

# *Transcendental Basenji Sermons & Enlightenment*

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## Editorial

Future archivists take note this issue was finished after issue 8. During October and November 2004 issues #7, #8 and #9 were being constructed at the same time. Some time-critical material migrated to #8 from #7, #8 was the first of the three issues completed, and some no longer time-critical stuff written for #8 ended up in #7. Issue #9 may hopefully wait until the 2005, until mailing comments for the December ANZAPA are available. At the end of this exercise I hope to be able to up to date with my ANZAPA obligations and be able to shift to a four or six times a year format, with fewer pages than the 2004 TBS&E issues but more able to respond in a timely manner with mailing comments etc.

Garry P Dalrymple – November 21, 2004

## Mailing comments for ANZAPA issue # 219 of June 2004

Comment on the following Mailing comments. In the following pages you will notice that the zine titles are underlined and listed in OBO order. If your zine's title is in **bold** then you had something to say to me last time. I have also tried to underline the topic of your responses to my earlier zine. I hope this form of organising mailing comments makes it easier for you to find the points of common interest that we share as you do a first quick read through of this issues conglomeration of zines.

### Les Chattes Parties 71 – Sally Yeoland

I hope your back has returned to full use by now. From my own experiences, spending nights in the embrace of mistress pain leaves you with little energy for other things. Sadly none of the pups belong to me. I was able to borrow the images. The 'character' of Basenjjs is a major part of their attraction, you are always conscious that you are living with an 'alien' rather than just owning a dog. After nearly 20 years of Basenji thrall I'm still puzzled by what Mystique does at times. The greater part of my objection to 'new translations' of the Bible (or any other text) is that what you get is someone's un stated opinions of what the text should mean, context is lost and 'colouring' is misread as divine writ. I recall a story/radio play about a remote Island. The survivors (one legged as a rite of adulthood) of a ship wreck adopt as their bible a navigational text and read into it moral advice and find it complete and sufficient to build a law abiding society by interpreting their history through this text. The King James (nee Wycliffe version is also an interpretation but it is the edition of the time of the Protestant reformation / Catholic re-reformation, the turning point of modern religious experience (in the West). It is also a living slice of Elizabethan language, a form of English with much to admire.

### Odd News and Nonsense Six – Roger Sims

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

### Karenzapa XII – Karen Johnson

I read your contribution with interest as Ian Woolf and Emma Duncan had to go through an Aust-Canada version of the same migration woes. Aust – US seems to be a more exacting process! I must try to find and print up a copy of the OTEN restructure dice as part of an ANZAPA mailing, as the sentiments are applicable to any re-structure. When I first thought through the bat and red light camera problem my first thought was –

Aha! A bat population survey method. I later learned that the cameras are aimed to shoot low, to catch numberplates but not car occupants. This saves unfaithful partners being outed when the traffic fine photos arrive in the post. On the gardening front I can offer no insights. My activities are restricted to scoop watering 'desirables' with grey water and pouring boiling water on 'undesirables' – 100C water is the ultimate bio degradable herbicide. Weeds don't seem to grow in the garden beds if you don't hose them.

**Ping!** – John Newman

RE 'The Years of Salt and Rice' - The various plagues that swept into Western Europe are an excellent but neglected point of departure for Alternate History SF. From 'Germs Guns and Steel' I have read that for most plagues you can identify a single incident where it started or could have been avoided. The legacy of Europe's great plagues continues to this day in the form of Universal literacy, the absence of Leprosy and even some resistance to AIDS. In the theme of repeated re-incarnation (Hi I'm Josh ...Splat) I detect a whiff of theosophy.

**Panopticon 24** – Dan McCarthy

Gosh two lots of poetry in a single ANZAPA, what is the world coming to? The WS Jacob FRAS, Astronomer to the East India Company is a reference to the Honourable company's need for time keeping services, Astronomy charts etc to allow accurate navigation and timely transshipping of goods from the Indian Ocean, South China Sea and back to Blighty. Re SPAM, with my new email I am getting Spam about only once a month. Dunno if this is due to stronger filters, or just that I have not been as e-active since the new job.

Yes We Mormons should have a rather different take on the Trinity, Continuous Revelation and Jesus' mission in North America than Christians.

