

A Cat-Tales Companion

The Companion is a diverse, and not especially well-organized collection of snippets, rantings, and extras connected to the Cat Tales series: The recipes for d'Annunzio's Shrimp Arrabiatta, the real life models for Nirvana the ocelot, how 'Pheromones' got his name, and what really happened at Clark Kent's bachelor party.

These items are divided roughly into the following categories:

Catverse: Cat-Tales continuity, shown in purple

DCU: DC continuity, shown in blue

Reality: From the real world, or the real world's history, pop culture, or literature

Such an Idiot

Literature That bit from Shakespeare

***Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands,
organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?***

They say Shakespeare invented the human being. What they mean is that he crafted characters who were real people. Despite being fictional, they had realistic feelings and psychology; they were complex, sometimes torn between conflicting impulses. They were never mere plot devices with names and bodies that moved the costumes around the stage and got the story from A to B.

That's true of all Shakespeare's characters, but this quote goes to the heart of the matter, for here we have one of those oh so human creations arguing for, and indeed insisting upon, his humanity.

At the end of ***Catfight***, we left Bruce pondering that bit of conversation he overheard between Selina and Eddie in ***Heard the Latest***. The reality of her life as a criminal and continued

ties to the rogues was beginning to ferment. At the opening of ***Such an Idiot***, he's working himself up to talk to her about it, and in so doing, he quotes a bit of Shakespeare. The verses are Shylock's from *The Merchant of Venice*, Act III, Scene 1. Shylock is asked why he would insist on the terms of a bargain with Antonio, taking a pound of flesh if Antonio defaults on his loan. Shylock responds

*He hath disgraced me, and
hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses,
mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my
bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine
enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath
not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs,
dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with
the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject
to the same diseases, healed by the same means,
warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as
a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?
if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison
us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not
revenge?*

Shylock was not the first villainous, money-lending Jew in Elizabethan drama, nor was Shakespeare's the first version of this tale. But Shylock was the first that wasn't a caricature. He wasn't greedy and vindictive just to be contrary; he had a grievance. His daughter had been disgraced, and that was fine with all the fine Christian protagonists because he was only a Jew.

Even though he was the villain of the piece, Shakespeare gave Shylock motivation and the opportunity to reveal it through some of the most lasting and startling poetry on the subject of humanity.

It's not surprising that Bruce would focus on this speech in insisting on Batman's humanity. It is, after all, the same argument: Doesn't Batman have the same biology as any other

man? The same organs and senses and passions, and isn't it therefore a foregone conclusion that he will be drawn to a woman as any other man would be?

And hand in hand with that physical reality is the other one: "If you prick us, do we not bleed. If you poison us, do we not die."

The humanity and mortality are linked. To deny the one is to deny the other and that is, as Bruce says, a delusion he cannot afford.

There are those fans who try to deny Batman humanity, who argue for an uber-bat who has no feelings beyond the mission, and who therefore cannot be hurt. It's easy to see the appeal in this, for those who've been hurt can find relief in identifying with a hero who is untouchable. The problem is, except for that small, vocal minority, this approach is utterly dead. It produces barren and unsatisfying stories, because it's fundamentally flawed.

Readers of stories recognize truth. And the truth is armor isn't decorative. It's protection - people who develop a façade as hard and harsh as Batman's do so to protect an inner person who feels MORE deeply than the smiling gladhanders. To accept a Bat as dark and menacing as the one we see so relentlessly since Crisis, is to accept the inner man that Selina glimpses in the vault: one who is intensely vulnerable.

This intro to ***Such an Idiot*** is very special to me, as it addresses in a short space the many flaws in Psycho-bat characterization.

I find the more I try to unpack this section, the more I'm restating what's said in the text, and doing it less well. So having explained the source of the quote, let's just move on.



D'Annunzio's

The conversation at Selina's apartment introduces a place we will come to know well in *Cat-Tales*: D'Annunzio's, although we will not meet its proprietor Giovanni until ***Fun and Games***. A city like Gotham would boast hundreds, indeed thousands, of restaurants. The trendy ones will remain impossible to get into for nine months to a year, then drag on for a bit on reputation, then disappear making way for the next hot new thing.

D'Annunzio's is one of a handful that has staying power, however. This is partially because it does not rely on a celebrity chef pushing 'creative' [read: bizarre] combinations of food, but on inventive yet sensible presentation of classic Italian cuisine. In other words: the food tastes good.

