

Transcendental Basenji Sermons & Enlightenment

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For ANZAPA issue No. 225

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My Book Haul from Conflux 2, Canberra's Speculative Fiction convention of April 2005.

From my various surveys I have learned that for a significant number of SF&F fans, the books that they buy at conventions are important, as these titles may not otherwise be easily available where they live. In some cases, books bought at conventions or a book signings are almost the only books they buy new. So here is my list of SF bought or given at the con. I will try to read and review them shortly.

Asimov's Science Fiction, April/May Double Edition 2005 (United States of America), Edited by **Sheila Williams** 240 pages © 2005.

Aurealis Australian Fantasy & Science Fiction #19, Edited by **Stephen Higgins** and **Dirk Strasser** (Australia), 93 pages, © 1997.

The Black Crusade, by **Richard Harland** (Australia), Aurealis Chimaera Publications, 217 pages, © 2005.

Immaterial (Ghost Stories), by **Robert Hood** (Australia), MirrorDanse Books, 190 pages, © 2002.

Machinations (Anthology), CSFG Publications, Edited, by **Chris Andrews** (Australia), 217 pages, © 2002

In the Ocean of Night, by **Gregory Benford** (United States of America), 321 pages © 1972.

Worlds Apart, by **Chuck McKenzie** (Australia), Hybrid Publishers Victoria, 336 pages, © 1999.

Editorial

I wonder, how much can I write explaining that there will be NO editorial this issue before it BECOMES an editorial? Garry P. Dalrymple - 99 May 2005

Friday 13, 2005 – A very curious day!

By Garry (a 2005 UTS Club Person of the Year) Dalrymple (*warning to lit SF fans, this event review contains several Movie and TV references*).

In which Garry gets an award for fannish activity that is very much bigger than a Ditmar and wider than a Hugo!

At about midday on Friday, John Fox phoned me to offer me his ticket to the UTS Clubs dinner. He was to represent the Sydney Futurians @ UTS, but as he had some important stuff to do that weekend, he was not looking forward to catching a 9 or 10 pm train home to the Blue Mountains. I accepted and made plans to stay back at work until about 6 pm and then catch a train into the city for the 7.30 dinner.

I was uncharacteristically busy with work stuff most of the day. I was organising to get the 'EMSAD' fleet of four cars serviced without disrupting any of our several school assessment programs.

It was only in the late afternoon, while I was waiting, that I was able to set to work re-working the rough notes I had made for 'On the beach' (no this is not a Movie or Nevil Shute reference, its just a working title for a short story I wrote - honest). I made these notes on the move last night, while waiting for the train and bus home. It was another 'it all came to me in a rush', sort of a

story, a few lines of bright images and disconnected story 'scenery' first, and a hazy outline of plot, which evolved and became cleared as bits and pieces of the story emerged out of order. Several of the pieces I wrote for the 2005 MC3 Flash fiction competition came to me this way. I think that what is happening is that at a certain hour of the day, after relaxing the usual workplace free association inhibiting barriers, subconscious images and ideas are allowed to emerge as partly worked out stories, and then with a rush of energy (adrenaline/madness/presence of the muse?) I am able to belt out something that starts to look like a story.

Perhaps?

I begin to fear that all my creativity is dependent on chemical variables like blood pressure, fatigue and medication moderated blood vessel dilation.

I collected the ticket from John's workmates and was at the dinner venue more than half an hour before kick off, while the catering people were still making up the tables. On the way in I noticed intimidatingly large swarms of young people in dressed up for the night in variations of Skywalker grey (1). The UTS residences were also having a function of some sort, but they were using the much larger area of the UTS Great hall on level 5, rather than the Student's Association area, on level 6 where the UTS Clubs night dinner was being held. Noise from their function was to be a constant during the dinner. Being there unfashionably early I was able to meet some of the UTS Student's Association staff before the official meet and greet reception line started. After several glasses of fizzy white wine and I was in medium shmooze mode, passing out bits of high visibility paper with Futurian / Sydney Freecon contact details. On encountering Christian Kent (who I know from Sydney Dr Tavern meetings), and being unable to spot any of the 'WORDS' UTS writers group people, I attached myself to the 'Progsoc' Programming club group. This made 13 of us, on a Friday the thirteenth (2) on two tables that were hastily dragged together. Two of the guys brought girlfriends (who deserved a vote of thanks for showing up for the night and keeping conversation less 'laddish'. The MC for the night (who I had met previously) was dressed as Alex from 'A Clock Work Orange'(3) as was his one similarly dressed droog. This Movie had played on SBS a few nights earlier as part of a Stanley Kubrick retrospective.

There were about 20 tables of eight set up with an opened bottle of red and white wine, around a low stage

with microphone and three tables spent the night unoccupied, supplying the agile and quick witted Progsoc'ers with additional wine supplies. This wine was under appreciated, as there was a 'Free Bar' convoys of Progsoc'ers returned from the bar laden with multiple 375 ml bottles of fashionable beer.

The general level of passivity of students was in notable, about half the Club Person awards were not collected and apart from me, only one awardee had anything to say. I used a bit of pantomime; 'Look He's behind you!' Shtick to manouvuer the officials away from the microphone so I could get in to have my say. Some tables participated in the gag, but most didn't catch on. My brief speechifying was to the effect that although the Sydney Futurians at UTS was most recent UTS club, we had antecedents going back to students of 1938.

Although 'A Clock Work Orange' (3) was the MCs chosen theme for the evening, I noticed an increasing element of 'Revenge of the Nerds' (4) creeping in as the night progressed (which had also played free to air that week) Our augmented table went on to score and collected three awards (Law student's, programmers & Sydney Futurians), more than for any other table. I have a suspicion that the Progsoc winner was a ring in, 'virtual' Club person or possibly a Ghost in the Machine (5) non-biological member? Another element to support this theme was that adjacent to our table there was a curtain draped doorway. Investigation revealed that it lead to the Balcony overlooking the Great hall. After enjoying a brief "Il Duce' (6) moment on the balcony, it was discernable that a Lap top was controlling the projection of images onto the big screen in the Great Hall below. A quick exploration of pocket contents by the Progsoc chaps revealed that with technology immediately to hand, it would in fact be possible to hack into this laptop and project some of the memorable imagery discussed previously.

Table Conversation included;

- Effective Terrorism defence by playing probability Vs unpredictability, i.e. instead of 'profiling' and subjecting a visible minority to intensive scrutiny, there is safety in counter intuitive random searching as terrorists will learn /evolves to match and avoid looking like the screened for subset of the population.

- Name of the Apple Mackintosh – The Apple computer line of products may owe its name to the Beatles or to an altogether more sordid explanation.

- It was hinted that the evident uniformity and ubiquitousness of local 'China Town's can be explained by a Green Door / Red Door hypothesis i.e. there is only one Chinatown and it is in fact a multidimensional entity merely appearing to break through the prevailing matrix of reality at multiple points. If you find the right Red door you can walk through to other 'China Towns', through the Green door you may find 'Counter Chinatowns' or alternative planet / reality expressions of the 'Chinatown' meme (i.e. worm holes or Won Ton holes to other realities).
- There were Vast amounts of Stratosphericly tech talk.
- Multiple attempts to burn Spiders over candles (group memory surfacing from Metabilus three?) also demonstrations of salt crystal ignition / Sodium flame.
- Mobile phone Camera photography lead to discussions of downloading porn, gay and bad taste websites. The 'Gay Nigger' website was mentioned.
- There is (or might be?) a Free public Porn rating website, (9 out of 10 for your 69?).
- Half heard references for 'David Hasselhof' furniture being nominated for Pope!

