



The Technician

Neal Asher

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The Theocracy has been dead for twenty years, and the Polity rules on Masada. But the Tidy Squad consists of rebels who cannot accept the new order. Their hate for surviving theocrats is undiminished, and the iconic Jeremiah Tombs is at the top of their hitlist.

Escaping his sanatorium Tombs is pushed into painful confrontation with reality he has avoided since the rebellion. His insanity must be cured, because the near mythical hooder called the Technician that attacked him all those years ago, did something to his mind even the AIs fail to understand. Tombs might possess information about the suicide of an entire alien race.

The war drone Amistad, whose job it is to bring this information to light, recruits Lief Grant, an ex-rebel Commander, to protect Tombs, along with the black AI Penny Royal, who everyone thought was dead. The amphidapt Chanter, who has studied the bone sculptures the Technician makes with the remains of its prey, might be useful too.

Meanwhile, in deep space, the mechanism the Atheter used to reduce themselves to animals, stirs from slumber and begins to power-up its weapons.

The Technician Details

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Chris Berko says

This is probably my favorite of all of the books I've read by Neal Asher. This is my ninth by him after original 5 Cormac novels and the 3 Spatterjay ones. There is some seriously cool shit happening in these pages, a great expansive story that really needs to be experienced as a whole for full enjoyment IMO.

Bradley says

Back to the world of the Theocracy and home to some of the most weird-ass creepy-crawlies in the known universe, twenty years after the Theocracy's fall.

What we have here is a seriously cool work of ideas and ongoing development and reveals. What I loved most about the previous Asher books was the grand mystery surrounding Jain technology, the aliens who destroyed their own intelligence to escape the weapon they made, and all the cool-as-shit AI's, partial AI's, quantum AI's, and all the ALIEN AI's.

Carry over a 2 million year mission from these old aliens to the present fiction day and here we go. :) The Technician. The assassin of assassins, the clean-up crew of a multi-genocide technology, including itself. :)

Again. Cool. Very cool. :)

And I love these drones. Polity peeps are CRAY.

I had a lot of fun here. :)

Richard says

As usual, great book from one of the most original universes I 've read about.

spikeINflorida says

I love Asher's world of freaky flora and fauna. But the characters are pathetically underdeveloped. The story plodded along, which caused me to lose focus. IMO, the Spatterjay trilogy is Asher's best work.

Bill Hayes says

In summary, I'm glad I bought and read it, it was a nice fast read taking us back to the story line in the 2nd Polity novel 'Line of Polity' and culminating in one of Asher's signature space battles, However I didn't find

it particularly memorable and I doubt I will reread it in the future.

I would give it 3.5 stars if fractional stars were allowed. While written as a standalone novel, readers will enjoy it more if they have read 'Line of Polity' which has the original story of the alien entity called Dragon and the revolt against the Theocracy controlling planet Masada.

Asher and Iain M. Banks are my two favorite authors. I thoroughly enjoy the enhanced humans, pure A.I.'s and mixtures of the two that you get in Asher's Polity universe and Banks' Culture universe, not to mention the advanced aliens in both.

The central mystery in 'The Technician' is actually fairly interesting: How and why did the Atheter civilization disappear two million years ago and how was it connected to the gabbleducks and one special hooder on Masada? The ECS (Earth Central Security) AI has tasked the scorpion shaped AI war drone Amistad to solve the mystery.

Florin Constantinescu says

I finished the Cormac cycle some three years ago, and I was left with some good memories. I remember the must-read world-building, the good plot and the decent style. Characters sucked, but I can live with that. Seeing how he continued adding novels to the Polity universe, I thought it's time to go back. Unfortunately, I was unable to recapture the same feeling I had with "Polity Agent" or "Line War".

