typically religious discourse. For example, whereas mid-twentieth-century Esotericists often referred to spiritual beings such as angels and demons as Jungian archetypes existent in the practitioners' psyche, post-secularly inclined Esotericists are far more reluctant to deny the objective existence of these beings. Post-secular Esotericism is also often more eclectic than its earlier post-Enlightenment counterparts. The scope of influence is broadened to include every thinkable source, with Old Norse mythology, Tantra, Kabbalah, East Asian religious notions, Muslim mysticism, UFO beliefs, and beyond combined to form a multi-interpretational *bricolage*.

Many of the changes affecting Esotericism in late modernity are due to the possibilities introduced by late twentieth-century technological

progress. For example, the Internet is increasingly used as a major arena of communication, and individual practitioners can be scattered widely around the world and connected through transnational and translocal networks.¹⁶

A specific expression of post-secular Esotericism is the Left-Hand Path, what I propose calling an etic category in the study of Esotericism, based on emic terminology and self-identification, but bound in scholarly research and academic discourse. The etic category of the Left-Hand Path can naturally not encompass all the different emic understandings of all the groups and individuals who employ the term as a self-identification, nor is it meant to. One important thing to remember with etic definitions is that they are academic constructs, construed not to describe reality “as it is,” but rather to be used as analytical and conceptual tools in the process of academic research. Thus, one should not make the mistake of equating the etic term Left-Hand Path with the emic one.

The Left-Hand Path can be described as a magic milieu, in the sense that organizations and individuals involved in the milieu commonly use the term “magic” as a description for their practices and philosophies. Magic is, like religion, a somewhat problematic concept. There are scholars who suggest that it might be best to abandon the term altogether due to its often pejorative connotations.¹⁷ However, many contemporary Esotericists use the term as a self-designation, and for that reason alone it cannot be discarded. It is prudent to remember that both the terms religion and magic are constructs, and that any absolute separation of them is unsound. In the context of the Left-Hand Path magic can be defined as a philosophical stance that posits the practitioner, rather than gods or other higher beings, as the focus. I need to point out that the nature of Esoteric magic is immensely complex, and that I do not propose the above as a general definition of magic in the contemporary West.

The Left-Hand Path can be identified by the following five characteristics: the ideology of individualism; the view of the human being as a psycho-physical totality; the appraisal of life in the here-and-now; the goal of self-deification; and an antinomian stance toward conventional religion and culture.

Through the ideology of individualism the individual and his/her spiritual development, not the religious community, is the primary focus of the Left-Hand Path magician. The individual and the unique are positioned in opposition to the collective and the common, and this often results in a form of elitism, or “uniqueism,”¹⁸ in which the magician is seen as an elect individual.

The human being is regarded as a psycho-physical totality, where the corporeal and carnal aspects of the person are not regarded as inferior to aspects such as soul or mind.

The focus for the Left-Hand Path magician is not on an afterlife, but on corporeal existence in the present. All aspects of life are valued,

even its destructive aspects (e.g., death). Moderate to extreme hedonism is advocated, and ways of enjoyment (e.g., sex) are sometimes used as methods for spiritual development. This applies to the negative aspects of life as well, such as symbolically and ritually confronting one's impending death.¹⁹

In Left-Hand Path spiritualities the goal of the practitioner is to become a creator, or god, by means of initiatory processes. The interpretations of the nature of this self-deification range from the purely psychological (i.e., assuming total control over one's personal existential universe) to the metaphysical.

Left-Hand Path philosophies include antinomian aspects where collective religious and cultural norms are questioned in the pursuit of individualized ethics²⁰ and spiritual evolution. Sometimes this is realized in spiritual practices in which the magician breaks religious, cultural, and personal taboos (most often on a mental level).²¹ The idea is that this will grant the magician freedom and separation in his individualization and self-deification. Any particular Left-Hand Path exists in an antithetical relation to what its adherents perceive to be the Right-Hand Path. This includes religious (and often political, ideological, or other) groups that are mainstream and conform to established norms, as well as many forms of alternative spirituality which are regarded as being essentially collective in character, and/or conformist in ideology and practice (including Esoteric spiritualities such as New Age and common expressions of Neopaganism.) A particular Left-Hand Path thus defines itself in opposition to this perceived Right-Hand Path.²²

TWO LEFT-HAND PATH MAGIC ORDERS

In some respects, the Left-Hand Path could be viewed as a peripheral phenomenon on the contemporary Western religious field. Generally, organizations in the milieu are quite small in regard to number of members, with most practitioners operating individually. The Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge are among the largest and most influential Left-Hand Path magic orders, but neither has more than 400 members.²³ These organizations do, however, have an influence beyond their respective memberships, functioning as focal points for the Left-Hand Path milieu in general. The milieu and ideas contained within it are widely dispersed, existing in transnational networks throughout the Western world. The ideas also have an influence beyond the individuals and organizations directly involved in the milieu. For example, books such as *The Left-Hand Path*²⁴ by Tapio Kotkavuori, *Kabbala, kliffot och den goetiska magin*²⁵ (recently issued in an English-language version as *Qabalah, Qliphoth and Goetic Magic*) by Thomas Karlsson, and the *Nine Doors of Midgard*²⁶ by Edred Thorsson have sold in numbers well exceeding the memberships of the organizations the authors represent (those

being the Temple of Set, Dragon Rouge and the Rune-Gild.) Thus, the trends toward vegetarianism and appropriation of animal rights politics, as discussed in this article, have a bearing on Esoteric spiritualities in general, and the Left-Hand Path milieu in particular.

To discuss both the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge in a treatment of Left-Hand Path spirituality is of importance not only because they are the most active and influential organizations, but also due to their largely existing in different areas of the Western cultural sphere. The Temple of Set was founded in the United States, and has its strongest following in the English-speaking world.²⁷ Dragon Rouge was founded in Sweden, and has its strongest following in Europe, in particular in non-English speaking Europe.