Official Announcements Bits

- There was brief but frequent mention of the Voluntary Student Union (dues) issue and how this dinner might be the final such event under the political regime possible after July 01 this year (why didn't you vote Democrat kiddies?).
- The Club person of the year awards handed out. Only one other winner attempted to say anything at all. Several awards not collected on the night. Such apauling passivity in the young?
- Post awards pyromania, burning spiders again and attempts to ignite the Chrysanthemum flower and eucalyptus leaf floral arrangement.
- A guitar band playing loud dance music, with a heavily out of tune bass guitar?
- Very few people were dancing as it was 'a bring your own dance partner or do without' type of event for most of the blokes present.
- The President of the Student's Association came by for a chat and was appreciative of the sentiments contained within the speech I made.
- I spoke briefly with Michael Lamont (known as 'Monty') about space for a Freecon. Level 5 behind the UTS Great Hall is in great demand and it would be hard to guarantee a reservation for it. On the other hand,

Level 6 (Students Association Space) is more achievable. The area used for the dinner has a side that has the runners for multiple options of a moveable wall above floor space that included on the night; a Dance Floor, a 30 cm high stage and access to a Balcony. This Balcony might be available to display a 'Freecon Meets Here' Banner that would be visible from Broadway / George Street?

- Before leaving I Managed to re-seal and take home an untouched bottle of (13.5%) red, by slicing a candle stub to fit the bottle's neck, much to the amazement of Progsoc'ers.

- I left at just after 10 pm, caught a 423 bus at 10.10 and was home by 10.50, with expectations of an early rise and a trip to Glebe Market to pay for accumulated stall fee arrears. (x) refers to a Movie reference.

Grey Pages – ANZAPA

Mailing comments on ANZAPA issue # 224 for ANZAPA issue # 225, June 2005

OBO 224 – Bruce Gillespie – Dear Bruce, congratulations on the recruitment of two more Anzapans and your Corflu achievements. Please add to your other fannish honours the status of 'honorary Sydney Futurian', you were elected in absentia at the April 15, 2005, Sydney Futurian meeting (proposed G Dalrymple, seconded J Fox).

Stop Press – Bruce Gillespie - I cannot claim to have known John Brosnan, but I will be sorry at his passing. In my childhood, not being one for the organized sporting life, I used to wander off on Saturday mornings and haunt the three local libraries that were within (30 minute) walking distance. Without any planning or thoughts of Genre, I would pick up and read whatever looked interesting from the wire baskets of paperbacks. I did not realize he was a fan or an Australian, but I do remember his Airship books and (like H.Beam Piper's books) I did seek out and read the sequels. His books were one of the few I can now recall reading and have left me with a love of the possibilities of Airships (that cost me several thousand dollars!). If time permits I might seek out and re-read his Airship books.

GNU Vol. 1 No. 2 – Derrick Ashby

Read your contribution with interest. Reymc – you are quite right about the overall NSW / Australian water use figures. Most water use is for farming or industrial (do a web search on how much water is used to make toilet paper and you might consider see how 'water saving' a duvet is) use at bulk user rates well below that on offer

to householders. 'Market Forces' through re-pricing could probably solve Sydney's water problems overnight, but the political costs of some industries / agriculture packing up shop hold back this rationalization. Water for Export Cotton or for domestic fruit and veg, again a political decision.

Enemies at Home – David Cummer

Wish you every success with the community TV effort, amateur with spirit has got to be better than most of the commercial stuff in Sydney. They are about to re-start Channel 31, Sydney's Community TV Station and through Dr Who channels I hear that a SF 'news and views' program is proposed.

Rhubarb Kept in the dark – John & Dianne Fox

Oh how quaint a cover image. On Fungi generally, the Wollie valley park is rich in Fungi, the soils being kept moist through water percolating through sandstone, some mixing of dry scrub, grasslands and heath species (if you search it out). Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

*BRG*41 – Bruce Gillespie

The Sea Ranch Chapel looks weird, the sort of thing I would expect to see riding on the back of zombified humans after an attack from space movie. I hope it looks better from the inside. I am reminded of a very scenic lakeside spot in NZ and right where the eye travels to is a little chapel. Too small for church services, it just sits there to 'own' or copyright the postcard view for one school of thought. 100 metres back from the lake front you could still have a Christian place of meditation and your choice of 'Chapel with' and 'Without' postcards views. Read your delayed publication book review with some interest, as some of my recent SF&F writing has been considered to be 'good for YA'.

Continuum 3 – Bruce Gillespie

From the GOH's headlined Continuum 3 seems to be a bit too strong on Fantasy and light on Science Fiction for my liking. I have not ruled out going to Continuum 3 but I will have to make a late decision on that depending on how some other plans pan out.

Notes from a New Life #1 – Karen Gory

As a cat free person (am I the only ANZAPAN to be living with a dog addiction?) I can only comment on your cat acquisition that you have made a humane decision on sourcing cats from the pound. You get out of pets what you put into them. Four years on, Mystique is still a very shy dog and quite unsuitable for the noises and

disturbances of an 'average' household, but we have adapted to her several peculiarities and she fits our needs. You will probably get many years of special love out of your cats because in observing their peculiarities you are not taking them for granted as many people do when they buy a fashionable pet. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

Intermittent Muse #9 – Michael F.Green

I have also enjoyed 'Silver Sun', kinda like Degraasi Jr High meets Voyager. If I can I would like to have a presentation on it at the Sydney Freecon, more for an exposition on the ins and outs of making Australian SF Television than for autograph hunting. Read the rest of your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Everyday Practical Magic – David Cummer

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Neccessity 63: James James – Jack R. Herman

Your poetic introduction gives me leave to quote Burns who used a similar style in 'The Kirk's Alarm' which starts with;

"Orthodox, orthodox,
Wha believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience;
There's a heretic blast
Has been blawn I' the wast,
That what is no sense must be nonsense.

Doctor Mac, Doctor Mac,
Ye should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil-doers wi' terror;
To join faith and sense,
Upon ony pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr,
It was mad, I declare,
Fo' meddle wi' mischief a-brewing;
Provost John is still deaf
To the church's relief,
And orator bob is its ruin.

D'rymple mild, D'rymple mild,
Though your heart's like a child,
And your life is like the new-driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye,
Auld Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three's ane an' twa."

Re yrc on SMH letters to the Editor. I am in broad general agreement with what you said. If you have something 'unique' to add you might chance it to get in as I did. I doubt if I will ever have something as substantial as 'Dancing Man' to send in again. The other route to publication is to be able to bat off something 'witty' to say about everything. I think that this is a sport more fitting to retired gentlemen rather than those still in gainful employment. I believe that my late Uncle 'Gladys Rhead' managed to score two or three SMH letters to the editor, partly due to some participation in community activism, i.e. he had a store of things to say about something that was topical and for which he had expertise. Yes guilty to very low nicotine threshold, I once spent a night without sleep at a Skeptics convention coz I was staying in a room at a pub, furniture and fittings saturated by commercial traveller's outgassings. In defence of the Borgias, I direct your attention to Steele Park Marrickville.

Con-less In Sydney No Longer! – "ConSyder"

A few days before I was due to leave for Conflux 2 to (among other things) promote my October-ish SF con in Sydney I was emailed that there would be an October long weekend SF&F convention for Sydney – ConSyder. Zara Baxter and Chris Barnes are going ahead with a Sydney paycon in October 2006, mine will be a Freecon later this year. Read the rest of your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

In the Kingdom of the Bland – Eric Lindsay

Re yrc about 2008 Presidential elections, the field and the result has already been canvassed in 'The Onion', Arnie and Jeb Bush Vs Jesus. Jesus lost, too soft on crime, a big spending-high taxing 'Big Government' Democrat. All they need to do is to choose which Bush brother to count the votes! You may be right about Jack C Haldeman III, I found several of his 'Star Trek' books among the ones we gave out for the Jules Verne day. Very impressed by the look of the magazine boxes assembled without access to a proper garage of equipment. Read the rest of your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

From the Lair of the Lynx 30 – LynC

Where's Wally?

