
COSMOPOLIS

Number 18

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Contents

- 1 Project Report
by Paul Rhoads
VIE delivery date; Vance in Russian; TI, PP, and DD updates; and more
- 5 You Have Done It!
by Hans van der Veeke
Volunteer work credits for completed texts:
Wyist, Green Magic, Golden Girl, Masquerade on Dicantropus, The World Between
- 6 *Cosmopolis* Bloopers
A small mention by Hans
- 6 *VIE* Quiz
A Vance math puzzler from Richard Chandler
- 6 Honneur aux Dames!
by Paul Rhoads
Honoring the female *VIE* volunteers
- 9 Gift Volume at Frankfurt
by Derek W. Benson
The *VIE* and the Frankfurt Book Fair
- 9 Scaling the Purple Peaks of Pulp
by Koen Vyverman
VIE Statistics Part II: How many sentences per paragraph?
- 13 Letters to the Editor
A reply to Ed Winskill by Paul Rhoads
- 15 Closing Words
- 15 *VIE* Contacts
- 15 The Fine Print

Project Report

by Paul Rhoads, and others in Management

VIE Delivery Date

I am very sorry to have to announce that we are not going to be able to respect our planned publication date. Because of a recent work slowdown, it has become unlikely that all 44 volumes can be readied by the fall of 2002. This situation is not impossible to alter but, given present circumstances, the *VIE* board has decided to adopt the following policy: we will deliver at least half the books at the announced time—fall of 2002—and the rest will follow, in one lot, as soon as ready.

Though the delivery will be done in two lots rather than one, nothing else will change. According to our schedule, arranged with Sfera, printing will begin in June 2002, and will continue through the summer. We had planned to print all the books in this period, but now we will continue to print books into 2003.

Textual Integrity work, unfortunately, has not proceeded as fast as planned. Over the past year key TI managers have encountered unforeseen constraints, unrelated to the project. We are now reorganized on a more flexible basis, and our key personnel are finally out from under their extra-project constraints, and back at their old stands. We may be optimistic about the present state of TI work flow. It should be emphasized that the work accomplished so far is of high quality, based on the solid foundation laid down by Alun Hughes in particular.

Until recently we worked to a text-based plan which presumed the readiness of all texts in time to assemble the 44 *VIE* volumes in the spring, and through the summer, of 2002. We are now attacking the job in two 'waves', based not on texts but on volumes. I am confident that, with our present resources, we can respect the new, somewhat less ambitious schedule. In any case, the *VIE* book set will require two crates for mailing, so delivery in two waves will not affect mailing costs. The books included in the 'first wave' will include the new Vance-authorized restored version of *Languages of Pao*, which

combines the two already published versions. It will also include many of the rare mysteries, as well as *Mazirian the Magician*, *Tschai*—in the never before seen true manuscript version—and many others, in fact: half of Vance’s work!

In the last month TI has begun to output a satisfactory number of texts, but the paucity of completed work until recently has kept Composition and Post-Proofing mostly idle. Their work also requires time, so these teams must be kept in regular job supply if we are to meet deadlines. It is now more useful than ever to increase the number of Post-Proofing teams. As always, subscribers and presently inactive volunteers should consider signing up for Post-Proofing. We are constituting teams that will work on short texts only, so you may request membership on one of these. You may also sign on for a single stint only. All Post-Proofing work, like all other *VIE* work, involves deadlines. Specific deadlines are based on text length, and adjusted based on work experiences. They have proven workable. Remember: *THE VIE WANTS YOU!* If that feeling is mutual, please contact Chris Corley, head of Post-Proofing. What could be bad? Reading Vance is why you are here.

Less amusing, but just as important, is our continuing need for DD scanning. DD productivity remains one step ahead of TI, often due to the heroic and singular efforts of Richard Chandler. The other teams, like Techno-Proofing and Jockeying, are holding up their ends, to say nothing of internal processes, such as *Cosmopolis* publication, Record-keeping, Personnel management, Archiving and Production. Many dedicated volunteers are keeping the *VIE* wheels turning. I, personally, apologize for the delivery delay. Those subscribers who would rather have their down-payments returned will be accommodated, within the limits indicated by the subscription agreement. However, the best reaction to this situation is to sign on to a Post-Proofing team; the *VIE* is coming into being only by the sweat of the brows of a certain group of people. Be one of them. There are openings for permanent membership on the *Sandestin* and *Expiationist* teams. The elusive *Funambulist Evangelists* team, whose membership is more fluid, takes on assignments as workflow and text availability dictate. Now is the time to renew your commitment to the noble *VIE* project.

Finally, all may follow *VIE* work progress in detail. On the *VIE* site go to: *VIE* Work Documents/Master Tracking, and watch the green (completed jobs) invade and oblit-

erate the gray (uncompleted jobs)!

The *VIE* and The World Wide Web

Speaking of the nobility of the *VIE*, we are still waiting for the media to pick up our story. More than any other technology, the Internet is changing the way we live but the greatest single mass of Internet activity is something, shall we say, ‘disgraceful’. Next in volume is buying and selling of various kinds, which is certainly not evil in any way, but must fail to ennoble a culture already pickled in consumerism. Then there is communication among people with special interests. But such ‘inter-communication’, as gratifying as it may be for the participants, does not necessarily have anything ennobling about it. It is easy and fun to spend time with people—real or virtual—who share one’s interests and agree with one’s opinions. But the real world, the world of the street we live on and the family of which we are a part, is formed of different kinds of people. Real life, the life that ennobles, is not a cocoon of virtual gratification. We are ennobled, or raised up, by that which takes us out of ourselves and helps us to a wider and deeper view.

I do not mean to suggest that the Internet is nothing but a bloated organ of turpitude and gratification where chatter and impulse overwhelm discourse and thought! Of course; the Internet is merely a tool, morally neutral in itself! But how are we using it in other ways than to get more of what we already have too much of, to nourish impulses better allowed to wither, or to facilitate organized mischief?

Vance is a real artist, not a facilitator of sterile notions and escapism. Contact with his art, as with any genuine art, enriches our lives by enlarging our perspective. Far from being a ‘special interest’, his appeal is universal and, though few have yet discovered him, his readers come from all walks of life. Speaking for myself, *VIE* work brings me into daily contact with people whose devotion to the work of Vance is the only thing I have in common with them. Also, *VIE* work is by no means always gratifying and fun; much of it is laborious. I am not saying dull laboriousness is ennobling! But it is ennobling to take trouble for the sake of a goal that goes beyond personal pleasure, or to put it another way: it is ennobling to make sacrifices. The goal of the *VIE* is to bring Jack Vance to the world. This project is an act of generosity, motivated by gratitude towards a benefactor. This is what makes it noble. Furthermore, the nature of the benefaction is ‘cultural’. All who wish to emphasize positive aspects of the Internet, or vital

and innovative cultural developments, can do no better than point to the *VIE*.

