



EXTANT



October 2005

#7

CONTENTS

V.I.E. RUMOR AND CHAFF	1
SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE WORK! (<i>continued</i>) <i>from Hans van der Veeke: A WORD FROM ROBIN ROUCH.</i>	2
COMMENT ON ROB FRIEFELD'S TI ARTICLE <i>by Paul Rhoads.</i>	3
VANCE'S WRITINGS AND THE SAGA OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF <i>by Michael Parsons.</i>	8
STYLE AND THE SPENGLERIAN ATMOSPHERE <i>by Paul Rhoads</i>	12
GRILLED DOG	19
THE THREE LITTLE PIGS: AN AMERICAN PARABLE <i>by Matthew Paris</i>	19
ECHOES IN THE ETHER	20

ELLERY QUEEN

This special volume is moving inexorably toward the printing press. Two of the 3 texts have passed though TI, thanks to Chuck King, Steve Sherman and Tim Stretton. They have even already been Imped by Hans van der Veeke and Deborah Cohen. I have been assigned to compose them, and Marcel van Genderen is managing CRT. Stefania Zacco has been promised she will have the volume .pdf by the end of October. Though Torriani will be gone, Sr. Biffi will oversee production. To help PP this volume contact Chris Corley.

THE ERRATA SHEET

May I urge VIE subscribers who have received their wave 2 books, to use the errata sheet slipped into volume 44? It includes an official VIE method to correct 19 errata, 6 penned in, 13 others with cut-and-paste. The first of the hand corrected 'erratum's' seems to be nuncupatory. I am not sure how it slipped in there, except that the oversight was mine—the comma wanted at volume 6, page 199 line 7 is already in place.

Once the corrections are applied with the official errata sheet your VIE book set becomes fully and officially 'complete and correct'. Also, by applying these corrections you become an honorary member of the VIE composition team. 11 volumes are involved. Four corrections are needed in volume 38, three are needed in volumes 7, two each in volumes 11, 29 and 37, and one in volumes 4, 6, 26, 28 and 40.

Objection has been raised to this VIE errata-sheet correction procedure for being unprecedented; such carpings are, if I may say so, a myopic pathology of overly tidy minds—a trouble under-represented among EXTANT readers! The true obstacle to application of the errata is *Sloth*. This demon should be combated with vigour by all.

USING YOUR VIE VOLUMES

If you have a Readers set, sometimes the corners are a bit stiff and sharp. Tap the corners lightly on a hard surface to 'break' the point; they will handle better. Then: do not hesitate to smudge and stain the covers! The books will not be complete, comfortable and fully beautiful until they are well used, and they show it. Dog ear your favorite pages, make notes in the margins, inscribe your thoughts on the inside covers! By using your books fearlessly and well you not only become an honorary member of the VIE composition team, but increase the value of your set—for anyone who has their priorities in good order.

Meanwhile, Jurriaan Kalkman is experimenting a substance known as 'Renaissance Wax' which he claims 'seems to work well on the covers. At first the covers

VIE RUMOR AND CHAFF

2d PRINTING PACKING

A crew of 8 worked for 5 days in Milan. They were: Thomas Rydebeck, Jurriaan Kalkman, Scott Benenatti, Billy Webb, Vince Serrano, Christa Jonkergouw, Bob Luckin and myself, but Thomas left on Wednesday, to be replaced by Mary Beth Jowers. I wish to express particular gratitude to Thomas for his moral leadership and guidance—in these packing trips and in many other ways over the years—and to Billy for running the packing assembly line. Gail Webb was morally present in the careful plan she prepared for us, based on the painstakingly prepared data of another moral presence, that of Suan Yong. Stefania Zacco was present almost every day, and helped us with the physical labor as well as expediting the shipments, and Nicola di Angeli also lent his usual hand.

It was a sorry thing to see Torriani with half its machines gone, and deserted of most of its personel. The doors will have closed forever, on September 30th.

