

## REVIEW OF *THE CULTURE: THE DRAWINGS*

The *Culture* novels have a special place in my heart, and it was a foregone conclusion that I would buy this. I'm delighted this material was released so that we can get an extra little glimpse into Banks's mind.

These drawings aren't vivid renderings, but rather more like blueprints. Banks drew things to scale and annotated his pages with copious quantitative details about sizes, speeds, capacities, etc.

There are some amusing comments buried here and there. Banks expressed his dissatisfaction with one of his vehicle designs thusly: "no good! looks like a goddamned cash-till!"<sup>1</sup> Alongside a bunch of estimates regarding the number of beings in and around the Culture, he wrote: "all going to look silly if planets around stars are a rarity".<sup>2</sup> I guess he can rest easy on that front.

I always imagined that the ships, drones, and devices of the Culture would, because of their practically magical level of technology, be designed entirely around aesthetics, unhindered by any practical constraints. Banks's designs are very angular and utilitarian, quite different than I might have expected.

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<sup>1</sup>Iain M. Banks, *The Culture: The Drawings*, 1st ed. (New York: Orbit, 2023), 71.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.