First of all, I could've sworn that the entire plot regarding Penny Royal / Jain tech / Atheters / Dragon / whatever was done with. Obviously I was wrong. We are thrown back on planet Masada (first introduced in "The Line of Polity"), apparently starting exactly where "Line War" had left off

.
The part I liked is that the world-building is still there. Or rather, it is a world previously built. The planet's ecosystem is mind-blowing. Dune-like even, I might add. The general concepts behind the Polity, the rogue AIs, and most of Neal's setup are also stunning. These however were previously developed. Very little is added now.

The bad parts are the style and the plot. I cannot understand which editor okay'd these very short sub-chapters delivered machine-gun style, each ending ambiguously, brim-filled with tech words. Some contain only "dialogue" between AIs. The number of POV characters is beyond belief. Maybe as many as in a George RR Martin book, at 1/3 the length. And it's not just the number of them. The characters still suck! As good as Asher is with biological and ecological descriptions, he is just as bad as creating a memorable character.

Just in case you think I'm kidding, how's the following quotation for a phrase? If it doesn't make you roll your eyes, then you have a good chance at liking Neal Asher's style:

"In orbit over Masada a brief intense detonation at the head of a column of purple fire – the geostat weapon, which Ergatis had just used against a disruptor, detonating halfway through its next firing cycle, fusion plasma escaping the doughnut Tesla bottle and punching out into vacuum, proton beam unfocused, dissipating on the way down, just licking the disruptor sliding in over the east coast."

Overall an okay-ish read, but a serious deterrent to next books in the Polity (such as "Dark Intelligence").

Lady*M says

4.5 stars

Occurring mostly on the planet Masada, *The Technician* falls between *The Line of Polity* and *Dark Intelligence*. If the first talks about the revolution against the Theocracy and the latter about the planet gaining its independence from the Polity, this novel explains how a representative of the native species - gabbleducks - regained its intelligence and, once again, became Atheter.

Twenty years after the revolution and still in partial quarantine, Masadans enjoy the benefits of new technologies and freedoms. But, not everyone can accept Polity's general amnesty of all previous crimes. When a former theocrat Jeremiah Tombs, driven mad by the unusual attack of the hooder which downloaded something in his mind, is let loose on the planet to regain his wits, many players gather directly or indirectly around him trying to achieve their goals. A former revolutionary is set to protect him, scientists to study him, terrorists to kill him. The unfathomable Dragon has his agents too. And the mechanism which erased an entire civilization wakes up.

Exciting and fun, the story benefits from being set on a single planet. I enjoyed 'seeing' Amistad, Penny Royal and dracomen again. Gabbleducks are always fun. The book has one of the most satisfying endings of all in the Polity Universe.

Ove says

The Technician can be enjoyed as a standalone novel but you will get more out of it if you read the Cormac novels first. Visiting Masada again for me that have is a bit like coming home and I get to enjoy some of the characters from previous books (You can read my review of them below. The Line of the Polity is the one with most Masada in it).

As usual with Neal's books this one also has an intriguing and well developed back story that tightly fits together with what happened before. I can understand why he went back to Masada. It is such a wonderful quirky place with huge hooder predators that can swallow a man or a minor car and gabbleducks walking around copying human talk but not making any sense; the whole world is wrapped in the mystery of a disappeared alien civilization called the Atheter. On top of this an oppressive theocracy was toppled by rebellion facilitated by the Dragon's destruction of their orbital lasers. Masada is also the homeworld of the Dracomen created when the Dragons crashed on the planet.

Amistad the war drone from Shadow of the Scorpion is back in charge of Atheter research as events set in motion by the Dragon once again threatens humanity. Amistad is one of my favorites. With him we get to follow a bit of personal growth and development, ai style.

I might be the only one but I thought it was hilarious when Blue, the only blue Dracowoman was introduced, I immediately thought; Neal your rascal, you sneaked in a Na'vi on us. The other explanation that came to mind was the blue pill from Matrix in reverse.

The plot centers on Jeremiah Tombs and his journey back to sanity. A theme he also used success with Mr Crane/The Brass Man. Tombs is not the only point of view or main character in this novel but I enjoyed him most because he changes the most. The characters are well developed with much more 'meat' than in his early novels something I as a character person like and appreciate.