The Temple of Set was founded in California in 1975 by Michael A. Aquino and a number of other former members of the Church of Satan.²⁸ Although having a background in Satanism, the Temple has evolved in a very different way than the original Church of Satan. For example, whereas the Church of Satan has consistently stressed the carnal nature of the human being, the Temple of Set includes a stronger focus on more spiritual aspects.

A central notion in the philosophy of the Temple is the concept of *Xeper*, which according to Michael Aquino refers to “the transformation and evolution of the Will from a human to a divine state of being—by deliberate, conscious, individual force of mind.”²⁹ This is achieved through “Greater Black Magic,” in which the practitioner changes “one’s subjective frame of reference”³⁰ and thus affects both the objective world and other people’s subjective frames of reference. “Lesser Black Magic” involves the magician manipulating the world around him/her without explicitly affecting his/her personal outlook.³¹

The Temple operates with six initiatory degrees,³² signaling levels of personal development as well as organizational responsibilities and status. A significant difference between the Temple of Set and many other initiatory orders is that the Temple does not regard initiation as something it conveys. Rather, it is the responsibility of the individual to experience the process of initiation, and the Temple then *recognizes* his/her enhanced level of being.³³ Although individual work is considered the most central aspect of Setian self-development, the Temple provides forums for collective initiatory work in various sub-communities called Pylons, Elements, and Orders. On an organizational level the Temple of Set is governed by a High Priest/Priestess, who functions as the ideological and public head of the Temple.³⁴ The High Priest is in turn responsible to the Council of Nine,³⁵ a board of directors consisting of members elected from the priesthood. The council has the ultimate power for Temple affairs, and can even depose the High Priest/Priestess if this is deemed necessary. An Executive Director is in charge of the administrative tasks of the organization.

Dragon Rouge was founded in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1990, by 17-year-old Thomas Karlsson. In the mid-1990s the order caught the attention of Swedish news media, and consequently had a large increase in members.³⁶ In the late 1990s, the order started to attract members outside Sweden, ultimately resulting in the situation where the order today has a larger membership outside than inside Sweden. The organizational, administrative and ideological center of Dragon Rouge is located in Stockholm, Sweden, with local groups—called ritual groups and lodges—in Sweden, Finland, Greece, Mexico, Italy, Poland and Germany.³⁷

Like the Temple of Set, Dragon Rouge is an initiatory society. The initiation system of the order consists of eleven degrees modeled on the Qliphothic spheres of Kabbalah.³⁸ Central to the philosophy of the order are the dichotomies of Chaos and Cosmos, where Chaos is understood as the sphere of unmanifest potential and the destructive forces that constantly rearrange the otherwise static structures of Cosmos, and as the force that the magician can draw upon in order to rearrange his/her existence. The most important symbol invoked in Dragon Rouge is that of the Red Dragon, in its outer form representing the primordial chaos and the universal life-force, and in its inner form symbolizing the individual life-force of the human being.³⁹ The form of magic practiced in Dragon Rouge is called Dark Magic, signifying the exploration of hidden aspects of the Self and existence.⁴⁰ While Dragon Rouge is highly eclectic, the foundation of the order's practice and philosophy is based on Qliphothic Kabbalah, Tantric kundalini meditation and Old Norse mythology, set in the frame of reference of spiritual alchemy.⁴¹

ANIMAL RIGHTS ISSUES AND VEGETARIANISM IN THE WEST

The history of vegetarianism and animal rights in the West can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome, where philosophers such as Pythagoras,⁴² Plato, Socrates, and Plutarch advocated meatless diets. Skipping to later Western history, several examples of ideologies of compassion for animals can be found. During the Renaissance, the alchemist and scientist Francis Bacon advocated taking animals into consideration when making ethical choices; during the eighteenth century the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau insisted that humans have a natural compassion for other beings, including animals; and during the nineteenth century Henry Salt entertained ideas about a brotherhood of all living creatures.⁴³

The organized work for the betterment of animal treatment began in 1824, when the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was founded in the United Kingdom. In 1840 the organization

gained the patronage of Queen Victoria, and subsequently gained the prefix Royal (thus, RSPCA). An American variant, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), was founded in 1866.⁴⁴ From the 1840s, the terms vegetarian and vegetarianism were used to designate people advocating meatless diets, and the first organized vegetarian association—the Vegetarian Society—was founded in the United Kingdom in 1847. The American Vegetarian Convention was founded in 1850, and the German Vegetarian Society in 1867.⁴⁵ These early animal welfare groups did have an effect on society, as legislation to improve the situation of animals was conceived in the United Kingdom in 1876. The scope of animal welfare issues was broadened in the late nineteenth century when societies opposed to vivisection were founded in the United Kingdom (1875) and the United States (1895).⁴⁶ A century later, the 1960s and 1970s saw a great increase in animal welfare legislation in both the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as in many other Western countries.

The modern animal rights movement came into existence in Oxford in the early 1970s, when a group of philosophers took up the issue of the moral status of non-human animals. In 1970, the psychologist Richard D. Ryder, who was part of the Oxford group, coined the term *speciesism* to denote the discrimination of non-human beings based on their species.⁴⁷ The approach pioneered by the Oxford philosophers reached popularity with the publication of Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* in 1975. In that book Singer breaks down the boundaries between human beings and non-human animals, establishes speciesism as the foundation of human mistreatment of animals, and argues for a radically different approach to human-animal coexistence. Among other things Singer presents the horrors of scientific experimentation on animals and modern factory farming of animals. He also identifies vegetarianism as the most important act in the pursuit of animal liberation.⁴⁸ Another important work in the animal rights movement is Tom Regan's "The Case for Animal Rights" from 1983, in which he advocates ending all use of animals for human convenience.⁴⁹

David Sztybel identifies four main reasons for the rise of the animal rights movement in the mid-seventies.⁵⁰ First, movements working for the liberation of women and subjugated ethnicities had achieved success and could function as a model for a new approach to animal welfare issues. Second, evolutionary biology had weakened the perceived boundaries between human and non-human animals. Third, existing animal welfare organizations had experienced devaluation and their motives were questioned. Fourth, documentation of the exploitation of animals in factory farming and medical science was published.

