Legion Short Guide

Legion by William Peter Blatty

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Characters

Legion contains more minor characters than its predecessor, but its main focus is tighter, concentrating on police lieutenant William Kinderman, a secondary character from The Exorcist. Kinderman is, as Christopher Lehmann-Haupt puts it, a "wondering Jew," equally given to Yiddishisms and philosophical speculation. His name, Lehmann-Haupt points out, means "child- man" in German and "one who is more kind" in English; both fit Kinderman's personality, weighted with empathy for the world's sorrows but eternally questioning and open as a child.

As in The Exorcist, Kinderman's love of "schmaltz" and his sometimes rough or rambling manner conceal a sharp mind and keen perception, both professional and personal. In his theological quest, Kinderman states, "Never mind. Lieutenant Kinderman is on the case." Kinderman's family—wife, daughter, and mother-in-law—are important thematically and to the plot, providing loving support but vulnerable to outside threats.

Winter points out that Legion is an untraditional sequel, in that none of the central characters of The Exorcist feature significantly in Legion. The MacNeils are completely absent; Father Karras's body is vital to the story, but his spirit appears briefly and ineffectually, if at all. The friendship between Kinderman and Father Dyer, one hopeful element concluding The Exorcist, does add both depth and lightness to the first part of the book, until tragedy strikes. Their banter shows true caring—and the cleverness of dialogue in Blatty's other works, such as The Ninth Configuration (1978; see separate entry). However, Kinderman, Dyer, and Father Riley—a minor character in The Exorcist, president of Georgetown University in Legion—seem strangely unchanged by the events of the previous book. They all refer to the anniversary of Father Karras's death, but never discuss the exorcism further, even when the outre intrudes into the plot, again.

Instead of offering more full continuity, Legion presents a new crew of both minor and major characters. Kinderman's personality plays off his professional associates, including Stedman, a police pathologist, and Sergeant Atkins, Kinderman's assistant, "a Vietnam naval veteran out of a Catholic University," but with "a certain gentility of soul." Both play straight man to Kinderman's jokes and ideas. Investigating the murders, they encounter a number of victims, witnesses, and suspects, some hardly more than names (Joe Mannix, who discovered the first body) and some more interesting personalities: Martina Otsi Lazlo, the catatonic mental patient discovered at the first crime scene; or Mrs. Clelia, another mental patient.

Two of the new characters are fully developed and secondary only to Kinderman. One, the spirit of the Gemini Killer, plays the role of the demon in TheExorcist, both plot-wise and by contributing a sharp, taunting edge to the book. Like the demon in The Exorcist, Vennamun mentally picks up phrases to assault humans with: after Dyer dies, with "It's a Wonderful Life" on the wall in blood, Vennamun greets Kinderman, asking, "It's a wonderful life, don't you think?" Although Vennamun's abused childhood evokes our

sympathy, nothing warm or vulnerable is left in his personality. As purely cruel as the demon, Vennamun shows his humanity only by greater wit and more refined joy in the suffering he causes.

Blatty accomplishes much with the character of Dr. Amfortas. Named for the wounded Fisher King of Arthurian myth, Amfortas advances the theme almost comparably to Kinderman and is at least as vital to the plot. A neurologist, Amfortas specializes in pain and considers its implications both physically (including the problems of not having pain receptors, or what the phantom limb phenomenon suggests) and spiritually.

His agony over his wife's death leads him to tape the voices of the dead, providing Kinderman with a key to understanding the afterlife. Amfortas also, influenced by a brain tumor, meets his double and converses with it about supernatural matters, in a scene perhaps more striking than any other in Legion. He provides a very credible murder suspect, as Karl Engstrom did in The Exorcist; and as with Engstrom, his secret turns out to be not murder, but a hidden source of emotional (and in Amfortas's case physical) pain.

Others populate the hospital where Dr.

Amfortas works and other murder suspects are mental patients. Dr. Freeman Temple, a colleague of Amfortas's (with a statue of Excalibur on his desk) is a quirky, unpleasant, and arrogant behaviorist psychologist, who—echoing The Ninth Configuration—half-jokes that insanity within a mental ward is "contagious" to the staff. Nurse Keating is a pleasant minor character; Dr. Tench is chief of staff at the hospital. All the hospital personnel add color to the novel; moreover, as the murders more and more involve the hospital, they advance the plot as suspects and sources of information.