I'm always peeved by the narrow mindedness of 'defenders of Christian marriage' campaigning against Gay Marriage, I mean Marriage is ordained by God for *a Man* and just *One Woman*, I mean, puleez read your Old Testament!

**Kingdom of the Bland** – Eric Lindsay

Yes the cunning of spammers to Trojan horse parasitise other people's computers did slip my attention. Your comments on public water use raise an aspect that I had not seen publicly disclosed elsewhere. Remaining dam storage and estimated daily water use are disclosed but nothing on daily waste water flow or sewerage processed that would allow you to estimate water supply from 'other sources'. Useful data if you are considering ALL water sources/uses. There is some

bore / runoff water already used in Sydney. At our place the health concerns of standing water does not eventuate. Grey water buckets are emptied daily and exposed to sun light, water stored from the washing machine is emptied onto lawn or garden beds Sat/Sun ahead of Monday's washing. Rain water is sealed under lids or screw caps.

Re pumps your thoughts are in accord with mine. I am keeping an eye out for a washing machine pump.

Re your comments on Re-plumbing costs, this is why I feel that for most cases the 'Rebate for Rainwater tanks' to be a form of middleclass welfare, only the 'landed' can afford the space to put up a useful sized tank. Living as I do in an older style home (toilet and laundry out the back) connecting these to run of rainwater could be affordable. For people living in flats, forget it, it needs a building approval, planning stage or body corporate decision to implement rainwater saving infrastructure.

**Necessity 58: Goon on Pilgrimages**

– Jack R. Herman

I remain doubtful that the US fully qualifies as a part of the English speaking world, Congress did once vote about German becoming the official language of the US. My point about 'Goodbye my lady' was that the dog was a first/second generation 'African American'. Re - the 'cheese eating appeasement monkeys', a point made in the book, '1943 The Victory that never was' is that French civilian and military casualties were much higher than most Anglo-Americans would appreciate. The main contention was that the allies WW2 Italian campaign was a mistake, a late 1943 drive across the channel would have used fewer men and resources than Italy and would have caught the Nazis fully extended deep in Russia, saved millions in the concentration camps and lead to the resurrection of France as a full fighting partner to the Anglo Americans.

He also reads books – The book by Hunter S Thompson, 'Better than Sex', a memoir of the first Clinton election, makes oblique references to the first Bush Presidency, suggesting hat the concerns listed by Franken are of a longer standing than just this current Bush Presidency.

**Rambling through Canberra** – Gerald Smith & Womble

Read your conflux con report with great interest. My own recollections had many back pain filled gaps, so I guess I would have been on deck for about 40% of the con. I could find very few faults with the organisation of Conflux and I would predict a run of similar futre Canberra Natcons that will make for a more 'National' event than the Perth and Melbourne Natcons. On the quest experience, an individual or small group with practice may well be able to march all day, sleep well and fight all next day, but I suspect that the routine of

having to make/break camp, movement only as fast as the slowest element of the straggling baggage train and the uncertainties of travel over hostile ground would deny you a good night's sleep and leave you vulnerable to defeat the longer the campaign lasted. The history of the UK and US civil wars might hold instructive examples of this.

#### Hold That Tiger – Terry Morris

A history of Coffee and Prophecy as seen through a glass darkly? I recall that the Bastille was stormed and it's garrison killed partly because of Coffee. The Marquis De Sade was imprisoned there, was greatly constipated due to a coffee overdose and he used the funnel provided to ease his plight as a megaphone to broadcast the false claim that the guards were slaughtering all the (seven!) inmates. The rest was history. Might be a message in that?

#### Land of 10,000 Loons (for 218) – Jeanne Mealy

I have read Aldiss' Heliconia Winter, so inspite of your descriptions of culture and artistic life in sub zero ( C ) temperatures I find it hard to accept that civilization is possible when parts of the atmosphere spend month at a time lying in heaps on the ground. That said, I do know of an Australian company that can deliver ice/snow that will not melt at 40 degrees C.

#### Land of 10,000 Loons (for 219) – Jeanne Mealy

It is widely understood that Tasmanians are so inbred that double headed individuals are not uncommon, in fact their political system recognises this by having 'multiple member constituencies' rather than electing one member (or head) per seat. Hence rear view mirrors are frequently unused when driving, instead while still looking forward with one head you just turn the other to see what is behind you. Tim Tams and (Arnotts) are US owned (by Mrs Kerry?) Dick Smith (a non-drinking Australian!) has lent his name to a range of Australian made/owned food products designed to compete with the overseas owned Australian icons. This has come about principally because overseas food companies are priced at 20 to 25 times earnings while Australian ones were priced at 10 to 15 times earnings.