The approach of the modern animal rights movement differs greatly from the earlier approaches of animal welfare groups. Whereas the animal welfare groups had advocated better treatment of animals, while still

allowing humane use of animals, the animal rights movement rejects most or all uses of animals for the benefit of humankind. This includes the use of animals in medical experimentation and the eating of meat and other animal products. In fact, the animal rights movement argues for the dissolution of the normative hierarchies between human and non-human animals. There exist many different theoretical approaches to the issue of animal rights,⁵¹ but most of the contemporary proponents agree on the practicalities of the matter e.g., the necessity of vegetarianism. The issue of vegetarianism is treated on a multidimensional scale, where ecological, ethical, economic, humanitarian, and several other factors are put forward as rational reasons for adopting a vegetarian diet.⁵²

Of course, the choice of a vegetarian diet does not necessarily need to be linked to animal rights philosophies. Many choose a vegetarian diet due to the positive effects on health and body weight that they perceive it to have. These motivations are first and foremost grounded in self-interest, and would not seem to fit the altruism of animal rights activism. In many cases, however, self-interest and altruism go hand-in-hand in the contemporary vegetarian, animal rights, and ecological movements. A person who is vegetarian primarily for ethical reasons may, over time, perceive the beneficial effects on health as an additional motivator, whereas a person who is vegetarian for health reasons, may gain access to information that leads to ecological and ethical concerns becoming more important.

ANIMAL RIGHTS ISSUES AND VEGETARIANISM IN THE TEMPLE OF SET AND DRAGON ROUGE

As Left-Hand Path spirituality is, by nature, opposed to “doctrine,” the perspectives of animal rights, vegetarianism and ecology do not apply to all members of the Temple of Set or Dragon Rouge. Nonetheless, these issues are much discussed in both groups, and are therefore something that most, if not all, members are at the very least confronted with.

The Temple of Set approach to animal rights issues and vegetarianism is contained in the concept of *Arkte*,⁵³ presented by Maga Lilith Aquino as her “fifth degree word” in the year 2000. A brief excursion into the nature of “fifth degree words” is in order before embarking on a closer examination of this particular concept. When attaining the fifth degree—Magus/Maga—a member of the Temple of Set presents a concept ultimately condensed into a single word. This concept is considered to change the existing Aeon⁵⁴ in some fundamental way, and becomes an integral part of Temple philosophy. Tapio Kotkavuori describes the “fifth degree word” as “the culmination of the initiate’s personal approach to Setian philosophy and magic” and the utterance

of them as comparable to paradigm shifts in science, occurrences after which the affected fields of science are fundamentally transformed.⁵⁵

The foundation of Lilith Aquino's initiatory work in regard to animal rights originates from at least the early 1990s, when she officially created an element within the Temple with the goal of exploring the role of "the Gift of Set" in regard to non-human animals. The work of the element was to become the foundation of Lilith Aquino's "fifth degree word." According to her, the concept of Arkte "calls upon the initiatory capacity of humankind to realize that animal intelligence must be measured against its own benchmark, not ours, and that it as such goes beyond mere 'instinct' to various forms of metaphysical awareness pertinent to each species."⁵⁶ On an initiatory level the concept is supposed to transcend the magician beyond the species boundaries, so that he/she is no longer bound by the limitations of his/her species. The magician furthers his/her evolution through abandoning the view of the human being as the "crown of creation" and acknowledging the rights of non-human animals.⁵⁷ This helps the magician perceive him/herself in a new light. To experience the interconnectedness of things is also important, as is awareness of how one's choices affect the surrounding world. Through this awareness, issues of ecology become natural aspects of the work of Arkte, although they are not treated to the same extent as animal rights issues.⁵⁸

The Arkte element is where the main components of the Temple's animal rights philosophy have been conceived, and where the practical work for animal rights has taken place. Formed in 1993, the aim of the element is "the defense and protection of animals, and the bringing to justice of those who harm them in any way, including for reasons of 'research and experimentation'."⁵⁹ According to Tapio Kotkavuori, a member of the element, Arkte is about recognizing the awareness of other beings beside humans. He is also of the view that the issue of animal rights is directly linked to this.⁶⁰ The members of the element are considered "Arkte Warriors," signifying their active stance in the prevention of animal cruelty and abuse. The description of this element in the Temple of Set directory states that Arkte will abstain from any use of violence, but that it will employ all other magical, practical, and legal means to fight persons and institutions that harm animals.⁶¹

The element is a rather unorthodox one in the Temple of Set in several respects. First, it allows non-members to participate, although by invitation only. Second, and more importantly, the element is the first and only group within the Temple with political goals. The work of the element is based on twofold operations. On the one hand, Arkte Warriors regularly engage in different forms of animal rights activism, such as participating in demonstrations and writing to public opinion sections of local newspapers. In addition to being vegetarians themselves, it is not uncommon for Arkte Warriors to try to further vegetarianism

through affecting the opinions of non-members of the Temple of Set. On the other hand, the work conducted in the element is founded in Western magical traditions, consisting of magic workings, mostly shamanic in character. These workings, directed at specific issues, are thought to affect the initiates in themselves, as well as work through magic correspondences to correct situations where animals suffer. Furthermore, there are estimates that a vegetarian diet might make the individual a more effective magician, although this is not generally considered a prerequisite for being a skilled magician in the Temple. Tapio Kotkavuori expresses the sentiment that the issues of animal rights and vegetarianism have to do with the goal of the Left-Hand Path magician to become autonomous. According to him, autonomy entails a huge responsibility and necessitates the cultivation of strong personal ethics.⁶² When operating as an autonomous individual—fully responsible for all of one's actions and aware of the atrocities committed against non-human animals—the decision to adopt a vegetarian diet becomes logical from an ethical standpoint.⁶³

According to the estimate of Tapio Kotkavuori, about twenty Temple of Set members are involved in the Arkte element, with the element having a far greater impact on the Temple as a whole. An estimated twenty percent of all the Temple members are vegetarian, with an absolute maximum of thirty percent.⁶⁴ Although a clear majority of the members of the Temple of Set have a mixed diet, the number of vegetarians is still considerable and the significance of reducing meat consumption is recognized by many more. The number of vegetarians in the United Kingdom, probably the Western country with the densest vegetarian population, was said to be around four percent of the total population in 2003.⁶⁵