More than this, the *VIE* is utterly specific to the Internet. Special interest clubs and commerce are as old as the world; the Internet is only a mode by which old things can happen in new ways. But the *VIE* is totally dependant on the Internet; it could not exist in any viable form without it. The *VIE* is therefore not an *old thing being done in a new way*, but truly a *new thing*. Never before has an international group of an author's readers been able to work together to publish his oeuvre, in restored and corrected texts, with the goal of helping the world discover him. When you think of the tens of thousands of hours of work required, given Vance's meager following, such an undertaking could never be supported locally, or from the fruits of commerce. The market for Vance is just not large enough, even on a planetary scale. Don't forget that Vance's work is mostly out of print! Thanks to the Internet, just a few hundred souls, scattered evenly over those areas of the globe linked by the Net, using the new electronic tools in their own innovative ways, are doing this new thing. Furthermore, Vance is regarded by the outside world as a 'low-brow pop-culture genre writer' rather than recognized as the peer of Balzac, Dickens and James; so the *VIE* is a rebuke to the élites, at both ends of the cultural spectrum, all of whom have failed Vance. This is a story, and sooner or later it will get out. There have been nibbles from several journalists, but so far nothing has been done. I am confident that eventually it will happen—and anyone who can help 'it' along, should certainly do so!

Vance in Russian Translation

Alexander Feht, well known to *Cosmopolis* readers for his invigorating articles and letters, is at work on authorized translations into Russian of the *Tschai* books. The first two are finished, and being edited in Russia. Alexander is currently at work on the latter two.

TI Work Up-Date

Many texts have recently reached the final stages of TI, or what we call 'Board Review'. Among them are: *The Languages of Pao* (John Robinson), *The Last Castle* (Rob Friefeld), *Clarges* (Patrick Dusoulier), *The View From Chickweed's Window* (Linnéa Anglemark), *The Flesh Mask* (Norma Vance), *Dodkin's Job* (Dave Kennedy), *Dream Castle* (Jeff Ruszczyk), *Mazirian The Magician* (Tim Stretton), *Night Lamp* (Chris Corley). These texts, and others, are getting their final checks, and being sluiced into Composition.

Norma Vance, once again, has turned up some errors which could not have been discovered any other way—from *Clarges*, whose manuscript is long lost. Norma reports: "In the process of trying to answer some questions about this novel, I started to read more and more of it. I have not finished it yet but here are a couple of errors, one of which seems to occur several times throughout. I did not expect anyone would flag it because it is made-up. The first word is 'destemporize', meaning to take a life (what the assassins do). Jack wrote the word as 'distemporize'. It may seem unimportant, but the wrong version is not sensible, and also difficult to pronounce when said aloud. Then there is this word (also made-up): 'Prytaneon', which looked weird, so I consulted Jack. He said it should be spelled 'Prytanean'. . . Jack remembers rewriting *Clarges* at some point after early publication—just in case significant differences are noticed. He had never liked the original version. If I uncover anything else, will let you know!"

Post-Proofing Up-Date

Joel Riedesel and Robin Rouch, co-heads of the *Clam Muffins* Post-Proofing sub-team, wrote to us a couple of months ago: "We are trying to think of ways to motivate our team to high completion rates so we can out-perform the other sub-teams, and receive special accolades from *VIE* management! To this end we are contemplating a line of standard promotional items with the *VIE* logo." More recently they reported that the following items will soon be ready: a nylon briefcase, a fleece crew-pullover sweatshirt, a mock turtleneck, a zippered fleece jacket, a driving jacket, a windshirt, caps, and a chambray shirt. These, and perhaps other items, will soon be posted on a web site. *VIE* project members will be able to purchase them directly from Joel and Robin, and the project will be offering, or subsidizing the acquisition of, certain items to Post-Proofers according to a schedule of accomplishment. We look forward to more news from Joel and Robin!

DD Up-Date

Richard Chandler reports:

"In my experience, TextBridge (the Optical Character Recognition program) is much better with punctuation than OmniPage. OmniPage frequently replaces '!' with an 'l' or '1'. It also interprets all dashes, hyphens etc. as the same character, that is #030 from the standard character set. This looks somewhat like a hyphen in Word, except it overlaps the previous character a little.

On the other hand, OmniPage is usually better than TextBridge on standard characters. TextBridge commonly replaces 'b' with 'h' so that 'but' is rendered as 'hut', which the spell checker misses. In *The Flesh Mask* one of the character's names, Carr, became Carm, Camm, Cann, and various other permutations. It's too bad we didn't know two years ago what we know now about digitizing text. We would certainly be past all the proofing nightmares and well along with TI and Composition."

Thanks to Richard's work I then 'monkeyed' *The Flesh Mask* (comparing the v-text to the DD-text to find errors in the former). The v-text turned out to be remarkably clean, a tribute to Andreas Irle, John Schwab and Koen Vyverman who processed it prior to TI. However DD once again proved itself invaluable, by turning up a whole missing phrase of three sentences. I want also to thank Doug Wilson and Chris Ryan for helping us with questions relative to this book. Apropos, many Vance readers express less interest in these early non-'sci-fi' mysteries. I do not pretend that *The Flesh Mask* is on the level of the *Demon Princes*, but it is clearly by the same author, a thing which is felt less in the style than in the content. The underlying themes are pure Vance, and if they are treated in a less magisterial and poetic manner, they give fresh insight into his gargantuan artistic sensibility. These books are particularly concerned with childhood, its dreams and dilemmas. Jack's own childhood was troubled by a dramatic drop in social and economic status, a father who disappeared, and the loneliness imposed by his own proud and eerie young nature. If a Vogle Filchner or a Howard Hardoah is seen only obliquely, the persons in these early books—Robert Struve, Carr Pendry, Professor Chickweed, Julie Hovard, Paul Gunther, Ronald, etc.—are shown to us up-close. My *VIE* work has brought me into greater contact with these books and, as with the later masterpieces, each time I reread them I enjoy them even more.

Richard sent in this regarding *Vandals of the Void* (TI underway by Kurt Harriman): "I'm in the process of doing DD-OCR work on *Vandals of the Void*; thanks to Jack, Norma, and John for the loan of the book. The Foreword contains something very striking; note that Jack wrote this book in 1951:"

By 1965, spaceships powered by chemical energy will land human beings on the moon. By 1968, spaceships will cross to Mars and Venus, and assume satellite orbits above the upper limits of the Martian and Venusian atmospheres. A man will ride a small

glider-rocket to the surface of each planet. After one, two, perhaps three days of exploration, he will strip off the glider wings, fly the rocket fuselage back to the mother ship. By 1975, permanent satellite stations will circle Earth, Mars and Venus. By 1978, atomic energy will be adapted to the propulsion of spaceships. By 1980, permanent colonies, such as the Security Station on the Moon, Miracle Valley on Venus, Perseverine on Mars will come into existence. The potential animal, vegetable, mineral resources of our neighboring worlds will be explored and undergo development. Freight costs will be very high; it will be economical to export to Earth only commodities of high intrinsic value, such as fur, musk, precious metals and woods, jewels, perfume and aromatic oils, jade, ivory, coral, native handiwork and fabrics (if any), fossils and zoological specimens, other objects beyond conjecture. These shipments will inevitably tempt dishonest men too lazy to work for themselves, but who are willing to live as parasites on the effort and enterprise of other men. By 1985, the age of space piracy will begin.

