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# COSMOPOLIS

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## Work Tsar Status Report as of July 25, 2004

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

Two texts are in initial composition and one text in composition review.

There are eight texts in Post Proof and five texts in Post Proof composition updating and review.

11 volumes have been completed and sent to Sfera to produce the blues. Blues will be reviewed over the next 2-3 weeks and then these 11 volumes will be printed.

The last 11 volumes are scheduled for this treatment at the end of September.

Last month:

- + In-TI: 2 texts (2.44%)
- + Post-TI: 16 texts (19.51%)
- + Volume Ready: 64 texts (78.05%)
- + Volumes Ready: 11 (50%)

This month:

- + In-TI: 2 texts (2.44%)
- + Post-TI: 16 texts (19.51%)
- + Volume Ready: 64 texts (78.05%)
- + Volumes Ready: 0 (0%)
- + Volumes Completed: 11 (50%)

*Joel Riedesel*



## You have done it!

VIE work Credits

... will be back next issue, when Hans returns from vacation.



# How Your Contribution Is Helping the VIE into Being

By Tim Stretton

While writing a first draft of the VIE project history for Volume 44, I dug out some statistics on the number of jobs volunteers have done. As an accountant by trade, I became rather interested in the figures, and inevitably ended up producing something far too complicated for inclusion in a general essay.

Rather than let this work go to waste, I decided instead to share it with the readers of *Cosmopolis*, since it illustrates a number of fundamental points about the VIE and its volunteer workforce.

We all know many of the VIE stalwarts, who have in some cases undertaken hundreds of assignments. But what about the people who have not done so much? Maybe you feel guilty that you've only volunteered for a few assignments: well, read on to assuage your conscience!

The table below sets out the number of jobs carried out by volunteers in various bands.

The first line, for instance, looks at volunteers who've done between one and 10 jobs ("job" is used loosely in

Well, no. The VIE is not finished until all the jobs are done. Each individual job is as important as any other, since the project is not finished without it. So if you're one of the 57 people with a single VIE assignment to your name, that assignment as important as any one of Paul Rhoads' 475.

Another way of looking at it is this: 450 out of 5,441 jobs have been carried out by people doing 10 or fewer assignments. That's 8.3%, or around 1 in 10 of all jobs. Without those jobs, the already slow gestation of the VIE would have been retarded even further – perhaps below stalling point. For those who are interested in statistics, the median number of volunteer jobs is five: that means, if you ranked volunteers with the most jobs at the top and the fewest at the bottom, and then picked out the person in the middle of the list, that person would have done five jobs. It's a further illustration of how, although the VIE managers may get all the glory, the rank and file volunteer who wants to help the VIE without it taking over their life deserves every bit as much of the credit.

So, if you're a VIE volunteer, even if you've only done one job, take a minute to congratulate yourself: you've earned it!



VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR JOB				
No. of jobs	No. of volunteers		Total jobs	
	No.	%	No.	%
1-10	153	62.8	450	8.3
10-15	21	8.6	282	5.2
16-20	17	7.0	303	5.6
21-30	15	6.1	368	6.8
31-40	5	2.0	169	3.1
41-50	8	3.3	358	6.6
51-75	5	2.0	290	5.3
76-100	7	2.9	621	11.4
100-200	9	3.7	1,343	24.7
201+	4	1.6	1,257	23.0
TOTAL	244	100	5,441	100

this case: it can range from the TI of an entire novel to ensuring that two or three corrections have been implemented correctly). 153 out of our total 244 volunteers have undertaken ten or fewer jobs – a proportion not far short of 2/3rds. Only 13 volunteers have done 100 or more jobs – although these volunteers have carried out nearly half the total number of jobs. So they're the most important volunteers, right?

# 38's Crucible

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## Golden Master 3.1\*

In the first week of July, 2004, six volunteers gathered in Chinon, France, to put the finishing compositional touches on 11 volumes and implement final errata collected by various means—JOEL RIEDESEL's 'Volume Post-Proofing' in particular. For the purposes of GM3.1, and for GM3.2 which will occur in September, a computer network with four stations was readied in Chinon. ALUN HUGHES brought 2 laptops which were joined to the network.



FOREGROUND: Tim and Bob Luckin.  
BACKGROUND: Andreas, Alun, Chris.

The work process, designed and supervised by TIM STRETTON, was approximately as follows:

-BOB LUCKIN, head of the Composition Review Verifi-

\* VIE jargon and terminology have evolved along with our processes. The original publication plan was to prepare all 44 volumes at once. The final step in the work procedure, as then conceived, was to create 'Golden Masters', a term introduced by John Foley in the Master Plan. But in 2001 it became apparent that finalizing so many volumes all at once would be inconvenient; we decided to print the books in two 'waves'. As we approached the 'Golden Master' phase for Wave 1 it was further realized that our 'Golden Master' step had two parts; not only did we have to finalize the books as best we could on our end, we had to check the proofs, or 'blues', from the printer, a step which might dictate further adjustments. Thus, for Wave 1, there was 'GM1' (composition finalization and application of all final pre-blues errata) and then 'GM2', in which the blues were proofed and consequent errata implemented. GM1 was hosted in New Jersey by *John Foley* (see *Cosmopolis* 30) and GM2 was held in Chinon (see *Cosmopolis* 31). Now, two years later, for reasons of workflow both within the project and production considerations in Milan, we have divided Wave 2 into two 'batches' of 11 volumes each. These batches concern pre-publication work only; Wave 2 will be delivered to subscribers as a unit, like Wave 1. GM3 and GM4 correspond to GM1 and GM2, but require a '.1' and '.2' to indicate batches.

cation team (created by ROBIN ROUCH), prepped the bis files† related to each volume, creating 'volume bis files'.

-CHRIS CORLEY, head of Post-Proofing, reviewed all outstanding errata.

-PAUL RHOADS, Composition team 'Master Designer', reviewed each volume for aesthetic issues.

-ANDREAS IRLE, Composer, updated the composed texts in InDesign.

-BOB verified the changes.‡

-A group review was then held. Any resultant changes were implemented by Andreas and verified by Bob.

Prior to GM3.1 there was concern that anomalies might creep into the pdfs because when volume 13 was 'booked' (the various texts, including front matter, organized by InDesign into a 'book' with consistent page numbering), text 'reflow' on certain pages was introduced though no changes had been implemented in the texts. This may have been due to an unintended manipulation, a Windows/Mac problem, or to something about how InDesign is installed on the computers of the various composers. We tried, but failed, to understand what was going on, and decided that a systematic page by page check after each volume update must be run. For GM3 the VIE acquired Acrobat 6 whose excellent diff feature made this daunting task easy.

Tim was kept busy supervising the rest of us and making sure each text and volume got full treatment, but he did find some time to work on volume 44 VIE Addenda. Alun contributed to resolving GM3.1 issues but devoted most of his time to the volume 44 TI essay, taking advantage of the proximity of high-level volunteers to gather facts concerning correction of various texts. The work atmosphere

† 'bis files', for those lucky enough not to know, are text files created in parallel to composed 'fin' files, which are 'pdf's. Initially, in 2000, we used 'bis files' for text work also, until *Bob Lacovara* noticed that Word's 'end note' feature would be more convenient. Bob has since pointed out that, were the VIE to be redone, it would be best to use Acrobat from end to end, and dispense with both Word97 and bis files. Note: The books are printed from the 'pdf', but these are outputs from InDesign, where the actual composition takes place in the native 'indd' format.

‡ 'Verification': VIE jargon for checking that declared changes have been implemented.

was excellent, punctuated by outbursts of laughter as we came upon favorite comic phrases.



Andreas and Chris explore a compositional point while Tim updates his tracking chart.