While animal rights issues are prior to ecological concerns in the Temple of Set, and are the fountain from which its ecological concerns spring, the situation is different in Dragon Rouge. Here animal rights issues are raised from ecological concerns and the primacy of nature. The importance of ethics, and the view that adopting a vegetarian diet is a natural consequence of cultivating one's personal ethics and responsibility, is common to both organizations. There are more members of Dragon Rouge who regard ecological living as important than there are members who have adopted a vegetarian diet or who actively fight for animal rights issues. That being said, an overwhelming majority of the members involved in the Inner Circle of the order, and of the active Stockholm-based members, are vegetarian. A member of the Inner Circle, who has been a member of the order since 1991, and who professes to be a nature and animal rights activist, says that many Dragon Rouge members are vegetarian and that a large majority entertain ideals of nature conservation and ecology.⁶⁶ Furthermore, in a presentation of the order to a group of university students in 2001, vegetarianism was identified as one of the strongest ethical themes prevalent in the late 1990s.⁶⁷

Dragon Rouge is organized differently than the Temple of Set. The elements and orders of the Temple have no direct counterpart in Dragon Rouge. Thus, the political standpoints regarding animal rights and ecology are of a somewhat more individualistic character in Dragon Rouge.

The order subscribes to the classic Esoteric characteristics of correspondences and living nature. One of the "Five Elementary Draconian Principles" states that "all is one"⁶⁸ and this is often understood to imply a veneration of nature.⁶⁹ Thus, ecological concerns are a natural part of the Dragon Rouge approach to life and magic.⁷⁰ A female member of the order expresses her view on ecology and magic in the following way: "It is self-evident to me that everything is connected, everything I do affects someone else, both humans and animals and the whole planet. So for me it is very important and self-evident that I do not destroy unnecessarily."⁷¹ She also identifies this view of the interconnectedness of everything as a necessary ingredient in the composition of a magical worldview. A common view in the order is that destroying nature would ultimately amount to destroying oneself.⁷² The rhetoric of ecology, however, is not based on spiritual sentiments and emotional reactions alone. Several members display concerns for the future wellbeing of humanity if efforts to advance sustainable development are not accelerated.⁷³ These concerns are based not on any Esoteric notions of correspondences or living nature, but on purely secular views about environmental destruction.

Although the ecological concerns surface as primary in Dragon Rouge, the issues of animal rights receive treatment in their own right as well. When discussing ecological issues, the vegetarians of the order regularly take quite lengthy excursions into the issues of factory farming and other forms of mistreatment of animals. Similarly to the Arkte element of the Temple of Set, the common view among the members of Dragon Rouge who are vegetarian is that animals have value in themselves.⁷⁴ As a female member expresses it: "I see all living creatures as equal. . . . [E]veryone has the same value and potential as we have."⁷⁵ Even though the order in an official capacity generally steers away from politics, the issue of animal mistreatment is discussed. The website of the order strongly criticizes modern materialism, and in particular the results it has had on animals.⁷⁶ It is argued that the human being is essentially no different from non-human animals, and that he/she needs to acknowledge this fact. Furthermore, it is stated that "[m]an can become god by entering outside the human limits and by recognizing the importance of the beast."⁷⁷ The horrors of factory farming are often given as a reason for adopting a vegetarian diet. Sentiments that the contemporary meat industry is perverse,⁷⁸ morally and magically reproachable,⁷⁹ and irresponsible⁸⁰ are expressed. One member goes as far as comparing the meat industry with pre-Civil War slavery in the

United States, and the Holocaust in Nazi Germany⁸¹—as did the animal rights movement PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) in 2003.⁸²

Like the Arkte element of the Temple of Set, the issue of animal rights is commonly approached through ethics in Dragon Rouge. Several members are of the opinion that meat eating and animal exploitation is unjustifiable from a moral standpoint,⁸³ and that the lack of responsibility in the populace in general, and among political leaders in particular, is appalling.⁸⁴ Through magical self development and reflection the magician arrives at an ethical foundation for animal rights issues.⁸⁵ A common belief is that animal rights sentiments naturally emerge as a key notion when working with foundational magic energies, and that adopting a vegetarian diet is a logical step to take when sufficient awareness of oneself and life in its totality is achieved.⁸⁶

A final reason given by Dragon Rouge members for the preference of vegetarian diets is the harmful physiological reactions to eating meat. One member says that meat eating makes him dull, and unable to concentrate on his magical working.⁸⁷ Another member elaborates on the same subject: “when one is working magic, it is quite important to have the right nutritional substances in oneself. Meat is quite hard to break down by the body, and one becomes tired and heavy and all of that.”⁸⁸ These sentiments are also echoed by the founder of the order, Thomas Karlsson.⁸⁹ In short, a vegetarian diet is preferable for a magician as it makes the working of magic easier. Or rather, the eating of meat makes the working of magic more difficult.

CONCLUSION

Left-Hand Path groups are often regarded as radical, and the reasons for this are not difficult to understand. The fostering of extreme individualism, the goal of self-deification, and the appropriation of transgressive symbols in antinomian philosophies and practices can make Left-Hand Path spiritualities seem threatening when compared to traditional Western religion. It is important to note, however, that the two largest Left-Hand Path groups actually encompass a form of radicalism that conflicts with the political right-wing extremism with which they are most often identified. The animal rights movement is often interpreted as belonging to the extreme left of the political spectrum, and in both the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge this ideology has achieved a status which no other political standpoint has ever had. But why have animal rights ideology and vegetarianism risen to such prominence in these groups? I believe that some answers to the question can be found if one looks at the characteristics of Left-Hand Path spiritualities, as discussed in this article.