#### Goatsneeze #15 – Derrick Ashby

All the computer talk passes my eyes in an uncomprehending blur but I expect some of my writing has that effect on other ANZAPANS. Great injustices will continue to be a feature of World affairs while peoples, states and borders fail to directly correspond. TANJ! There Ain't No Justice for the people of Kurdistan, Darfur, Tibet, Palestine, West Papua and Western

Sahara any time soon. I find myself in violent agreement with most of the rest that you had to say. All available evidence suggests that it would be 'Economic' and Rational' to put into effect Egalitarianism and Meritocracy over self and private advantage. I get as worried when the 'best' and hardest working kids are not getting the best opportunities and when economics or public policy encourages kids to want to study to be Lawyers or Accountants instead of Science.

#### The Bring Bruce Bayside Fan Fund – Bill Wright

A very impressive achievement in so short a time. I expect contributors will get value for money. I wonder if a similar scheme could be used to bring in some 'value for money' charismatic SF writers or Artists to non-Natcon type SF events, the sort of events that would bring more local SF readers into SF con attending fandom.

#### You Really Know You're Home When You Find a Wombat in Your Bed #93 – Cath Ortlieb

Grief like life brings constant surprises. While my father was between cancer treatments and everything looked fine we went out to Round Corner Dural (where 'Sydney' meets 'country') and collected Mystique Pukkanut. She was eight years old and had concluded a 'career' as a breeder. She had missed out on learning a lot of 'house dog' skills and social behaviour. Mother and I are greatly rewarded by every small step she makes towards normality. We treasure the fact that we have a 'third person' in the household. WE have been able to give her a better life than she could have otherwise expected and I have greater understanding of how some people can become so attached to their difficult or 'special' children.

#### Megatheriums for Breakfast 41 – David Grigg

I'm not very surprised when a SF writer turns in a good historical Fiction book. I expect that a writer with the imagination to build a story set in a non existent world should have no difficulty building a story from stuff that is documented, or finding a corner of that world to light with good fiction.

#### You Really Know You're Home When You Find a Wombat in Your Bed #91 – Cath Ortlieb

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

#### Interstellar Ramjet Scoop – Bill Wright

'The Cruel Sea' was mentioned as one of the five boks you must read/own, for much the same reasons as in IRS. I did read Ditmar's comments and I probably 'over spoke' in this case but after working in 'intellectual property' and standing in front of Astronomy poster for

twenty years I have been too frequently asked if the real Astronomy images are 'airbrush' or computer generated and I too frequently see real images used without attribution to add 'amazingsness' to a commercial product. As for your Conflux report, much the same comments as for Gerald and Womble's Ramblings.

Gegenschein 98 and 99 – Eric Lindsay

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

## Blue Pages – Science/Astronomy

### BAANSW / Sydney City Skywatchers

#### Public Meeting 02 August

##### BAANSW Public meeting

This meeting featured a brief Business session with two special resolutions needing to be resolved by a vote of members present. When I arrived (a few minutes late) there were 14 members present, a safe quorum.

##### The first motion was

– That the name of the Association be changed from the 'British Astronomical Association NSW Branch Inc'. to 'Sydney City Skywatchers'. This motion passed 10/4,

##### The second motion was

– That we adopt affiliated status with the BAA London'.

I successfully moved a motion to alter this, substituting the word 'seek' for 'adopt'. This amended motion passed 14/0. I proposed this amendment as it is up to London to grant us affiliate status, rather than for us to claim it.

This exercise was needed to satisfy the NSW legal minutia consequent to changing our Astronomy group's name. For some decades we had claimed 'Branch' status without having among our members the necessary minimum of ten London BAA members and all executive members of the committee being filled by London BAA members. These motions formalised an end point in the 110 plus year history of 'The Branch'.

**Garry Dalrymple's** – The month that was – Newspaper coverage of Astronomical and Space highlights of June and July included;

- Images back from the Cassini mission to Saturn
- The SpaceShipOne flight to 'Space' altitudes
- That greater Solar brightness since 850 AD has caused some global warming, but from icecore evidence, Sunspot related Solar activity can be shown to be responsible for only 25%, rest is due to human activity.