We enjoyed our traditional high standard for evening meals, in the various restaurants of Cologno Monseze. The Torriani canteen was closed but we ate with the remaining workers at a cafeteria across the street. Brian Gharst, for the VIE film he is working on, asked Billy for some extra footage, particularly a statement from Sr. Biffi. Biffi took this to heart and wrote a little speech. It was a moving scene. We have been lucky, not to say blessed, to have such high-quality people helping us.

There was hard work right up to 5 o'clock on Friday. The packers diligently exhausted themselves making sure each subscriber will receive a perfect VIE book set. Right-minded folk will feel gratitude for these volunteer efforts—it remains only to thank Bob for 4 bottles of various liquids of which he made me presents; some contained hot pepper-sauce, others single malt. What more could one ask of a true friend?

appear smudged, but after 30 minutes it looks just like before, no darker, no smudges, but with a thin layer of wax protecting it against sweaty fingers.' I hope Jurriann will provide more information about his Renaissance Wax experiment.

WAVE 2 ERRATA

Suan Yong reported to VIE managers that one subscriber, Nick Lowe, wrote as follows:

. . . a few pages (perhaps just one side of one sheet) of vol. 13 have printed at a lower resolution, resulting in a kind of half-tone effect visible mainly on p. 14 (but only barely on the title page, with which it partners), as well as 25 and 48. The fact that this is the nearest to a defect I've been able to find is further credit to the extraordinary level of attention to detail that's gone into this project from the start. It's been a privilege to witness, and we (and posterity) owe you all a huge debt of thanks.

Joel Anderson, VIE Master Composer, commented:

My Vol. 13 has the same symptoms. I just finished reading the San Rodrigo stories and hadn't noticed. Must have been sitting under a low-wattage lamp.

Before I looked at it, I would have suspected there was some grayscale element present that forced the rip to render it as a halftone. But that wouldn't have affected the type or the two-bit stuff. Rather this looks like linework that has merely been screened back, as in 80 or 90% black rather than solid; the resolution, the edges of the type, appears to be as high as that in the rest of the book. Nor does it seem likely that any of Illustrator's or InDesign's transparency effects were in operation, and again, that would have produced low res halftones. . . I found a copy of ie13-fin-v6a.pdf and opened a few of these pages in Illustrator. Everything looks to be 100% black. . . another thing is that type inside the map on page 25 is solid, while that on the page below it is screened. Strange.

This effect is not present in my own copy of volume 13, and appears to be another mysterious problem inherent in the digital/internet environment which has made the VIE possible. See COSMOPOLIS #61, beginning, page 3, for a discussion of similar issues.

WALLAH TALK

Ron Chernich, chief cat-wrangler of the Techno-cats, writes on the TI hot-line:

Wave 2 has finally broken on ozzie shores and is now sitting on my library shelves. I'm absolutely delighted — big thanks to all who packed the volumes for shipping, managed trans-shipping, etc. Now to get reacquainted with some old friends. . .

MARKET VALUE

In recent weeks two Readers book sets have been auctioned on E-bay. Both were numbered, signed sets. They sold for \$3,600.00 and \$3,200.00. As a return on investment this is comfortably superior to 100% and shows a price trend which can only continue. VIE subscription, whatever else it may be — and as I frequently warned — was a prudent financial move.

SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE WORK! (CONTINUED)

An initiative of Volunteer Coordinator, Hans van der Veeke

FAREWELL FROM ROBIN ROUCH, THE GODDESS...*

I send my love and admiration to all my Muffins, the CRT, and the CVT for their dedication, self-sacrifice, and support. I wish to give special thanks and affection to the following, amazing VIE'rs:

