

# The Scroll of Set

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Editor: Margaret Wendall IV<sup>o</sup>

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## [1] Non-Partisan Political Aspects of the Setian Philosophy

- by Howard M. Sinnott III<sup>o</sup>

The human race has the potential to destroy itself and all traces of its civilization within a matter of minutes. Movies that have come out recently seem to show a preoccupation with destruction and doom. For rational, sane people, this cataclysm is a frightening aspect, to be avoided by any way possible.

The Temple of Set is dedicated to the survival of civilization and of its membership. We are an elitist organization; we realize that not all people are truly equal, but are indeed unique. Some people are talented and gifted, visionary and intelligent, while others, most, I'm afraid, are never meant to see beyond their own noses. We, the elite, must endeavor to lead the masses on a path that will save them, if possible. Our first duty, however, is to ensure our own survival and prosperity.

It would be realistic to point out that our members are few; it is our quality that sets [sorry about that pun] us apart from the rest of the religions. Even with our higher quality of people, it is ludicrous to think that we can save the world. Right now we might be lucky to save ourselves.

We cannot, however, allow ourselves to be dominated by pessimism. We live in a political climate that allows us to exist, for which we can be grateful. The Temple of Set supports this political system that allows each person to profess his or her own religious beliefs; without compulsion to change. In fact, on this point, we must always jealously guard this precious right, because it is a right that zealous self-appointed saviours and prophets do not recognize. Since every person has the right to blind himself by his own illusions, we do not begrudge anyone's religious beliefs. We surely wouldn't want everyone to become Setians and thus bring unqualified persons into our Temple. Set chooses his Elect, not the other way around.

What of the other political issues, you may ask. There are many controversies floating around, and many candidates seeking your support. Well, the Temple of Set is a recognized religious organization and thus tax-exempt under the laws of the United States and California. This is a valuable thing to have for all of us, and accurately reflects the nature of our organization.

The Temple of Set does not involve itself in partisan political activities; it will not lobby, endorse candidates or issue political position papers. We do so for two reasons: (1) Our tax-exempt status forbids it; and (2) More importantly, it could possibly divide our membership over a relatively trivial matter and thus change the nature of the Temple from that of a religious and philosophical society to that of a political club.

Partisan politics is concerned with immediate, hot issues. It is extremely rare for this issue to be of any long-range importance. Those in the public forum use these issues to manipulate the masses (i.e. abortion). At times such an issue may affect the life of individual members, in which case, that member should be intelligent enough to figure out a lawful course of action to take on his or her own to get the point across and protect the interest threatened. Remember that this takes energy. Determine if the interest affected is worth all this energy to protect it. It is possible to win the battle (protect the interest) and lose the war (too much expended energy and time). You do not (or should not) need the Temple of Set to tell you what to do. We will not be like the Catholic bishop and stand up in a pulpit and tell you to write letters against abortion or anything else. Our members are people, not sheep.

As it was stated in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*, we are in a crisis situation. If we fail, the Majesty of Set will be no more. However, if we do succeed, then we shall come into a most glorious age with purpose and knowledge. That, indeed, is our challenge: to succeed.

Success will come by looking into the future and anticipating the adversities, not by grappling blindly in the pit of despair with the present.

The problems of the present seem so all-encompassing, yet they are only a warning of the future. For too long we have lived without considering the ramifications of our actions on future generations.

So long as the human race lives on, we have the only form of immortality that is really possible; the memory of our deeds and existence in the minds of those who follow us. If we act without considering those who will follow us, then indeed Set will be no more, as he has tied his fate to that of mankind.

We mustn't wait for others to act and think for us; we must do it ourselves. The Setian should take it upon himself to do his part to solve the problems that threaten us, so that mankind can go on.

You need not think in terms of universal salvation. If it is possible to save only a few by acting, better than doom for everyone. It can be possible to try to save more of the world, but a bird in hand is worth two in the bush.