Commemorations of anniversary of Apollo 11, New NASA plans announced.

- Very few counter Sun phenomena observed to date this Winter.

- A very brief article mentioned a new telescope, to be the third largest in Australia; see Nick Lomb's comments below.

**Monty Leventhal's** Sunspot observations were; little activity at the start of July and then by about the 12 th. Prominences were seen and then Seven or Eight groups of numerous small Sunspots. The cooperative observations between Monty and **Harry Roberts** that followed were some of the best work done in recent years. Using web published X-ray observations (from a spacecraft at an L1 orbit between Earth and the Sun), and their own White light and H Alpha views of the Sun in eruption, they were able to pick the right moment to observe and record short term Solar Phenomena such as the progress of flares and 'Surges'.

**Nick Lomb** explained the background of the new telescope; A UK philanthropist, Mr Dill Fawkes has donated the \$9 million cost to build a two metre telescope at Mount Siddings Springs, next to the AAT. He has also donated for one at Hawaii and like it, it will be mainly used by UK school children!

**Dr Wayne Orchiston's** Venus Transit report. Wayne was unable to report to last month's meeting due to his participation in a UK conference on the Venus transits. He gave a well received paper on the Australian observances of Venus Transits.

**Paul Raditch** – pointed out that a current edition of Time Magazine has Cassini and the Saturn mission on the front cover with a major feature article inside.

**Harry Roberts** – (see also Monty's observations)

Harry produced a sequence of very detailed drawings of **Solar Surge AR652** was successfully 'caught in the act' in a manner that illustrated in textbook fashion the advance and retreat along lines of magnetic force of matter ejected from the surface of the Sun.

**Alan Plumer** handed out and discussed a summary sheet of his very impressive (to date) 3370 Variable Star observations, which included several plots of light curves and some of his ten year old son's observations. Most of his observations are fairly recent, as with greater confidence he has greatly expanded his observing program, i.e. his first 1,000 observation was on March 2004 and he currently monitors 219 stars. He recently

was fortunate to catch a slow Nova as it was increasing in brightness.

At the end of Alan's observations I was able to add a note of WW2 and UV light trivia. In the early days of the war, post operative cataract patients were recruited for coast watch duties. Their eyes being better able to detect UV signalling lights from German U boats.

## Guest Speaker - Dr Wayne Orchiston

### Topic 'Early Astronomy in Tasmania'

Francis Abbott – Comets and the E Carina Controversy  
Venus Transits – 1874 and 1882

Alfred Barrett Biggs – Astro- Seismologist 1874 to 1899

Wayne made the point that rising and retreating sea levels connected then isolated Tasmania from the Australian mainland, so there would have been an earlier Aboriginal Astronomy over five to fifty thousand years of habitation, but that this tradition was unavailable to us.

The location of Tasmania as a South Pacific British Colonial possession ensured that it would be a location from which Astronomical observations would be valued.

Transient Astronomical observations for navigational purposes were made during Cook's second voyage in 1773 at Adventure bay by William Bayley. Under the governorship of **Sir John Franklin** 1837 to 1843. **Sir James Clark Ross** ran the **Rosbank Geomagnetic Observatory** (as well as Time keeping and weather) from 1840 to 1854.

The first real 'Tasmanian' Astronomical figure was **Francis Abbott** (1799-1883), a watchmaker who arrived as a convict but who achieved financial and social success shortly after gaining his ticket of leave. Initially he worked from **Rosbank** but soon built his own observatory providing a Time service and meteorology observations, effectively acting as a de-facto City observatory. His major observational work included **Comet observation**. On several occasions he was the first to see significant Comets, but his naming right claims were defeated by 'the tyranny of distance' related communication delays.

His major impact on World Astronomy had to do with his observations of the keyhole Nebula region of Eta Carina (then Eta Argus). In 1868 and 1871 he reported that there were marked differences between what he could see and what had been recorded in 1836. An

implication of this was that for visible change over such a short time to be possible then the Nebula had to be made of gas or dust rather than of stars. Unfortunately such corroborating evidence that was available was withheld, and the scientific issue was settled by social status, the word of a scientific gentleman Vs the work of a colonial ex-convict. Emerging evidence from the then new Astronomical methods, Photography and Spectroscopy would also have backed his position.