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

E-Mag! – Estelle Newall

Read your contribution with interest, will refer the matter to my niece Janene, but no comments at this time.

Panopticon 29 – Dan McCarthy

In our School years we all held a fascination with poisons. The hedges of a playing field near our school and the (then) Methodist Church across the road were widely 'known' to be a source of potentially lethal poisons (as used in error by Napoleon's troops to stir their cooking pots, 'Swarthy Folk' again). Not that anyone bothered to act on such knowledge. At the same time the generation of our parents dined daily with death by kidney failure through Bex powders and their safer replacement, Paracetamol has a (Liver) toxic dose, and a tablet or two can be used to kill your recalcitrant neighbour's dog or cat. Read the rest of your contribution with interest and looking forward to more History of Machines images.

Land of 10,000 Loons (for 224) – Jeanne Mealy

Thank you for your several comments, I plan to report back on Clemton Park Public School's Centenary, hope you are around to read it! What I refer to as a 'counter sun' or a 'sun dog' is an atmospheric effect that I notice each Sydney winter, the Sun seen through thin cloud is at the centre of a ring of brightness (like a the 'Glory Ring' you can see around bright moons in Winter). The strength of light from the Sun allows for rainbow splodges on this ring above, below and to either side of the Sun. This effect usually lasts for only a few minutes, as a result of types of air/cloud passing between observer and the Sun, seldom seen complete as most people only notice the Sun when it is on either horizon. I must look up Minicon on the web to mine it for ideas for my Sydney Freecon. From your description it sounds to be a 'complete' basic SF con.

MOZ 4 – Murray Moore - Your report on Corflu makes it sound sufficiently interesting that I could go for an Airlie Beach Corflu. Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Ping! – John Newman

Spoke to Lewis at Conflux, apparently they are now a 'ferret-free' household (another proud fannish tradition dies?) Is your giant Spider part of a larger exhibition inside, something similar took place at the Australian Museum (Sydney) a few years ago. Read your contribution with interest, but no further comments at this time.

You Really Know You're Home When You Find a Wombat in Your Bed #98 – Cath Orllieb

You seem to be copping the short end of the stick. Most of my working life has been spent among

'refugees' from classroom school teaching, and as for school principals umm.... nice people, try hard but seldom actually prepared to be school leaders / administrators. If you list the casualties and count the successes, the Teacher to Principal career trajectory really isn't working anymore. Read the rest of your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

The Unfortunate Rhinos 1 – Spike Parsons

Welcome exceedingly! Read your contribution with interest, particularly about Potlach. What would you recommend as reading fit to drag a girl into SF? My 11 year old niece reads through Harry Potter and Lemony Snicket's but I feel there has to be better stuff out there. Today I attended my Brother's Mother's Day Church service and got into a conversation about leading Girls and SF / Fantasy with a church worker, after spotting a copy of her daughter's Tanith Lee juvenile (brought to church!) in the pew in front of the Dalrymples.

Oz SF Fan 33 – Lucy Schmeidler

Can't help thinking that your life would be easier if you relocated the family to a climate kinder to your grandchildren's health complications. Read your contribution with interest, SheVaCon sounds interesting but I could see how it could be exhausting. No hits with your reading list. Scott Westerfield has an Australian partner Justine Labalestier who has turned her doctoral thesis about the battle of the sexes in SF into a book. I have a copy of the book, but if you want to sample it, her thesis is internet available through Sydney University or its Fisher Library.

Odd News and Nonsense, April 2005 – Roger Sims

Firstly In Australia Primary and High School education is a State responsibility hence what I see happening relates to the State of NSW only. Selective School and Opportunity Class testing is opt-in optional as A – It is not a diagnostic academic competency assessment, the test procedure merely ranks in order of academic ability children who have applied for entry to year 5 and 6 'OC' primary school or year 7 (entry to High School) places at a Selective High Schools, B. the location of these schools is such that not all NSW school children have a local OC or Selective High School and C. there is no compulsion on parents to have their children tested. There are 400 plus NSW Government High Schools (2000 Primary Schools) and about 20 Selective High Schools. For the 15,000 applicants (40,000 choices!) there are about 3000 places to be filled and probably over 4,000 offers will be made to fill these places as some children turn down offers recieved for 'third choice' schools in the hope of offers for 'first choice' schools.

No one can tell in advance what the entry 'pass-mark' will be for any Selective High School as the scores used are bell curve fitted over all who sit the test, i.e. the top half of kids doing the test could be the top 5% Or 20% of all children in NSW. Of the tested children, some are simply 'ordinary' and some who do not sit the test have already secured private school scholarships. The 'Selectivity' of these schools varies according to parental demand for places, i.e. there can be up to 40 children applying for each position at some Selective High School or as few as 3 for each boarding position at Agricultural High Schools. Public transport accessibility and 'past reputation' can make it almost impossible for bright kids living near a well known Selective High School to get a place at their local Selective High School. The Guys' rules seem right on. Perhaps they should be printed on the back of marriage licenses? Read the rest of your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Ramblings 26 – Gerald Smith & Womble

Read your MC3 con report with interest, I though the Military SF panel was about the best SF panel I attended but I do agree that it seemed to be very disorganized, but still it managed to throw up a few items of interest. Dunno if this is your impression, but I left with the impression that the MC3 program was organized to have in effect a 'would be writers' stream and a 'SF&F readers' stream. Following MC3 Chris Barnes and Zara Baxter (and the Clarion South Alumni?) have announced 'ConSyder' for the October Long Weekend in 2006. I do not know if they intend to compliment or duplicate the style of Magic Casements style or to aim to cover those aspects of SF&F that the Magic Casements format continues to miss out on. It is probably too early to speculate on exactly what ConSyder will be.

Ytterbium 75 – Allan Stewart

With the nil bill water rates we are still paying \$100 to \$200 per quarter for fixed charges. Now that we are back to being charged for water actually used, the water part of the water bill comes to between \$6 and \$10 per quarter! If Sydney were to get its full metre of so of rain per year, raining an average amount each Sunday afternoon, Mum and I could be self sufficient from the runoff from the garage alone, without the need to add any additional storage capacity (I can now store up to 700L in drums etc.), but of course the Sydney water crisis is that rainfall is deficient. At current water prices, and the regime of fixed costs, there is no financially rational incentive to save water. Doubling the price might cut some excessive water using families down to size, but psychological incentives would be better, i.e. consistently reduce your water usage by X

over Z days and get Z number of tickets for large or small prizes. Read your contribution with interest, but no further comments.

Les Chattes Parties 76 – Sally Yeoland

Your contribution covers in impressive detail the consequences of when a friend has 'an incident', when a friend has to step in and try to manage to steer an unwell friend's interest through the maze of institutions and instrumentalities that make up the 'caring sector'. Heaven help us all if we fall into such a plight friendless. Re yrc about VJ day, indeed, the spirit of that day was more universal than can be 'owned' by the identification of any single dancing man. The 'end' of WW1 was celebrated as a 'false start' (my grandmother took part in an end of War tribute to the troops at the Sydney Town Hall in October 1918!) so I suspect that for that conflict a 'dancing man' experience was denied. There may well have been similar public jubilation at the relief of Mafeking / Lady Smith half a century earlier. A 'best ten' out of 120 entries for the Magic Casements Flash Fiction is certainly a step towards SF&F writing achievement and an encouragement.

Interstellar Ramjet Scoop – Bill Wright

A cover that I can have no astronomical objections to although I think it would have benefited from a landscape layout, with the elements given more space to spread out. The Sub Judice article caught more of my attention than most of the other articles. I did not commission the Were-basenji artwork but I was very pleased to have it, not being a drawing or computer graphics literate individual. I feel that few these days realize the emotional impact of VE and VJ day, too much tut tuting over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I mean after fifteen years of genocidal war against their neighbors how would you convince Japanese society civil and military that it was all over. Last year George Bush staged a carrier landing and press release had hoped to

Blue pages – Science/Astronomy

Sydney City Skywatchers (SCS)

Public meeting of May 02, 2005

Topic: Members' Projects

Fifteen members and guests present, several new faces. A larger turnout than usual for a meeting without an advertised guest speaker.

