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VIE Volunteers Talk With Jack Vance

On the weekend of August 2-3, 2003, several VIE volunteers conversed with Jack by tele-conference. The participants on Saturday were Joel Anderson, Jeremy Cavaterra, Brian Gharst, Chuck King, and Ed Winskill; on Sunday participated Chris Corley, Damien Jones, Dave Reitsema, and John Schwab; John Vance II was present both days. Transcription by Jeremy Cavaterra.

Day 1: Saturday, August 2, 2003

Jack: I thought I'd take this occasion here—if you're interested, if you have questions about my writing—to give you an opportunity to delve a little deeper into my subconscious. If your questions are too complicated, or the answers not readily definable, I may say "No comment". This doesn't necessarily mean I find the question offensive, it just means that to answer it, I'd have to go into all sorts of ambiguous remarks, et cetera.

With this in mind, you can get started!

Joel: I get a lot of enjoyment from your descriptions of architecture, the mood and the atmosphere they create. Do you design your surroundings to evoke an atmosphere?

Jack: I wish I could give you a definitive answer; I think it all just comes together organically. When I start a story, I do have a mood, which is hard to explain—a certain feeling, or an idea. Then when I write the story, I make every aspect of it relevant or appropriate to this mood—which would include landscape, architecture . . .

Joel: Or language?

Jack: Language, costumes, everything. That's my goal, anyway, sometimes I succeed and sometimes I don't . . .

Joel: Well, from my viewpoint, you usually do succeed; I've rarely read anything by you that doesn't create a definite mood.

Jack: Apparently I have a knack! Maybe I was born with it; I don't take any special pride in it. Just like being born right- or left-handed.

Joel: Well, I'm glad you have it! I understand you built your house yourself. When you're writing a story, do you ever sketch the floor plans of your architecture just for fun?

Jack: No, I don't. When we arrived here originally, this place was like a chicken shack, perched up in the air. Over the years Johnny and I together built the present house around the old house, and essentially threw the old house out through the windows! Without exaggeration, this house we're living in now encompasses the old shack totally. There's nothing left of that place except the floor in the living room.

Jeremy: In a lot of your books, there is an emphasis on crafts, and craftsmanship, especially with things like ceramics, tapestries, and painting; but the emphasis seems to always be on the craftsmanship, rather than what I'd call 'the *artiste*'. So could you tell us about your intimacy with ceramics, and maybe how this all weaves into your writing?

Jack: All right, well, I don't think there's any much connection between the ceramics and the writing, but ceramics at one time was—and still is in a certain sense—highly important to me.

Ceramics is a craft that has so many different aspects to it, so many special areas, every one of them is fascinating. There's the wheel, turning out a piece, there's firing, at different temperatures ranging from 1800° F to—I never did fire porcelain but that goes up to 2800° F. I used to fire at Cone 5, which is about 2300° F—that's stoneware.

The most fascinating part is making glazes. You take this piece of malleable clay, put it in this terrible heat, it comes out impermeable and permanent. You make a glaze—you can buy it of course, but the challenge is to make it yourself, using different chemicals, and mixing them according to precise formulas, then put this white paste on the body, and then put it in the fire. Then you await the opening of the kiln with the expectations of a kid coming downstairs Christmas morning, to see what's under the tree. "What the devil's in the kiln?!" The results can be a source of great joy, or distress! But if successful, your work comes out with rich glowing colors: greens, blues—perfect! The texture of glazes sometimes is a thing of beauty in itself, this oleaginous, buttery kind of a glaze. These are esthetic experiences, opening the kiln and taking out these fired pieces.

The secret is getting the glaze to 'fit' the clay. In the old days, that was a very difficult proposition; you had to go through all sorts of mathematical computations, then try, try again, and try again. But about the time I built my last studio, a fellow in Canada came out with a computer program called 'Insight' which simplified glaze-making to such an extent that it just became a

pleasure. The names of these glaze components carry a romance in themselves, just like names of musical compositions . . . anyway, I've said enough about pottery, but I just love it.

When my eyes went out on me, I had to close down the pottery. We sold the kiln, and took down the studio. We still have a lot of chemicals down below, along with the potter's wheel . . . so that's the story.

Back to the more general idea of crafts, yes—I am highly appreciative of craftsmanship, of doing things precisely, doing them properly. Starting out with a vision of something and doing it with such expertise that it comes out the way you want it. This can be done in furniture making, pottery, writing poetry I suppose.

John V: Writing books!

Jack: Well, I don't know if I'd call writing books a craft or not.

John V: But there's craftsmanship in your work.

Jack: That's a matter for discussion—could be, I wouldn't argue. There's all kinds of crafts. Jeremy, what do you think about knocking about on the piano, do you think that's a craft?

Jeremy: Well, if you argue that writing books is a craft, or that 'craftsmanship' is the ability to create something according to your ideas, then sure, why not?

Jack: But I think that it's not so much the music itself, that 'craft' is hitting the right keys, teaching yourself to have in mind a certain effect, and then having your fingers go to the right keys . . .

Jeremy: In the way you write, there's this sense of precision in translating a feeling, or an idea into words in the most efficient way possible; that's the kind of craft I'm talking about. I see it as analogous to any type of craft that you mentioned.

Jack: I'll go along with that, I agree.

Ed: When I think about craftsmanship, I think about *Emphyrio*, which is so much about craftsmanship, the whole book . . .

Jack: Yes, there's craftsmanship in that story. I do admire craftsmen. Artists? The word has taken on so many unpleasant connotations, you know, 'artists'—these people with long hair and funny attitudes. I'm speaking of the old-fashioned stereotype of the artist; the 19th-century kind of an artist.

If anybody's interested, I'll give you my definition of art. I don't put this down as universal law, of course, but to my mind, when a person has an emotional reaction to

something or another, he tries to convey this emotional reaction to someone else by symbolic means. This is important: the artist must use symbols which are intelligible to not just himself, but the person he's trying to communicate with; there has to be mutual knowledge of the symbols involved, because if the artist uses symbols which the onlooker or listener can't interpret, the artist fails; he's not communicating. This is my objection to abstract 'art', so to speak—quotes around the word 'art'—and so-called 'modern jazz'. The people who are involved use symbols which are known only to themselves; it's kind of a narcissistic approach that means nothing, to anyone but themselves. The people who are listening—well, you'll hear a lot of people who don't know anything about music, or art, exclaiming with rapture about things—they have no idea what it all means, except they might say, "That's sort of 'bright', and this is sort of 'cheerful' . . .", but they don't understand the symbolism for what the artist had in mind.

But that's enough about 'art'. Okay! Next question?

Brian: When I first picked up one of your books back when I was in high school, the thing that grabbed me, and made me say, "Wow, this is really neat stuff", was the way everybody talked to one another. Even the villains and the scoundrels were very intelligent people, and spoke with irony and understatement.

It seems to me that this has been present from the beginning, even in your very early books. Is this something you had to develop, on your own, before you started publishing? Or is it something that came naturally? And what was the reaction, in the early days?

Jack: In the early days, after I'd published a couple of short stories, one of the editors mentioned 'Vancishness' for the stories I'd written. So evidently even at that time I had a kind of a distinctive approach. But in response to your question, I think it just became this way, because of my appreciation of such masters as P.G. Wodehouse, who is an absolute genius at the rhythms, the wryness in his dialogue. He's superb at it, doesn't get credit enough for being one of the great writers. That's before the war, of course; after the war he was nowhere. But Wodehouse's dialogue is just wonderful stuff. It's mannered, of course; Jeeves speaks in a certain way, and you have to appreciate this. There's also a fellow from the 1920's called Jeffrey Farnol; he wrote adventure stories, he used dialogue with a great deal of care, and was also excellent at it. These two, especially, gave me a goal to work towards: if I could write as good dialogue as Wodehouse or Farnol, I felt as though I was doing something good.

Aside from that, I just didn't think about it, I wasn't self-conscious about it, the stuff just developed on its own.

Brian: Did you ever worry if the readers would accept it?

Jack: No, I never thought of that at all, any more than any other part of the story. In other words, the whole thing was organic, the dialogue and the exposition, et cetera, were all part of the same thing, and I just wanted to make them consistent.

Going back to this mood I was talking about—all the parts of the story should be consistent and in line with the mood, generating the mood, reinforcing the mood. So the exposition and dialogue both go, in my opinion, to those ends.

John V: I can throw something in here, Brian. Dad generally doesn't give a damn what anybody else thinks anyway. That may be just a little blunt, but he probably never worried about whether other people could go for his style, because it didn't really matter to him. He just did it the way he wanted.

Brian: I'll often be reading one of your books, in my living room, and my wife will be sitting there with me, and suddenly from nowhere a gasp of satisfaction will escape my mouth—and she'll know that I must be reading a Vance novel—because I hit one of those beautiful, very clever pieces of dialogue that are so satisfying to me.

Jack: Incidentally . . .

I don't know how to express this, but I can't find the proper words to express my feelings toward you guys. It isn't gratitude exactly, I think it's just plain pleasure, that I have reached a bunch of people like yourselves.

I was at this convention in Columbus, and it just happened to occur to me—and I said this to a group of people—that I don't have any stupid fans! Everybody that seems to like my junk is highly intelligent, which I think is . . . well, it gives me a source of vanity, or something of the sort. But anyway, I do appreciate your interest, I can't say I feel gratitude for that's not the proper word. Thank you all!

Chuck: I have a question that ties into some of the things you were just talking about, when you mentioned your earlier writing. I was wondering if you could tell me something about the relationship between writers and editors.

Jack: Editors are in general frustrated writers. On second thought, that's wrong; they're business people. Some I got along great with; others, like John Campbell, couldn't see me for sour owl spit. Although that's not quite true, as soon as I wrote a story for Campbell that involved telepathy, or something similar, he went for it.

Campbell was engrossed with things like telepathy, telekinetics, extra-sensory perception of all kinds. He was interested in it; I am too, as far as that goes . . . but I knew I could always sell him something, as long as I

threw in something of that sort. Some of my worst stories—just hack writing, some of the worst I've ever written, I sold it to him; he loved it.

But in general, the relationship between writer and editor depends upon the individuals. It's personal; I don't have any basic theories or propositions.

John V: Going back to the telekinetics and that sort of stuff, you said that you're interested in it; does that mean you believe in it?

Jack: In general I am a skeptic about these things. Then of course I run into something, read something somewhere...like a book I recently read, by John Edward—he's a medium or something—he's so matter-of-fact about talking to dead people, he takes it so casually, just like a mechanic fixing a car, that you have to scratch your head and say "what the hell's going on here?"

In general I'm skeptical; I haven't had any experiences myself, and I don't know anybody that has, that wasn't lying to me when they told me about it.

I'm skeptical about these fields—I'll believe it when I see it.

John V: I believe you are 'skeptical, but tantalized by the possibilities'.

Jack: Exactly right. I'm tantalized by these things!

There's a book called *Ghosts in Irish Houses*, by a fellow called James Reynolds; it's a marvelous book. When we were in Ireland, I went around trying to find these houses, and couldn't find any of them; we went to a University there, and I visited a professor of anthropology, and talked to him; I thought he'd be in the know about such things. Shows what a damn fool I am! I went up to him and asked, "Sir, what's your experience with ghosts in Irish houses, like James Reynolds put in his book?" He gave me the most withering look, and said, "There's nothing of the sort in Ireland!" He was so contemptuous of the idea that the Irish were seeing ghosts everywhere. I slunk out of there with my tail between my legs. I never saw any ghosts in Ireland.

As John said, I'm skeptical, but tantalized by all these things. It's the romance of the ideas—the romance of haunted houses, and castles, and ghosts—these are the things that fire the imagination!

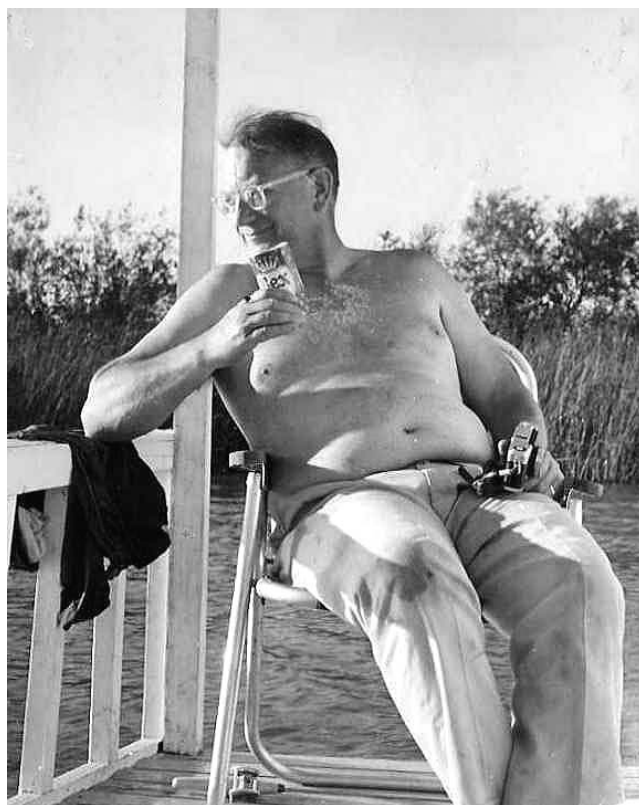
Ed: You've talked about mood, and I wanted to ask specifically about it, in terms of water. It seems to me that you must have hung around a lot of estuaries; you've got fens, and mudflats, and quayside inns. I'd like to know about the sources of all that in your writing.

Jack: I was born in San Francisco. When I was six years old, the family moved up to my grandfather's ranch in the

Delta, where the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin River divide up into waterways, which are known locally as 'sloughs'. Some of the sloughs are strikingly beautiful things, lined with cottonwoods and weeping willows; our house was adjacent to one of these. I grew up among these sloughs, swimming and boating and wading around.

Subsequently, Poul Anderson and Frank Herbert (though he dropped out) and myself built a houseboat, 14 feet wide and 32 feet long, took it up into those waterways, and cruised it through there. That was one of the big eras of my life, when I think about it; we had so much fun aboard that son-of-a-gun; we'd take it out on the weekend. I had a 25-horse outboard on it, and we'd anchor it someplace, laugh and joke, drink beer and play music, while the ladies were inside preparing dinner.

But anyway, I grew up among these waterways, and I have a basic, inherent love for them.



Jack on the deck of the houseboat, circa 1966.

Joel: I have rather a stupid question, but I'll ask it anyway...

Jack: I'll give you a stupid answer.

Joel: Okay! If the movie moguls approached you, like the Cohen brothers, Scorsese, Peter Jackson—which one of your books would you tell them would be a good choice for a two-hour movie?

Jack: Well, I don't know...I would think—not that I know anything about movies—but it would look to me

that the *Lyonesse* set would be a natural for someone like Disney, but nobody's done more than nibble at it. Maybe *Trullion* would be good?

Ed: I'd like to see it on film!

Jack: There may be others, *Emphyrio*? I've never thought of it too much.

I wrote a suspense story called *Bad Ronald* that was bought and made into a television movie. People have wanted to do it over and over again; that made a good movie. There's another one, which I called originally *Chateau d'If*, but which the editor called *New Bodies for Old*. That was also sold, and made into some sort of a television movie.

John V: Dad, are you sure anything was ever made of it, or was it just optioned?

Jack: I'm not sure . . .

John V: We got whacked on that a couple years ago, because it was just the option that was sold. Somebody approached us, offering some money that would have been wonderful, but as it turned out the option had been sold off for \$500, or something like that, a number of years ago . . .

Jack: I don't know, you may be right.

Jeremy: Speaking of *Lyonesse*, compared to other stories in the fantasy genre, there's a scholarly feeling about the folklore, the Irish and Britannic and northern European folklore. Would you care to say anything about that?

Jack: What's the question?

Jeremy: Well, I wondered if you could talk specifically about fairy-lore.

Jack: Well, of course, I've assimilated fairy stories all my life—Lord Dunsany and the like. They're part of my mental background. It's a matter of romance; fairies are romantic little creatures. I don't believe in fairies, but they make very delightful little decorations. It'd be nice if they did exist. But I don't really expect to go out and see them sitting in the eucalyptus tree.

I don't know if that answers your question or not. I will say this: I was much fonder of Lord Dunsany as a young man than I am now. Now I think he's over-written, overripe, over-emotional, over-sentimental. But when I first read him, he made a big impact.

Dunsany, incidentally, writing all this beautiful, delicate stuff, was a big game hunter! In his castle in Ireland, you'd find heads of bison and lions and tigers all over the place. It's hard to reconcile Lord Dunsany shooting all these animals, and writing these delicate stories.

Sic transit gloria mundi . . .

Chuck: One of the things that has struck me in your writing is that you're a very keen observer of society and culture. I wonder whether you agree that California has always been perceived as fundamentally different from the rest of the country?

Jack: That's a complicated question. California is such a various country: up in the north, it's all forests, and a volcano or two, and down south we have the Mojave Desert, and Death Valley, and Los Angeles, San Diego down at the bottom—a lovely retirement place for the old people. And San Francisco, a den of iniquity . . .

Ed: And San Rodrigo County is in there, somewhere—

Jack: San Rodrigo County is a mixture of where I grew up: of San Joaquin County, and some other little counties further south. It's a composite county, but generally accurate to the atmosphere of those counties, as it might have been thirty or forty years ago—not the way it is nowadays, of course.

But California, as I say, is such a various place. Raymond Chandler writes about Los Angeles, and makes it seem that it's an island in the middle of the universe. I can't think of anybody that writes about San Francisco in a similar way; it's a different city completely from what it used to be. Nowadays it's a thing in itself, an idiosyncratic *sui generis*, to use a ten-dollar word.

A lot of good jazz bands in San Francisco: the Lu Watters Jazz Band . . . then there's a band that works out of Los Angeles, called the South Frisco Jazz Band—

But in answer to your question, I'd say that California is just too blasted complicated to generalize on. Of course now we're trying to get rid of Gray Davis—we're beset by Democrats here! . . . Next question?

Ed: I'm glad that *Bad Ronald* came up, because the movie they made was pretty good, I've seen it a couple times. But they had to tone the story down; in the movie, Ronald gets caught, in time, and he doesn't in your book. There's a kind of Brothers Grimm quality, a certain tone you get—a 'distancing' or 'detachment' when something bad happens and goes unrecompensed. One of your most striking scenes is when Cugel slays the innocent little water creature, for the crime of getting him wet. Or when the fairy Twisk gets chained to the crossroads post, and so forth . . .

Jack: Yes, these things have to be dealt with objectively. I try to describe what's going on without using emotive adjectives or adverbs, just using nouns and verbs. If you try to put too much impact in, you lose the effect. You get the effect by just detailing the circumstances, without commenting upon them. That does the trick, it's simple enough.

One of the secrets of writing, in my opinion, is every time you see an adjective or adverb, get rid of the son-of-a-gun. Avoid them as much as you possibly can. It makes the writing far more pungent.

Ed: You don't tie a judgment up with it, you just lay it out.

Jack: That's right—say it just the way it is.

Joel: The lack of romanticizing elements in the story makes it effective. The Cohen brothers' movies to some degree share that; they have some ugly things in them, but they're not romanticized, not pushed in your face—

Ed: They're not sentimentalized . . .

Joel: Right, they're just stated.

Another writing question . . . Do you plan your books, starting with an outline? And if so, do the stories 'behave'? Do they 'stay' where they're supposed to 'stay'?

Jack: I start out with a general idea, but as I go through it I have to go back and give everything a kind of consistency. Any of you guys would do the same thing—you just start out with an idea and try to finish it in the best possible way.

John V: How long would one of your outlines typically be?

Jack: Oh, I don't know, it all depends . . . some parts would be detailed, if I wanted to capture an idea, and I'd put down a paragraph or something. But generally, no detailed outline, really.

Joel: Are you working on something at the moment?

Jack: Yes, I am working on something at the moment, but it's not a continuation of *Lurulu* or *Ports of Call*. It's a new one, a new idea.

Joel: I don't suppose we should ask what it is, but just wait for it?

Jack: No, you'll have to wait and see!

Brian: There's one character in your books I always thought was very interesting: Kirdy Wook from *Araminta Station*. I think he's one of the most tragic characters you ever wrote about; it's very hard for me to read the book because of what happens to him, and how he responds to it. I wondered if you have any comments on how he came about?

Jack: No, I have no comments except that he just appeared, and I saw him as a whole, and he conducted

himself in the story as this person. I had no part in his conduct, he conducted himself.

That sounds like a very 'arty' way of putting it, and I don't mean it in the way self-conscious artist-writers talk, like "my characters go their own way" and all that sort of stuff. But I didn't do any artificial guiding of him at all.

John V: Dad, is there any chance that any of your brothers might have influenced that character? There's something about him that reminds me just a little bit about one of your older brothers.

Jack: No—he's not at all like either of them.

Brian: Just from my personal experiences in life, he rang a bell; I have seen what happened to him happen to people, and I've always been fascinated by him.

Jack: Well, aside from what I've already said, I don't have anything else to say about Kirdy Wook. He was there.

Chuck: One of the themes that I find interesting in your books involves the sort of megalomaniacal villain who views himself as set above the normal ruck of humanity, people like Howard Alan Treesong, or Faurence Dacre, or Paul Gunther.

Jack: If you notice, in general, those people are concentrated in the *Demon Princes* set. Each one of those stories had to have a bad guy in there (incidentally, *Demon Princes* is not my title, someone else called it that). But they're all different, and I think they get better as the series goes along. I'm not too keen on the first two, I guess they're all right, but *Palace of Love*, and the succeeding ones, *The Face* and *Book of Dreams*—I like those last three books.

Chuck: Well, I hadn't thought of the other *Demon Princes* besides Treesong, but from *Freitzke's Turn*, Dr. Faurence Dacre . . .

Jack: Well, he was just a bad guy, but not a terrible, insensate criminal. To tell you the truth, I forget the story . . .

Chuck: Another place where the character decides that he's this singular being in the universe, and it's destined to mold itself to his uses, is Paul Gunther from *The House on Lily Street*.

Jack: Oh, yeah. That was back in the days when the world was young, when I wrote that. Back in the days when beatniks were beatniks! That was before the hippies—the beatniks were in power. Remember those?

Jeremy: I do notice that there is a common thread with a lot of your villains, that they're misunderstood characters who tend to be very fanciful, and have this very elaborate inner fantasy world, which in some cases they exteriorize—like *Viola Falushe*.

Jack: Yes, that's right.

Jeremy: And I notice that even in *Bad Ronald*, he's got this very detailed, creative inner world. They all tend to have that.

Jack: I think it makes them more interesting, rather than just Josef Stalin types. Of course I don't know how Josef Stalin was, he might have been very fanciful, for all I know . . .

Chuck: That brings up my next question, which was whether that type of person was based on any real-life figure.

Jack: No, just a way to figure out some real unpleasantness. All of us can do the same thing—each one of you guys out there, if you sat down to write a book about something unpleasant, each one of you would come up with a different variety of bad guy or bad lady, but it would be more or less along the same lines as I do: you just figure out what makes that person work, and why he or she sets him- or herself apart from the others, and what set him off in that direction to begin with. I just want to make the villain more interesting.

Chuck: Why do you seem to have relatively few female readers, and concomitantly, why are there so few female VIE volunteers?

Jack: I have not the slightest notion! I regard myself as a great ladies' man, of course, but that doesn't seem to do much good—I can't attract them! I wish I knew the secret . . .

I do a lot of reading of murder mysteries, and it's strange, but when I come across one that's written by a lady, with a lady detective, dealing with ladies' problems, I just discard it instantly, because I know that these things are slanted toward middle-aged, aging ladies sitting at home reading ladies' books.

There are, of course, some excellent lady writers. In fact one of my favorites, if not my favorite writer, is M.C. Beaton, who I want to recommend to all you guys. She's a marvelous writer. For you people that don't know her, she writes about a little town, *Lochdubh*, on the coast of Scotland. *Hamish Macbeth*, her detective, is a wonderful protagonist. And *Priscilla*, his lady love, works beautifully as a counterpoint to him. In fact all of her stories, all of her work is great. She has another series called *Agatha Raisin*, which I don't like as much, I don't

find *Agatha Raisin* a very appealing character. There's of course *Ruth Rendell*—*Barbara Vine* is her pseudonym—who's a marvelous writer, but she's such a pessimist; these things are all downers! And yet on the other hand, when she deals with her detective *Inspector Wexford*, she doesn't do that. *Deborah Crombie* is a good writer too.

But anyway, that's enough of my criticism of lady writers.

Chuck: You mentioned the coast of Scotland, which ties in with another thing I wanted to ask about: I understand that you're also a fan of good whisky.

Jack: Exactly right. Even bad whisky.

Chuck: What are some of your favorite drams?

Jack: Well, I tell you the truth, I wish I was what the French call a '*fin bec*', but I don't have a good palate for wines, I'm just perfectly happy with the plonk. Expensive wine is wasted on me. I drink them all, and I do seem to notice when you get especially good wine, but I don't make any fuss about it. Now in these single malts, I have at home five or six different brands, but I can barely tell the difference between one and another. I'm anxious to read that article in *COSMOPOLIS*. There was an auction on scotches a few months ago, and some sold for \$400-\$500 a bottle! The 50-year-old *Macallans* were very valuable, and others as well. But I usually stick with stuff that's \$20 or somewhere in there: *Glenlivet*, et cetera.

