
COSMOPOLIS

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BREAKING NEWS

'Golden Master' 3.1 finished on July 9th. in Chinon, France. 6 VIE volunteers attended for a week. 11 of 22 'Wave 2' volumes have been delivered to Milan. Blues will be printed followed by a 'virtual Golden Master 4' process, to be managed by Chris Corley and Tim Stretton. Contact them to participate! COSMOPOLIS 52 will have a full up-date.



GM3.1 workers, left to right: Tim Stretton, Chris Corley, Andreas Irlé, Bob Luckin, Alun Hughes.

WORK TSAR STATUS REPORT

AS OF JUNE 27, 2004

There are only 2 texts remaining in TI: *Lurulu* and *The Star King*.

Two texts are in initial composition and four texts in stages of composition review (CRT and composition updating).

There are seven texts in Post Proof and three texts in Post Proof composition updating and review.

There are 11 volumes ready for processing. 1 volume is in front matter review while five are in Volume PP (including the 1 in front matter review). Six texts have completed VPP and are ready for review and GM 3.1 processing.

LAST MONTH:

- + IN-TI: 2 TEXTS (2.44%)
- + POST-TI: 19 TEXTS (23.17%)
- + VOLUME READY: 61 TEXTS (74.39%)
- + VOLUMES READY: 10 (45.45%)

THIS MONTH:

- + IN-TI: 2 TEXTS (2.44%)
- + POST-TI: 16 TEXTS (19.51%)
- + VOLUME READY: 64 TEXTS (78.05%)
- + VOLUMES READY: 11 (50%)

38'S CRUCIBLE

TALKING ABOUT THE VIE

This just in from 'Library-babe' Linnéa Anglemark:

ConFuse is a semi-biannual science fiction convention in Linköping in southern Sweden. It is known in Swedish sf fandom for having a literary focus with interesting authors as guests of honor and a variety of discussion panels and talks on literary topics. The local science fic-

tion society has quite a few Vance enthusiasts within its ranks; the society subscribes to the VIE as do some individual members. Some time before this year's Con-Fuse (which took place on June 18-20) I was asked if I'd like to give a presentation of the VIE, the history of the project as well as its current status. Having given a similar presentation at another convention last year and attracting an audience of three people, I thought I'd be presenting in front of an empty room.

Not so, however. 20-25 people showed up for my talk, which lasted about half an hour. I knew most of the people in the audience, at least by name, but was still extremely nervous beforehand... I started from the beginning, when the VIE was merely a glint in Paul's eye, touched upon the various developments of our methods, the Mugar collections, the TI process and the amount of man hours put down by a comparatively small amount of workers. I had looked up the work notes for *Marune*, and went through that process—substituting “person A, person B” etc for the names of actual workers. When I had reached Person Q and the fourteenth proof-reading, people were shaking their heads in wry astonishment and admiration—and possibly asking themselves what manner of perfectionist fools we are.

The talk itself took about half an hour, and then people asked me questions for another half hour, until we were turned out of the room—and after that the discussion continued outside, in the bar. Topics that people were interested in included the fact that the work takes place almost completely over the Internet, the question of how to determine which texts are most authoritative when deciding which printed edition to type or scan, and which, if any, other authors might get a similar work effort dedicated to his work. When I explained that one important reason behind the VIE was the wish to make Vance better known, one person asked, in true bewilderment: “But... everybody knows Vance - I mean, not everybody *reads* him, but nobody needs to be told who he is!” Which I thought was kind of sweet. The talk and discussion were recorded, and there might eventually be a transcript of it available—in Swedish, but if it appears, and if I get my hands on it, it may well appear in translation in a later edition of COSMOPOLIS.

Several people expressed regret at not being able to afford a VIE subscription, but the four smaller Special Collections aroused a lot of interest. I gave them the URL to the web site—maybe there will be a subscription or two as a result. That wasn't why I wanted to hold the presentation, though; creating friendly interest is more

important, I think, than just soliciting subscriptions. People were crowding around the volume I had brought (*Trullion: Alastor 2262*: I had brought my old paperback as well as the VIE volume, for comparison) and all the comments I could hear were very positive.

All in all it was a very pleasant experience. If anybody else gets the chance to talk about the VIE in front of an audience of sf fans, I recommend it!

The Laughing Mathematician (Koen Vyverman) also informs us:

. . . I've been asked to write and present a paper about my SAS developments within the VIE context (TOTALITY etc.) at next year's worldwide SAS developers conference in Philadelphia. Working title will be “Publishing Jack Vance: the SAS System as a tool for literary analysis”.



VOLUME POST-PROOFING NUNKERY

VPP 'Nunker' Dusoulier comments on volume 27 (DURDANE) VPP work:

[. . .] A lot of remarks, and many are really GOOD. One of them is an actual BINGO, a typo that went unnoticed by several dozens of otherwise reputed sharp eyes. . . . Amazing. . . . Anyway, there are several legitimate remarks and changes to make in the pdf file, no doubt about it. Joel: I'm glad that everybody seems to be using the same numbering system, and the only practical one at that, i.e. the PDF file numbering. . . . Good show. There are many remarks about break-of-line hyphenations. They're a real pain, but then, there is no way we can really prevent them from coming up, we just have to deal with them. And then again, some of these remarks are worthy of attention. [. . .] This exercise on Volume 27 was extremely profitable. I hope my review will also save time for the GM3 team. I have checked a number of things; they won't have to go over all that themselves.

Re volume 3 (Gadget Stories), Patrick noted:

Quite a number of good remarks; this is such a profitable exercise! And some reviewers are really thorough, I have to admire how keen some observations are.



PAUL ALLEN IN THE NEWS

No one will be unaware that Paul Allen is behind the first successful privately financed space flight. This is the same man who just created a Science Fiction Museum.

Paul Allen is famously the 5th richest man in the world,

a self-made man and stellar example of the 'American Dream'. On the occasion of the opening of his Science Fiction Museum the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* did an interview in which Allen said: "Jack Vance is probably my favorite author of all time."

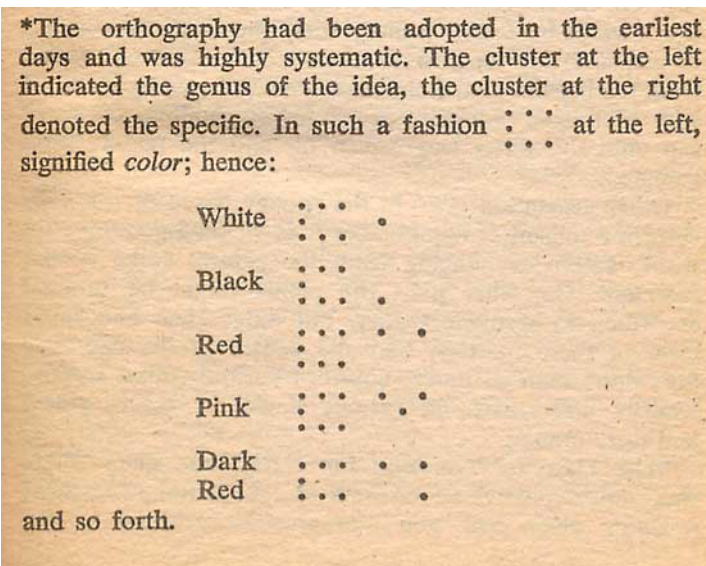
It is not because one is self-made or ultra-rich that one's literary judgement is reliable. Still, the opinions of such a man are not to be automatically minimized. My own view—unendorsed by worldly success, as yet—is that Allen's taste is excellent.