Social Concerns

While The Exorcist (1971; see separate entry) presented an impressive array of its contemporary fears and hopes, the sequel, Legion, is more personal and more purely theological in its concerns, although still shaped by its time. Peter Blatty had at first not wanted to compose a sequel to his outstandingly successful book, instead writing a memoir of his life with his mother, I'// Tell Them I Remember You (1973). In 1977, the motion picture The Exorcist II: The Heretic came out, directed by John Boorman, without Blatty's participation—or approval of the results. Twelve years after the publication of The Exorcist, Blatty wrote, scripted, and directed his own follow-up, which was filmed in 1990 as The Exorcist III. On its own, Legion would not have been the cultural phenomenon that The Exorcist was; however, while an unconventional sequel in many ways, it does continue many of the theological issues of the original, reaching an intellectual conclusion that the earlier novel lacks.

One main difference between Legion and its predecessor comes from the choice of protagonist, the Jewish detective William Kinderman. Instead of The Exorcist's family stresses, with Chris MacNeil as a single working mother (however glamorous her job as an actress), Legion presents a full family structure, including not only Kinderman's wife, Mary, and daughter, Julie, but also a visiting motherin- law, Shirley. Any stress is proportionate to life in the 1980s and Kinderman's police job; the relationships are realistically flawed, but problems are met with love and humor. Moreover, Kinderman's assistant, Atkins, marries during the novel, with Kinderman's approval of the act as "good" and "normal." The family is a stable asylum from the growing supernatural threat.

Horror in the novel, then, does not grow out of fears concerning the fragmentation of the family, as in The Exorcist, but comes from threats from outside the family. Although this is more traditional than The Exorcist's approach, it may also reflect its time. Certainly, one social theme in the 1980s was a return to family values, and the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s had given way, at least in the public image, to hardworking young people set on building their own future rather than changing the world's. Drugs and breaking the law were viewed less as results of adolescent protest, and more as threats from those deemed outsiders—from the poor, "career criminals," or foreign drug cartels.

The epitome of this threat from outside, in some ways, is the serial killer, in whom interest grew during the 1980s and 1990s; the detective element of Legion concerns seemingly random atrocities in the style of a serial murderer, the Gemini Killer, whom Kinderman knows had been caught and executed. While Blatty does not explicitly link the arbitrary nature of serial killings and the general philosophical question of purpose or design in life, the latter's centrality to Legion fits precisely with the former. In 1969, the senselessness of the Tate-LaBianca killings shocked the public, who still tried to make sense out of the motive and consequences of the act; by the 1980s, stranger-murder for thrills was on the rise, and the public was fascinated by these nihilistic acts, simply accepting them as having no understandable cause.

To the extent that serial killings in popular culture are seen as caused, the explanation plays out another concern of the 1980s and 1990s: the evils of family dysfunction and child abuse. In Legion, the Gemini Killer, James Vennamun, is motivated both by enjoyment and by a desire to hurt his father, Karl, who tormented and caused the death of James's beloved brother, Thomas. Karl Vennamun, a cruel drunk, is also a well-known television evangelist. Significantly, written in a time suspicious of televangelists and their scandals, Karl Vennamun forms a counterpoint to the benevolent priests in Legion, carried over from The Exorcist but given much more minor roles and presented as murder victims rather than supernatural saviors.

Legion primarily continues the religious themes of The Exorcist, and those, rather than social issues, drew readerly and critical praise. Even here, however, Blatty's approach was shaped by his culture.

Instead of the yearning to reaffirm traditional religion seen in The Exorcist, Legion demonstrates a drive towards a new and syncretistic spirituality—blending not only different faiths but, most importantly, religion with quantum mechanics and other science—that was present in the 1960s, but flourished in the 1980s (and 1990s) to become a cultural (and marketing) category known as New Age philosophy.

Thus, while Legion is not as manifestly a guide to its time as The Exorcist, with philosophical and theological concerns even more central and personal, those concerns are definitely expressed in Legion in ways that reflect the culture that produced it.

Techniques

Like The Exorcist, Legion is structured as a detective story—in this case, as Douglas Winter points out, a police procedural.