"It is amazing how accurate this was for the beginning of space exploration: Apollo 11 (powered by chemical energy) landed the first men on the moon in 1969. Salyut 1, the first orbiting space station, was launched in 1971. Venera 9 landed on Venus in 1975. Viking landed on Mars in 1976. "The one thing Vance (and other early science fiction writers) missed completely was the astronomically high cost of space exploration! And of course that is what, to a large extent, has made the rest of his timetable unrealizable."

The Gift Volume

The Gift Volume has gone to press. We hope to make delivery sometime in October. It continues to be a pleasure working with Sfera personnel: Claudia Fuchs, commercial representative; Stefania Zacco, project chief; Christina Oliari, production chief; as well as the binders: the ineffable Signor Lolli and his star artisan, Signor Biffi. These are the people who make the world's most beautiful books, and they have all contributed importantly to how the *VIE* books will be.

YOU HAVE DONE IT!

VIE Work Credits
compiled by Hans van der Veeke

From now on *Cosmopolis* will be publishing the volunteer work credits for each text that has cleared Post-proofing and is printer-ready. Under the same rubric we will announce each collection volume that is completed.

Check your name! A misspelling here may indicate a misspelling in our database, thereafter in the books themselves (or else a simple *Cosmopolis* blunder). We don't want to spell your name wrong, or leave off a Jr. or Esq. or other important element. To correct your name, contact Suan at suan@cs.wisc.edu Also contact Suan if we have overlooked you.

WYST
Finished 21 May 2001

Digitizer
Suan Yong

DD-Scanners
Richard Chandler
John A. Schwab

DD-Jockey
Christan J. Corley

DD-Monkey
Tim Stretton

Technoproofer
John Robinson Jr.

TI
Tim Stretton

Composition
Joel Anderson

Post-proofing
"Funambulist Evangs"
Christian J. Corley (team manager)
Richard Chandler
Charles Hardin
Mark Henricks
Brent Heustess
Jody Kelly
R.C. Lacovara
David Mortimore
Jeffrey Ruszczyk
Steve Sherman

GREEN MAGIC
Finished 22 June 2001

Digitizers
Derek W. Benson
Joe Ormond

Pre-proofer
Alan Bird

DD-Scanners
Richard Chandler
Joel Hedlund
David Mortimore

DD-Jockey
Rob Gerrand

DD-Monkey
R.C. Lacovara

Technoproofer
Hans van der Veeke

TI
John A. Schwab
Paul Rhoads (Gift version)

Implementation
Mike Dennison
Damien G. Jones
John McDonough

Composition
Joel Anderson

Post-proofing
"The Tanchinaros"
David Reitsema (team manager)
Andreas Björklind
Carina Björklind
Patrick Dymond
Charles King
Per Kjellberg
Stéphane Leibovitsch
David Mortimore
William Schaub
Gabriel Stein
Russ Wilcox

GOLDEN GIRL
Finished 20 August 2001

Digitizer
Per Sundfeldt

Special Reformatting
Suan Yong

DD-Scanner
Richard Chandler

DD-Jockey
Mark Adams

DD-Monkey
John A. Schwab

Technoproofer
Danny Beukers

TI
John A. Schwab

Implementation
Donna Adams
Derek W. Benson
Damien G. Jones

Composition
John A. Schwab

Post-proofing 1st pass
"Dragon Masters"
Erik Arendse (team manager)
Angus Campbell-Cann
Evert Jan de Groot
Jurgen Devriese
Jasper Groen
Jurriaan Kalkman
Bob Luckin
Willem Timmer
Hans van der Veeke
Marcel van Genderen
Dirk Jan Verlinde

Post-proofing 2nd pass
"Spellers of Forlorn Encystment"
Till Noever (team manager)
Malcolm Bowers
Rob Gerrand
Peter Ikin
Bob Moody
Bill Sherman
Michael J. Smith

MASQUERADE ON
DICANTROPUS
Finished 24 August 2001

Digitizer
Chris Reid

Pre-proofers
Arjan Bokx
Owen Davidson
Joel Hedlund

DD-Scanners
Richard Chandler
John A. Schwab

DD-Jockey
Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey
David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer
Rob Friefeld

TI
Rob Friefeld
Steve Sherman (*TI second*)

Implementation
Derek W. Benson
Damien G. Jones

Composition
John A. Schwab

Post-proofing 1st pass
"Spellers of Forlorn Encystment"
Till Noever (team manager)
Malcolm Bowers
Rob Gerrand
Peter Ikin
Chris McCormick
Bob Moody
Bill Sherman
Michael J. Smith

Post-proofing 2nd pass
"Clam Muffins"

Robin L. Rouch/Joel Riedesel (team managers)
Top Changwatchai
Mark Henricks
Marc Herant
David A. Kennedy
Bob Luckin
Robert Melson
Jim Pattison
Michael Turpin

THE WORLD BETWEEN
Finished 24 August 2001

Digitizer

Derek W. Benson

Special Reformatting

Arjan Bokx

Pre-proofers

Arjan Bokx
Jon Hunt

DD-Scanners

Richard Chandler
John A. Schwab

DD-Jockey

Hans van der Veeke

DD-Monkey

Suan Yong

Technoproofer

Rob Gerrand

TI

Rob Gerrand

Composition

John A. Schwab

Post-proofing

"Dragon Masters"

Erik Arendse (team manager)
Angus Campbell-Cann
Evert Jan de Groot
Jurgen Devriese
Patrick Hudson
Jurriaan Kalkman
Willem Timmer
Hans van der Veeke
Marcel van Genderen



Cosmopolis Bloopers

compiled by the Editor

Fear was rampant throughout the *Cosmopolis* staff that this column would not appear in this issue, due to the fact that our *VIE* Editor-in-Chief was singularly non-humorous in his spelling efforts this time. However, the day was saved by Volunteer Ombudsman Hans van der Veeke who, in the work credits listed elsewhere in *Cosmopolis*, had named some of us under the heading 'Implementation'.

So what is this Implementation, some kind of weird French: Imp-lé-mention, meaning that here we are mentioning the Imps? *Cosmopolis* assistant Nita's first reading of this was Implet-mention, in which case maybe it's little baby Imps jumping around that we're supposed to be mentioning. No offense meant to Hans, but it was determined by one of our number that 'Implementation' is probably a better designation for us.

VIE Quiz

Cosmopolis readers might be intrigued by this puzzler Richard Chandler sent out to the TI team: "As a mathematician I am always alert for mathematics in Vance's works. I have come across the following passage in *Vandals of the Void*:"

Figure it out for yourself. That end of the room is fifteen feet wide by eight high: 120 square feet. In square inches that's about—let's see 144, call it 150, times 120 is 12,000 plus 6,000, 18,000. Knock off a thousand, call it 17,000 square inches.