When our taste is good, our favorite things are the best things. Jack Vance is one of the greatest authors of all time.



BLUE WORLD CRT NOTES

Composition Review noted an odd feature in the VIE's *Blue World* setting, which reproduces the published editions, as in this scan of Del Rey:
Can you pick up this little problem?



CRT commented: '. . . the winks seem to be wrong. fin-v1 follows Del Rey, but, if we read the lamp positions as: 1-2-3, 4-5-6, 7-8-9—where '1-2-3' are the top three dots of the wink, etc.—white='color'+5, red='color'+1 - 3, and Pink='color'+1 - 3, 5, then black and dark red should be, either: black='color'+7 and dark red='color'+1 - 3, 7, or: black='color'+9, and dark red='color'+1 - 3, 9.'

Blue World wallah, RICHARD CHANDLER, was consulted. He wrote: '. . . the manuscript] contains a complete vindication of [this ideal. [Using] the matrix 1-2-3, 4-5-6, 7-8-9 to represent the 9 positions . . . from the spacing of the periods (Norma used periods to represent the winks) I

think it's pretty clear that Jack intended:

- White should be 'color' + 5,
- black should be 'color' + 9,
- Pink should be 'color' + 1 + 3 + 5 (i.e., red + white),
- Dark Red should be 'color' + 1 + 3 + 9 (i.e., red + black).

Every one of the published versions of *The Blue World* I have examined (4 in all) messed this up. Of course, they all derived from the Ballantine version.



KRAGEN GEOGRAPHY

Regarding *The Kragen* post-proofer NEIL ANDERSON (VIE i.d.#65) turned up a set of directional inconsistencies. Anderson's notes were characterized by Post-Proofing Team head CHRIS CORLEY as 'a cogent analysis'. There are worries that correcting these problems would open the VIE to accusations of 'rewriting'. The matter is being discussed. Meanwhile those interested in the special problems of fictional geography may find 65's observations of interest. The references numbers are to pages/lines in 'krage9-fin-v2.pdf', the current type-setting document of this story. *The Kragen* is the early novella version of *The Blue World*, which Vance used as a first draft for the latter.

PP-QUERY 65: 41/27; far west at Tranque

COMMENT 65: This is the first of many confusions with directions. On 3/second paragraph, we have "At Tranque Float, at the extreme east of the group . . ."

PP-QUERY 65: 42/7; westerly direction to the south of Maudelinda Float, toward Bickle.

COMMENT 65: On p8, we learn that the order of floats in the extreme east of the group is Tranque, then Thrasneck, then Bickle. So 'south of Maudelinda, moving west' cannot be towards Bickle, as there is nothing to the east of Bickle except Tranque and Thrasneck. Then on p47, Blasdel explains how to summon KK to Bickle Float, it would seem that Maudelinda is to the WEST of Bickle. See also following comment.

PP-QUERY 65: 45/3; Maudelinda float proceeding to the west; hence, the Intercessors are in no danger.

COMMENT 65: If the preceding correction is made, then King Krage has been spotted off Bickle, swimming towards Maudelinda.

PP-QUERY 65: 45/8; so that he waits off Sciona Float
COMMENT 65: From the evidence in the text (numerous references to the New Floats being to the east of the Old Floats), the rebels leave from the easternmost float of the Old Floats. On p3, we are told that this is Tranque, and on p8 we learn that Sciona is in the far west.

PP-QUERY 65: 67/23; directly east
COMMENT 65: The New Floats are to the east of the Old Floats. Therefore Blasdel would have to be paddling west to return to the Old Floats.

PP-QUERY 65: 67/24; eastern edge of the chain
COMMENT 65: Same as above.

PP-QUERY 65: 69/28; Almack Float . . . far to the east, in fact next to Sciona
COMMENT 65: Sciona is at the far west of the chain of Old Floats.

PP-QUERY 65: "70/6; departed to the east
COMMENT 65: In the climactic scenes, we are constantly told that the New Floats are to the east of the Old Floats. Therefore, the three spies have to depart to the west to return for their mission. Further, the wind is later described as blowing 'from the west' and the men row to maintain headway—the only reason they would do this is if they were trying to head west themselves.

PP-QUERY 65: 70/12; struck out east
COMMENT 65: Same as preceding point. NB: on p71 we have two references to them traveling west: 'the coracle surged west', and 'their own course had generally been true west'.



TALKING WITH MATTHEW PARIS

Commenting on Vance's Ellery Queen stories, playwright-novelist-poet Matty Paris recently wrote to me:

'The tale in COSMOPOLIS suggests these pieces were gutted of felicities beyond Vance's patience. I do know the Ellery Queen literary legacy is a strange one. There were Ellery Queen Junior stories somebody wrote that were terrible. Somebody was imitating Ellery Queen. I hope it wasn't Jack Vance. Then when one of the two people who were Ellery Queen—Manfred Lee or Frederick Dannay (from another source I have learned that it was probably Dannay who edited Vance's EQ texts) died—I can't remember

which plotzed, the other one was sick or depressed—the last two Ellery Queen books, according to Stanley Ellin who was part of the inner circle and had said this to me, were ghost written. No wonder they were lousy. Since I grew up not on normal masterpieces but among other American genre eccentrics, Queen's novels, all of which I read between ten and twelve—including the great 'Ten Days Wonder' and the realistic social trilogy 'The Murderer Is a Fox'—I was intrigued by your reference to that side of Vance. Those early ones like the 'Greek Coffin Mystery' are corkers. I can still remember Ellery Queen going to the bathroom "to perform his ablutions". What the hell was an ablution, I wondered at eight? Some ultimate renunciatory act beyond defecation? I would never think of trying to imitate the Queen style. Like Vance it's at once light, crazy and filled with arcane words, very much the manner of crankish provincialism at its best. They are as good as John Dickson Carr's English puzzle mysteries; that is as good as they get. By the way Carr was not English; he was an American from Virginia. Both he and Queen (les doubles et ses miroirs) were also excellent critics. I wonder what Jack Vance thought of these extraordinary stylists. It must have been author's heaven for somebody like him to be among such masters of language.'

On another topic Paris had what seemed to me a vancian point of view:

'I think with all this talk about politics most people lose track because the presumption is so large that nearly everybody assumes in the modern era that politics or some near metaphysical determinism is so powerful that one is ruled by it in some Assyrian manner no matter what flag one is waving from the bunkers as a soldier. My own feeling is that capitalism and commerce is not inherently amoral much less immoral as Marx said anymore than lovemaking or eating noodles is inherently a boon or evil; there have been plenty of moral businessmen. Neither freedom nor social engineering preheats those in their net from a severely ethical life. It's all an ancient Tory argument from Atlantis for strong laws to quell the scurvy rabble. Obviously the alternative, a socially engineered society, doesn't hold any of its citizens responsible for their actions. They don't even admit there is an individual reality. They think people are imaginary bacteria venomed with the illusion they exist.'

