



El mundo de Roche

Robert L. Forward , Manuel Mata Álvarez-Santullano (Translator)

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Impulsada por un revolucionario motor láser, la primera nave espacial interestelar alcanzará el planeta doble que orbita alrededor de la Estrella de Barnard en el plazo de apenas veinte años. Algunos de los mejores científicos del mundo se encuentran a bordo de esa nave y llegarán preparados para vivir aventuras, peligros y, lo que para ellos es más importante, la emoción del descubrimiento científico. Pero lo que van a encontrar, tanto desde el punto de vista del peligro como del descubrimiento, sobrepasará con mucho todas sus expectativas.

A diferencia de tantas obras de ciencia-ficción "de vanguardia", esta novela, obra de un físico de primera línea, se basa en sólidos razonamientos científicos. Las extrañas inteligencias que aparecen en "El mundo de Roche" son imaginarias; pero podríamos empezar a trabajar en la nave de investigación impulsada por láser que nos propone Forward mañana mismo.

El mundo de Roche Details

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From Reader Review El mundo de Roche for online ebook

Thomas says

It's sort of disappointing to read a book with your name on the cover and be this disappointed by it. Thing is, I found Forward's Dragon's Egg to be one of the best hard-SF books I've ever read, so my hopes were high-ish for this one. The main problem with it is something I found to be a problem with Dragon's Egg: The characters are impossibly wooden. With Dragon's Egg, I sort of tolerated that because most of the characters were aliens living in a vaguely tribal social structure for most of the book; it was easy to comprehend. Also, the science was vastly more interesting. Unfortunately, here the humans and their bland interactions are far more important than they were in Dragon's Egg. The result is a series of lengthy vignettes about extremely boring people. I'm also far less clear on planetary dynamics than I am on stellar dynamics, with the result that I could never really picture the world(s) covered. I found them unnecessarily complicated, frankly. The book sort of buries its lead in that a fairly interesting alien race gets lost in the push-pull of a very complicated setting. Or maybe the setting wasn't complicated... seriously, I couldn't really tell.

I would say this one is probably not worth your time unless you're positively obsessed with planet-building. Read Dragon's Egg, though. It's brilliant.

Eran says

The introduction claims that with each re-publishing the book got longer (60,000 words, then 100,000 to 110,000 words as publications under "Flight of the Dragonfly", then 155,000 words in this version). Maybe I would have enjoyed the shorter version better. Essentially this is a great "hard" sci-fi novel, with the only problem that it is a very tedious and somewhat boring read for the most part. Somewhere around three quarters of the book it gets slightly better, but then ends with an ending that's mostly a redundant recapitulation.

Derek says

Good scientifically valid story

Randy McDonald says

Even science fiction fans have been known to call their favourite genre a "literature of ideas," as implicitly opposed to a "literature of style." Characters can be transparent; plots can be simple; the prose itself can be clunky. I'd like to think this is starting to change, but I've learned by now not to confuse likes with actualities. I think.

When I saw Robert L. Forward's 1985 novel *Rocheworld* at the BMV in the Annex, I had to buy it. At \$4.19, it was quite inexpensive, but more to the point *Rocheworld* has been one of my favourite science fiction novels since I was an adolescent, maybe even before adolescence. Re-reading it after a decade, I'm pleased to

find that my memories hold true.

Rocheworld is not high literature. The characters lack much depth, with their likes and dislikes being superficial and a somewhat surprising lack of conflict (and not unsurprising hookups between multiple couples) prevailing throughout, with the singular exception of a bitter senator and his proxy crewmember, the former eventually relenting and giving the central character George Gudunov his general's star and the latter being replaced by a Mexican geologist working on Titan even before the light-sailed STL starship leaves Sol system. The Barnard's Star system is full of wonders, explored in this book and its sequels, with ubiquitous life and interesting challenges which are never lethal. It would be harsh to describe this book as all setting, but not too harsh.

But what a setting! The laser-propelled solar sail interstellar craft--a propulsion method that Forward himself designed, and remains plausible to this day--is superb. The Barnard's Star planetary system, notwithstanding the confirmation a decade after the fact that Barnard's Star can't host the near-brown dwarf Gargantua, is well-designed and interesting, so much so that I wish that Forward was right. The titular Rocheworld, a very close binary of two rocky worlds so near each other that they share an atmosphere and ocean in common, is a remarkable construct. And the life in the oceans of Rocheworld, including the intelligent flouwen (calling them brilliant shapeshifting jellyfish known for their loves of mathematics and surfing wouldn't be inaccurate), is interesting. Forward's world is well-designed indeed.

Most importantly to me, Forward's universe is fundamentally optimistic in a way I find quite cheerful. People mean well and do their best; reason and patience allow for the anticipation of problems and effective responses; effort can yield positive results. And if Forward's characters can do this, and if we can do this, then we can all enjoy a universe full of wonders and delights. Yes, it's a great way to educate people in science, but it's also a great thing to read when you're down or concerned.

elidemelnibone says

Un début de lecture laborieux, un long voyage dans l'espace ennuyeux ... je ne me suis pas attachée aux humains formant l'équipage, tous bien braves au demeurant. Je retiens quand même les voiles à propulsion laser du vaisseau et l'ordinateur qui se décline en James, Jack, Jill, en satellites de communication et autres sondes Clete, Barbara, Splish et Splash etc.. Mais je suis contente de m'être accrochée pour enfin découvrir le système solaire original de l'étoile Barnard et de ses planètes, décrit avec des détails donnant l'impression de participer à l'exploration, et rencontrer les alien originaux, amicaux, cool, joueurs, intelligents, très doués en mathématiques pures et très attachants. Un contact humains-alien optimiste.

