

Temple of Set Reading List
Category 18: Life and Death
Leben und Tod
as of February 26, 2003

MA: To the profane, life and death are automatic, inevitable, and unalterable. Hence they take the influence of the life/death continuum on human affairs for granted. To the magician, life and death can be influenced and eventually controlled altogether. The Victor Frankenstein of yesterday becomes the genetic engineer of tomorrow. New forms and mutations of life will become possible, death may cease save through accident, and the Self may evolve into a Self-contained state of existence unhampered by a physical shell chained to the entropy of the objective universe. *Xeper*.

18A. *The Immortalist* by Alan Harrington. NY: Avon Books #380-00201-125, 1969 [recently revised and updated]. (TOS-3) MA: “In this brilliant book Harrington argues that the presence and the fear of death are root causes for much if not all of human behavioral characteristics. Non-human animals cannot conceptualize and anticipate death, hence are not governed by it. Harrington then catalogues the surprising number of ways in which death-awareness grips human philosophy, presents data on efforts to arrest death, and finally ventures hypotheses concerning a non-death-obsessed environment. A scientific rejection of the Osirian ethic. I originally reviewed #18A in the Church of Satan’s newsletter *The Cloven Hoof* #V-1: ‘The Secrets of Life and Death’, reprinted as Appendix 71 in #6N and also available in the Order of the Trapezoid section of the Intranet.”

18B. *The Immortality Factor* by Osborn Segerberg, Jr. NY: Bantam Books #553-08183-195, 1974. [Deutschland: WU: 25/12684] (TOS-4) MA: “This is a somewhat more technical approach to the questions addressed in #18A, with emphasis on the physiological aging/ regeneration processes [see also #17F’s discussion of this], the creation of life, and ecological implications of a controlled life/death environment [cf. *Logan’s Run*]. Well-researched & argued.”

18C. *The Book of Opening the Mouth* by E.A. Wallis Budge (Trans.). NY: Benjamin Blom, 1972. (TOS-5) MA: “The Spell for Life Unbounded by Time, caricatured as the ‘Scroll of Thoth’ in the classic Boris Karloff film *The Mummy*. As with other TOS-5 codes, this text is not to be read or used casually or irresponsibly. The motion picture *Deathdream* (Quadrant/Impact Films, 1972) can give you a good idea of what can happen when you tinker with necromancy without appreciating the consequences of ‘success’.”

18D. *Our Eternity* by Maurice Maeterlinck. NY: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1914. (TOS-4) MA: “A revision and expansion of Maeterlinck’s 1911 essay ‘Death’. The highest form of inductive logic directed towards the major issues of existence and survival of the egocentric consciousness after material death. Key to the effectiveness of #18C. [Maeterlinck is also the author of #21.]”

18E. *The Mysteries of Life and Death: An Illustrated Investigation into the Incredible World of Death* by Professor Keith Simpson, OBE, FRCP, FC Path, et al. NY: Crown (Crescent Books, 1980). (TOS-3) MA: "At first glance this appears to be a rather morbid 'coffee-table' book, but it soon becomes apparent that it is quite a bit more. For one thing, the contributing authors are among the most respectable and distinguished in their fields, which range from philosophy and criminal psychiatry to pathology and forensics. Here is the entire concept of death for you to examine: mythology, physiological aspects, psychological considerations, and cultural legacy. There are chapters on assassination, disease, the soul, strange & bizarre funeral & entombment practices, suicide, artistic influences, war, etc. After you get over feeling queasy [the photographs & illustrations pull no punches], you will be fascinated to discover just how little you actually knew about the phenomenon of death [hence life], and just what the limits of human knowledge concerning it happen to be."

18F. *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide* by A. Alvarez. NY: Random House, 1972. [Deutschland: *Der grausame Gott*, Verlag Hoffman u. Campe, Hamburg, 1974] (TOS-3) MA: "An incisive, objective, and empathetic investigation into the psychology of suicide, accompanied by a survey of suicide themes in historical literature. Said the *New York Times* of this book: 'To write a book about suicide - to transform the subject into something beautiful - this is the forbidding task that Alvarez has set for himself; he has succeeded!'"

18G. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* by Bram Stoker. NY: Kensington Publishing Corp (Zebra Books #416), 1978 (originally published by Rider & Company, UK, 1912). (TOS-5) MA: "After writing *Dracula* Stoker set out to do for ancient Egyptian magic and immortality what he had done for medieval vampirism, and *JSS* was the result - certainly his second greatest creation. Though well-received in England, *JSS* remained almost unavailable and unknown in the USA until this small paperback firm brought out this edition. The book recounts the story of Queen Tera, a mysterious sorceress of old Khem, one of whose hands was seven-fingered. Superstitiously hated and feared by the ordinary priesthoods and court cliques, Tera used her arts to discover the great spell for immortality drawn from the Seven Stars of the Thigh of Set, and enchanted it into her tomb through the Xepera-shaped Jewel of Seven Stars. Subtly, sensitively, Stoker evokes in the Initiate reader the success and triumph of Tera - though to the uninitiate it will seem that she failed. [See also my "My Last Three Books" in *Scroll* #XVIII-2, April 1992.] See #F18A."

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F18A. *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb*. Hammer Films. MA: "Recently restored/released on DVD [with some informative and amusing interviews with cast & crew]. Despite its lurid title, it is actually a film version of Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* - and a much more faithful treatment of the novel than the later and better-known Charlton Heston remake *The Awakening*. The only irritant is the ending: Whereas Stoker's novel ends on a romantic, mystical note, *BMT* concludes [as does *Awakening*] with a 'monster movie shock scene' completely absent in the original. Cast includes Andrew Keir, Valerie Leon, James Villiers. Directed by Seth Holt. See #18G."