To my beloved, Joel Riedesel, for bringing me to the VIE, giving me unfailing support, and loving me through our travails. I love you, boy. To Karl Kellar for being my best friend forever and taking over the Clam Muffins when it was the last thing you ever wanted to do. You have touched my heart. To Marcel van Genderen for your extraordinary and continuing friendship—I WILL hug you again some day! To Chris Corley for being the perfect manager: professional and wise; to both Chris and Tim Stretton for reading me Jane Austin on bended knee. No one can ever say that VIE'rs are not romantic! To Robert Melson for your incredible work and kindness; you are a gentleman of the highest caliber; to Luk Schoonaert ("Luke-babe") for keeping me laughing over the years, even when life became incredibly dark. To Charles King for being irreplaceable and incomparable during work, warm and kind during play. Special-special thanks for doing a mean Mark Knopfler imitation and serenading me with "Romeo & Juliet". To Steve Sherman for being the only man worthy of earning an honorary PhD in Clam Muffin-ness. I adore you. To Steve and Rob Friefeld for their support and kindness during my brutish and short TI stint. And Rob, thanks also for tending to Joel's scratched cornea. To Rob Gerrand and Patrick Dusoulier for the "GM Blues". It was an astonishing, improvised gem for my VIE scrapbook. To Hans van der Veeke for being a friend even though we really didn't work together. You have been one of the faithful few who has been there always. I very much hope that we meet in person one day. For Bob Luckin, Till Noever, and Bob Lacovara for some of the most entertaining "conversations" I have ever had. Additional thanks to Bob Luckin for being such a tireless worker no matter how many comments the evil overseer overruled. And, finally, to the overseer himself for his hospitality, kindness, patience, and thoughtfulness to me. I do think that you were the ONLY person stubborn enough to pull this thing off. Thank-you so much, Paul, and love to Genevieve.

To anyone I have forgotten: thank-you and forgive me. The VIE pulled me out of a deep pit of despair after my initial disablement and remained faithful and supportive after my second. I only wish we could have finished out this thing together.

Hugs to VIE'rs everywhere,

Robin Rouch,

Former VIE slave, Gatekeeper to the Nympharium, and Goddess of the Universe.



* For reasons innocent this testimonial was not, as intended, published in COSMOPOLIS #63.

COMMENT ON ROB FRIEFELD'S TI ARTICLE (IN COSMOPOLIS #60)

Re-reading Rob's article, with the same enjoyment as the first time, it occurred to me that, while it reveals what TI was like as a personal experience for wallahs and reviewers, it does not explicate TI accomplishments; most of Rob's amusing and instructive examples show TI saving Vance from itself. I do not suggest that the picture which emerges is untrue! There was indeed a good deal of that, and I am glad a light has been cast upon it. Even more could be said. Though superficially embarrassing, in the final analysis it is a tribute to their personal qualities that a group of miserable self-appointed amateurs could self-correct in this way.

Meanwhile, though over the years there have been numerous exposés of what TI has done for specific texts, what is lacking is an overview of how Vance's work is affected as a whole by TI's famous labors. Alun Hughes' article in volume 44 (*'Strange Animals in Questionable Poses': The Reconstruction of the V.I.E. Texts*) is a general account; not a global review of VIE texts as corrected but a discussion of the theories, sources, problems and solutions involved.

What I have in mind is a general exposé of what was accomplished, illustrated by a wealth of samples of the most interesting and important corrections. This is no job for me. I will, however, offer a sketch of my own bird's-eye-view of the TI contribution. I was involved in much TI work but, given the scale of the task, my knowledge of what was done with many of the texts is superficial or nonexistent. What follows is notes for an article I will never write.

THE EARLY STORIES

Most of these were restored to original magazine versions which, in many cases, are quite different in texture and voice from the book versions by which most of us know them. The over-all effect is greater freshness and less science fiction veneer. The book editors, sometimes to a surprising degree, tended to standardize language and inject sci-fi jargon. Telephones and holsters were no good; they wanted 'tele-screens' and 'weapon clips'. Such changes were made in the 1970s and 1980s.