"Now I contend that persons brought up using the English system of measuring (as opposed to the metric) should be able to perform the exact calculation (as opposed to the above approximation), 'in their heads'. Can you? What is 144x120, in your head!""*

* $144 \times 120 = 12 \times 12 \times 120 = (12 \times 12 \times 12) \times 10 = 1,728 \times 10 = 17,280$ (Every schoolchild should know $12 \times 12 \times 12 = 1728$, the number of cubic inches in a cubic foot.)

Honneur aux Dames!

by Paul Rhoads

Jack Vance—a writer of 'boys' books'?—has a woefully small feminine readership. This is certainly not because his books have no major heroines—what of Julie Hovard, Alice Tynott, and Madouc? And, among 'secondary characters' who can forget Zan Zu of Eridu, Zap 210 and Wayness Tamm? Or, from a different perspective, villainesses like Skorlet, Dame Clytie and The Ordene Zaa? Or clowns, like Lully Inkelstaff, Madam Soldinck or Dame Hester Lajoie? I myself happen to subscribe to the masculine gender but that hardly stops me from reading the 'girls' books' of Jane Austen, or considering her one of my favorite novelists. I am sure

the women who read Vance would likewise snort at the notion they should require their literature to be 'feminine'. What they want, just like the boys, is not 'feminine' literature—whatever that may be—but good literature.

For reasons oft been evoked in these pages, not only have few discovered Jack Vance, very few women have discovered him. But the *VIE* project is living proof that his female readers are just as enthusiastic, if not more so, about Vance. Therefore, this month's *Cosmopolis* honors our female volunteers. It is a gesture which should not be interpreted to mean the *VIE* project endorses the notion of equality between the sexes. To the contrary, in the *VIE* women are superior to men, for the following ineluctable reasons: of our 288 *VIE* volunteers (who have worked or are now active) only 8% are women, but 10% of *VIE* management and TI personnel is female. Suan Yong, who provided the statistics, also informs us that, outside of management personnel, the female volunteers, on average, have done 2.9 jobs, while the men have only done 2.4. This should be considered in the context of some 10,000 hours of work accomplished so far.

I would like to make special mention of Nicole Saunier, one of our few French volunteers, although France is 'over-represented' in TI by Patrick Dusoulier all by himself. As all American Vance readers should become aware, the French buy, and read, more Vance than the Americans, though the French population is but a fraction of the American. The same is true of several other European countries. France, however, is *the* country of gallantry and women, which is not unrelated to their famous good taste.



Norma Vance is the First Lady of the *VIE*. It is natural to wonder, among the varied females in her husband's work, which is modeled upon his "wife and colleague" as one of his dedications runs. To me, the portrait of Norma is to be found in

Glyneth of Lyonesse. Like Glyneth, Norma is a blonde beauty, resourceful, sassy, kind-hearted and true, who loves cats and is irrepressibly cheerful. I don't remember Glyneth doing any cooking, so in this regard the portrait is off the mark; Norma, in addition to her other qualities, is a world-class cook.

Much could be, and will be, said of Norma's contribution to the *VIE*. For now I will qualify it with the single word: essential.



Donna Adams joined the *VIE* very early, in fact Donna's *VIE* volunteer number is '1'. She was the first of the digitizers, and is now a hard-working 'Imp' of the mysterious and exclusive Implementation team. Donna's name will appear in the credits of very many *VIE* volumes! She lives in New Zealand, as do other high-powered *VIE* volunteers.

Debbie Cohen, a programmer, now on *VIE* leave of absence, has served both as *VIE* gatekeeper and *Cosmopolis* Editor, not to mention her text work. We miss her sorely and can't wait till she gets back to the *VIE* full-time.



Linnéa Anglemark is Swedish (a country strongly represented in the *VIE*), and works as a librarian at the University of Agricultural Science in Uppsala. She writes "I am a language junkie, who thrives and occasionally gets high on



good language usage, Vance is the perfect fix—if you excuse the choice of words. Those Vance books I have, I've read and re-read." (Visit Linnéaville, via the link on the *VIE* Who-We-Are page!). Linnéa attended the Chinon TI conference and has gone to Boston for *VIE* work at the Mugar Library. She has completed work on *The View From Chickweed's Window* and is presently restoring no less an oeuvre than the *Tschai* novels, to their never-before-seen true state.



Robin Rouch is co-head, with her husband Joel Riedesel, of the *Clam Muffins* PostProofing sub-team, which already has a string of successfully completed jobs to its credit.



Jody Kelly, who says she is looking forward to getting 'high-jacked and advanced', is another TI team member. She is currently at work on *When The Five Moons Rise*. She is a technical writer, taught English for many years, is mother of four, and lives in Texas.



Lisa Brown is an audio engineer, and is married to Mike Berro. She has bravely gotten involved in front-line project work in her own right.



Like Lisa, Lori Hanley is also associated with a *VIE* manager. She has been one of the top performing women volunteers.



Carina Björklind is married to Andreas, also a *VIE* volunteer. Both are Swedish and live in Linköping.



Linda Escher works for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, designing nature walks.

Tammy Vance, Jack and Norma's daughter-in-law, has never signed on as an official *VIE* volunteer, but she has been courageously doing *VIE* work since the beginning. She has photocopied manuscripts, mailed books, done promotional work, and played hostess at the Oakland work conferences, as well as being one of the most important moral-supports of the project behind the scenes. The project owes much to Tammy.



Nita Benson, also not an official *VIE* volunteer, has been helping her dad as Editorial Assistant on *Cosmopolis*.



Here is a countdown of all our female volunteers, in order of jobs completed: (the jobs are of varying dimension, so the list is only an approximate representation.)

- 10: *Donna Adams*
- 6: *Robin L. Rouch*
- 5: *Deborah Cohen; Lori Hanley*
- 4: *Jody Kelly; Norma Vance*
- 3: *Lisa Brown; Betty Mayfield*, among other things, is a librarian.
- 2: *Linnéa Anglemark; Carina Björklind; Connie Brown* is a technical writer who also does book production; *Linda Escher*

The following volunteers are awaiting assignment:

Jennifer Clarke-Joustra is a professional proofreader. *Christine Doiron* is a book reviewer.

- Cheryl Hanna*
- Amy Harlib*
- Nicole Saunier*
- Elane Mott*

Sara Pearson is an administrator. She writes: "... I have read only one of Jack Vance's books, *The Eyes of the Overworld*. I was very impressed with the story and wanted to find more of his works, however, I discovered many of his creations to be out of print. . . My interest in the *VIE* stems from. . . real-

izing I could not obtain the books I was looking for. So many wonderful books have gone out of print, and as a result, our society loses the literary value they contribute.”

Sharon Vance Bennett works in law and the arts. She writes: “Jack Vance always satisfies and I believe him to be one of our greatest authors. Some people I have talked to about his work feel that it lacks characterization, but, well, what can I say, they’re just missing the point.”