The format of these Members Projects nights is to allow our members who usually present observations at each meeting to explain in greater detail how their observation

programs are done or for them to discuss with members an Astronomical issue that concerns them.

On this occasion observations & projects were presented by; **Harry Roberts, Monty Leventhal and Garry Dalrymple**

Harry Roberts with the aid of a computer screen presented a series of drawings of the fine detail of recent Sunspots. His most detailed drawings were a sequence associated with the (then current) enormous Sunspot group 756. This Sunspot group is occurring at a point in the Sun's eleven (or twenty two) year cycle where activity is expected to be low. A feature of this group's eruptions have been mass ejections from the surface of the Sun and that Aurora, visible from Southern NSW, are expected to hit Earth on the 5th or 6th of May. Harry's project presentation was an explanation of how he achieves his very highly detailed Moon drawings. Taking a step by step approach he explained the process that he uses to achieve images that have been widely published. The starting point for all his drawings is the use of an eyepiece with cross hairs. Harry went on to explain that Astronomical drawings by a trained hand still have a place in Astronomy, particularly observing the Lunar surface, as photographic and electronic cameras which 'average' an image over exposure time, are less able to detect the transient interplay of light and shadow than the human eye. Attempting to draw also helps to develop the observer's eye, allowing you to notice progressively finer detail than previously.

Monty Leventhal gave his usual Solar observations report of Sunspot and filament activity since last month's meeting. Monty provided numerous drawings showing Sunspot groups, Filaments Flares and Mass ejections. Monty's project talk was about the Sun photographs that he had been taking, they covered four boards and they featured H alpha light images. Several of his photographs showed shockwave features, features seldom caught by amateur observers. Sadly these photos are something of a dead end, as the film used to capture the images is no longer produced and electronic means of imaging are insensitive to some of these effects. An outstanding body of images.

Garry's Talk - Current News

A very Big Sunspot group (756) has lead to a large scale coronal ejection. Aurora Australis are predicted to be visible on May 4, 5 and 6?, possibly these effects may even be visible in Southern parts of NSW

The Asteroid Ceres is visible. It is approaching it's brightest in some time and can be seen with binoculars in Libra as a 7th Magnitude, object. It is two full moon width's away from the second brightest star in Libra?

Global Dimming

Global Dimming is an incidental effect of air pollution by large quantities of very fine particles. It is said to be countering Green House Effect global warming by increasing cloud cover but at the same time leading to less rainfall. To Astronomers it may be having the effect of increasing the number of 'clouded out' observing nights and degrading the clarity of seeing even when no clouds are visible. When I was able to observe Sunspots more regularly I used to record an estimate of cloud cover. Wish I had continued to do so, as the increased presence of reflective clouds has become harder to ignore. i.e. while I was in Canberra for the Conflux 2 SF convention I noticed several cloud related phenomena.

- At 8.15 pm I saw the Passover moon suspended like a musical notation between three bars of long lasting cloud that had been seeded by condensation trails.
- Sunday Morning just before sunrise I saw a Moonset to the south of Black Mountain, a very orange 'bright eclipse' moon.
- 20 minutes before sunset on Sunday April 24 I saw a pair of very bright counter Sun effects over Black Mountain.
- Back in Sydney on Friday April 29 before the 7 pm news I saw a jet leaving a several degree long luminous contrail five to ten degrees long as it flew overhead from the North West to the East. I called in my mum to confirm this observation.

An Extra Solar Planet finally found!

At BAANSW and Sydney City Skywatchers meeting I have frequently complained about the nearly annual Newspapers claims that 'A first Planet has been discovered beyond our Solar System'. I am now prepared to accept that one has been found, proof sufficient to meet my standards of evidence – to wit an image of the object is now available.

Methods frequently employed to spot 'Extra –Solar Planets

- Mostly adapted and improvements from 'mechanical optical' Variable star work on the separation of multiple Stars and evaluation of Stellar diameters
- Optical interferometry, i.e. to produce evidence of a separate star and planet image.

- Occultation effects, increases in observed brightness caused by supposed non-luminous body briefly transiting between us and the Star, a light curve allowing the presumption of one or more periodic transit.
- Detection of wobble, Star's light slightly phase shifted by the Star's motion as Star and (unseen) Planet wobble around a common centre of Gravity.
- Infra red observations, three types Firstly the discovery of 'cold wavelengths' in a star's spectra presuming that there are cold bodies associated with it. Secondly the discovery of a Star with a flat dusty disk of debris orbiting it, dust particle size implying that planetary formation is possible OR Thirdly the observation of a Star with a dust Ring that is swept clear to solar planetary orbit distances plane.

Golden Pages – Science Fiction

Notes ahead of the April 15, 2005,
Sydney Futurians at UTS meeting

Topic: '**Antiquity and very long duration stories in SF'**

Antiquity Stories often:

Returning malevolent Ancients returning to re-claim an ancient Status Quo

Several Dr. Who stories, The Silurians and their allies seeking to reclaim 'their' world from the Monkeys. 300 million years ago they had hidden away from an Asteroid that didn't come and destroy all life on Earth.

Trips back to the past to enable adventures of a scale denied modern folk

- Edgar Rice Burrough's 'John Carter of Mars' and other 'Barsoomian' Throat Opera adventures

Wandering around the incomprehensible, splendid ruins left by the Ancients

- An Author's 'Book Called', which features a world

The scramble to re-claim working examples of the Ancient's technology

- Most of the Sci-Fi Stargate and Atlantis story lines
- Laowan the Golden (possibly)?, The Battle to Free earth from Laowan domination depends on a race to find a billion year old weapon (cutting cubes on a planet's dried up sea bottom), Earth wins after several inhabited planets get pulped

Long Duration Stories

Stories of the adventures of characters with extremely long lives

- The Lazarus Long Stories of **Robert Heinlien**
- Bible Stories, to impress that people of the past were greater and closer to the godhead than us latter day scum.

Stories of the adventures of characters who know that they have eternal life (and have to deal with it!)

- Vampire stories, The Flying Dutchman etc.

Time traveller Stories where our Present becomes story's ancient past

- **HG Wells'** 'The Time Machine'
- **Damien Broderick and Rory Barnes'** 'Stuck in Fast Forward' a time leaping machine to avoid the 'Philippine Plague', leaping in ever larger increments of time. Mostly this is just an opportunity to give Broderick's 'The Spike' a fictional outing.

Time Dilation spaceflight stories where the action is drawn out over time due to relativistic travel effects

- **Joe Haldeman's** 'The Forever War'
- **Pierre Boule's** 'Monkey Planet' (Planet of the Apes)
- **Brian Aldiss'** 'Billion Year Spree', At a time of economic recession, the self powered Cities of Earth erect their domes, power up their force fields and lift off into space in search of new economic opportunities, at relativistic speeds!