All right! Anything more you want to know about my taste for bad liquor?

Jeremy: I had a question about mystery novels. Do you have any opinion about *John Dickson Carr*?

Jack: I think he's kind of a poseur. He likes to fancy himself an entertainer, and in the middle of his stories I see him break off and talk to the reader, he'll say, "Now, reader, if you can solve this problem, I congratulate you" or something of that sort. And I don't like his detective, *Dr. Fell*; he seems phony. His ideas are sometimes ingenious, but always seem artificial, and not very convincing. In short, I don't really like him very much.

Ed: I wanted to ask about your own mysteries, a direction that you took, but not nearly as much as some of your other directions. . . particularly the *Joe Bain* books are great; they evoke California tremendously. I've always been curious about the reasons you didn't pursue the mysteries more.

Jack: Because, I'll tell you—after I published *The Pleasant Grove Murders*, I had an outline for one called *The Genesee Slough Murders*. My editor died, and whoever took over shot

it back at me. Maybe it wasn't as good an outline as it should have been. So I started writing something else, and I didn't continue with that San Rodrigo County stuff. Although I was kind of sorry about it; I liked that milieu, and I liked Joe Bain.

Ed: I like Joe Bain too! I love his roadhouse in the mountains.

Jack: Yeah, that was fun.

Ed: I wonder, in that regard, whether the real-world setting restricts your scope a little bit, particularly in dialogue. That ironic manner of dialogue which sets so much of the tone that we love, would be hard to pull off there.

Jack: Well, I think it worked out pretty good. I was not unhappy with the dialogue. I thought Joe Bain was a good character, I wish I could have gone on with those stories. He was—I won't say inspired by—but there was a fellow called A.B. Cunningham, who wrote about Sheriff Jess Roden in Tennessee a long time ago. If you get those out of the library, you'll find out that it's not like Joe Bain at all . . . Sheriff Jess Roden has a sidekick, a big black guy who gets into a fist fight with a bad guy in every story, always wipes up the floor with the other guy—they're entertaining books. A.B. Cunningham—if I'm not mistaken, I think he was a Texan.

Chuck: One more quick one. What aspect of your work has given you the most satisfaction?

Jack: Getting the check. I'm not fooling! But to be not quite as sardonic, I could say: writing the words "The End".

John V: Growing up, when I was fooling around, running around the house while Dad was writing, occasionally out of nowhere he'd chuckle to himself. It was very clear that he was enjoying what he was doing—that the writer was having a good time.

Ed: Looking for you in your books, Jack, I always thought I'd found you in Navarth. Is there anything to that?

Jack: He's one of my favorite characters. I identify with him in a certain way, but I don't consider myself him, though I'm fond of him and his ideas. But that's perceptive of you; of all the characters I've ever written about, Navarth is the closest one I identify with, though he's a totally different person than I am. But still, there are elements.

I like Navarth's poetry, too.

Ed: I love it.

Jack: Nobody ever talks about my poetry!

Ed: "Tim R. Mortiss"—one of my favorite poems. That, and being poured full of pomegranate wine by the riverbank . . .

Jack: Yes, "Eridu". That's a good poem. Then that "Song of the Darsh", and there's one other that I vaguely remember, though I don't remember where it was. It was about poison . . .

Ed: "Underneath My Upas Tree".

Jack: Where does that come from, I forget?

Ed: I think it's *Palace of Love*.

Jack: I think you're right.

Jeremy: Do you have anything to say about poetry in general?

Jack: Not in general. I'm not a big devotee of poetry. I like:

*Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad: when the journey's over
There'll be time enough to sleep.*

Ed: That's A.E. Housman.

Jack: A.E. Housman! *A Shropshire Lad*. The only trouble is that it's so morbid, so depressing to read about his preoccupation with death, with young people dying. Why is it necessary to be so damned despondent? But I think those are the most beautiful couplets in the English language. I don't think anybody can write better than that.

Some of those little shorter couplets and limericks are true art. One limerick I really love is:

*A curious family is Stein:
There's Gertrude, there's Ep and there's Ein;
Gert's poems are bunk
Ep's sculptures are junk
And nobody understands Ein!*

Another really good one, too:

*Hurrah for Madam Lupescu,
Who came to Romania's rescue:
"It's a wonderful thing
To be under a King!
Is democracy better, I esk you?"*

The English are adept at writing these limericks, they're so goddamn good at it!

Day 2: Sunday, August 3, 2003

Chris: What was the difference in the way you wrote, when you made the transition from writing on paper to typing on the computer?

Jack: For many years I wrote longhand, then I jumped over the typewriter and went straight to the computer, but to my amazement, I didn't notice any difference at all. I think the processes were all going on in my head, and the methods of getting them down on paper were peripheral.

I notice a difference now, since my eyes went out—it's hard to explain, but before, I could read up and down the page, and get a sense of the flow of the material; now, with my eyes out, I have to listen. I have a box, speech hardware, that reads the text to me, and try to pick out the flow of the stuff via what the voice tells me. It's very much slower. I have to go back and forth, make sure that it isn't just a jumble of disconnected phrases.

Anyway, I'm not bellyaching too much. I just bellyache a little bit.

John V: Let me throw in that writing is murderously difficult for Dad these days, it's really an excruciating process. Not being able to see, has proven to be—as you might guess—a very significant handicap.

Jack: Well, I'd rather do this, than get thrown into the Red Sea, with pirates on either side.

Chris: One of the reasons I asked, is because the file that I had to work with was very clean, of course—it had been picked over by you and by Norma and maybe some other people too—and it made me think about the way I write now, compared to the way I used to write on paper. It's interesting to me that there's no real difference for you in the creative process itself.

Jack: Nope, it doesn't seem like it—except, as I say, since my eyes went out, the process has changed; I have to do it via my ears, and go back and forth a sentence or two. If I'm really audacious, I go back several sentences . . .

Chris: How accented is the voice? Is it hard to understand?

Jack: No, not for me.

John V: Dad's used to it, but it's a pretty peculiar little robotic voice.

Chris: I wondered that the potential mellifluousness of some phrases would not translate well, through this 'speaking box'.

Jack: No, it's okay. No complaints, let me put it that way. I don't mind it, in fact I kind of like the son-of-a-gun.

Chris: I'm glad there's a way you can keep writing!

Jack: Well, I'm really half-retired. I don't regard myself as an active writer anymore, but I don't have anything else to do—except, oh, a few things here with my records and music. So I'm just writing now more or less from my own steam, but I hope I'll get this book out.

Chris: We do too! And thanks for your answer, it's very interesting to hear your comments.

Jack: Well, I guess so; it doesn't sound very interesting to me.

John V: Dad's using a vintage 386 DOS machine, with a derivative of the old WordStar software, and he's not using a mouse, so when you say 'cut-and-paste', to put that into Dad's language that would be 'reading a block' and 'writing a block'. It's a pretty old-fashioned process.

Jack: A fellow named Kim Kokkonen worked out this program for me, called 'Big Ed'—Big Editor. When I still could see, I could get characters of different size on the screen—and by this method I was able to keep 'seeing my work' for several years. But finally, the eye-doctor got his revenge on me, and I can't see anything. Now, Big Ed doesn't mean so much anymore.

Damien: Jack, first of all I'd like to thank you for providing hours of entertainment for me in the past, and hopefully in the future.

Jack: I hope you bought the books, and didn't just go to the public library for them.

Damien: Actually I stole them from my dad.

Jack: You know, in Denmark, if you get a book out of the library, you pay a fee which goes to the writer. I think in England it's the same. But here in the States, the writer is screwed. People go to the library, take books out, and the writer gets you-know-what for the service. The musicians' union is set up now so that any time a tune is played over the radio, some royalty goes to the artist or the composer, whatever it is. So I think there's been a movement to try to get the same thing for authors, that the writer gets a cut every time somebody takes a book out of the library. It doesn't have to be very much, actually, only a penny a copy or something like that—but it would mount up. As it is now, you write a book and it sells a thousand copies if you're lucky, but those things in the library get read a hundred thousand times and you get you-know-what for it. I'm not bellyaching too much, but I just want you to know it's not really correct.

Damien: I hadn't really thought of that, but you're right, that doesn't sound fair at all. But then I do actually buy books.

Jack: Oh, I was just joking . . . But I believe that in Denmark—I'm not sure about England—and possibly in some other Scandinavian countries, and perhaps Germany, they have that small fee.

Damien: I'd like to follow up on the question that Chris asked. I'm sure you've been asked this many times, but given also the conditions under which you work, I would like to know what compels you to write?

Jack: Well, I've been doing it for an awfully long time, and if I don't do it, I don't have much to do except sit around. I have a lot of records, old traditional jazz—are any of you people traditional jazz types?

Chris: I enjoy the music, I can't say my collection is large.

Jack: Well, I don't know how many records I've got but they must be in the thousands. They're scattered amongst CDs, records and cassettes, and so I've got an enormous project trying to organize them and get them all on CDs, indexed—it's kind of a pointless job, it doesn't do anybody any good except conceivably John, or my grandchild—but it is a job. So aside from this particular job, I don't have anything else to do. Oh, I do a lot of reading, of course, on these cassettes. But still, I'd feel restless, or nervous, if I didn't have a writing project going, to occupy my mind so to speak.

John V: Dad, what about in the old days, when you made your living as a carpenter?

Jack: Well, what about that?

John V: What led you to write instead of banging nails?

Jack: Do you need an answer, John?

John V: I think I know the answer!

Damien: I think I'd like an answer!

Jack: Well, in the early days, I was a merchant seaman for a time; then I got married, and got off the ships, of course. I had to find some kind of a job to keep me going, until I could make a living writing (I wrote aboard the ship). A friend of mind said, "Why don't you be an apprentice carpenter? It doesn't pay very much, and you have to go four years to an apprentice school—it's a pain in the ass—but still, you can survive on it. I'm an apprentice, and it's very difficult—they really put you through it, run you this way and that—but at least it's an honorable living." "All right, Sam,"—his name was

Sam—he took me down to the Carpenters' Union, and the guy at the desk there looked at me and said, "Aha! You're here, are you?" I said, "Yes, I am." He said, "All right, I'll ask you some questions. What're the dimensions of a sawhorse?" I said, "Oh, about like this and like that." He said, "Why are studs placed on 16-inch centers?" I thought about it a little bit, and said, "Well, it must be so they'll catch four-foot sheets of plywood without overlapping." So the third question—I forget what it was—I think he asked me which end of the nail goes in first. "Well, it seems to me more practical to put the point in first because the head gives a larger surface to pound on." "All right,"—he wrote on a slip for me—"there you go; just go over yonder, and they'll find a job for you." And he made me a journeyman carpenter! My friend, Sam Wainwright, was trapped in this four-year apprentice program, and I marched out with a job as a journeyman carpenter at three times what he was making. How his face fell! "Jesus Christ, what the hell goes on around here?"

John V: Construction in the Bay Area suffered for the next year . . .

Jack: Well, I learned fast. I got fired from my first job after an hour or two. The second job I lasted several hours, and third job . . . anyway, after getting fired from a few jobs, it wasn't all that hard. I got to be a pretty good carpenter in the end. And I'm really grateful I had this chance to be a carpenter, because it stood me in very good stead when we moved into this house. It was just a little shack, but over the years, and when he was old enough, with John's help, I built this house we're living in now, around the old shack. I couldn't have done it without the training. In other words I'm not mad about being a carpenter, I'm kind of happy in a way, but I got out every chance I could get. Every time I had a sale, made some money, I'd quit the Carpenters' Union and Norma and I would go traveling. Then the money would run out, and I'd have to sneak back in and try to get a job again. At this time jobs weren't so plentiful, and they tried to keep me out, but I managed to get back in. I got in and out of the Carpenters' Union three or four times . . . the last time, I never did go back; the writing income was sufficient that I didn't have to perform these ignoble tasks. Of course Norma was working as well, so that helped.

John V: Was this around '73, or so?

Jack: I forget when it was. No, it was earlier than that, I think. Anyway, that's my life as a carpenter.

Damien: So you enjoyed the writing more than the carpentry, then?

Jack: Well, sure! I could do it on my own time, sit in a comfortable chair, drink coffee, beer if the occasion warranted, have Norma bring me a lovely cuisine when she felt in the mood . . . obviously it's much more pleasant being a writer. If you're a carpenter, you work on these hills around here, there's poison oak, and you have to carry stuff up and down the hills; it gets tiresome. It's work, hard work! You go home, and you're tired. But again, as I say, I have never regretted it, was never mad about it—it was okay. I met a lot of good people. I don't have any friends left, I don't think, from the carpenter days. But I made a lot of friends, carpenters. They weren't the same ilk as writers. I don't know of any other guy who was at once a carpenter and a writer. There must have been a lot of them, of course.

But my circle of acquaintances, once I stopped being a carpenter, totally changed. I got to know Poul Anderson—he was about the first writer that I got acquainted with—and we stayed very good friends until he died, which I think was a great loss. Poul was one of the finest men I've ever known, if not the finest—well, present company excepted, of course. But he was a real gentleman—a wonderful guy, can't say enough nice things about Poul. He was born of Danish people, and his mother taught him Danish . . . but I don't want to rave about Poul too much. But I do miss him! He was my best friend, I guess, among writers. Frank Herbert I knew quite well. Anthony Boucher I knew pretty well. He was an editor—well, he was a writer too: murder mysteries, and so-called science fiction. So . . . have I covered the subject?

Damien: More than that—you've answered just about all my questions! Thank you.

Jack: You're welcome! Don't hesitate to ask questions. It's quite comfortable sitting here, and you gentlemen are no doubt comfortable where you are. My only regret is that we don't all sit at a table with some beer in front of us, but maybe the time will come.

Dave: Hi, Jack, this is Dave Reitsema.

Jack: Hi Dave. How's everything going?

Dave: It's going well, I'm on vacation in western Michigan—sitting on the shore of Lake Michigan. It's beautiful.

Jack: It *is* beautiful. Any mosquitoes?

Dave: Oh yeah, they have all sorts of bugs here—a lot of species that have never been named or discovered!

Jack: You have a cottage there, in a village, or out in the open?

Dave: It's a cottage. They line the shore, here. Both my wife and I are from this area, so we come back and visit, and all the relatives come out and drink margaritas and beer.

Jack: It sounds wonderful. Are you there all summer?

Dave: No, we just usually come up for a week.

Jack: From where? I forget . . .

Dave: I live on the south side of Denver.

Jack: Kokkonen, the programmer I was mentioning, lives in Boulder City, if I'm not mistaken. I don't know Denver very well, except I think there's the Brown's Palace, supposed to be a good hotel.

Dave: That's a wonderful hotel, and the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, is even nicer.

Jack: Oh really? That Brown's Palace is really old, isn't it?

Dave: Yes, it's at least 125 years old, I believe.

Jack: Have you patronized it?

Dave: I patronize it for lunch occasionally, it's a good place to have a business meeting.

Jack: They probably feed you pretty well, I imagine.

Dave: They do, but you must wear a tie.

Jack: But I'll bet they probably have good steak, and things like that—

Dave: They do!

Jack: Well, sorry I can't meet you there for dinner tonight.

Dave: I'd love to meet you for dinner, sometime! . . .

The question that I was most interested in, was how you feel about the VIE, and whether you're happy with the progress or result so far.

Jack: Well, first of all, I'd be a churl if I found fault with it, you know if I made complaints and said "What a rotten bunch of people"—you'd think I was insane. No—obviously, I can't think of the proper word. I was thinking about it yesterday, about what adjective I could use to describe what I think about VIE. I discarded the word 'grateful' because I didn't think it was apropos, but I marvel at the work you guys have done. I'm really impressed by you guys—thankful that somebody's around to do this. As far as I know, I'm the only current writer

that anybody's taking the trouble to go to these lengths. I'm happy about it—Norma suggested the word 'honored'—that's about as close as anything I guess. So, if you guys want some more flattery, I could probably go on.

John V: I think the word is 'pleased'!

Jack: Pleased and honored, and I'd rather have it this way than the reverse, that nobody paid attention to me! An old rascal like me, and everybody said, "Who's that?" No, instead it works the other way around. Somebody says, "Jack Vance" and now there are at least a few people who turn their heads, and don't spit on the sidewalk. So that's about it—does that answer the question or not?

Dave: I believe it does; I must tell you that I feel happy and fortunate to be able to hear you talk tonight and ask you questions, but as I recall you have never appeared in the pages of COSMOPOLIS.

Jack: No, I want to stay apart from it, I don't want to get . . .

Dave: That's okay, but it's nice to hear you say that, because one doesn't read that in COSMOPOLIS or anywhere else.

Jack: No, I don't feel it's my place to involve myself in the affairs of VIE. I'm not a member of the group, and it would be impertinent if I inserted myself. I very strenuously isolate myself from the work you guys are doing, except I'm sure happy it's being done. Again, I do admire your work; it seems like a magnificent job you are doing. I can't see the books myself, but everybody that has the books, admires them tremendously.

John V: I'll just throw something in here. When Paul first came to us with this idea, Dad more or less explicitly forbade both my mother and me to become involved, just because it would take time, and we have plenty of other things to do around here. Dad wanted us to be working on other things, essentially.

Jack: But luckily it didn't take any of Norma's time or John's time at all. Ha! It was worse than I ever expected! [laughs]

John V: COSMOPOLIS is an accessory to the major work that goes on. Mom in particular has put some things in, to show our appreciation to the people who are working on the project. But there isn't really a reason for Dad to come out and be involved in COSMOPOLIS.

Chris: Were you ever displeased with the way editors treated your texts in the past when you published?

Jack: Of course! Oh my god, I don't want to even go into it, I may have a heart attack! Editors have done things to my writing that even a dog wouldn't do. They do it without so much as a pang of guilt. When I see them, if ever I see them, they give me this bland look—and if I complain, they act surprised. "We're here to help you, Mr. Vance, here to make your writing better." All right! They've done some terrible deeds. Changed all my titles around, put in titles I don't like. About half the time, I give the story a title, and some girl out of Vassar will say, "God, that's no good, I'll give it another title." And that's the way it comes out. And what irritates me more than anything else, these girls out of Vassar are given the jobs of copyreaders, so what they have is a copy of *Fowler's English Usage* by their elbows, and they want to make me adhere to Fowler! And I try to explain to them, this is a volume of usage! It's not a Bible or anything, they want to make everyone stand in line, and salute when Fowler goes by. That infuriates me more than anything else. "*Fowler doesn't like that!*" You know—you should use two commas instead of one comma, Fowler says so. Fowler can go jump in a lake!

Chris: Is it more a question of smaller details in the way sentences are constructed?

Jack: It's all kinds of things. I am luckily more or less protected from the worst atrocities, because a lot of it I've never seen. You guys have seen more of it than I have. Norma's seen a lot of it, and she tells me once in a while about this thing or that, and I ask her not to continue because my digestion is not all that good that day.

Chris: Then maybe we should go on to the next question!

Jack: But anyway, I'm not alone in this; everybody I know is mad at the editors, it's not just me. Except maybe Dylan Thomas or John Masefield or . . . well, anyway, continue.

John S: Now that *Lurulu* is completed, where do you go from here?

Jack: Well, I'll tell you, I knew you were going to ask this, and I don't want to go into details about this story, or even tell you title, but here's how it happened. When I was writing *Ports of Call*, I wound up with a long book, but still had a lot of material I wanted to use. So freely, unconventionally, I said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I've got to stop this story here, and continue in the next volume." And so I ended *Ports of Call*. But I used the material I had left over, in *Lurulu*. Now, I've finished that story, and I don't have the impulse to continue with another sequel, but I find I still have quite a bit of material, about places, ports and societies, that for one reason or another I didn't

care to use in either *Ports of Call* or *Lurulu*, for various reasons which I won't go into—well, I'll say that some of these places were so scary, so grotesque, that I didn't want to scare my readers—so now I'm using some of this material in this new book I'm writing. I may use all of it or none of it. It's a different kind of a work than *Ports of Call* or *Lurulu*, which essentially make a single narrative; does that more or less get to what you wanted to know?

John S: I think so. I can't remember this having been asked before; I know that you and Norma have done a lot of traveling—to what extent do your travels and the people you've met find themselves in your stories?

Jack: None whatever. Well, let's put it this way: I'm not aware of it, but I suppose no matter what you do with your life, whether you travel or don't travel, or just meet people, or work as a carpenter or a radio announcer, all these experiences in your life get into your subconscious, and when you start to write you draw on these things without thinking too much about it. So I suppose that all the people I've met, either here in the States or elsewhere, maybe I've used them for help in the stories. I wrote some murder mysteries using backgrounds of Morocco, and the Pacific Ocean, and Positano in Italy, and on a freighter that Norma and I traveled from San Francisco to Spain on—I used that as a background for a story—mystery stories. But in the other material, backgrounds are much more synthesized—incidentally, I hate the word 'science fiction', I just hate to use it—it makes me think of *Star Trek*, and the adolescents who . . . well, I won't go into it. The last movie I ever saw was *Star Wars*, and I only went because I got a free ticket to it. As it turned out, I liked it, I thought it was a lot of fun. I liked it all—except when the hero duels with the villain using flaming swords, which I thought was a bunch of hokum. Anyway, I isolate myself from the so-called 'science fiction' field. Anybody asks me what I write, I say, "Oh, adventure stories, social Darwinism"—I just give some kind of funny answer, nobody knows what I'm talking about. I suppose I shouldn't be so damned ticklish, or vain, or whatever it is. I should bite the bullet and say, "All right, Vance, everybody thinks you're a science fiction writer, you might as well accept it." That's probably the sensible thing to do. But the vanity is that I just don't want to be in the same leaking rowboat as *Star Trek*.

John S: Understood, and I will not refer to your work as 'science fiction'!

Jack: Okay, although I'm not really too upset about it—I just don't like it.

I'm reminded of the time the government of Mexico took me and Theodore Sturgeon to Mexico City, and had us on a talk show together with Italo Calvino and a

Mexican communist. I didn't think much about it at the time, but every one of these people had a totally different notion of what the field of 'science fiction' was. Sturgeon and myself were a little closer together, but for instance, Calvino had the notion that the field derived from the Icarus legend, that it was just a continuation of Greek mythology; the communist thought it was all social propaganda, that all science fiction should be devoted to the egalitarian revolt of the masses, and that's the only reason for writing it. I forget what Sturgeon's ideas were, but in any event, my idea was just to use it for entertainment!

Damien: If you had your choice, whose work would you like to see, for lack of a better word, 'suffer' the same treatment as yours has, under the VIE?

Jack: Well, I guess Poul Anderson speeds to mind. Of course he's dead now, and can't appreciate it, but he certainly would have enjoyed having his work handled like this. But he's the only name that comes to mind, can't think of anybody else. There may be some other people whose work I admire. But as I say, you couldn't call me expert in the field.

Damien: Well, I don't want you to limit yourself to just science fiction—

Jack: Oh, well, for heaven's sake, I do a lot of reading of murder mysteries, suspense stories, and I've got some authors there whom I admire tremendously. There's a lady called M.C. Beaton. Anybody there know her?

Dave: I love her; she's a wonderful writer.

Jack: She is my favorite writer; she is magnificent. She can't be improved on. Her stories are a habit for me. She's got a new one out called *Death of a Celebrity*; I read her stuff over and over again. There are other good writers—I used to think that John MacDonald was really great, then I got sickened and annoyed by this feeling that he had to insert into each one of his books a big erotic spasm, and they're all the same, there's a formula he used. But if he'd get this erotic spasm out of his books, they'd be great. He's an intelligent man, and he has an eye for all kinds of wonderful things, but all this talking about how he got his gun off, and these ladies he laid, it just got so goddamn tiresome, and now I just can't stand him, I don't read him at all. But let me think now . . . now, Agatha Christie, and Earl [Stanley] Gardner, they're old war-horses, I've got an affection for them, and enjoy reading them.

I like English stories better than Americans. Oh, and Norma just mentioned Arthur Upfield, an Australian; anybody acquainted with his books? If not, then run, don't walk, to the nearest library and get some Arthur Upfield.

Damien: To the library, eh?

Jack: You'd have to. Upfield went over to Australia, from England, as a reporter. His early stuff is terrible, but the more he wrote the better he got, and his latest stuff is just tremendous. Also you learn more about Australia reading Arthur Upfield than just about any other way.

There's a woman called Deborah Crombie who is a good writer—and Ruth Rendell, but her stuff in many cases is very depressing, and I don't read murder mysteries to feel depressed, to get terrible feelings about the world. Sometimes she feels impelled to pull all the stops out on tragedy and terrible things happening to people—the babies are all dead, and the ladies get leprosy . . . But when her stuff isn't a downer, I recommend her—she's a damn good writer.

I kind of like Martha Grimes's stuff, although at times I find her trying to be too cute, too coy; still, I find her entertaining. Again, I'm still talking now about murder mysteries, which you guys aren't particularly interested in.

Dave: You started out writing for pulp magazine stories, and then moved into mysteries . . .

Jack: I was trying to make an honest buck.

Dave: And then the move back into your current work?