Desiree says

As someone who is already a bit leery of science fiction, this really did me in. I needed to read this for a class, and while I'm told the science is really really solid by a lot of people who read it, it is the worst book I've had the misfortune to lay hands on in a long while. Forward has made an amazing premise, and could have written an amazing story to go with it...but he is simply not a writer, in the same way that Carl Sagan was not meant for fiction when he wrote *Contact*. I can respect the importance of accurate science, but for a fiction book to read this poorly, with this much disregard for realistic interactions and character development? It's painful and unfortunate.

Jose Moa says

A tecnologically plausible journey to a next star using a laser sail an the adventures in a planet of the sistem till eventually find intelligent specimens

William Fishburn says

It was a wonderful story with some amazing ideas, but, there was a bit too much science that went over my head. It took me out of the story every once in awhile.

John Doez says

Tengo aprecio por el autor por su trabajo teórico relativo al viaje interestelar. Además, el libro tiene algunas cualidades. La ciencia está tratada con respeto. Los hechos son científicamente plausibles. Y, sobre todo, ha acabado con mi insomnio. Cada vez que lo cogía, me quedaba dormido.

Andrea says

Forward charges in with a bold, self-reflexive move & proudly informs us less than one hundred pages (85-86) in of the nearly five-hundred, how exciting and well-written his story is going to be and just how it's all going to play out. We get the idea that we'll be looking at shiny vessels orbiting around monstrous planets, staffed with a highly intelligent crew, managing improbable escapes, floating around, eating free-range food while conducting world-changing research under the threat of being crashed, air locked, lost or otherwise killed during their one-way ticket to Rocheworld. On some of these accounts, Rocheworld delivers. Unfortunately, Forward manages to paint these grossly stereotypical characters, with asinine dialogue to cover the rest of the human drama. Couple this with the rampant racism, sexism, ageism and elitism apparent in the characters thoughts, actions and interactions and Forward makes finding interest in the actual hard science, a task at best.

Rocheworld smacks of 80's post cold-war tensions, scientific politics, and is rife with "commies," "yellow-skinned chinks," "honkeys," misogyny and white, Southern senators with drawls as thick and comical as Foghorn Leghorn. Frankly, it's more than anyone with a cross-cultural world-view and a scratch of humanity can stomach. To Forward's credit, however, he does turn a few good phrases; there are some beautifully descriptive sentences that blend machinery, motion, science & emotion in an educative way that's not too heavily buried in jargon or crap dialogue or distracting slurs and are technically well-expressed.

Forward could very well have titled this novel, "Floating, Rockhounding and Humping" if it weren't for the light-sail propulsion, the mention of Lagrange points, the inter-planetary tsunami and the playfully kooky, surfer-dude, rainbow jellyfish assortment of aliens. There is clearly some excellent science in motion here. As a first round in descriptions of that motion however, Forward succeeds when he keeps it simple, avoids the traps of sexist, racist, jargon-flooded technical dialogue and textures the scene with relative humanity,

allowing the content not to come through obvious, cardboard character by forced propulsion, but for us as readers, to simply be moved.

Kelvin says

The 80's were a fucked period for SF. This book represents the best and the worst of 80's SF. On one hand, you've got relatively exciting science and science-concepts in play all through the book. On the other hand, you're burdened with having to deal with leaden dialog, two-dimensional characters, barely believable aliens, stupid sex...its one saving grace is the amount of time spent detailing the expenditures of state-funded science research and experimentation, even though the warped characterizations spoil that a bit. A great book. If I was 14 and it was 1988 again. Okay, maybe not that great. Good for science, though.

Wesley says

Two words: interplanetary waterfall! Hard science fiction fans will enjoy this thrill ride!

Justin Bremer says

I couldn't finish it. I wanted to, so very much, but I just couldn't get through it.

It was off to a strong start, a very solid hard sci-fi novel. Detailed science, plausible, well-explained. But, eventually it got bogged down in silly minutiae. I appreciated knowing how things like shed hair would be dealt with, but I didn't need to know exactly how much of which foods everybody on the mission was rationed, and I especially didn't need to know how much they ate in one sitting.

The first couple of characters were promising, but proved to be flat or have no development, and after a good couple dozen were introduced I couldn't keep track of them (and, it seemed, neither could the author - inconsistent accents and speech patterns in ESL characters, quick and easy tropes / roles for everyone).

I really did try, and to be fair I am happy I read the early tech specs, but I feel this "novel" would have been more enjoyable as a theoretical how-to on interstellar travel.

Jenelle says

don't usually read hard science fiction and it took a minute for me to give in to this, but it was a great. it's not a great STORY, especially if you're into people, if you like PEOPLE in your books, but it will take you all the way into space. or, like, it miniaturizes space into an elegant physicist's model, and then you're miniaturized, too, and you get to zoom & roam around. right, that's what that would look like from here, ok and what about from there? it forced my brain to do a thing it doesn't usually do on its own.

Marianne says

Lots of science in this, with highs and lows entirely from the action. Characters are all variations of no-nonsense scientists. A good read if you are stressed and don't need a bunch of sad things bringing you down.

For good science, but more character drama, read Dragon's Egg.
