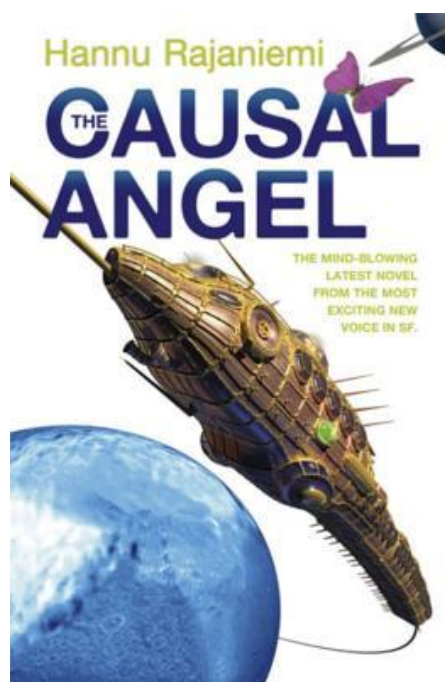




The Causal Angel

Hannu Rajaniemi

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Causal Angel

Hannu Rajaniemi

The Causal Angel Hannu Rajaniemi

With his infectious love of storytelling in all its forms, his rich characterisation and his unrivalled grasp of thrillingly bizarre cutting-edge science Hannu Rajaniemi has swiftly set a new benchmark for SF in the 21st century. And now with his third novel he completes the tale of his gentleman rogue, the many lives and minds of Jean de Flambeur.

Influenced as much by the fin de siecle novels of Maurice leBlanc as he is by the greats of SF Rajaniemi weaves, intricate, warm capers through dazzling science, extraordinary visions of wild future and deep conjecture on the nature of reality and story.

And now we find out what will happen to Jean, his employer Mieli, the independently minded ship Perhonen and the rest of a fractured and diverse humanity flung through the solar system.

The Causal Angel Details

Date : Published July 17th 2014 by Gollancz (first published May 6th 2014)

ISBN : 9780575088979

Author : Hannu Rajaniemi

Format : Paperback 292 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Space, Space Opera, Cyberpunk

 [Download The Causal Angel ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Causal Angel ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Causal Angel Hannu Rajaniemi

From Reader Review The Causal Angel for online ebook

Molly Ison says

Worth reading as a complete series but somewhat disappointing as an ending. In the first two books, technical and scientific concepts, fantastical sci-fi and a sense of mystery and possibility, even upon rereading, make up a fascinating world and overcome a few problems with pacing and characterization.

Unfortunately, I felt the ending to be overwhelmed by sentimentality and a sort of humorlessness. (The many nerd references weren't charming to me, they were mostly so unsubtle, an unfunny wink-wink that screamed to be noticed). I guess the zoku just didn't work for me as too large a part of the story, especially combined with Mieli, who I find obvious and soapy (a reveal about her was something I'd already guessed in the second book). It wasn't awful, but it didn't hold up to the first book in the series, where I found the setting and characters much more intriguing.

Something that was both a pro and a con for me was the conciseness. A lot of things are packed into relatively short books. I re-read *The Quantum Thief* to remind myself of what was happening, and it only took a few hours to skim through. In general, I appreciate this. A few times, it felt like things were just happening right in a row without much reason, and I would have possibly been more involved in this book if the quantum jargon had slowed down a little and the motivations of certain characters played with a little more (except for Mieli feeling feels). I'd gladly read more about how and why Josephine and Matjek became the people they did, about the Aun, even longer info-dumps about why the zoku jewels were able to work the way they do.

Despite some criticisms, I feel like it's a sci-fi must-read and I'd recommend it to anyone who thinks even a little that a post-Singularity story would be of interest.

Tom Lee says

It's nice to have the trilogy wrapped up, but I found myself progressively less satisfied with each book. Rajaniemi's contribution is creating a narrative within a post-Singularity society, where minds are indistinguishable from computation and identity is no longer constrained by individuality. It's a dizzying thing to try to read, but if you enjoy consuming sci-fi that only becomes comprehensible in retrospect, this is cask-strength stuff.