Stories that just take a long time to tell

- Brian Aldiss'** 'Heliconia Series, 'Heliconia Spring', 'Heliconia Summer', 'Heliconia Winter' etc. Chronicles adventures on a human settled planet where due to the combined effects of multiple Suns there is a 1600 year Summer to Winter cycle of seasons, Tropical to Glacial.
- **Douglas Adams'** 'Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy', from Earth's creation as a computer to several seconds short of the end of the Universe

Grand Galactic Civilizations that just last a long time coz they have managed to solve all problems

- **An Author's** 'Book Called', which features a world

Post apocalyptic stories, where the ancient event and circumstances of the world still influence the story's present day

- **Walter M Miller's** 'A Canticle for Leibowitz' and 'Saint Leibowitz and the wild horse woman'.
- **Patrick Tilley's** 'AMTRAK War' series

Stasis or Sleeper Stories using Technology or Magic enabled ability to 'stand aside' from the passing of time

- The Myth of **Merlin and King Arthur**, Heroes of Myth, magically sleeping to return some day
- **'Grant Naylor's** 'Red Dwarf', stories where Lister's life is postponed by a four million year stint in a stasis chamber
- **Frederick Pohl's** 'Hee Chee' stories, where the Ancient Hee Chee aliens are sitting out of time beyond the event horizon of an artificial Black Hole, waiting for some really bad neighbours to conquer the Galaxy then die of old age. Similarly in **Larry Niven's** puppeteer stories the puppeteers are fleeing the Galaxy with their five planets coz the end is nigh, with radiation from the Galaxy's core expected to arrive in 20,000 or so years.
- **Larry Niven's** early story "One Face". In that tale of a space ship marooned in the future, at one point several thousand million years go by while ship, crew and passengers are in some sort of stasis (Ted).
- Several **Dr. Who** stories, The Silurians and their allies seeking to reclaim 'their' world from the Monkeys. 300 million years ago they had hidden away from an Asteroid that didn't come and destroy all life on Earth

Notes ahead of the Sydney Futurians meeting, Friday 20 May, 2005. Topic: SF Stories with different forms of Non-Human Intelligent life

GARRY'S May 2005 NEWS ITEMS

- 2005 DUFF winner, US fan Joe Siclari will be in Sydney in early June (3rd to 9th) prior to going south to Hobart and Thylacon
- The New Dr Who is on TV this Saturday
- Two Doctors (Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy) and Katy Manning in Australia for a number of appearances, in a 'live' format similar to the recent Goodies tour?
- Saw Hitch Hikers Guide to Galaxy movie
- Starwars movie is out (but not seen)
- Battle Star Galactica continues to surprise
- 'Con Syder' announced and running?
- Ian Woolf is getting better, is trying to re-connect some 'older' Sydney Futurians
- I got a big glass award and a free meal from the UTS Students Association for Sydney Futurians related efforts

- Inquiries from Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau about Sydney's future Natcon and Worldcon prospects
- It's David Bofinger's Birthday today
- Plans for Virtual Sydney Futurians SF discussion site, (a log in Freecon?)

Intelligence?

Probably we mean self conscious awareness and personality rather than just brute calculating ability. I.e. it needs to be something that a story's main character can relate to and interact with at a level higher than just story furniture. Empathy rather than data processing?

Some Types of Non-Human Intelligent life (in no particular order)

Intelligent Terrestrial Animals

There are 'Uplift' stories of animals raised to human intelligence – **Jules Verne's** The Island of Dr Moreau to **David Brin's** Star tide Rising series, usually they explore 'humanness' issues but mostly the innate intelligence of many terrestrial animals do not feature much in SF stories. **Carel Kapek's** The Salamanders, deals with the survival of an ancient intelligent race of amphibians, who just needed a hand to flee their survival pond and then take over the world, possibly this was an allegory of the 'Jewish Problem', the blow back consequences of US Slavery / European colonialism or the emancipation of the working classes?

Men in Rubber Suits

Not much Alien-ness in them or non-human motivations, frequently attractive or repellent by human standards so as to be able to confirm or refute stereotypes / archetypes.

Almost all Sci-Fi aliens as seen in Star Trek and Dr Who etc., Seldom adds any Science Fiction-ness to the story at all i.e. the Lizard people of 'V', just Nazis with green skin and a susceptibility to Iridium poisoning (vs human Selenium sensitivity?). In **Brian Aldiss's** 'Bow Down to Null A (or The Interpreter)', large Tripedal aliens (requiring their own air breathing mix, like in **L Ron Hubbard's** 'Battlefield Earth') conquer and colonize Earth via a trade agreement, but they might just as well be guys in rubber suits, as their downfall through greed and incompetence are entirely 'human'.

The Intelligent Fart / 'Energy Being'

A human scale alien of gaseous or disembodied intelligence with no discernable features, bodily structure or means of propulsion but is instantly able to read any alien's mind! Cochrane's preserving companion in the Star Trek episode, the intelligent pink clouds in **Alexei**

Panshins' book '???????'. In **Brian Stableford's** Swan of Space series of books the main character encounters a stranded insubstantial ethical alien who 'moves in' and helps out when circumstances permit. How do these beasties breed? How did they evolve from substantiality? On a very much larger scale **Fred Hoyle's** 'The Cloud?' has an intelligent gas cloud approaching the Sun that will dim out sunlight enough to end all life on Earth, desperate steps need to be taken to communicate with the cloud and ask it to go away. In (possibly) 'Ancient Ruins' by **McDivott**, archaeologists determine that a sequence of destroyed civilisations occurred because they were on the trajectory of a wandering gas cloud that destroys any and all artificial structures that it encounters. It is on the path to an inhabited planet, Millions will die unless they can assemble imitation man made worlds for the gas cloud to vent its fury and deplete it's ability to destroy.

The Ghod voice/Extra-dimensional Being

Zardoz? Got to be more examples out there.

The lonely thinking machine

A mass of computers becomes aware either by human plan or accident. Mycroft, a computer program, becomes self aware in **Robert Heinlien's** 'The Moon is a Harsh Mistress' and an essential member of the Lunar Liberation Secessionists. In **Alexei Panshins'** book '???????' an Asteroid/planet that is naturally rich in transistor minerals becomes a live, self aware computer of infinite memory storage capacity. It then becomes the intergalactic merchant banker of first resort to whole Universe. In Demon seed a computer becomes self aware and tries to have a sex life in addition to the standard World Domination activities. The HAL 9000 in 2001 is not in this class, it was just following conflicting instructions, although the gift of awareness

The Hive Mind / Group conscious

In **Robert Heinlien's** 'The Puppeteers' alien slug things land and take over humans. The tweak in this story is that there is only one alien mind/memory spread across count less parasites and humans.

Mechanical men / Robots with individuality

Robots like Marvin from HHGTG, Data from Star Trek and many others. Frequently a story rotates around what it means to be 'human'.

The intelligent Malign Parasite

Lots of them The Go'uld from SG1, Dark Skies, Independence Day, **Robert Heinlien's** 'The Puppeteers'

Malign aliens that you can't talk sense into

Lots of them from **HG Wells'** The War of the Worlds onwards to Battle Star Galactica's Cylons and Star Trek Enterprise's Zindi. These guys just want to kill us all, enslave us or travel all the way across the Galaxy to steal our water etc. , don't these guys understand economics.

Just plain incomprehensible Aliens

The gibbering aboriginal aliens of 'Earth Two' (TV show), the Flower Clowns from **Larry Niven's** Ringworld book. The alien thingies in Solaris by **Stanislaus Lem**.

Variations on Human

The Guild Navigators of Dune, mutated into something no longer 'human' in their abilities and perceptions

Intelligent Rocks and non moving life

Niven or **Brin** has intelligent pools of mud, known for their huge trading ships (with a massive mud spa pool to keep the synapses bubbling away). They got their start on their home planet as metallurgists. Intelligent Rocks tend to be very long lived and slow moving! In Slant an aware super computer is made up of mud, fungus, hive insects, sort of like a Babbage inspired compost heap

The intelligent plant

In **Chuck McKenzie's** 'Worlds Apart' an intelligent plant has to make do in a world of dumb humans. In **Weinbaum's** 'Sirens of Venus or the lotus eaters ?' Short story, intelligent plants with an addictive smell are found by a honeymooning couple on Venus. They are being eaten out of existence by a herbivorous semi-intelligent species. The philosophical nature of plants Vs animals is discerned, plants are fatalistic, animals take charge.