People are not dominated by ideology no matter how loud the braying. Ideas and concepts, whether for 'order'

or 'charity', are less powerful than reality. The light-handed governments portrayed in Vance—the Connatic's rule of Alastor for example—are implicitly skeptical of ideology and confident in reality.

My conversations with Matty led me to take another look at Jeffery Farnol, a writer Vance has always recognized as an important influence, and found this quotation:

As I sat of an early summer morning in the shade of a tree, eating fried bacon with a tinker, the thought came to me that I might some day write a book of my own: a book that should treat of the roads and by-roads, of trees, and wind in lonely places, of rapid brooks and lazy streams, of the glory of dawn, the glow of evening, and the purple solitude of night; a book of wayside inns and sequestered taverns; a book of country things and ways and people. And the thought pleased me much.
—from *The Broad Highway*, by Jeffery Farnol

If this prose, though 'high', is not really vancian, the sentiment certainly is.

For more from Paris visit Xiccarph at:
matthewparis.com

Xiccarph has been described by Roth Limburger as: ". . . the McDonalds of Something, I don't know what the hell what." Paris himself has variously attempted to characterize it as:

- ♦ *A Cure for Pleasure*
- ♦ *A Young Eunuch's Guide to Heaven, Hell and the Suburbs*
- ♦ *A Thousand and One Ways to Do Nothing*
- ♦ *Remedies Without Diseases, Solutions Without Problems*
- ♦ *Comfy Commuting in an Ultimate Wilderness*
- ♦ *The very Intelligent Infant's Manual of Incontinence*

A polymath pot-pourri. Paris, a disabused and sometimes cynical orphan of the Left, rather than having fallen into morose grumpyness is indulgent and celebratory. This attitude has an air of 'New York' and the multicultural, but Paris is totally original in his 'baroque gestures', reminiscent of Shaw and Oscar Wilde on the one hand and Pierre Dax ('San-Antonio'*) on the other—an explosive recipe.



*This amazing and unclassifiable author is even less translatable into English than Wodehouse, his Anglophonic counterpart, is into French: woe to all who can't read that important language! To attenuate their misfortune here are a few more or less translatable 'San Antonio' titles: *Pass Me the Mona Lisa, Serenade For a Dead Mouse, Fingers in the Nose, Eat and Shut-up, Concerto for a Pair of Garters, A Banana in the Ear, Take It or Lick It, Move Your Foot So I Can See the Sea, Crab Circus, Let the Asparagus Grow, After You—if There is Any Left—Mr. President, The Silence of the Lobsters, Oysters Make Me Yawn, Sand in the Vaseline.*

DIRE BEASTS AND SUNSETS

A Reaction to David Williams

Presenting, in COSMOPOLIS 49, his vancian bestiary, Williams speculates on the author's motivation for this basic element of work. Does mankind, asks Williams, 'need the constant pressure of predation to avoid stagnation'? Do these symbols of 'natural vitality' show that aspects of life are 'impervious to urban abstractions'? Does 'every rose' have 'its thorn'? Does Vance, 'with his deep desire for personal autonomy', himself identify with 'wild things'? Williams hesitates to penetrate Vance's 'psychological predilections'. So do I, but I agree with the implicit interpretation in Williams' suggestions.

Vance's message is surely that nature is powerful. But the power of vancian nature is not merely 'dire'. There is also the power of nature's beauty. Vancian man exists in a tension between these two poles. Williams alludes to this tension in his presentation of Trullion; while 'malevolent merlings lurk beneath the placid waters, anxious to seize any humans who tip from boats', on Trullion life 'is easy' with various pleasures 'the focus of human concerns'. This easy Trullion life is close to nature and revels in its beauties—the beauty of the night sky in particular indicated by the practice of 'star watching'.

There is a counterpoint in Vance's work between dire beasts and the beauty of nature. Emblematic of the latter are sunsets. For Vance readers this needs no demonstration but, for the sake of form, the special place sunsets hold in Vance's work universe is underlined by this footnote from *Durdane*:

The language of Shant discriminates between various types of sunsets. Hence:

feoyhre—a calm cloudless violet sunset.

arusch'thain—a violet sunset with horizontal apple-green clouds.

gorus jurhe—a flaring flamboyant sunset encompassing the entire sky.

shergorszhe—as above, additionally with cumulus clouds in the east illuminated and looking toward the west.

heizhen—a situation where the sky is heavily overcast except for a ribbon of clarity at the western horizon, through which the suns set.

But the vancian sunset is more than 'glorious' pageantry:

They climbed to the top deck and came out into a blaze of ruddy light from a glorious red and gold sunset. Clouds streamed forty miles across the sky; the ocean glittered with color. For an instant Betty seemed to apprehend

the flaming message: hope and the tragedy of hope, the ultimate victories still far in the future, a golden emotion beyond the reach of words. The sunset faded; color was conquered by the gray dusk, the golden message was lost.>>*Thanks to the Laughing Mathematician and his ISR for several of the citations used in this essay.<<*

— *Dark Ocean*

The message, the implicit drama, sometimes evolves into an actual story, 'a play within a play':

[. . .] the sun went down in a cataclysm of scarlet, rose, pink and red, like a king advancing to his doom. Silence on the balcony. The tall woman came forth with new mugs of beer, then stood a moment staring at the sunset as if never in her life had she witnessed a sight so remarkable.

— *The Domains of Koryphon*

The vancian sunset—more than an explosive moment of polychromatic magic, exuberant and wild, or tranquil and soothing—is a mirror of human life, a narrative symphony with a beginning, a middle and, looming behind, an end. Sometimes they even transcend story to become philosophy:

At the risk of banality, I will point out that 'fate', 'destiny' and 'lurulu' are not synonymous. 'fate' is dark and ponderous; 'destiny' is more like a beautiful sunset.

— *Lurulu*

Beauty comes in many guises! It is everywhere! Some identify beauty with life! Others claim that the waning of life, like the fading of a sunset, is the culmination of all experience.

— *Ports of Call*

As Williams points out Vance's dire beasts symbolize not only the danger of nature but its vitality. Vance's sunsets are also multi-dimensional, a tension between hope and tragedy. Williams highlights how Vance's dire beasts are sometimes the occasion or vehicle of vancian humor. Sunsets—their natural beauty in particular—are likewise a vehicle of surprising contrasts, or the point of departure for an evocation of something close to humor, gaiety:

There was the melancholy normally induced by sunset—and now the sunset was beautiful indeed; the sky glowed mauve and green-blue around a green bank of persimmon-orange clouds stranded with magenta. It was not the beauty which brought on melancholy, mused Gersen, but rather the quiet halcyon light and its fading. . . . And there was

another melancholy—different yet somehow similar—which came to Gersen as he watched the debonair folk about him. They were all graceful and easy, untouched by the toil and pain and terror that existed on remote worlds.