Although at a first glance it would seem to be a contradiction, the ideology of individualism is one of the most important reasons behind the rise of animal rights awareness and vegetarianism in the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge. With a strong individualist ethos the focus is shifted away from communities, and indeed the human race. This shift has the natural effect of causing a reevaluation of the apparent uniqueness of the human race, and can lead to a critique of traditional justifications for existing power relations between human and non-human animals. From here, the adoption of animal rights ideologies and vegetarianism can seem like the logical course of action. This appears to be what has happened in the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge. Both groups also place great importance on personal responsibility as well as on conscious and reflected ethical positions. The general rise of animal rights awareness in Western culture has brought new issues to the arena of ethics, and this has naturally not gone unnoticed by Left-Hand Path magicians. In an ideology that demands self reflection, this issue could not go unaddressed for very long.

The view of the human being as holistic in nature and the focus on life in the here-and-now also play a role in the appeal of vegetarian diets and ecological thinking. With a positive appraisal of bodily matters a person would be expected to seek to maximize the enjoyment of physical existence. The health benefits of vegetarian diets have been much discussed in recent decades, and a person wishing to get the most out of his/her life could easily be tempted to choose a meatless diet. As I discussed earlier, the aspects of self-interest and altruism often go hand-in-hand in the animal rights movement's rhetoric concerning vegetarianism. A person who becomes a vegetarian due to health reasons will eventually be confronted with animal rights and ecological motivations for vegetarianism and might then adopt these as additional reasons for sustaining a vegetarian diet. Furthermore, when confronted with information about the negative aspects of meat production—e.g., ecological problems—the choice of a vegetarian diet might be expected to be compelling for a person who seeks to enhance the experience of his/her physical existence and considers the world to be an interconnected place.

While the goal of self-deification does not seem to be of direct relevance to the adoption of animal rights sentiments and vegetarian diets—other than it being one possible result of an atmosphere where ultimate responsibility is placed in the individual—the antinomian ethos of Left-Hand Path philosophies is. To anyone familiar with Hindu Tantra, this might seem odd. Tantric texts contain many references to rituals where practices normally forbidden by traditional Vedic religion are prescribed, including the consumption of meat.⁹⁰ The aim of these practices is to transcend duality through facing the taboos of one's own culture and religion. Here one has to consider the differences between

the prevailing ideologies of India and the West. In the latter, the eating of meat has never been the subject of restrictions in the same way as in certain Indian communities, and it certainly is not a taboo in contemporary Western societies. For a Left-Hand Path practitioner the adoption of a vegetarian diet and animal rights perspectives could be seen as antinomian, due to these practices and philosophies not being mainstream.

The rhetoric and rationale of the questions of ecology, animal rights, and vegetarianism in the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge is firmly grounded in the contemporary secular animal rights movement, as pioneered by the likes of Peter Singer and Tom Regan. However, spiritual dimensions are added to this secular approach. In the Arkte element of the Temple of Set, acknowledging the sentience of non-human animals is seen as beneficial for one's own spiritual evolution. In Dragon Rouge, the world is seen as an interconnected place, where humans coexist with other living beings and where he/she should not have an automatically superior status. Vegetarians in both groups regard the adoption of animal rights ethics as a natural consequence of the initiatory process. The combination of secular animal rights activism with religious sentiments is a good example of how post-secular Esotericism combines the scientific rational (i.e., the disenchanted) with the analogical and emotional in order to arrive at the re-enchanted.

The Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge are rather small in terms of the number of members. They are, however, among the more influential Left-Hand Path organizations and function as exemplars for other groups and individual practitioners. Thus, it should be expected that the rising animal rights sentiments expressed in the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge will have an impact on the larger Western Left-Hand Path milieu. As the Left-Hand Path has thus far not received much attention from academia, it is very difficult to assess the number of people involved in the milieu. The increasing number of publications in the field,⁹¹ and the generally good sales of titles, indicates that the interest in Left-Hand Path subjects is considerable. Furthermore, as a distinctive development of contemporary, post-secular Esotericism, the Left-Hand Path also functions as an intriguing case study. It would be of great interest and importance to compare the Left-Hand Path with the developments of other forms of contemporary Esotericism.

ENDNOTES

¹ Elsewhere I have argued against the use of "Satanism" as an analytical category. The main reason for this is the extremely strong pejorative connotations of the term, which make it nearly impossible to escape certain presuppositions about

the nature of the groups in question. I reserve the term Satanism for those groups that self-identify as Satanic, and then only as a self-designate, not as an analytical category. See Kennet Granhölm, "Dragon Rouge—A Spiritual Organization in Opposition to the Society and the Church?" (Torino: CESNUR [Center for the Study of New Religions], 2001), <<http://cesnur.org/2001/london2001/granhölm.htm>>; and Kennet Granhölm, "Embracing Others: The Multiple Princes of Darkness in the Left-Hand Path Milieu," in *Embracing Satan: Contemporary Religious Satanism*, ed. Jesper Aagaard Petersen (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, forthcoming).

² "Mördare Driver Dragon Rouge," *Göteborgsposten*, 6 June 1997.

³ Linda Goldston, "Child Abuse at the Presidio," *San Jose Mercury News*, 24 July 1988, <<http://www.outpost-of-freedom.com/aquino01.htm>>, accessed 25 June 2008. In 1989, CBS used the case as a template for the made-for-TV movie *Do You Know the Muffin Man?* Although Michael and Lilith Aquino were initially implicated in child molestation there was deemed to be no grounds for prosecution. The case did, however, have an adverse affect on the image of the Aquinos and the Temple of Set. For Michael Aquino's rebuttal of *Do You Know the Muffin Man?* see "Do You Know the Muffin Man?" <<http://www.holysmoke.org/sdhok/muffin.htm>>, 25 October 1989.