I sure hope I haven’t left anyone out, for, as we males well know: *hell hath no fury like a woman scorned*, and why not? No woman should be scorned. I am sorry there is not a full set of pictures, but I did all that flattery, pestering and threats could accomplish. The information is first hand, or copied off the Who-We-Are pages. I sincerely apologize for any lacunae.

Gift Volume at Frankfurt

by Derek W. Benson

Our Gift Volume will be presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair being held from the 10-15th October. Paul Rhoads and Bob Lacovara are planning on being there to promote the *VIE* and Jack Vance’s work. A brochure (in a number of languages) concerning our project is being prepared for distribution, and the planned *VIE* buttons will probably also be ready.

Base of operations at the Fair will be the Sfera stand, which is in Hall 5.1, stand B951. Representative(s) from Sfera will of course be there, and rumor has it that other *VIE* volunteers might show up, including Andreas Irle and The Laughing Mathematician. Any *VIE* volunteer or subscriber who is interested in attending is very welcome.

The Frankfurt Book Fair is the main event yearly for book publishers worldwide. The official opening, on October 9th at 5pm, boasts speakers Petra Roth, Mayor of Frankfurt; Chancellor Gerhard Schröder; and Greek President Konstantinos Stefanopoulos. Greece is Guest of Honour at this year’s Fair.

Among other events, a ‘Big Questions’ conference is being held on the 8th which is designed to open up a global perspective on the radical changes experienced by the publishing community. The current Big Questions facing the publishing industry are:

- How quickly will the small screen take over as a reading medium?
- What changes can libraries expect over the next five years?
- How are the roles of publishers, authors and booksellers likely to evolve?
- Will new technologies transform the market for translations?
- How can publishers and authors be paid within a digital environment?

Here is a hypothetical future Big Question for these people which we will have contributed greatly to:

- How should the publishing industry cope with the new trend in ‘private volunteer publishing’?

More info on the Fair can be gleaned from their website: <http://www.frankfurt-book-fair.com/>

VIE Statistics Part II: Scaling the Purple Peaks of Pulp

by Koen Vyverman — The Laughing Mathematician

INTRODUCTION

While zealously toiling away on his *Dragon Masters* TI-assignment, Ron Chernich recently began harbouring suspicions about the high number of short single-sentence narrative paragraphs in the digitized *Galaxy* pulp edition. Ron’s conjecture was that the *Galaxy* pulp magazine edition had a lot more of these than the *Ace* edition, from which our v-text derives. And it has been a long-standing suspicion that the pulp editors added extra paragraph breaks liberally to accommodate their narrow columnar page layout.

Rather than subjecting himself to the tedium associated with a manual verification of his thesis, Ron turned to *Totality* — the *VIE* data warehouse — for answers. A new module was added to *Totality*, allowing Narrative Paragraph Analysis or NPA. The present article will expose some of the results obtained thus far . . .

METHODOLOGY

The basic premise of the NPA-engine is simple: it tip-

toes through each *VIE* text, paragraph by paragraph, and determines whether a paragraph is narrative or not by looking for double-quote characters <">. If a double-quote character is detected, the paragraph is not considered narrative, and it is subsequently ignored.

Each of the remaining narrative paragraphs is then fed through the sentence sequencer algorithm as described in the Stochastic Vancifier article of *Cosmopolis* 17. For the purpose of the NPA however, a restricted set of sentence delimiters is used, consisting only of periods (and ellipses), question marks, exclamation marks.

Before proceeding to count the number of sentences which each narrative paragraph contains, the NPA-engine attempts to eliminate a number of artefacts that might skew the statistics later on. In order to avoid e.g. chapter and section headings to show up as single-sentence narrative paragraphs, any distilled sentences that either start with the word <chapter>, or consist only of digits or roman numerals are deleted. Furthermore, sentences having none of the three delimiters are equally dropped, which gets rid of certain tabular structures in some of the texts.

A count is then performed, identifying for each individual text how many narrative paragraphs consist of a single sentence, how many are composed of two sentences, and so forth. Note that in what follows, these counts will always appear normalized by the total number of narrative paragraphs in a given text, this to allow comparison of the distributions across *VIE* texts. In other words, the graphs below show for any number of sentences N precisely what percentage of a text's narrative paragraphs contain N sentences . . .

THE PURPLE PEAKS OF PULP

With such a distribution of narrative paragraph length (expressed in number of sentences) available for each *VIE* text, it becomes possible to investigate if and how these vary across the entire *VIE* spectrum. Is there a noticeable trend as a function of time, ordering the texts chronologically? Or as a function of text length (in words) perhaps?

Consider the mountainous vista displayed in figure 1. The horizontal axis orders the texts by their length expressed in number of words. That is: number one on the right is *Cat Island* with 1,371 words; number 124 on the left is *Araminta Station* with 190,780 words.

The slanted axis lists the number of sentences per narrative paragraph. Only the range 1 to 20 is shown, as nothing much happens beyond. Interestingly, the highest value reached throughout the *VIE* occurs in *The Anome* where a single freak paragraph is composed of no less than 46 sentences.

The vertical axis shows of course the percentages as explained in the above, and the colour-gradient applied

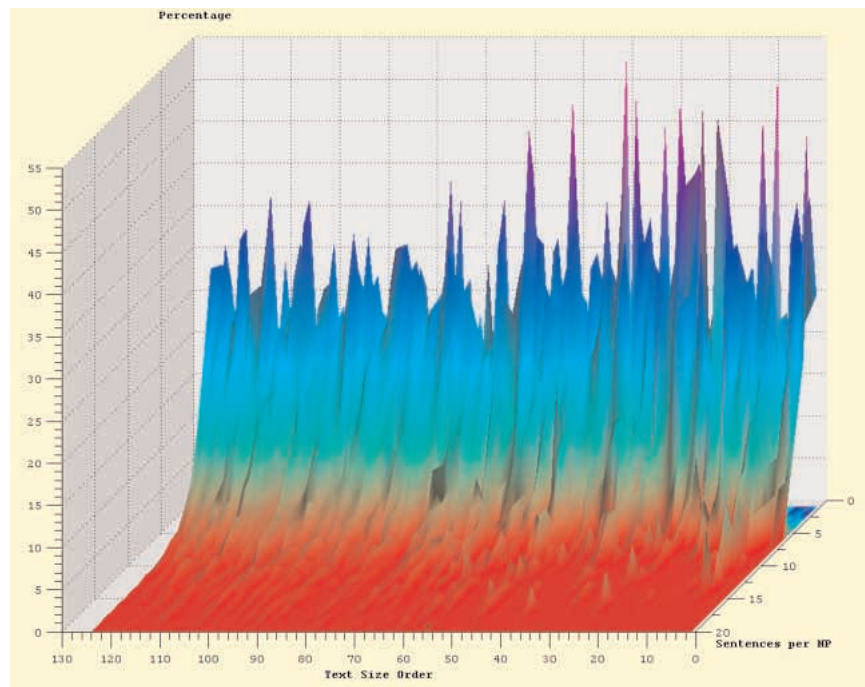


Figure 1: Distributions of length (expressed in sentences) of narrative paragraphs across the *VIE*.

to the surface reflects this percentage scale.