Jack: Just a matter of economics. Those early stories, I was trying to write something that would sell. I tried to sell to John Campbell, and had pretty good luck with him, if I could find something connected with the paranormal: telepathy, telekinetics, forecasting . . . Poul told me one time that he was in Campbell's back yard, and Campbell gave him a bent wire hanger, and told him to walk across the back yard, and Poul said the hanger popped down every time he crossed over this space, and John said, "Well, that's where the pipe goes; you're a good dowser." That's the kind of stuff John Campbell was into. So I admit to taking advantage of—I knew I could sell a story to him as long as I included some paranormal stuff in it. Then I started writing murder mysteries—because, first of all, I liked them—but there wasn't any money in it, so I just went back to writing so-called science fiction, and never turned back.

Chris: I wonder where your extensive vocabulary has come from—there are words you use that would not be in any standard thesaurus, so I'm not going to accept the answer that you just look in the thesaurus.

Jack: I was one of these kids that had a wonderful I.Q. I could read very early, and I was anti-social, not so much because I wanted to be, but because the other kids didn't like me very much. In any event, I did all kinds of

reading, of everything—science, history, art, music, everything. At age ten—I was very arrogant and vain, mind you—I thought that I had a better education than most other people I came in contact with. As a matter of fact, I was probably correct! But nobody wanted to hear some pipsqueak of a kid tell them how stupid they were.

Once I got out of high school, I decided I was going to change my ways. I wasn't going to be an aesthete and bookworm anymore, I was going to become a man's man, so to speak. So for about five years after getting out of high school, I went out and did all kinds of different kinds of work—manual work. I picked a lot of fruit, of course. I learned an enormous amount. I got a job with a mining construction outfit up in the Sierras, as a laborer. I learned all kinds of things there; I won't go into them. But I learned enough about electrical work that I subsequently conned the Navy into thinking I was an electrician, and they sent me out to Pearl Harbor to be an electrician's helper. I was there about three or four months. I was so mad at the Navy—they just didn't treat us very nice—and I came back to the States, arriving about a month before the Japanese hit the place. But I went out there, because of what I learned working for Western Knapp Engineering.

John V: What about rigging, Dad?

Jack: Oh, learning about rigging. Up in the mountains I learned rigging backwards and forwards: dealing with rigging, dealing with riggers, and admiring the rigging mentality, which I still do. I think rigging is a craft . . . well, you don't hear much of a rigger. As a matter of fact, later, after I got back from Hawaii, I got a job as a rigger at Kaiser, making ships. I was a pretty good rigger, in fact I became what they call a quartermaster, which means I had six rigs under me.

But anyway, I learned all of this stuff working for Western Knapp; it was very valuable experience. I wasn't so much of an erudite weasel anymore, I was just a human being. I've developed all my life; I think almost anybody develops as the years go by, if they've got any sense to them. They see where they've made mistakes, and if they have any will at all, they'll try to arrange things so they're not the criminal they used to be.

Oh—where I got my vocabulary! Well, I got my vocabulary from my early reading. One time, before I went for Western Knapp, I got a job as an assistant to a surveyor. That means carrying the rod, knocking stakes in, and so forth, I didn't mind. But he was a pretty smart guy, and I thought I knew all kinds of things. I told him—I don't know how the subject came up—but I told him that electricity was the flow of electrons. He scoffed at me, said, "You're crazy, you don't know what you're talking about." I said, "No, no, that's what electricity is, it's well known." And he said, "Ah, bah, that's just what

they teach you high school kids.” And of course, he was right. Electricity is associated with the movement of electrons, but scientists today talk more about the electric charge carried by the electrons.

Anyway, that’s where I got my lore, all from the mistaken idea of what an electric current is. I did develop a pretty good vocabulary by reading.

Damien: I noticed, having spent some time with your works lately, that *The Book of Dreams* shows up in a couple of your stories, and I wondered if it’s something that you just came up with, or . . . ?

Jack: No, I never had a book of dreams, but it seemed like a good idea for Howard Alan Treesong to have one.

He had this symbol, which he thought had mystical powers to it. This particular symbol I’d evolved, myself, long ago. There’s a book by Rockwell Kent called *North By East*, in which there are these beautiful woodcuts, some of them showing a boat wrecking on the coast of Greenland; some of these woodcuts showed human beings flying through space in an idealized fashion. I got thinking, “I wonder how you can express this feeling in the simplest way, using two curved lines.” So I experimented, did a lot of fooling around with it, so that the lines became a little bit more complicated, and I put this symbol into *The Book of Dreams*. The book was published by DAW first, and I included the symbol, and of course, they printed it upside-down—I just about had a heart attack! Of all the stupid things! This beautiful symbol carried all this magnificent dynamic thrust, and the damned thing was printed upside-down! How could anybody be so goddamn dumb? It looked, as I’ve often said, like a dead seal on the beach!

But did I have a book of dreams in my background? Not really, no.

Dave: I think you like perhaps to avoid being characterized as one type of writer, or another, and I’m curious as to whether—and I don’t want you to be modest—you’d consider yourself just a creative person writing in your own style.

Jack: Oh yes, definitely. It’s not just me, I think almost any writer has that feeling.

Dave: Do you feel that someone influenced you? Are you a craftsman, improving on the work of someone in particular?

Jack: Well, yes and no. When I was little, I used to read a magazine called *Weird Tales*. It was full of all kinds of good stuff, and I was influenced by the amazing stories that came out of it. This was way back in the ’20s. And then Lord Dunsany had an influence on me when I was young. He doesn’t any more, I think he’s a little bit too

hoity-toity, to tell you the truth, a little too charming. But when I read him as a kid I was very much impressed. Then of course I can’t neglect P.G. Wodehouse, whom I admire tremendously. I think he was a great writer, at least before the war. Jeffrey Farnol, I’ve mentioned several times, was an adventure story writer, English, during the ’20s. I liked Sherlock Holmes. Gee, I’ve read so much, I can’t remember it all . . .

Dave: But you wouldn’t say that you consciously—

Jack: Copied? No way. I was influenced, in the sense that, “Oh, that sounds like a good idea, I’ll try to use something similar to this.” But again, as I say, everyone who’s ever written, uses what he’s read as influence; but I don’t think it’s a matter of slavishly copying somebody’s style, or attitudes or anything of the sort. Wodehouse I just admire, revere. He wrote an epitaph for himself: “That old son-of-a-gun was a worker.” And he was . . . that stuff didn’t come easy for him, Wodehouse really worked at it. When you read it, it flows so artlessly and so evenly, but he was a worker, he worked very hard at it.

Chris: Speaking of the craft of writing, I’ve heard it said that you start a story with kind of a ‘mood’ that you’re trying to set and convey; do you then create characters that fit in with that mood?

Jack: I haven’t used that method so much recently, but, oh, maybe twenty or thirty years ago, before I started a new idea, I’d have a mood, a certain feeling. Then I’d scratch together a plot, and I didn’t purposely craft the characters to fulfill this mood, but just worked the story around this mood without getting too fussy about it. In other words, I forgot the mood as soon as I started the story, even though the mood persisted, I guess . . . especially in the *Tschai* books, I started those off with a mood about the planet.

But there wasn’t any hard-tested method: it was just ‘try this’, and ‘work at it’. I don’t have any methods, really, I just work as seems good at the moment. But yes, the mood would come on me, and I’d say, “Gee, it would be nice to work a story out on this set of circumstances.”

Chris: Was the mood that you had in mind for the *Durdane* trilogy related to music?

Jack: I don’t know, maybe. It might have been. But as I say, don’t take this mood business too seriously, because it’s just a kind of passing ingredient, in the work of getting a story together. It’s there, but not the guiding factor at all.



Work Tsar Status Report

as of August 29, 2003

by Joel Riedesel

WAVE 2

There have been some changes in management due to health reasons. Marcel van Genderen is the new CRT manager, Bob Luckin is the new CVT manager and Karl Kellar is the new Clam Muffins team leader. The transition was smooth and we expect these new managers to exceed even Robin's high expectations.

There are 25 texts in TI. Three of these are in Board Review and the other 21 are assigned and active. I've added *Lurulu* to my tracking and placed it into TI for now as unassigned and awaiting the text.

Three texts are in Implementation. There is one text in initial composition while 16 texts are in various stages of composition review. There are 6 texts in post-proof and 6 texts in post-proof composition updating and review.

Although it doesn't seem like a lot of texts have achieved volume readiness this month, I note that Post-Proofing is currently busy and that there are 16 additional texts that will keep it busy for the next month. We are quickly approaching the light at the end of the tunnel, and it is time to start thinking about possible deadlines for various tasks in order to achieve a reasonable end date and keep our eyes on the end of the tunnel.

Last month:

- In-TI: 26 texts (31.71%)
- Post-TI: 34 texts (41.46%)
- Volume Ready: 22 texts (26.83%)

This month:

- In-TI: 25 texts (30.49%) (includes *Lurulu* tracking)
- Post-TI: 32 texts (39.02%)
- Volume Ready: 25 texts (30.49%)



You Have Done What?

by Hans van der Veeke

We are now more than halfway through the project and subscribers are tasting our first twenty-two fruits! A lot of volunteers have been working on this, and a lot of jobs have been done. In fact 4067 jobs have been done (as of right now), with 225 people having done at least one job. If all volunteers had done an equal number of jobs, this is 18 jobs per person.

But few of us understand who is doing what, how many people are doing it, and who they are! Heck, even I, who have worked at many different project tasks, don't know exactly how each job interacts with the others. There have been explanations in COSMOPOLIS but a picture is worth a thousand words, and Suan has created a chart-which-says-it-all (from his immaculate database-of-everything-and-a-bit-more).

This chart shows each VIE team and each person who has done at least one job for that team. Teams marked in darker grey have completed all their work; there is nothing left to do for Pre-proofers, Double Digitizers, DDers, Jockeys, Technoproofers or Monkeys! The rest of the teams must keep their nose to the grindstone.

The team members are the people without whose work we could not have done Wave 1. They are the people now doing the work of Wave 2. Team heads are marked by an asterisk—though sometimes only the original or the current team head is indicated. It is hard to present each and every fact!

Around the Composition circle are numbers to help explain the somewhat complex process here. A newly composed text first goes through RTF-Diff (a type of Techno-proofing) and Composition Review (search only for compositional artefacts, like kerning errors), and then Composition Review Verify; CRV is to Composition-CRT what Board Review is to TI. The updated composed text is now Post-Proofed (search (mainly) for textual errors and issues, like typos). Errata found by the PP teams are then reviewed by both TI and the Composition team. The latter process is called PPV, which is the post-PP version of CRV. A further round of RTF-Diff is then done, to make sure no errors have been introduced by the updating process, and, finally (tada, the moment we've all been waiting for!) the composed text is 'Golden Master ready'. Golden Master ready means that we are ready to get proofs from the printer and to give them a final eyeballing at a Golden Master meeting (such as GM2 of last fall, see COSMOPOLIS 31).

The current VIE version of a Vance story is called a 'v-text'. The chart is divided into an upper, middle and lower section. A v-text begins, in the upper section, as a 'raw' file; an uncorrected digitization of some one or another published version of the story. As a 'raw' file it is 'pre-proofed' and 'Techno' proofed to render it free of typos or other obvious errors afflicting a fresh digitization or the published version itself. The v-text then goes to Textual Integrity for correction, and becomes a 'cor' file. This is the middle section. When TI is finished the Composition team transforms the 'cor' text into a 'fin' text by composing it as a printable pdf. The 'fin' text is then adjusted and cleaned up, as described above.

A final step is TEXTPORT; here any further textual (as opposed to compositional) corrections that have been

DIGITIZATION

Donna Adams		David Mead	John A. Schwab*
Mark Adams	Rob Friefeld	David Mortimore	Mark Shoulder
Derek W. Benson	David Hecht	Joe Ormond	Michael Shulver
Connie Brown	Joel Hedlund	Chris Reid	Gan Uesli Starling
Richard Chandler	Alun Hughes	Paul Rhoads	Tim Stretton
John Council	Jon Hunt	John Robinson Jr.	Per Sundfeldt
Christopher Davies	Andreas Irle	Thomas Rydbeck	Hans van der Veeke
Ian Davies	Jurriaan Kalkman	Bill Schmaltz	Koen Vyverman
Evert Jan de Groot	R.C. Lacovara	Luk Schoonaert	Suan Hsi Yong
Mike Dennison	Kyle Scott McAbee		

DOUBLE-DIGITIZATION: SCAN/OCR

Mark Adams	Joel Hedlund	Chris Reid	Peter Strickland
Olivier Allais	Andreas Irle	Paul Rhoads	Theo Tervoort
Erik Arendse	Ian Jackson	Joel Riedesel	Hans van der Veeke
Denis Bekaert	Damien G. Jones	John Robinson Jr.	Dirk Jan Verlinde
Richard Chandler*	Jurriaan Kalkman	Axel Roschinski	Koen Vyverman
Huy Dinh	Charles King	Thomas Rydbeck	Billy Webb
Hervé Goubin	David Mortimore	John A. Schwab	Richard White
Jon Guppy	Sean Rainey	Mark Shoulder	Dave Worden
			Suan Hsi Yong

PRE-TI PROOFREADING

Linnéa Anglemark	Owen Davidson	Joel Hedlund	Betty Mayfield
Erik Arendse	Evert Jan de Groot	Wayne Henry	Chris McCormick
Mike Barrett	Richard Develyn	Brent Heustess	John McDonough
Peter Bayley	Antonio Duarte, III	Helmut Hlavacs	Lawrence McKay Jr
Michel Bazin	Patrick Dusoulier	Patrick Hudson	David Mead
Richard Behrens	Patrick Dymond	Jon Hunt	Bob Moody
Derek W. Benson	Andrew Edlin	Peter Ikin	Till Noever
Joe Bergeron	Kimmo Eriksson	Ralph Jas	Turlough O'Connor
Brian Bieniowski	Linda Escher	Damien G. Jones	Joe Ormond
Alan Bird	John Foley	Jody Kelly	Dave Peters
Arjan Bokx	Fred Ford	David A. Kennedy	Matt Picone
Foppe Broisma	Rob Friefeld	Per Kjellberg	Richard Platt
Lisa Brown	Rob Gerrand	John Kleeman	Quentin Rakestraw
Chris Budgen	Carl Goldman	R.C. Lacovara	Greg Reddick
Sean Butcher	David Gorbet	Stéphane Leibovitsch	Chris Reid
Graziano Carlon	Edward Gray	Lyman Leong	David Reitsema
Jeremy Cavaterra	John H. Chalmers	Lee Lewis	Paul Rhoads
John H. Chalmers	Martin Green	Thomas Lindgren	Joel Riedesel
Richard Chandler	Jasper Groen	Richard Linton	John Robinson Jr.
Ron Chernich	Stuart Hammond	Tonio Loewald	Axel Roschinski
Deborah Cohen	Lori Hanley	George Logan	Robin L. Rouch
Christian J. Corley	Kurt Harriman	Fernando Maldonado	Jeffrey Ruszczyk
Chris Coulter	Craig Heartwell		

DD-JOCKEY

Mark Adams	Dave Peters
Richard Chandler	David Reitsema
Christian J. Corley	Paul Rhoads
Rob Gerrand	Mark Shoulder
Joel Hedlund	Hans van der Veeke
Damien G. Jones*	Dave Worden
David A. Kennedy	Suan Hsi Yong
Joe Ormond	

DD-MONKEY

Paul Rhoads
Joel Riedesel
Thomas Rydbeck
John A. Schwab
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton
Dave Worden
Suan Hsi Yong*

Thomas Rydbeck	Menno van der Leden
Mike Schilling	Hans van der Veeke
John A. Schwab	Patrick van Efferen
Steve Sherman*	John Velonis
Lyll Simmons	Dirk Jan Verlinde
Gan Uesli Starling	Koen Vyverman
A. Daniel Stedman	Paul Wedderien
Gabriel Stein	David White
Tim Stretton*	Richard White
Per Sundfeldt	Douglas Wilson
Willem Timmer	Dave Worden
Dirk-Jan van der Duim	Suan Hsi Yong

TECHNO-PROOFING

Danny Beukers	Turlough O'Connor
Mark Bradford	Donn Olmsted Sr
Ron Chernich*	Errico Rescigno
Christian J. Corley	Joel Riedesel
Michael Duncan	John Robinson Jr.
Patrick Dusoulier	Axel Roschinski
John Foley	Lawrence Schick
Rob Friefeld	Hans van der Veeke
Rob Gerrand	Patrick van Efferen
Ed Gooding	Koen Vyverman
David Gorbet	Matt Westwood
Peter Ikin	Dave Worden
Karl Kellar	Suan Hsi Yong
Bob Moody	Fred Zoetemeyer

TEXTUAL INTEGRITY

Linnéa Anglemark	Thomas Rydbeck
Derek W. Benson	John A. Schwab
Richard Chandler	Steve Sherman*
Ron Chernich	Anton Sherwood
Christian J. Corley	Tim Stretton*
Patrick Dusoulier	Koen Vyverman
Rob Friefeld	Dave Worden
Rob Gerrand	Suan Hsi Yong

TI-SECOND

Patrick Dusoulier
Rob Friefeld
Alun Hughes
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

BOARD REVIEW

Rob Friefeld
Alun Hughes
Paul Rhoads
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

IMPLEMENTATION

Donna Adams	Damien G. Jones*	Paul Rhoads
Mark Adams	John McDonough	Thomas Rydbeck
Derek W. Benson	Chris Reid	Tim Stretton
Mike Dennison	David Reitsema	Hans van der Veeke
Patrick Dusoulier		
Joel Hedlund		

COMPOSITION REVIEW (CRT)

Mark Adams
Andreas Björklind
Christian J. Corley
John Foley
Brian Gharst
Andreas Irle
Karl Kellar
Charles King
Per Kjellberg
Stéphane Leibovitsch
Bob Luckin
Paul Rhoads
Robin L. Rouch*
Marcel van Genderen*
Billy Webb

RTF-DIFF

Erik Arendse	Sean O'Sullivan
Mark Bradford	Errico Rescigno
Deborah Cohen	Robin L. Rouch
Patrick Dusoulier	Bill Schaub
Charles King*	Hans van der Veeke

REVIEW (CRV)

Joel Anderson
Paul Rhoads*
John A. Schwab

COMPOSITION

Joel Anderson
John Foley*
Andreas Irle
John A. Schwab

SECURITY CHECK

David A. Kennedy
Paul Rhoads*
Tim Stretton

TEXTPORT

Patrick Dusoulier*	Charles King
Josh Geller	Suan Hsi Yong

CHANGE VALIDATE (CVT)

Andreas Björklind	Charles King
Top Changwatchai	Bob Luckin*
Christian J. Corley	Robert Melson
John Foley	Paul Rhoads
Rob Friefeld	Robin L. Rouch*
Brian Gharst	Marcel van Genderen

GOLDEN MASTER REVIEW

VERIFY (PPV)

TI REVIEW

POSTPROOFING

Funambulist Evangels

Derek W. Benson	Patrick Dusoulier	Sandestins
Richard Chandler	Jody Kelly	Michael Abramoff
Christian J. Corley**	R.C. Lacovara	Ian Allen
	Steve Sherman	Mark Adams

FINAL RTF-DIFF

<i>Tanchinaros</i>	<i>Penwipers</i>
Charles King	Enrique Alcatena
Per Kjellberg	Robert Collins
Roderick MacBeath	Andrew Edlin
Michael Mitchell	Rob Friefeld*
David Mortimore	Tony Graham
David Reitsema*	Rob Knight
Bill Schaub	Betty Mayfield
Ivo Steijn	Quentin Rakestraw
Gabriel Stein	Errico Rescigno
Cameron Thornley	Mike Schilling
Russ Wilcox	Luk Schoonaert
Fred Zoetemeyer	Carl Spalletta
	Kelly Walker

Spellers of Forlorn Encyptment

John Audcent	Chris McCormick
Malcolm Bowers	Bob Moody
Harry Erwin	Till Noever*
Rob Gerrand	Axel Roschinski
Ed Gooding	Bill Sherman
Gilbert Harrus	Mark Shoulder
Peter Ikin	Michael J. Smith

Dragon Masters

Daniel Chang	Brian Bieniowski
Deborah Cohen	Top Changwatchai
Jeff Cook	Charles Hardin
Michael Duncan	Mark Henricks
Brent Heustess	Marc Herant
Jason Ives	Karl Kellar*
Brian Koning	Ken Kellett
John Ludley	David A. Kennedy
S A Manning	Bob Luckin
Michael Nolan	Jim Pattison
Matt Picone	Joel Riedesel*
Glenn Raye	Robin L. Rouch*
Jeffrey Ruszczyk*	Andrew Thompson
Mark J. Straka	Michael Turpin
Anthony Thompson	Patrick van Efferen

volunteers as of 20 August 2003
prepared by S.Yong

applied to the 'fin' text (as a result of a PP find, for example) are then retro-fitted to the last 'cor' text. The output of TEXTPORT is the VIE commercial publisher ready electronic archive.

About a quarter of all Wave 2 texts are Golden Master Ready. The other three quarters are somewhere in the 'cor' or 'fin' process. Let's keep up the good work; together we are getting there!



38's Crucible

by Paul Rhoads

VIE Management News

Robin Rouch, one of the all-time VIE powerhouses, has withdrawn from the project. We all wish her well, though the hole created by her absence is alarmingly majestic of proportion. Robin was a 'latecomer'; she began as a Post-Proofing sub-team head under Chris Corley. Later she created the Composition Review Team (her famous 'Proud Few'), and then the CVT team (to check compositional update implementation). Robin ran her teams with such verve that the whole project was infused with her exuberance and dedication. She will not only be missed, she will always be remembered. Robin has influenced the project so strongly that the effect will certainly be permanent. Her management credit has been earned 10 times over, and any post-VIE celebration would not be complete without her. I do not know the exact figures but I am sure they will show that Robin, personally and all by herself, did a quantity of VIE work to put her in a class with such heroes as Richard Chandler and Steve Sherman.

Meanwhile project work must go on. Marcel van Genderen, already promoted by Robin to assistant headship of CRT, has graciously accepted to carry on alone. Bob Luckin, one of Robin's 'proud few', who scores an exceptional 68 VIE jobs, has agreed to become head of CVT. As of this writing I do not know who Chris has appointed to head the Clam Muffins Post-Proofing sub-team. Several worthy candidates exist. Three big strong men will be needed to replace this one frail girl. For those who have not yet had the privilege of meeting Robin, imagine a combination of Jean Parlier pizzazz, Tatzel's troubling good looks, and Wayness Tamm's dedicated persistence.

Subscribers (which almost all VIE volunteers are) should doff their caps to Robin, Marcel and Bob. The number of managers is limited; they must work with each other, and the members of their teams, on a constant basis, in their free time, without pay and as often as not

without even someone to say 'thank you'. They are the ones who make the project move.

Thank you, Robin, for all you have done! Thank you, Marcel, and Bob, for what you have started to do! And thank you to whomever will lead the Clam Muffins!



A Post-Modernist International Bestseller

I rarely read International Number One Bestsellers, and when I do it is even more rarely with enjoyment, so it may be newsworthy that your curmudgeonly reviewer was pleasantly surprised by Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*. This book is a successful example of the post-modernist style.

The height of post-modernism is the cartoon series *South Park*. Like all post-modernist art *South Park* is not notable for deep thinking but it is as clever as possible, and it is artistic (as opposed to just 'post-modern') because it's so effectively about reality in both content and style. Unlike even *Peanuts* (obviously an influence) or so many other cartoons, and though little Kyle is the 'hero', *South Park* is just as much about his friends, classmates, teachers, all their parents (including the parents of the teachers!) and other denizens of South Park. This is not because *South Park* is about the town of South Park—the show takes us all over America and into outer space in the insouciant 'disrespectful' post-modernist manner—it is because its creators observe life broadly and deeply—in, one might say, the vancian manner.

There are three basic elements to post-modernism: throwing form out the window, or pretending to, aggressive or ironic relativism, and a bantering, magpie 'multi-cultural' eclecticism. Since there is no reason not to create new artistic forms however superficial, and since relativism is infected with quantities of vulgar truth, and since reference or non-reference to other art in whatever way or degree is a neutral quality, there is no reason the post-modernist style cannot be interesting and successful. The visual-formal aspect of *South Park*, the self-conscious kindergarten style graphics in particular, is integrated with its fundamental premise: mockery of the cutesy vision of childhood or the nicey-nice vision of life. This is no original theme but it is not an easily exhausted vein either. Unsuccessful post-modernist cartoons—the majority of contemporary after-school TV animation—are merely flat-footed exercises in unrelenting grotesquerie. But *South Park* strikes the right note: the kids are not only horrifying but cute. This is because they are so well observed. Like real children they are laughably absurd, terrifying, but also endearing in their innocently terrorist activities. The adults, since they should know better, have less appeal, but remain

sympathetic in their well-intentioned if totally bumbling humanity. The category that appears least in *South Park* is teenagers, and when they do they are totally unappealing—a refreshing note!