A special category are the handful of stories the author himself revised for later book publication. In the case of *Guyal of Sferre* and *I'll Build Your Dream Castle* the VIE publishes both original and revised versions (in fact there are 2 authorial revisions of *Dream Castle*, see note in volume 44's *Catalogue of Titles*, page 553). In these cases we developed an editorial policy. It was felt that, in revision of his early work, the author was occasionally motivated by embarrassment at what he seemed to regard as youthful excess, or sometimes a desire to make older work conform to his evolved style. This is understandable when some early story was to be exposed in the context of his own later work, or work by other writers. But the VIE presents the Vance oeuvre as a whole, naturally dominated by the mature period masterpieces. In this context the early work finds a natural place and remains in a proper perspective. We did not for this reason, however, exclude

authorial revision! But we did use discrimination sometimes to reject revision which grayed the color, at times admittedly perfervid, of the early style. Vance's manner of revising his early work may be conveniently studied in the VIE by comparing the versions of *Guyal of Sferre* and *Dream Castle*, his two most extensive revisions.

In fact our cautious policy of rejecting certain revision did not cover the majority of them, which were most usually in the class 'stylistic improvement', rather than 'stylistic change' at which we looked askance. There was much discussion of these points. Initial opinions often varied on where to draw the line, but we almost always came to consensus.

THE MYSTERIES

The mysteries are a mixed affair. Excluding the Ellery Queen novels (for a discussion of which see Chuck King's words in COSMOPOLIS #61) they were not notably degraded by editors. Limited Mss material for *The Man in the Cage* offered many puzzles, and only after months of work, mostly between Suan Yong, Patrick Dusoulier and myself, did we decide that the Mugar material was an early draft. Still, differences in the various published versions indicate that editorial meddling did occur. We felt justified, therefore, in making a few interesting restorations, in cooperation with the Vances, of certain passages. Today, however, I tend to the opinion that even more of the divergences from the partial Mugar Mss than I thought were due to Vance himself. That said, I do not regret the few restorations we did make.

One of Vance's great stylistic strengths is what might be called 'rapid efficacy'. This quality is an element of his evocative power — another being his miraculous vocabulary. Together they super-charge the meaning/time factor of the prose. The reader's mind is kept off balance; he registers not a text but an experience. Cutting away extraneous material, however good in itself, is therefore crucial to Vance's work process, one we see constantly in the early drafts. That said, and even if comparing early wordier versions with final shortened phrases almost always reveals the strength of Vance's craft, it can be argued that the cuts sometimes seem too deep. On occasion, rather than sharpening an impression they wash so thin it fades. This can sometimes be sensed in Vance's mature work where the reader — this reader anyhow — sometimes yearns for a bit more, or feels the account has become so streamlined it escapes his grasp.

An example from *The Man in the Cage* is the 'Captain Goulidja' passage (beginning of chapter 14). The Mugar partial draft Mss has:

Behind a green metal desk sat a short thick man of Napoleonic mien. Thick ringlets of mingled black and gray clustered over his broad forehead. He wore an expression of mildly amused skepticism, a kind of occupational facade, as if to warn malefactors, actual or putative, that their guile had been foreseen and discounted. He held out his hand.
"Your passport, please."

Darrell handed over the green booklet. Captain Goulidja flicked it open with an expert hand, assimilated what information it contained with an air of faint astonishment, placed it carefully down on his desk.
"What did you wish, please? You report a death?"

The published versions are shorter:

Behind a green metal desk sat a short thick man of Napoleonic mien. Ringlets of mingled black and gray clustered over his broad forehead. He wore an expression of mildly amused skepticism, as if to warn malefactors, actual or putative, that their guile had been foreseen and discounted. He held out his hand.

"Your passport, please."

Darrell handed over the green booklet. Captain Goulidja assimilated what information it contained with an air of faint astonishment. "What did you wish, please? You report a death?"