But there are problems. The universe is invented in the first book, and there are fewer fun add-on ideas in each subsequent volume. *The Oubliette* is a lovely riff on privacy and digital rights. In the second book, *Sirr* is a somewhat diverting orientalist backdrop (if not one that ever makes a ton of sense). But in the third book it's just plot mechanics and some extra details about how the Zoku society works. I don't think there were any additional inventions on par with those of the first two books.

Second, while the experience of reading something this conceptually dense is enjoyable, I find it leaves me with little memory of the actual plot. I'm not sure this is Rajaniemi's fault--he's a good stylist, and achieves more emotional resonance than many sci-fi authors (though still not much). But his universe is so mind-bending that things wind up being a bit impressionistic -- you can recall who's an antagonist, but how are you supposed to remember a narrative when you're rarely even sure if an event is happening in physical space or one of several types of simulations? Or if the people it's happening to are people or fragments of them? I usually have a pretty good memory for this kind of stuff, but I found myself surprised by how little of the

preceding books I remembered. This deficit gets worse with each sequel. Here, in the third, I felt fairly adrift. The All-Defector, in particular--the book's chief villain--completely failed to convey menace. I get the impression that Rajaniemi got bored with his Sobornost inventions, but they always seemed much more frightening to me, but are left unused in this book.

I'll still enthusiastically recommend the Quantum Thief. And I think that if someone winds up sold on that novel, they might as well let themselves be propelled along to the trilogy's conclusion. Particularly if they can read them all at once. But I have to confess that this treat had lost a lot of its flavor by the last bite.

Daniel (Attack of the Books!) Burton says

As I approached the final act of The Causal Angel, Hannu Rajaniemi's Jean Le Flambeur Series that started with The Quantum Thief, there was an uptick in the action, a movement toward battle and denouement. Giant space ships and lethal weapons were brought to bear, planetary defenses were invoked, and warriors on both sides came to grips...

Unfortunately, I'm not sure I understood half of it. The weapons, vehicles and concepts seemed to require a robust understanding of quantum and theoretical physics and computer science, neither of which I can claim, even for all of my interest in science and science fiction. The world that Rajaniemi has imagined is on the other side of the singularity, and it is a world that is difficult to recognize as descending from our own.

So, clearly, it's brilliant. I just struggled to understand and relate. Call me stupid, call me dense, but I see the series as a brilliant, but missed opportunity.

I very badly wanted to love the book, and I spent some time clicking through Google researching the terms and concepts, using both a wiki about the series and Wikipedia itself. It helped, but the more I read and the more obscure jargon that I bumped up against the more I became convinced that my efforts would be futile. The learning curve is steep, and Hannu does little to assist his reader, utilizing in action descriptions that are short of a helpful infodumps, but oh! how I would have loved one.

Sure, usually I prefer that the author focus on the story, showing only a glimpse of the world building that is beyond view, hinting at what is out there beyond the action. The Causal Angel does this. But because the world is so far from our own, the glimpses are insufficient. It makes for difficult reading.

It doesn't help that the story picks up immediately from where it left off, requiring some back tracking by the reader to refresh memory. And my understanding of what was going on in the plot was never really crystal clear in the first place. Compound everything that I missed in The Quantum Thief, The Fractal Prince, and now The Causal Angel together, and I'm sure that I was unable to enjoy the story to the fullest.

That said, I still liked the book, and though I'll have difficulty recommending it to more than the most hard-core of science fiction fans, I really DID enjoy it. Rajaniemi has a brilliant vision of the future, extrapolating in a way that I think is far more accurate than a lot of other science fiction. Additionally, he understands how to tell a story and, but for the high barrier that the theoretical physics and computer science presents, does spin an interesting tale.

I'm glad I read it. I just wish I could have lost myself in it a bit easier. Escaping into the imagined world is hard when I have to keep coming out to look up terms I don't understand or concepts that weren't even clear

in the first book, let alone the second or third. Understanding them is clearly necessary to the plot, and they just aren't easy. If the ease of access had been greater, I would have put Hannu on the list of Hugo worthy writers. His vision is there and his writing is in the neighborhood that should get him awards. He imagines a world where consciousness has transcended the physical, where people living in a constant state of MMORPG, where copies of the self can be made, saved, and utilized in computing power. It's mind-blowing.