— *The Star King*

Elsewhere in this story Vance evokes another tension from natural beauty:

There was a majesty, a clarity, a transcendental quality to the planet, which affected him with an almost religious awe, and presently he came to understand that he must leave shortly or succumb psychically, give himself completely to the world. The knowledge afflicted him with an almost unbearable sadness, for he knew that he would never return.

— *ibid.*

Teehalt must choose: stay on the world to live out his life, and protect the secret of its precious existence, or return to civilization and abandon the world to violation. Is this choice a mere plot device; is there no third way? No; the civilized universe is not large enough to hide from Malagathe the Woe. As Teehalt hesitates on Smade's Planet his agents run him down and murder him.

Teehalt's choice in favor of civilization is understandable. As Aristotle said: 'Man is a social animal'. The world was beautiful but Teehalt cannot face a life of solitude. The society of the dryads could never replace the society of men:

Magnificent creatures, thought Gersen, beyond a doubt—but somehow they were a—well, a discordant element. A perverse notion—but there it was. On their own planet they seemed out of place! Exotic elements in a scene as dear and beloved as—as what? Earth? Gersen felt no conscious emotional attachment for Earth. Still, the world most nearly like this was Earth—or, more accurately, those occasional areas of Earth which somehow had evaded the artifices and modifications wrought by generations of man. This world was fresh, natural, unmodified. Except for the dryads—a jarring note—this might be Old Earth, Earth of the Golden Age, the Earth of natural man. . . .

Gersen felt a small exhilarating shock of enlightenment. Here resided the basic charm of the world: its near-identity to the environment in which man had evolved. Old Earth must have known many such smiling valleys; the feel of such landscapes permeated the entire fabric of the human psyche. Other worlds of the Oikumene might be pleasant and comfortable, but none were Old Earth; none of them were Home [. . .] For a fact, mused Gersen, here is where I would like to build a cottage, with an old-fashioned garden,

*an orchard in the meadow, a rowboat tied to the riverbank.
Dreams, idle yearning for the unattainable. . . but dreams
and yearning which necessarily must affect every man.
— ibid.*

In a further contrast the charming dryads turn out to be 'dire beasts':

*The dryads, wandering up the shore, flourished their gorgeous
fronds, swaying slowly like branches in the wind. On the
swamp they moved more slowly, a step at a time. One of them
stopped, stood stock still. Under its foot showed a glint of
white, as the concealed proboscis plunged down into the soft
ground. A few seconds passed. The ground heaved, erupted:
the dryad toppled over backward. Up from a crater staggered
Warweave, the proboscis still thrust through his back.
— ibid.*

Like Adam and Eve excluded from the Garden of Paradise, Galactic Man, to say nothing of Modern Western Man, is excluded from his natural environment, the scene of his evolutionary development, his root, his existential home.

If this idea can ultimately be traced to the first book of the Bible, its immediate ancestor is surely Rousseau's noble savage—the inspiration for Thoreau's famous back-to-nature experiment. This Rousseauian idea permeates American culture. In the 1960s, from age 10 to 14, I attended a school founded by Walter Clark. Clark was famous in the 'progressive education' movement which flourished from the 1920s to the 1960s. His school gave substance to the phrase 'getting back to nature', but for Clark this had a larger meaning than birds and flowers, fresh air and forests. Clark understood nature as much more than an aesthetic object which ought to be appreciated more deeply. He wanted children to have what he called 'basic experiences': hunger and thirst, cold and hot, hard work with shovels, axes and farm animals. Like Abraham Lincoln, Walter Clark was a master ax handler. His school had a regular course of study, but he also taught the secret of that noble tool. For Clark nature was not merely an environment, but an experience which was not just educational but intimate and essential, or actually redemptive.

'Urban man', as Vance calls him, needs to reintegrate into his soul something which, to his profound detriment, he lacks. By learning how to milk a cow or slaughter chickens, by feeling cold and hunger—in long camping trips in the mountains—Clark believed a person recovered that elusive something modern life has lost,

misplaced, or stolen. In the spring of 1970, the year before he retired, Clark took some of us to his favorite destination, a beaver lake high in the Adirondacks. On that occasion, in the light of dawn, two young boys took a swim in the beaver channels which articulated the swamp. I was one of those boys. I still recall the tang of the cold air, the reflection of the rosy sky in the motionless black water, lone bird calls penetrating the absolute silence, the inebriating perfume of budding trees. After our swim we pulled leeches off our naked bodies—which did nothing to mar the scene; that swim, in water that was almost ice, still refreshes me. The leeches, dire though they be, provoked no disgust. They were admirable in their smooth, shining firmness, their mysterious vitality. The traces of blood on our legs was a sign of our profound relation to that environment, our real integration with nature. Without intention, without intellectual or emotional effort, we lived sublimation in the Great Cycle of Existence. As the crisp air nourished our lungs, as the water floated our bodies, as the sun illuminated that secret corner of the Earth to our delighted eyes, our souls were exulted—and all the more for our, dimly sensed, status as leech-food. We were more than spectators; we were integrated to the absolute degree. It was not an idea, it was an experience, a 'basic experience'.

Later, when I got to know Walter Clark as an adult, I learned that he had watched us that morning. Our sense of careless freedom, our innocent submersion in what was, in fact, a dangerous environment, took place under his watchful protection. But his surveillance also had a personal aspect which, today, years after his death, I can fully appreciate. That swim—one of countless situations he had carefully encouraged—was the work of life, his gift to the world through us.

If not for Walter Clark my up-bringing would have been much more urban. Has Walter Clark redeemed me from vancian urbanity? I feel enriched by what Walter gave me, but others who benefited from his methods are now as urbanized and neurotic as possible—and I myself am hardly free of neurosis! Certainly there is an element of choice; it is one thing to be confronted with the *landscapes* which permeate *the . . . fabric of the human psyche*, to be plunged into that *dear and beloved* world, that *fresh, natural, unmodified* world unpolled by *the artifices and modifications wrought by generations of man*. It may be another thing to make that world one's own.

How does the noble savage become 'civilized man'? The culprit is selfishness, otherwise known as 'evil'. In Eden man's happiness is perfect. His instincts guide him.

Nature provides all that is needed. When man is tired he sleeps. When he is hungry he eats. When he is sexually aroused he takes satisfaction. But another noble savage wishes to snooze in the same nook, hungers for the same fruit, is aroused by the same female; Strife enters paradise. Noble savage #1 may drive off noble savage #2, but to be cleverer and stronger at a given moment does not solve the basic problem. Life begins and ends in weakness. The infant and the decrepit are defenseless. To win the struggle for survival and happiness, at the racial level, men must cooperate. But cooperation demands subordination of primal urges, however pure, however 'good', to the civil arts: communication, self-denial, negotiation, war.

Is this the process of perversion? Is it by cultivating the arts that man loses his essential self? Does he now live by a code which, however efficacious materially, betrays the foundation of his being? By losing contact with his primal urges has he changed his nature? Is 'urban man' 'non-man'? The Rousseauian dilemma—our separation from redemptive nature—underlies much of what is called 'leftism'. The sexual revolution, moral relativity, identity politics, personal empowerment; these are ways we have tried, in the last 40 years, to recover our natural essence.