Eliminated are: 'thick', in 'thick ringlets', the description of Goulidja's skepticism as: 'a kind of occupational facade', and the descriptive passages: 'flicked it open with an expert hand' and 'placed it carefully down on his desk'. The first two removals are good. There is a wealth of description of Captain Goulidja so that the 'thick' is only clutter. As for his skepticism being 'a kind of occupational facade', this is a secret thought of the writer. It is communicated more powerfully when only suggested, so that, rather than being spoon-fed, the reader evolves it in his own mind. This is one way Vance 'respects the readers', as I like to put it. Part of the pleasure of reading is a complicity with the author, a conversation of winks and nods which depends on real reader participation, to weave an enriching harmony around explicit suggestions from which greater pleasures are generated.

Maintaining that conversation is a delicate matter. When Goulidja's movements are eliminated in the last paragraph some of the information the reader needs to feel the facade quality of his cynicism is lost; the flicking and careful placing are theatrical, thus false. The VIE has the passage thus:

Behind a green metal desk sat a short thick man of Napoleonic mien. Ringlets of mingled black and gray clustered over his broad forehead. He wore an expression of mildly amused skepticism, as if to warn malefactors, actual or putative, that their guile had been foreseen and discounted. He held out his hand.

"Your passport, please."

Darrell handed over the green booklet. Captain Goulidja flicked it open with an expert hand, assimilated what information it contained with an air of faint astonishment, placed it carefully down on his desk. "What did you wish, please? You report a death?"

On the other hand, did Vance wish to make Captain Goulidja's cynicism sincere? The context will reveal the prudence, or lack thereof, of this VIE restoration.

It should be emphasized that such restorations from early drafts are extremely rare. Even though there was constant temptation to make them, they may have occurred only in *The Man in the Cage*, and in any case number less than a dozen. The TI attitude was conservative in the extreme. As an example, take this passage from chapter 11 of *The Man in the Cage*:

They ate in silence. The elderly couple finished, rose and stalked from the room.

The Mugar Mss has:

The elderly couple finished their meal, rose and stalked in austere dignity from the room.

The published version is certainly a 'vancian simplification', not editorial intervention, and study of the context justifies the author's change, no matter how appealing the eliminated

descriptive may be.

Take My Face and *The House on Lily Street* presented a totally different problem. They were published once only, evidently on the cheap because without proper editorial work or proofing. Norma had accumulated a set of notes on these texts, and other problems were identified by TI. In cooperation with the Vances these texts were properly edited, including adjustment of some trivial authorial errors, for example the age of a certain character in *Take My Face*.

THE EARLY SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS

The most dramatic TI correction is certainly to *Gold and Iron*, where a marriage ending had been added by editors. At Vance's direction this was removed. However, it now appears probable the passage was none-the-less penned by Vance, probably with reluctance or even disgust, at a publisher's behest. The final adjustment of the text, which involved only removal of a few words, was designed by Patrick Dusoulier, in cooperation with a TI group. It is certainly the most important of his characteristically sensitive and brilliant solutions. The VIE's *Big Planet*, also restored by Patrick, is based on the magazine version. The editorial changes were extensive, and have been discussed by Patrick in *COSMOPOLIS*.

The Languages of Pao is a very special case. This book is certainly one of the most important and 'interventionist' VIE editorial efforts since the story existed in two contemporary versions, both by the author, of which one is not simply a revision of the other. This matter has been discussed in *Cosmopolis*. In essence the VIE version combines both authorial versions to the greatest extent possible. The author's longer version adds a good deal of enriching material. It also ruthlessly eliminates numerous passages which fill out the young hero's character. Given that, as in so many of Vance's stories, this hero is, in fact, only one of several main protagonists, the version which lacks these reinforcements feels somewhat hollow at the core. The VIE version is, from a purist standpoint, a fabrication, but I persist in feeling that we have done this text the best possible service.

THE MIDDLE PERIOD CLASSICS

For many Vance readers these books, from *The Blue World* and *Cugel the Clever* to *Maske:Thaery* and *Skybreak Spatterlight*, are the favorites. For a certain number we had Mss evidence. For the rest we had magazine versions and usually several book versions. The level of editorial interventionism in these texts is 'average to severe'. The restoration of classics such as *Emphyrio* and *Showboat World* benefited from access to important manuscripts. I do not know how extensive their restoration needed to be, but the usual editorial tricks are probably to be observed in almost all the book publications. A classic example occurs in *Marune*, for which we had no Mss. The VIE follows the magazine text, *Amazing Science Fiction* (July and September 1975), where we read:

The man enters the chamber where the woman sleeps, or pretends to sleep; and in utter silence procreation occurs. Virginity or its absence is neither significant, nor so much as a subject for speculation; the Rhune dialect contains no such word.