What can be learned from figure 1? First of all, the shape of the distributions is pretty much the same for all texts: most narrative paragraphs consist of 1 to 3 sentences (the blue and purple peaks) beyond which the numbers fall off sharply before flattening out completely (the red plain and foothills). A common characteristic.

Where they are different though is in the height of the peaks. Roughly speaking, the shorter stories form the right half of the graph, say numbers 1 through 60, while the novel-length works are on the left. As the right-hand side's purple peaks correspond mostly to stories that were written for and published by the early pulp magazines, this region of the graph may be adequately

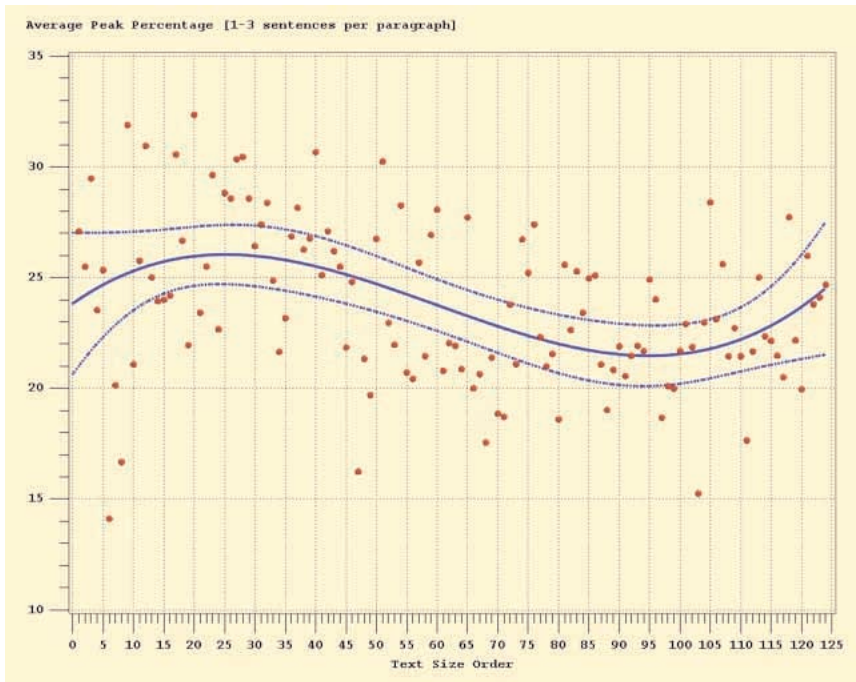


Figure 2: Peak percentages averaged over 1, 2 and 3 sentences per narrative paragraph.

specific, here are some notable outliers, both on the high and on the low end of the percentage scale. In the following stories more than 45% of the narrative paragraphs consist of just one sentence:

title	%	digitization source
<i>Four Hundred Blackbirds</i>	54.0	UM
<i>Seven Exits from Bocz</i>	52.2	UM
<i>Coup de Grace</i>	48.5	Dobson=Ace
<i>The Kokod Warriors</i>	48.5	DAW
<i>Three-Legged Joe</i>	48.2	UM
<i>Hard Luck Diggings</i>	46.4	UM
<i>D.P.</i>	45.5	Avon

Unfortunately, at the moment of this writing none of these are being actively subjected to TI, and therefore no textual stemma is available, which would allow identification of the specific pulps the digitization sources may have relied upon.

The stories with less than 15% of single-sentence narrative paragraphs are these:

title	%	digitization source
<i>The Miracle Workers</i>	14.3	Macmillan
<i>Something Awful</i>	13.7	UM
<i>The Secret</i>	11.5	UM
<i>Where Hesperus Falls</i>	11.1	UM

SOME CASE STUDIES

Dragon Masters

Returning to Ron's suspicion concerning the different *Dragon Masters* paragraphing in *Ace* vs. *Galaxy*, the matter is easily settled by comparing the distributions derived from both files. Figure 3 shows clearly that Ron was right: the story has more of the one- and two-sentence narrative paragraphs in the *Galaxy* edition . . .

referred to as the 'Purple Peaks of Pulp'.

Observe how the average height of the peaks among the shorter stories lies considerably above the average peak height for the longer stories. To illustrate this aspect more clearly, figure 2 shows averaged percentages over the range from one to three sentences per narrative paragraph. Each of the red dots in the diagram represents a text. The order runs from short on the left to long on the right. The solid blue curve helps visualize the trend present in the cloud of red dots. The dashed blue lines are the computed error margins for the solid line. Notice how the trend's maximum corresponds to the shorter stories.

SINGLE-SENTENCE EXTREMES

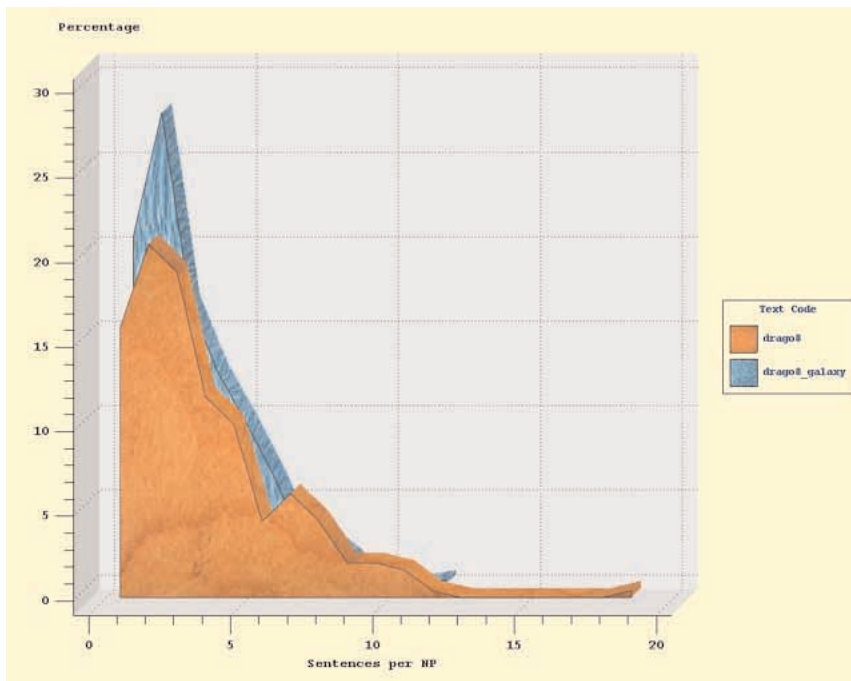


Figure 3: Comparison of the Ace and Galaxy distributions for Dragon Masters.