But how did the germ of selfishness enter the savage and destroy his nobility? According to the Biblical account the Devil, and human freedom, is to blame. If so, God—or Nature if you prefer—is not responsible. By heeding evil counsel we, by our own free choice and action, have introduced a new element, which has destroyed us. But—leaving God out of it—how can such an element come from outside Nature? Is it possible that man was constructed unable to cooperate with his fellows? When the Eskimo grandmother is sent out to die on the frozen tundra so that the viable members of her clan may flourish, she is condemned by nature to do so with regret and fear. How could Nature have arranged human beings so that she would take this fateful step in an elan of primal joy and with a sentiment of fulfillment? Fear and regret are the other side of the coin of Life.

Man, as made by Nature, is *Homo Faber*. The noble savage is not merely noble, he is artisan. The natural environment—its scarcities and complexities—contrary to the nostalgic Rousseauian view, is the ultimate source of language and the civil arts, including the art of war. If we are indeed permanently orphaned of our primal environment, our present artificial environment cannot be called unnatural. We were made to create it and therefore we were made to live in it.

But this ratiocination does not free us from the tension. Like the merlings in the fens or the leeches in the lake, the primal environment is itself fraught with tension. All these tensions have one source—the tension of tensions—and it is inherent in nature: the tug of war between life and death. We are born, and so we aspire to life, but our birth is our death warrant. This is the drama, the 'story', the final thing of things which, like a story, has a beginning, a middle, and, alas, an end. Life itself—coming to be, passing, and ceasing to be—is the engine that drives the world.

The terror and beauty of life; these are the tissues from which Vance weaves his stories. This may seem like a truism. Are not all stories, all dramas, undergirded by this dynamic? No. We have here a hint of Vance's greatness, that largeness of view which penetrates to the least of things and illuminates the whole.

If Vance has a deliberate artistic intention that his stories should be atmospheric, this intention is based on a something that is deeper than an artistic intention. It is based on the sense that 'atmosphere'—the feeling of things—exists. What is 'the feeling of things'? It is like the ether, a subtle substance which permeates everything and gives an over-all unity of feeling. It is like a color scheme in a painting, like theme and tempo in music. Vance's work is drenched with this feeling of unity. His 'worlds' are convincing not because his descriptions of them are 'well written' or 'not contradictory', but because there is a larger view behind them, a context of feeling in which each detail finds its just place. This large view is not a notion about how society, or a society, is. It is a sentiment which is like an idea, but is also like a smell, about the nature of existence itself. It is a remarkable quality, and there are few parallels to it in literature.

Jane Austen achieves something similar by understanding all characters against a Christian background. The virtues and flaws of Emma Woodhouse are calibrated against the same moral understanding as those of Mr. Elton. Like the unity of color in a master painting, both characters inhabit the same infinitesimally calibrated spiritual universe, which Jane Austen thus makes palpable to the reader. Thomas Hardy's work is drenched with a unifying sense of unfolding social evolution.

If Vance's characters and his grasp of society's structure and movement are less acute and articulated than Austen's or Hardy's, his view is wider and more philosophical. If Hardy is as vivid, he lacks Vance's sage laughter. If Austen is as sparkling, she lacks the dark masses and vast vancian perspectives. Vance's constant sense of the Great Tension

allows him to weave all things, animate and inanimate, all time and space, into a splendid tapestry.

Are there any other authors whose work has an equally poignant sense of the foundational strata of existence? There are certainly not many. Thackeray has a similar breadth of view and ironic outlook; a detailed comparison of these two writers might be interesting.

George Bernard Shaw also has a broad philosophical view, but Shaw's outlook is intellectual. The movie version of *Major Barbara** has a somewhat vancian power. Barbara is a Major in the Salvation Army. She is in rebellion against her millionaire arms merchant father, Undershaft, and Bodger, the millionaire whiskey manufacturer. But her view broadens:

I was happy in the Salvation Army for a moment. I escaped from the world into a paradise of enthusiasm and prayer and soul saving; but the moment our money ran short, it all came back to Bodger: it was he who saved our people: he, and the Prince of Darkness, my papa. Undershaft and Bodger: their hands stretch everywhere: when we feed a starving fellow creature, it is with their bread, because there is no other bread; when we tend the sick, it is in the hospitals they endow; if we turn from the churches they build, we must kneel on the stones of the streets they pave. As long as that lasts, there is no getting away from them. Turning our backs on Bodger and Undershaft is turning our backs on life.

If Vance would never articulate something like this, it is none-the-less a vancian sort of view. Life and death, good and evil, are imbricated. One is the flip side of the other. But the movie version of *Major Barbara*—to the advantage of its emotional power—is textually adulterated. Cusins, professor of Greek and Barbara's fiancée, agrees to become Undershaft's heir and run his industrial empire. This reflects Shaw's desire that intellectuals run the world, but only a hint of this is allowed into the movie. The following speech is not included. The second sentence is a fully vancian sentiment, but Shaw goes on to show his Socialist colors:

You cannot have power for good without having power for evil too. Even mother's milk nourishes murderers as well as heroes. This power which only tears men's bodies to pieces has never been so horribly abused as the intellectual power, the imaginative power, the poetic, religious power than can enslave men's souls. As a teacher of Greek I gave the intellectual man weapons against the common man. I now want to give the common man weapons against the

*Starring the young Rex Harrison and Robert Morley.

intellectual man. I love the common people. I want to arm them against the lawyer, the doctor, the priest, the literary man, the professor, the artist, and the politician, who, once in authority, are the most dangerous, disastrous, and tyrannical of all the fools, rascals, and impostors. I want a democratic power strong enough to force the intellectual oligarchy to use its genius for the general good or else perish.

Shaw's view is Rousseauian in his suspicion of education, or civilization. When Undershaft is searching for an heir, he says:

I want a man with no relations and no schooling: that is, a man who would be out of the running altogether if he were not a strong man. And I can't find him [. . .] if he shews the least ability, he is fastened on by schoolmasters; trained to win scholarships like a racehorse; crammed with secondhand ideas; drilled and disciplined in docility and what they call good taste; and lamed for life so that he is fit for nothing but teaching.

Shaw is exciting to read but he fails to generate atmosphere; the artistic excitement is all intellectual or verbal. He is witty, in that English vein which is Oscar Wilde's whole stock in trade, but in the greatest art wit and feeling are inextricable, and Shaw is cold.*

One 20th century artist who resembles Vance in his breadth of vision and simplicity of soul is Marcel Pagnol. Little known outside of France, Pagnol had a remarkable career as writer and film-maker. Some twenty years ago one of his sagas—in an adulterated remake with Gerard Depardieu—had some success in America: *Manon des Sources*. Every Frenchman has heard of Pagnol and seen his films, but the French literary elite (to which no elite in the world can compare) looks down its collective—not to say collectivist—nose at him. Like Vance, Pagnol fails to embroil himself in modernist angst and ambiguity, and commits that gravest of all modernist sins: he is popular with ordinary people. Committing a further no-no, like Vance he mixes liberal doses of comedy with his

*There is one speech from *Major Barbara* which may have influenced Vance directly. Speaking of a Salvation Army meeting, Cusins says:

"It was an amazing meeting. Mrs. Baines almost died of emotion. Jenny Hill went stark mad with hysteria. The Prince of Darkness played his trombone like a madman: its brazen roarings were like the laughter of the damned. 117 conversions took place then and there."