But the conceptual difficulty puts the novel out of reach of many, and that's unfortunate. I will read whatever Rajaniemi writes next because I am curious what else he has in the quiver. I hope it will be more accessible, because he is brilliant, his writing is brilliant, and his vision is brilliant. But I hope he can also make it accessible.

A word about the cover art on this series: I love it.

Petrik says

My mind has been traumatized. I understood barely half of what happened in this book.

I'm actually amazed and proud of myself that I finished this book. I don't have a lot of things to say here regarding the content of the book. I really wish I could say more but I'm not able to because I just don't understand more than half of what happened here; the uncompromising zero exposition was too difficult for my first read. This is definitely a trilogy that requires a reread to fully understand what happened. If you're not into a hard as fuck with zero exposition sci-fi, I seriously can't recommend this trilogy to you. However, if you're into them, this could truly be a masterpiece series for you. The fact that I finished this trilogy and this last book without understanding even a quarter of what actually was going on, goes to show just how good Rajaniemi's writing was.

Picture: *The Causal Angel* Chinese edition cover

In the end, let's just say this was the hardest and most complex trilogy I've ever read so far. If you've read the first book and you thought it was difficult, this in my opinion was like trying to compete in physics with Einstein at his prime even though my umbilical cord hasn't been cut yet. This small last book alone (300 pages) to me felt ten times more complex and difficult to understand than Cixin Liu's Remembrance of Earth's Past trilogy. I will change this review in the future when I do reread this trilogy, but for now this is how I feel about this book. My overall experience reading this one was a 2 or 2.5 stars but I'll give this the benefit of the doubt and raise it to 3 stars; I'm just not smart enough to fully appreciate this book yet.

Series review:

The Quantum Thief: **3.5/5 stars**

The Fractal Prince: **3.5/5 stars**

The Causal Angel: **3/5 stars**

Jean le Flambeur trilogy: **10/15 stars**

You can find **this** and the rest of my Adult Epic/High Fantasy & Sci-Fi reviews at **BookNest**

Bradley says

I cannot recommend this trilogy enough. It's smart, has mind-blowing images, really fast pace, and ideas to absolutely kill for, and kill again, and even aim for a true death before causality does a flip and the spooky zoku decide that it's time to revoke my entanglements and I lose a few hundred gaming levels.

This novel really feels N-Complete. I'm satisfied in a way that I rarely get, and I have decided to plop these novels into my most favorite books of all time. Sure, there are flaws, but what is most brilliant about them are very, very brilliant, and I can't overlook the beauty of them. I'll definitely revisit all of these novels in the future. They all belong tightly entangled together, and it's so much more apparent now than it would have been by the end of the second novel, despite my faith in the series.

All I will say is, Prison, Prison, Prison, Freedom, Freedom, Freedom. What a gorgeous ride this has been.

Laramie says

Anticipating this and a little disappointed that the release date has been pushed to July 17.

David says

Having finished the trilogy I just have to say this is my favorite piece of Sci-Fi work. Ever.

Hannu Rajaniemi is definitely on another level. His otherworldly settings put your imagination to work like a boot camp. Some of the things that happen in the book, the environments, the places, are just hard to imagine. Once again is the wedding of ultra-hyper-hi-tech and fantasy: the technology is just so advanced that whole realities (virs, Realms) can be created around whatever concept you fancy. And one of the things I find most interesting about all this is that it really is possible in a long distant future for things like this to happen. If we don't self-destroy or collapse back to a non-computerized civilization before.

Now, having praised the book like this, I have to admit something: I came to terms with the fact that huge chunks of the plot just plainly escape me. Reasons I never fully understood. Situations that largely slipped by. Characters that I never fully grasped. But you know what? I don't care! It's just part of the beauty of these books for me. I always felt I was reading something out of our time, so it felt only natural to be confused at times. I'm going to read these books sometime again, in a few years, one after the other and perhaps I'll understand more things. Just perhaps.