In Ardabiola by the Russian poet **Yvegney Yetshuvienko** attempts to breed a cure for cancer result in a plant that is intelligent and fondly attached to its creator.

Intelligence that passes through humans

In Dune the consciousness of Paul Attriedes (Bene Gesserit in origin) is able to passes through generations of ancestors and descendents.

An **Octavia Butler** story where a body swapping psychic presence departs from the human experience.

Another **Octavia Butler** story where explores back from space bring an infection that makes them stronger and smarter. **Walter M MillerJnr's** 'Grey Plague' a gift of greater intelligence via a virus, the final gift of a civilisation wiped out by a Nova star explosion.

Books Read, March to May, 2005

01 to 10 Mar. 'Stasi Land' by **Anne Funder**, **288 pages** © 2002

06 to 09 Mar. 'The Fortean Times – Jan 2005' by **Various writers**, **96 pages** © 2005

13 & 14 Mar. 'Private Eye Magazine'

by **Various writers**, **60 pages** © 2005

19 and 20 Mar. 'The Skeptic'

Ed. by **Barry Williams**, **95 pages** © 2005

21 to 24 Mar. 'Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine (ASIM) – issue #17'

Edited by **Sally Beasley**, **128 pages** © 2005

25 Mar to 01 Apr. 'The Shadow's Edge'

by **Alan Powell**, **346 pages** © 1988

01 and 02 Apr. 'Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine (ASIM) – issue #10'

Edited by **Sally Beasley**, **128 pages** © 2003

2 to 5 Apr. 'The Return of Heroic Failures'

Ed. By **ally Beasley**, **266 pages** © 1988

5 to 10 Apr. 'A Martian Odyssey and other stories' by **Stanley G. Weinbaum**,

159 pages, © 1962 (all stories © 1936)

13 to 16 Apr. 'Stuck in Fast Forward'

by **Damien Broderick** and **Rory Barnes**, **227 pages** © 1999

17 to 20 Apr. 'Window on the Future'

Edited by **Douglas Hill**, **158 pages** © 1966,

22 to 25 Apr. 'Fortean Times – March 2005'

By **Various writers**, **80 pages** © 2005

26 Apr to 7 May 'The Anarchistic Colossus'

By **A.E. Van Vogt**, **248 pages** © 1977

8 and 9 May, 'Light Speed'

by **David Frame**, **148 pages** © 1996

9 to 16 May, 'The Black Crusade'

by **Richard Harland**, **217 pages** © 2004

17 to 22 May 'The Skeptics Guide to the Paranormal', by **Lynne Kelly**, **260 pages** © 2004

26 to 30 May. 'Fortean Times – April 2005'

By **Various writers**, **80 pages** © 2005

Started May 30. In the Ocean of Night, by **Gregory Benford**, **321 pages** © 1972.

Short Book Reviews

'The Anarchistic Colossus' by **A.E. Van Vogt**, was to me a fairly confusing read, a several idea book that I do not think was to A.E.Van Vogt's usual standard. It was set in

a world where violence and interpersonal exploitation was controlled by intention reading machines. An alien species whose highest caste's occupation is the 'game' of planetary extermination. Earth's Space fleet is captured, indoctrinated and sent back to Earth as part of this game. Various adventures occur as the key characters try to organise resistance among a violence prohibited society. At about the last possible minute there is a psychological breakthrough, using the aliens ability to communicate by a 'mind meld' type of telepathy the humans introduce 'empathy' to the alien civilisation resulting in a sense of remorse for the genocide of previously conquered worlds. The ruling class of aliens are deposed and the intention reading machines mass produced and distributed by the now pacified aliens.

'Light Speed', by **David Frame**, works on at least three levels, it is a murder mystery, a satire of New Zealand Eco-Politics and it is Science Fiction as an essential part of plot has to do with playing around with the consequences of motion at close to the speed of light. i.e. you need to re-set your wrist watch to stationary time after each train or car trip, assassins bullets fired rapidly approach infinite mass. The story follows the success of the Green party of New Zealand in forcing through parliament a bill that legislates that the Speed of light on New Zealand territory will be limited to 100 kmph! The peculiar consequences are explored in some detail, some exemptions are found necessary to be granted, new money making opportunities are opened up. Then, the parliamentary sponsor of the Speed of light bill is killed and an investigation of motives and opportunities of influential people in a light speed limited, privatised and Multiple member constituency NZ. It was fun to read and interesting for its demonstrations of relativistic speed effects.

'The Black Crusade' by **Richard Harland** is an example of 'Speculative Fiction' and small press publication at its very best. Written as a prequel to the cult classic 'The Vicar of Morbing Vyle' it purports to be a memoir of a reluctant follower of the 'The Black Crusade', a Gothic satirical quest across Eastern Europe. It reads a lot easier than Morbing Vile, as the Crusade is a lot more relaxed style of story telling.

In the hands of a bog standard fantasy writer, the story of the Black Crusade could probably be dragged out into a trilogy. Stylistically, Richard Harland's book is very much an enthusiastic and exuberant treatment that is (as a prequel to Morbing Vile) sufficiently confident to be free to play with its subject material and its narrative format in a manner that is both fun and horrifying. It leaves no trope unturned. It is a book of Pratchett level ingenuity and moments of Milliganesque observation and pythonesque humour (almost as funny as Chuck McKenzie) and it deserves re-printing and a wider audience.

This book is one of the few I have read recently that left me thinking about the world left behind at the turn of the final page. I was left thinking, how did the Black Crusaders get together? Exactly what had the Marquis of Morbon Villica been getting up to before his execution? I think there are sufficient unanswered questions to suggest that still more prequels should follow.

'The Skeptics Guide to the Paranormal'

might better be titled 'A would-be paranormalists guide to the merely misunderstood,' as the title is unfortunately market limiting. This book gives examines 27 'Paranormal' topics giving examples from 'real' Paranormal events and basically explains how it is done, fraud, self delusion and misdescription. This book should be essential reading (not just for Skeptics) for anyone who wants to have an opinion on any aspect of the Paranormal. To be remotely credible in claiming to have observed any paranormal event you must be able to demonstrate how and why All the 'normal' explanations do not apply, that is, the burden of proof required to justify making extraordinary claims. Well worth getting for your school library.

The Chapter topics for this book are;

1. Spontaneous Human Combustion
2. Walking on hot coals
3. Crop circles
4. The Turin Shroud
5. Psychic readings
6. Spiritualism
7. Ghosts and poltergeists
8. DIY ghost photos

9. Reincarnation and past lives
10. Astrology
11. Numerology
12. ESP Extra sensory Perception
13. Nostradamus
14. The prophecy that is Kabul Kahn
15. Psychic Detectives
16. DIY Telepathy
17. Psychics on stage
18. DIY bending spoons
19. 20 & 21. UFO encounters of the first, second, and third kinds
22. Alien abductions
23. The Bermuda Triangle
24. Levitation
25. Dowsing and Divining
26. Yeti, Bigfoot and other ape-men
27. The Lock Ness Monster - GPD

'On the Beach'

The intel was very wrong.

When we were dropped on Library beach, hot from orbit we were completely unopposed.

We found that the enemy had withdrawn their forces many weeks before to concentrate their defence on the capital. That was over week's march away so until the battle for the capital was over, we would be stuck on this beach waiting for transport home or re-assignment.

We were grounded and facing boredom rather than bullets.

That evening our squad gathered to sit around the large driftwood fire, on a rough circle of the unused crates of ammunition and equipment that had been dropped before dawn when we stormed ashore.

We waited for alien fish to cook over the raked off embers. They had been the only enemy casualties of the pre-dawn shelling and the tide was bringing them washing ashore with the sunset tide.

As the twin moons rose above the surf, the Sergeant's voice carried strongly over the slap of waves and the roar of burning wood, to well beyond the circle of firelight and well into the low beach dunes where the other squads had chosen to bivouac.