Compare Navarth's speech from chapter 5 of *The Palace of Love*:

"A pyre tall as a mountain, and Viole Falushe at the top. Platforms surrounding for ten thousand musicians. With a single glance I strike the fire. The musicians play while their whiskey boils and their instruments melt. Viole Falushe sings soprano . . ."

drama—Fernandel stars in many of his films.* His stories, though anchored in the mid-20th century milieu of southern France are remarkable for their local atmosphere. But they are like high-relief carvings in marble, so deep is their resemblance to classical Greek plays. As in Vance extremes of good and evil are not Pagnol's focus and it is sometimes difficult to decide which character is 'hero' or 'protagonist'. Pagnol plays out the tension between society and human desire in contrasts of transgression and forgiveness animated by our love of things, places and, above all, people. Long after Alain Robbe-Grillet and Jean-Marie Le Clezio are relegated to footnotes in comparative literature doctoral theses—if they are that lucky—Pagnol will still be touching the hearts of millions. At some point the establishment will have to take him seriously. This will not happen before it is purged of its modernist perversion.



FIDDLES AND FONTS

I have treated this matter several times in past issues of *COSMOPOLIST*† but I wish to more adequately state and illustrate some basic points—proportions in particular. My criticism of contemporary typography is three pronged: it is stylistically backwards, it is thoughtlessly mechanical and homogeneous, and it abuses digital scaling. These three flaws are closely related.

A Bit of History

The stylistic development of typography—or the evolution of letter forms on the printed page—followed a natural course, starting with the standardization of the 'Roman' alphabet by the Frenchman Jensen and other masters, working in Italy in the 15th century. The letter forms have two sources. The capital letters are based on Roman letters used to carve inscriptions in stone. The lower case letters are based on handwritten forms developed by French monkish scribes in and around the city of Tours from the 9th century onward. This so-called 'Caroline miniscule' was itself developed from the Roman capitals.

Many characteristics of Jensen's fonts, and the fonts of his most illustrious followers such as Garamond, are therefore closely related to stone carving on the one hand, and on the other to ink and quill writing. For example, the proud forms of the capital letters are characterized

*To say nothing of such French thespian institutions as Remu, Charpin, and the ineffable Oran de Mazi.

†See #s 3, 6, 10, 16 and 43.

by massive simplicity based on straight lines, vertical, horizontal and diagonal:

H T E A V Z

strong contrasts between straight lines and grand curves:

B J D P U

or the use of grand and sober curves alone:

C Q S

(Examples given in 'Amiante Title' at 18points.)

Long straight lines, or regular and even curves, are hard to draw well and quickly by hand. But large carved letters are first traced out with plumb-line and compass. They are also naturally and suavely terminated with long graceful serifs (such as the little pedestal at the foot of the 'T' or the danglers from the cross bar). Such elements, too small for ink and pen and totally unadaptable to rapid writing by hand, are a natural design element of monumental carved letters. The lower case letters are characterized by crochets, curvets, arcades, specks and squiggles, inherited from rapid and fluid use of a pen:

k t x f p d m h j i e s

As typography develops the traces of stone carving and penmanship are slowly overshadowed by technical considerations proper to typography itself—which is to say to extremely small forms carved in metal, cast in lead, inked and pressed on paper. This progress finally results, at the end of the 18th century, in 'Modern Style'. Modern style fonts are characterized by a mechanical aesthetic reflecting the typographers' proud mastery of their art. The line-weight variations and slanted structures inherited from penmanship are suppressed in favor of a rigorous verticality. Modern Face is slick and handsome on the printed page but its forms are alien to those naturally produced when writing by hand.

Quousque tandem

'Modern Face' font by Bodoni; about 1800.

The stylistic difference between Modern Face and the previous manner of typographical design are made clear in

Quoufque tandem

William Caslon, 1734

Note, in Caslon, the emphasis ('shading') to the lower-

left bellies of the 'q' and 'd', the angled serifs of 'u', 'n' and 'm' and the tail of the 'Q', which continues to be a free-form pen stroke. Bodoni's 'Q' is 'designed' in the modern sense of the word. Bodoni's shading, like his serifs, are made strictly vertical and horizontal.

The cleaner look of Modern Faces is partly the result of accumulated technical progress in paper smoothness and press pressures, even more than carving and molding techniques, but this cleanness should be distinguished from Modern Face's mechanical aesthetic. There is no necessary connection between Modern Faces rigid verticality—which is merely a rejection of diagonal, skewed or casual forms—and cleanness as such. Likewise its extreme contrasts between thick and thin lines; such elements are design choices. They are choices made available by technical progress but they are only aesthetic choices. They are not, in themselves, 'clean' or 'mechanical' as such. These are to be discerned in such aspects as the trueness of straight lines and smoothness of curves.

Typographical progress continues with Sans-Serif fonts, invented on the heels of Modern Face in the early 19th century. These attain the extreme limit of typographical logic. All reference to stone carving and penmanship are eliminated; only the letter forms themselves, in their purest—one might say 'spiritual'—form, remain. While Sans-Serif fonts have proved useful in many areas they have never gained favor for literary use. Modern Face fonts, which dominated literary use for over a century, have been out of style since the early part of the 20th century—except in France where they continue to exert some influence. What happened?

In the 1860s in England there was a reaction against the mechanistic aesthetic of Modern Style in favor of the more gracious forms of the older typography. This resulted in 'Old Style', a typographical aesthetic based on nostalgia for such fonts as the Caslon example, above. Old Style continues to dominate today, 150 years later. But if Old Style succeeded in turning back the aesthetic clock—or in thinking it did—it did not slow technical progress. 'Old Style' fonts would seem to be well named; they are old 'style' but not old. The 'cleanness' of Modern Face is prolonged and pursued in them and, more significantly, they also prolong less obvious aspects of the Modern Face aesthetic. Prior to the 1860s, and the emergence of Old Style, the mechanistic Modern Face aesthetic is not carried to its logical extreme. This honor, ironically, is reserved to Old Style. Modern Face may eschew diagonal forms, but for all its apparently rigid verticality and 'slab' serifs—which are indeed the begin-

nings of a true machine aesthetic—Modern Face does not make a virtue of homogeneity. Note the Thorn example above. The rounded part of the 'p', 'd', 'e' and 'o' are not identical. The bowl of the 'p', for example, is wider than the bowl of the 'd'. These two letters do not feel like mirror images of each other. The 'e' and 'o', likewise, are not easily confounded, one reason being that the shading of the 'e' is, in fact, slightly diagonal.

At first glance the homogeneity of Adobe 'Garamond', as opposed to the heterogeneity of Amiante, may not be obvious. Indeed, if these matters were not at a certain level of subtlety the feebleness of contemporary typography would be a serious handicap rather than a mere aesthetic shame. However, to mention only the most obvious elements, note the top-serifs of 'd', 'l', 'b', the bottom serifs of 'q', 'p'.