The DAW version, however, is:

The man enters the chamber where the woman sleeps, or pretends to sleep; and in utter silence copulation occurs. Neither virginity nor its absence is significant, nor are either so much as a subject for speculation; the Rhune dialect contains no such word.

The misguided effort to correct the excellent second sentence is musically and semantically maladroit, and the change of 'procreation' to 'copulation' corrupts not only the author's voice but his thinking. Such alterations, as far as I saw, are pervasive in the book publications from the 1960s and 1970s, while the magazine versions, though more faithful are sloppy, beset with typos and missing phrases. In the case of *Marune*, for example, passages were missing from the *Amazing Science Fiction* text which we were able to restore from the books, including DAW.

I did not work on *Tschai*, for which we had Mss but I did extensive review of the *Durdane* books, which were restored by Suan Yong and Rob Friefeld, from Mss in the Mugar, where we also discovered unpublished maps. The most controversial issue was sorting out some geographical mix-ups which became an issue in light of the maps, and which revealed unresolved phases of draft and redraft. These issues have been thoroughly aired in several issues of COSMOPOLIS by Suan and myself.

THE LATE WORK

I had nothing to do with the *Cadwal* work, but I believe these texts, corrected from the author's electronic files by John Schwab, were fairly clean. Published editions of *Skybreak Spatterlight* are also pretty faithful I believe—if the title is discounted, though it was not 'changed' by an editor. Vance only created his own title for this story in 1999, though had always objected to the editorial one. Steve Sherman corrected *Lyonesse* which, along with lesser problems, had been seriously mixed-up in at least one edition by editors who shifted chapters. *Night Lamp* was quite problematic; serious damage had been worked upon this text, as also upon *Ports of Call*. The Underwood version of the latter was the best available, until now.

TITLES:

The corrected titles include the following major changes:

The Dying Earth / *Mizirian the Magician*
The Five Gold Bands / *The Rapparee*
Slaves of the Klau / *Gold and Iron*
The Eyes of the Overworld / *Cugel The Clever*
Showboat World / *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*
Tschai, Planet of Adventure / *Tschai*
The City of the Chasch / *The Chasch*

Three titles were not restorations but new titles, desired by the author for the definitive version of his work:

The Wankh / *The Wannek*
The Galactic Effectuator / *The Dogtown Tourist Agency, and Freitzke's Turn*
Cugel's Saga / *Cugel: The Skybreak Spatterlight*

OVERVIEW

Some texts required dramatic or even drastic correction. Among the most dramatic, not mentioned above, are *The Augmented Agent*. The important changes to *Crusade to Maxus* and *The Star King* have been discussed in COSMOPOLIS. Those who know these stories only in book publication will find important differences. Most of the texts, with the possible exception of *Cadwal* and *Skybreak Spatterlight*, have had to be more or less extensively restored in detail, often with hundreds of changes per text. These are frequently minor matters such as punctuation and paragraphing, but word changes can be frequent as well.

CARPINGS

On August 30, on his personal anti-Paul Rhoads/VIE Message Board, Alexander Feht—famously at work on new Russian Vance translations which emphasise ideologies Feht claims Vance promotes in his work: social Darwinism and militant Atheism—made this complaint:

There are some obvious lapses in Jack Vance's books, even in the best ones. These flaws are usually insignificant, and don't deserve excessive attention. However, Jack's books would benefit from an accurate professional editing in this respect. In the past, I've pointed out several such lapses in the TSCHAI series, and in MASKE: THAERY. Now I am translating WYST, and, again, cannot avoid noticing many inconsistencies.

