

Recommended authors

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 02 Mar 2003

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jismulkstis — 02 Mar 2003, 13:21

I strongly recommend Iain M. Banks Culture novels:

Consider Phlebas

Use of Weapons

Excession

Inversions

Look to Windward

While stylistically unlike Gene Wolfe, Iain M. Banks writes novels about the moral ambiguity that comes with wielding vast power. He can also be very dry, sarcastic, and funny, but these are in no way humorous novels. The Culture is a detailed, well thought out society and his books are better at creating the old "sense of wonder" (especially Excession) than anything I've read in many years.

You have to like a world where the spaceships are far more intelligent than their passengers and give themselves names like "Honest Mistake" and "Ethics Gradient".

Those who are hooked on a more medieval setting should try "Inversions".

I'd like to know what others think of Banks, but this may not be the appropriate forum.

Muskrat

Thomas Bitterman — 03 Mar 2003, 14:57 · follows jismulkstis

jismulkstis at att.net wrote:

While stylistically unlike Gene Wolfe, Iain M. Banks

[...]

He's not just stylistically unlike Wolfe, their worldviews are diametrically opposed. Banks and Wolfe probably shouldn't shake hands, lest some sort of literary explosion take place.

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Obligatory Wolfe note: I'm convinced that Banks is making an allusion to Wolfe in Excession. (My copy is at home, so I'll just draw an outline.) The ship's interior is hemispherical, and there is a bright line that rotates around to make day and night. Banks describes it as a giant jump rope, with the ship at play forever. It's such a brilliant twist to the Long Sun it's hard to believe Banks didn't have it in mind.

Muskrat

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Dave Rolsky — 19 Apr 2003, 07:56 · follows Thomas Bitterman

On Sun, 2 Mar 2003 jismulkstis at att.net wrote:
I strongly recommend Iain M. Banks Culture novels:

[snip]

While stylistically unlike Gene Wolfe, Iain M. Banks writes
novels about the moral ambiguity that comes with wielding

Ok, this thread is ancient but the general topic is still being discussed so ...

Actually, I do think Iain Banks and Wolfe have some stylistic similarities, primarily in that both seem to enjoy setting complicated, elaborate sets of clues while playing with your head. Banks seems to do this more through formal structures, as in Feersum Endjinn (probably my favorite Banks novel), where he rigidly alternates chapters in cycles of four, one for each narrating character, each of whom has a distinct voice. The trick in the book is figuring out the timeline of each character, because it's not purely sequential.

He also does some fun timeline tricks in Use of Weapons.

-dave

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