We follow Kinderman searching out clues, interviewing witnesses, receiving lab reports, pursuing and eliminating suspects. In fact, even the theological/philosophical theme is presented as a process of putting clues together, and speeches by Kinderman that begin in the metaphysical may instantaneously switch to his speculations on the multiple murders under investigation. Kinderman refers to himself half-jokingly as "the Jewish Mister Moto ... on the verge now of cracking this problem of evil."

In The Exorcist, the focus on the murder mystery allows Blatty time to credibly build up clues, slowly introducing the reader to the supernatural; in Legion, Blatty presents the spiritual musings and murder investigation in counterpoint, perhaps to maintain interest among readers who care less about one aspect but will keep reading for the other. Legion also relies less on suspense than The Exorcist does. Although individual scenes—as when Kinderman follows clues to protect the next victim—can be quite suspenseful, Kinderman suspects the killer's identity in the first scene, although he quickly dismisses the idea, and accepts it rather easily soon after.

Blatty could assume that a reader of "The Long-Awaited Sequel to The Exorcist" (as the jacket copy states) would be willing to accept supernatural elements, already prepared by the carefully built credibility in The Exorcist. Whether Blatty thought of this consciously or not, Legion does not struggle to develop believability as its predecessor did. Like his demonic counterpart, Vennamun's spirit suggests telepathy as an alternative to actual possession, but Kinderman does not agonize over the difference as Karras does. This also, of course, reflects the differences between the two men's personalities, Karras doubting and Kinderman open and searching.

While the themes are presented more explicitly than The Exorcist's in Kinderman's musings, they are also conveyed more subtly through selected imagery.

One motif is that of the carp swimming in Kinderman's bathtub for purification before eating, a homey detail and source of amusing complaint by Kinderman.

However, thematically it fits with two key components of the novel's philosophy: we are all trapped in a fallen world in which we do not quite fit, as the carp is trapped, doomed to purposeless action unless we break free; and yet it is also a process of purification that will enable us to "regroup" into the universal true self.

Another motif is that of doubling: James Vennamun became what he was because of the death of his brother, Thomas; Dr.

Amfortas sees his own double and converses with it; even the multiple possessions form a kind of doubling, the invading spirit opposed to the invaded body.

Legion differs significantly from The Exorcist in that, while the actions are often even more horrible (though not sexually alarming), the depiction is understated. The murder-mutilations are not described when committed, but referred to during investigation; the facts are extreme—including crucifixion, decapitation, exsanguination, and replacement of bodily organs with other objects—but not given the direct attention of even the vomiting or verbal obscenity in The Exorcist.

Themes

Legion opens with police lieutenant William Kinderman meditating upon evil in the world, then flexing to consider the good, in one smooth motion. The setting is soon revealed as that of a particularly horrible murder, the first in a series; but throughout the scene—and the novel as a whole—Kinderman's ruminations alter nate with, and are given at least as much weight as, the homicide investigations. "It seems to me," Kinderman tells his friend, Father Dyer, "the whole world is a homicide victim."

Indeed, the central themes of Legion are theological: the problem of pain, the existence of evil, the argument from design—does the complexity and purposefulness of nature imply a creator?—faith versus proof, and the nature of death and possibility of life afterwards. These issues are primarily talked out, by Kinderman in conversation with Father Dyer, with a pain specialist named Dr. Amfortas, with Kinderman's police compatriots, and often by himself. Many critics compare Legion's lecturing unfavorably to the exploration of these issues through action in The Exorcist, although a significant number find the earlier novel too sensationalistic and prefer Legion's approach.

Moreover, the lectures do not displace action altogether, and the plot does enact those metaphysical themes. Just as Regan's possession affirms a supernatural presence in The Exorcist, the existence of a soul, separable from the body and surviving death, is repeatedly revealed through supernatural events within Legion.

The central plot, concerning a series of heinous murders, culminates in Kinderman's discovery of the possession of multiple bodies by a malevolent human spirit. A major subplot concerns the taping of the voices of the dead, indicating that there is a kind of limbo for the immediately deceased. In The Exorcist, Father Karras is tortured by the death of his mother, but receives no assurance beyond the taunts of a demon using her voice; in Legion, Dr. Amfortas begins the taping in bereavement over a young wife, dead of meningitis, and does find that the dead survive. Kinderman also dreams a kitschy version of the afterlife (well portrayed in the motion picture version, The Exorcist III), which provides him with information he could not otherwise have known at the time.