The other distinguishing feature is Giovanni, descended from "an aristocratic Italian poet". This would be Gabriele d'Annunzio. Gabriele d'Annunzio was the best selling author of his time. He was regarded as a war hero by the Italian people after his attempt to preserve for his country the Dalmatian port of Fiume in 1919.

As a man of influence, his voice could have made a difference in the establishment of the fascist state, and yet, for the sake of comfort (and a ready supply of cocaine), he allowed Mussolini to keep him locked up for the rest of his life in his villa, Il Vittoriale, on Lake Garda.

Reality Take out menus are on the desk:

One of those details of NYC life that allude so many Gotham writers, pro and amateur. Apartments in the city are small, kitchens are small, and a great many people live on takeout. In the heart of the city, there are a hundred alternative to the Chinese and pizza delivery available in the 'burbs.

Monitor Duty at the Watchtower

The JLA's current base is called the Watchtower. It is a structure located on the Moon. I'm told this happened after they defeated the Hyperclan of White Martians around JLA #4 or 5. It would include bits of their previous base, a satellite. Members travel to and from the Watchtower through transporter tubes.

Using technology developed by S.T.A.R. Labs, the JLA travel to and from the Watchtower by way of transport tubes using ambient matter, which exists in two places simultaneously and can be folded through space. The JLA transporters link streams of ambient matter to Earth-bound transport tubes maintained at various government facilities. When a JLA member steps into the transporter, they are literally folded to the location of the opposite tube through a revolving door.

--Wizard JLA Special, 1997

The Watchtower contains, among other resources, a Trophy Room:

"Originally conceived in the Sanctuary, brought on board the JLA Satellite, and now birthed in the Watchtower, the JLA Trophy Room houses all sorts of items that were connected to the League's past cases. Notable exhibits included the dormant body of Starro the Conquerer, the deactivated Amazo, Professor Amos Fortune's Stimu-Luck machine, Green Arrow's trick arrows, and Julian September's Probability Machine."

And a Monitor Womb, so named because it is constantly monitoring goings on on Planet Earth, as Batman describes in Dogs of War:

"...the uplink matrix automatically runs raw the data through a multilevel contextual filter sorting the information by location, category, urgency index and so forth."

JLA Members take turns sitting in this room to alert the others should an emergency arise. Monitor Duty may be an outdated concept in an era when you can set up your Yahoo Pager to PING you any time Penn State scores against 'Bama or your Sonic Foundry stock goes up a point, but any time Batman suggests a

better way, Clark has these 400 objections.

Pop Culture

Whose Line is it Anyway:



Joker IM's Selina because he can't work the VCR to tape his favorite show, "Whose Line is it Anyway."

This is a real show in which contestants improvise scenes in theatresports-type games given to them by the host. They might be required to sing about an audience member, speak only in questions, become weird superheroes, or guess at bizarre quirks.

The show is a Hat Trick production which began life as a 'competitive' team game on Radio 4 in the UK. Host **Clive Anderson** was joined by four contestants, including regular team captains **John Sessions** and **Stephen Fry**. **Colin Sell** provided the improvised music.

After a year, the series moved to television and Channel 4. Clive continued to host, with John initially appearing in every episode, and **Richard Vranich** providing music. The two vs. two format was soon dropped. Common performers on the show included **Greg Proops**, **Josie Lawrence**, **Brad Sherwood**, **Paul Merton**, **Sandi Toksvig**, **Mike McShane**, **Chip Esten**, **Tony Slattery** and **Steve Frost**, as well as **Ryan Stiles** and **Colin Mochrie** who became fixtures of the later seasons.

These performers were joined by guests such as **Stephen Fry**, **Rory Bremner**, **Graeme Garden**, **Jonathan Pryce**, **Ardal O'Hanlon**, **Mark Cohen**, **George Wendt** and many more. A number of episodes were filmed in New York in 1991/92.

In 1998 the original show celebrated its 10th Anniversary by filming "In Hollywood" episodes, and shortly afterwards the cast joined **Drew Carey** for tapings of a new US version for ABC (sometimes affectionately referred to as DLiiA? - "Drew's Line is it Anyway?"). **Laura Hall** provided music for both of these series. The American version continues today with **Ryan & Colin** joined by **Wayne Brady** as a third regular, and fourth-seaters including oldies **Greg, Brad & Chip** and newcomers such as **Kathy Greenwood, Denny Siegel** and **Jeff Davis**. Laura has been joined by guitarist **Linda Taylor** and other musicians.

