BOOKS I HAVE READ: NOVEMBER 2015

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Three cracking good science-fiction novels, two so-so detective ones and a surprising (and accidental) missiology discovery.
Category: Observations

There is no doubt about it,Â NexusÂ by Ramez Naam is the best fiction book I've read this year. I only bought it because it was ridiculously cheap on Kindle and was surprised at just how good it was. Set in the relatively near future, Nexus is a science-fiction book based around the eponymous nexus, a drug which allows people to share their thoughts with other people and to run all sorts of software apps on the hardware of their brains. It's a lot better than my description makes it sound. If you enjoy Sci-Fi and, in particular, if you have ever read and enjoyed anything by Cory Doctrow, then you should rush out and buy this now - even if you have to pay for it.

The only problem with Nexus is that if you do buy it, you will then want to shell out forÂ Crux: Nexus ARC Book 2Â andÂ Apex (The Nexus Trilogy Book 3). The whole trilogy is good, satisfying sci-fi. It's not very comfortable reading, but it's a great ride while it lasts. This raises an interesting point; with Kindle books it is difficult to tell how long they are. My suspicion is that each of these three would run to around 500 pages in print; either that, or I suddenly became a much slower reader.

Out of the PastÂ is a run of the mill detective novel. It's the sort of thing that I'd recommend borrowing from the library or buying when it was on sale. I quite enjoyed it when I was reading it, but three weeks later, I had no recollection of what it was about. To be honest, similar things could be said aboutÂ Let Us Prey: Gotcha Detective Agency Mystery Book 1. Amazon often sell the first book in a series very cheaply (this one is free), in the hope that you will get hooked and want to pay for the rest of the books. It worked for the Nexus books, it hasn't worked for this one.

On this blog, I tend to listÂ books that I read for general interest; be they fiction, history, theology or what have you. I rarely take time to note the books that I read as part of my PhD studies. Partly because there are too many of them but mostly because they would only interest a very few people (all of whom have probably read them anyway). However, I would like to make an exception for Creative Tension by Bishop Stephen Neil. I pulled this off the library shelves by accident while looking for something else and I'm very glad that I did. Long out of print, this selection of four essays is absolutely excellent and still has a cutting edge. It is also the source of a quote which I have often used, but have never actually traced back to the original source:

> *"If everything is mission, then nothing is mission"*

I'll probably quote extensively from this book at some point in the next few weeks when I can't think of anything original to write.

Lastly, if you read fiction on some sort of electronic device, you might want to consider signing up to BookBub, this is a service which sends you notifications of cheap Â and free deals for books available for various types of e-reader. I've got scads of interesting looking fiction and history books waiting to be read, all of which I've downloaded for free. My fiction 'to read' pile is getting to the same size as my theology one.