This discouraged Abbott from observation, but he turned his efforts toward 'Public Astronomy' instead, i.e. the popularising of Astronomy through public education, talks and newspaper articles. Following his retirement in 1880, the Tasmanian Royal Society called for the appointment of an official government Astronomer. Not surprisingly he recorded several vivid Auroral observations. The language describing Aurora of August 29, 1859 is quite exceptional.

His observations, practical contributions and 46 published papers are enough to rank Francis Abbott second only to John Tebbutt in the early history of Australian Astronomy.

### The Transits of Venus – 1874 and 1882

Due to it's location, at both the far South and East of European and North American observers, 1874 saw Tasmania as the venue for three sets of observers. Francis Abbott in Hobart and two US teams equipped with pre-fabricated, Transit specific observatories. The 1882 event was observed in Tasmania by two teams, Brownrigg (US) & Biggs (at Biggs' Campbelltown home) and White from Melbourne observatory at Hobart.

An important device used was the Horizontal Photographic telescope which was intended to make numerous consecutive photographs of the progress of the transit. White recorded 39 exposures but he missed all four contacts due to cloud. At Campbelltown they achieved 55 full disc photos and 77 during third and fourth contact (which were taken back to the US). A single photo in a Tasmanian museum is the only known surviving example of these photos!

Ultimately the mathematical reduction of the sum results from this pair of Venus transits produced figures very close to those found by modern technology, with the Tasmanian observations being most close to this figure.

### Alfred Barrett Biggs – 1825 to 1900

Was a Launceston School teacher then Bank employee who was a protégé of Tebbutt. He published 42 letters detailing his observations. Initially he observed from

his brother in law's back yard, but later built an observatory next door, in a riverside public park. This observatory was a venue for some popularising of Astronomy.

### The Australian Comet Corps – 1882 to 1883

Was part of a world wide push to assign observers to monitor all portions of the sky for the early appearance of comets. Ultimately it lapsed as the three main investigators, Tebbutt, Biggs and Bone were otherwise occupied making observations of four 'Great Comets' (of 1880, 1881, 1882 and 1887) to spare the time to systematically scan the skies for other 'minor' Comets. Another distraction that made comet spotting difficult was the then unexplained Twilight glows of 1883, the result of Volcanic dust suspended in the air for years after Krakatoa.

### The 1891 Leake Bequest – a missed opportunity

10,000 pounds left to set up a school for practical teaching of Astronomy in Hobart or other Australian Capital. The family successfully contested the will, so Tasmania had to wait until 1950s for a University level school of Astronomy.

### Eta Carina observation

Surprisingly during the above talk our Eta Carina fixated member made no attempt at making a comment, even though a much of Wayne's talk was about changes to the structure and appearance of the Eta Carina nebula region.

## Yellow Pages – Science Fiction

Notes ahead of the Sydney Futurian meeting of Friday 16 July, 2004.

### Discussion Topic;

'SF Books they should be making into movies'

### Garry's News

1. Met Sydney Fan and SF artist Marilyn Pride at Glebe Market during June. She will be sending some or her artwork to this year's Worldcon.
2. Ephemeral Gods received from Felix N. Jenkins a 1950s or 1960's Sydney SF fan and Futurian.
3. Email from Alex Paige – News and a photo of his meeting with US SF fan and legend - Forrest J. Ackerman, who seems to be on the mend.
4. Two Videos received from Garfield Barnard, Anthology of Interest and Giant Monster Trashes City, both multiple 'SF-ish' short films.
5. Received from Chris Nelson a copy of his zine 'Mumblings from Munchkinland #22', a John

Foyster's tribute edition which includes an report of the 1954 Sydney SF con, Sydcon II.

6. Voyager back on TV at it's accustomed 'stuff the fans' timeslot between 10.45 and 1 am.
7. Dr Who is back in colour, with Jon Pertwee currently playing the Doctor.
8. Progress on a Bankstown SF meeting currently on ice, awaiting the return from holidays of the relevant official at Bankstown public library.