On a curious note, I was entirely thrilled to find out there was an "Evangelion-zoku". I mean, damn!

To finish, I'm really, really curious to see what will Hannu come up with next. I will be (im)patiently waiting for the next outing of my new favorite Sci-Fi author of all times!

Jasper says

originally posted at: <http://thebookplank.blogspot.com/2014...>

Last year I had the chance to read Hannu Rajaniemi's sequel, *The Fractal Prince*, to his stellar debut, *The Quantum Thief*. I am a big fan of authors who defy the normal set rules of fantasy and science fiction and create their own; this can either turn out so-so or produce a very ambitious book. The Jean Le Flambeur series definitely belongs to the latter case. Hannu Rajaniemi holds a Ph.D. in mathematical physics and isn't afraid to use several of the science concepts and theories in his stories. In *The Fractal Prince* I had to scratch my head a couple of times to fully understand it, but rereading these scenes only bolstered a much better hard-wired science fiction feeling. Hannu Rajaniemi's books are in a complete league of their own amongst the science fiction genre, it's unique and mind-cracking good.

The Quantum Thief introduced us to the main protagonist of the story Jean Le Flambeur, a gentlemen thief who has had quite the (in)famous reputation. Jean eventually found himself wound up in the endless loops of the Dilemma prison and was saved by Mieli and her spaceship the Perhonen. In order to get his freedom back he has to make the ultimate heist job. In the second book *The Fractal Prince*, Hannu Rajaniemi upped the stakes even more and went for a very ambitious plot. This time around Jean Le Flambeur had to hack into a Schrödinger's box to free a god. But just like its predecessor, this is far from a straightforward job for Jean, he had to face many challenges...

The Causal Angel picks up directly from *The Fractal Prince*. In the end of the second book Jean lost Mieli as Perhonen shot her into space to save her. Now Jean finds himself in a desperate quest to save Mieli, he made a promise and if it is one thing that we have learned from Jean is that, even though the trickster and his many personalities, he is and always will be true to his word. Mieli is special and the part she has inside her, a special Founder Gogol is of high interest for many of the galaxy, the race is on for Jean to rescue her on time. Where you thought the earlier two books were ambitious in the actions that Jean undertook, *The Causal Angel* again tops it off as Jean has to hack and take-over the Realm of the Zoku that now have Mieli. There is a definite complication in the mix as Jean isn't alone on his ship but is accompanied by the young version of Matjek, Jean cannot leave Matjek alone on his ship, he has a brilliant mind, loves his books but holds a dangerous threat... Jean really has his work cut out for him, and it wasn't enough to start with, along the way he discovers some true intentions and other dangerous players take to the stage.

Just as I said with the review of *The Fractal Prince* the story is just mind-blowing and if you tread into the fine details it will spoil it all, it's these kind of stories that you have to read without having read any review to be honest. Hannu Rajaniemi broaches again some very cool concepts and keeps building on them page after page. I do have to mention that it is best to get acquainted with the first two books for the terminology as you aren't spared a moment in getting the explanations of what it all is. Is this a final and satisfying conclusion to the Jean Le Flambeur series? Yes it is! The ending of the book is one that will put a smile on your face. I like it when you have the more powerful forces make their own plays and for me this happened in the end and I do hope so that we will see much more stories set in this universe even though the series has come to an end.

The characters of *The Causal Angel* are all recurrent. First up is Jean Le Flambeur, the gentlemen thief, in my earlier review I compared him to Eli Monpress and again he proves to be the infernal trickster but he also shows that he is much, much more than only fun and games. His goal now is to rescue Mieli. With all that has transpired and having found himself again he is getting more and more "responsible" in his actions and seems that he starts to value other things more. I am a big fan of Jean's character in all that he acts and reacts there are some very fine moments with him. Next you have Mieli, who saved Jean from the Dilemma Prison way back and they have created a bond. But Mieli finds herself in a completely different environment that