⁴ See, for example, Tim Maroney, "The Nazi Trapezoid—Nazis and the Occult," <http://www.totse.com/en/religion/the_occult/trapezoi.html>, 11 November 1990, for the view of the Temple of Set as racist, and Kerstin Nilsson, "Religionens nynazister," *Aftonbladet*, 12 February 1995, for an equally negative view of Dragon Rouge. Many of these groups have shown an interest in the history of Nazi Germany, in particular with its occultism. However, the groups also frequently stress that the interest is of a purely non-political and non-racist fashion, see e.g., Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 215; and Tapio Kotkavuori, interview by author, Åbo, Finland, 9 March 2007; Thomas Karlsson, questionnaire answer, Stockholm, Sweden, 2001; "Peter," questionnaire answer, Stockholm, Sweden, 2001.

⁵ Kennet Granhölm, *Embracing the Dark. The Magic Order of Dragon Rouge—Its Practice in Dark Magic and Meaning Making* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2005).

⁶ Antoine Faivre, "Questions Proper to the Study of Esoteric Currents in Modern and Contemporary Europe," in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, ed. Antoine Faivre and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 2.

⁷ Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 10–15. Faivre's characterization of Esotericism has been criticized for being overly rigid, and thus not taking into account the historical transformation of phenomena involved. For a significant alternative approach of Esotericism as a field of discourse see Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2005); idem, "Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation," *Religion* 35, no. 2 (2005): 78–97; and idem, "Esoteric Discourse and the European History of Religions: In Search of a New Interpretational Framework," in *Western Esotericism: Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 20, ed. Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo/Stockholm: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 2008), 217–36.

⁸ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 386–88.

⁹ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “How Magic Survived the Disenchantment of the World,” *Religion* 33, no. 4 (2003): 357–80.

¹⁰ See also Olav Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) for examples of the adaptability of Esoteric worldviews. Hammer identifies the emergence of pseudoscientific discourse as one of the most important epistemological strategies of post-Enlightenment Esoteric movements.

¹¹ Hanegraaff, “How Magic Survived,” 358.

¹² Christopher Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West*. Volume 1, *Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture and Occulture* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 40.

¹³ Hanegraaff, “How Magic Survived,” 359. All religious traditions are, of course, dynamic, diverse and subject to historical change. However, as Hanegraaff notes, magic has often been considered as being more static than other religious elements.

¹⁴ Kennet Granholm, “The Sociology of Esotericism,” in *Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Peter B. Clarke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 783–800.

¹⁵ See Kennet Granholm, “Post-secular Esotericism? Perspectives on the Transformation of Esotericism,” in *Western Esotericism: Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis 20*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo/Stockholm: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 2008), 50–67.

¹⁶ For translocality see Michael Peter Smith, *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 169–71. For translocality in Left-Hand Path groups see Kennet Granholm, “‘The Prince of Darkness on the Move’—Transnationality and Translocality in Left-Hand Path Magic” (Torino: CESNUR [Center for the Study of New Religions], 2007), <http://cesnur.org/2007/bord_granholm.htm>.

¹⁷ See Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “Magic I: Introduction,” in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, ed. Wouter J. Hanegraaff with Jean-Pierre Brach, Roelof van den Broek and Antoine Faivre (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 716–19.

¹⁸ Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 129–31.

¹⁹ See Kennet Granholm, “Symbolisk död och återfödelse i den vänstra handens väg,” *Finyar årsskrift 2006–2007* (2008): 35–51.

²⁰ Kennet Granholm, “Den vänstra handens väg. Moral, etik och synen på ondska i en mörkmagisk orden,” in *Hotbilder—våld, aggression och religion*, ed. Maria Leppäkari and Jonathan Peste (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 2006), 37–50.

²¹ See Richard Sutcliffe, “Left Hand Path Ritual Magick: A Historical and Philosophical Overview,” in *Paganism Today: Wiccans, Druids, the Goddess and Ancient Earth Traditions for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Charlotte Hardman and Graham Harvey (London: Thorsons, 1996), 109–37; Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 137–38.

²² Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 138.

²³ I have been given differing membership numbers for the Temple of Set. According to Tapio Kotkavuori the group has between 300 and 400 members

(Kotkavuori interview, 9 March 2007), and according to the High Priestess of the Temple the membership number is around 200 (Patricia A. Hardy, interview by author, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 30 September 2007). According to the administration of the order, Dragon Rouge had approximately 370 members in early 2007. The rather small membership is in part due to restrictive application policies, and partly due to the religiously and culturally radical approaches of the organizations. Left-Hand Path organizations tend to draw more male participants than females, with approximately 20–30 percent of the members of Dragon Rouge being female (Granhölm, *Embracing the Dark*, 176). From my field work experience in various Temple of Set gatherings the percentage of female Temple members is similar to that of Dragon Rouge. In both organizations the stereotypical member is in his early to late twenties to mid-thirties, with people in the age range of 18 to 80 being involved. Both organizations only admit members of age eighteen or older.

²⁴ Tapio Kotkavuori, *The Left-Hand Path* (Kaarina: Voimasana, 2007).

²⁵ Thomas Karlsson, *Kabbala, kliffot och den goetiska magin* (Sundbyberg: Ouroboros produktion, 2004). See Thomas Karlsson, *Qabalah, Qliphoth and Goetic Magic* (Jacksonville: Ajna, 2008) for the English-language version. See also Tommie Eriksson, *Mörk magi* (Sundbyberg: Ouroboros produktion, 2001), Thomas Karlsson, *Uthark. Nightside of the Runes* (Sundbyberg: Ouroboros Produktion, 2002) and Thomas Karlsson, *Adulrunan och den götiska kabbalan* (Sundbyberg: Ouroboros Produktion, 2005).

²⁶ Edred Thorsson, *Nine Doors of Midgard: A Complete Curriculum of Rune Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994). See also Edred Thorsson, *Runelore: A Handbook of Esoteric Runology* (San Francisco: Weiser Books, 1987), Edred Thorsson, *Runecaster's Handbook: The Well of Wyrð* (San Francisco: Weiser Books, 1999) and Edred Thorsson, *Northern Magic: Rune Mysteries and Shamanism* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 2005).

²⁷ Curiously enough, and in contrast to the rest of the Nordic countries, Finland has a rather sizeable Setian membership.