Life of Pi is not a truly first rate post-modernist masterpiece like *South Park*. But Martel seems almost intoxicated with observation of reality, and reports on it in a chattering manner I often found effective. *Life of Pi* starts out strong with an exuberant and rambling introduction, over a hundred pages, about childhood in Pondicherry, in which post-modernist relativism and multi-culturalism allows a warm-hearted treatment of Indian post-colonial cultural pandemonium. But when the main story begins, post-modernist grotesquerie dominates in odd counterpoint with 'magic realism'—the latter term used by a reviewer to avoid sully himself with the exact one: 'science fiction'. In the last pages we even get a frank post-modernist declaration; the hero is being questioned by people who don't want 'a story' but 'straight facts'; he responds:

"Isn't telling about something—using words [. . .] just looking upon this world already something of an invention? . . . The world isn't just the way it is. It is how we understand it, we bring something to it, no? Doesn't that make life a story?"

However expressive of post-modernist orthodoxy, and whatever degree of truth may be imbedded in such a statement, there is a line from *Star King* which nicely captures its essence: ' . . . incoherence, at once engaging and suggestive of a deeper wisdom . . . '. However it was with Lugo Teehalt, this time there is more incoherence than deeper wisdom. Reality can be trifled with in art, but better look both right and left before you cross the highway or the story you tell may be set in the emergency room.

Unfortunately Yann Martel is a 'littérateur'. The book's first sentence is: *This book was born as I was hungry*. Such an opener is a prominent display of post-modernist credentials; the work of fashionable authors these days is 'self-reflectively' about themselves and their work. Do we learn anything from Martel about hunger? I didn't. I don't mean to insist that Martel should write no book that does not provide original and profound insights, but if he is going to call attention to himself and his themes with tricks, let's have something to bite on under the post-modernist sauce! Also Martel can't resist proliferating wise-ass or cloyingly literary metaphors, like comparing the spectacle of fish as seen from a boat in the Pacific Ocean to Tokyo rush hour, or calling the change of color, when green trees are filled with hordes of small beige animals: *an autumn that came on in a few minutes*. He reminds me of everything I don't like about Kipling in such despicable phrases as:

I sang that tree's glory, its solid, unhurried purity, its slow beauty.

Nothing will ever reconcile me to such balderdash! When a real writer, Jack Vance for example, wants to evoke the wonder and mystery of trees, here is how he does it:

. . . and there, rising like a tremendous plume of smoke, stood the Tree. The outlines were hazed by distance and the upper foliage blended with the overcast but it was unmistakable. The Tree of Life.

— *Son of the Tree*

Or:

A dozen great trees grew to the side. Mist drifted down across the crags to swirl through the high foliage. Jubal stopped in his tracks. These were like no trees he had seen before. Each seemed an entity in itself: a massive creature of incalculable sentience, grim and domineering. — *Maske:Thaery*

No phony poetics, no cheap paradoxes; just the right words to stimulate the mind's eye. But it's not as if Vance's phrases are un-literary or un-poetic! Metaphor abounds; a tree is compared to a *plume of smoke*, it is endowed with *sentience*, its personality is characterized as *domineering*. Martel's writing is mere verbiage by comparison; *slow beauty? unhurried purity?* As opposed to what; *fast ugliness* and *hurrying impurity?* Meaningless! Such phrases serve a single purpose: to maintain in the mind of the writer and his readers that they are participating in something called 'high culture'. Lord Dunsany's mocking poem,

Apples fall up

Into silent thunder

captures the effect sought, and achieved, by the *littérateur*; an impressive and grandiloquent, but ultimately cheap and empty, illusion of probity and style.

The whole book is notable for well observed animal behavior. When the story topples into science fiction the only really interesting aspect is, again, the convincing descriptions of animal behaviors. Clearly Martel is seriously devoted to animals, and the only daring aspect of the book is a surprising defense of zoos. But even this, in obedient PC. fashion, is soft-peddled with the following disclaimer:

I don't mean to defend zoos. Close them all down if you want (and let us hope that what wildlife remains can survive in what is left of the natural world). I know zoos are no longer in people's good graces. Religion faces the same problem.

There is as much about religion in the introductory section as about zoos, and though it reflects the return of religion in the face of disenchantment with technology, Martel has little of real interest to say on the subject. His sympathetic introduction to various religions is engaging but he then settles into a white-bread syncretism without color or savor. Despite hints to the contrary the rest of the book, aside from a few forced references to 'Allah', is silent on the subject.

But Martel's hand is not always heavy and he is notably exuberant and positive. I suspect his wide ranging interests and positive attitude are the keys to his international bestsellerdom. They are certainly what kept me reading. Carping and complaining aside, when Martel is on stride he carried me along with smiles and laughter.



Reflections on *Clarges* and Vancian Psychotherapy

I have reread one of my favorite early Vance stories, *Clarges*, in the VIE version. John Schwab's setting is innovative in its use of Cursive for the *hors-text* material; an original and successful disposition for this book! I had not recalled to what an extent *Clarges* is full of themes treated in other stories. Here, I believe, is the first appearance of the 'Reach' concept, and the death of Rolf Aversham is an event occurring identically in *The Domains of Koryphon*. Here is how Vance does it in 1958:

Waylock seized the leg, hauled it up with tremendous force; Aversham went hopping, reeling back toward the windows. Clutching at the shinar silk, he gave a hoarse shout and fell backward out into space.

Excellent! But 14 years later Vance etches the same scene in unforgettable language:

In desperation he seized the foot and ran forward. The man, face suddenly contorted in dismay, hopped back with lurching foolish hops, out the door, out across the balcony, over the rail, out into the void.

All non-essentials ('hauling up' with 'tremendous force', clutching at 'shinar' silk) and any straining for effect ('went hopping, reeling back', a 'hoarse' shout) are eliminated. The action is presented in deft touches of maximal word-to-meaning ratio, with concentration on the surprising and telling detail; desperation, contortion, dismay, foolishness, and then the repeated 'hop's and 'out's to work a shivering crescendo.

There is an echo of *Dodkin's Job* in the attempt to tamper with a work report in the Actuarian, as well as Waylock's manner of getting an interview with Jarvis. The latter passage amounts to a plot outline for the story written four years later:

Waylock called the Central Cell in Garstang, and asked to be connected to Director-General Caspar Jarvis. The process consumed time and effort; he argued in turn with the switchboard operator, a public-relations official, the Cell Manager, the Assistant Director and finally won through to Jarvis himself . . .

The Chancellorship of *Clarges* is a precursor of the office of mayor of Ambroy in *Emphyrio*. Both are ceremonial vestiges of posts once having real influence. More significantly; in both books there is an attempt to restore this power, to reassert laws fallen into disuse.

Human laws are not like the laws of physics; they can go in and out of fashion. *Cadwal*, with the Great Charter and those who would relegate it to history or revivify it, uses this concept as a basic plot dynamic.

Clarges is also a major vancian treatment of the social effects of what can loosely be called the industrial, or technological, revolution. *Clarges* was written in 1958. In 1952 Vance wrote *Gold and Iron*:

The barge flew over the glaring lights, the fiery pots, the churning arms, the incalculable shapes of Magarak.

Suddenly it occurred to him, how would he find his way home? There was no locator on the raft. He must remember to unclip it, take it with him.

On the locator he gauged the progress of his voyage. Not yet half-way to Central Organ. Below, the buildings, the shapes, the moving arms, the fantastic fires, took on proportions more enormous than he had yet seen. The air reeked with acrid odors; the clatter and jangle of the processes reached up to astonish him. How could men survive such a nightmare?

And yet men did survive. Men had survived ice-ages, pestilences, wars, and they survived Magarak. Human will to live approached the infinite. And Barch thought, put . . . the Zulu buck at a modern city intersection, and the Zulu might also wonder at man's resistance to self-created hell.

In *Clarges* it is not the physical brutality of an unrelenting industrial chaos, but the physiological brutality of a society built on technological miracles. This is related to the 'neo-Rousseauist' or 'Bodissian' warning that too great a distance from nature de-natures humanity.

Clarges and *Night Lamp* have the two most fully drawn vancian treatments of psychotherapy. In *Night Lamp* Jaro receives therapy but his 'problem' is really an obscure but successfully functioning part of his brain receiving messages from his unhappy brother, imprisoned far away. This may seem to be a 'psychological problem' for Jaro, or look like one to the doctors, but the real problem is that Garlet is suffering. This suffering is caused by human evil. Later Jaro liberates Garlet. Jaro was 'cured' but the real problem was not solved; Garlet endured inordinate suffering, for too long; the help Jaro and Maihac then offered was insufficient.

The psychological problems treated in *Clarges*, the effects of the special strain of life in the Reach, is of the same type. Both Jaro and the *cattos* of *Clarges* are victimized by conditions of the outer world.

There is a philology of psychological treatment-types in *Clarges*:

" . . . analysis, which is applicable only to the milder troubles and where communication is still open; hypnosis or suggestion, which constitutes a superimposition upon the basically unsound foundation; drugs, very useful aids to the above processes, and of a certain usefulness in themselves. Their action, however, is merely a numbing of the malfunctioning parts, and is by no means permanent. Then

there is shock, by chemical, glandular, electrical, mechanical or spiritual methods. Under certain circumstances shock produces surprising results; more often the shock is traumatic in itself . . . surgery, which is actual excision of the disturbed section; there is electro-staging, which is the blurring or erasing of all circuits. There is likewise the vortex principle, or adding of the entire brain. And lastly there is . . . the development of a new individual from a cultured cell, a process which hardly can be described as therapy, although such is the eventual effect. Naturally I considered all of these processes, but I was dissatisfied. None of them appeared to attack the source of the catto's trouble — which is merely his frustration and melancholia. To cure the catto we must either remove the obstacle — which is to say, change our entire system of life, manifestly impractical — or we must arrange the catto mind so that the obstacle no longer appears insuperable."

The real problem is that we don't like, or can't cope with, reality. Jaro was disturbed by his brother's mournful complaints. The catto can't cope with the stress of life in the Reach. From mere annoyance, through melancholia and on to 'madness', are steps on a progressive retreat from the difficulties of reality into a subjective inner world, and finally a state of catatonia which, though ever more limited, are more bearable than the real thing.

The psychological theories of recent decades — radicalized impoverishments of the subtle and complex Freudian orthodoxy — contrast with this vancian view. The Freudian thesis, by contrast, has interesting vancian overtones. According to Freud our understanding of ourselves and the world depends on symbolical structures through and by which we apprehend, interact and exist. These symbols, or 'symbol flakes', include elementals such as 'mother', 'anus' 'penis' and conditionals such as 'fixation', 'retention', 'jealousy'. 'Meaning patterns'* can now be constructed, such as: 'the anal-retentive subject has a mother-fixation and suffers penis-envy'. This 'meaning pattern' would give indications not only about the subject's inner life, but her outer life and personal history. It may be piffle, to say nothing of messy and embarrassing, but it pretends, or attempts, to express an englobing reality taking all aspects of experience into account — emotional, physical, intellectual, temporal, cultural — in a synthesis, a single 'swirl of import'. 'Freudian analysis' decrypts the symbolical tangle in which the subject finds himself resultant upon the particular circumstances of his physical-social-psychic development. The 'analysis' functions as both diagnosis and cure; by coming to grips with the Freudian symbolical matrix, the interface by which the self (the 'ego') interacts with the world (a 'cultural' force generating 'super-ego') and his inner self (the notoriously

capricious and obstreperous 'id') the subject can adjust or complete his personal symbolical interface and adjust and balance the dynamic forces that make up the ensemble of his existence and experience. Freud seems to locate the 'psychological problem' neither in the subject per se, nor in the environment. It does not seem to be accurate to say that there is a Freudian 'natural' or 'normal state', either interior or exterior, from which there has been deviation. Instead the subject's problem is almost linguistic; he has not passed from 'anal' symbology to 'genital' symbology, as if his vocabulary and syntax were out of phase, as if he had not properly learned to listen to music or look at painting, as if he were traveling through the realms of color without enough purple magic vocabulary (the realm of living symbols) or green magic syntax (the realm of manipulation of these symbols).

According to Vance, art — literature, music, painting, the creation of inns — is about manipulation of symbols. This means something very simple: words and musical notes, for example, are 'symbols' or elementals which, combined in alchemical ways, generate 'meaning'. This 'meaning', not scientific in nature, is nonetheless laden with implication and potent with sense.

Post-Freudian psychological theories are more scientific, or flatly materialist, in tone. There is no question of symbols. The pathology is located within the subject like a microbe to be obliterated with an antibiotic spray. Psychological problems are ascribed either to chemical imbalance or to improper socialization, as if normalcy corresponded to a physical state X, or as if there were only one mode of being and interacting. The subject's brain must be adjusted with drugs, or the botch his parents and teachers made of his socialization must be corrected so that the techniques of interaction are mastered. For Freud the essence of a psychological 'problem' is neither brain disorder nor poor socialization but resides somewhere in the language which allows the 'I' access both to its inner part and the world around it — the latter understood as a dynamic construct, a 'culture' made of symbolical interactions perpetually evolving by reason of the syntactically gifted individuals who make it up; in vancian terms, the 'sprites' of the green realm.

This contrasts sharply with the socialization idea, which in fact involves no socialization at all but boils down to a single piece of brutal advice: *think only of yourself and your personal satisfaction!* If the psychological problem is not chemical, which is to say physical, it is a crude matter of repressed desires resulting in dissatisfactions to be alleviated by circumvention of repression. Even more simply stated: the subject is not getting what he wants. A critique of his wants is excluded. They are what they are. They are there. They need to be fulfilled. This amounts to a relativist and anarchic critique of society; all constraint, of whatever nature, is wrong. The subject must liberate himself,

** . . . the meaning patterns of the green realm, where a hundred symbol-flakes (each a flitting spot of delicate iridescence) might be displayed in a single swirl of import.
— Green Magic*

which boils down to the recommendation that we should not care what others think. Social opprobrium is nothing but a mindlessly repressive attitude perpetrated by under-developed persons taking their cues from outmoded notions.* Achievement of gratification is the symptom of 'proper adjustment', and thus 'cure'. The Freudian 'super-ego', a dynamic aspect of the self but also an ensemble of symbolical elements anterior, exterior and interior to that self, is disqualified. The environment, physical and cultural, is no longer a real place our relation to which might be meaningful in ways that are larger than ourselves. It is reduced to a neutral locus, a playground with a rubber floor where the well-adjusted seek gratification in liberated and omnipotent creativity.

The psychologists of *Clarges* and *Night Lamp*, without Freudian poo-poo pee-pee stuff or any symbolical gobbledygook, see the environment and the human subject as having states that are more or less ideal, or normal, within certain broad limits. Departure from the bounds of these normal states causes, or is caused by, strain. When human nature is overtaken by a reality that is too stressful it becomes discouraged or may even collapse. Less robust or flexible personalities are more prone to collapse but the basic fault is in the environment, or more specifically human foolishness and evil.

This vancian approach is not without interesting similarity to a third contemporary theory, an obvious corollary of the socialization idea, by which psychology transforms itself into politics. According to this theory society, the environment, is also the problem, but it must be acted upon with vigor so that human life may be optimized. Unlike the vancian view there is no steady conception of nature or human nature; humans are open-ended creative beings whose needs and desires are protean. Absolute tolerance must prevail. Rigid conceptions of the past must be scrapped in favor of an environment that is an open-ended arena where each individual's 'normalcy' or 'deviancy' (new and old terminologies meaning exactly the same thing) can express itself in all directions.

In *Clarges* and *Night Lamp* human nature is seen as falling within certain boundaries, which must be respected. When the environment weighs too heavily on the subject there is no cure, no 'liberation' that can help them, and the true cause, the undue stress of life, cannot be ignored forever. The only therapeutic hope held out by the vancian psychologist is blocking off awareness of the stressful reality. This means rearrangement of the subject's mind so the problem no longer appears insuperable, or no longer appears at all. It might be called 'ostrich therapy'. Jaro is saved from Garlet's voice,

*For example religion: an outmoded influence held to be sexually repressive because it allegedly labels certain behaviors 'deviant'. "Deviant from what?" the critics ask? "How can there be deviance when the only 'reality' is the swirling miasma of individual lusts?"

but later this 'cure' looks like abandonment, even betrayal, of his brother. Then Jaro must cope with his conscience. In *Clarges* Basil Thinkoup's ingenious 'anti-heptant' therapy may work, but for how long? After leaving the hospital 'cured', will not the stress of life in *Clarges* soon drive the subject back into a catatonic state?

The other striking similarity between *Clarges* and *Night Lamp* is the class stratification of *Clarges* and *Thanet*. Elaborate class hierarchies are often mentioned by Vance, such as the uniformly bourgeois Soumi society with its 20 social levels so subtle no outsider can detect them (*Cadwal*), or the Tunkers of Mizar 6 who, despite a monastic social structure intended to eradicate class differences, recreate them through a language of eyebrow movements (*Star King*), or any number of societies dominated by an aristocratic caste. But not often does Vance present whole stories or long episodes set within such cultures, where class stratification itself is a major story element. The classes of *Clarges* are the 'levels' people must traverse toward the state of 'Amaranth', and immortality. The climb is made via social merit. Most do not make it; they are then 'assassinated' on schedule in accord with the Fair Play Act. No one is obliged to take part in this race, where the odds are 2000 to 1, so there is also a class of 'glarks'. In *Thanet* society is structured in stratified social clubs, culminating in the supernal Clam Muffins. There is no immortality to gain, but much mortification to suffer at failure to reach higher status. The climb is not via the grim route of social merit but is a pure popularity contest; in contemporary terms it is about how 'cool' you are. People can drop out of the *Thanet* system to become 'nimps'. At *Thanet* social climbing is accomplished in an atmosphere of frantic gaiety which seems to alleviate some of the stress and nastiness of the system.

What about throwing out class distinctions? Vance's work suggests that, however you slice it, society will be more or less stratified. In *Throy* we are treated to this bit of Bodissian wisdom:

To create a society based on caste distinction, a minimum of two individuals is both necessary and sufficient.

Because human beings are what they are, because the world is what it is, societies will be stratified. This is one of those vancian views that make his thinking unorthodox. But Vance is not saying we are absolutely condemned to this situation; some societies are worse than others. The worst are fully dedicated to the proposition that the sweet sensation of superiority is worth the corresponding mortification—to be suffered, naturally, by others. As Vance puts it in *Throy*:

. . . the diminished status of [some], by a sort of transcendental osmosis, augments the status of other folk.

In Clarges, Carnevalle is necessary to alleviate stress, while in Thanet carnevalle is incorporated into the fabric of life. But even if Thanet seems frivolous and gay the 'Black Angels of Penitence' persecute 'schmelzing' nimps with physical torture.

The stress in Clarges is generated by fear of death. No one likes to die, but normally we are not subjected to a slim possibility of technological immortality for which we are invited to compete against everyone else for all our natural lives, meanwhile being informed of the approximate date of our assassination.

The anxiety of death is a theme in several books. In a way it is *the* theme of *Ports of Call*. In *The Killing Machine* the hormagauntish passions of Kokor Hekkus are larger than mere prolongation of personal vitality; he must even live several lives at once, to the fantastical extent of being the lord of two cities, in two guises, to make war upon himself. Such insatiableness reduces life to monstrous inconsequentiality. To be a hormagaunt he sucks the life out of children; to experience many lives simultaneously he reduces himself to a thespian. Carried to this point the lust for life negates its preciousness and seriousness. The final cry of another hormagaunt reveals the motor of such lust, the same that drives the stratified society: the übermensch temptation, the dream of god-like superiority:

"Fools! Fools! Do you realize how long you have been gulled and milked, and bled? Of your gold, of your warriors, of your beautiful women? . . . Against the Brown Bersaglers he sent your best and they died in futility; to his bed came your beautiful girls; some returned to their homes, others did not. You will cry when you hear of how they fared! At last he died, at last I die, but fools! fools! —"



The Normal Man and the Exotic Woman

(The following is adapted from a VanceBBS thread started by Dan Gunter.)

Roy Barch, Aillas and Reith are men we can identify with. Certain women they fall in love with—Komeitk Lelianr, Tatzel, Ylin Ylan and Zap 210—are less familiar types. Their culture, and sometimes their race, are very different from ours. Vance almost seems to bring such couples together in a process like a scientist immersing a normative control-substance into a foreign solution. The result has little resemblance to sociological or anthropological writings; Vance presents aspects of culture and society through their expression in human hearts engaged with other human hearts.

Komeitk Lelianr and Tatzel present the problem of superiority. Roy Barch is culturally inferior to the Lekthwans. The measure of this inferiority is his own:

technological and 'cultural' development. Aillas' inferiority to the Ska is different; it is merely a Ska prejudice. But the Ska, at Castle Sank, can impose their view. Barch overcomes his sense of racial inferiority by demonstrating, to himself, that he is, at least in some ways, as good or better than the Lekthwans. The marriage at the end of *Gold and Iron* was added by editors and has been removed per Vance's instruction for the V.I.E. Though Barch cures himself of his sense of inferiority the cultural gap, now more horizontal than vertical, remains too great for marriage. For Aillas the denouement is not about proving to anyone, least of all himself, that he is Tatzel's equal, but his triumph over his romantic obsession. This triumph is expressed in a speech to Tatzel on the Cam Brakes:

" . . . When the day-dreams and romances of two persons run alike, they become friends, or, as it may be, lovers. When this is not the case, they find no pleasure in each other's company. It is an easy concept, though but few take the trouble to understand it."

Aillas' romantic obsession with Tatzel is not unrelated to his enslavement because Ska prejudice distorted what ought to have been the normal working of reality. If Aillas could have approached Tatzel on a footing of equality rather than being forced to gaze on her from afar and from below, the passions his day-dreams created would more quickly have given way to the reality of who she is. His obsession might have been blunted, or reality could have taken a normal course, in whatever direction. Tatzel's attitudes would also have been different in less relentlessly hierarchical circumstances; she would not have begun her acquaintance with Aillas regarding him as a sub-human inferior. Ska prejudice made Aillas' situation extreme, but even the less dramatic cultural barriers running through, say, Western middle-class society produce similar situations, as anyone who has gone to high school is aware.*

When Aillas and Tatzel trade conditions Tatzel, now a slave in her turn, clings to her prejudices. If Aillas ends up less of an animal in her eyes, she is never totally liberated from her Ska perspective.

The case of Barch and Aillas are anatomies of the effects of social hierarchy. The lovers of Adam Reith have a completely different function. With Reith, Vance does not treat the problem of cultural or racial hierarchies but of various kinds of distancing from reality that society and culture can generate. Ylin Ylan, the Blue Jade princess, comes from an aristocratic culture

*An extreme case that has always interested me is the 1970s case of the man obsessed with Jodie Foster. Stardom represents a strange sort of aristocracy rife in modern egalitarian societies. Stars are no 'aristocrats'. They have no ancestral land, no traditional values, no hereditary pride. They are basically ordinary folk. Jodie Foster is certainly a remarkable person by her many notable qualities, but these are certainly not the true reason for the sometimes pathological fascination with stars. Stars are intimately known, almost friends, but inaccessible, somewhat like Tatzel at Castle Sank.

where everything is formalized. She knows only a complex and artificial world of fêtes and protocols. Her capture and adventures bring her into brutal contact with a more real or natural situation. She even seems to be developing into a normal young woman when the journey back to Cath begins, and especially when Dordolio appears. Her habitual reactions reassert themselves. But her adventures in the natural world have placed her in contradiction to the 'civilized' values of Cath. She faces an uncompromising choice: reject her 'civilization' and live life on a more natural basis, or cling to that civilization. As it turns out Ylin Ylan cannot escape her heritage, and only one role remains for her to play once return to the old context is complete: *awaile*. No matter what she does the special joys of Cath, including 'the round', are lost to her forever. If these are her ultimate delight, *awaile* is a greater good than natural life; her perspective has been decisively corrupted by the decadence of Cath.

The case of Zap 210 is as different from Ylin Ylan, as Tatzel's is from Barch's. By the agency of the Pnume, Zap 210 has suffered not the distortion of over-civilization but retarded development. This is not only physical, though she has been maintained in the physical and psychic condition of a pre-adolescent. Her life is not characterized by artificiality but constriction. What she knows of it is extremely circumscribed but more or less normal. It is certainly not dominated by the incredibly elaborate conventions and hyper-civilized delights of the totally artificial 'round'. The subdued and polite comporture practiced in the shelters is not artificiality, it is merely an expression of the tranquility valued by the Pnume. The adventures of Zap 210 on the ghaun do not, like Ylin Ylan's adventures outside Cath, highlight the contrast of an artificial culture with reality, but the blossoming of a proto-person into reality:

Life for Zap 210 was a somewhat insipid experience to be tolerated. Fear was reserved for the unfamiliar; joy was beyond conjecture.

For this reason Zap 210 does not suffer a 'crisis' but a simple series of misadventures, her inexperience obliging her to a stumbling discovery of the real world, as well as her own selfhood, her sexuality included.