Joker cannot stand the American version with Drew Carey and only watches reruns of the UK originals rerun on Comedy Central.

He is quite taken with Ryan and Colin and writes them many letters telling them so.

Catverse **"That's not his name. Nobody knows his name."**

I love most of them, I really do. But fanboys get bothered by the damndest things. The Tim Burton Batman movie needed the pre-Joker Joker to have a name, so they gave him one. "Jack" – fair enough – there's even one in a deck of playing cards – or it may have something to do with the word "jackanapes" which means a mischievous child; impudent upstart, someone who is unimportant but cheeky and presumptuous. And Napier, possibly a nod to Alan Napier who played Alfred on the '60s Batman TV series, although I seem to associate the name with a Golden Age artist too. In any case, they needed a name, they have him one: Jack Napier.

When I uploaded **Reputation** to a particular workshop, one darling reviewer, who is himself an excellent writer and a great guy, was most concerned about Selina addressing Joker on the IM as "Jack." This would open me up to criticism, he warned, as one who knew only the movies and cartoons, and since I was obviously knowledgeable about the comics... etc. etc.

Now I take equally from any continuity that makes sense to me, and I throw out anything that I don't care for. I see no benefit in

the kind of idiotic rigidity, and my instinct was to call him Jack a dozen more times in the next installment just to watch them hop around and froth at the mouth.

Then it occurred to me, if I have the urge to bait fanboys solely for the entertainment value, how likely is it that Selina would do the same thing. She's certainly as fun-loving as I am, and the Jackster can certainly outdo any fanboy for outraged hopping and frothing.

DCU Protocols

An explanation of the Protocols from JLAin't author, MyklarCure:

JLA: Issues 43-46 "Tower of Babel"

Ever the "contingency planner," Batman put together files on how to incapacitate each member of the Justice League were any of them to "go bad" or (more likely) were their bodies were to be taken over by some mind control device/villain. These files were kept secret so that if one of them **was** controlled, the controlled Leaguer would have no idea about the attack or have a pre-thought-out plan to counter it.

Ra's Al Ghul (with the help of Talia) got a hold of these files and used them in a calculated attack against the entire League at one time. He was doing one of his typical "throw the world into mass chaos and let it destroy itself" maneuvers and used the Protocols to keep the League occupied and out of the way of his "Master Plan".

Ra's first step was to keep Batman occupied long enough for the Protocols to be enacted without him "catching on" to what was happening until it was too late. Ra's accomplished this by digging up and stealing Martha and Thomas Wayne's remains, sending Batman on an around-the-world hunt for his parent's coffins. Then the Protocols were enacted against each League member in different places around the globe.

The Protocols themselves:

Kyle - blinded. Being a graphic artist, most of his creativity is based on vision, so without it, his ring-abilities were limited or non-existent. The added psychological trauma of being blind affected his willpower.

J'onn - his weakness being fire, small nanites were attached to his skin (via a rocket fired at him) that changed trace elements in his skin to magnesium, which bursts into flame upon contact with oxygen. Hence, J'onn became a living torch anytime he came in contact with air.

Plastic Man - flash-frozen then smashed into little-bity-bits.

Arthur - a special enhanced version of Scarecrow's fear gas was administered that infected him with Hydrophobia: the Fear of Water (Rabies). Since Arthur needs water every few hours or he is completely dehydrated, being deathly afraid of water kept him out of water and in a drained and incapacitated state.

Diana - a nanobot VR chip was administered through the ear and attached itself to her brain. It induced a dream-like state where she believed she was in constant hand-to-hand combat with someone who was her exact equal in all manner of fighting. The physical rigors of the battle, however still affected her physical form. The battle would have raged on forever in her mind, with no winner or loser, until Diana's body finally just gave up... resulting in a heart attack.

Wally - A vibrating projectile was fired toward him with the knowledge that his standard defense against bullets is to vibrate into a "phased out" state so that the projectile simply passes through him. The projectile's vibration rate was the same as Wally's "phased out" state and the programmed "bullet" itself lodged into his spinal column, forcing him to undergo continual epileptic seizures at light speed.