she was used to. By placing her in such a secluded area where she has to fend for herself, Hannu Rajaniemi brings out the best in her character, yes she was already a strong and determined woman but it comes to the full show in her part of the story. Besides Jean and Mieli there are a few more added to the mix, those of Matjek and Josephine. We meet up with the younger and on face value innocent Matjek, he likes his books and bug Jean with more than a few questions about the why's and what's and if's of the stories, but one important thing must not be forgotten, Matjek is a very smart boy... and if you loose him out of your sight, things can go terribly wrong. Josephine also added an interesting perspective, she is the one that set in motion for Jean to be freed from the Dillema Prison. Basically Josephine has ordered almost every move for Jean to do.. but is it until now? Whenever you have both Josephine and Jean in a room together there is something of a romantic plug trying to spark but it stays at that, this was one thing that I really enjoyed reading about their complexity.

Out of the blue Hannu Rajaniemi drops the scene with the All-Defector. This is exactly the stuff that will hit you out of the ball park. I hadn't seen this coming. It's with these kind of plot twists that, when you finish a book and now also a series that you will look back at it with a great smile on your face recounting every single moment of the stories again and again. Going from ehheh.. what does that mean to wow did he really just do that? With the All-Defector's introduction a few things do become clear and it was great to read how several events from the earlier books were all put into perspective, some things can be ordered, other cannot but in the end you will always leave you mark one way or another.

The Causal Angel is the best yet in the Jean Le Flambeur series. From the start of the series in The Quantum Thief Hannu Rajaniemi dared something new and defied most of the rules of the current science fiction genre. Creating a complete new set of rules with his hard wired science science fiction space opera. There are some concepts in the books that took me sometime to fully grasp or look up to what the theories really mean but I am always in for a challenging read and what made these books even better for me is the limited explanation of several of the technology that Hannu Rajaniemi uses in his story, this readily allows you to think for yourself that what it all could mean. In The Causal AngelHannu Rajaniemi again hits all the right spots, the characters and the rich and interesting surroundings from the spaceships down to the vir's. The bottom line for The Causal Angel and the Jean Le Flambeur series: it's evocative and can be mind-bogglingly at times but this creates a highly addictive air around it, and once you get through to the fine details you will be amazed. This is must read science fiction.

Tim Hicks says

Two stars strictly for ambition. But this series has degenerated into a wankfest.

You may wish to see my review of The Fractal Prince, in which I started to wonder if the series might be getting a bit top-heavy with concepts.

Note: you might do better if you plan to read this right after The Fractal Prince while that book is relatively fresh in your mind.

You know the recent craze to create the Best! Ever! Cocktail!.. where bartenders - sorry, mixologists -- toss in five ounces of liquor, most of them kinds you've never heard of, and serve it in a glass slipper, topping it with a froth made of mosquito wings? This is that in a book.

OK, Rajaniemi is a genius. But he doesn't need to try so hard to prove it. He has dumped into this series everything he has ever learned in his advanced degrees in math and physics. But what we've ended up with is not a culinary masterpiece, but a stew. Master chefs don't use all their ingredients in one dish.

I am a little bit familiar with most of the concepts he starts out with in this series. I have read a LOT of SF, I have a math degree, and I am quite OK with hard SF, right up to maybe half of Greg Egan's work. But the concepts are perhaps a tad overdeveloped and overused here.

Imagine, for example, that the entity writing this review is not actually me at all, but rather a simulation running in a cloud of plasm inside a copy of a copy of an upload of my original brain. And that the simulation is running as a sub-instance of a function inside a 30th-century version of a quantum-powered multiplayer Playstation. And of course when I say "me" I refer not to my actual self, but to my hobby role of playing a really skilled actor, who is pretending to pretend to be three other people at once (remember, I can copy myself). One of me is running through time twice as fast as the others, and a second one is in a spacetime bubble where time runs backwards, so he is going to have been younger next month. It's OK, because all the other clubs and gangs are doing it too.

Still with me? If so, you did better with that paragraph than I did with this book. I bailed at page 164. I'll never know what happened to that lovable rogue Jean, and I don't care because by now he is not lovable, not a rogue, not charismatic, not even interesting. I even know that he's going to steal one of Saturn's rings later in the book and I Still Don't Care.