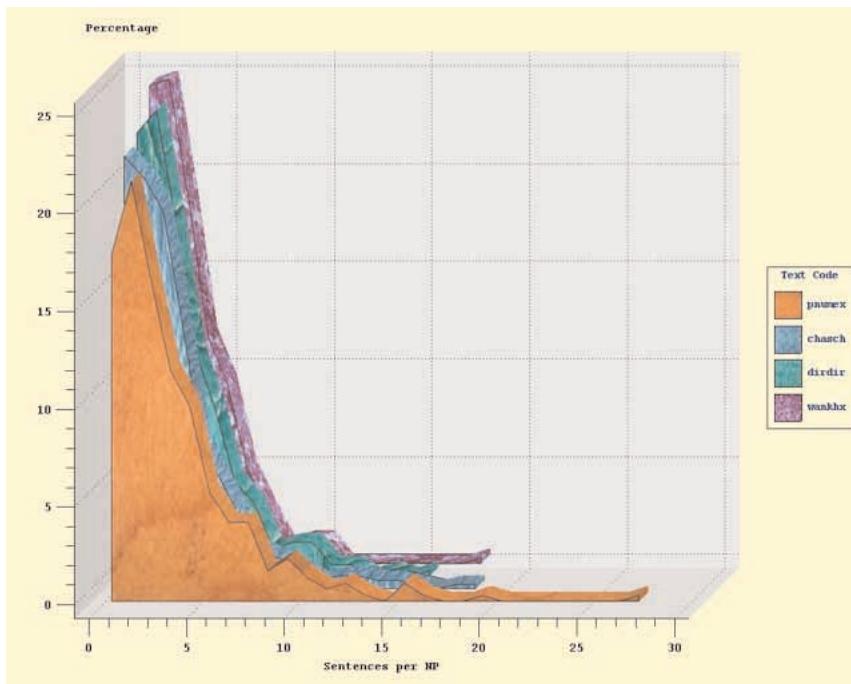


Figure 4: Comparison of the distributions for the four Tschai novels.

Tschai, Lyonesse, Cadwal

We can also have a closer look at some of our favourite series . . . Figure 4 e.g. shows the distributions for the four *Tschai* novels. They are pretty much identical in shape, even though the height of the peaks varies slightly.

On the other hand, analogous graphs for the *Lyonesse* (Figure 5) and the *Cadwal* (Figure 6) books show two distributions nearly coinciding with the third one standing somewhat apart!

CONCLUSIONS, IF ANY . . .

What does all of this really mean? Nothing, perhaps: in the worst case, all of the above can be seen as a mere collection of facts and figures, to be taken at face value. The fact that *The Green Pearl* has a somewhat different distribution than both *Suldrun's Garden* and *Madouc* may be insignificant, and accounted for by small stylistic variations in Jack's writing style. The Purple Peaks of Pulp might well be there because, well, that's how Jack wrote them.

But then, as the *Dragon Masters* case illustrates, there may be more to it. Conceivably the Purple Peaks are only there because pulp editors hacked up Jack's artfully crafted prose for the sake of bi-columnar magazine layout aesthetics? Only time, and arduous TI work, will tell.

(See figures 5 and 6 on following page.)

Letters to the Editor

In reply to Ed Winkill's thoughtful letter; religious people — such as myself — do not necessarily wish to prove that Vance is a Christian. I doubt Vance believes Christ rose from the dead or that our flesh will be resurrected on judgement day—to list but two points of the Catholic credo, to which I subscribe. However, the 'universal morality' referred to by Ed is not as unproblematic as may be thought. C. S. Lewis did not abandon his Christianity in favor of this 'Tao', or lowest common denominator of morality and religion. He could only have pointed out that aspects of it are common to the various religions, which are thus identical at these points. But even those who subscribe to this lowest common denominator would, unless they are confused, consider 'absurd' any morality that aimed even lower.

For example, if they consider it a moral absolute that we, at minimum, should leave our neighbors in peace, they must regard as 'intolerable' (or 'absurd') the belief that it is best to steal from our neighbors—as socialists* do. The more seriously a person takes their deepest convictions the less seriously they are obliged to take opposing views. One cannot be serious about respecting, say, the Christian view, and at the same time respect the Mohammedan view, without denaturing both. To Christians who do believe that

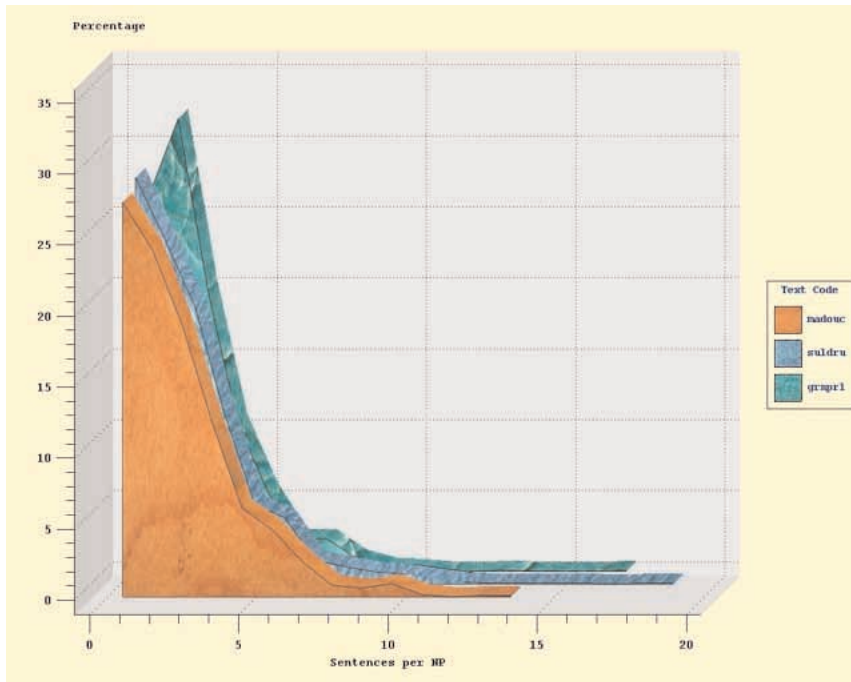


Figure 5: Comparison of the distributions for the three Lyonesse novels

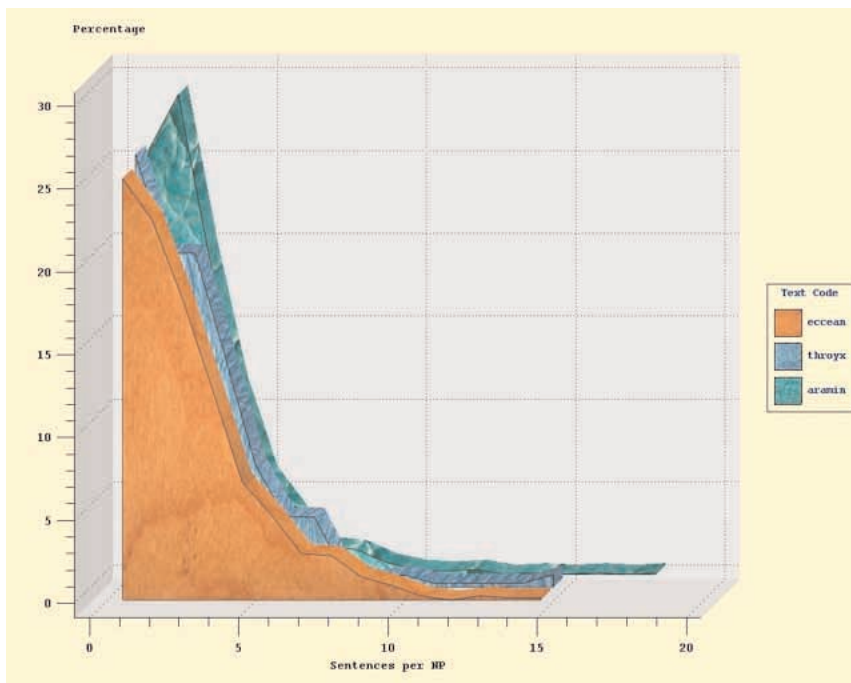


Figure 6: Comparison of the distributions for the three Cadwal novels.