For example, in the large Chapter 7 alone: during his conversation with Kedidah, Jantiff gets up to his feet twice within the two paragraphs, without sitting down in between: "Jantiff jumped to his feet, run across the room and took her hand. . . Kedida patted Jantiff's cheek. . . There was a brief silence. Jantiff rose to his feet."

The VIE had a policy about such things. If, by some hypothetical argument, it could be shown, as it almost always could, that a) logic is not outraged—in this case by an implied or latent possibility that Jantiff might have sat down, or b) that the reader is not disturbed, we left them alone. This was so in all cases I recall. In short, we rejected a rigid and tidy logic, congenial to small minds, and allowed Vance to speak in his own surprising ways.

Feht continues:

The layout of Arrabus, and of Uncibal in particular, remains an enigma. . .

See the map on the next page. Uncibal is the south western quarter of Arrabus. Disjerferact lies on the north side of Uncibal. The spaceport is to the south of Uncibal's eastern border. A mile east of the spaceport, and somewhat north, is the Centrality. North of this space-port Centrality zone, across the urban area and on the water, is the Field of Voices. From the space-port the man-way called Uncibal River flows north and makes a majestic turn west to bisect the city. Disselberg River runs parallel to Uncibal River but farther north. These rivers are joined by laterals which have names or numbers. At the western end of the city is a north-south man-way not called a lateral but defined as the 'Great Southern Adit'. Old Pink is on the western side of Lateral 26 and on the eastern side of Lateral 112, the next lateral westward.

Old Pink is slightly north of Uncibal River and well south of Disselberg River. So much may be adduced from the text.

The numbered laterals seem to be segments between the rivers. These, given the nature of the man-ways, cannot be continuous, being on the same level as the rivers. They are labeled to a scheme not immediately obvious, but about which various hypotheses or, of course, typotheoses, are possible. The named, as opposed to numbered, laterals appear to be less frequent and to run north-south across the whole city without interruption, crossing the rivers on a higher level (see frontispiece: VIE vol. 31). In the chase of Chapter 8 (and assuming Arrabins drive on the right side of the road) when Jantiff leaves Old Pink he would, by default and convenience, go south on Lateral 26, and reaching Uncibal River would most conveniently divert to the west, as this would be a right turn. In fact he does go west, since later he doubles back to the east, and makes his way to the Centrality.

So much for the enigma of Arrabin geography. Feht's odd failure to pierce it doubtlessly accounts for his perplexity and error in the following:

We know from the previous descriptions that the Uncibal River runs along past the Old Pink building. When Jantiff first got off the Uncibal River to enter the Old Pink (in Chapter 3), he "diverted to a slow neighborhood feeder and presently stepped off in front of the weathered pink block. . ." Later, we learn that Jantiff could see the crowds riding the Uncibal River, and Kedidah entering these crowds and disappearing in them (before her last fateful hussade game), while sitting on the bench in the loggia (which, as if in a dream, suddenly and conveniently appeared for this purpose) to the side of the Old Pink entrance.

However: Skorlet and Jantiff return to the Old Pink to pick up Jantiff's camera and Tanzel. Esteban and Skorlet had agreed to meet "where Uncibal River crosses Tumb Flow, on the north deck."

Jantiff, Tanzel, and Skorlet are going to the bonterfest. They start out from the Old Pink lobby. "The lateral (???) took them to Uncibal River, where they diverted (???) and rode east." Fine, they are riding east, and, despite the "diversion," let's suppose that "feeder" and "lateral" are the same thing (though earlier we learned that "laterals" were major perpendicular flows), and the group is still riding the Uncibal River (which must be, because they are going to meet with Esteban, who waits for them at the crossing of the Uncibal river and Tumb Flow, right?). . .