The musical group Red Priest does quite weird things with Vivaldi's music, and when accused of being over the top they replied, "If no one goes over the top, we'll never know what's on the other side." Rajaniemi has probably done SF a great service by being the first one over the top in this area, but I reckon I'll wait till someone comes back and writes a simpler version of the story.

There's probably a bloody good story hidden in here, but I can't be bothered digging it out. This book is for all practical purposes written in a foreign language.

Matt says

I'm not sure if **Causal Angel** was actually worse than the first two in the series, or if I only enjoyed it less because my own tastes have changed -- somewhat radically -- since I originally read them. Whatever the reason, **Angel** felt flat and deflated compared to the high-energy originality of **Thief** and the promissory note left by **Prince**. As much as I found Rajaniemi's style engaging in those books, the same trappings felt worn and irritating here. Too much feels like it was skated over in a hurry or left out entirely, with too much focus on the zip-bang transhumanism rather than any real development of the characters.

The trilogy as a whole stands out to me as quite good, but **Angel** is to me a glaring pock-mark on an otherwise compelling series in a striking and novel setting.

Michael Burnam-Fink says

"We have received a communication from Jean le Flambeur. He claims that in precisely 57 minutes, he is going to steal a ring of Saturn."

It's all true, of course. The system's greatest gentleman thief **almost** always gives fair warning when he's about to commit a crime. *The Causal Angel* takes us into the white hot cultural heart of the system, the intricate games of the quantum Zoku posthumans, who have embraced quantum narrativism as a weapon against the cold computational simulational hyperpolitics of the Sobornost Founders. At stake is the

Kaminari Gem, an ancient artifact with the power to unmake and remake universes, which might be the only thing that can protect post-humanity from the hegemonic ursine embrace of the All-Defector strategic parasite.

Okay, wow. I've got almost no idea what's going in this book, but it is **GLORIOUS**. The Saturnian Zoku don't quite hold together as well Mars and Earth from the previous books, but the sheer awesome of the cosmological war over the very nature of existence makes up for a story that seems to be blowing itself apart at the pieces, like a combat thoughtwisp shedding its outer armor against slowgun viral parasites. What Rahaniemi says is that we **can** imagine the other side of The Singularity, and even there a few people can make all the difference.

Rajaniemi has been teasing about his cosmology and its relation to the story since book one, and he lays it all out here. There is something deeply spooky at the interface of quantum mechanics and computation, certain answers that come out of nanoscale blackholes that indicated that the secrets to the universe are encrypted, and whoever holds that password will be the next best thing to gods. The key is the macguffin of the series, the Kaminari Jewel. Crafted by the Zoku, a clade of posthumans descended from gamers who use quantum effects to optimize their society, the Jewel has been presumed lost. Le Flambeur's quest is to steal it, and to make himself someone who can use it. On a reread, this is more pessimistic than I remember. Both the Zoku and Sobornost are thoroughly monstrous, the jargon does not fully conceal the more or less arbitrary nature of the Kaminari as the object, and the Zoku society feels incredibly dated in an internet culture circa 2014 kind of way, rather than hitting some eternal truth. It's a solid conclusion, but not a stunning one.

Brent says

I don't normally blaze through a trilogy by chain-reading them all in a row, but I had invested so much headspace in figuring out the charterers, the various societies, and their technology that I needed to finish up while it was all still clear in my mind.

Also, I had to know how it ended.

And, as is typical for the writing style of these books, why it all began.

Beautiful all the way through.

Ana-Maria Negril? says

O încheiere bine realizat? a trilogiei, pu?in repetitiv? pe alocuri, dar la fel de plin? de imagina?ie ca ?i primele volume.

Jason says

5 Stars

The Causal Angel, book three and final volume of the Jean Le Flambeur series is the best book by a quantum amount. I loved the ambition of this series so much so, that I took the time to reread books one and two before venturing on the final journey. I am so glad that it was worth my time and the payoff that much more.