We are at a pivotal time in the history of mankind. It's a bad cliché, but an appropriate one. We can either descend into chaos, destruction, and

oblivion, or else find our way to an age of greatness where progress can continue to give all of us a better life. The Setian is well suited for this quest.

When considering priorities set by the political system, as individuals ask these questions: "Will this help make the future better? Will it help reach a long-range solution to the problems that beset us?" If it does, it should be supported while we also work on our own solutions. If it does not, then you should either work to change it within the law, or redouble your efforts to reach another solution, to ensure our own survival.

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## [2] **The Right to Die**

- by James Lewis I°

Death. For many people this is the most frightening word in the world; yet it can be the most comforting boon available to mankind, our Fifth Race included.

Bear in mind that I write this as a Setian and also as a member of a nursing team; you will see both elements emerge as I comment.

Part of my graduation vow, our class promise, was to sustain life insofar as we were able to do so. Then I recited the words with everyone else and had no more idea of what "life" was and is than I could plot an accurate map of Pluto. All we knew was that we had drugs and machines for everything and every condition. Ha! Looking back, I realize that while now my knowledge is limited, then I had the "new graduate syndrome" and knew **everything!**

The first few patients we lost made me chew my nails long into the night wondering what else could have been done. I looked with disgust at doctors who ordered, "NO C.P.R." (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) on certain patients. I thought patients and families who gracefully accepted a coming end to be slightly, if not totally mad. Now I look back and see that these were patients in their seventies, eighties, and nineties; patients with carcinomas, or chronic pulmonary or renal or what-not disorders, and wondered how I could've been cruel enough to want them to remain in such a living hell. Thus saith the nurse.

Very few of us have not seen a family member or a close friend in a terminal stage. Some go with grace, dignity and acceptance. Others go with pain, fear, and raging against this end that must be. With acceptance or denial, the heart still ends with asystole after the fibrillation stage. Yes, we can do endotracheal intubation, gastric intubations, venous cutdowns, defibrillate in hopes of a normal sinus cardiac pattern, administer intravenous norepinephrine, use respirators, furosemide - the works! But if the brain cells are damaged so that there appears to be no hope of recovery [and I

realize I get into something touchy here], why not stop? Can we of the Fifth Race, or any other, believe the Intellect, the Will, is still there? Suppose it is? Suppose it's chained to this multi-tubed, mechanically-assisted body. Would it not scream for release?

Christianity preaches a burning Hell for non-believers. I say that there is no greater Hell than listening to the sounds of respirators through a tracheostomy, or knowing the last fever I'm fighting with antipyretics and sponging is the body saying, "This is my way of fighting it; let me do it, and then let me go."

Listen now to a remark made by an elderly carcinoma patient who was resuscitated by some eager-beaver new graduates after a cardiac arrest: "Why did you bring me back? I was in a beautiful place. I was happy that I wasn't hurting anymore, and those fields and hills went on for as far as I could see. I was there, but I knew what you were all doing to me. You made me come back to this! Why?"

I confess it sounds sugary, but the lady has a point. That happened two weeks ago and the narcotics needed to decrease her pain grows daily. Senseless, purely and simply senseless.

Of course, I'm not advocating never raising a finger, nor do I advocate euthanasia. I can look back on many who have been pulled through and lead full lives and on whom all these measures were fully justified.

Now I say as a Setian: Let the body return to decay and dust. The Will still lives. *Xeper.*

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## [3] **Why I Collect Science Fiction**

- by Forrest J Ackerman, Honorary Setian

You ask me why I collect science fiction, what I get out of it.

First of all, I got my whole life out of it. It brought me, after 47 years of collecting, to a \$250,000 mortgage that will take me til 1998 when I am 84 years old to pay off, just to house the results of my collecting in a 4-story 17-room house in Hollywood that will be a proper repository for the collection.