The 11 volumes readied at Golden Master 3.1 were shipped to Stefania Zacco at Sfera (now 'Area Group Media'). As I write these words blues are being printed and, by the time you read them, the 'virtual GM4.1' process will have begun. This process was designed by Tim Stretton and Chris Corley, to cope with the situation of the batches and work-flow considerations in Milan. Tim and Chris collected volunteers for GM4.1, under the aegis of the Post-Proofing team but with a special ad hoc team structure. Blues will be sent to designated volunteers. GM3.1 volume errata will be collected, and a special nunking session will then be held, probably in September, probably at Gatwick airport. The nunkers will be Tim, Alun and STEVE SHERMAN. The texts will then be updated and verified. Marked pages will be returned to Stefania along with the updated pdfs. Stefania will output new blues for the pages in question, which must also be proofed. Meanwhile GM3.2 will be underway. It is scheduled for late September, and the list of possible attendees currently includes:

- Tim Stretton
- Alun Hughes
- Andreas Irle
- Marcel van Genderen
- Steve Sherman
- Chuck King
- Joel Riedesel
- Robin Rouch
- Joel Anderson
- Bob Luckin
- Koen Vyverman
- Rob Friefeld

Compared to GM1 workwise, GM3.1 was luxurious. Though we only barely finished all the volumes in the allotted time, no issue, however niggling or tedious, was ignored. A kerning oddity affecting one volume was rooted out on each page. Playthings were tweaked into collectively approved perfection. Issues of intra-volume consistency were debated. This degree of refinement was not possible at GM1, where we were forced to process a double load.

As befits all VIE gatherings, culinary standards were maintained at our usual high level. The culinary high point was the stuffed fish, baked with turnips and lemons, with saffron rice, prepared by Alun Hughes. This noble dish was accompanied by three bottles of Mosel brought from Germany by Andreas.



As at GM2, lunches were held outside, picnic style, with generous supplies of Chinon 1981 cabernet franc directly from the wine cave.

Friends and well-wishers who may be in France in late September are invited to stop by for an apéritif or a meal during GM3.2.



Volumes, and their texts, treated at GM3.1:

*Volume 3: Gadget Stories*

Planet of the Black Dust  
Dead Ahead  
Hard Luck Diggings  
Sanatoris Short-cut  
The Unspeakable McInch  
The Howling Bounders  
The King of Thieves  
The Sub-standard Sardines  
To B or Not to C or to D  
Spa of the Stars  
The Enchanted Princess  
The Potters of Firsk  
The Visitors  
The Uninhibited Robot  
Dover Spargill's Ghastly Floater  
Sabotage on Sulfur Planet  
Three Legged Joe  
Four Hundred Blackbirds  
Sjambak  
Parapsyche  
Sail 25

*Volume 8: The Houses of Iszm and Other Stories*

The Houses of Iszm  
The Gift of Gab  
Nopalgarth  
The Narrow Land

*Volume 13: The Fox Valley Murders - The Pleasant Grove Murders -  
60 page Joe Bain novel outline*

The Fox Valley Murders  
The Pleasant Grove Murders  
60 page Joe Bain novel outline

*Volume 14: The Man in the Cage - The Deadly Isles*

The Man in the Cage  
The Deadly Isles

*Volume 15: Cugel the Clever*

*Volume 21: Tschai*

The Chasch  
The Wannek  
The Dirdir  
The Pnume

*Volume 24: The Palace of Love*

*Volume 27: Durdane*

The Anome  
The Brave Free Men  
The Asutra

*Volume 32: The Dogtown Tourist Agency and Freitzke's Turn*

The Dogtown Tourist Agency  
Freitzke's Turn

*Volume 33: Maske: Thaery*

*Volume 41: Throy*



GM4.1 NOTES:

Stefania Zacco has reported that by July 30th all the blues, or 'ozalids', had been sent out all over the world including Australia. In Post-Proofing style each blues volume will have a team of readers with a team leader to collate errata. There are a total of 1,189,500 words to be reviewed. As of July 25 the following volunteers were reportedly involved:

*Volume 3*

Team leader: Dave Kennedy  
Readers: Bowers, Hunter, Crowther

*Volume 8*

Team leader: Karl Kellar  
Readers: Keyser

*Volume 13*

Team leader: Marcel van Genderen  
Reader: Riedesel

*Volume 14*

Team leader: Derek Benson  
Readers: Bradford

*Volume 15*

Team leader: Tim Stretton  
Readers: Sherman, Edlin

*Volume 21*

Team leader: Robert Melson  
Readers: N. Anderson

*Volume 24*

Team leader: Tim Stretton  
Readers: Prior, Kelley

*Volume 27*

Team leader: Rob Friefeld  
Readers: Timmer

Volume 32

Team leader: Chuck King  
Readers: Petersen

Volume 33

Team leader: Bob Luckin  
Readers: Lacovara

Volume 41

Team leader: Till Noever  
Readers: Gerrand, van der Eijk



## THE ARTIST AS ENGINEER and Other Considerations

### *A meditation on THE MAN IN THE CAGE*

Among GM3.1 texts is *The Man in the Cage*. This book, first published in 1960, is one of the rare stories for which Vance won an Award. At first glance it seems an unpretentious tale in the murder mystery genre but, though almost half a century old, it must resonate with contemporary readers, for reasons I will mention shortly. For Vance readers it is rich in characteristic themes. No other tale, for example, has such an extensive treatment of that favorite vancian setting, the tavern. The Masquerade bar, in Tangiers, with its habitués, is one of the story's principal settings, treated at even greater length than, say, the Old Groar of *Wyst*. At a deeper level is the real-world exposition of a theme which might be labeled the 'T'sais-Melanthe syndrome'. It is one of Vance's great themes, saturating his work from end to end, and might be defined, at the broadest level, as the tension between the force of death and the force of life. The demiurge Pandelume creates T'sais, but:

*"[. . .] she climbed from the vat with a warp in her brain, in this manner: what we hold to be beautiful seems to her loathsome and ugly, and what we find ugly is to her intolerably vile, in a degree that you and I cannot understand. She finds the world a bitter place, peopled with shapes of direst malevolence."*

When T'sais professes ignorance of beauty, her good twin T'sain\*

*. . . was puzzled. "I do not know how to explain beauty. You seem to find joy in nothing. Does nothing give you satisfaction?"*

*"Only killing and destruction. So then these must be beautiful."*

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\* In French 'sais' means 'I know', and 'sain' means 'healthy'.

Despite this T'sais clings to life; she is therefore wracked by contradiction:

*'in the pale face and dark eyes he saw her misery and the spirit that caused her to defy her fate and hold to her life.'*

Why does anyone cling to life? Some people commit suicide in disgust or discouragement. T'sais and Melanthe do not. They remain 'perversely' attracted to life. Melanthe, after Shimrod has had a certain influence upon her, becomes dissatisfied with herself and approaches Tamurello:

*"You told me that my mind works at discord to the minds of other persons."*

*"So I did. Notably with persons of the masculine gender. This is Desmèi's attempted revenge upon the cosmos, and particularly that segment with external genital organs. What a joke! It is only such innocents as poor Shimrod who must bear the brunt of Desmèi's rage."*

*"In that case, remove her curse from my soul."*

Tamurello indicates a cure, simple and arduous:

*"Each mind is a composite of several phases in superimposition. [. . .] Your first phase would seem to be deficient. The second phase, the agent of emotional interpretations, with great travail and inconvenience tries to fulfill this function. Here would seem to be the nature of your debility. The remedy is to strengthen the first phase, by a regimen of usage and training [. . .] you must apply yourself to learning, in the fashion of a student: through books and study and discipline, and so you will learn to think with logic, rather than to brood in terms of emotion."*

