



Ciudad motor

Ken MacLeod

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Durante diez mil años Nueva Babilonia ha sido la mayor ciudad de la Segunda Esfera, una civilización interestelar de humanos y otros seres que han sido secretamente expulsados de la Tierra a lo largo de la historia. Ahora, los humanos de la lejanía llegan a la Esfera ofreciendo inmortalidad — además de para avisar a Nueva Babilonia que levante defensas ante una invasión extraterrestre que saben que está llegando, dirigida por la figura más alienígena que existe—. A medida que los alienígenas y humanos compiten y conspiran, la rueda de la historia alterará a los jugadores de formas nuevas y sorprendentes. La obra de MacLeod refleja el gusto por los escenarios clásicos que siempre le sedujeron: los de la Edad de oro de la ciencia ficción; aunque con una característica poco común, la actualidad de su prosa y lo moderno de sus planteamientos. Es un escritor muy interesado por la posición que ocupa el hombre en la sociedad así como en la información o en la desinformación en la era de Internet.

Ciudad motor Details

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Dan says

In what seems to be typical of MacLeod, this series (and this book especially) has had a weak, but engaging start, a solid middle and a confusing abrupt end.

Towards the end of the book I had no idea what was going on at all, with characters we have gone along with for the past 2 books seemingly dragged from random place to place.

Isabel (kittiwake) says

The prologue clarifies the role of the gods, and spells out the reason that they seeded the Second Sphere with earth flora and fauna, which I was very happy about as I had been wondering about it since reading the first book of the trilogy. From there we follow Grigori Volkov and the Tenebre trading ship to Nova Babylonia, and Gregor and Elizabeth back on Mingulay, where they discover evidence that the spider-monkey aliens may have returned. And from then onwards, events unroll in extremely unexpected ways.

Cristián says

The Engines of Light is comprised of 3 books.

I must admit that it didn't sound too much fun at the beginning and it's a little confusing when you start reading the first book, but it quickly becomes interesting. In every book there's a clash between different social ideas, individualistic vs collectivistic societies.

The story is well told and the plot isn't easy to predict. I liked the way it simulates societies that have lived centuries with a particular thought on life and the way they develop.

In short: It's a nice sci-fi book with aliens, spaceships and war, but told in a non exhausting way.

Natasha Hurley-Walker says

[Nova Babylonia transforming from a steady-state green philosopher's paradise to an industrial conglomeration of nation states with space capacity;
Gregor and Elizabeth having, raising, and educating a child who by the time the book starts is a fully grow

Palimp says

Trama confusa, situaciones poco creíbles, en general no aprovecha nada las posibilidades del argumento.

Alguna cosa se salva pero en conjunto flojo.

Mike Franklin says

Apart from the ending, I found Engine City to be the best of the three books in the Engines of Light trilogy; the ending, though, was just dreadful; a nonsensical let down. In fact it seems to suggest a fourth book but, since we're now twelve years on from Engine City, that would seem unlikely.

The bulk of the book was very good indeed. It moved along at a page turning pace with an interesting story that offered some intriguing ideas (his Multipliers were really rather fun if somewhat unlikely). One of my favourite ideas throughout these books has been his approach to interstellar travel. He doesn't *quite* break the laws of physics but still manages a true space opera without a faster than light drive. Instead they have a light speed engine; not faster than light but just light speed. A quick check up on the theories of relativity reveals that, with such a drive, if you were making a one hundred light year journey that journey will appear to the crew to be *instantaneous* whilst to the outside world it will appear to take one hundred years. So these books have traders who will make what appears to them to be a short journey only to return to their origin where, depending on the length of that journey, possibly hundreds of years have passed. I liked this element of realism that is so often dodged in space operas and which MacLeod addresses by having complete extended family communities crewing these ships.

Another aspect I liked was that, for this book, MacLeod has reined in his politics a bit; not completely (I'm not sure MacLeod is capable of writing a completely non-political book!) but it's not in the reader's face nearly as much as the second volume in the trilogy – Dark Light. This made for an altogether more relaxed and enjoyable read.

But then he had to give us such a terrible ending. Without going into spoilers, it was just a rushed, untidy and unsatisfactory disappointment, and it didn't need to be; there are many other possible good endings he could have used. Then he compounded that with an epilogue (okay so he called it a 'coda' but it was an epilogue) which served only to open up a complete new can of worms and then left that can hanging and unresolved, suggesting a fourth book which has never been written.

With a better ending this would have been 4 stars, as it is I can't give it more than three (possibly 3.5) and that is a shame; I really wanted to give it more.