Hannu Rajaniemi has created a complex, no holds barred amazing universe. He explores so many high level concepts that cover mathematics, physics, psychology, and even religion. This is a story of realizations, openings, and growth. There are so many things that make this series so unique and incredible. We get a serious education in causality.

What can I say there is a whole Wki Page that explores and defines this hard science series.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Quan...

This page was essential the first time I read book one.

Rajaniemi is a gifted writer and storyteller. Not only does he write science fiction at a high level that can be quite a challenge to read, he also write stories that border on fairy tale style. In The Fractal Prince, book two, we are shown his fantasy style. In this final installment, the entire novel comes across as a hard science fairy tale. Magical, mystical, futuristic, and thought provoking. What a crazy genre cross that I wished did not have to end. I cannot wait to reread this book.

Rajaniemi writes great details and action...

"She stands up, in full combat mode. Time slows down. Dust particles swirling in the air become static brushstrokes. Her wings bloom from her back, radiating waste heat. The fusion reactor and her right thigh pumps energy into coherent payloads of the Q – gun in her right hand. She's already firing the ghostgun in her left: war gogols and nanomissiles, hurling themselves at what used to be a Great Game warsuit.

I do not want give anything away, but I do want to make it crystal clear that I loved this series. The ending of this book and the trilogy had me cheering out loud. I freaking loved it. If you like incredible thought provoking hard science fiction and are not afraid of a little work, than this series is for you. Top marksamazing!

Tudor Ciocarlie says

Absolutely astonishing ending of a mind-blowing series that is for me the greatest and the most beautiful science-fiction trilogy of all time.

Anna says

Ah, Rajaniemi... the author I so want to like, and sort of do, but goddamn I don't get half of the technical babble in these books. And I've studied biochemistry a few years in the uni, too! Not that I was any good at it, but still... The technical aspects in these books are, if I've understood correctly, remotely possible already or at least theoretized, but I have no effin' clue about what is what and how do they work. And it annoys me. It makes me feel dumb. And this time I _know_ the problem is with me, not with the writer. Sniffles.

But other than that, Rajaniemi's stories flow well and are interesting. There might be a tad too many "it almost worked out well but oops something sudden happened" twists, but all in all the books not long enough for that to be an actual problem. And if this trilogy would consist of some 600 page novels, I'm not sure if I'd read anything beyond the first one. But as they aren't, I'm quite glad I did. Not only because the author is Finnish, but also because the stories are nice. They are what I like in my scifi: crime stories wrapped in fancy futuristic setting.

That being said, I can't bring myself to give this more than three stars, because I don't think I get it all. I just don't. This whole damn trilogy is probably awesome and best thing since sliced bread for those that actually know A LOT about what is going on in science nowadays, but for the less... well, mathematical science nerdy of us this is just half gibberish. And for people who do not even care much for natural sciences, this must be just too damn scary to even read further than maybe the first book.

I don't really know, I think that some day I will have to read all three of these in one go and see if I understand more of it. Some time in the future when the scientific things in this book might make more sense to me.

At least there were a ton of snicker-worthy zoku names in this one! I think they were the parts I enjoyed the most, since they were the parts that demanded knowledge of things happening outside this book, and I'm not completely sure everyone gets them. You know, the sort of "I'm probably smarter than someone else!" realization when reading. Whereas most of the book was "I'm so much dumber than the writer of this book, so saaaad," heh. I just guess I don't like to be reminded how dumb I am. Then again, who does, eh?

Just read these all, dammit. They are short, they demand something of you, but they do give stuff back, too. I think Rajaniemi's writing has become less serious in every book, but it still does keep its definitely scientific heart intact. And these are good, honest scifi. Not the best books ever, maybe, but definitely worth the time, since in the time you read this whole trilogy, you could only finish probably one Banks novel. Except that Banks' novels are easier to grasp and thus maybe easier to read, too...

James says

Others, notably the top-rated reviewer Tom, have done an excellent job of analysis and criticism of the trilogy and this final installation, most of which I agree with.

My main problem with this book is the depth of the characters. I honestly felt no anxiety or any other emotion for any of the main characters.