Melanthe, repelled by intellectualism, hesitates. Unlike T'sais her antipathies are particularly concentrated upon the masculine gender, but both she and T'sais are compromised with regard to love. It is love that almost cures Melanthe, and which does cure T'sais. T'sain, her love-filled twin, product of Turjan's love for T'sais herself, is the agent of this transformation:

*"[. . .] If I went to Earth, could I also find beauty and love?"*

*"That may be, for you have a brain to understand beauty, and beauty of your own to attract love."*

*"Then I kill no more, regardless of what wickedness I see. I will ask Pandelume to send me to Earth."*

*T'sain stepped forward, put her arms around T'sais, and kissed her.*

*"You are my sister and I will love you."*

*T'sais' face froze. Rend, stab, bite, said her brain, but a deeper surge welled up from her flowing blood, from every cell of her body, to suffuse her with a sudden flush of pleasure. She smiled.*

*"Then — I love you, my sister. I kill no more, and I will find and know beauty on Earth or die."*

In these extracts we begin to perceive a relationship between the mute life-force and logic, or between what might be called 'beauty' (or 'eros', the quality which draws the spirit into the world by attraction) and an unwarped or 'true' brain.

Ellen McKinstry, heroine of *The Man in the Cage*, falls halfway between T'sais and Melanthe. The root of her problem is sexual abuse, and murder of a parent (another recurrent vancian theme). In the case of Melanthe the original hurt is to Desmèi's *amour propre* ['love of self']. Desmèi would avenge her spurned love. Melanthe, since the hurt is not to her personally, may represent Women, or the permanent struggle between the sexes in which the masculine gender, despite occasional feminine victories, will always have the upper hand.

*"I hate all men," said Ellen. "I hate men like poison."*

But Ellen is not comfortable in this role. She tries to protect her attitude by expanding it:

*"I don't have any moral principles — except the principle of self-interest. Precisely like everyone else, though other people profess noble ideals. I profess to nothing."*

She feels the need to prove to herself that her attitude is justified, despite contradictory feelings:

*She made an angry gesture. "I came out here because I wanted to hate you. I've been anxious for a chance to hate you. You haven't given me any opportunity. You've frustrated everything. And I hate you for that!"*

But, like T'sais and Melanthe, she is not beyond reach.

*The word depravity came to mind but it failed to ring true. Ellen looked anything but depraved; depravity was moral collapse. Ellen was too stubborn and bitter and intelligent for collapse.*

Like T'sais, and unlike Melanthe, Ellen is cured. Melanthe, as a personification of the problem itself, is not really susceptible to a cure. The cure is love, and 'intelligence' or, one might say, expanded awareness.

*The Man in the Cage* is set in the early 1950s, during the war in Algeria between the French and the Arab anti-colonialists. Algeria, after the loss of Viet Nam, was one of the last pieces of the French Empire. It was considered by the French, and by many Algerians, to be part of France. Though native Algerian 'Frenchmen' did not yet have the same rights as 'metropolitan' born French, Algeria was

being quickly modernized.

The complex history of the Algerian war is not well known. The war was won by France, whereupon DeGaulle granted Algerian emancipation. Independent Algeria quickly revealed itself a disaster. Massacres occurred of those who had sided with the French. Algeria today remains one of the most squalid and hopeless places on earth, its prosperous and hopeful colonial past a lost dream.

In Vance's story Noel Hutson, a would-be swashbuckling romantic, has run a truckload of guns from Tangiers to a place near the Algerian border. It is the first of 14 shipments. The weapons came from Europe on a contraband ship, and are controlled by a certain Ventriss. Trade with the Arabs is organized by Arthur Upshaw, son of a Scottish ex-patriot living in Morocco. Upshaw will pay Ventriss with money from the sale of heroin, brought on camel back from Egypt, which he will receive in exchange for the guns.

Noel unloads the guns at the rebel outpost; what he sees there makes him decide that gun-running in Morocco is not for him. The Arabs, nervous at the proximity of French forces, insist that he depart with a load of heroin, full payment for the 14 arms shipments. Noel and the heroin both disappear. Upshaw lacks his heroin (and risks total financial ruin) and the Arabs lack their arms. Both are furious, and believe that Noel has run off with the dope.

A month later Noel's brother Darrell arrives in Tangiers. On page 76 (of VIE volume 14, not yet published), Ellen tells Darrell:

*"[. . .] It's certain that Ventriss refused to release any more merchandise without payment, so Arthur will automatically try to squeeze the other end of the business."*

*"The FLN?"*

*"Call it that if you like."*

*"What do you call it?"*

*"Egypt. UAR. Pan-Arabia. The Moslem Empire. FLN is only a front — the people that do the fighting. In another ten years . . . well, there may still be a few Europeans alive in North Africa."*

On page 102 el Kazim, an agent of the FLN, drives Darrell to Fez:

*They passed through another squalid village; el Kazim gestured toward the mud hovels. "You think the people are poor?"*

*"They seem to be."*

*"That is the fault of the French. They own everything in Morocco. They are everywhere, like ants, and carry everything away [. . .]"*

*But you do nothing to help us! You give the French money to buy guns; you help them kill the Moslems."*

*"That's not the intention," said Darrell. "We've also sent aid to Morocco."*

*"Do you know what the Russians will do for us? They are planning to help us, like brothers. They will make good water from the sea and build a great pipeline to take it into the middle of the Sahara. There will be a great lake, everything will be changed!"*

*Darrell laughed. "You don't believe that, do you? The project isn't possible."*

[ . . . ]

*"What do Americans think of the Pan-Arab Union?"*

*"I suppose we feel it's the business of the countries involved," said Darrell.*

[ . . . ]

*"When the French are pushed into the sea: that is the solution," said el Kazim grimly.*

*"If you can make it stick."*

*"The French can't resist the Moslem people. All North Africa will be Pan-Arab soon. Much sooner than you think. Nasser will do this. He is a great man! He is our Çeorge Washington!"*

*From the Moslem point of view, the analogy was by no means absurd, thought Darrell.*

*"What do you think?" challenged el Kazim. "Do you believe the French should own Algeria, that they should be rich while we are poor?"*

*Darrell hesitated. "Eventually I suppose all the states of the world will be organized into great territorial federations; I suppose in principle I'm in favor of the Pan-Arab Union. Although I can't say I care much for Nasser."*

*"Because he is a Moslem who spits in the Westerner's face."*

After Nasser, hopes for an Arab George Washington were placed in Qaddafi, and then Saddam, and now Bin Laden. I remember hearing pro-Qaddafi hero-worship of a pan-Arab vein on WBAI, the left-wing (anti-American, anti-Western) radio station of New York, in the 1980s.

On page 117 we get another glimpse of pan-Arabism:

*[ . . . ] we will put you in the cage for tonight [ . . . ] Darrell slowly turned, stared into el Kazim's hard brown eyes. In the gloating, the triumph, the unreasoning malice, he saw the new face of the East [ . . . ]*

*[ . . . ] We will cleanse Africa; we will drive you into the sea. You think you are better than we are, with your pink bellies and painted women. You are rich and fat and weak; we are poor and strong.*

This, reminiscent of Bin Laden's chilling: 'You love life; we love death', was written four decades prior to the 9/11 attack. The 9/11 Commission's complaints seem

short-sighted: why have we failed to heed the warnings provided by Jack Vance 40 years ago? Supposedly we are weak on 'human intelligence'; Vance got his information by going to Africa.