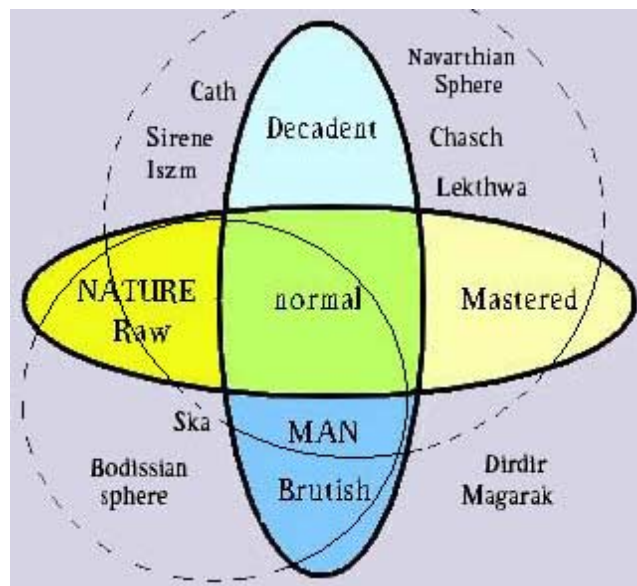
Is the device of the normal man and the exotic woman just a way to make such points, or does it have a deeper element? Why an erotic relationship at all? Many other ways of dramatizing cultural or social questions can be imagined. Or why not turn the formula on its head, and present a normal woman and an exotic man? Trying to comprehend Zap 210 Adam Reith thinks this thought:

She was female and inherently irrational — but her conduct seemed to exceed this elemental fact.

For Vance, is Man the 'subject', while Woman remains 'object'? Given the abundance and variety of his female

protagonists this is doubtful, or even excluded. Take the Golden Girl (another Lekthwan). She has been torn from a high culture and thrust downward, like the 19th century Western woman shipwrecked in Australia and forced to live among the aborigines. Both kill themselves in despair at the prospect of continued life in such savage conditions. The modern West is to Lekthwa as aboriginal society is to the modern West. This is not because the Golden Girl, like Tatzel, cannot assimilate reality, or because, like Ylin Ylan, she is discouraged by the impossibility of return to an artificial one, but because she cannot bear the loss of a truly higher condition, or continued existence in a brutish mode. Her culture is not artificial, like Ylin Ylan's; it is, in fact, superior. The Golden Girl is highly developed, sensitive and broad of outlook. Her condition, on Earth, is not an opening into the natural world, but a closing into a limited and constricted state.

Vance makes a distinction between culture and nature. But he makes another between brutishness and development. There is a golden mean in the intersecting continuums from raw to mastered nature and from brutishness to decadence in society.



Each society or civilization may be charted as an ensemble of points and/or zones falling within the ensemble of the blue continuum representing Man in his cultural states, and the yellow continuum representing Nature and the degree to which it is mastered. A few vancian societies have been named on the chart as samples; they are placed near where cardinal points or zones charting their characteristics might be located within the continuums. The Dirdir, for example, are both technologically evolved while culturally brutish. The Cath have only a moderate level of technology but an extremely refined and even decadent culture.

Culture can be artificial. It can also be a higher state, a green realm where life is augmented. There are real distinctions between no culture, low culture, high culture and corrupt culture. The symbolical matrix that is

culture, a 4-dimensional realm of living symbols generated and maintained by generations of human beings, is a vancian reality. The Ska are not superior, they just think they are. The Lektwhans, like the Golden Girl, do not regard humans as 'inferior', just less developed. Their attitude is not malevolent; since they cannot interact with humans on an equal basis they undertake to educate them. The Ska are xenophobic übermenschen who regard others as animals to enslave or exterminate, as circumstances dictate. That they may have been provoked to this attitude, by being treated badly to begin with, is no excuse.

Rob Friefeld brought the following passage, from *The Wannek*, to our attention:

At the center rose a massive monument. A dozen male figures, each carrying an instrument or tool, danced in a dreadful ritual grace around a female form, who stood with arms raised high, upturned face twisted in some overpowering emotion. Reith could not identify her expression. Exultation? Agony? Grief? Beatification? Whatever the case, the monument was disturbing, and rasped at a dark corner of his mind like a mouse in the woodwork.

However distorted men's vision of Woman, women are people too, and Vance dissects the resultant comic discontinuities in such episodes as the dialogue between Aillas and Tatzel.

As the old saying goes: *T'is love, t'is love that makes the world go round!* The Greeks understood this through the symbol of Eros. Though in the body of a baby or a youth, Eros is the oldest and most powerful of the gods. He created all the others at the beginning of time. Eros is more than his vulgar representation, the god Priapus, an imperious sexual organ steering its phampounian part like a triumphant Pulsifer. Under the law of Eros one thing is attracted to another. It is more than man to woman, it is also rain to earth, root to mould, flower to sun, tide to moon—or, in modern terms: gravitation, the strong force, the weak force.

Is there a 'romantic' element in these *normal man, exotic woman* situations that goes beyond mere plot convenience? Male characters like Anacho, Finnerack, Dystar, Ifness, Jehan Addels, Gascoyne the Wholesaler, also represent contrasting or revealing cultural attitudes. Anacho has accepted Dirdir mythology even though it denigrates what he is. This acceptance is so thorough that Anacho is exalted by it. Under Reith's influence he slowly sheds the Dirdir attitude but retains some of the *superbe* imbued in him by his original credence. Anacho's is a success story. He ends up free of his cultural prison, like Zap 210, and unlike Ylin Ylan or Tatzel.

We live in a 'man's world'. But the thing men are interested in, above all, is women. As a young man Jack Vance proclaimed that one of his main interests was female psychology, and what young man is any different? Interest in female anatomy probably runs a close second,

to say the least. It has often been observed that, as Christianity expanded human freedom and respect for the individual, women had more and more importance in society until, by the 18th century, culture was completely feminized. I consider this a fashionable myth of modern thinking; my own idea is that women, just by being there (and never mind Cleopatra, Queen Elizabeth I, Joan of Arc, Jane Austen or any of the countless women famous even to pre-feminist historiography), have always had a great, if not 'crushingly preponderant', influence on men and their alleged world. Take the Greek story, true and historical, of the man who fell in love with the statue by Praxiteles in the temple on Lesbos; recall the delicacy of Romanesque art exemplified in the smiling angel of Reims. Are the boys nothing but bellowing beasts, calming down only when a girl comes along? Perhaps not. Still it is surely the case that masculine energies are largely engaged by Woman. 'Cherchez la femme' as the French cleverly say: 'look for the woman' to learn the reason for, well, whatever it may be. Because of sex? Note the passage from *The Wannek*; the woman, in so far as her physical nature is evoked, is described only as a 'female form'. The rest of the passage is concentrated on her inner, or spiritual, nature.

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Thoughts on *Throy*

I just finished rereading *Throy*, one of Vance's most perfect works! Here at last the problem of the 'political denouement' is solved. *Domains of Koryphon, Durdane, WYST* and other stories dramatize a reorganization of society and government, but sometimes society itself seems to become a sort of character, the center of attention of the story, an effect that can be awkward, leading some critics to accuse Vance of poor plotting. But in *Throy* it is handled with unequivocal mastery. The denouement is satisfactory and fully lived through the characters.

Throy also boasts a succession of unforgettable societies, like the super-bourgeois Soumi with their religion of the Gnosis, an amusing 'scientism' riff of this ancient heresy, or Yaphet where the modern heresy of health idolatry gets some gas let out of its bag:

They were fed a meal of unfamiliar substances with odd textures and flavors. A sign on the wall read: "Please call our attention to your slightest dissatisfaction, whereupon the Chief Dietician will appear and explain in unforgettable terms the synergistic concepts behind her preparations, and make it clear why every mouthful must be carefully chewed and swallowed."

Glawen and Chilke ingested as much as possible, then departed the restaurant hurriedly before someone should call them back to make them eat their fortified curd and their seaweed with ginger.

And then there is Rosalia; discovered by Wild Willy, divided into ranches controlled by the 'factors' and a 'double government', lit by amber sunlight, famous for giant trees and various waifs*, scene of the tragic Stronsi family history and Barduys' idyllic society and chain of tourist inns; I can think of no more 'vancian' world!

But *Throy* has many other elements worthy of note. Chilke's courtship of Flitz is the most extensive such episode in Vance; this would be wonderful in itself but Vance dots his 'i's by giving us full details in regard to Chilke's system, the same used effectively by Rhalto the Marvellous and which the Bold Lions attempted, with little success, to develop in their *manual of foolproof methods for getting along with the girls*. When Glawen asks Chilke to explicate the system, Chilke explains:

. . . "Look at it this way. If you were asked to describe that old yew out yonder, your first statement would be: 'It is a tree.' In the same way, when asked to describe Flitz, first you would say: This creature is a woman."

"Is there more?"

"It is only the starting point. I won't go so far as to say that all women are alike; that is a popular misconception. Still, basic principles never change."

Eternal Woman! Don't count on Jack Vance to provide a theoretical basis for a metaphysics of sexual equality! The passage continues:

"At first glance she might seem mysterious and inscrutable. Why? Could it be that she is actually shy and demure, and emotionally immature?"

"Marvellous!" declared Glawen. "How do you divine all this, so quickly?"

"I have had experience with these hoity-toity types," said Chilke modestly. "There is a trick for dealing with them."

"Hm," said Glawen. "Can you divulge a few details?"

"Of course! But keep in mind that patience is involved. You sit off by yourself, pretending disinterest, and watching the sky or a bird, as if your mind was fixed on something spiritual, and they can't stand it. Pretty soon they come walking past, twitching just a bit, and finally they ask your advice about something, or wonder if they can buy you a drink. After that, it is simply a matter of docking the boat."

But that is not all. The narrative follows Chilke, step by step, as he attempts to apply the program. It is not smooth sailing; revisions and addenda can be inferred from his set-backs and dog-legs, if just scrapping the system entirely is not the best choice.

In addition to being redolent with love, *Throy* is equally charged with hate, including the most titanic of all vancian battles: the confrontation arranged by Barduys on Thurban island between Dame Clytie Vergence and Simonetta Clattuc. The action, as compelling and cathartic as hadaul at Dinkelstown, includes superlative invective:

*The final and most satisfying version of many such vancian hobgoblin creatures, who make their first appearance in *The King of Thieves*.

You belching old cow; you shall not roar in my face! Vex me no further! or: Unspeakable thing with your foul haunches! Now we shall see!

Throy provides a further important sample of vancian theorizing in the most comprehensive aesthetic discourse of a consummately artistic oeuvre. Aspirants and critics curious about 'how Vance does it' would be well advised to start here:

. . . he had sojourned at hundreds of hostelrys and inns, of every sort and quality. On occasion he had noticed the passionate dedication an innkeeper lavished upon his premises: efforts unrelated to profit. Barduys saw that in such cases the inns were regarded as beautiful entities in their own right: 'art-objects', so to speak. After visiting the wilderness lodges, he began to codify the precepts of this particular aesthetic doctrine.

First, there must be no self-consciousness. The mood of the inn must derive from simplicity and unity with the landscape. The excellent inn was a composite of many excellent factors, all important: site, outlook and their synergistic effect upon the architecture; the interior, which should be simple, free of ornament and overt luxury; the cuisine, neither spare nor elaborate and never stylish; the staff, polite but impersonal; the guests themselves. Additionally, there were indefinables and intangibles, which could not be foreseen and often not controlled.

(With little trouble such principles can be transposed to other arts; among primary vancian literary values are certainly mood and authorial discretion.) The passage continues with Barduys' plans to develop Rosalia for tourism:

When Barduys remembered Bainsey Castle, he decided that here would be the site for the first of his inns. Next he would build several rustic lodges on the beaches of the Mystic Isles, staffed, perhaps, by handsome Yip men and lovely Yip maidens. The lagoons, at least in part, might be made safe for swimming. Elsewhere the water-waifs added a titillating element of danger to the otherwise idyllic peace of the islands. In small submarines guests could cruise the inter-island channels, exploring coral caverns and jungles of multi-colored sea-plants.

Another important aspect of *Throy* is its ultimate comment on the central vancian theme of tourism. Barduys is by no means the first Vance character to contemplate tourist development of a planet. Ramus Ymph and Husler Wolmer had a similar plan for Thaery. Cadwal, of course, must be preserved for the plants and animals. However, a homeopathic dose of organized tourism is allowed even there, for study, fun and profit. Too small a dose?

There were sites on Throy which cried out for quiet little inns: for instance, on Throop's Heath, where the andorils played their odd version of bowls; also, among the rocks above Cape Wale, where the great southerly storms dashed waves against the cliffs.

The proposals were interesting, said Dame Lamy tartly, but if Lewyn Barduys had his way, there would be hostelrys at two-mile

intervals everywhere across Deucas and Throy, and why forget Ecce? Were the tourists not interested in horrid monsters?

Barduys conceded that, without a doubt, Dame Lamy knew best, and that he would be guided by her views.

But how different are Barduys' plans for Rosalia than the Peefer plan for Deucas?

The ideal of pure democracy had been replaced by plans for a more manageable—and useful—system of kindly paternalism, to be administered from a network of fine country estates. When asked how the system differed from manorial feudalism, the LPFer said that the comparison was sophistry of the rankest sort. Serfs were serfs, and Yips were free spirits who would be trained in the arts of folk dancing and choral singing, and who would enjoy many gay festivals, while others would learn to play the guitar.

The Peefer plan intends to:

. . . transport only thirty thousand Yips to Deucas: [a number] both adequate and desirable. . . we wish to maintain the sylvan charm of this wonderful environment! The remaining Yips will be transported to new homes off-world.

The Yip population is 100,000, each and all subject to the tyranny of the Oomphaw, now the bloody-minded Simonetta Clattuc. Yips are disposed of like property by their mistress, with Namour collecting a fee. Meanwhile Yip society is totally unappealing. The way things go at Pussycat Palace or the Caglioro set the tone:

when he loses all forty parts of his Ruha, he has lost all of himself. . . he is called 'No-name' and made to stand at the side. . . staring blankly over the scene. . . he is no longer a person.

The basic problem with Yip culture is absence of basic respect for humanity. Still, Yips are people, and we don't like to see them mistreated, by each other or by outsiders. A few thousand, the lucky ones as it turns out, are transported to Rosalia and other places as work gangs. Though treated with less than fulsome charity by everyone involved they were the lucky ones! Barduys, involved in using or transporting them, notes their uselessness as workers but conceives a social experiment. With regard to the Yips, Barduys' plan stipulates:

. . . twenty thousand individuals, the sexes in equal proportion. . . sound of limb and intellect, under the age of thirty: in other words, young folk in excellent health.

But what of the old and the sick? Who will take care of them? Won't they be lonely? What of families? Too bad! A first 1000 are delivered but:

. . . some were rachitic, while others were senile, or spoke in unknown languages. Of the younger group, about half were deformed, diseased, or psychotic. The others were of subnormal intelligence or sexually disoriented. The group could not have contributed in any way to the lyrical sad-sweet mood Barduys hoped to engender on his idyllic islands.

The Peefers then destroy Yipton, a massacre in which the old and rachitic certainly found death by fire and water. 27,000 are saved by an all-out effort from Araminta Station, and Barduys transports them all to the Mystic Isle, without prejudice to the lyrical sad-sweet mood. Still, there is nothing inherently wicked in transporting 27,000 people to a place where life is easy, and where they are wanted, and it seems absurd to turn against Lewyn Barduys—an interesting variation of the Connatic. Barduys is a business magnate who, thanks to vast personal resources, can juggle with the political fate of planets, so that *Throy* is an optimistic preview of globalization and the International corporation.

Willy nilly, the problems of the Conservancy are solved. What of Rosalia?

Rosalia was sparsely inhabited. The population of Port Mona, the largest town, varied between twenty and forty thousand, fluctuating with the coming and going of transient workers.

The other towns of Rosalia seem quite inconsequential, so the total population of Rosalia may be estimated, very roughly, at 150,000 souls. The importation of 27,000 Yips is therefore, broadly speaking, equivalent to a population increase of 18%. This would seem to be a dramatic demographic and sociological event but we get the sense that, on Rosalia with its wild frontier situation, this immigration gets as little attention as the massive imports of Chinese labor to America in the 19th century. The Yip encampments do not seem to be resented. Barduys' program of social experiment seems to inspire not even a sniff of disapproval. Flitz herself, on whose land it will take place, is indifferent. The amazing giant trees, as well as the waifs, are mentioned only as tourist attractions, or as nuisances to be cleared away as needed; their intrinsic worth and welfare is not evoked a single time. But Rosalia also has twice the land area of Earth, and even 150,000 is only the population of a mediocre Earth city. What are 27,000 Yips in such a context? Nothing. Then why not on Deucas?

Throy is Vance's most probing exploration of the political problem. It is sometimes said that Araminta Station is a 'police state'. This comment misses the point. *Throy* confronts the reader with the problem of the rule of law as it presents itself in the contemporary context of ideology and relativism. This difficult matter is further complicated by Vance's further toying with cultural relativism as a plot element.

The Yip culture makes them: *psychologically incapable of functioning as paid laborers and they cannot understand a compulsion to work for something intangible, such as the need to pay off a debt.* This seems to carry us perilously close to something nasty, and yet it is not fundamentally different than the idea that Joaz Banbeck and the Basics cannot comprehend each other. The echoes of contemporary north-south

issues sharpens the edge but does not change the essence: either Yips are human beings like the rest of us, perfectly capable of understanding such simple things, or cultural relativism is true and they legitimately 'cannot understand' such things, and, ultimately, use a different scale of good and evil. If cultural relativism is false the Yips must be more or less stupid or corrupt.

The down-to-earth Chilke, who knows how to deal with Yips, calls them *lazy rascals*. Here is a typical exchange:

. . . *Do you want to carry our luggage into town?*

"Naturally not. Do you take me for a fool?"

"For payment, of course."

The Yip looked over the two cases, which were of no great size. "How much payment?"

"Half a sol should be adequate."

The Yip turned back to the dragon's-eye tree. Over his shoulder he said indifferently: "A sol."

"A sol, for both cases, from here to the hotel, now and in our company, not lagging behind or sitting down to rest along the way."

"I should charge you extra, for impudence," said the Yip. He thought for a moment, but found nothing inherently unreasonable in Chilke's proposal. "Give me the money first."

"Ha ha! Now who takes whom for a fool? You shall be paid at the hotel."

"It seems that I must trust your good faith," grumbled the Yip. "It is always thus, and perhaps here is the reason why we are a down-trodden race."

"You are a down-trodden race because you are lazy," said Chilke.

"If I am lazy and you are not, how is it that I am carrying your baggage while you walk light-foot?"

For a moment or two Chilke deigned no explanation of the seeming paradox; then he said: "If you knew anything about the laws of economics, you would not ask such a banal question."

This exchange, all by itself, is a sample of Vance's greatness. Dissatisfaction, mistrust and even contempt, trickery and contrasting cultural attitudes are rife on both sides. Still, if Chilke is in any way wrong, he is more right than the Yip. Were Chilke to have been automatically generous the Yip would have cheated and tricked to full extent. Because the Yips are corrupt, which is to say because they spend their energy trying to dodge around reality rather than confronting it, they regard members of other cultures as oppressors. This is a technique to distract attention from one's own turpitude. Insistence upon cultural relativism legitimizes Yip attitudes, but Yip culture, meaning each Yip one at a time, must be redeemed from corruption. Reality cannot be scamped.

The success of globalization, or the integration of populations all over the whole world to a mode of life hitherto foreign, is proof that while cultures may be different people are just people.

Finally, how can the Conservancy be justified in its machinations to save itself? Araminta Station, in contrast

to the LPF and the Yips, respects the rule of law. Yip unconcern for human life, exacerbated by the passions of Smonny and the soulessness of Namour, is summarized in this snake-like declaration:

Selious suddenly became smilingly virtuous, in a manner typically Yip. "I told him that I did not wish to harm a weak and helpless female. He brushed aside my scruples. The woman, so he declared, was an off-world person, no better than vermin. She was a malicious interloper, with no right to breathe our good air or eat our food or displace qualified persons from posts of honour. It was proper to eliminate such persons from the environment. Catterline felt that there was logic in the concept, and that in any event I must obey Namour's command. I had no choice but to agree, and so the deed was done."

As for the Peefers, they are incoherent. Their 'democracy' is a totally fluid concept. They may not be automatically blood-thirsty, but their own fantasies and desires are the only reality worth attention. After their genocidal massacre the arguments they use in their own defense would have been brushed aside with contemptuous laughter in Stroma or Yipton. But in those places such arguments could never even have been made. It is only at Araminta Station that law exists and counts. But law is not a simple matter:

. . . *our own statutes denies the existence of habitancy upon Lutwen Atoll. In the absence of such habitancy there was no crime of the sort mentioned in the indictment, which is clearly false, prejudiced, and poorly conceived.*

What effrontery! And yet, the argument stuns. For a moment we think: they will get away with it! And then Justice Hilva Offaw makes clear the law's awful majesty:

Justice Hilva Offaw said to the prosecutor. "Sir, do you care to offer a counter-argument against the compelling statement which we have just heard?"

"No, Your Dignity. It is patently absurd."

"I think not, Prosecutor. There is more to the defense than appears on the surface. In a certain sense, it could be argued that not only the perpetrators of the so-called bonfire, but also every citizen of Araminta Station, living or dead, must share in this guilt."

When law rules, when it is completed by competent, broad-minded and good-willed men, it cannot be brushed aside, and forces us to contemplate the hard truth. Tens of thousands of persons have been deliberately murdered; there is no doubt by whom, and yet the prosecutor must search for a technicality on which to hang the culprits. The final exchange is grotesquely inconsequential by contrast with the horror of the deed:

Justice Offaw leaned forward. "You are telling me that the prisoners were motivated by a desire to tidy up the environment when they set fire to Yipton?"

"No one lived there, Your Honour! I have proved this; therefore, what other motive could possibly have influenced them?"

High Justice Hilva Offaw said: "Counsel, you have done your best, and your arguments are well reasoned, even though they deal with imaginary situations. This court — and I think that I speak for my colleagues — " he glanced left and right " — reject your theory of the case. The fact that they secretly possessed the gunships and were evidently planning armed rebellion only solidifies the force of the accusation."

We may feel that a bunch of exotic animals and plants are nothing compared to the welfare of 100,000 human beings. I certainly do. I love animals and plants but I think people are infinitely more important. I part company with ecologists when they devalue human life in favor of plants. Do I therefore agree with the Peefers that Deucas should have been opened to the Yips? Did the High Justice of Araminta Station himself not say: *every citizen of Araminta Station, living or dead, must share in this guilt?* But the question is not whether or not Araminta Station should have done this or that, or whether or not Peefers' ideals are right. This question is: what can we learn from *Cadwal* about the nature of rule by law?

Is it only when there is rule by law that there is humanity? What of that 'police state' disposition: Schedule D?

So now, which is it do be: Bureau B or Schedule D?"

"Schedule D, of course," said Sharde. "Otherwise we must expend our efforts and give up our time at three separate trials. Schedule D is indicated. . . The IPCC Mode Manual describes four levels of reactive conduct to four levels of venality. Schedule D is the most drastic. When an offence transcends the ordinary, such as the destruction of Stroma, Schedule D is the approved response."

So Schedule D is also the rule of law. What is the fate meted out by Bodwyn Wook, the chief of the 'police state', to Spanchetta, who ordered Marya's murder, Smonny, who ordered the destruction of Stroma, and Namour, accessory to these acts and perpetrator of countless murders himself: prompt execution? Not at all. Their lives are spared. They are removed, with adequate supplies for survival, to the prison they invented for their enemies: Shattorak. Bodwyn Wook is more clement than Justice Hilva Offaw.

The Yips are barbarians. The Peefers are selfish, mendacious and manipulative. Araminta Station is civilized. Civilization may not be ideal but it is the best we can do in a world where discomfort, lack, pain and death are real. Civilization is a group of people living together to perpetrate and realize the rule of law; just law protects property; civilized people, the constituent elements of civilization, are the ones who feel its benefits.



The VIE Miracle

Steve Sherman recently posted on the VanceBBS with regard to things being said now, but mostly about things that were said in 1999 here and there on the Internet, about the VIE:

" . . . I have learned a great deal about the early days of the VIE . . . Any number of people express reasons why it cannot work, why it is doomed to failure. It starts with objections to a limited edition, ignoring Mike's explanation of copyright issues. After a while it disintegrates into a discussion of peripheral issues . . . but some of the first responses, especially those of Lis . . . evidently of NESFA, are cogent enough. Some of the posters might have made significant contributions to the VIE, had they had the courage.

"I am more impressed than ever with what we have achieved, and more than ever grateful to Mike Berro for having been one of our paladins of the first month.

"These posts occurred about three weeks before I joined the VIE. If I had read them, would I have had doubts that I have never had? Would I have decided that it was not worth my time and effort to contribute? The objections that are raised are not irrational. Objectively, were we not tilting against windmills?

"The VIE is more improbable than I ever imagined. It is not only unprecedented, it is well nigh impossible. And yet there it is on my bookshelf, and in four dozen major libraries around the world. All volunteers, all subscribers, who believed in this coming to pass should congratulate themselves for the role they have played."*



Cat Skinning

'Mischief, thy name is legion!', to coin a phrase. Our little 'crisis' may be over, but don't hold your breath; a new one will come along before we are through. Ill-will infests the Internet like rats in a sewer. Loud-mouthdom is as ineradicable as the mumps.