Al Jolson had to sing. Fred Astaire was born to dance. I discovered science fiction when it was still scientificion, in the October 1926 *Amazing Stories*, and by 1929 my collection encompassed not only *Amazing* but *Amazing Stories Annual*, *Amazing Stories Quarterly*, *Science Wonder Stories*, *Science Wonder Quarterly*, *Air Wonder Stories*, *Science & Invention*, some *Weird Tales*, and any issues of *Argosy*, *Bluebook*, *Liberty*, *Popular* or any other mundane magazines that turned up with "stf" stories in them, plus books by Burroughs, Kline,

Cummings *et al.* By then I was corresponding with about 117 fans & authors. Soon I was into collecting stills from “scientifilms” and trying my hand at writing sf of my own, and at the beginning of 1932 the first fanzine was started and I was associated with it as a contributor.

In the beginning I collected sf avidly because I was thirsty for more than existed and it was like a man collecting dew in a desert oasis when he didn’t know where his next drop of water was coming from.

In 1975 I am still collecting science fiction because it has long been a way of life. Years ago I conceived of the creation of a Fantasy Foundation. I thought that many people would help me. Few have. To those who have, I am immensely grateful. But many moons ago it became evident that I was mainly going to have to do it myself.

I wonder how much I’ve spent in collecting in nearly 50 years? Several hundred thousand dollars? I wouldn’t be surprised - it seems to me I’ve spent money on very little else. And it’s meaningless to tell me it’s been a valuable investment; that those 100,000 stills and the other 100,000 books, magazines, paintings, posters, props, manuscripts, etc. are worth over \$1 million in today’s inflated market for out-of-print rarities & collectors’ items. I may be a millionaire, but only theoretically, because I’m never going to cash in my chips, auction off my holdings, or sell them to libraries & institutions, tempting as it would be to retire. Don’t delude yourself that I wouldn’t love it, that I wouldn’t be happy to be free of the treadmill of 37 professional deadlines a year and all that agentorial work.

But I have a voracious white dinosaur to feed: the Ackermansion, the Museum of Imaginative Literature. Have I collected it, or has it collected me?

Well, when I go, it will be with the sense of satisfaction that I have left the world its greatest collection of science fiction & fantasy. And who knows? when the old curator kicks the bucket. it may only be for a temporarily-enforced “vacation”, because I intend to opt for a very scientific type of comeback: cryonic preservation and, potentially, resuscitation. If, after I die, I am later on revived, look at all the sci-fi I’ll have to collect! I can see it now: the New Rave science fiction of the 21st Century!

(Not) The End

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#### [4] Council of Nine

- by Michael J. Waters III<sup>o</sup>, Assistant Editor

I would like to congratulate Magister Robert Ethel on his reappointment to the Chairmanship of the Council of Nine of the Temple of Set. His term of office expires on 30 June XII. I’d also like to

congratulate Magistra Margaret Wendall on her reappointment to a full nine-year term as a member of the Council of Nine. Her term of office will expire on 30 June XX (1985 C.E.) May Set be with them, and the others on the Council.

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#### [5] Book Reviews

- by Yael R. Dragwyla I<sup>o</sup>

*The Siege of Wonder* by Mark S. Geston

- and -

*Missing Man* by Katherine MacLean

I have just finished reading two works of science fiction that I think would be of interest to my fellow Setians and would give a great deal of pleasure in reading as well. Therefore I would like to give a short review of each of them, and describe something of both their contents as well as my reaction to them.

The first is *The Siege of Wonder* by Mark S. Geston (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1976). The blurb on the front of the jacket of the hardcover edition is for once perceptive: “Cold science versus magical wizardry - which would be the victor?” It is the story of two worlds in conflict: one, a world of cold rationality and perfect objective science; the other, a world in which the Magical Art is the basis of all philosophy, technology, art and life. There has been a war for centuries between these two worlds. The world of science has finally “cracked the secrets” of magic and begun to construct a cold and rational technology of what it has learned. And with this knowledge, plus knowledge it hopes to gain through a spy, Aden, and others like him, it plans to defeat once and for all its enemy, the world of magic and “make the universe safe for rational thought” by deleting all the fuzzy, hairy, glorious illogicality and intuitiveness of magic from it.