The Dragon's hidden agenda goes like a chain from Grindlinked to this one. That is a nice touch even if there is not much Dragon action in this one. It is more like a heritage.

The Technician is no doubt one of the best new novels I have read this year. It got a fantastic inner journey with fast-paced alien-world action. I am in awe of Neal Asher for this amazing feat of original writing. If you haven't read Neal before you might as well start with this one, you will not be sorry. Maybe I should add that Mr Asher is very fond of gigantic insects and might get a bit graphic in his descriptions.

Rbjumbob says

Asher is one of the best current SF writers. People ask who currently is great, he is one of them.

Princessjay says

[Because they are the devolved descendants of the Atheter. Because it is a biomecha

Stevie Kincade says

RTC if I feel like it

Allan says

Set 20 years after the Polity liberated the world of Masada from Theocracy rule, this tale follows Jeremiah Tombs, an ex-Theocracy Proctor who survived a Hooder attack. Not just any Hooder either, possibly the oldest and most esoteric Hooder on the Planet and they call it The Technician.

Trouble is...no one survives a Hooder attack, their victims are skinned and dismantled before being eaten, but Tombs did and the AIs are sure The Technician put something into his head, something related to a lost race called the Atheter.

So Tombs is rebuilt and allowed to follow whatever destiny has in store for him. The AIs have also assigned him some serious "protection" as there are still those out there with long memories and boiling hatred of the Theocracy and anyone identified with it.

This is a stunningly good story. If you've been following Asher's Masada stories, it brings a lot of the earlier players and Masadan wildlife together - the war drone Amistad, the black AI Penny Royal, ex-rebel commander Lief Grant, Dragon, the Gabbleducks and of course, the Hooders.

Mya says

In my mission to consume all things Neal Asher, I just completed The Technician, which has to have one of the most bad ass covers ever. I mean you can actually see the badass beastie popular through many of Asher works, the Hooder itself upon the cover. Either way, this book is unique. While it fits nicely into the grand universe that Asher has created with many of his works, along with many familiar places, characters and events, 'The Technician' stands apart for me because of its aims as a morality play. I admit that I adore Asher's works for the gun battles, the vicious alien life, the living tech and cyberbattles, but The Technician, which some have claimed not to like, held more for me than just potent drama. It deals with the nature of hatred and how that emotion corrupts and cripples as well as how it is overcome. I found it fascinating to watch the rebirth (sometimes uber gory) of a being who clung so tightly to one belief, become more than just an instrument of revenge and anger, while others sank in the quicksand of clinging to what they believed and felt.

In having read a good deal of Asher, I am always amazed by what lies beneath the tech, the biology, the battles and the balls-to-the-wall action... and to be honest, I am rarely disappointed.

Bryan Brown says

It was too long since I read any of Ashers Polity novels and so the start of this book was really slow for me as I struggled to remember all the details of the things going on. Once I was able to get a frame of reference, and the main plot took off I really enjoyed the book.

My only complaint about this novel really is that it seemed to have an excessive number of POV characters that we jumped around in. I found some of them very compelling, like Amistad the war drone AI, and Tombs. Some of the others were less interesting to me and likely influenced my opinion about the point of view hopping.

Overall, though I liked the book and I will continue reading books in the Polity universe. I think Dark Intelligences is next.

Vít says

Další p?íb?h ze sv?ta ?ádu nás zavede zpátky na planetu Masada po pádu Teokracie, a je to zase parádní jízda, jak jsme od Neala Ashera zvyklí. Teroristé, separatisté, ?ádoví roboti a k tomu místní bizarní zv?í?ena, a to ješt? není zdaleka všechno. Kdesi ve vesmíru se probouzí mechanismus, který po sob? zanechali vyhynulí Aetheterové a mí?í k Masad?...

Nem?žu si pomoc, já to mám rád :-)