Clark - came in contact with an enhanced red Kryptonite (Created by Batman) that forced an unbelievable amount of pain but did not cause death. It essentially made his skin transparent, allowing the solar radiation that gives him his power to assault his organs

and muscles directly, making him unable to control his powers and causing him immense pain.

After the whole incident was over, the other JLA'ers voted to have Batman expelled from the League. That decision (in true DCU fashion) was reversed a mere 3 issues later and Batman was returned to Active Duty in the League.

Final Vote tally (For or against expulsion):

Against: 3 -- Wally, Kyle, J'onn

For: 4 -- Diana, Arthur, Plastic Man, Superman (swing vote)

DCU

“Dent, Gordon and Batman had taken an oath, like some medieval brotherhood, to draw a line against the evil and drive it from Gotham for good.”

The Long Halloween, #1

“Gordon’s Replacement”

Commissioner Gordon retired at the end of the “Officer Down” crossover. We will only begin to learn the Catverse details of his successor(s) in ***KnighLife***.

“he railed against the night sky like King Lear, screaming with a passion seldom seen outside of grand opera.”

Another Shakespeare allusion, not so detailed, but worth the mention. King Lear’s madness reaches its crescendo in Act III, Scene 2 (which of course Harvey would appreciate). On a heath, stripped of his kingdom, his entourage, his dignity, and ultimately his sanity, Lear rages against life the universe and everything in one of the most famous screaming fits of drama:

*Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanes, spout*

*Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, an germens spill at once,
That make ingrateful man!*

“I said all evil needs to thrive is for good people to do nothing.”

Bruce is paraphrasing the 18th century political thinker, Edmund Burke [1729-1797]: "All it takes for evil to thrive is for good men to do nothing"

Catverse Zogger

That's Strategic self-mutating defensive regimen four, damnit! Zogger, as Dick christened the training program, is a grisly contraption of pressurized punching dowels, perforating spikes and slicing blades, operating within a boxing-ring size perimeter equipped with lasers and tranquilizer darts.

A Robin-in-training must survive two hours at level three before he will be allowed to accompany Batman on patrol.

Once a trainee has 'graduated,' Zogger is run on twice a month, on the 1st and 15th, to keep everyone fresh.

Except, we learn in Something New, when Bruce is worked up about something, and then it runs four hours a day every day until he works it out of his system.

“that gobbledygook about couples that are two halves of the same person is all bullshit. I know women that are just like me – I can’t stand ‘em.”

It’s Mindy Newell’s pathetic attempt at Millerization “Her Sister’s Keeper” which came up with the stunningly asinine exchange: “We’re on opposite sides” ... “of the same coin.”

Why perfectly good writers who should know better (including most in the Further Adventures of Batman Volume 3 collection of Catwoman short stories) persist in quoting this painfully bad dialogue is one riddle even Eddie won’t touch.

But a better question still is why they go beyond the words to rehash the premise, giving us origin after origin or adventure after adventure where Selina’s experiences or reactions somehow mirror Bruce’s.

In this case, as in much of the discussion, the characters express the thought more concisely than I am able to. Here, Dick nails it: People click off their differences. Some common ground is a good thing, sure. But a mirror image? if we find someone too similar, invariably, we can’t stand ‘em.”

In Harvey’s ruminations about Fate he thinks: “A shake of her head and a message goes awry, the lover swallows poison and his bride impales herself on his sword.”

That would be *Romeo and Juliet*, because by this point I just wanted to see how much Shakespeare I could squeeze in to a single fic.

Later in that same scene he is watching TV. The conversation about the musket: “the world isn’t like that - black and white – it’s a more interesting place than that” is from an episode of Aaron Sorkin’s SportsNight entitled *Dana Get Your Gun*

“So you’re free do anything you want and use anybody you can because the ends justify the means, is that it?”

The proposition that “the ends justify the means” is from Nicholo Machiavelli’s greatly misunderstood treatise: *The Prince*. It is ironic that a man devoted to the service of his country should have his name come to represent everything he was not: treachery, double-dealing, and cruelty. Machiavelli was none of these any more than Batman is “Psychobat,” so it pleased me to call Batman Machiavellian, which is he is, in the truest sense of the word. Machiavelli’s *il Principe* was, essentially, a job application. It analyzed many systems of government, the decisions of various rulers and their consequences, and drew conclusions. He had been a statesman, and this work was intended to show the new ruling house, the Medici, that he could be of use to them. His analysis is always pragmatic – while Machiavelli personally believed in the ideals of republican government, he knew this wasn’t possible in the politically chaotic and corrupt Italy of 1513. He wrote about what was, and he avoided the moralizing that was common at the time. In so doing, Machiavelli created the first work of political science, but as it happened, he didn’t get the job. The legacy is very real, however, and the boiled down proposition that: the end justify the means, is not as diabolical as it sounds. It is a statement borne of the same reality discussed in this story: the world isn’t black and white. Sometimes a leader must put aside concerns for his own soul and do what is best for his people even if it’s not quite nice.