Simultaneously, Kinderman gradually reveals hints of a grand theological-philosophical system he is developing, which answers all of his questions concerning God, man, and nature. These expository lumps present a bibliography of what was coming to be called New Age syncretism: gnosticism, Plato, and The Tibetan Book of the Dead (14th century); Carl Jung; and evocative science such as Wolfgang Pauli's quantum physics, Bell's theorem, and J. W. Dunne's Experiment with Time (1927). Especially important is the philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin, the archaeologist-priest on whom Blatty partly based Father Merrin in The Exorcist, and whose combination of science and Christianity appealed to many and was condemned by others. Just as Teilhard speculated that man and nature are developing to a divine "omega point," Kinderman concludes that the Fall (of man from the grace of God in the Garden of Eden) was actually the splintering of a single consciousness that pervades all creation, and spirits are "regrouping," reversing that Fall. Blatty has stated in interviews that he personally endorses this theology..

This approach has a purgatorial aspect, doubtless rooted in Blatty's Catholicism but transmuted into the overall philosophy. Kinderman dreams of the afterlife, in part, as a hospital, where souls are cured before moving on, presumably to the reuniting of spirit that reverses the Fall. Another dream presents spirit in terms of sentient lights, choosing to be incarnated and then return to pure spirit.

This is not a perfect answer to all the theological problems, as some critics point out, but it is a good one. However, the more closely one examines the philosophy, the less it works as a continuation of the basically traditional approach of The Exorcist. The switch from demonic possession to inhabitation by a dead human soul is radical, despite Blatty's attempt to reconcile the two. Kinderman decides that all possession is by the dead, not fallen angels—he appropriately mentions the Jewish concept of the dybbuk.

Yet Blatty could not completely ignore, or retroactively write out, The Exorcist's demon, either: the Gemini Killer coyly refers to "a friend" who helped him take over Karras's body, and for whom he killed those victims in Legion who were associated with the exorcism in The Exorcist. This contrast is especially keen because Kinderman's philosophy identifies Lucifer with that ancient, unified soul from which we all are splinters and into which we are trying to regroup.

Another major theme in Legion is that of love, both supernatural and human. In Kinderman's dreams about the lights choosing to become physical, the reason is "pure love," for which the spirit chooses the pain of incarnation. Kinderman asks Dyer if it is true that the nature of angels is pure love, even that of fallen angels, and the positive answer spurs Kinderman's philosophy. On the human level, Kinderman's life—and his assistant Atkins's—is enriched and strengthened by love. Dr. Amfortas is wounded by his love for his dead wife, perhaps fatally, but also enriched by it, and led by it to discover the truth about the afterlife. Finally, a mental patient's inexplicable repetitive motions are discovered to mimic those of her long-lost love, who made shoes by hand; her decades-long identification with him, instead of losing him, leads Kinderman to proclaim, "In a world where love doesn't last, this lady was a giant." This theme stands alone, but also is part of Kinderman's answer to "the big detective story in the sky."

Critic Douglas Winter refers to the "uneasy juxtaposition of fear and hope that powers" both The Exorcist and Legion.

Clearly, the emotional appeal of the former relies more on fear, and the latter emphasizes hope. In Legion the theological questions are more explicit, and the answers even more so. In some ways this interferes with the suspense-thriller elements of Legion, but thematically the two aspects satisfactorily complement each other.

Adaptations

The Exorcist III, the motion picture version of Legion, was released in 1990, both scripted and directed by Blatty. Lee J. Cobb—Detective Kinderman in The Exorcist—had died, and George C. Scott was cast as the Jewish protagonist. His portrayal of the role is very different, more aggressive and even surly, although most critics praised him for it. A tired Jason Miller returned as Father Karras, his suffering face perfect for his minor but moving role; Brad Dourif as the Gemini Killer stole the screen from everyone except Scott.

The motion picture seems to have a split personality, largely understated in its depiction of horrors (even more than the novel), then overblown with pointless special effects in a new ending written for it. In the hospital cell with the spirit of the Gemini Killer, his adversaries face flames, serpents, an exploding Bible, and a floor opening so that the dead can emerge. One realizes that this is karma: the sequel motion picture is marred by intrusive special effects, because the more relevant but more shocking special effects of its predecessor changed the horror film field forever.