Leila P says

Very enjoyable. I loved the Multipliers, they were such intriguing and weird aliens.

Nick says

I was pleased by the change in pace and scope from the previous two books in the trilogy - it finally hit a pace that kept me entertained.

It's a fun trilogy with lots of politics, the drama of light speed travel, trade, history and alien invasion. Very

cool aliens and MIB ideas wrapped up in it too.

It possibly ends a bit abruptly, but I'm not sure where else the story could have gone instead. Between them they're short enough to make a single fattish volume and that might be a better way to read the series.

Michael says

This is the third book in the Engines of Light trilogy by Ken Macleod. I really enjoyed this book and this trilogy although the first book was slow to gain my interest I kept reading and about half way through I started to enjoy it and then the next two books. As for this book except for the ending, I found Engine City to be the best of the three books in the Engines of Light trilogy. I really didn't like the ending but I have to say I did see it coming because the characters were just too invested in their beliefs for it to end any other way. This book is very complex and is about the interactions, political and otherwise, of several species of intelligent Earth species, including humans, and at least two alien species, one of which is considered to be a race of gods by all the other species. I recommend this series to fans of Space Opera and fans of Ken Macleod.

Nikki says

I cried hard at the end of Engine City, when three characters who all at some point or another opposed each other stand together for one final thing (I won't go into what in case you want to read the books and don't want a major spoiler). The books also touch on other things I really love: the idea of immortality, the idea of space travel being like time travel, the shaping of societies, change within societies, gods being no more or less than aliens...

Aneel says

MacLeod seems to be skipping a lot to bring this to a close in the third book. Major parts of the action take place offstage, and the sense of caricature is even stronger than in Dark Light. The conclusion seemed to lack finesse. Satisfying in that the plot wraps up, but not otherwise.

Chris says

After an extremely focused book 2, MacLeod pulls back for the final book, covering a much bigger stage. For the most part, the book is a step up from *Dark Light* as well. If anything, things early in the book go too smoothly, but this is an acceptable price to pay for telling a big story in a small book. The ending is a double whammy though - one blow isn't going to make you happy and the other just isn't going to make sense.

prcardi says

Storyline: 3/5

Characters: 3/5

Writing Style: 3/5

World: 3/5

The Prologue was perhaps the best selection I've seen from MacLeod - having now read both the four-part Fall Revolution series and the Engines of Light trilogy. Unfortunately that is but a small fraction of the overall page count. I am tempted, however, to recommend that curious-but-undecided readers start (and end) with this final, Engine City, volume. It is by far the best book of the three: the ideas are more clear, the socio-political messages are better integrated, and the plot is far more interesting. I don't think, however, that a reader starting with number three will be satisfied with the characters - there's just too much backstory in the first two volumes.

There are some really good ideas. MacLeod has a knack for picking up lesser known science fiction predictions and staples and slipping them into his stories. The problem I find with him generally - and here specifically - is that they're usually embellishments. He manages to avoid info dumps and instead pretty smoothly contextualizes them in his future, but they don't feel significant. There's no weight to them. The exception to that criticism is the use of relativistic space travel. This was the best I've seen it incorporated into a plot since I read Haldeman's Forever War. Just about everything else, however, makes an appearance on page without making significance for the story. This was true for his attempts at economic, cultural, social, and political criticisms as well. They weren't shoved to the forefront in this volume - a good thing - but I felt that this ended with MacLeod thinking he was making substantive points and arguments and me thinking that it all fizzled into something undeveloped and unremarkable.

Scott Holstad says

Didn't like it. Didn't finish it. Wasn't impressed with the writing -- the descriptions, the plots, etc. Seemed forced. Maybe if I had read the first two books in the trilogy first, that might have changed, but books in series need to be able to stand on their own and I don't think this one does. Not recommended.

Pam says

I wanted to like this series more than I did. I just could not bring myself to care about the competing communist/socialist/anarchist/democratic etc ideologies (really, Volkov, **must** you cause a revolution in every society you encounter, even happy, functional ones?), and the author's tendency to hint at an explanation for something, end the scene, and never bring it up again was pretty irritating.

Overall I liked this one better than the first two, but the end was out of left field--it's explained why killing a god is a crime, i guess, but why did they even do that, did they accomplish anything by it? And why **this** one, besides convenience? I mean, the one they encounter first in book 2 didn't seem to have a problem with humans and it was a tragedy that it died, but then they go out and kill some random one just because some gods, maybe not including this one, might attack, and somehow this helps? And then it's unreasonable that this is a crime. What?

