

## Editor's Notes

### Time, Tenacity and Technophobia

Alfredo Mac Laughlin

There are many obvious benefits to publishing our journal in an online format. It is less costly, the publishing process has fewer moving pieces, it uses fewer natural resources and it can be made immediately accessible to anyone in the world with a decent, non-censored internet connection. We do not have to put a strict cap on article length (though practical wisdom recommends *some* measure!), and we do not have a maximum number of articles we can publish in each volume.

A perhaps less obvious benefit is that we do not have a *minimum* number of articles that we need to publish. And although the number of published articles at the launch of volume 2 will appear at first a bit underwhelming (just two articles, compared with five at the launch of volume 1), this means we do not have to compromise on the quality of the articles we publish. We can continue adding articles after the launch of an issue, and continue building patiently towards our goal: the appreciation of science fiction as a medium for philosophical reflection. Every article (painstakingly rewritten and revised in the light of long and detailed commentary from our reviewers) contributes to this goal. We are enormously thankful for the work put in by authors and reviewers, and we must honor it by continuing to work towards higher and higher standards of scholarship in science fiction and philosophy.

This put us in an odd spot this year. Contributors will recall that this volume's Call for Papers announced as our Yearly Theme "Dystopian Caves and Galactic Empires: Social and Political Philosophy in SF." Well, at the launch of this issue there are no articles dealing with the yearly theme (although there are a few in preparation). Despite our aiming at a theme that would be both general and intriguing enough, there were actually more submissions outside of the yearly theme than within it. This is fine, but it is also a lesson learned, and we plan to implement a more collaborative system for determining the theme for next volume, inviting authors, reviewers and readers into the decision process.

We had also somewhat of a wrench thrown at our works halfway through the year; the well-intentioned folks who produce the (open-source) software that runs our journal released a full update that improved the looks of the site a little, while making it very difficult to customize and impossibly complicated to operate. I have been running the journal around the software rather than with it, and I could swear every time I look at the website I find fewer things on it. It drives me up the wall every time—and so: *technophobia*.

Which is what Stefano Bigliardi (Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco) discusses in “We Don’t Know Exactly How They Work,” his in-depth review of the literature analyzing the original *Westworld* (1973) and its sequels. Moving beyond the extant literature, Bigliardi finds grounds for technophobia in *epistemic hubris*: the realization that the limitations of technology are the consequence of its creation and usage on behalf of epistemically limited humanity. I can relate.

Ultimately, it takes time to build good things. Some will recall the story of a visitor to the British Isles commenting on the quality of British lawns. “Well,” his host was reported to say, “we’ve been cutting the grass for hundreds of years.” The moral of the story applies to the (also British) reportedly longest running SF series, *Doctor Who*, a show that (thanks to the ingenious device of “regeneration”) can continuously recreate itself, together with its titular time traveler. Because of the show’s duration and its sometimes loosey-goosey (timey-wimey?) scripting, it would seem rather improbable that we should find in it a consistent philosophy of time. In “Gallifrey Falls No More: *Doctor Who*’s Ontology of Time,” Kevin Decker (Eastern Washington University) has undertaken this monumental task, tracing the views on time through the length of the show, and establishing a (not unproblematic) four-dimensional realism at the basis of *Doctor Who*’s fictive timeline.

So time, technophobia, and the tenacity of two authors who have surveyed a *staggering* amount of material, to foster not just our appreciation but also our delight in science fiction as a medium for philosophical reflection.

Enjoy, and thank you for reading!

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Editor, JSFP