* It is one thing to believe people should share their money with poorer people. It is quite another to support the use of temporal power to forcibly separate people from the fruit of their work so it may be divvied up among 'the poor' to the end that all have the same, and none have more than others. This is indistinguishable from theft, whatever ideological and legal cover it may have, and theft is contrary not only to divine law but to lowest-common-denominator morality as well.

Jesus was the son of God (as opposed to those who do not) the Mohammedan idea that he was just another prophet, like Jacob, Hosea or, according to the Mohammedans, Mohammed himself, is absurd. This may be inconvenient in a world where Christians and Mohammedans must live cheek by jowl (as they have been doing since the invention of Islam in the dark ages) but the contemporary solution—taking nothing seriously—is more inconvenient still. ‘Respecting’ all religions amounts to respecting none, and is part of a disposition whereby we take nothing seriously.

It will be objected that it is still possible to respect what ‘underlies both Christianity and Islam’. But this is another way of deciding for one’s self what underlies, and is thus most important to, these religions, and whisking away the rest as superfluous. It turns out that the supposed ‘underlying aspects’, the elements of universal morality, are never what the Mohammedans and Christians regard as the underlying aspects, which is that Mohammed was the prophet of God, or that Jesus was the son of God*. But these two premises are not just ‘absurd’ in the eyes of non-believers—plus the sort of Christian ‘believer’ who defines his ‘Christianity’ for himself—but they are ‘absurd’ (because contradictory) in the eyes of the supposed ‘respector of all religions’. Universal respect for all religions is just a cover for comfortably thinking they are all absurd, without saying so.

Finally, for Christians who are serious about their religion, intimate contact with anything actually anti-Christian, which would be diabolical, is distasteful to say the least. But contact with Vance, despite his supposed skepticism, is not distasteful to us. To begin with, there is nothing anti-Christian about skepticism, assuming Vance really is a skeptic (Jesus said: “All who are not against us are with us.”). On the other hand, an attack on the Church (the final guardian of truth “against whom even the gates of hell shall not prevail”) would be distasteful. A respector of ‘universal morality’ would feel the same way about mockery of sentiments like generosity, and Vance is as ‘skeptical’ about this as about anything else. But the fact is that Vance does not attack the Church. To the contrary, what happens in *Lyonesse* actually supports the Church.

There are three points in *Lyonesse* regarding the Roman Church: Casmir fears Rome will bleed off his gold, the

priest is an evil man, and Aillas and Suldrun insist on the sacrament of a Christian marriage. But Casmir’s fear is just that, a fear; Vance does not take us to Rome to show the Pope mocking the Holy Spirit’s charge to save men’s souls and instead plotting to despoil them. Umphred’s corruption, as has been pointed out, is personal—though obviously no source of pride to his bishop! As the Church well knows, a priest, or even a bishop, cardinal or pope, is always still just a man. The Church has been coping, and will continue to have to cope, with that inconvenient fact until the end of time. Human corruption is not linked to the Church in any structural way; like any institution it may fall prey to it. The only difference is that the Church’s special task is to save all men from themselves, which is more than can be said of the IRS, or your local town council. But that Aillas and Suldrun respect the sacrament of marriage, need and seek the Church’s consecration of the sacred link they desire to forge between them—even in the person of the odious Umphred, a duly consecrated priest after all!—can only be interpreted as acknowledgement that the Church is what it claims to be: the guardian of the sacraments, the divinely consecrated bonds between God and man.

That Umphred is indeed an evil man even gives this episode a particularly Catholic flavor, because Catholics are so aware that form is superior to matter, or, in this case, that a properly consecrated priest, no matter how bad a man, is still a priest. The story even demands such an attitude toward marriage; how pallid the predictions of Persilian and Desmei if marriage is not a projection of a spiritual reality greater than the world we know! How better to express the link between ourselves, and this overworld, than with the sacraments?

I am not arguing that Vance is a crypto-Christian, much less a crypto-Catholic, writer. I am simply pointing out that, whatever Vance himself may think, Aillas and Suldrun respect the Church as guardian of the sacraments, that in the world of *Lyonesse* marriage is not an empty formality but a living sacrament, and that serious Christians—who can’t help but regard other religions as absurd, which does not stop them from respecting and loving their misguided practitioners—can read Vance with as much pleasure as non-Christians.†

Paul Rhoads

* If Jesus is not the son of God, his ideas about what is moral, however well expressed, are no better than yours or mine.

† This letter anticipates some of the points from an upcoming essay on Vance and religion, which the burden of front-line *VIE* work is making difficult to complete.

CLS No. 10

Will appear with *Cosmopolis* No. 19. We apologize for the delay. It will be a good issue.

Closing Words

Thanks to Nita Benson for editorial assistance, and Joel Anderson for composition; also to proofreaders Patrick Dusoulier, Bob Lacovara, and Matt Picone.

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Derek W. Benson, Editor

Vie Contacts:

The *VIE* web page:

www.vanceintegral.com

For questions regarding subscription:

subscribe@vanceintegral.com

To volunteer on the project:

volunteer@vanceintegral.com

Paul Rhoads, Editor-in-Chief:

prhoads@club-internet.fr

R. C. Lacovara, 2nd-in-Command:

lacovara@infohwy.com

Suan Yong, Work Flow Commissar:

suan@cs.wisc.edu

Richard Chandler, Double-Digitizing-Scanning:

chandler@math.ncsu.edu

Damien Jones; Double-Digitizing-Jockeying:

dagjo@pacbell.net

Ron Chernich, Techno-Proofing:

chernich@dstc.edu.au

Alun Hughes, Textual Editor-in-Chief:

alun.hughes@btinternet.com

Steve Sherman, Textual Integrity Administration:

Steve.Sherman@compaq.com

John Foley, Composition:

beowulf@post.lucent.com

Christian J. Corley, Post-Proofing:

cjc@vignette.com

John Schwab, Archivist:

jschwab@uswest.net

Hans van der Veeke, Volunteer Ombudsman:

hans@vie.tmfweb.nl

Derek Benson, *Cosmopolis* Editor:

benson@online.no

The Fine Print:

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