But there is a snag: with every victory over magic, the world of science and hard rationality finds that something good, something life-giving has gone out of the world and out of life. The men and women of science have found that they can break down all phenomena into easily measured, weighed, calculated parts - but when they do, the life goes out of it ... and them.

And so Aden finds that he must turn against his own world and people; for if he does not, their ruin is certain.

This a marvelous parable of our **own** world, and the tragically unnecessary quarrel between science and magic, between technology and art. For both are needed, and both have their place, and each has something to give the other, as this book, a parable, illustrates. When each believes that the other must be destroyed as worthless and perhaps evil, each has

lost something, and something of life goes out of the world with every "victory" each has over the other. I recommend this book - not only does it have something to say as a parable of our own times and world; also, its author is an excellent writer, and the book is a pleasure to read in its own right.

The second book I have here for review, which I also recommend, both for its "message" and for sheer reading pleasure, is Katherine MacLean's *Missing Man* (New York: Berkeley Publishing Corp., 1975).

This is a story of a possible near-future, set in New York City. Here it has been found that certain people are strong psychic broadcasters, most others receivers. Those who broadcast are not in general very different from most, but do tend to be talented or creative - although quite a few tend to become influential people in politics and other important socioeconomic areas, which is not so of other people who do not have this tendency to "broadcast". They have the same basic hopes, fears, desires, and reactions to things that others do; when one of them is unhappy, a large percentage of the people within the immediate vicinity up to about twenty miles pick up their mood and, acting on what they think are their own impulses, actually behave on impulses that originated from these "broadcasters".

Several problems arise from this: suicide rates go up, riots start, and other tragic social trends emerge seemingly reasonlessly, all based on impulses received from these relatively few "broadcasters" by the majority of citizens, who tend to receive rather than send. A special rescue bureau has been set up by the New York Police Department whose sole purpose is to find "broadcasters" who, in trouble or otherwise in an ugly frame of mind, are impelling the majority of people in their areas to panic and actions borne out of despair coming originally from these broadcasters.

This is a parable, too, but a parable this time of the difference between power and motive, between ability and reasons for the way that ability is used. It is a parable as well of the difference between awareness and unawareness of self and of one's deepest reasons for one's actions and desires.

As with the first book, I recommend it for sheer delight as well as for whatever serious meaning may be got out of it.

In too many recent works of science fiction, the author has got so intent on delivering his or her "message" that he or she has forgotten all about the art of writing, of constructing something that the reader will find a pleasure to read. This is not so of the two authors whose works I have briefly covered here.

These books will make a nice addition to anyone's magical library, but they are also eminently worth reading in their own right, as excellent works of fiction, well-crafted, full of interest and a glamor of their own. If you want to read something for the enjoyment of it that is also an excellent commentary on the sociopsychology of magic, I highly recommend either or both of these works!

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## [6] Forum: Letters to the Editor

I am writing in reference to "Set Experiences, *Scroll of Set* #I-12, August XI. I feel that material should be a little more strongly edited before being printed in the *Scroll* so as not to be confusing or misleading by those who may not understand the Temple of Set completely - especially those who are not near fellow Setians who may answer any questions they might have.

For example, see the letter from Setian Martee L. Zaccirey I°: "We 'work' together to create perfect harmony" -and- "For Master Set shall lead thee to new-found horizons, where thou shalt become one with the universe."

A Setian is **not** in harmony or oneness with the universe. I understand that a I° Setian might not be aware of a real Prince of Darkness, Set, who has given us a Gift which is independent of the natural order, and I do not mean to sound sarcastic nor to imply that I know all there is to know about being Setian, but I do know what being Setian is **not**.

I further realize that using our English language to express ourselves can be very difficult and sometimes even misleading, but I feel that this matter is important and should be brought to your attention.

Thank you for your attention and time, and may Set always be with you.

*Xeper.*

Robert G. Brink II°