Do I think Bruce has read Machiavelli? Oh yes.

DCU

“Like telling Spoiler who I was?”

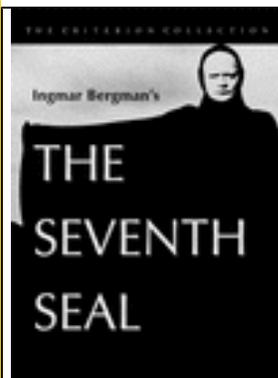
That he did, right around Robin #87, during DC’s systematic screwing up of everything Bat-related and blaming it on Bruce instead of Rucka & Company. Bruce had had another falling out with Alfred, Alfred was at Brentwood Academy, Tim’s school, Robin was missing or Batman needed to get a message to him and went to Spoiler for help with this.

The Adventures of Bruce Wayne, FOP

“he missed a chance to confuse Paris, the character from Greek mythology, with Paris, the capital of France...”

When the Olympian Gods failed to invite Discord to a party, she came anyway, and tossed in an apple with the note “For the most beautiful.” Hera, Artemis and Aphrodite all step forward to claim the prize, and none of the gods want to act as the judge. So the goddesses go descend to Earth and impose on Paris, son of Priam, to judge. All three of the goddesses offer bribes in order to tilt Paris' decision in their favor, but Paris declares the winner to be Aphrodite, who has promised him the hand of the beautiful Helen. Helen, as it turns out, is the wife of the Greek king, Menelaus, kicking off the Trojan War.

“Later he heard a familiar silvery laugh – and understood Ingmar Bergman to be the famous Swedish director and not the blonde actress from Casablanca.”



[Ingmar Bergman's](#) masterwork is called The Seventh Seal, about a knight of the first Crusade who stalls Death during the Black Plague by challenging him to a game of chess.

The underlying theme is very much about choosing to experience the pleasures of life: in the midst of the Plague wiping out $\frac{3}{4}$ of Europe, on borrowed time himself, the knight learns to enjoy the taste of a bowl of strawberries and cream and the laughter of a beautiful woman playing with her child.

Any reader wishing to speculate on relevance to Bruce might just

have a master's thesis in the making.

[Ingrid Bergman](#) played over sixty movie roles, including Ilsa Lazlo in *Casablanca*. Above all else, *Casablanca* is about honor as a living experience. Do I think Bruce has watched it? Undoubtedly. About fifty times. Do I think he identifies with Rick, a loner and adventurer, who plays by his own rules, covering a caring and sensitive soul with a hard, cynical, somewhat ruthless shell, who finds love in spite of himself and must deny himself that love to further a fight against evil? Let's just say anybody not wanting to go for the masters on *The Seventh Seal* might want to take a whack at it on this one.

“I believe the lady likes Cole Porter.”

Kiss Me Kate, Anything Goes, Night and Day, Silk Stockings... Even in a post-Studio 54 world, Cole Porter together with the Gershwins and Richard Rodgers are still the standards for Boy in black tie meeting Girl in Galanos falling in love in an elegant ballroom.

Color and Light

What Batman tells Two-Face is wholly accurate: Black & White is the stuff of the old movies of which the writer spouting that theory is so fond.

In science: White light is the presence of all colors, and black is the absence.

While in painting, adding all colors together is how you create true black.