ADOBE 'GARAMOND' AT 20PTS: e c o d l b q p

AMIANTE 'BOOK' AT 20PTS: e c o d l b q p

But Old Style, despite its enthusiasm for diagonal and graceful forms, embraced the emerging mechanical aesthetic of Modern Face in subtle ways. Forms similar in many letters (such as stems, bowls and serifs) were progressively made as similar as possible, in a growing enthusiasm for standardization which, by the end of the 20th century, had become a doctrinaire orthodoxy totally foreign to the spirit even of the Modern Face typographers. For it is difference, not sameness, that enables us to distinguish between letters. When they are too much the same they risk being confused with each other. Heterogeneity underlies legibility: each letter should be distinctive. The homogenization that comes with the passion for standardization is fundamentally foreign to a natural and healthy typographical aesthetic.

With the advent of digital typography this wrong tendency was given further scope. 'Digital scaling' means that a font, or basic set of letter 'glyphs', can be made any size wanted. All computer users perform this act of typographical barbarism when they change the point size of a font in a document. Prior to digital scaling if larger or smaller letters were wanted a whole font had to be drawn, carved and cast. Previously it was self-evidently obvious to typographers that large and small letters have distinct relationships to the reader so that particular proportions should be applied to each. But the creeping machine aesthetic progressively blinded them to this problem so that with the advent of digital typography it

seemed totally unproblematic—and even a triumph of standardization—that a single set of shapes could be used for all size letters.

Violins and Cellos

A cello is more than twice as big as a violin but, at first glance, and seen from the front, the proportions of the two instruments are basically the same. Close inspection soon reveals a host of subtle differences. There are many reasons for these but one of the most fundamental is that, while the size of fiddles change in order to cope with higher and lower musical registers, an integral aspect of fiddle sound production—human anatomy—does not. If the finger board of a violin is indeed slimmer than that of a cello, both still must accommodate the human hand's manipulation of 4 strings. The narrowest part of a violin's finger board (the upper most



Violin, George Chanot, 1835. Body height: 355mm.

point, not shown above) measures about 23mm; that of a cello, about 31m: a ratio of about 1/1.4. But the relation between the heights of the illustrated instruments is about 1/2.1. Proportionally speaking this difference is dramatic. Where the body size more than doubles the fingerboard does not even increase by 50%.

Another proportional difference between a violin and a cello is clearly seen from the side. If the face of the violin and the cello are quite similar, from the side the differences are, again, dramatic.

The actual sizes of each fiddle type varies in a narrow range. I have collected the following width/height figures on violins; 29*-32/354-362, on violas: 36-37/393-406,

*All figures given in millimeters.



and on cellos: 120-126/717-766. Taking round figures in these ranges, and rounding out the calculations, we get a clear picture of how the width to height proportion of these three noble instruments are distinctive:

VIOLIN: 30 x 360, or 1/12
 VIOLA: 36 x 400, or 1/11
 CELLO: 125 x 750, or 1/6



Cello, Simon Gilbert, 1751. Body height: 752mm.

If violin proportions were imposed on the cello it would be half as deep, and vice versa. A 'cello' that was merely a scaled-up violin would not only fail to produce good sound, it would be unplayable because the finger board would be too massive.

Each aspect of violin, viola and cello could be examined in this light. It would be found that the proportions of almost every part are particular, for a variety of reasons. In addition to human anatomy and sound production, factors include the mechanical characteristics of wood and the stress caused by tuned strings. Similar as these instruments are, studied in detail they turn out to have many profound differences, some pronounced, others more or less invisible.

Footnotes and Titles



The same situation applies to typographical letters. Tiny 8pt letters used for footnotes have requirements as different from large 18pt letters used for titles as

a violin has from a cello. And here is where digital scaling wades in; just as the proportions of a violin are designed to serve the production of certain notes by human arms and hands, so a font is designed to be printed on paper at a certain size to be read by the human eye. A surprising number of parameters determine the proportional changes

required when the size of letters is altered. These include line thickness and relative contrast of thick to thin within lines; the slants used for emphasis and the relative width and height of the various parts of the letters. I will not provide an exhaustive list of these parameters, but to give a single example: the bigger the letter the greater can be the contrast between thick and thin lines, while at the same time the relative thickness of the thickest lines to the letter, over-all, may be reduced. This is because while an 8pt. letter might be about 2mm high, and an 18pt. letter as much as 5mm high (a difference greater than 2 to 1) the human eye cannot cope with any line so thin that it becomes confounded with the impurities and irregularities in the paper, such as are present in all but the most pure, flat and surfaced types. The thinnest line easily discernable, however, could be used in very large letters. So, while over-all letter size can change dramatically, there is an absolute limit on the thinnest lines that may be employed. This typographical situation corresponds to the relation of human anatomy to the different fiddles. Human anatomy—in this case visual acuity and arm length (which defines the distance at which a page of letters in a book will be read) affect the nature of the lines that a typographer may employ.

The most obvious consequence of digital scaling, therefore, is small letters that are too skinny and large letters that are needlessly clumsy.

Illustrations:

Here are very large blow-ups of Times, Adobe 'Garamond' and four Amiante Fonts, which allow their structures to be studied in detail:

TIMES: The swift jump fox

ADOBE GARAMOND: The swift jump fox

AMIANTE NOTE: The swift jump fox

AMIANTE BOOK: The swift jump fox

AMIANTE 12: The swift jump fox

AMIANTE TITLE: The swift jump fox

All 6 fonts have been digitally scaled up to 33pts. The natural 'metrics' (spaces between letters and words) have been retained (except in the case of Amiante Title whose metrics are very wide for decorative reasons). Note how Times is basically an Old Style font, where Amiante has more elements of Modern Face: compare the shadings of 'o' (note that 'Garamond' uses Modern Face vertical shading for this letter!). Times is quite nice in the 8-10 range, but becomes unpleasantly overbearing at larger sizes. Amiante Note is authoritative at 8pts but is gauche at larger sizes. 'Garamond' is even more spidery than Amiante Title. Inspection of these fonts each at 8, 10, 12 and 18 points highlights the effects of digital scaling:

TIMES:	AMIANTE BOOK:
The swift dog	The swift dog
The swift dog	The swift dog
The swift dog	The swift dog
The swift dog	The swift dog

AMIANTE TITLE:	ADOBE 'GARAMOND':
The swift dog	The swift dog
The swift dog	The swift dog
The swift dog	The swift dog
The swift dog	The swift dog

AMIANTE 12:

The swift dog

The swift dog

The swift dog

The swift dog

AMIANTE NOTE:

The swift dog

The swift dog

The swift dog

The swift dog

Adobe 'Garamond', clearly, only functions, and that barely, at 18 points. This should be no a surprise; it is modeled on actual letters which were even bigger. For this reason Amiante Title, designed for exactly 18

points, is visibly more comfortable at that size. VIE typesetting, therefore, allows for properly legible words at each size.

AMIANTE LETTERS AT INTENDED SIZES:

8 points: The swift jump dog

10 points: The swift jump dog

12 points: The swift jump dog

18 points: The swift jump dog

In addition to the above considerations, letters, at each size, of given proportions and weights, demand different spacing to create comfortably legible words.