²⁸ The Church of Satan was founded in San Francisco in 1966, by Anton Szandor LaVey (1930–1997. Pseudonym of Howard Stanton Levey). In 1975, several members of the Church, with Michael A. Aquino as the most active party, became dissatisfied with changes in the Church and decided to establish a new organization. Michael Aquino, had been a member of the Church since 1969, and had during his membership handled the editorship of the Church's newsletter *Cloven Hoof*, established one of the first local groups of the Church, and was eventually initiated into the fourth degree, the High Priest being the only one with the fifth and highest degree. See Michael A. Aquino, *The Church of Satan* (San Francisco: Temple of Set, 2002), 406–12, <<http://www.xeper.org/maquino/nm/COS.pdf>>.

²⁹ Michael A. Aquino, *Black Magic* (San Francisco: Temple of Set, 2002), 114.

³⁰ Aquino, *Black Magic*, 88.

³¹ Aquino, *Black Magic*, 72–75.

³² The degrees are I—Setian; II—Adept; III—Priest/Priestess; IV—Magister/Magistra Temple; V—Magus/Maga; and VI—Ipsissimus/Ipsissima The first degree, which new members are assigned when affiliating, is of a probationary nature. Starting with the second degree one is considered a full member, and

from the third degree onwards the Setian is part of the Priesthood of Set and consequently has more extensive organizational responsibilities.

³³ Aquino, *Black Magic*, 21.

³⁴ To date, the Temple has had five different High Priests, two of whom—including the present one—have been women. Michael A. Aquino, *The Temple of Set*, draft 6 (San Francisco: Temple of Set, 2006), <<http://www.xeper.org/maquino/nm/TOSd6.pdf>>.

³⁵ The mandate for the council members is for nine years, and functions on a rotational schedule, so that each year one of the members is re-elected or replaced. A chairman (or woman) is elected from among the members of the council each year.

³⁶ Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 161–69.

³⁷ *Dracontias*, no. 2, 2007 (2007): 16–20; Dragon Rouge, “Lodges,” Dragon Rouge, <<http://www.dragonrouge.net/english/lodges.htm>>. *Dracontias* is the internal members’ publication of Dragon Rouge.

³⁸ The Qliphoth are in some sense the negative mirror image of the ten Sephiroth on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, and are often considered the domain and origin of demons and other malevolent beings. For information on the Qliphoth see Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah* (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 73–77; and for the Dragon Rouge approach to the subject see Karlsson, *Kabbala*. The ten spheres, and the names of the degrees in Dragon Rouge, are Lilith, Gamaliel, Samael, A’arab Zaraq, Thagirion, Golachab, Gha’agsheblah, Satariel, Ghagiel and Thaumiel. See Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 23, 29–31. Although the Qliphothic spheres are ten in number, the number of initiatory degrees in Dragon Rouge is eleven. This is due to the last sphere, Thaumiel, being represented as dual in essence. Whereas the number ten, and the highest of the Sephirothic spheres—Kether, represents total union with the Godhead, the number eleven—and Thaumiel—represents total separation from the godhead and the ensuing deification of the individual. See Kenneth Grant, *Nightside of Eden* (London: Skoob Books, 1994), 98–99 for the view of eleven as the number of Qliphoth and as “one beyond ten.”

³⁹ The “Inner Dragon” is often identified as the *kundalini* (Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 145–46), a concept derived from Tantra. The *kundalini* refers to an innate, feminine, force or energy in the human being, perceived as a snake coiled in the base of the human torso. The concept is linked to the idea of *chakras*, mystical energy nodes in the body. When the *kundalini*/snake is awakened through various religious practices it rises upwards in the body and activates the *chakras*. With the activation of the final *chakra* enlightenment is achieved. See Hugh B. Urban, “Kuṇḍalinī,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2d ed., Vol. 8, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit, Mich.: Macmillan, 2005), 5266–267.

⁴⁰ Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 123–34.

⁴¹ Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 169–70, 235–42, 267, 306–7.

⁴² Alan Beardsworth, *Sociology on the Menu: An Invitation to the Study of Food and Society* (London: Routledge, 1996), 219–20.

⁴³ Rod Preece, *Awe for the Tiger, Love for the Lamb* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003), xvi–xvii.

- ⁴⁴ Marc Bekoff, ed., *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group 1998), xvii.
- ⁴⁵ Beardsworth, *Sociology on the Menu*, 222.
- ⁴⁶ Bekoff, *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights*, xvii–xviii.
- ⁴⁷ Richard D. Ryder, “Putting Animals into Politics,” in *Animal Rights: The Changing Debate*, ed. Robert Garner (London: Macmillan, 1996), 168.
- ⁴⁸ Peter Singer, *Oikeutta eläimille* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1991), 151–76.
- ⁴⁹ David Sztybel, “Distinguishing Animal Rights from Animal Welfare,” in *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare*, ed. Marc Bekoff (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), 44.
- ⁵⁰ Sztybel, “Distinguishing Animal Rights,” 44.
- ⁵¹ The modern animal rights movement is strictly secular in character, with a scientific rational base for its arguments. There are, however, animal rights advocates who strive to combine these issues with religion, see e.g., Günter Altner, *Naturvergessenheit. Grundlage einer umfassenden Bioethik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), and Erich Gräßer, “Das Seufzen der Kreatur (Röm. 8, 19–22) auf der Suche nach einer ‘biblischen Tierschutzethik’,” in *Schöpfung und Neuschöpfung*, ed. Ingo Baldermann (Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 93–118.
- ⁵² For example, Singer, *Oikeutta eläimille*, 156–62. Good examples of the combination of animal rights issues with vegetarianism and veganism can be found in the online articles “Animal Rights and Vegetarianism,” HappyCow, <http://www.happycow.net/why_vegetarian.html>, accessed 25 June 2008; Bruce Friedrich, “Vegetarianism in a Nutshell,” GoVeg.com, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), <<http://www.goveg.com/pdfs/nutshell.pdf>>, accessed 25 June 2008; and “Primer on Animal Rights,” Vegetarianism in a Nutshell, The Vegetarian Resource Group, <<http://www.vrg.org/nutshell/animalrights.htm>>, accessed 25 June 2008. All of these articles discuss vegetarianism primarily from an animal rights perspective, but add that the diet is beneficial for the environment and the health of the person adopting the diet.
- ⁵³ According to Lilith Aquino, the word “Arkte” is derived from the Hellenic name for the constellations of the Great and Little Bears. Important here is the Greek myth of the origin of the constellation. Here the nymph Kallisto is transformed into a bear and almost killed by her son Arkas who does not recognize the bear as his mother. Zeus then transforms Arkas into a bear as well, and in order to protect them further transforms both mother and son into constellations. Lilith Aquino, “The Dawn of *Arkte*: A New Dimension of the Gift of Set” (2000), 1–2. Document contained in the *Crystal Tablet of Set*, internal document collection of the Temple of Set.
- ⁵⁴ Michael Aquino defines Aeon as “an attitude which one chooses or is conditioned to accept,” in *Black Magic*, 35.
- ⁵⁵ Kotkavuori interview, 9 March 2007.
- ⁵⁶ Aquino, “The Dawn of *Arkte*,” 2.
- ⁵⁷ Kotkavuori, *The Left-Hand Path*, 71–74.
- ⁵⁸ Kotkavuori, interview, 9 March 2007.
- ⁵⁹ Aquino, “The Dawn of *Arkte*,” 1.