Blatty's own script also departs from the novel radically at the end by introducing a new character. There is no exorcist in Legion; the spirit of the Gemini Killer moves on, because his father has died (so there is no point in killing to torment him) and the spirit itself is "tired," leaving Karras's body dead, as it had been when Vennamun's spirit entered. But perhaps studio executives felt that a film called The Exorcist III must have an exorcist, and so the script introduces one: Father Morning, played by Nicol Williamson, physically good casting in what Vincent Canby calls "a terrible role." He briefly tries to exorcise Vennamun from Karras, only to be telekinetically thrown to the ceiling, his skin detaching as he frees himself, leaving him a crippled and bloody mess that does provide some help as Kinderman confronts the Gemini Killer.

This contrasts unpleasantly to the stylish restraint of the rest of the film— which, as Douglas Winter writes, "inverts the sensationalism of its predecessor."

One decapitation is shown only by a sheeted figure racing towards someone, huge surgical shears held open, then a shot of a headless statue in the same hallway. A priest's murder is indicated by blood seeping out from under the door of his confessional booth. One addition of violence, or near violence, works well, adding suspense and an adrenaline rush without gore. In the book, a murderous emissary is sent to Kinderman's house, and her package contains the same huge surgical shears, but she is helplessly catatonic when Kinderman arrives. In the movie, she actually brandishes the shears against Kinderman's daughter, and the daughter is pulled out of the way just in time.

The special effects before the end are primarily used to establish supernatural presence, especially as a threat to Father Morning. Clocks stop, unnatural wind springs up, and a crucifix falls off the wall and bleeds. It is an attempt to provide atmosphere that fails because, unlike the similar phenomena in The Exorcist, these elements are clearly not demanded by the plot. Even one special effect relevant to the plot, an elderly

vehicle of the Gemini Killer escaping past a guard by climbing on the ceiling, is grim but somehow too humorous. Most critics found these additions silly, although some viewers have liked the results.

As one might expect, the motion picture reduces the number of characters in the book. Most significantly, the character of Dr. Amfortas is eliminated altogether—unfortunate, perhaps, but understandable given the need for focus in one feature film. The hospital staff is well represented by Dr. Temple and Nurse Keating, the latter more vivid in the movie than in the book. The various mental patients are combined into the single character of Mrs. Clelia, again helping the focus of the movie.

While the ending of The Exorcist was less thematically clear in the movie than in the book, The Exorcist III is even more thematically clear, and adds an element of self-sacrifice consonant with the end of The Exorcist and The Ninth Configuration. In Legion, when the Gemini Killer leaves, Kinderman states that Karras never was in the body. The movie, however, hints that Karras, like Regan before him, is still alive, although submerged; finally, Karras momentarily surfaces, and tells Kinderman to shoot him, to win against Vennamun and to "free" Karras, which Kinderman does.

Although less talky than the book, Legion still depends largely on dialogue—or Kinderman's monologue— both to explain the plot and to convey the religious and philosophical themes.

Critics seem split in their opinions, some praising the seriousness of the movie and others protesting its long stretches without action. Jami Bernard, in The New York Post, suggests that because the scriptwriter and director were the same, he was tempted to make the film "script-centered" at the expense of the movie as a whole. This may be true, and yet both the acting and the stylish presentation show that Blatty cared about other aspects of directing, also, and the inclusion of lectures and dialogue from the novel was deliberate. In fact, given the nature of the novel, it is hard to see how any substantial presentation of it could have been otherwise.

Key Questions

Legion presents many good topics for discussion, both by itself and in conjunction with The Exorcist. The primary focus, reflecting the primary focus in the novel, might be on philosophical issues. Some ambitious groups may wish to read the works to which Kinderman refers while developing his metaphysical system, especially Teilhard de Chardin, but also Jung, J. W. Dunne's Experiment with Time, and others. Other discussions might concentrate more purely on the work itself, or on its literary precedents. Both plot and character development are somewhat more elaborate than in The Exorcist. Readers can evaluate the success of plot and character, and also focus on specific complex characters such as Dr.

Amfortas, the Gemini Killer, and of course Lieutenant Kinderman.

1. What do you think of the total philosophy that Kinderman develops? Does it seem credible to you, and—a separate issue—does it seem self-consistent within the novel?