George W. Bush may, or may not, be the new Charles Martel, but such a man, no more and no less, is what is wanted,\* and the full scope of the pan-Arab menace continues to elude our consciousness. Endless examples could be given. Here is one, gleaned from an interview with a French school teacher from Versailles (Louis Chagnon, interviewed by Pierre Lefebvre for Primo Europe. See: [primo-europe.org](http://primo-europe.org)). In a situation worthy of Kafka, Chagnon has been persecuted by the French education and justice systems for teaching facts about Islam in a religion course; he has come to believe that "there is a deliberate effort to establish intellectual terrorism blocking all criticism of Islam" in France.

Chagnon: Certain sourates [verses] of the Koran are discordant with the rules of life in a democratic society like ours. There are calls to murder (sourates 1 and 4), to the submission of woman, who can be beaten (sourate 4). The Koran is not simply a religious text but also the source of the law: the Sharia.

Lefebvre: There are also calls for murder in the Bible!!

Chagnon: It's not the same thing. The Koran is the word of God, dictated and inscribed for the Muslims. The Bible is a human work. It can be criticized. Certain texts of the Old Testament don't pretend to have any scientific value, and the events related in them don't have a historical value. They are myths or symbolical. The Koran, on the other hand, is God speaking through the 'prophet' Mohammed.

Lefebvre: Your vision of Islam is severe!

Chagnon: It's in the text. Christians and Jews are badly treated; in sourate 9 they are called 'stupid folk that God should annihilate'†

*The Man in the Cage* also has a sharp reference to the cold war. Ellen is speaking:

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\* West of Egypt much of the population is not Arab but Berber, or 'Amazigh' as they call themselves. Berbers have been largely arabized since the Mohammedan crusades of the 8th and 9th centuries—stopped, in its most north-westerly penetration by Charles Martel near Chinon in central France. But the Berbers show traces of other cultural and racial contacts; the Phoenician Carthaginians and European Vandals (invading from Spain), and black Africans. Berbers make up a large part of the 'Arab' immigrants in France. They are physically slender, slight and fine-featured. Their skin color varies greatly, from pinkish white to greyish umber. They are notable for large dark eyes.

† Translation by PWR.



*"I think I detest the passive evil more than the active evil. The Russians smothered the Hungarian rebellion. It was a vile act. All over the world people coughed and averted their eyes. Sometimes they called names like fox terriers barking from behind a fence. That nauseating Nehru denied that anything happened. There's a certain grandeur in the evil of the Russians. The people who look on are merely despicable."*

It is hard to find such passages in fiction from the 1960s. The near totality of the Western artistic-intellectual elite did not feel this way. I do not think that Vance was saved from sharing in their error because of superior intelligence (whatever that is) but because of superior artistry. Vance is a real artist, a great artist, and art, properly understood, is tied to reality.

The true artist has clear vision of reality because it is necessary to art, including the art of High Fantasy. All of Vance's work is an example of this, but let me provide a few examples. In *Rhialto the Marvellous* the archvults have retreated behind a door of solid osmium in their pink pearl castle:

*Morreion stepped three paces forward. He pointed his finger; force struck at the osmium door. It creaked and rattled, but held firm.*

*Morreion pointed his finger at the fragile pink nacre; the force slid away and was wasted.*

*Morreion pointed at the stone posts which supported the castle. They burst apart. The castle lurched, rolled over and down the crags.*

The castle is magic, proof against spells, but it sits on unmagical stone posts. The weakness of the archvults is at the interface of magic and reality; they are undone by a tactic worthy of a second year engineering student.

In the same vein consider this passage from *Cugel the Clever*:

*"What were the terms of the bandit's curse?" — immediate onset of cankerous death." Sheer viciousness. The ghost-king's curse was no less oppressive: how had it gone?" — everlasting tedium." Cugel rubbed his chin, nodded gravely.*

Suffering under the bandit's curse Cugel deliberately provokes the ghost king:

*From the depths of the fort came a moan, and Cugel felt the pressure of the unknown. "I activate my curse!" came a whisper to Cugel's brain.*

*Cugel strode quickly away to the southeast. "Excellent; all is well. The 'everlasting tedium' exactly countervenes the 'immediate onset of death' and I am left only with the 'canker' which, in the person of Firx, already afflicts me. One must use his wits in dealing with maledictions."*

This sort of Mark Twain-ish contrast between vaporous extravagances and elementary logic is one of the founts of Vance's comic, and thus artistic, insight.

When Shimrod is about to penetrate Irerly Melancthe gives him three disks to 'accommodate' his senses; "you will go instantly mad without them" she says, for in Irerly "[p]erceptions occur by unusual methods". This is no 'baroque gesture'; Vance is lampooning the 'intellectual elite'. In Irerly—where conditions are 'less easy than Shimrod had hoped'—Shimrod is confronted with pompous and hyper-sensitive 'mountains of gray-yellow custard, each terminating in a ludicrous semi-human face'. The failure of such eminences to free themselves from entrancements with non-realities, is not, for the artists among them, an intellectual failure; it is an artistic failure. Reality is there to see, and real artists see it. The faces masking the Western brains which collaborated—by approval, silence, or anti-Western agitations—in millions upon millions of murders from the 1920s onwards, may or may not be considered particularly ludicrous; they are arguably 'semi-human'.

Vance's clear vision continued unclouded in the 1960s; how many other 'artists' and intellectuals supported the Viet Nam war? Vance's courage, for which I admire and honor him, accounts in part for his obscurity.

We cannot be many years from a re-assessment of the stale ideas on these matters. The anti-Western, anti-colonialism, and communist idealism, which blinded the elite, is answerable to the catastrophic political and economic situations now prevailing in places like Viet Nam and Algeria. Other matters, such as communist failure to overrun Indonesia, also need scrutiny. The same pundits who failed to be sensitive to these matters at the time likewise failed to take into account the prosperity offered ordinary folk by 'capitalism' or to chastise communist (Russian and Chinese) colonialism. Unlike Vance they were wrong in the 50s and 60s; also unlike Vance they were cowardly. Not singing with the chorus meant being pushed aside.

For these folk, who still dominate our cultural and intellectual life, it is not enough that communism is a proven economic disaster, that its crimes have been catalogued, that its complicity with Fascism—in the name of fighting which it gained so many propaganda victories—has been doggedly documented. They persist in their anti-Westernism. Forced to admit that Communism was a fiasco, they pretend that 'Capitalism', its alleged mirror image, is worse. It is yet another quadrille in the eternal dance of those who hate liberty, who will do and say anything to attain their mortifying goal of suppress-

ing it. But 'Capitalism' is neither plan nor ideology; it is a label, invented by its detractors, for the ordinary activity of buying and selling, which normal folk have practiced since the dawn of time.

Vance's attitudes, I say, are a function of an artistic power. Successful art, rather than pure aesthetics or 'puffs of acrid vari-colored vapor', is fundamentally linked to reality.

With regard to art itself, in *Star King* we have this:

. . . *the tighter the discipline of an art-form, the more subjective the criteria of taste.*

The meaning of this statement is not readily apparent. We expect what is in fact a tautology: 'the tighter the discipline of an art-form, the *more objective* the criteria of taste' for, obviously, the more codified and pre-established the rules of an art, the more its success or failure can be measured by objective standards. But the 'aesthetic doctrine' cited by Detteras means something more interesting. It is when objective standards are clear that individual distinctions in our reactions—being sensible deviations from, or variation of, *something*—take on meaning. Individuality, in the true sense of the word—the flavor of personality—comes into its own in the context of differentiation. Distinctions and choices mean nothing without a common background, a referent. As objectivity fades, subjectivity, in its primary sense, fades with it. When objectivity is gone, 'subjectivity' replaces it as a new form of 'objectivity': the 'reality' that prevails in the minds of madmen. Absolute subjectivity is personalized objectivity, 'private reality', a personal universe such as those controlled by the Elders of the Hub. Having no points in common with true reality such 'realities' are, de facto, objective. They are not 'sub' anything. They cannot be seen in different ways, interpreted variously, understood more or less deeply. They are both interpreted and created in the same self-referential act, the ultimate solipsistic gesture.