It may also be mentioned that not only does VIE typesetting use these four Amiante fonts coordinated to each other at their specific sizes, but two types of cursive fonts, two sets of small caps, and several other fonts, in an integrated typographical family. The final effect may be more or less successful but the VIE restores aspects of typography which have become totally absent from contemporary book-making.

Fonts like Adobe 'Garamond', therefore, while vaguely based on actual 16th century fonts by Claude Garamond, give a typographical result which relates to its models as Gatorade relates to a Chenin white from the hills of the Vienne valley. Times, a font designed in the 20th century to meet the needs of high-speed presses, while basically an Old Style font, is superior to Adobe's 'Garamond' because, while 'Old Style' in its forms, it is designed not in a spirit of sterile nostalgia but to cope with real-world exigences involving paper, presses and readers. As a result Times has an appropriate 'color' (jargon for the lightness or darkness of a printed page as a consequence of letter form thickness and text line spacing) for its typical sizes. The designers of Adobe 'Garamond' failed to take color into consideration. They simply measured actual Garamond letters, and made homogenized digital copies of them. I am sure of this because actual Garamond letters were in the 20 to 30 point zone—in the 16th century it was technically impractical to have smaller letters for reasons, above all, of paper roughness—and Adobe 'Garamond' has appropriate darkness only at these sizes. Claude Garamond's actual letters are perfect at the original sizes; transposed down to 12pts, they are absurdly 'light'.

But the weakness of contemporary typography does not end there. Just as fiddle proportions must change along several parameters, so letter proportions must alter in many ways as their size changes. As I have explained elsewhere, as letters become smaller they must also become narrower, and their stems must become correspondingly short. In the samples, above, compare the 'd's of 'Garamond' and Amiante Book; note the relative stem length and width of bowl. The Adobe proportions, which are not bad in themselves, only work at much larger sizes than 12pts. where, for reasons I have not yet discovered, letters may be wider, and both letters and words may have more air around them, without compromising legibility.

For the last few years the typographical establishment has been discussing the introduction of OpenType, a new technology to address the problem of digital scaling. I have not yet seen this new technology, which seems to having trouble penetrating the market. In the VIE, when we change letter sizes, we must also change fonts; an extra step that means extra effort and time. OpenType is supposed to solve this problem by automatically changing the letter shapes, or 'glyphs'—presumably by substituting a modified font—when the size is changed. Such a technological development should be welcomed. It is my impression, however, that the industry's awareness of the scaling problem remains superficial.

Passions of Head and Heart

There is an additional parameter which gets to the core of our present typographical malaise. Old Style was a natural and healthy reaction to the increasingly triumphant mechanistic values which accompanied the development of Modern Face. This triumphalism was driven by fatuous self-satisfaction following upon scientific, technological and industrial progress. But man is not a machine. The curvets and swoops of the quill are linked, through our fingers, arms and shoulders, directly to our hearts. Man is made to think, but he is also made to dance. We love to contemplate cubes and spheres, we also love to contemplate the chaotic sunset. The Modern Face aesthetic is handsome, proud and practical, but it begins to be offensive. The war of the mechanics against the poets—an aspect of the war between the atheists and the theists—has been going on for centuries. It is as timeless a struggle as the battle between the sexes. Man is in permanent tension with himself. He is a Noble Savage, but he is also Homo Faber. He has a heart, and a mind. He can conceive of eternity, but he is condemned to his mortal body.

The Old Style reaction, despite its triumph—a triumph of the poets—failed to be more than superficial. The anti-diagonal aesthetic of Modern Face is only the most obvious of its qualities. Modern Face typographers practiced to perfection the true art of scaling. They fully understood the gamut of proportional changes wanted for each aspect of letter construction at each size. But thanks to the mechanical passion, the passion to standardize and codify, these lessons were lost in the 19th and 20th centuries. Despite Old Styles’ ‘aesthetic triumph’ a truly mechanical aesthetic—of standardization and homogenization—entrenched itself.

There is something about the rational part of man that wants all things to be the same, lusting for a cube-like environment, infinitely divisible and combinable, a totally masterable world. This strange passion is not only behind our love of games—miniature worlds which we can dominate—it behind calls for ‘equality’ and thus, eventually, the ideological horrors of Marxism/Leninism and the technological horrors of Hitlerism. For the benefits of the economy, for reasons of efficiency and efficaciousness—but really to satisfy this mental thirst—anything and everything is standardized. Take the art of arts: painting. In France there exists a standard set of painting sizes, in three proportions, ‘Figure’ (closest to a square), ‘Paysage’ (‘landscape’, more rectangular) and ‘Marine’ (which is quite elongated). These three proportions are declined in numbered sizes—of which only a few are actually available. Thus one talks of ‘6F’s, ‘8P’s, ‘10F’s and ‘15M’s. Stretchers to these specifications are produced in mass, reducing cost. Frames made to these same standards are conveniently transferred from painting to painting, giving gallery owners marketing flexibility and frames more value. What does all this nifty rationality have to do with painting? Exactly nothing. A given painting, because of the artist’s inspiration, the needs of a given subject or a given decorative situation, has its own logic which translates, or should translate, into specific measurements proper to each situation.* We are inebriated by mental passions, delirious with rationality.

I am not suggesting the Apollonian be overturned in favor of the Dionysian. I feel no desire to dethrone rationality in favor of raw instinct. The right path is a good and proper marriage of head and heart.



*The American system is better in this regard; stretchers are not made complete, but sold as bars in increments of 2 inches, to be assembled by the artist. This allows, for example, a far greater choice of near-squares.

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Compiled by Hans van der Veeke

Marc Herant notified me that, in the credits of last issue, he was forgotten. Marc post-proofed 3 texts in Volume 3 and his name should be there. Apologies and repairs have been made.

Slowly but surely we are making progress. A few more texts have been finished and one volume even made it to the final stage—a second time: volume 32 had been declared finished but new evidence (in fact a partial manuscript) was discovered, and we took full advantage! Several important improvements were made.

Please check the credits below. If your name is misspelled or missing; let me know at hans@vie.tmfweb.nl. The credits of all finished (Wave 2) texts can also be found on the VIE site:

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MORE ON THE VIE'S FUTURE

Editor,

In COSMOPOLIS 50, Paul Rhoads reports that Joel Hedlund was wondering what other author might have his works collected upon completion of the VIE. I've contemplated this myself many times, and I always come back to one author: Roger Zelazny. Vance and Zelazny are inexorably linked in my mind. Sometime in the early 70's, I read my first book by each author, perhaps during the same week. Each has a unique use of language that seduces and envelops the reader. Vance I've always thought of as 1% alien, different enough from daily language to constantly remind me I'm somewhere else. Zelazny is the most poetic writer of prose that I've encountered, his words creating a reading trance. Each has worked in both fantasy and science fiction. Each has works that are hard to find, but well-worth reading. Each has a body of work that is not overwhelming to the wallet. Each is much loved by his readers, but neither has reached the wide audience that is deserved.

As I'm not one of the volunteers doing the work, this is more like a wish than a suggestion, but I would instantly subscribe to ZIE.

Martin A. Stever

Bainbridge Island, Washington



END NOTE

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