2. Are the plot and Kinderman's metaphysical speculations sufficiently integrated into a coherent novel, or does the book seem like an unstable marriage between the two?

3. Do you think the horrors, especially the murders, should have been shown more directly in Legion, as the supernatural horrors and obscenities were shown more direcdy in The Exorcist, or was Blatty's indirect approach justified (and if so, why)?

4. In what ways is and is not Legion "a horror novel"?

5. Were you sympathetic to Dr.

Amfortas, put off by him, or both? What is the Fisher King in Arthurian myth, for whom he is named, and why is that association appropriate (or inappropriate)?

6. What is your reaction to the character of the Gemini Killer? Does knowing his background make you more sympathetic or not?

7. How does the character of Kinderman change from The Exorcist to Legion?

Can you believe that the latter is a continuation of the former?

8. Legion has more distinguishable minor characters than The Exorcist does.

What do figures such as Dr. Temple, Martina Otsi Lazlo, Julie Kinderman, and Sergeant Atkins add to the novel?

9. What role does Kinderman's family play in Legion? What was your reaction to his family members and relationships?

Did you find them credible?

10. Is Legion disappointing as a sequel to The Exorcist or not? In what ways is it a follow-up, and how well do the new aspects blend with the old?

Literary Precedents

Surpassing even The Exorcist, Legion is primarily indebted to the detective novel for its structure, if not for its thematics.

In both novels, Kinderman resembles television's Colombo (also the subject of novels in the 1990s) more than his hardbitten compatriots such as Sam Spade or Philip Marlowe. His character may also have been influenced by Rabbi David Small, in the detective novels of Harry Kemelman published throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Blatty refers to other detectives in Legion, as when Kinderman calls himself "Mr. Moto" and one witness is surnamed Mannix.

The single strongest literary precedent is Red Dragon, by Thomas Harris (1981; see separate entry). Blatty's interviews have not been forthcoming about literary influences. Harris's novels lack the direct philosophical queries of Legion and have even stronger imagery. However, there are two striking similarities. Each is the story of the search for a serial killer, the Gemini Killer in Legion and "the Tooth Fairy" (from his biting his victims) in Red Dragon. Harris, a longtime crime reporter before turning to novels, betters Blatty at the procedural aspect, as might be expected; his detective, Will Graham, differs greatly from Kinderman but is also well drawn. More importantly, Graham consults the imprisoned serial killer, Hannibal "the cannibal" Lecter, better known from Harris's later novel, The Silence of the Lambs (1988; see separate entry) and its motion picture version. The Gemini Killer and Lecter are quintessentially cruel, occasionally playfully so, witty in their taunts, essentially helpless to affect anyone physically but powerful in their scheming intellects. If nothing else, Vennamun and Lecter are characters developed in response to the zeitgeist and of a kind destined to proliferate in the 1990s, as in the motion picture NaturalBorn Killers (1994).

Legion is interestingly similar to, yet unlike the other books in the horror genre that its predecessor helped create.

Its understatement regarding the physical horrors of the murders distinguishes it from the mainstream in horror at its time, represented by Stephen King, Dean Koontz, F. Paul Wilson, or Michael McDowell. Contrariwise, its treatment of the supernatural is very much like those of genre horror, which by its packaging tells its readers to expect—and prepare to accept—the unbelievable as part of the plot. In Legion Blatty also eschews follow-up within any of the subgenres that The Exorcist created, such as the demon child novel or the priest-versus-evil novel, which by 1983 had become passe anyway.

Legion seems not to have itself created any characteristic subgenres.

Related Titles

Blatty mentions exorcism in Twinkle, Twinkle "Killer" Kane (1967) and its rewrite, The Ninth Configuration (1978; see separate entry), but the closer link to Blatty's other works to Legion is in Kinderman's wit, especially the repartee between Kinderman and Dyer, which resembles much of the dialogue in those novels but is not found in The Exorcist.

(There, Kinderman is just as sharp, but more subdued.) Those books also concern themselves with some of Legion's thematic issues, especially the problem of evil and the hope of some kind of redemption. Self-sacrifice, a theme in The Exorcist and The Ninth Configuration, is replaced in Legion by a unity of all things, so that success is in transcending the self, and individual sacrifice is part of a universal movement of self-salvation.

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