In the Relativist Dispensation under which we live the meaning of the words 'objective' and 'subjective' are perverted. We can no longer conceive of a universe where people both have something in common, and individuals have a real existence. Objectivity—radicalized as 'absolute truth' and rejected as a prison—is thought to destroy subjectivity and individuality; we hunger to be Elders of the Hub, each master of a private universe.

One of the most blatant results of this malaise is 'contemporary art'. But when art is free and un-codified is this not a boon to individuality? Is not art about 'personal

expression'? Do not objective criteria baffle creativity? Consider this passage from chapter 12 of *Lurulu*:

. . . *he was confronted by a pair of objects standing at either side of the path: statues twelve feet tall, apparently wrought by a mad genius in the avant-garde mode, as icons to represent his contempt for ordinary conventions of society. The objects were constructed of unusual materials, spars of metal, and twisted, pitted shapes contorted as half-in half-out of another dimension. Gray-pink tubing looking unpleasantly like viscera wound in and out of the other materials. Myron stared at the objects in wonder; the [family name] evidently were members of a clique where such demonstrations were fashionable. Odd, indeed! . . . Fixed to the door was a heavy demon-mask of antique copper, the features molded in high relief to express a leer of malignant triumph—or perhaps some other horrid emotion. The eyes bulged, the ears were distorted wads; a long black tongue dangled from the mouth. Myron gave his head a grim shake: here was another phase of avant-garde doctrine, where shock and novelty were accorded the highest priority. He wondered to what extent [first name] had been infected; it was a depressing thought.*

*Lurulu* will soon be providing grist to the mills of those who label anyone with such views *conservative reactionaries\** and yet Vance's pungent indications regarding the 'contemporary art' style, as an artistic dead-end and pretentious charade, is as to the point as his indications regarding the pan-Arab menace and the cold war. 'Contemporary art' has no artistic function. Art has been destroyed in the name of the assault upon the way the West has understood reality since the Greeks. Art is now a strategy of one-upmanship.

In the same conversation where Detteras mentions the aesthetic theory, discussed above, he discusses the Tunkers of Mizar 6:

*"a religious group: ascetic, austere, devout to an astonishing extreme. The men and women dress identically, shave their heads, use a language of eight hundred and twelve words, eat identical meals at identical hours—all this to protect themselves from the perplexity of wondering about each other's motivations."*

In spite of this fanatical egalitarian purpose the 'meaningful elements' in the Tunker 'eye-motions' derail the whole system, and life goes on as usual; the establishment and maintenance of pecking order continues uncontested in its dominance of human affairs! Vance develops this point in *Throy*, in his discussion of the Soumi:

*To the off-world observer wealthy folk were hard to distinguish*

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\* See 'Locus Review Reviewed', *Cosmopolis* 25, page 22

from persons of ordinary income, since everyone made a great point of owning only 'the best', meaning goods of durability, excellence of finish and practical function. The affluent could be picked out only by the most subtle of indications, and great skill was used in demonstrating one's position in life while carefully avoiding 'bouschterness'. All Soumi, no matter what their caste, reckoned themselves ladies and gentlemen. A paradox of Soumi behaviour is their emphatic dedication to egalitarianism, while simultaneously supporting a society of rigid stratification into as many as twenty levels of status. These status levels are not formally recognized, nor are they characterized by a nomenclature; nevertheless their reality impinges upon everyone and he or she is continually gauging his or her personal status against that of everyone in sight. Soumi are insistent upon asserting superiority of caste over their inferiors, while caustic and envious of those who assert superiority over themselves. Such tensions create a dynamic quality of striving and maintenance of genteel standards; scandals are always enjoyed if for no other reason than the diminished status of the persons involved, which, by a sort of transcendental osmosis, augments the status of other folk.

The workings of this mysterious system are fascinating. If a dozen strangers are placed in a room, within minutes the hierarchy of caste will have been established. How? No one knows, save the Soumi themselves.

Despite the absence of titles or precise nomenclature, the level of a person's caste is denoted exactly by a subtle use of linguistic tonality, or phrasing of a sentence, or the choice of appropriate terminology: nuances which the Soumi ear instantly recognizes. Still, the overt basis of Soumi society is expressed in an almost aggressive doctrine, a slogan taught in the schoolroom: "Each person the equal of all! Each person a full-fledged Ameliorative! Each person of full gentility!"

'Contemporary art' has a social purpose, even if its artistic aspect is nil. Real art, true creativity, is something completely different.

The chateau of Versailles is the most amazing ensemble of buildings, parks and sculptures in the world. It was conceived by Louis XIV as the stage of the drama of his monarchy. Not only the chateau itself but the park is structured dramatically. The park is most notable for its famous fountains. These are not mere decorative artifacts; each is a chapter in a symbolic drama. The play of these fountains was intended to draw the spectators—who, even in Louis' time, included not just his aristocratic guests but anyone and everyone—from one station to the next, unfolding the drama of the reign of the Sun King. The 'bassin de Latone', at the foot of the first 'parterre', is the beginning of the story. Latone, mother of Apollo (symbol of the 'Sun King') and Diana, protects her children from

monstrous peasants who spout water at them but are transformed into frogs and turtles by a benevolent god. This is a reference to 'La Fronde', a sort of genteel rebellion, blossoming at times into civil war, against Louis when he was still a minor under the protection of his royal mother, Anne of Austria. The spectator now continues down the 'allée royale' at the base of which is the 'bassin d'Apollon'. Apollo, in his sun-chariot drawn by wild horses, rises up from the frothing waters, as if about to charge up the 'allée royale' to the chateau at its summit, like the sun rising to illuminate the earth. Louis, having survived the humiliation and discouragement of La Fronde, takes off in his glorious ascension to become the most powerful and glorious monarch on earth. And so on. As each fountain begins its water-play, the spectator is drawn further into the drama.

On designated days visitors to Versailles may still experience this marvel of art, the work of Louis XIV and his master artisans, Le Notre and Le Brun, exactly as in the 18th century. The park and statuary are impressive in themselves, but when the waters begin, the effect is electrifying. The effect, of course, depends on plumbing, plumbing which remains such a spectacular feat of hydraulic engineering that TV documentaries have been made about it. When you visit the park you do not think about plumbing; you are lost in a dream of glory, a *fête champêtre*, a mythical romantic idyll. But enchantment is not the work of the enchanted. Art and engineering are more allied than is generally thought. If a magical road could somehow be cast into the air and suspended between two sides of a river, would it not be a dream come true?

I will not attempt, here, to explore vancian plumbing. I present the foregoing as evidence that an art as effective as Vance's, stories that can be read again and again with never diminishing pleasure, are not the result of failure to understand reality.

As a final note, *The Man in the Cage*, like all Vance's books, offers its share of striking word plays, of which I reproduce two:

page 32:

The Moroccan youth, a smile pasted inaccurately over his mouth, sidled away.

page 38

. . . the blonde girl arranged her fundament more evenly over the stool.



## Eratta

### *Star King* Vassarization:

A particularly plump and juicy ‘vassarization’ crossed my screen today. Gersen is trying to trick Hildemar Dasce into revealing Malagate’s cover:

*Gersen had hoped to surprise an exclamation from Dasce. He asked, “Do you know whom I refer to?”*

An editor could not resist changing this to the grammatically ‘correct’ *to whom I refer*. One pictures Gersen, several hundred years and light-years from here and now, confined in a small space-craft with two extremely dangerous individuals, pausing carefully prior to each statement he uttered, fearful that his diction might displease early 20th century pendants.

