



The Sacred Era

Yoshio Aramaki , Baryon Tensor Posadas (Translation) , ?? ??

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The magnum opus of a Japanese master of speculative fiction, and a book that established Yoshio Aramaki as a leading representative of the genre, *The Sacred Era* is part post-apocalyptic world, part faux-religious tract, and part dream narrative. In a distant future ruled by a new Papal Court serving the Holy Empire of Igitur, a young student known only as K arrives at the capital to take The Sacred Examination, a text that will qualify him for metaphysical research service with the court. His performance earns him an assignment in the secret Planet Bosch Research Department; this in turn puts him on the trail of a heretic executed many years earlier, whose headless ghost is still said to haunt the Papal Court, which carries him on an interplanetary pilgrimage across the Space Taklamakan Desert to the Planet Loulan, where time stands still, and finally to the mysterious, supposedly mythical Planet Bosch, a giant, floating plant-world that once orbited Earth but has somehow wandered 1,000 light years away.

K's journey to this strange world, seemingly sprung from Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, is a journey into inner and outer space, as the novel traffics in mystic and metaphysical questions only to transform them into technical and astrophysical problems, translating the substance of religious and mythic texts into the language of science fiction.

The Sacred Era Details

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Author : Yoshio Aramaki , Baryon Tensor Posadas (Translation) , ?? ??

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From Reader Review The Sacred Era for online ebook

Syd says

sloppy world-building with tossed together sci fi tropes--including women as clueless sinful traps but of course also a key plot motivator ? disappointingly dull with the kind of religion analysis you'd expect of newly atheist internet trolls

Sean Parson says

Some cool philosophic ideas and some interesting ideas but not much of a story arc and really horrific gender politics. All women in this book are just props for sexual anxiety.

Lena says

I would call this a self-centric sci-fi story. Despite not being referred to by name throughout the book, the story revolves around its protagonist. Other characters are more like figments of his imagination and not real people. Its saving grace is that this lack of characterization is relevant to the plot.

While it had its profound moments from time to time, I'm not familiar with Catholicism enough to catch all the themes and references. However, it did have some neat insights from time to time.

Also, please don't refer to shuttle rocket launches as a "giant phallus ready to violate the heavens." I want any future rocket launches I watch to be free of any lewd thoughts. On the other hand, I found the erotic docking scene that followed strangely funny. It was certainly not what I expected.

Bogi Takács says

Review coming next week IY"H (need to insert some formatting into it but it's mostly done)

Jen says

** I received an advance reading copy of this book for free through a Goodreads giveaway. **
More of a 2.5 star than a 3 but I'll be generous!

I'm still not entirely sure what it is I just finished reading. The book is dystopian and fantastical and so dreamlike that it is hard to hold on to the story at times. A very surreal post-apocalyptic novel following a young man as he explores the secrets of his world, his religion, his culture and the universe. While I did for the most part enjoy this book (while remaining very, very confused most of the time!), I did not enjoy the negative portrayals and lack of real description of the few females in the book. They seemed to exist only to provide temptation and sex to the male characters. Honestly, the book would have been much better if they had been left out entirely as they seemed to add nothing of merit to the novel. Just side-stories of tempting

the main character into breaking his rather undefined vows. Still, as I said, I did mostly enjoy the book. I do wish the translation had been better. At least I hope it's the translation that led to some of the clunky and poorly put-together sentences!

Julien L says

This book is weird/bonkers/bananas etc.

In the same vein as Kawamata Chiaki's *Death Sentences* (it's from the same publisher, U of Minnesota press), it follows a relatively straightforward story that quickly moves into the weird and metaphysical. It ends kind of abruptly and the plot basically takes a detour for larger philosophical and theological queries, which made the reading experience weird. This is not a book you read for the narrative, because the narrative is just a larger vehicle for speculations on the nature of existence, the nature of organized religion, and bending of space and time. This is sci-fi on acid.

Another note: The prose is odd and kind of stilted but its prose-in-translation. Nuances in Japanese don't translate well over to English, and vice versa. This knocked it down a bit for me but it's sensible most of the time.

Worth a look.

Jeremy Garber says

My first exposure to a fascinating Japanese sci-fi author. Aramaki deftly weaves philosophical (and theological) reflection into an engrossing tale of institutional coverups, space travel powered by souls, and the pleasures of the flesh versus the secret of knowledge. K, the main character, is the youngest postulant ever to be accepted to the Imperial Academy. His study begins at the end of the Empire's Millennium of Progress, as water supplies dwindle and food production slows. His area of study - a heretical planet that may hold the literal secret of the Universe. Kudos to the translator on this one too - the language and conversation carry you right through the book. If I didn't have to sleep (and work), I would have devoured this one in one sitting!

Susan Haseltine says

I guess new wave isn't my thing. The weirdly filtered western theology is somewhat interesting but the offhanded misogyny is repellent. Women are beautiful, graceful, lustful, but never anything that isn't determined by being female. Even when they are mechanical.

Rachel Cordasco says

Why can't I give this book 25 stars?!??
