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SERIES IN PHILOSOPHY

JESUITS IN SCIENCE FICTION

Reason and Revelation on Other Worlds

Edited by
Richard Feist

"The greatest consolation he received was from gazing at the sky and the stars, and this he often did and for quite a long time."

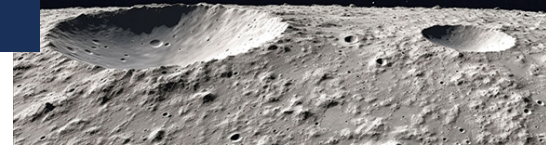
- St. Ignatius Loyola, Autobiography

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About the editor

Dr. Richard Feist's educational background includes a Bachelor of Education in which he majored in mathematics and physics. His MA and PhD were both in the philosophy of science. He has taught numerous courses in philosophy, ethics, and the philosophy of science. His research and publications have been in the philosophy of mathematics, science, metaphysics, and ethics. He has taught numerous courses in all these areas. He has also had a long interest in science fiction and literature in general. Brought up Catholic, attending Catholic Schools as a child and then teaching at a Catholic university, has contributed to his longstanding interest in the history of the Catholic Church—especially the clash between the Jesuits and Galileo. Dr. Feist has always had a deep love of science fiction, which was the original spark that led to him studying physics and philosophy. Teaching at Saint Paul University alongside theologians inspired him to take a deeper, more theoretical interest in the Jesuits and to consider bringing all these strands (philosophy, science, theology, Jesuits, and science fiction) together in an academic manner. The first instance was to publish a couple of papers on Phillip K. Dick and religious and philosophical themes. The second was a conference on Jesuits and Science Fiction held some years ago in Boston. Some of the papers in this volume are from that conference, while others were deliberately solicited for this volume. The next task, though, is a full-scale, single-author study of Jesuit theology and science fiction themes.

Summary

From their founding in 1540 to this day, Jesuits have been controversial. Their centuries of missionary work have taken them to all corners of the world. They have been accused of killing Kings and Presidents and contributing to colonization and destruction of cultures—even participating in enslavement. But the Jesuits have also been seen as bringers of light and education. With their ferocity of purpose and intellectual rigor, the Jesuits' impact on world history cannot be ignored. No surprise then, that Jesuits appear in literature, especially that literature of ideas, exploration, and social commentary, otherwise known as science fiction.

This unique collection of essays explores how the Jesuit has long been part of science fiction's history and how Jesuit ideas and characters are featured in some of science fiction's greatest works. In this collection, we see Jesuits continue their missionary spirit as they take leave of the earth, moving their missionary labors literally towards the heavens. Reason and revelation are now indeed on other worlds. In this collection, we have explorations of philosophy, science, theology, and culture, all done in typical Jesuit fashion, always in various and foreign contexts. This collection is akin to others in its linking of religion and science fiction, but it is unique in its concentration on the Jesuits and science fiction.

This collection will be of interest to scholars working and researching in the field of science fiction studies and would be suitable for courses on science fiction. But it will also be of interest and accessible to those of us who simply love science fiction for its power to explore other worlds and, in this case, to take some of the deepest human reflections, namely those on God, morals and culture, lift them up, and see what forms they may take on other worlds.

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