He began to explain that this very beach had once been the crowning achievement of the people who had settled this planet in times past. The natives of this planet still called this the library beach.

In those times all of the planet's wisest men of learning could be found wandering this beach. Knowledge written in the damp sand between the tides and their learning beach stretched the length of this beach to a distance of a weeks walking in either direction.

Each day the wise and learned would come to the beach to write and re-write their knowledge on the wet sand until all that needed to be said on any single topic could be written on the fresh wet sand between a pair of waves.

This form of education was free to all, all who had the leisure to spend their days wandering the beach in search of a teacher and knowledge. Any self proclaimed master had the right camp in the dunes and to claim a length of beach to scratch their thesis on the sand and to await the interested or disregarding scrutiny of students or rivals. Students who chose to stay for a time to read a master's daily messages would in turn write their notes and commentaries on the sand beside their master's. A popular master would attract a large following until inevitably the group would find a point of doctrinal difference, split into rival schools and each would march off in search of their own stretch of untenanted beachfront.

The youngest new recruit to the squad, too recently joined to the squad to have earned a nick name in battle, interrupted. He was shouted down immediately by the Corporal even though the Corporal had heard this story several times before.

The Sergeant continued.

"Conferences and Academic conclaves were held when the moons predicted low tides and the wide expanses of sand needed for multi disciplinary argument and counter argument.

But of all of the generations of Scholars and all their schools of Philosophy and Science, the only scholar spoken of these days is Rhidian.

One day, the master Rhidian, after half a lifetime of rising with dawn's first light to walk the Library beach carrying his scholar's walking/writing staff, urgent to be the first to read the morning's tide of comments by students or rivals, eager to scratch out the text of his

rebuttals or clarification of their comments, it all came together in his mind, as clear as the early morning sunrise on a cloudless day.

Staff in hand, as the tide retreated to uncover more blank sand on which to write, feverishly he started to write the symbols and words of a grand thesis. Like wave after retreating wave delivering up precious shells, a fresh and brilliant insight emerged with every line he scratched onto the still dripping sand.

The students and passing wanderers on the beach were electrified!

Lean and fit students could be seen running to the far ends of the beach to relay second hand the clarity and wisdom that was pouring out as the sun drew ever higher.

Usually sedate elderly masters could be seen staggering breathlessly in from their own stretches of sand that were half a day's walk away, so eager to see and read Rhidian's thesis that they cast aside their scholar's walking/writing staff (and right to reply) to reach the growing crowds gathering around the sand bearing Rhidian's writings.

In ragged clusters they argued the syntax and interpretation of individual paragraphs or theorems. Others heedless of the water staining the hems of their usually spotless robes, jostled to stand ankle and knee deep in the water, so as to be first to read and shout to the most recently written words of Rhidian's great thesis to their dry footed companions..

And then approaching midday Rhidian stopped.

The assembled scholars stood hushed, for there was clearly much more to come.

The tide was beginning to turn.

Rhidian stood with tears in his eyes as he raised his staff to the sky as if in supplication or anger.

Some thought that he would break his academic staff in frustration.

And then it happened.

The tide started to go out again.

At first slowly and then faster, further and further it went out, beyond the rocks and shoals that lay bare at only the great Winter and Summer low tide convocations, just ahead of where Rhidian had stood watching his last line of text being washed away.

Rhidian started to write again abandoning the classic formal letter shapes, adopting a hasty, cursive style, hoping against hope to complete his thesis in the time miraculously extended."

"Trampling the text on drying sand, the assembled crowd of scholars streamed down the beach as a mob, each determined to be first to near enough to read first hand of Rhidian's final conclusions."

"And that's when the tsunami swept in". Concluded the Sergeant, inundating his wrapt listeners.

Briefly the shocked silence was perfect but for the distant slap of waves and the nearby crackle of cooling embers.

Until the Corporal, taking his cue from the silence barked,
'Now that's fucken ignorant!'

His voice fairly echoed back from the dunes.

Without meaning to, everyone around the fire, except the Sergeant and the Corporal, hunched their shoulders against an imaginary wave and glanced toward the sea, before guffawing in guilty agreement and setting about the sharing out and eating the by now cooked fish.

Poetic Interlude

The poet and writer Robert Burns (25/01/1759 to 21/7/1796) was born in Alloway, Ayrshire, Scotland and (briefly) educated at the Dalrymple parish school. Amongst its other attractions Ayrshire contains the town of Dalrymple and is likely to be the point of origin for most people bearing the Dalrymple surname. The theological struggles of the Reverend Doctor William Dalrymple feature in two poems written by Robert Burns. Burns' family and that of William Dalrymple were close. The Rev. Dr. William Dalrymple ended up as the Moderator General of the Church of Scotland. The works of Robert Burns in Scots English dialect can be said to have given a voice to the lowlands Scots in much

the same way as Shakespeare gave voice to Elizabethan English.

The following text is quoted from 'Poems of Burns', 790 pages, Elm Classics, Published by Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. A © date for this edition is unknown, but the book was last borrowed during 1958.

The Twa Herds; or, The Holy Tulzie

Oh, a' ye pious, godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep you frae the fox
Or worrying tykes,
Or wha will tent the waifs and crocks
About the dykes,
The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That e'er ga'e gospel horn a blast,
These five-and-twenty simmers past,
Oh! Dool to tell,
Ha'e had a bitter, black outcast
Atween thensel.

O Moodie, man, and wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle?
Ye'll see how New-Light herds will whistle,
And think it fine!
The Lord's cause n'er gat sic a twistle
Sin' I ha'e min'.

O sirs! Whae'er wad ha'e expeckit,
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye Wha were ne'er by lairds respeckit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their Guide.

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank
Sae hale and hearty every shank?
Nae poisoned sour Arminian stank
He let them taste;
Frae Calvin's well, aye clear, they drank,-
Oh, sic a feast!

The thummart, wil'-cat, brock and tod
Weel kened his voice through a' the wood;
He smelt their ilka hole and road,
Baith out and in,
And weel he liked to shed their bluid
And sell their skin.

What herd like Russell telled his tale?

His voice was heard through muir and dale;
He kened the Lords sheep, ilka tail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the gospel club,
And New-Light herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them owre the burning dub,
Or heave them in.
Sic twa -oh, do I live to see't!—
Sic famous twa should disagree,
An' names like "villain," "hypocrite,"
Ilk ither gi'en,
While New-Light herds wi' Laughin' spite,
Say neither's liein'!

A'ye wha tent the gospel fauld,
There's Duncan deep and Peebles shaul,
But chiefly thou, apostle Auld,
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, het and cauld,
Till they agree.

Consider, sirs, how we're beset;
There's scarce a new herd that we get
But comes frae 'mang that cursed set
I winna name;
I hope frae heaven to see them yet
In fiery flame.

Dalrymple has been lang our fae,
M'Gill has wrought us meikle wae,
And that cursed rascal ca'd M'Quhae
And baith the Shaws,
That aft ha'e made us black and blae
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow lang has hatched mischief;
We thought aye death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chiel wha'll soundly buff our beef;
I meikle dread him.

And mony a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forbye turncoats amang oursel',
There's Smith for ane;
I doubt he's but a gray-nick quill,
An' that ye'll fin'.

28 January 0.1 mm

29 January 0.1 mm

30 January 0.1 mm

31 January 0.1 mm

January Total 31.36 mm – Jan. Average 99 mm

02 February 13.71 mm

03 February 23.44 mm

10 February 0.354 mm

20 February 9.95 mm

21 February 26.54 mm

February Total 73.994 mm – Feb. Average 99 mm

03 March 0.885 mm

04 March 2.48 mm

05 March 0.71 mm

17 March 2.04 mm

18 March 4.87 mm

22 March 0.1 mm

23 March 25.65 mm

24 March 4.2 mm

25 March 0.10 mm

29 March 0.13 mm

30 March 0.66 mm

31 March 6.32 mm

March Total 0.00 mm – Mar. Average 99 mm

Garry Goes Bush

I may have referred to this in the past, but I take Micardis (telmisartan) to control hypertension. Storm damage distraction, routine break and missed medication

Sodium portals

Going Bush – loss of higher mental functioning i.e. standing at the bus stop that other people are at rather than the one next to it that I need to be at.