- ⁶⁰ Kotkavuori, interview, 9 March 2007.
- ⁶¹ Temple of Set, "Elements directory" (2006). Document contained in the *Crystal Tablet of Set*, internal document collection of the Temple of Set.
- ⁶² Kotkavuori, *The Left-Hand Path*, 71–74.
- ⁶³ Kotkavuori, interview, 9 March 2007.
- ⁶⁴ Kotkavuori, interview, 9 March 2007.
- ⁶⁵ Brian Campbell, "Number of Vegetarians Decline in U.K.," AnimalRights.net, <<http://www.animalrights.net/archives/year/2003/000330.html>>.
- ⁶⁶ "Peter," questionnaire, 2001.
- ⁶⁷ Presentation of Dragon Rouge to a group of university students, Stockholm, Sweden, 29 October 2001.
- ⁶⁸ Dragon Rouge, "Five Elementary Draconian Principles," Dragon Rouge, <<http://www.dragonrouge.net/english/philosophy.htm>>, accessed 25 June 2008.
- ⁶⁹ Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 153–55.
- ⁷⁰ Karlsson, questionnaire, 2001.
- ⁷¹ "Maria" and "Lisa," interview by author, Stockholm, Sweden, 6 May 2001. Maria and Lisa were jointly interviewed but only Maria is quoted.
- ⁷² Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 155.
- ⁷³ "Justin," interview by author, Stockholm, Sweden, 3 April 2001; "Franz," questionnaire answer, Stockholm, Sweden, 2001; Karlsson, questionnaire, 2001; "Carter," questionnaire answer, Stockholm, Sweden, 2001; "Lisa," questionnaire answer, Stockholm, Sweden, 2001.
- ⁷⁴ Granholm, *Embracing the Dark*, 155.
- ⁷⁵ "Maria" and "Lisa" interview, 6 May 2001. Only Maria is quoted. See also "Sheila," interview by author, Stockholm, Sweden, 8 May 2001; "Lisa," questionnaire, 2001.
- ⁷⁶ Dragon Rouge, "Contra 3 M," Dragon Rouge, <http://www.dragonrouge.net/english/Contra_3_M.pdf>, accessed 25 June 2008.
- ⁷⁷ Dragon Rouge, "Contra 3 M."
- ⁷⁸ "Carter," questionnaire, 2001.
- ⁷⁹ Karlsson, questionnaire, 2001.
- ⁸⁰ "Justin," interview, 3 April 2001.
- ⁸¹ "Peter," questionnaire, 2001.
- ⁸² A comparison between the horrors of Nazi death camps and the use and abuse of animals in contemporary society is made in John M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 19–22. In the text, which was originally based on lectures given by Coetzee in the Tanner Lectures at Princeton University in 1997–1998, the fictional novelist Elizabeth Costello says the following: "Let me say it openly: we are surrounded by an enterprise of degradation, cruelty, and killing which rivals anything that the Third Reich was capable of, indeed dwarfs it, in that ours is an enterprise without end, self-regenerating, bringing rabbits, rats, poultry, livestock ceaselessly into the world for the purpose of killing them." Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*, 21. Coetzee's text was probably the original inspiration for the comparison by PETA, and the author is discussed on the PETA website, see e.g., "Nobel Laureate J. M. Coetzee on Animal

Death Camps," *The Peta Files*, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), <http://blog.peta.org/archives/2007/02/nobel_laureate_1.php>, 27 February 2007.

⁸³ "Lisa," questionnaire, 2001.

⁸⁴ "Justin," interview, 3 April 2001.

⁸⁵ "Carter," questionnaire, 2001.

⁸⁶ "Sheila," interview, 8 May 2001.

⁸⁷ "Carter," interview by author, Stockholm, Sweden, 5 February 2001.

⁸⁸ "Sheila," interview, 8 May 2001.

⁸⁹ Karlsson, questionnaire, 2001.

⁹⁰ See Hugh B. Urban, *Tantra: Sex, Secrecy, Politics, and Power in the Study of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 40. It should be noted that although Tantra, or rather Western interpretations of it, is where the concepts of Left- and Right-Hand Path are ultimately derived, the Western Left-Hand Path is only superficially related to Indian religious traditions.

⁹¹ In addition to the books mentioned earlier, see Don Webb, *Uncle Setnakt's Essential Guide to the Left-Hand Path* (Smithville, Tex.: Runa-Raven Press, 1999); Nikolas Schreck and Zeena Schreck, *Demons of the Flesh. The Complete Guide to Left-Hand Path Sex Magic* (Washington D.C.: Creation Books, 2002); and Michael W. Ford, *Luciferian Witchcraft* (Houston, Tex.: Succubus Publishing, 2005); Michael W. Ford, *Liber HVHI: Magick of the Adversary* (Houston, Tex.: Succubus Publishing, 2005).