Recent events have inspired me to reflection upon the theory and practice of flame war. Beside the common wisdom about Internet relations, that social constraints dissolve in the disembodied radically egalitarian virtual arena, not only are weapons limited to words (or spiritual arms) but the semi-real-time aspect of Internet interaction is important. Battles of written words have always been fought, sometimes across centuries, but the Internet word partakes of speech; it occurs in real time,

*For those who wish to see for themselves, Steve explains: Start Google, select Groups, navigate to 'rec.arts.sf.written' and search that group for 'vance integral edition'.

like a shout or a squeal, and yet it lingers. It is subject to evaporation at the touch of the censor's switch or the poster's own editorial revisionism; and yet it may persist indefinitely, if buried ever deeper under growing heaps of inconsequentiality. Furthermore, and this is also crucial, virtual passes of arms occur before an audience, which grows in proportion to the heat and sparks. The special characteristics of this audience are that, while functioning as jury and judge, it can also transform itself into combatant at any moment, and since flame wars are fought on virtual battlefields equally and instantly accessible from any point on the terrestrial globe, the combatant-spectator-jury bring a cacophonous infinity of perspectives, all expressed in short, more or less cryptic, 'threads'. It is a landscape reminiscent of *The Men Return*:

In one direction blue-green hills shivered like bladders full of oil. In another direction lay a streak of black—a gorge or a lake of clay. In another direction were blue-green hills—the same they had seen in the first direction; somehow there had been a shift. Below was the plain, gleaming like an iridescent beetle, here and there pocked with black velvet spots, overgrown with questionable vegetation.

Such is the arena. What of the enemy? To say nothing of hate and furore, the cardinal virtue of the Internet goon is bad faith. No allegation, accusation, suggestion, insinuation or lie is too false, invidious, nasty or egregious to be indulged. Facts? Logic? These have no more weight than 'last year's mouse-droppings' or, being virtual, even less. Good will? The long-fingered hands of your enemy's wild epithets and twisted syllogisms grasp compulsively for your virtual throat. If you stand there like a ninny citing facts you are torn to numeric bits as fast as the carcass of a large ruminant is picked clean by piranhas. The solution; disappear! Why not leave your insensate aggressor triumphant in 'conquest' of a nothing that exists nowhere? Why wrangle with a maniac, drooling on a keyboard somewhere on the other side of the planet, to control a 'place' that isn't even real? Amazingly there is a reply to that objection: retreat is sometimes not a choice because virtual territory sometimes must not be relinquished. In the Information Age a posting board can be the 'place' where certain real-world matters must be resolved. Did not some third-rate science fiction hack, a pacifist from the 1970s, foresee this situation in a story called 'Ghost Gladiator', 'The Sword of Nomos' or 'The Battle on Server I-8U'?

Such is the situation of the V.I.E. It is a real world thing that lives and dies on the Internet. The virtual enemy cannot always be ignored. The virtual places on which the project depends must sometimes be won back from barbaric invasions. Who are the Huns and goons?

...the Organisms, lords of the era, their discords so exactly equivalent to the vagaries of the land as to constitute a peculiar wild wisdom.

Do not be misled by appearances; the Organism's discords, so outrageous and peculiar, are indeed a sort of wisdom, rife with sideways protocols and juggled algorithms. The Organism seems insensate but it is not without motivations. It exists and desires against a backdrop of passions; it has something to defend. It lurks across the virtual landscape peering about in search, laboriously lugging something it must prove. The flame warrior must penetrate the enemy's desires, comprehend its motivations. The Organism, by contrast, cannot comprehend reality; thus it cannot understand the flame warrior, thus it suffers a strategic disadvantage.

But that is not all. The Organism is a creature without conscience. To cope with it, before donning his *armor of indifference* the flame warrior must drop his *pants of inhibition*. He must stand ready to play as dirty, to strike as low, to insinuate and vituperate no less than his foe. The Organism's tactical advantage is neutralized.

Each Organism is unique but each is handicapped by a basic dynamic: the quest for a reflection of itself in the guise of the superior being it lusts to be. The flame warrior must break the mirrors which cast these reflections. The Organisms, thwarted, melt back into virtual nowhere.

Some people—they remind me of some 1930s folk—want to believe there is never any reason to fight. They contort themselves into a variety of shapes to cope with the contradictory reality. Seeing a dispute, they proclaim all rights and wrongs equally distributed, the main wrong being 'immaturity'. Those who defend themselves against attack, no matter how serious the stakes, are mindless brawlers. The consequences of aggression are dismissed; unconcern justified by the alleged impotence of aggression. Since aggressive people are difficult to cope with it is more convenient to turn against those who are attacked, and blame them for provocativeness.

Some fights are indeed nothing but gratuitous aggressive overflow, and some attacks are too ineffectual to need riposte. But bad faith, hate and destructiveness are realities ignored at the cost of accepting the consequences, which are sometimes significant.

Why deny reality? Why support the aggressor and turn on the victim? Observe the school playground; defenseless children need to rationalize siding with the bully; they want to avoid becoming victims themselves but they need to live with their consciences. The adult world adds its own nuance; safe from bullying oneself, it is possible to pose as a philosopher perched high above the fray, calling down for 'reason' and 'calm'. This has nothing to do with love of peace, for love of peace that does not begin as love of justice is just fear or indifference in disguise. What such philosophers are up to, if they are not secretly supporting the aggressor, is calling attention to their own superior quality.

As someone said: 'there are those who do and those who complain'. An even more exact and broad formulation might be: 'there are those who complain about those who do'.



Torcon 3

VIE official rep, Stephen Trump, has been hard at work at Torcon 3, the Science Fiction convention recently held in Toronto. Stephen went around in VIE hat and shirt created by Joel Riedesel, passed out the new VIE flyers created by Joel Anderson, and ran a contest devised by himself; five lucky winners are receiving VIE books provided by the project as prizes. At Stephen's suggestion Suan put hints on the VIE site to drive contestants there. Ain't we tricky? Thanks to Stephen's efforts many new people have heard the good VIE news; some will be subscribing. The impact of the hard work being done by VIE volunteers is being maximized.



Anticipating TI

by Richard Chandler

I have started TI work for *The Blue World* and *The Kragen* and have encountered an interesting situation. The first step in TI is to strip out all 'useless' endnotes. So what is a 'useless' endnote? One which does not involve a TI issue. In the case of *The Blue World* there are many such: I reduced 444 endnotes in the techno file I received to just 68 in the cor-v1 file I produced on the first TI pass! Previous proofers had endnoted many obvious 'scannos' (things I would have simply corrected). I suspect the reason for their caution was that they were proofing from the DAW, Mayflower, and Underwood/Miller editions, not the Ballantine which had been used for the original digitizing. Perhaps they also realized one of the early proofers (who shall remain nameless) was a 'textural activist' who felt that he could and should 'improve' Jack's writing. An absolutely beautiful example of this occurs in Chapter 11.

Sklar Hast and his followers have just killed the first kragen at the New Home Floats. As they discuss the situation, the intercessors they have brought with them as hostages to their safety revile them:

The Wyebolt Intercessor, a thin, hot-eyed old man with an undisciplined mop of white hair, rasped: "Your sarcastic fleers and flaunts will avail little when King Kragen at last demands an accounting!"

The expression 'fleers and flaunts' had the following endnote:

TEXT-CHANGE yyy; jeers and taunts/fleers and flaunts; revised to match DAW edition.

COMMENT yyy; if this isn't an obvious case of Ballantine's editorial intervention, I don't know what is. DAW is definitely more Vancian. Ballantine evidence should be viewed with suspicion (as usual, in my experience).

COMMENT zzz; UM79 agrees (and I confess, I had to look up <fleers>—the word exists and is *perfect*).

I have checked the original typescript as well as the Ballantine, DAW, Underwood/Miller, and Grafton editions. All use 'fleers and flaunts', *not* 'jeers and taunts'! (So in this case at least, yyy's skepticism regarding Ballantine's editorial activism is misplaced.) The early proofer must have felt that 'jeers and taunts' was somehow better. In my opinion, 'jeers and taunts' is not bad but 'fleers and flaunts' is immeasurably superior. It's the difference between competence and genius. I could easily have come up with 'jeers and taunts'. Not in a million years would I have thought of 'fleers and flaunts', although both words have been in my vocabulary for a long time.

I suspect many of you will inevitably be reminded of another of Jack's wonderful passages, this time from *Araminta Station*. Glawen has related to Wayness that Bodwyn Wook expects him to become a Bold Lion:

"I don't know what to think. On top of all else, I now must become a Bold Lion, and I sorely wish that Bodwyn Wook were learning the roars and growls instead of me."

Wayness tried to maintain a tone of sober sympathy, without total success. "You're probably being prepared for an important mission; when you learn the details you'll no doubt think better of the program, despite the yelps and howls."

"Roars and growls, to be exact."

"In either case it's a recondite skill. . . ."

To me this passage borders on the miraculous. Consider 'roars and growls' versus 'yelps and howls'. Here are four closely related words, the first two somehow very leonine, very he-manly, very much aligned with the Bold Lion self-image. The other two are more usually associated with jackals or coyotes and are entirely consonant with everyone else's image of the Bold Lions.

But let's get back to 'fleers and flaunts'. At first, I couldn't believe the substitution of 'jeers and taunts' had been done by one of our VIE volunteers. He had used the Mayflower (1976) edition for proofing and my first thought was that the Mayflower editor may have felt that 'fleers and flaunts' was too esoteric, too . . . recondite. However, checking Jerry Hewitt's authoritative *Vance Bibliography* elicited the fact that the Mayflower edition was 'offset from the Ballantine U2169 plates'. So much for that idea. Here was one of our volunteers committing

the same offense that TI was supposed to save us from. I should have been warned by his disclaimer:

COMMENT xxx; let me confess my sins...I have anticipated on TI work...



Resolved at Last?

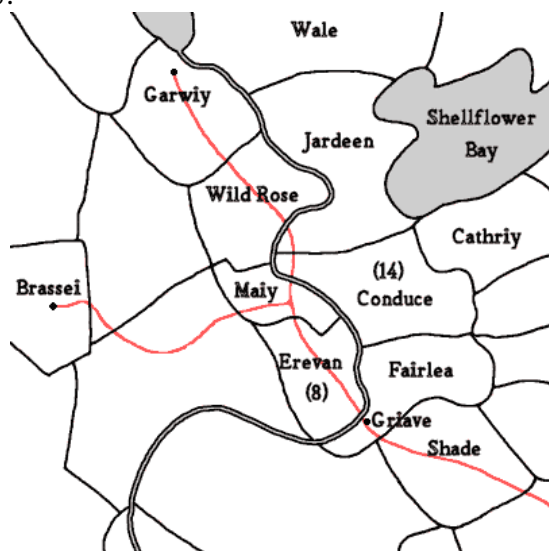
That Pesky Durdane Geography

by *Suan Yong*

It all started with that Durdane map—a detailed delineation of sixty-two cantons and balloon-way routes, discovered inside that Vancian treasure chest at Boston University’s Mugar Memorial Library. The map itself is an interesting artifact of Vanciana: hand-traced in three colors of ink over pencil, with pencil shadings to indicate mountains, blue for cantonal boundaries, green rivers and numberings, and red balloon-way routes—and a curious effect of the inks’ chemical reaction with the printing on the reverse of the map (a cover sheet for a pack of printing paper), resulting in a band across the map with green borders, red numberings, blue balloon-ways; and below, red borders, blue numberings, and green balloon-ways. The inventors of the color-changing markers must surely have derived inspiration from a document such as this.

So I returned home with a xerox copy of the map, excited about publishing a map of Shant with the VIE. Unfortunately, as we have now come to learn, Jack is not particularly careful with details of consistency. A good number of passages in the text turned out to be inconsistent with the map, in particular the section of the Great Transverse Route between Garwiy and Angwin Junction.

Here is a rendering of the relevant portion of the map:



On the Mugar map, the cantons are numbered, with a listing of canton names on the side. In the above rendering, the numbers have been converted to names, for easier reference, but two numbers, 8 and 14, have been left, and will be discussed later.

The Relevant Passages

There are seven passages across the trilogy that concern the region in question:

a. *The Anome*, chapter 7: An hour later the Asper arrived at Brassei Junction in Canton *Fairlea* and was switched onto the Great Transverse Route.

b. *The Anome*, chapter 9, from Angwin to Garwiy: The balloon Shostrel, leaving Angwin, spun down the Great Transverse at extraordinary speeds, out of the Wildlands into Shade, then *Fairlea*, and past *Brassei Junction*, where Etwane turned an expressionless glance west, to where Frolitz presumably anticipated his early arrival; through Cantons *Conduce*, *Maiy*, *Wild Rose*, each jealous of its unique identity, and at last into Canton Garwiy.

c. *The Brave Free Men*, chapter 3, Etwane tells Aun Sarah: You are required to visit the cantons east of the Jardeen and north of the Wildlands, including Shkoriy, Lor-Asphen, Haghead and Morningshore. I am assigned the cantons to west and south. [...] Your first cantons should perhaps be *Wale*, *Purple Fan*, *Anglesiy*, *Jardeen* and *Conduce*; then you can take the balloon-way at Brassei Junction for the far east. I go first to *Wild Rose*, *Maiy*, *Erevan*, and *Shade*, then take balloon for Esterland.

d. *BFM*, chapter 4, Etwane tells Casallo: I want to visit *Jamilo* [Wild Rose], *Vervei* [Maiy], *Sacred Hill* in *Erevan*, *Lanteen* in *Shade*. Then we will proceed directly across Shant to Esterland.

e. *BFM*, chapter 4, Etwane visits, in succession, *Wild Rose*, *Maiy*, *Conduce*, and *Shade*: In *Conduce* Etwane found confusion. Looming above the horizon to the south-east stood the first peaks of the Hwan; an arm of *Shellflower Bay* extended almost as close from the north. "Should we send our women north? Or should we prepare to receive women from the mountains? The Fowls say one thing, the Fruits another.

f. *BFM*, chapter 6, Etwane’s journey from Maschein to Garwiy: East on a great loop through the sylvan foothills of *Lor Ault* they sailed, then north down *Methel Vale*, with mountains rising on both sides. At *Griave* in *Fairlea* they met the *Great Ridge Route* of the balloon-way, only to learn that all northbound balloons had been delayed by gales driving in from the *Sualle*. Continuing to *Brassei Junction*, they boarded the balloon *Aramaad*. The *Sualle* gales had waned; the *Shellflower* winds provided a splendid reach; the *Aramaad* spun north along the slot at a steady sixty miles an hour. Late in the afternoon they slid down the *Vale of Silence*, through the *Jardeen Gap*, and five minutes later descended to *Garwiy Station*.

g. *The Asutra*, chapter 1, from the Wildlands to Garwiy: Ifness only shrugged and looked out across the purple distances of Canton Shade. [...] The Conseil spun up the slot; cantons *Erevan*, *Maiy*, *Conduce*, *Jardeen*, *Wild Rose* passed below and disappeared into the autumn murk. The Jardeen Gap opened ahead; the Ushkadel rose to either side; the Conseil blew along the Vale of Silence, through the gap and so to South Station under the astounding towers of Garwiy.

The Inconsistencies

The first inconsistency that stands out is the location of Brassei Junction, which is the point on the Great Transverse Route from which the Brassei Spur forks off. In the first two excerpts in *The Anome*, Brassei Junction is in Fairlea, but on the map it is clearly in Maiy. Further, there is no passage in the text explicitly stating that Brassei Junction is in Maiy, though passage (f) feels a bit more natural with the junction in Maiy than Fairlea.

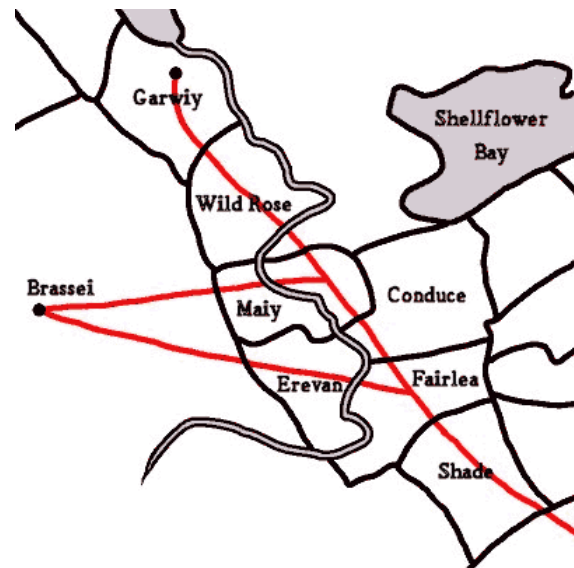
The second inconsistency is that the canton listing in passage (b) makes no sense when compared to the map. And finally, the passage (e) visit to Conduce is out of place, not only with respect to the map, but with Etwane’s stated intention in passages (c) and (d) to visit Erevan and not Conduce.

How to explain these inconsistencies? In *COSMOPOLIS 40*, Paul Rhoads propounded a theory: maybe Jack confused the map numberings, so that canton 14 should be Erevan, and canton 8 should be Conduce. This resolves the third inconsistency, but introduces three new inconsistencies that must be fixed: in passages (c), (d), and (g).

The New Evidence

Three months ago, Chuck King returned from Mugar with more goodies: two scans of holographic maps from the *Servants of the Wankh* folder—which Paul hoped to use to create a better map of Tschai. But they turned out not to be of Tschai, but of Durdane! Specifically, one of Durdane (showing the continents), another an ‘early conception’ map that wasn’t nearly as refined as the ‘final conception’ map we already had.

And this map seems to explain fully the inconsistencies cited above. Here is a rendering of the relevant portion of this ‘early conception’ map:



First, it will be noticed that Jack had two lines leading from Brassei to the Great Transverse Route, one meeting in Maiy, the other in Fairlea. Evidently, Jack had wavered between the two, so that while writing *The Anome* passages (a) and (b) he had junction in Fairlea, but by the time he drew the final conception map, he’d decided junction should be in Maiy.

Next, *The Anome* passage (b) now makes perfect sense. And further, the sequence of visited cantons in (e), with Conduce after Maiy, also makes sense—though this still contradicts the territorial delineation in passage (c), where Conduce was assigned to Aun Sharah.

Of course, now the canton listing in *The Asutra* passage (g) is out of sequence; and further, the river journey in *BFM* passage (f), though not explicitly violated, does not fit the early-conception map as well as one might hope.

The Solutions

So thanks to this new evidence, we can now identify quite precisely how Jack came to write the inconsistencies he did: each passage is consistent with one or the other of the maps, so clearly when Jack drew the final-conception map, he made some changes without realizing that it would result in inconsistencies with previously-written text.

Great. But the question of a VIE solution remains non-trivial: what should the VIE adopt?

The early-conception map—choosing the Fairlea branch of the Brassei spur—is attractive because it is only strictly inconsistent with one passage: the cursory listing (g) in the *Asutra*, which is the least ‘consequential’ of all the passages in question, and can be easily changed. This version of the map is *somewhat* inconsistent with the river journey (f), unless the balloon line is curved down to meet the river again, at a point which can be named Griave. The remaining inconsistency that would be

impossible to fix is the Conduce visit in passage (e), which while consistent with the map remains inconsistent with the territorial delineation (c). This isn't a particularly noticeable inconsistency, and is far from the worst inconsistency that TI has allowed to remain.

If we take the early-conception map, but with Brassei Junction in Maiy, then the river journey (f) becomes more graceful. But we would have to change Fairlea to Maiy in passage (a)—simple enough—and passage (b) would require some non-trivial adjustments. And the Conduce (c)-(e) inconsistency remains unresolved.

If we use the final-conception map, we must do the same Fairlea/Maiy changes. But then the Conduce passage (e) now makes absolutely no sense, so the Fowls and Fruits may have to be migrated to Erevan, which would simultaneously resolve the (c)-(e) inconsistency.

As there is now no evidence that Jack ever confused the numbering on the maps, the solution proposed by Paul must be rejected, if for no other reason than because it would require two further changes, in addition to the final-conception proposal above.

So now the tradeoff appears to be between early-conception/Fairlea, and final-conception/Fowls-and-Fruits-in-Erevan. While we haven't yet made the final decision, we seem to be finally on the home stretch.



Vance, Religion, Sex, and the Emasculation of *Parapsyche* by Steve Sherman

In his lengthy article in *COSMOPOLIS* 41, Paul Rhoads has argued that Jack Vance, while probably anti-clerical, is surely not anti-Christian. I agree with this assessment. However, I disagree on a couple of items of interpretation, which I would like to discuss.

Paul makes the rather remarkable statement that, "Many of Vance's attitudes seem similar to the Pope's. For example, he is not promotional regarding divorce, abortion or homosexuality." To say that not being promotional is similar to the Pope greatly understates the negativity of the Pope's position on each of these issues. But we need to look at Vance's attitudes, to whatever extent they are evident in his writings, a bit more carefully.

Surprisingly, considering the range of human activity that has been treated over the many years of Vance's remarkable writing career, divorce is scarcely mentioned. The occasional character is mentioned incidentally as having been divorced, but the fact of divorce, its

consequences or emotional fallout is not an aspect of any of his stories, so far as I can remember. I think it fair to conclude that Vance is not particularly interested in the subject. That attitude is hardly similar to the Pope's. And as for the fact that Vance is himself married and has been for many years: that, I submit, is less the result of his attitude toward divorce than of his good fortune in marrying the woman he married.

I also think we need a more differentiated view of Vance's treatment of homosexuals than Paul provides. As far as I know, Paul's catalogue of characters—Kex, Tamurello, Faude Carfilhiot—is complete. But are we really talking about homosexuality here? It is not at all clear to me that Kex is simply gay, despite the assertion of the other characters in Positano. In Rome as well, there are divergent views:

Leonardo, barman at the Artists and Models Club, hints that Kex is heterosexual — meaning afflicted with many sexes. This is just a hint, however, and Leonardo is large with his hints. Bill Perch, of the Daily American is more explicit. "Kex? Gay as a big red barrel-organ."

Consider the contents of his library:

The divan was very soft. The room was ripe as musk. I rose to my feet and went to the bookcases. A nude boy, in bronze, with elongated limbs and a dismal El Greco face stared at me. I turned him so that nakedness compelled a little less attention, and bent to glance along the books. Like everything else belonging to Kex, they were obviously expensive, richly bound in leather or heavy cloth. The titles were not at all familiar: Pavilion of Delight, Angel in Hell, Erotic Encyclopedia, Suramât, Flowers of Passion, The Loves of Danae. "My bloody sacred aunt!" I said to myself, and read on. Five Little Virgins and How They Grew, Ten Nights in Tangiers, The Portal of Ecstasy, King Granion's Treasure, Secrets of a Girl's School. I came to a foreign section. L'Amour Sacre et Profane, Erotique Chinoise, Fleurette et Flamond, Fantasma, Aphrodite. I picked up a large flat volume entitled Les Sylphides. Beautiful naked girls, some very young. Pornography, but ice-cream deluxe, connoisseurs' stuff. The girls were as fresh as May, with that look of wanton innocence most profoundly disturbing.

I sampled here and there. The Way of the Gods — weird indeed. Chounzy — little negro boys and girls, photographed in Haiti. Arcana Erotica, The Mount of Venus, McMurdo's Manual, Rife Goes to a Drag Party. Enough was enough.

Evidently his tastes and interests extend to considerably more of the human race than other men: Leonardo seems to have come closest to the truth.

Nor do I think there is any hint of approval for the blatant homophobia of the other residents of Positano. If any one character is speaking with the author's voice, I think it is perfectly clear which one it is:

Countess Margaret sniffed. "I don't care a peep whose friend you are. I just can't stand you fruit-cakes."

Blaine intervened hotly. "He's not, Marge; didn't you hear him? I ask you, does Chuck look queer?"

They all looked at me. "Of course not," declared Blaine. He told me in the manner of a confidential aside, "Marge can't stand a homo, not since her old man ran off with a talented Bulgarian."

"I was just as talented," grumbled the Countess Margaret.

"Couldn't have been," said Blaine, "otherwise you'd still have your old man. Proof of the pudding."

Alma looked at me with sly trouble-making snake-eyes. "If he's not queer, how come he's staying in Kex's flat?"

"Damned if I know," said Blaine. "I guess that's his own affair." They all looked at me once more.

I was angry now; I wanted to shock them. I spoke on a perverse, rather childish impulse. "As a matter of fact I've come down here to be James Hilfstone."

"Who?" asked Hester, leaning forward as if she were hard of hearing. "Who?"

"James Hilfstone," I said. I saw that faces at the bridge table had turned. "Whoever he is."

"I don't care what your name is," mumbled the Countess. "I still can't stand a queer; they make me sick. That's why Positano makes me sick. They hang around here like flies."

"Every man to his own taste," said Blaine. "That's what the world needs, tolerance for the other guy. Now I don't go around reading out of the Bible, telling everybody what they ought to do."

Or again this:

"The whole damn bunch is nuts," said Countess Margaret.

Blaine said, "After all, which of us isn't nuts in some way or other? If we weren't, we wouldn't be holed up here in Positano."

"Çad!" Alma spat out the word like a hot marble. "How I hate this place, this —" she lapsed into obscenity — "rotten stinking Positano. Fruits and queens, winos, crooks, bum artists, hack writers —"

"My dear woman," said Blaine.

"— punks, fags, snowballs, phonies —"

"Alcoholics," suggested Blaine.

"What of it?" she flashed. "Çotta do something to hold on to your mind. Name somebody around here who's got a better vice."