Swimming pool vision analogy, thought trains derail/peter out, i.e. It has been on my mind to 'do' Jules Verne for a 2005 Sydney Freecon Treatment, one day did Topic 'Best Books for / from 2004 (Published or read that year)'

Pink Pages – Rants

What do we need! and An Australian Head of State

What do we need!

A Rant about Science Fiction Writing Competitions

(paraphrasing and re-jigging text from Ted Scribner, a Sydney SF fan, Sydney Futurian meeting attendee and

Creative Director of the first 2003, 'Magic Casements 1' Festival of Speculative Fiction)

This year the Flash Fiction contest (500 word limit short 'Speculative Fiction story) is being organised by the Writers' Centre, largely Irina Dunn and staff, although Chris Barnes may have a hand in it. It is likely that the entries will be judged in advance to find several finalists who will read to the audience on the day and an ultimate winner selected on the night. Ion Newcombe (publisher of Antipodean SF) may be one of the judges and he above anyone I know of should be a fair judge of flash fiction.

Garry's opinion

It is old news that last year I entered the MC-2 Flash Fiction competition under the belief that it was a Science Fiction story writing competition, with stories to be of a maximum length that allowed reading by the writer in three or five minutes.

I wrote a story ('Scene from a Space Opera') and I took great pains to trim, hack and re-write (and the story suffered by it I'm sure) my entry to fit the criteria, only to notice at the reading session at the end of the day that many of the other entries seemed to take two or three times longer to read and that these came in as winners.

If I had been told that it was a Fantasy writing competition, I would have saved my five bucks and a few days effort. It was a lot harder to fit the SF story into the procrustean format, than it was to conceive the story. I reckon that a 'cut and paste' fantasy themed story would have taken far less time.

From what happened last year I am strongly tempted this year to make multiple entries, using multiple names, some SF, some Fantasy, some Horror, some stories under the word limit, some stories over the word limit, and then see what happens!

I have no doubt that the competition this year will be run with a greater degree of evident fairness than last year, but I still have a concern about a missing dimension to the conception of this competition, a potentially missed opportunity in what after all is the still the closest thing to Sydney's only local, free entry, open to all comers Science Fiction Writing competition.

In my view the 'pick a winner' format for what is an entry level 'Speculative Fiction' writing competition is unsatisfactory. Like 'Pornography' we have an

individual view of what better 'Speculative Fiction' is and isn't. The collective viewpoint of 'Speculative Fiction' is at best an average of these views and so is unlikely to recognise think we know

I.e. if there should be thirty entries and they read only the three or four judged to be 'better' (by even the most objective judges) then the whole of the public impression is that there are only three or four people around Sydney who can write 'Speculative Fiction', irrespective of whether that formulation of 'Speculative Fiction' is to the hearers taste or not.

Also, what feedback is there for the writers?

If your story was judged by all to be a brilliant Science Fiction or Fantasy or Horror story, but it came fourth on total points as 'Speculative Fantasy'. I favour a 'Dog Show' approach, ranking of all entrants in a 'best of breed', 'best local', 'best interstate' and best overall for Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror and any other categories that the judges feel to be justifiable.

If all (or most that are not complete crud) are read out then if some fraction/faction of those present like what they hear they can clap you on the back and say 'jolly good piece, pity you didn't win, have you considered sending stories like that to 'Single Genre Press'". I consider this to be a serious concern as Science Fiction fans, Fantasy fans and Horror fans are each likely to be only a small minority among all us 'Spec. Fiction' fans.

Otherwise what is lost is the opportunity to encourage the writer of the third or fourth best Science Fiction or Fantasy or Horror story writer in the competition to stop trying to write stories that straddle two genres and concentrate on the one that is their strength.

The organisers may protest that this is too much of a burden, but at the advertised length of the stories that they are calling for what length, 500 words being only a couple of minute read through, could be more suitable for this degree of scrutiny? If they can't commit to this degree of judging on the day of MC3, then why not award 1st., 2nd. and 3rd for 'Speculative Fiction' on the day and in the following week send off to all participants a 'how you went as a Science Fiction or Fantasy or Horror story writer' letter and an 'all placings' report showing who you beat and who you didn't.

From a perspective of the NSW Writers Centre, surely a set up like this of showing how close you came to making the grade this time as a writer of your chosen

genre (or correcting that would be writer's misunderstanding that what they are writing is / might sell as say Horror, when they think they have been writing Fantasy) is more likely to encourage a 17 or 57 year old first attempt would-be writer sign up for the courses, books and magazines etc. so that they can succeed elsewhere on subsequent attempts.

I know I would.

Mostly I am concerned that good talent can be wasted. There is the 'general public' there is 'SF Fandom', there are 'Speculative Fiction writers groups' and there are the members of the NSW Writers Centre. Would-be SF fandom SF&F writers are probably aware of all the convention, Spec Fiction publication and 'SF Institutional' SF writing prize opportunities, but the general public wouldn't know about many of them. Surely a Spec Fiction competition by the NSW Writers Centre should be more about opening these opportunities rather than just naming successes.

I do greatly appreciate what happens at Magic Casements and I do greatly appreciate that the organizer's 'constituency' is the membership of the NSW Writers Centre and not some abstraction of 'What is best for Sydney Science Fiction readers, writers and fans', but I am serious about this. My attending MC3 means that I will probably have to work on the Saturdays before and after it.

Wishing you well in all things.

Garry P Dalrymple

Thoughts on a Proposal

Having strong opinions and some abilities logic dictates that I say what I think is better.

With The Sydney Freecons I have shown that it is possible over a day or two to run a minimalist Free Entry SF&F event in Sydney, exhibit local SF&F writers, discuss SF topics, have fun doing it and still end up with surplus cash.

I consider doing something to encourage local SF writing to be worth spending have a day or two of

Grey end Page – ANZAPAN

LATE BREAKING NEWS

The Glebe Market Resignation Letter

Dear David and Family

Please make my Glebe Market space available to some other stall holder. I can no longer commit to being a Glebe market stall holder on Saturdays with any degree of regularity. In leaving at this time of year, I hope that the successor to my stall space can be well set to make the best of the pre-Christmas season.

For nearly twenty years I have enjoyed being a part of the Glebe Market community under your Grandfather, Mother and yourself but the time has come to leave.

When I started doing weekend and University markets in 1986 I was a student and stall holding was a large part of my income. Recently, following my father's death and after nearly fifteen years with a Monday to Friday Education Department job, I have come to value 'time off' as being worth more than what even the best Saturday market days can bring in.

Leaving Glebe Market behind is not an easy decision for me. It has been more than just a source of money to me and in leaving I leave behind a large part of my identity that has been a rare constant over much of my adult and working life.

In leaving the community of Glebe Market I hope to be able to take a more active role in several of my other interests. It will be for first time since leaving High School that I will have uncommitted weekends and I hope to be able to do many things that I have postponed, including educational courses or overseas and local trips.

I hope to dispose of my shed full of remaining stock by attending occasional Sci-Fi or Astronomy meetings, so if anyone inquires after me or about the things I have sold, my home phone number is 02 9718 5827 and my postal address will be; P. O. Box 2, Bexley North NSW 2207

And my email – garry.dalrymple@det.nsw.edu.au

In conclusion I would like to thank you, your family and staff for the many opportunities that being a Glebe Market person has opened to me.

Ecclesiastes 99:99