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### *Star King* Stemma:

The stemma of the *Star King* editions presents an intriguing problem. Some of us believe that a number of the cuts in the pulp version, published slightly prior to first book version, are due to an editor. Others believe that, though bibliographically posterior, the cuts are either Vance’s or the result of sloppy pulpishness. The first group feels the pulp editor practiced these cuts to save space. The second group points out that the pulp editor also added dozens of text breaks and new paragraph separations, and that the non-sloppy error cuts — of which there would seem to be two, involving whole sections the lack of which makes hash of the story — seem exactly the sort of judicious excisions and remoldings Vance makes in revisions and final drafts.

• • •

### Molding or Mouldering in the Mould or in the Mold?

It has been my conviction that Vance makes a distinction between ‘mold’ and ‘mould’, the latter referring to lichen, rot and decay, the former to form and castings. The following passage from American Founding father John Adams, however, has just come to my attention:

*Democracy will soon degenerate into an anarchy, such an anarchy that every man will do what is right in his own eyes and no man’s life or property or reputation or liberty will be secure, and every one of these will soon mould itself into a system of subordination of all the moral virtues and intellectual abilities, all the powers of wealth, beauty, wit and science, to the wanton pleasures, the capricious will, and the execrable cruelty of one or a very few.*

So it cannot be claimed that there is any early American

antecedent for the alleged vancian usage.

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## Wannek Wonks and Wankers

The VIE, once again, has fallen under cyber-sniper fire. This time we are accused of degrading the VIE by ‘[countering] *the author’s stated wish on matters of both title and content.*’ Allegedly we have changed the title ‘The Servants of the Wankh’ to ‘Wannek’ under pressure from prudish Brits inside the VIE.

What are the facts about this title change?

- a) Ever since discovering the British slang connotations of the vocable ‘wank’ Vance — a writer not only exceptionally sensitive to the meaning of words but delicate in his sensibilities — regretted having used it. Discussing this title recently Jack Vance said: ‘it embarrasses me’. His discovery of the slang meaning of this word was made in the 1970s, shortly after publication of the book and several decades prior to the VIE. Vance informed me of his feelings about the title in 1998, two years prior to the existence of the VIE. As for my own feelings about this matter, they are non-existent. I am unfamiliar with the slang; I am not the author of the book.
- b) Whether or not, as is claimed, the subject was discussed in Oakland in January of 2000, and whether or not certain British members of the VIE brought it up then, my understanding of the VIE-Brit attitude to this title is more or less amused indifference. Alun Hughes, head of TI, is specifically accused of pressuring Vance to make this change. Alun Hughes denies this. He writes: “what rubbish! I’m supposed to have said ‘That word should never have been forced upon the English public’ — doesn’t sound like me, and I’m sure it wasn’t. Then I’m supposed to have suggested the change to Jack — now I’d know if I had done that!”

This assertion was not accepted.

Speaking as the VIE Editor-in-Chief I have never had any echo of a British, or any other, initiative to change this title, within the project or outside it. It has developed that another British volunteer (a ‘one-job’ volunteer) may be the person the sniper has in mind, mistaking him for Alun Hughes. If, however, someone, VIE manager or not, did object to this title, and did express that to Jack; what of it? Everyone is entitled to an honest opinion. There is no law forbidding anyone, even a VIE volunteer, from finding a word, say ‘Pnume’, objectionable, and to express

that opinion to an American citizen such as Jack Vance. Jack Vance is a big boy. He can listen to other people's opinions without losing his bearings. The VIE does not regard him as a senile pushover but as a great artist, and a man in full command of his faculties.

- c) The title 'The Servants of the Wankh', which is the one under which I know this text in published editions, is not the original authorial title. The original title is 'The Wankh'.
- d) The true story of the VIE title change is this: in the spring of 2000 (several months after the alleged VIE-British urgings) Vance called me, in France, to ask if he might change a title. I was somewhat astonished; I thought of myself, in the circumstance, not as someone to whom one made polite requests but to whom one gave instructions. I made clear that whatever titles he wanted would be the titles in the Vance Integral Edition; that what interests me is his artistry and presenting it in as perfect a way as possible. On that basis Vance began to search for a new title. He suggested several on the phone, and asked my opinion—again to my astonishment. I would implement whatever title he wanted. I did not want to participate in its elaboration. When I read VIE books I do not want to read Vance-Rhoads, any more than I want to read Vance-Vassar Graduate. I want to read Vance, pure and unadulterated. If I want to read Rhoads I'll write my own stories. Over the next 12 months Vance proposed several titles, all more or less similar to the 'wank' vocable, finally settling on 'Wannek'. Of course such a change implied changes in the text; 'Wankhman' must become 'Wannekman' and so on. This matter was fully discussed.

This is not the first time a VIE title change has provoked exaggerated reaction. Several VIE texts will bear unfamiliar titles. They fall into several categories. 'Mazirian the Magician' was an original title, rejected by the publishers in favor of 'The Dying Earth'. In the year 2000, half a century later, Vance remained disgusted by this change and seized upon the VIE to put matters right. 'The Eyes of the Overworld', by contrast, was a book which never had an original title. Vance, nonetheless, deplored the title. For one thing, as he pointed out, to make sense it ought to have been 'The Eyes of the Underworld'. Asked what the books should be called, after thinking it over Vance instructed us to use 'Cugel the Clever'. 'Cugel's Saga' is another title Vance disapproved but, again, no original existed. Vance provided a title for

the VIE: 'Cugel: The Skybreak Spatterlight'. Other published titles were either distortions of original titles, or editorial alternates. Vance's 'The Chasch' was changed to 'The City of the Chasch'; 'Gold and Iron' was published under this correct title, but also as the editorial 'Slaves of the Klau'.

The VIE has no other role in this matter other than implementing the author's instructions, about which there is nothing ambiguous. Alternate published titles are listed on the 'opposite title page' in VIE volumes (as 'The Servants of the Wankh' will be), and a full record of title related questions will be addressed in the 'Catalogue of Texts' in VIE volume 44.

The VIE's submissive obedience to the wishes of Jack Vance will not, for some, put the matter to rest. Is the VIE an automaton which takes orders like a machine set in motion with the flick of a switch? Are there no larger considerations? Does 'authenticity' count for nothing?

Strong reactions to the replacement of 'The Dying Earth' with 'Mazirian the Magician' were expressed. Time and Use, it was argued, has consecrated the published title; 'reader familiarity' and affection should be respected! As VIE Editor-in-Chief I stand not for authenticity but for Art. We are not conducting an archeological dig or running an antique shop. We are publishing a living author. Vance's work is the product of his imagination, experience, influences, ambition and artisanship. Publication has had an effect on the direction of his work certainly. In the 1950's Vance probably wanted to be a mystery writer rather than a science fiction writer; the publishers and the market influenced what he did do. But, even if 'The Dying Earth' title is 'good' in itself, to say nothing of Jack's wish to see the true title in print, it is unacceptable to the VIE because it is not the product of Vance's artistry. The VIE is the guardian of Vance's Art which it is our mission to promote and protect.

I can understand that someone might be disappointed at the change from 'Wankh' to 'Wannek'. But having been informed of the facts, the motivations, actors, and mechanisms and of the change, to persist in a public denunciation of the VIE is not just irresponsible and destructive, it is malevolent. This particular situation is regrettable in that the sniper in question has been, up-until now, an honored volunteer. However, I feel it is important that the record be set absolutely straight. Here are the accusations being publicly made against the VIE:

**ACCUSATION:** The VIE has: *'deliberately elected to change one of the works given into their charge.'*

FACT: we have followed the instructions of the author, regarding his work and the form and manner in which he wishes it to be presented.