I find it difficult to identify Vance's generous tolerance with the Pope's assertion that a homosexual's love of another human being is somehow less worthy of respect than any other form of love.

Well, what then of Tamurello and Faude Carfilhiot? Certainly theirs is a homosexual relationship. But again, this is merely an expression of the larger loveless sexuality that is characteristic of both men. Each is seen to take a female bed partner as well: Desmëi and Melanthe, respectively. The point is surely not the choice of partner but the lovelessness.

And no, I have not forgotten Casmir. In the first place, he is a married man and the father of two children. His couplings with his Queen are described in this memorable narrative from *Suldrun's Çarden*:

Queen Sollace showed great cordiality to religious zealots and priests, and found much of interest in their creeds. She was thought to be sexually cold and never took lovers. King Casmir made connubial visits

to her bed regularly, once each month, and they coupled with stately ponderosity, like the mating of elephants.

But as it happens he has other preferences, of which we learn in *Madouc* (by which time his attentions to Sollace have evidently increased as well):

The court of neither king lacked for regal comfort; both enjoyed their perquisites, but while Audry cultivated the company of his favorites, of both sexes, Casmir knew no intimates and kept no mistresses. Once each week he paid a stately visit to the bedchamber of Queen Sollace, and there addressed himself to her massive and lethargic white body. On other less formal occasions, he made shift to ease himself upon the quivering body of one of his pretty pageboys.

Casmir, in other words, is not a homosexual, he is a pedophile. The temptation to take a cheap shot here is overwhelming.

Regarding abortion, the only instance I can think of is Gally's in *The House on Lily Street*. But Paul implies that she resists the temptation to abort the child fathered by the unspeakable Paul Gunther. In fact, she takes the money he gives her for the operation and spends it on clothes. When all was said and done, the child was evidently aborted after all:

"I think it must be about midnight when I hear Paul in the living room. He's muttering and hunting around like a madman. I go take a look. He's got his hair on end, he's wild. He yells, Who's been robbing my stuff?"

"I tell him about Pa. I say I couldn't do nothing about it. Paul is mad clean through. He says, 'Clear outa here, I'm done with you.'

"I say, 'It's the middle of the night.' He says, 'Clear out or I throw you out on your fanny.'

"I got mad. I say, 'I need money for my operation.' He flings down in the chair, he writes a check for three hundred dollars. One thing about Paul, he was never stingy. He says, 'Take it and get.' Now I got my pride too. I take the check and I march out with my nose in the air. I never see Paul again."

Gally sighed mournfully. "That was a week ago. I stayed with my girl friend. I ask her about the operation, she say she knows where I can get fixed up. Cost maybe two hundred. I say go ahead, make the appointment." She looked at Shaw in sudden apprehension. "You won't try to stop me?"

Shaw frowned. "I guess I didn't hear anything you said. Just be sure you get somebody reliable."

I find it hard to imagine the Pope's response being anything like Shaw's.

The statement that pre-marital sex is 'neither frequent nor emphasized' seems to me to be clearly and blatantly half-wrong. The qualifier 'emphasized' is correct. But infrequent? Hardly. I am going to confine myself to citing a few instances of loving sex. The unloving instances cited in Paul's article serve to highlight the distinction. Lyssel's attempt to seduce Jaro into signing away his parents' house in *Night Lamp* contrasts very nicely with what happens when Jaro

figures out whom he really loves. This is the entirety of Chapter 14, Section 5:

Maihac and Çaing remained aboard the Pharsang; Jaro and Skirl returned to Merriehew. They dined on what remained in the larder and drank the last flagon of Hilyer's prized Estreas Valley wine, then went to stand by the fire. Outside a gentle rain began to fall. They spoke in soft voices, pausing often to reflect upon the extraordinary events, which in the end had brought them together. They stood close to one another. Jaro's arm was around Skirl's waist, and presently she reached out her own arm to hold him similarly. The conversation dwindled; each became increasingly conscious of the other's nearness. Jaro swung about, drew Skirl close and they kissed each other—again and again. Finally they paused to catch their breath. Jaro asked, "Do you remember the first time I kissed you?"

"Of course! It was after you nipped my ear."

"I think I loved you even then. It was a mysterious emotion, which puzzled me."

"And I must have loved you, too—although at the time I wasn't thinking clearly of such things. Still, I always noticed how handsome and clean you looked, as if you had been scrubbed thoroughly."

"What strange lives we are leading!"

"If we go off on the Pharsang, our lives will be stranger yet."

Jaro took her hand. "Something strange and wonderful is about to happen in the other room. I'm anxious to find out what."

Skirl held back. "Jaro, I feel very odd. I think that I'm frightened."

Jaro bent his head and kissed her. She clung to him. "It isn't fright after all," said Skirl. "It's something I've never felt before; I think it's excitement."

Jaro took her hand again and they left the room. The firelight moved among the shadows and set glimmers of orange light moving among the shapes of Althea's candelabra. The room was silent save for the sound of the rain against the windows.

It's also pretty clear what is going to happen after this passage in *Ecce and Old Earth*:

Standing by the railing at the edge of the verandah they looked toward the ghostly ranks of the Standing Stones.

"I am still frightened," said Wayness. "I was sure that I would be killed."

"It was a near thing. I should never have let you go off by yourself." Çlawen put his arms around her; they embraced.

Wayness spoke at last. "So—what now?"

"At the moment I can't think of anything sensible. My head seems to be whirling. I would like to find us a civilized dinner with a bottle of wine. I have had nothing to eat for days on end except some bread and cheese and a bite of pold. At the moment I don't even have a room."

"No problem there," said Wayness. "I have a very nice room."

There is in fact an explicit scene in Vance, but it is explicit in a vancean way, describing the events largely through punctuation. It occurs in *The Pleasant Grove Murders*. I will refrain from citing it directly, so that those of you subscribers who have not yet read that fine murder

mystery will have the pleasure of discovering it yourselves.

I can also think of only one instance of a loving couple actually being naked and in bed. It occurs in *Strange People, Queer Notions*:

At midnight Betty whispered through the dark, "If my father knew, he'd kill me." And a moment later she said hesitantly, "You're—sure there won't be any children?"

"No. There won't be any children." The moon dwindled behind a wrack of dreaming clouds, and presently sank. We lay close together, face to face.

I said, "Tomorrow we'll get your passport and then we'll leave Positano and never go back."

"I wish I could, Chuck."

"If you want to, that's all there is to it."

"I can't."

"But you can."

"No. You—don't know me, you don't know anything about me."

"Then let's have it; get it off your chest!"

She took my hand, held it to the smooth skin of her hip. I felt a scar. She opened her mouth to speak, but no words came. Her face began to wrench and twist.

This scene, because of the scar, is essential to the plot. Vance is never gratuitous, but he also doesn't hesitate to be as explicit as he needs to be.

Sometimes Vance can wax lyrical on the subject, as in this passage from *The Face*, which incorporates a modification made by the author especially for the VIE edition:

The boat drifted low and grounded upon a sand dune. The two sat quietly, looking out over the moonlit sand. Presently Jerdian said, "I am unutterably surprised to find myself here with you. . . And yet, perhaps not really surprised. . . I can't help thinking of everyone's outrage. What will they say tomorrow? Will I be the only one returning with my virtue intact?"

Çersen kissed her again. "Not necessarily."

Ten seconds passed. Then Jerdian said in a husky whisper: "But I do have the option?"

"Yes indeed," said Çersen. "You have the option."

Jerdian stepped from the boat and walked a few feet out along the dune. Çersen came to stand beside her. Presently she turned to face him; again they embraced. Çersen spread the white Darsh cloak down upon the ancient dunes of the Wale, and they succumbed to the magic light of Mirassou.

The contrast between what might have happened to Jerdian on the desert and what will happen *between* her and Çersen is very much to the point.

Or this from *Suldrun's Çarden*:

In a transport of joy the two looked into each other's eyes. Aillas said: "Treachery and tribulation brought me here, but I give thanks for all of it."

"I have been sad too," said Suldrun. "Still, if I had not been sent away from the palace, I could not have salvaged your poor drowned corpse!"

"So then! For murderous Trewan and cruel Casmir: our thanks!" He bent his face to Suldrun's; they kissed again and again; then, sinking to the couch, lay locked in each other's arms, and presently lost themselves in ardour.

Is there a hint in any of these passages that Vance subscribes to 'the Christian view' of disapproval that Paul cites? I submit that there is not. There is only enthusiasm for the expression of love.

Finally there is the problem of atheism and its alleged association with Communism, which Paul perceives in a passage from *Parapsyche* referring to Stalin, the arch atheist. It is understandable that Paul was misled by this, because a more telling passage, which sounds very much like the author speaking through one of his characters, was edited out of the original magazine version for the anthology *The Dark Side of the Moon*, published originally by Underwood-Miller. The editing, according to Hewitt and Mallett, was done 'by Tim Underwood and D. Ross Voyles with the approval of the author.' By now, of course, we know that 'the approval of the author' was on the order of 'Do whatever you like.' Unfortunately they did and my recently completed TI work on this text proposes nearly five hundred restorations to the original magazine version.

Here is the passage as it appears in *The Dark Side of the Moon*:

Hugh glared from his cavernous eye-sockets. "Are you admitting to atheism?"

"If you want to put it that way," said Don. "I don't see why you make it out a bad word. Atheism is the assertion of human self-reliance, dignity and individuality."

"You are forever damned," said Hugh in a hushed sibilant voice.

But here is the passage as it appears in the August 1958 edition of *Amazing Stories*:

Hugh glared from his cavernous eye-sockets. "Are you admitting to atheism?"

"If you want to put it that way," said Don. "I don't see why you make it out a bad word."

"An atheist and a communist!"

"Atheist yes, communist no. The ideas are at opposite poles. Atheism is the assertion of human self-reliance, dignity and individuality. Communism is the denial of those ideas."

"You are forever damned," said Hugh in a hushed sibilant voice.

I believe this speaks for itself.



Vancean Recipes

The Steamed Mussels,
from *Lyonesse: The Green Pearl*
by Max Ventura

. . . said Shimrod. "As for now, if you permit, I will call your servant that she may bring us more wine, and perhaps prepare a pot of mussels cooked with oil and garlic. Served with new bread, this is a hearty dish, consumed by folk of good conscience."

Melanthe turned away from the table. "I am not hungry."

For two people you're gonna need the following:

- about 2 kilos (5 pounds) sea mussels, preferably big-sized. If you get them at a fish market, ask for cleaned ones; in large grocery stores they'll have them already cleaned and bagged. *Do not* buy frozen ones! Mussels are not going to yield a lot of meat, so do not be scared by the weight: you are not going to eat 5 pounds of food.
- some extra-virgin olive oil. Don't bother buying the fanciest variety, any one will do. However, the greener, the better. If it's yellow, it's from Brooklyn.
- the juice of a lemon.
- a couple of regular red tomatoes, not overly ripe, coarsely chopped.
- a cup of dry white wine, better if at room temperature.
- a garlic clove, an anchovy or two, salt, pepper, parsley. Try to use fresh stuff, do not use powdered garlic, for example, or dried parsley. They taste vile.
- If you like it spicy, you can add some crushed chilis, but no more than a pinch or two.
- some french bread (baguette) or other European-style bread to make into croutons. *Do not* use American sliced bread or ready-made croutons. Give those to the goats in the barnyard.
- a shallow pot or a large pan, with a lid. It must be able to accommodate all the mussels at once, so choose with care.
- a large serving bowl.
- about twenty minutes of your time, just prior to dinner time. No, you cannot prepare it beforehand then microwave it. But you can clean them beforehand, and prepare the ingredients conveniently at hand so that when you start cooking it's bang! boom! and they're done.

Clean the mussels (if they didn't come already cleaned). It's the worst part of the job, so once you've done that, you're halfway finished. Rinse them well a couple of times and let them drain in the sink in a spaghetti drainer.

Slice the bread and put it in the oven (not in the microwave!) for 10/20 minutes at regular heat: the slices need to toast but neither burn nor harden too much.

In the pan of your choice sprinkle some olive oil, enough to make a little puddle on the bottom, add some

chopped garlic and the anchovy, and set the fire to simmer. Be ready with the mussels.

Once the oil sizzles and the garlic plus the anchovy are frying well, throw the mussels in all at once, then cover the pot with the lid and set the fire a bit higher. The mussels will require intense heat to open up and steam.

Shake the pan once in a while to avoid sticking at the bottom. Prepare the wine.

Open up the lid, stand back to avoid the steam in your face, and if it's very hot inside, throw the full cup of wine in, then a half-teaspoon of salt and a teaspoon of pepper, making sure they get to the bottom, where the liquid is. Add the chopped tomatoes, add the lemon juice, add most of the parsley, stir, cover the pot again with the lid, keep the fire up and leave it alone for a few minutes, stirring the mussels once in a while.

In the meantime, check the bread, before you burn it! You forgot that, I know.

If the bread is toasted, take it off the oven and quickly rub over each slice some of the garlic cloves. Sprinkle them with some salt and pepper, and some olive oil.

Check the mussels: are their shells fully open? Is the meat orange/yellowish? They're done. Throw all the contents of the pot, broth and all, into the serving bowl, arrange the slices of bread around the edge but within the bowl so they soak up some broth, sprinkle with the remaining parsley and serve it to your own Melancthe or Shimrod waiting in the dining room.

Eat while hot, as they cool off rather quickly, and dip the bread in the broth. Serve with the chilled dry white wine of your choice. Beer won't do because it will bloat the bread you're eating and satiate you rather too soon.

The mussels won't fill you up a lot: they yield a lot of water during steaming and most of their weight is shells. But the dipped bread will fill you, so consider it a dish in between an appetizer and a main course.

If you cannot find mussels (for example, if you live in Oklahoma), you can use clams, or, if worse comes to worst, you can do the whole thing for prawns or even for other types of seafood: this kind of preparation will fit most fish products. In fact, it is also the base for fish-soups such as the bouillabaisse and the italiabin versions, given or taken a few spices and herbs.

A final recommendation: the part you eat is not the shell.



Jack's Name-Recycling

by Patrick Dusoulier

This began as a game, early July, on the Jack Vance Message Board (<http://pub1.ezboard.com/bjackvance> Please come and join us, visit our Forums, taste our Topics and contribute to the enrichment of our Threads!). Having made the very trivial observation that Jack often re-uses names for characters and places, I posted a few examples and suggested that other members post their own findings. Those started coming up thick and fast, and I also found more through my own readings, so it began to look like good material for an article in *COSMOPOLIS*. I have packaged the findings so that they do not look too dry, but on the contrary should bring additional pleasure, I hope, to the readers, what with their miscellaneous details, totally nuncupatory precisions, and amusing quotes . . . I am not a Trivial Vancean Scholar for nothing.

The principle is simple: picking up names that Jack used in several texts, in various contexts. Preferably invented names, and unusual ones, but not necessarily . . . My selection was arbitrary, by necessity, because the basic definition is not precise . . . and I rejected some proposals, sometimes against vehement protests! For instance, I have not included the recyclings of first names, when they are strictly used as first names (the name 'Paul', just to mention one, occurs extremely frequently, but that's hardly of interest, except perhaps for people named Paul . . .). I could have made an exception for very unusual first names, such as 'Osso', of course, but I chose not to. Maybe I'll just do a special article for another issue, just for 'First Names' . . . or someone else will!

We ended up with 51 main entries altogether, with 121 distinct occurrences documented. The contributors to this collective effort were:

Attel	Eric Halsey
Bud	Steve Sherman
Charles	Mike Transreal
Cygnat	Mr. Inconnu
Emphyrio	Tristano
Rob Friefeld	

Here is the list of texts that are referenced:

Novels:

- *The Anome*
- *The Brave Free Men*
- The *Cadwal* trilogy (and in particular *Araminta Station* and *Ecce And Old Earth*)
- *Clarges*
- *Cugel the Clever*
- *Cugel: the Skybreak Spatterlight*
- *The Deadly Isles*

- The *Demon Princes* series (and in particular *Star King*, *The Killing Machine*, *The Face* and *The Book of Dreams*)
- *Emphyrio*
- *Gold and Iron*
- *The Houses of Iszm*
- *Languages of Pao*
- *The Last Castle*
- The *Lyonesse* trilogy (with specifics in *Suldrun's Garden*, *Green Pearl* and *Madouc*)
- *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*
- *Marune: Alastor 933*
- *Maske:Thaery*
- *Mazirian the Magician*
- *Night Lamp*
- *The Pnume*
- *Ports of Call*
- *The Rapparee*
- *Son of the Tree*
- *Trullion: Alastor 2262*
- *The Wannek*
- *Wyst: Alastor 1716*

Stories:

- *Château d'If*
- *Coup de Grace*
- *Crusade to Maxus*
- *The Devil on Salvation Bluff*
- *Dodkin's Job*
- *The Dogtown Tourist Agency*
- *Freitzke's Turn*
- *Golden Girl*
- *Green Magic*
- *The Insufferable Red-headed Daughter of Commander Tynnot, O.T.E.*
- *The Man From Zodiac*
- *The Miracle Workers*
- *The New Prime*
- *Sabotage on Sulfur Planet*
- *Telek*
- *Ullward's Retreat*

And here's the list of 'Recycled Names', in alphabetical order:

Araminta

- in *Araminta Station*: the name of an enclave of a hundred square miles on the east coast of Deucas, a continent on the planet Cadwal, circling the sun Syrene, one of the three stars of the Purple Rose System in Mircea's Wisp.
- in *The Last Castle*: the name of the 'current consort' of Xanten. (Later in the book, the relationship is dissolved.)
- in *Star King*: the name of one of Smade's 'young daughters, a girl of nine or ten'. Smade is the owner of the famous Smade's Tavern on Smade's Planet. He is also the proud father of eleven children, and has three wives,

names unknown. He doesn't feel 'lonesome', Smade says . . .

Bethune

- in *The Last Castle*: family Bethune is one of clan Isseth's families.
- in *The Book of Dreams*: Bethune Preserve is the single planet of Corvus 892, a yellow dwarf. Its phenomenal flora and fauna prompted the Naturalist Society to purchase it, and transform it into a planet-sized vivarium. This is where Otho and Tuty Cleadhoe live.

Bustamonte

- in *Languages of Pao*: the Ayudor Bustamonte is the ambitious brother of the Panarch Aiello Panasper, on the planet Pao.
- in *Night Lamp*: the name of one of the social clubs of Thanet, on the world Gallingle.

Cadwal

- in the *Cadwal* trilogy: one of the planets in the Purple Rose System in Mircea's Wisp. First explored by the locator Rudel Neirmann, a member of the Naturalist Society of Earth. The Society asserted formal possession of Cadwal, and issued a decree of Conservancy: the Charter, so as to protect Cadwal 'forever as a natural preserve, secure from human exploitation.'
- in *Suldrun's Garden*: a baron of South Uifland, Sir Cadwal of Kaber Keep, who, 'with only a dozen clansmen at his command, has long defied Carfilhiot.'

Note: in *Suldrun's Garden* again, the 'cadwal' is also defined as 'a single-stringed fiddle apt for the playing of jigs.'

Cargus

- in *Suldrun's Garden*: a slave of the Ska. He was under-cook in Castle Sank until he escaped with Aillas and other companions. A powerful man: 'Cargus bulked thick with muscle. The girth of his neck exceeded that of his massive arms.' and a staunch friend of Aillas. His proficiency in dagger-throwing is quite definite.
- in *Maske:Thaery*: we meet one Zochrey Cargus, 'a sharp-faced Thariot from the city Wysrod, who declared himself a genealogist and arbiter of disputed inheritances.' Zochrey Cargus is from the Cargus ilk, as is the mother of Cadmus off-Droad, Benruth Droad's illegitimate son.
- in *Freitzke's Turn*: the name of a legendary starmenter, Yane Cargus, who 'raided the Convent of the Divine Prism at Blenny, on Lutus, capturing two hundred and thirty novitiates.' This was to fulfill a contract with a band of all-male fugitives who had taken refuge in the Jamus Amaha jungles.

Cassander

- in the *Lyonesse* trilogy: name of the first and only son of King Casmir and Queen Sollace. Cassander would have eventually become Cassander V, had not Fate and Jack decided otherwise.

- in *Freitzke's Turn*: name of a town on the world Thesse. If you're looking for a good hotel there, try the Hotel of The Worlds.
- in *Marune: Alastor 933*: Cassander Inn is one of the Port Mar hotels, in New Town.

Cauch

- in *Trullion: Alastor 2262*: 'an aphrodisiac drug derived from the spore of a mountain mold and used by Trills to a greater or lesser extent.'
- in *The Pnume*: the name of a Zsafathran, 'a fortunate folk, neither rigorous like the Khors, nor obsessively flexible like the Thangs to the west.' In the incident of the eel-races, Cauch is impressed by Adam Reith's 'extraordinary mental process to adduce' what he now sees 'to be limpid truth.' Reith wryly replies that it's called 'logic' . . .

Cil

- in *Green Magic*: a region of the green realm where Howard Fair sent the golem.
- in *Cugel the Clever* (previously published as *The Eyes of the Overworld*): the domain originally ruled by the House of Domber.

Coble

- in *The Devil on Salvation Bluff*: Inspector Coble comes to check on the Colony established on Glory, and how the Flits are faring.
- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet* (formerly published as *Showboat World*): Coble is 'a port for both sea-cogs and river barges, and terminus for the famous showboats of the region', and the starting point of the novel.
- in *Ullward's Retreat*: Coble comes to visit Ullward with 'his wife, Heulia Sansom, and Coble's young, pretty cousin Landine.'

Cockaigne

- in *Madouc*: Sir Lodweg of Cockaigne is one of two noblemen sitting with King Casmir, by a tree in the gardens of Castle Haidion, where a reception is being held.
- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*: Cockaigne City is one of the lesser towns to be found along the Vissel.

Dangott

- In *Cugel the Clever*: the 'inexorable god' of the golden-haired villagers. Their doctrine is that: 'Strangers are automatically heretics, and so are fed to the sacred apes'.
- In *Suldrun's Garden*: a goblin with whom the fairy Flink claimed in ballad form to have fought a duel.

Dasce

- in *Star King*: one of the major villains is Hildemar Dasce, also known as 'Beauty Dasce'.

- in the *Lyonesse* trilogy: the inhabitants of the island of Dascinet are called the Dasce.

Dauncy

- in *Ports of Call*: Dauncy Covarth is a 'hearty gentleman, bluff and dashing, with a crisp mustache, sandy-brown hair which he wore clipped short, in the so-called 'Regimental' style.' His interest in Dame Hester Lajoie is not of a purely romantic nature.
- in *Araminta Station*: Dauncy's World is one of the planets to be visited by the Mummies Troupe, and which Arles doesn't want to miss.

Este

- in *Suldrun's Garden*: Sir Este is the portly seneschal at Castle Miraldra, and is 'notorious for his aphorisms'.
- in *Madouc*: Este the Sweet, 'with curling golden hair and a limpid smile', is one of Cory of Falonges' men. He is a Roman, and 'claims kinship with the house of Ovid the poet.'

Fath

- in *Night Lamp*: the name of Jaro's adoptive parents, Hilyer and Althea Fath.
- in *Ecce And Old Earth*: Mr. Fath is an attorney-at-law, one of Julian Bohost's associates in his attempt to gain control of the Naturalist Society.

Foiry

- In *Cugel: the Skybreak Spatterlight* (previously published as *Cugel's Saga*): Cugel takes lodgings in the village Flath Foiry.
- In *Suldrun's Garden*: Fear Foiry is a fairy shee; Godwyne Foiry is the location of the ruins of Old Gomar's capital.
- In *Ports of Call*: the location of the Club Kit-Kat is Place Foiry.

Garstang

- in the *Lyonesse* trilogy: the name of one of Aillas' companions in his escape from Poëlitetz, the great Ska fortress, in *Suldrun's Garden*. Garstang is described as someone 'who spoke little of himself, displayed the manners of a gentleman'. He is indeed 'a knight of Lyonese, from the Castle Twanbow, in the Duchy of Ellesmere'. In *Madouc*, we learn that he is to marry Lady Lavelle, an 'agreeable and apparently casual preceptress' of the young princess Madouc.
- in *Clarges* (previously published as *To Live Forever*): the name of a district of Clarges, 'the last metropolis of the world, stretched thirty miles along the north shore of the Chant River, not far above the broadening of the Chant into its estuary.' This is the district where the Central Cell is located.
- in *Cugel the Clever*: the name of the leader of the pilgrim band, who is 'a man spare and taut, with a waxen skin, a fragile skull, hooded eyes and a meticulous nose so thin as to be translucent when impinged across a light.'

- in *The Anome*: the Aesthete Garstang is Director of the Corporation, and secret assistant to the Anome. Eventually, he chooses 'an absurd method of suicide.'

Gl原因

- in *Trullion: Alastor 2262*: the name of Glinnes Hulden's twin brother, who later joins the Fanschers.
- in *The Face*: the name used by Kirth Gersen to introduce himself to Ottile Panshaw:

"I am a speculator. My name is Jard Çlay, and I am the controlling stockholder of Kotzash Mutual."

- in *The New Prime*: Lord Gl原因 is Ceistan's liege-lord, lying in prison on charge of rebellion. His fate depends on Ceistan finding the Crown and Shield Parchment to support his refusal to pay the energy-tax . . .