### Topic discussed

Garry's four categories;

1. Stories overdue a movie treatment coz they are better than the usual half baked crap served up at multiplexes as the 'Sci-Fi classic'.
2. Stories that seem to be re-done and re-interpreted by succeeding generations (War of the Worlds, 1984, 20,000 Leagues under the Sea, The Time Machine, Planet of the Apes etc)
3. Stories currently technologically enabled by advances in SFX i.e. the costumes, crowd and battle scenes from The Lord of the Rings.
4. Stories that over time mundane society would be prepared to accept (A Clockwork Orange?).

### Garry's Nominations

**Edgar Rice Burrough's** (Barsoom) 'Carter of Mars' books (type 3) - Would be nice to see the twin towers of Helium, Thoats and the four armed green Martians galloping across the Australian outback. **H Beam Piper's** 'Little Fuzzy' books (type 1 and 3). **David Brin's** 'Uplift' series books (type 1 and 3). **Patrick Tilley's** 'AMTRAK Wars' (type 3), plenty of work for local costumers and FX artists? Some of the more visionary **Robert Heinlein** books coz they are about a universe of expanding human potential. **David Webber's** 'Honor Harrington' books and **Lois McMaster Bujold's** 'Miles Vorkosigan' books, coz both have run out of places to go with their main character, so 'movie-ization' might bring them to a new market. Harry Turtledove's 'World War' series of books might be worth a try as a series of movies or TV miniseries. After 'Shrek' and the Gollum in LoTR the lizards would seem to be realizable as 'real' charactors and it would be nice to see all that 'retro' WWII war equipment back on the screen. A movie interpretation of any of **George Turner** or **Bert A. Chandler's** books, (cheap to obtain movie

rights from the estate of the late...?) would be welcome, as it would be nice to see an SF movie in an 'Australian voice', possibly the first since the original movie of **Nevil Shute's** 'On the beach'?

All the **John Norman** 'Gor' books (type 4).

NB Just joking about the Gor books.

### Garry's notes from the Infinitas Bookshop meeting of Thursday night, August 05, 2004

This meeting was my first visit to the Infinitas meeting since the bookshop moved to it's new location, at the back of the 'Blokey Stuff' shop, which is some hundred metres round the corner from it's previous location. With twelve people present it was a tight squeeze. As for the 'marriage/co-habitation' of 'Blokey Stuff' and the Infinitas bookshop, only time will tell. I can see that there are some synergies for SF readers and 'Blokey Stuff', but whether the implied testosterone will alienate Fantasy buyers, only time will tell.

I'm grateful that A SF&F shop remains open, rather than just shifting the Infinitas operation to Internet and mail order only.

This Meeting's Discussion topic:

#### A favourite book read in the last six months

Present were; Darryl Adams, Henry Chatroop, Garry Dalrymple, Kurt Frank, Jo Kay, Tim Martin, Gabriel Mcann, Michael Ousley, Charmaine Spears, Brian Walls

Items of News discussed before the topic:

- The first flight of SpaceShipOne and the 'X Prize', whether it is a real opening of non government space flight. – General discussion
- Microsoft's patenting of the use of the human body (any?) to carry computer signals. This lead to a discussion of some of the aspects of the Free Trade Agreement, particularly the effective import of US 'Intellectual Property' laws that would restrict commonplace existing Australian data uses. – BW
- The current use of Virtual Reality in Dentistry for pain relief, i.e. a functional headset so that you can simulate being in a calmer place while undergoing Dental surgery. – BW
- Deviations from the established cannon of Asimov's writings in the movie 'I Robot'. Particularly that the central point of Asimov's Robot stories was Robots as creatures of

morality and logic rather than rampaging inhuman monsters of the unrestrained Id.

- Currently there are no confirmed sightings of 'I Robot', anticipating inevitable sequels. - GD

### Discussion of the Topic

DA – 'Voyage of the Shadow Moon' by **Sean McMullen**, TOR Books. A Fantasy world with scientific principles, Not Sword and Sorcery. **Warnings** – Trilogy Alert, contains Dragons, Unicorns and a 'Noble' Vampire, but is Crystal and Rightful Princess free. Sequel out now/soon.

HC – 'Centurion's Empire' by **Sean McMullen**, TOR Books. Impressed by the quantity of research evident in the book as it moves from Hundreds BC to the near future. Develops how the real enemy of the one-way time traveler is the Ice Keepers, i.e. those who gain status and power by serving and controlling the apparatus needed to sustain the time travelers.