ACCUSATION: The VIE has violated its own *'prime tenet: to undo the hackneyed depredations of former editorial staffs and revert every work to its most original form.'*

FACT: The VIE is neither experiment in archeological deontology nor purveyor of antique curiosities; it is the work of Jack Vance as Jack Vance would like it presented. If we were tied to the procrustean bed of authenticity, what would we do with the many stories or passages revised by Vance? Must the VIE present every version of every story and every alternate passage penned by Jack Vance, including first draft versions deciphered from under black lines striking them out? Or does the fact that something has been printed in 10,000 copies, on the cheapest paper, confer a magical aura so that, no matter how corrupted by other hands or currently disapproved by its living author, it must be reproduced in an encyclopedic spasm of literary idolatry? Should the VIE, even more radically, publish only the author's initial outlines as the most authentic and original trace of his genius? Or, if he is to be permitted a degree of control over his own work, should we disallow any revision done more than a year after first publication? Two years?

The game is absurd! The texts of the Vance Integral Edition are what the living author wants them to be. Those who prefer alternate versions (which, naturally, they are free to call 'authentic' if it amuses them to do so) must procure other publications or first draft, second draft and third draft manuscripts—they will, no doubt, take care to exclude such 'unauthentic' text sources as errata sheets which often chased manuscripts prior to publication, or manuscripts further developed for second or third publication. In doing so they will deprive themselves of the truly authentic fruit of Vance's artistry, represented in unprecedented splendor by the Vance Integral Edition.

ACCUSATION: The title change was supposed to have been discussed, and rejected, in 2000 in *'official, on-line discussions with other members of the VIE team'*.

FACT: No 'official' on-line discussions ever existed. There were e-mail list-servers in the fall of 1999 but they were never 'official'. The VIE has always been participatory but it has never been 'democratic' (in the current imbecilic sense of the term). All 'official' discussions are non-public, and all official decisions are public, but made by duly constituted authorities with review and

control by other appropriate authorities, per the Master Plan—which, as VIE Editor-in-Chief, it is my duty and privilege to serve and enforce. The informal discussions which occurred on the mail lists in question nourished the project in its formative months. They helped VIE volunteers get to know each other, to build *esprit de corps*, and to vet ideas. However, in February 2000, cyber-thugs began to exploit them and, as Editor-in-Chief, I closed them down—with the exception of the 'Merscript' which was under the control of the TI team, and was closed under TI authority. The cyber-sniper alleges that Vance was pressured by the VIE, concerning the title in question, in January 2000. This would have left him time to have made his alleged objection on the lists. But, as far as I know, no such thing was proposed or even discussed. It is further claimed that 'John Vance at that time settled the issue by reporting his father's preference for the true and original title.' But I never heard anything about any of this. If there was question of the VIE (as opposed to Jack Vance) changing any title, it was not only unofficial, it was irresponsible. I have no memory of anything like this, and would have strongly disapproved any such initiative. The idea of such conversations, in early 2000, including such a remark from John Vance, is not only surreal, it is irrelevant.

Furthermore, the cyber-sniper claims that: 'shortly thereafter, the initial scanning and OCR work completed, I took my leave of the VIE with a sigh of relief that a dire crisis had been averted' and then goes on to claim that 'I did very probably manage to scan the greatest number of texts'. I have no wish to diminish the contribution of any VIE volunteer but the question of who did how much of what in the VIE is a matter of public record. The person did a considerable amount of digitizing. Only 6 volunteers digitized more text than he did. Of those 6, 3 of them did from 5 to 10 times more, each. His total contribution to VIE digitizing (which includes both initial digitizing and 2 further digitizing per DD) was about 5%.

I do not mean to minimize this contribution. It is considerable. These sorts of comparisons are distasteful; they are made necessary by an effort to instrumentalize VIE volunteer work to legitimize a mendacious attack against the Edition. All VIE volunteer work is not only necessary, it is valued. 5% of total VIE digitization is a massive accomplishment, representing dozens of hours of work. Paid at the rate of the average salary of a VIE volunteer, it is probably worth more than the price of the Reader's Edition, even much more. However, while such a contribution is solidly in the 'significant' category, it fails to be in

the 'champion' category. I will not stand for it being used to establish the bona fides of a malicious action.

**ACCUSATION:** The above objections were presented to the person in question who, notwithstanding, persists in them, including the following: *'the VIE was not only willing, but clearly well able to counter the author's stated wish on matters of both title and content'*: in other words: the VIE, on its own initiative, made this title change, despite knowing that Vance objected. Worst of all, referring to the fact that 'Wankhmen' is now 'Wannekmen' he insinuates: *'I cannot now regard the other volumes without a nagging trace of suspicion. If the title and the chief antagonists of the plot are not safe from such wanton editorial depredations. . . what other redactions might have crept in?'*

**FACT:** By posting such comments on the web the idea is to plant seeds of doubt about the quality of the VIE in order to discourage subscribers. This is an act of deliberate destruction. The cyber-sniper justifies his tenacity, in the face of patient explanations of the facts, with the following claim: *'I cannot help but remain convinced that had the Brits not badgered Jack so in the first place, and apparently later again after I'd ceased to pay attention thinking the matter wisely resolved, the term Wannek should nowhere have appeared in print, much less in an archival edition.'*

Since the Wannek title has been a public matter since 2000, one wonders why July 2004 has been chosen to make this squawk. The sniper claims that he *'cannot allow an attempt at revisionist history to pass unchallenged'*. That is a knife which cuts both ways.

This is not the first time the VIE has been accused of mucking around with Vance's texts in pursuance of an ideological program. It is ironic that the VIE, the Vance publisher which takes unprecedented care to present the true texts per the author's intentions and wishes, is regularly accused of doing the opposite! The pages of *Cosmopolis* have seen many demonstrations of how commercial editions have not only degraded Vance's texts out of contempt for Art but also for ideological motives, as well as both prudery and its opposite. Our cyber-detractors never raise their voices in thanks to the VIE for correcting these situations, or in indignation that they took place to begin with. The reason for this is clear: commercial publishers are not engaged in an open dialogue with their readers. They do not have to be. The VIE, on the other hand, is obliged to remain open. A commercial VIE is not viable. To accomplish our historic task we require willing hands and trusting subscribers. We can

only attract and retain generous participation by being in constant communication, by remaining open to the world. It is inevitable, in this circumstance, that the project will come under attack. When one must use the whole world as a platform there is no getting away from all the kinds that it takes to make it.

Some feel that such ripostes as this to cyber-sniper fire are unnecessarily confrontational, undignified or pointless. But the presentation of facts and the honest expression of respectable points of view strengthen the project. Lies, distortions and innuendoes, particularly when they go without correction—and rebuke where necessary—are harmful. The VIE has been deprived of a certain number of volunteers and subscriptions—discouraged from joining or encouraged to quit—by cyber-mischief. Lost volunteers mean greater burdens on the rest of us, to say nothing of that extra degree of perfection lost to the edition by being deprived of their unique participation. Subscribers turned away mean a weaker ultimate effect, since, in the last analysis, it is not only the quality but the sheer quantity of books we produce which is the final measure of our success. The VIE may print up to 1000 sets. So far we have about 600 subscribers. For some of us this is already a fine accomplishment. But I want my five years of devotion to the work of Jack Vance to have maximum impact. Cyber-thugs discouraged potential subscribers, initially encouraged by the event of Wave 1 publication. The VIE, in the delivery of 22 superb volumes to 500 thrilled subscribers, proved it was no fly-by-night operation, no scam, no inept plan run by bumbling idealists and dreamers doomed to failure, but exactly what it claimed to be. But, at this crucial juncture, the virtual space occupied by the VIE was polluted with insinuations about the quality of the volumes, the integrity of the texts, and the political or religious affiliations of certain VIE managers. A golden opportunity to augment subscribership was ruined. I received letters from potential subscribers at the time, hesitating in the face of these allegations. Failure to respond promptly and effectively to such tricks is imprudent. Such is the nature of the cyber-sphere; it cannot be undone with wishes or blindfolds.