Hack

- in *Madouc*: one of the plaques on the table Cairbra an Meadhan shows: 'Here sits Sir Gahun of Hack, fierce as the north wind and relentless in battle'.
- in *The Man From Zodiac*: Milton Hack, Zodiac's field representative, is the main character in the story.

Huss

- in *The Miracle Workers*: Hein Huss is the Head Jinxman to Faide Keep. He has taken Sam Salazar as apprentice, and is both baffled and impressed by Sam's empirical approach to science.
- in *Emphyrio*: a street of the city Ambroy on Halma is called 'Huss Boulevard'.

Jaro

- in *Cugel's Saga*: Jaio Jaro is a courtwoman from the 19th Aeon, briefly evoked by a magician from a book during a competition for the 'weirdest exhibit'.
- in *Night Lamp*: Jaro Fath is the adopted son of Hilyer and Althea Fath.

Kharesm

- in *Coup de Grace*: a continent on the planet Journey's End, home of Fiamella of the Thousand Candles, who is slowly killing the anthropologist Lester Bonfils.
- in *Madouc*: King Sigismondo the Goth is said to be 'considering an expedition against the Kingdom of Kharesm.'

Kylas

- in *Madouc*: there is a 'Damsel Kylas', who has 'lately been appointed to attend Madouc.'
- in *Cugel's Saga*: there is a 'Dame Kylas', a nondescript character . . .

Lanteen

- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*: a city on the Vissel river.
- in *The Anome*: a city in one of the outer Cantons.

Lumarth

- in *Suldrun's Çarden*: a village located six miles from Wookin. Dhrun and Glyneth are robbed on the road to Lumarth, shortly after passing the local gallows, better known as 'old Six-at-a-Gulp'.
- in *Cugel's Saga*: a town where there are temples sacred to the five demons: Yaunt, Jastenave, Phampoun, Ademar and Suul.

Lurulu

- in *Çolden Çirl*: the name of a gold-skinned alien girl, shipwrecked on the planet Earth.
- in *Ports of Call*: a mysterious word, defined by one of the characters (Captain Maloof, commanding the spaceship Glicca) as 'It is a special word, from the language of myths and legends, and is as much of a mystery now as when I first yearned for something lost and unknown. But one day I shall glance over my shoulder and there it will be, wondering why I had not come sooner.' We will know more when the sequel book, *Lurulu*, is published . . .

Lyonesse

- in the *Lyonesse* trilogy: one of the kingdoms of the Elder Isles. Its king is Casmir.
- in the *Demon Princes* series: one of the planets of the Rigel Concourse. A special reference is made to it in *Palace of Love*:
Beside him sat a portly gentleman wearing the black neck-band and beige skin-tone currently fashionable on the Mechanics Coast of Lyonesse, one of the Concourse planets.

The 'portly gentleman' is Hyman Grote, one of Viole Falushe's guests to his Palace of Love.

Maloof

- in *Çreen Pearl*: Lord Maloof of Maul House is Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of Aillas' ministers.
- in *Ports of Call*: Captain Maloof commands the spaceship Glicca.

Mario

- in *Çhâteau d'If*: Roland Mario, a 'quiet-spoken, quietly dressed' young man, is the main character of the story. Although athletic, his main concern is not body-building, but 'body-retrieving' . . .
- in *Palace of Love*: Gian Mario, 'of no fixed address', is one of the guests to the Margrave, and one of the suspects in Gersen's eye.

Marmion

- in the *Cadwal* trilogy: Marmion Province, on Deucas. It is known for 'Marmion Land', a 'strip of pleasant savanna along the northeast coast directly opposite Lutwen Atoll'. Reference is also made to the Marmion Low Plain, the Marmion Foreshore, the Marmion Straits, the Marmion Brakes and 'Marmion Head'. Looks like a nice place. No wonder the Yips want to invade it!

- in *Telek*: Shorn lives in the Cort Hotel in Marmion Tower. The hotel occupies the seventh and eighth floor (I guess this is one of the most nuncupatory details I've given yet).

Marune

- in *Marune: Alastor 933*: one of the planets in the Alastor Cluster. Marune circles around the orange dwarf sun Furad, part of a remarkable four-star group. The varying conditions of light, depending upon which sun or suns rule the sky, have led to a specific nomenclature for the various periods. They are of paramount importance to the Rhunes who live in the Mountain Realms.
- in *The Last Castle*: one of the family names within Clan Aure.

Methel

- in *The Face*: the planet of the haughty, aristocratic Methlen, well represented by the Gentle Adario Chanseth, banker, whose daughter Jerdian is not indifferent to Gersen's rugged charm.
- in *The Brave Free Men*: Methel Vale is a location on Durdane.

Mornune

- in *Languages of Pao*: Mornune is the Captain of the Mamarone. He prudently and discreetly resigns from his position and leaves Pergolai, after some events that might have led to his losing more than just his position . . .
- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*: Mornune is the city where the Festival of Art and Gaiety is held.

Mur

- in *Night Lamp*: Laurz Mur is the chairman of the arrangements committee for the Conclave of xenologists, on the planet Ushant.
- in *The Anome*: 'Mur' is Gastel Etwane's birth name.

Murgen

- in the *Lyonesse* trilogy: the Master Magician.
- in *The Wannek*: a place on Tschai, where the population has adopted a reasonable scheme to deal with divinities: *"It would never be thus in Murgen," declared the merchant warmly. "We pay sizable tithes to the priests; they take all responsibility for appeasing Bisme; we have no further inconvenience."*

Olam

- in the *Lyonesse* trilogy: kings of the Elder Isles. They went as far as Olam III. The first Olam was Olam Magnus of Lyonese, who brought 'all the Elder Isles (excepting Skaghane and Godelia) under his rule.' With a little help from Persilian . . .
- in *Star King*: the Scroll from the Ninth Dimension evokes 'the jewels of Olam' as a demonstration of one of the possible facets of Life on other worlds as a 'purulence in the original candid mud'.

Pangborn

- in *The Miracle Workers*: the name of the planet on which the action takes place.
- in *The New Prime*: in the episode of Bearwald the Halforn, the mother-hive of the Brands is located in Pangborn Valley, near Mount Medallion.

Pingaree

- in *Night Lamp*: Lyssel Binnoc invites Jaro Fath to meet her at the Conservatory, 'at the back of Pingaree Park'. This is in the town of Thanet, on the world Gallingle.
- in *Ports of Call*: Pingaree Punch is one of those refreshing concoctions that Jack's characters enjoy drinking in 'frosty goblets'.

Shimrod

- in the *Lyonesse* trilogy: the name of a magician, a major character in the trilogy. He lives in the house Trilda.
- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*: a historical character, Shimrod the Usurper, who 'two hundred years ago drowned the Green and Gold Tabard, and the last Doro, in Bottomless Sea.'
- in *The Anome*: Shimrod Forest is mentioned.
- in *The Dogtown Tourist Agency*: one of the Gomaz Castles, against which the Viszt warriors are presumed to have waged a campaign.
- in *Marune: Alastor 933*: Baron Shimrod was one of the two passengers departing the Marune spaceport on the night Efraim lost his memory, according to the spaceport clerk. His destination was Xampias.

Simic

- in *The Houses of Iszm*: the name of a spaceship, the *SS Andrei Simic*.
- in *Wyst: Alastor 1716*: the name of a 'Gaeen philosopher', quoted as follows:

Andrei Simic, the Gaeen philosopher, has theorized that primitive man, evolving across millions of years in chronic fear, pain, deprivation and emergency, must have adapted intimately to these excitations.

The spaceship in *The Houses of Iszm* may well have been named after him . . .

- in *Marune: Alastor 933*: the name of one of Efraim's barons. His participation to the story is limited to this passage: *Baron Simic shook his fists into the air. "It shall not be so easy for Rianlle after all!"*
- in *The Anome*: the name is mentioned in one the Anome's answers to five-hundred-florin petitions: *The gentlewoman Casuelda Adrio is advised that, notwithstanding her anger and concern, the punishment she urges for the man Andrei Simic will not beneficially repair circumstances as they now exist.*

Note: according to John Vance Jr., "Andrei Simic, anthropology professor at USC, is an old friend of the family's."

Smith

- in *Araminta Station*: a quote is made from a monograph written by the biologist Dennis Smith, '*The Purple Sliders of Tassadero*': 'They give forth a majestic stench, which, beyond cavil or question, is a thing of truly epic scope.'
- in *The Insufferable Red-headed Daughter of Commander Tynnott, O.T.E.*: asked by his probation officer who paid him a sum of a hundred dollars, Bo Histledine invokes a very hypothetical character: 'A man named Henry Smith: a gambling debt.'
- in *The Deadly Isles*: Luke asks his 'cousin' Carson to call himself 'Bob Smith, something of the sort, until we get aboard the *Dorado*.'
- in *Dodkin's Job*: Lee Jon Smith, District Agent of Sanitary Works 8892, is the reviewer and transmitter of Policy Directive 449 Series UA-14-G2, concerning 'The urgent need for sharp and immediate economies in the use of equipment and consumption of supplies'.
- in *Gold And Iron* (previously published as *Planet of the Damned and Slaves of the Klau*): an Earthman named Smith joins Roy Barch after the great Magarak slaves' revolt. His son's name is Tim.
- in *The Rapparee* (previously published as *The Five Gold Bands*): 'Mr. and Mrs. Joe Smith.' is how Paddy Blackthorn introduces himself and Fay Bursill to the police officer when they land on Shaul, at Aevelye Field.
- in *Sabotage on Sulfur Planet*: Robert Smith is the main character in the story. He is promoted to 'Lieutenant Robert Smith, of the Extraordinary Squad'.
- in *Son of the Tree*: Joe Smith is the main character in the story. He is interested in arboriculture.

Taussig

- in *Château d'If* : the office manager of Kubal Associates.
- in *Suldrun's Garden* and *Green Pearl*: the Group Leader of a slave team which Aillas has to join when he is captured the first time by the Ska. Taussig is a 'short grizzled Skaling'.

Thamber

- in *The Killing Machine*: a legendary planet, a 'world of myth, of witches and sea-serpents, gallant knights, and magic forests, [. . .] the locale of children's fairy tales.', but eventually a very real planet after all.
- in *Mazirian the Magician* (previously published as *The Dying Earth*): Thamber Meadow is where 'A golden witch named Lith has come to live. [. . .] She is quiet and very beautiful.'

Torqual

- in *Green Pearl* and *Madouc*: a Ska outlaw, to whom King Casmir says: "You are a wolf's head, a crafty murderer, and a blackguard' to which Torqual replies: 'I also ravish women.'

- in *Cugel's Saga*: On the docks. Final destination of Varmous' caravan. When questioned about his itinerary, Varmous replies: 'Our destination is Torqual, where we will arrive in time for the Festival of Ennoblements.'

Travec

- in *Madouc*: name used by Shimrod when he joins Cory of Falonges and his gang of ruffians.
- in *Crusade to Maxus*: Dyle Travec attempts to free his family enslaved by the Overmen of Maxus.

Tristano

- in *Green Pearl*: Sir Tristano of Castle Mythric in Troicinet is King Aillas' cousin.
- in *Star King*: Tristano the Earthman is an assassin, who 'kills by touches of his hand'. His expertise is no match for Gersen's.

Tusitala

- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*: there is a Tusitala Market on the Suanol River.
- in *Clarges*: this is the name of one of the old taverns along Riverside Road in Clarges. It stands 'on piles out over the dark stream'. Gavin Waylock drinks a mug of beer there, and eats 'a pastry cornucopia full of golden seafood'. Sounds like a good place.

Varmous

- in *Cugel's Saga*: the name of a caravan Master.
- in *Madouc*: the word is found in the refrain of the nonsensical Song of The Three Merry Vagabonds. In this song, the word could mean anything, of course . . .

Refrain (as sung by Mikelaus):

*Sigmo chaska yi yi yi
Varmous varmous oglethorpe.*

Refrain (sung by Mikelaus):

*Varmous toigal yi yi yi
Tinkish wombat nip.*

Editor's Note: 'varmous' may also be used as an adjective, at least on the planet Trullion: 'dirty, infamous, scurrilous; an adjective often applied to the Trills.'

Wysrod

- in the *Lyonesse* trilogy: a region of the Elder Isles, in the Kingdom of Godelia. The Wysrod peninsula is at the extreme North-East of the Elder Isles. The Wysrod March is situated to the far north of Dahaut. A hundred yards off the coast of Wysrod is Lamneth Isle, where lives the wizard Baibalides. The Wysrod peasants speak a pre-Celtic dialect, 'renowned for mouth-filling epithets', particularly appropriate for curses. Wysrod is famous for its apples . . .

- in *Maske:Thaery*: the name of the major city on Maske, one of the two attendant worlds on the star Mora, at the very center of the Great Hole, a remarkable pocket of emptiness at the fringe of the Gaeen reach. Wysrod occupies the shores of Duskerl Bay.

Wyst

- in *Wyst: Alastor 1716*: one of the planets in the Alastor Cluster. It is the single planet to the white star Dwan.
- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*: the land of origin of Damsel Blanche-Aster, who states that her 'birthplace is Castle Zatafoy in the land of Wyst.'

Yane

- in *Suldrun's Garden*: a slave of the Ska, he is 'a taciturn North Ulf, perhaps forty years old.' He is teamed with Aillas in Castle Sank, and becomes his companion through many hardships. He is also a staunch companion of Cargus.
- in *Freitzke's Turn*: the first name of a 'legendary starmenter', whose second name is, by a remarkable coincidence, 'Cargus' . . . See the entry for *Cargus*, then.



COSMOPOLIS LITERARY SUPPLEMENT 24

Esteemed Readers:

CLS 24 will be published in association with this issue of COSMOPOLIS. In addition to the usual fare, *Dragonchaser* and *Finister*, there is also—wait for it!—a letter!

Happy reading,
Till Noever



Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

Re. Till Noever's riff on 'ruling class', there are two issues.

One is the term itself but—I assume to be the perpetrator—let me first quote the incriminating phrase: ". . . to identify a country with its top 1 per cent, also known as its ruling class, a quite evocative, if by now *démodé* term". I cannot see how this warrants Till's "Are there people who actually still think in that kind of terminology?"

The other is the existence or non-existence of such a class. The paragraph Till wrote to my attention seems to acknowledge the existence of such classes. Would Till agree that while they are all noxious, some are more

noxious than others? But, until Till discloses how he proposes to name said 'ensemble', it is too ponderous to use the phrase 'top 1 percent'. I was testing the waters to see if the much preferable 'ruling class' could be used without distracting the reader. Doesn't seem so.

But I wish, by the way, that Till would refrain from calling me a do-gooder, even if only by implication, and whether quaint or not. (Still, this is not why I have not written to the CLS. It is just that the CLS has been, almost from the first issue, on my exponentially growing pile of urgent things to read. I will and, in the meantime, I apologize.)

Re. Paul Rhoads' stand on the Front National. That the Front National has been used by all the other parties to stampede the great unwashed masses is obvious, and I have written as much before, but let me assure Paul that the Front National has enough ancestors to make any fear at least plausible. For instance, in 1870, the Versailles, i.e. the Parisians wealthy enough to have fled Paris before it was completely surrounded by the Prussian army, discussed for weeks, in the Versailles papers, how many unwashed Parisians to massacre before their own return. Too few and this would not buy lasting enough 'social peace' and too many would cut distressingly in the workforce.

Re. Paul Rhoads' "Those who share my concern about the health of democracy in the world will be glad to know that the French left, as an elected political force, is kaput in France." I have mentioned before my loathing of the French Socialist Party and, as far as that goes, I cannot but agree with Paul. But, while I am glad to know that the hypocrisy is over, I cannot help but fear what is to come. Where I differ is on something I usually call, for lack of a better term, 'left ideology' which, presumably he loathes as well but, since it has not been discussed in these pages, is difficult to pin down. *What I hold against Paul, and which I still hope one day to debate to the bitter end over food and drink, is his unwarranted identification of the well-known non-ideology of the French Socialist Party and the 'left ideology' I hope for.* In the meantime, should he insist on this identification, he is honor-bound to provide me with a better term than 'left ideology' for what I believe in as opposed to what the French Socialist Party peddles.

Re. Paul Rhoads' "I am not alone in regarding George Walker Bush's election as constitutionally legitimate". Of course not: all Bush's clients (in the Roman sense of the word) do and a few others too. But I have read a lot of supposedly good and 'respected' legal minds who don't think much of the federal Supreme Court's decision and explain in unending detail why. And, by the way, the Supreme Court has been known to be, er, less than perfect. Regarding Gore et. al., I never thought that I would agree with Rev. Al Sharpton in any way but his statement that donkeys don't move unless they are kicked is perfect. As for the 'overwhelming majority of

American citizens', they do 'support Bush' in 'surveys' but that has nothing to do with whether he legitimately won the election. And the lack of 'massive uprising of red white and blue freedom fighters' is perfectly justified. Let me use the 'Great English Houses' as an analogy. Yes, butlers had lots of power (over the underlings) and there probably were fierce wars of succession when they retired, but flunkies they were and the real power was elsewhere. Why should any one not immediately under them have cared?

Re. Paul Rhoads' "Alain Schremmer's theory". ???

Re. Patrick Dusoulier's letter. This is called death by silence. I have suffered it in other venues. Usually means you are right.

Regards,

Alain Schremmer

- ❁ -

To the Editor,

Granting that the VanceBBS bannings can be termed 'censorship', and granting—by some mysterious process involving the absence of personal freedom of the men and women who in fact control the BBS—that I am to be held responsible for them, I am still surprised that anyone would pretend that the banned matter is 'silly' while professing 'outrage' at the banning. What of proportion? Would these persons feel 'outrage' were my scratchings banned from COSMOPOLIS? The alleged silliness perpetrated by the banned included insistent calls for exactly that, and if it can happen on the VanceBBS why not in COSMOPOLIS? Is this a 'silly' matter? Is concern about it 'puerile'? And if so why so much emotion about matters so dismissively labeled?

Those who nourish these contradictions refuse to take my word that what went on in our virtual neighborhood was the tip of an iceberg looming dangerously at the project. But each must decide which side of the story they want to believe—if they care at all.

It is easy to understand the rationalizations, and I flatter myself I comprehend the true reasons, but my left eyebrow continues to crook at the angry blasts. Jack Vance has proudly claimed he has no stupid readers. Were not 3 or 4 overlooked?

Paul Rhoads

- ❁ -

To the Editor,

Jack Vance - Le Pen - Paul Rhoads. Who is the odd man out? That's easy, our favorite American writer of speculative fiction, J-Van. Easy that is, unless you read COSMOPOLIS, an online journal started as a source of news regarding the progress of the *Vance Integral Edition*.

Instead of being about Jack Vance though, it has been hijacked by a despotic amateur whose politics, religion, and philosophy are 180 degrees counter to those held by Jack and written into his work.

How could such an affront have happened, and what can be done about it? As for the first question, there is a very apt expression: "All that is needed for evil to prosper is for good men to do nothing." Had people like John Vance, Mike Berro, Bob Lacovara, and others kept the project focused on Jack Vance, and denied Paul from using COSMOPOLIS as his personal soapbox, then Jack's public image and reputation would have been free of any association with the twisted, demagogic ravings of Paul Rhoads.

Are Paul's crimes limited to just his articles in COSMOPOLIS? No, the entire project has been subject to his dictatorial manner, and his actions are those of a fascist wannabe who has no respect for the opinions of others. I will now present a brief history outlining some of these crimes, and why it has now come to the point of demanding Paul's removal from further involvement with the VIE, and especially his banning from COSMOPOLIS.

When the project was in its infancy, there was a tremendous flow of e-mails among the participants. There still is, of course, due to the nature of the project itself, but back in the beginning, all e-mails were made publicly available so that subscribers could follow the progress of the VIE with an insider's look. Paul immediately began proselytizing in his e-mails, lamenting the fall of Western Civilization and other claptrap those who read his articles have become all too familiar with. He was just as offensive then as he is now, and everyone took him to task for his nonsense.

The e-mails taking issue with Paul began to multiply, and no one was taking Paul's side. That is, no one was in agreement with the rhetoric or ideas Paul was expounding. He was soon being blasted from all sides as everyone began chiming in with their anger and disgust with the offensive views Paul was disseminating in a forum that was set up solely to aid the flow of information regarding Jack Vance. A portent of things to come. Again, if only a few good men had acted; instead, they would allow Paul to commit his first crime.

Faced with such fierce opposition to his incessant blathering, Paul took the offensive action of shutting the e-mails down. He would repeat this crime again and again as I will recount, but this first time offered those involved with an opportunity to set matters right. They did nothing. Instead, they allowed Paul to take dictatorial control of the project and become its sole voice. It was now no longer the VIE, it was the RIE, the Rhoads Integral Edition.

I hope I haven't given the impression that I consider Mike Berro to be one of the villains of this melodrama. True, I have taken him to task for not standing up to Paul

in a more decisive manner, but that is not a crime comparable to Paul's words and deeds. The fact is, Mike is one of the heroes of the VIE. It was through his website that the project was presented to the world, and as Paul stated in *COSMOPOLIS 40*, it was Mike who first bankrolled the work of the volunteers. What would eventually happen to Mike is inexcusable and unforgivable, but then, those two words are the trademark of Paul Rhoads.

Mike set up a message board on the VIE site so that subscribers, volunteers, and interested Vanceophiles could discuss the developments and offer encouragement, advice, or criticism where needed. You probably know where this is heading, the word criticism being a tip-off. Paul is incapable of enduring any kind of criticism, and it didn't take long for his actions to bring it forth.

Paul's first 'mistake' (I use that word to differentiate this action from a 'crime') was in deciding that all the fonts in existence were just not good enough for Jack Vance. They were okay for Shakespeare and Jesus, but not Jack. No, he needed a font more beautiful and expressive than any font that has ever been designed, and Paul knew just the person to design it, himself. Never mind the fact that Paul wasn't even in the amateur rankings, having never designed a font before in his life, he decided that only he could do Jack justice.

When the first glimpse of this new font was made public, it immediately came under the scrutiny of professionals, and was found wanting. On the message board Mike had set up, criticism of the font soon appeared. And it wasn't just some grumbling from an uncultured barbarian, but a careful analysis by someone experienced in graphic design, with a knowledge of typefaces far above and beyond that of Paul Rhoads. His criticism was design specific, and his points were well articulated. What was Paul's reaction? Krakatoa could take lessons from the outburst that followed.

As before, with the e-mail situation, Paul wanted the message board shut down. He couldn't answer his critics, so he had to silence them. I don't know how Mike did it, but he managed a compromise of sorts. Instead of shutting the board down, it became subject to moderation. No messages would be posted until after they had been reviewed to protect Paul's monumental, but fragile, ego. That would be enough this time, but further perceived transgressions against Paul would not be tolerated, nor would moderation be sufficient to assuage Paul's megalomania.

At last, Wave 1 was received by the subscribers. It was greeted with congratulations and admiration. As a subscriber myself, I am content for the most part, and do not want my money back. However, there are a few minor complaints, and I am not alone in voicing them. Surely, this is the right of the consumer, to air his dissatisfaction, especially concerning something with

such a high cost. Don't tell that to Paul though, any complaint about the books is perceived to be a frontal assault on him and the volunteers, and a threat to the very existence of the project. What was his response to justifiable criticism? Do I have to tell you? That's right, he shut the board down. Only this time he exceeded the bounds of decency. I'll let him tell you in his own words, from *COSMOPOLIS 40*.

"The crisis crystallized around a difference of view between Mike and myself regarding the VanceBBS. Our difference of view led to quarreling; when two guys who have worked so closely, so long and so successfully together start having prolonged quarrels, it is not a good sign, and inevitably the quarrel spread to the Board [of Directors of the VIE]. My point of view was that the VanceBBS was being exploited by troublemakers, that their attacks were doing harm to the project, and that this problem was exacerbated by the fact that a member of the VIE Board was host to their activity. I wanted Mike to disallow that activity or, if not, I very reluctantly wanted him to resign from the Board."

Can you believe the audacity of this scoundrel? Without Mike Berro, the VIE wouldn't have gotten off the ground, and he wanted Mike to resign. No Paul, the person who needs to resign is you. As for the 'troublemakers' on the BBS, they've been taken care of. The board is now under new management more to Paul's liking. No one is allowed to speak freely there, and several people have been banned outright.

If you share the concern of those who believe Paul Rhoads to be harmful to the image and reputation of Jack Vance, don't remain silent. Write to *COSMOPOLIS* and let your voices be heard.

Have I said all I have to say regarding Paul Rhoads? I've only just begun. My next letter to *COSMOPOLIS* will begin to examine his articles of hate and prejudice that have appeared here, and why they are unsuitable for this forum, and why they stand to do the greatest harm to Jack's name. I wish Paul would save me a lot of typing and do the only honorable thing, resign.

Bruce Yurgil



Closing Words

Thanks to proofreaders Rob Friefeld, Jim Pattison, and Steve Sherman.

COSMOPOLIS Submissions: when preparing articles for *COSMOPOLIS*, please refrain from fancy formatting. Send plain text. For *COSMOPOLIS 43*, please submit articles and Letters to the Editor to Derek Benson: benson@online.no Deadline for submissions is September 28.

Derek W. Benson, Editor

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