

IDS 499 Capstone Presentation

A Philosophical and Historical Analysis of Frederik Pohl's *Gateway*

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Thesis: Frederik Pohl's *Gateway* helps us understand the queries and concerns which existed in the 1970s regarding the human condition and humanity's relationship to space exploration.

Frederik Pohl



The Study of Science Fiction: A Modest Proposal

Frederik Pohl

Science Fiction Studies, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Mar., 1997), pp. 11-16 (6 pages)

Hans Jonas



Toward a Philosophy of Technology

Hans Jonas

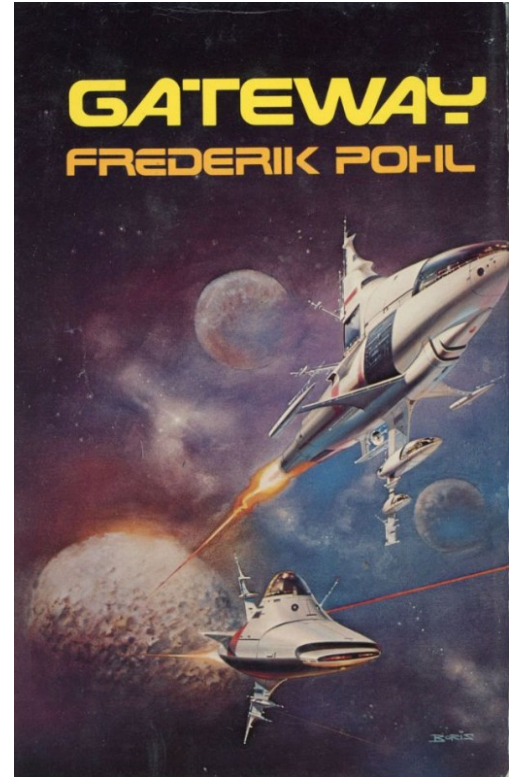
The Hastings Center Report, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Feb., 1979), pp. 34-43 (10 pages)

A Historical approach

- *Gateway*, published 1977
- *Toward a Philosophy of Technology*, published 1979

Summary of *Gateway*

- Robinette Broadhead wins the lottery and goes to *Gateway*, an asteroid that has many alien ships
- He goes on three prospecting missions
- On the third mission no one but Broadhead returns, and he becomes extremely wealthy
- Broadhead is haunted by how he left behind the other crew members to save his life



My Major and My Project

- Interdisciplinary Studies with a Concentration in History
- My goal is to become a technical writer

The interdisciplinarity of the Project

“If nothing else, it [the interdisciplinary study of science fiction] would represent a serious attempt to examine the basic elements of what science fiction, uniquely, is all about.”

Frederik Pohl, *The Study of Science Fiction: A Modest Proposal*

- Science fiction can be studied from the perspectives of many different fields
- Jonas’ philosophy is a way to analyze Frederik Pohl’s *Gateway*

What can we learn from Frederik Pohl's *Gateway*?

- *Gateway* presents ideas about the future which can be explored through Jonas' philosophy
- This is significant because it can help us understand the queries and concerns which existed in the 1970s regarding the human condition and humanity's relationship to space exploration

Jonas' concept of progress

"the juggernaut moves on relentlessly, spawning its always mutated progeny by coping with the challenges and lures of the now."

Hans Jonas, *Toward a Philosophy of Technology*

- progress is endless
- progress is unpredictable
- positive and negative sides of progress
- progress in technology continues cyclically

Jonas' concept of progress applied to *Gateway*

- alien technological finds are sought to be made usable for humans, and thus human technology is advanced in this way
- while technological discoveries are made, it cannot be predicted as to what prospectors will find
- prospectors must take their chances as to where the outcome of the mission will fall along the spectrum, from being dramatically successful, to having no survivors
- the missions which prospectors go on are dangerous, but the possibility of considerable monetary reward drives people to go on these missions