I am particularly sorry at the current turn of events. The person in question is someone I considered a friend. His VIE work, like all other volunteer contributions, remains fully valued. Without it, the VIE would not be where it is today: mere months from final printing.



## More Wit and Wisdom from Matthew Paris\*

Discussing essays he had written in the 1960's on Vance and other authors, Matthew Paris wrote:

... I wanted to suggest that American Arts generally had a another direction, as a cultural as well as political departure from the Old World, that had nothing to do with the Academy notions of the culture circa 1967. Now I think freedom has a radial centrifugal quality that makes the whole idea of design and common reality, in the old nationalistic sense, not applicable.

... I'm not really a polemical person. I'd rather get my hat than pull out a megaphone. I'm really a big James fan. I think Louis Auchincloss is a fine writer. I pushed Edith Wharton's *The House Of Mirth* when nobody had ever heard of her. I've read everything they all wrote. I just think that our culture is and always had been largely Jacksonian; James for all his virtues wasn't a Jacksonian. There never was a local set of artists and what has been accomplished here was sponsored much more by the Mafia than any Anglo patrons and foundations.† If you read *The Bostonians* you know what James thought of American aristos. What's changed? The very provincial and lesbian thread is the same. By the way, ever notice how the Academy left the one real aristo of genius, that stayed here, alone as if he never existed: Henry Adams? He was too weird for them. These essays were all done as a young man as a consequence of a watershed appearance I had taking my M.A. I realized that I was among fools, scalawags and hacks that knew less than nothing about the arts, literature, how to think and so on; yet these false hierophants were judging me, were involved in nefarious interlock with the job holding machines of the country to give one credentials or certificates to do nasty things for money that had nothing to do with anything these pedagogues taught, true or false. Now I feel that it is an ancient desire of caliphs, since Atlantis, to take the most intelligent people in a community and put them to work making mud pies so they won't think of taking up revolution. As a result revolu-

tions are usually the work of the merely competent. Since I was still in my twenties when I went through this formal communal initiation into a then banal madness, I was apoplectic as youth tends to be about 'les idees recus et maudits de l'age'. [the sanctioned and forbidden thoughts of the age': PWR] Yet as I recovered from my uncomely splenetic ire at being a seeming momentary accolade in this fantastical job holding operation, really not all that different in its egregious folly from the phantasmagorical Welfare scam I told you about,‡ I realized I had to find my own paltry designs and truths in a world of Art and thought, which really had nothing to do with these marvelous juggernauts or their embossed certificates. These drummers and hucksters had claimed to me, even when I was a tyke, that they and only they were the champions of people I loved and admired, or at least mildly coolly and distantly respected if they were dead, silent or far away. Paul, as an American job holder I was lucky I could play basketball.§

As a result during the late 60s and thereafter I wrestled like Hulk Hogan with my own ideas and trashed theirs; I gradually formulated what I thought were much more accurate, or at least honest if imbecilic explanations, of the nature of Art and thought. It was a different direction from many of my age who simply dismissed all culture and took up sex, drugs and rock and roll. Of course, hunkering to be banal in all ways, I did that too. Sometimes one needs enemies more than friends. I had wanted to write a thesis on H.P. Lovecraft; nobody in the college in 1967 had heard of him. I think then and now I'd have gotten that response had I offered to write academic critiques of Jack Vance. There are science-fiction cliques here and there but Vance really was never accepted even by science-fiction fans because he was clearly another sort of author, offering a great laniary Art — not to be confused with the Campbellite aesthetics au courant at the time. Since outside the late cyberpunk movement of Gibson-Sterling-Rucker of the 80s nothing has happened in science-fiction for a quarter of a century, it may be ready for the Academy by the time of the naissance of Buck Rogers. Whilst settling into the deep torpors of a well earned

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\* Paris is a poet, novelist and playwright, who works in New York.

† 'Jacksonian' is Paris' shorthand for an anarchic or frontier cultural situation.

‡ Shades of *The House on Lily Street*; Paris, whose father was the deputy mayor of New York under La Guardia, got his first job working for the New York City welfare department. He soon learned that it was a vast quivering mass of corruption. The agents took kickbacks from the clients, of course, but more importantly the alleged humanitarian aid functioned as a pay-off system to local and ethnic leaders, rewarding their cooperation and punishing their deviance, in the process strengthening their hold over individuals in their area. PWR

§ Paris later worked for the City Parks department, where he ran sports programs, before it, too, became a boondoggling channel of public money to chosen individuals and groups. PWR



senility I've had a chance lately to view these essays, mostly 1967-8, from a commodious if nacral perspective. The world I was writing about in those Triassic days had an embattled Devonian elite, pushing for Anglophilic imperial mastery; yet they were terminally confounded by positioning themselves as medievalists and Manicheans in a country of mostly roguish Jacksonians. About three years after I departed these Oxford-like temples in a huff after taking my degree, most of these didacts were told either to teach Puerto Rican Studies or offer literacy to the sleeping and dead loons beyond slumber in a mens' shelter. Sic transit merde, no? Now we live in a world in which it is as much an offense to claim that there is no natural inequality (to use John Adams' felicitous phrase) as it once was tantamount to more than mere treason to say that the current elites were a bunch of perfumed charlatans and bums. Zooks, go figure.

It's interesting to look on the Internet for records of the books and achievements of these perished wizards of my youth, many of whom were the thaumaturgic centers of cults. One of them I admired tremendously, Craig Rice, still has a few books in print. Helas, mon vieux, most of what I was brought up upon, nearly all pulp fiction, is literally not available for somebody who is growing up now, if they read at all. It makes me un vrai maitre du cemetaire malgre lui.

Regards d'outre tombe.\*



## Cosmopolis Errata

OR

### *The Perils of Amateur Publication*

Letter from Patrick Dusoulier:

Just browsing through Cosmo 51, and I came upon a strange confusion. Might as well set things right so that you can immerse yourself further into French "culture". On Page 5, left-hand side, you mention 'Pierre Dax'. Non non! The "San Antonio" series was written by Frédéric Dard. And there is no famous French writer named "Pierre Dax". You may have confused "Frédéric Dard" with "Pierre Dac", also known as "Le Roi des Loufoques", a specialist of nonsensical and absurd humour, always delivered in a deadpan manner. He worked for many years with Francis Blanche. All French people of my generation

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\* A true master of the cemetery, in spite of himself. Regards from beyond the grave: PWR.

know by heart their sketch about the "Sar Rabindranath Duval". They also wrote, and interpreted, the fabulous radio serial "Signé Furax".

I don't suppose you confused him with "Pierre Dux", a very different character: a famous actor from the Comédie Française, who was also the administrator of this noble institution . . .

To Patrick's above remarks I should mention some other errors of mine I have discovered myself: I mistakenly called Pierre Lelouche (a good politician), 'Claude Lelouche' (a bad film director).

So don't believe everything you read!



## End Note

*David Reitsema, Editor, Cosmopolis*

Thanks to proofreaders Steve Sherman, Rob Friefeld and Jim Pattison and to Joel Anderson for his composition work.

**COSMOPOLIS SUBMISSIONS:** when preparing articles for *Cosmopolis*, please refrain from fancy formatting. Send raw text. For *Cosmopolis* 53, please submit articles and letters-to-the-editor to David Reitsema: [Editor@vanceintegral.com](mailto:Editor@vanceintegral.com). Deadline for submissions is August 31, 2004.

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