GD – Fiction, 'A Civil Campaign', by **Lois McMaster Bujold** – A return to the adventures of Miles Vorkosigan and a familiar world with engaging and admirable characters. 'Saint Liebowitz and the Wild Horse Woman' by **Walter M. Miller Jr.** (dec.) & **Terry Bisson**, © 1997, 403 pages. An engaging story set in the world of the Hugo winning 'A Canticle for Liebowitz'. Reads as if it was influenced by Cadfael, the Amtrak Wars and a shoot-em-up Western. Features Barbarian hordes, Mutants, scheming Cardinals and Cowboy Popes in the American mid west. So good a story, I lent it to a non SF reading Nun at work! GD - Non-fiction, '1943 the Victory that Never Was' by **John Grigg**, © 1980, 252 pages Details the claim that WW2 could have been ended earlier and with fewer casualties if the Anglo Americans had decided to cross the channel in 1943 instead of committing to the Italian campaign. A factual 'Alternative-History' with enough detail to appeal to the Non-fiction reader as well as the 'Alt History' SF fans.

Kurt Frank – Nothing to report

JK – 'The Fire Dragon', by **Katherine Kerr**, Voyager Books. A lot like The Lord of the

Rings in that it is one of a sequence of quest novels, not a start to finish story. **Warnings** – Twelve part Trilogy Alert, Contains Dragons, Elves, Rightful Princesses and Shape changers. Unicorn and Magic Ring Free. Jo also likes anything by **David Endings**, his several twelve-part Trilogy quest novel series.

Tim Martin – Nothing to report

GMc – 'The Well of Lost Plots' by **Jasper FForde**. A Fantasy that is relaxed about genre crossing, a detective story where figures from Literature and reality interact, i.e. fictional characters escape into real life and real people find themselves in novels. Many in jokes – good fun. **Warnings** – Open ended Quadrilogy Alert, 4<sup>th</sup>. Episode out now/soon.

MO – 'Semper Mars' by **Ian Douglass**, EOS books. Military SF set in 2040 with the UN attempting to dictate to the US at the same time that Martian ruins are discovered. The UN takes control of the Space Station and embargoes the US! A joint US and USSR military mission is dispatched to Mars, the UN sends the French Foreign Legion! Not bad, but story develops very slowly, quibbles about plot essential military technology issues.

CS – 'The Wind's Twelve Quarters', by **Ursula Le Guin**, a Fantasy and SF Anthology, VGSF. Several good SF & Fantasy stories.

BW – Fiction, 'Cosm' by **Greg Benford** – Orbit Books Features Baby Universes and a Main Character in the form of a Black Woman Physicist and serves as a rebuttal to claims that Hard SF writers can't do characterization very well.

BW – Non-Fiction, 'Coral Coast' by **A.C. Clarke**, an account of the author's year in Australia. A vivid description of his trip to the Great Barrier Reef and other marine adventures during 1955.

## A Review of Ephemeral Gods

By **Felix N. Jenkins**  
Available from the Author

The title phrase 'Ephemeral Gods' is an explanation of the self image that modern humanity has accreted to itself, as many previously 'God-like' (or 'God-King like')

qualities and abilities have become common place, due to the rise of technology and the assumption of iconic roles by some members of the business, political and religious elites. It is an interesting point of view, possibly thought out to a deeper level of consideration than most SF fans would find necessary to pursue.

Ephemeral Gods reads like a conversation with an elderly relative who is trying to explain and reconcile the observed inadequacies of Religious and Scientific paradigms of his life's experience to fully explain the state of the world as he now sees it.

The form of this discourse reads partly like a school catechist tract as modified by exposure to the world view of mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Science Fiction, starting with an implicit point of view that all the knowable aspects of the Universe could be understood by most reasonably educated people who have an open mind.

'Ephemeral Gods' is neither fully satisfying Science, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Theology or Philosophy, instead I believe it to be a conversation in monologue from someone recovering from a life threatening episode who is making a reasonable effort at trying to set down on paper his subjective opinion on 'What it's all about'.

I would like to think that I also could also write a piece summing up my view of the Whys and Hows of the human condition, but in the final analysis, the challenge to the reader is; do you really think you could cover this much philosophic ground any better than Felix has? If put on the spot, how would you explain 'Life the Universe and Everything?' **GPD © November 2004**

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