Reality Yin Yang

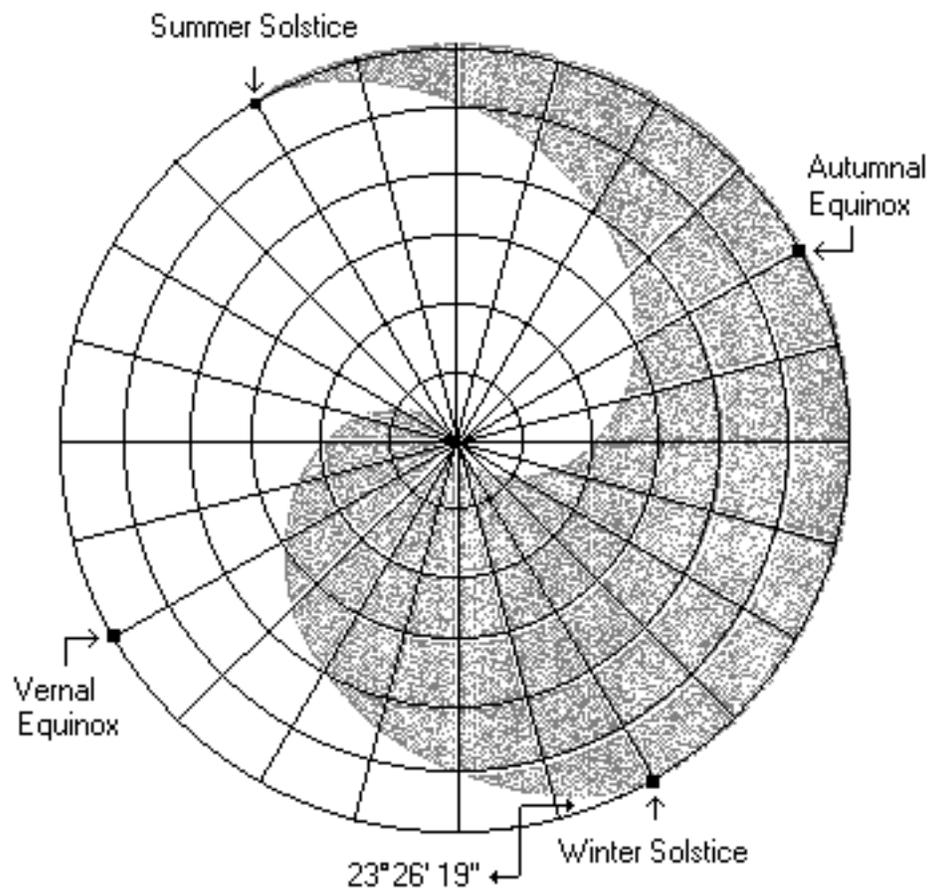


is the well-known Chinese Yin Yang symbol. Sometimes it's called a Tai-Chi symbol. The Tai-Chi is from I-Ching, the foundation of Chinese philosophy.

The symbol combines the sun (top) and moon (bottom). It's easier for people to understand the philosophy by talking about the sun (Yang) and moon (Yin). By observing nature and in particular the skies, ancient Chinese found that the universe is changing every day. Although it changes easily every day, it also has seasonal and annual cycles. From these cycles the unchanging rules are deduced. Applying those unchanging rules from the universe to human activities is the core of I-Ching.

When observing the cycle of the Sun, ancient Chinese used a pole about 8 feet long, posted at right angles to the ground and recorded positions of the shadow. Then found the length of a year is around 365.25 days. They divided the year's cycle into 24 Segments, including the Vernal Equinox, Autumnal Equinox, Summer Solstice and Winter Solstice, using the sunrise and Dipper positions.

They used six concentric circles, marking the 24-Segment points and dividing the circles into 24 sectors and recorded the length of shadow every day. The shortest shadow is found on the day of Summer Solstice. The longest shadow is found on the day of Winter Solstice. After connecting each lines and dimming Yin Part from Summer Solstice to Winter Solstice, the Sun chart looks like below. The ecliptic angle $23^{\circ} 26' 19''$ of the Earth can be seen in this chart.



By rotating the Sun chart and positioning the Winter Solstice at the bottom, it will look like this . The light color area, which indicates more sunlight, is called Yang (Sun). The dark color area has less sunlight (more moonlight) and is called Yin (Moon). Yang is like man. Yin is like woman. Yang wouldn't grow without Yin. Yin couldn't give birth without Yang. Yin is born (begins) at Summer Solstice and Yang is born (begins) at Winter Solstice. Therefore one little circle Yin is marked on the Summer Solstice position. Another little circle Yang is marked on the Winter Solstice position. These two little circles look like two fish eyes.



In general, the Yin Yang symbol is a Chinese representation of the

entire celestial phenomenon. It contains the cycle of Sun, four seasons, 24-Segment Chi, the foundation of the I-Ching and the Chinese calendar.

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