The author continued his whiz-bang "ain't I somethin'" theatrics to an excess with this novel, much to its detriment. Ray Bradbury is, in my opinion, the master of writing beautifully in this genre. His prose is magical with or without a plot, and his descriptive prowess, even for imagined landscapes, is unparalleled. Rajaniemi would be a better writer if he were to study Bradbury and others to deepen his prose-writing ability.

Liam says

This trilogy are the kind of books which really, *really* frustrate me. I understand just enough of it to know that, if I was bright enough to understand the rest I'd be absolutely blown away - but it is just that little bit

over my head.

I'm not giving this the higher rating it probably deserves because honestly... I'm not sure what I just read. I enjoyed large portions of it, and I *think* I grasped bits but... yeah. And I'm not entirely sure if that's a failing on my part, or the author's.

Irregardless, I cannot fault Rajaniemi's creativity or conceptual prowess - it is without a doubt one of the most impressive feats of worldbuilding I've ever experienced. I just wish I could be along for the entire ride and not just parts of it.

Justine says

Totally amazing book. I can't say enough about the series except that it is some of the best SF I have read.

David Katzman says

This review is for Book 2, *The Fractal Prince* and Book 3, *The Causal Angel*. Books 2 and 3 were just as entertaining as Book 1, *The Quantum Thief*, although neither achieved the thematic heights of Book 1 (the premise of rewriting history that impressed me profoundly). Instead, we are treated to further adventures in this surreal far future world created by Rajaniemi. Rajaniemi continues to impress me with his ability to project into the extreme future what life might be like if consciousness could be digitized (I don't believe it can be, but it makes for fantastic and fantastical possibilities).

In these two books, Jean le Flambeur and his semi-partner Meili (the battle angel), continue on their quest to fulfill the ambiguous and relatively confusing mission they have been compelled to perform by the "pelligrini"--an original Founder of the Sobornost, one of the first beings to develop and command high-level code (or information) which controls much of the reality that makes up the existing society. The story ranges across the inner planets and moons of the solar system and the various spaceways connecting them. Although a great deal of it also occurs in diverse versions of "cyberspace." Jean and Meili are caught between numerous social/military/technological/political forces that include: the competing Founders, who each control nearly limitless versions of themselves in various physical and digitized forms; unleashed and nearly impossible to control "code" beings that have only modest identities but great appetites; as well as a civilization called the Zoku who have gamified society and turned every single action and choice the members make into a game move that rewards them for success. Zoku society is something like if you got points in life for making choices that benefit the goals of a group. All actions are "monetized" and banked for future benefits. Zoku society is in a sense a barter society as well, where actions that move the group toward certain goals are rewarded with bankable points and higher levels of access to powers. Individuals achieve personal power by helping the group.

Just as in Book 1, Rajaniemi has a poetic flare for inventing and describing technology. I'm far from "pro-technology," because for every benefit of technology to date, we have also produced great harm. Mass production and the great mobility of planes, trains and automobiles have wrought global warming. For every MRI system that could save lives, we have nuclear bombs that could destroy all life and civilization. We probably should have stopped at the toothbrush and the bicycle. And that's why some science fiction authors who seem to glorify technology, like Neal Stephenson, really disappoint me. They seem to posit technology as being able to solve all our problems. I'll call them Technoptimists.* Rajaniemi doesn't strike me as a technoptimist. His tremendous imagination has envisioned a far future that we may never reach, but he

shows just as much struggle and despair in the future as the present. With beings of lesser power at the mercy of those of greater power, and those with power have their own agendas that have nothing to do with what will actually benefit the masses. On the other hand, as is often the case with epic adventures, highly clever single individuals have the power to save the day and make a huge difference. So I could level the charge against Rajaniemi that he seems to ascribe to the "great man" theory of history, rather than emphasizing the power of social movements. That said, the great man here is a woman, and it is a pretty damn good story. Most of us get a buzz out of someone being a hero and Rajaniemi delivers that, blended with enough cynicism that we don't feel like it's fake.

As long as you're a reader who is comfortable with technology so advanced it's like magic, and that is only directionally justified, then this is an exhilarating ride of a series. I found it hard to put down.

*I should trademark that!