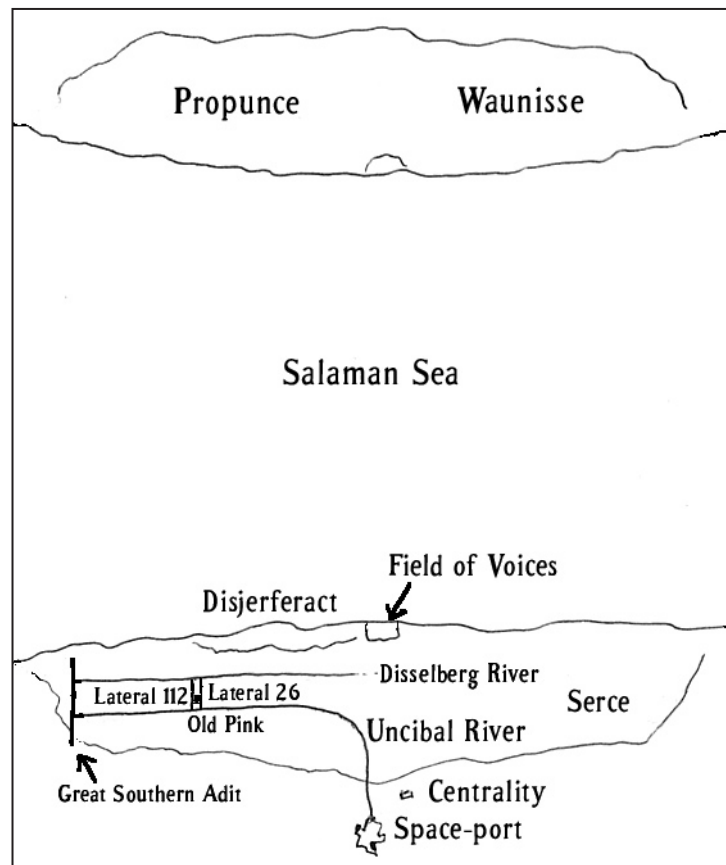
Before reaching his main point, we may note Feht's failure to grasp the spacial relation of Uncibal River to 'the' Old Pink, as well as noting that, there is, in fact, no ambiguity in this passage. Jantiff and Skorlet leave Old Pink via Lateral 26, riding south to Uncibal River where they turn left, or east, onto it. Throughout the book Vance uses the term 'diverted' to mean 'turned'. One can only wonder how such matters will be dealt with in Russian, a language notoriously less rich of vocabulary than English. Feht continues:

. . . All right, Tanzel points out Esteban and the others waiting on the north deck at the Tumb Flow crossing. At which point "the group continued westward along Uncibal river." Westward now. They were going east, unless "diversion" meant the decisive and inexplicable U-turn. Or did they ride to the east for the sole purpose of meeting Esteban, Sarp,

and others at the Tumb Flow crossing, only to return west, past the Old Pink, and to continue to the outskirts of the city? Implausible.

As a translator, I am trying to smooth out these kinks. However, the self-appointed editors of the VIE had a unique opportunity to deal with them once and for all. All they needed to do was to make a list of these lapses, and to get Norma's permission to straighten them out. After all, they were after "definitive collection" of Jack's texts, n'est ce pas? Despite all the breast-beating, pomp, and mutual congratulations, they missed this opportunity completely.

One must surmise, therefore, that the VIE cannot be regarded, in any respect, as anything more "definitive" than the other, popular editions that they merely reprinted.



THE CITY OF ARRABUS

From *Wyst*, chapter 1: At the equator, or the narrowest section of the hourglass, the continents were split apart by the Salaman Sea, a drowned rift averaging a hundred miles in width. That strip of littoral, never more than twenty miles wide, between sea and the flanking scarps to north and south, comprised the land of Arrabus. To the south were the cities Uncibal and Serce, to the north Propunce and Waunisse, each pair merging indistinguishably: in effect Arrabus was a single metropolitan area. Beyond, north and south extended the so-called "Weirdlands", one-time civilized domains, now a pair of wildernesses shrouded under dark forest.

The VIE, in the absence of manuscripts, and even then, was obliged to follow published editions. After much painstaking, VIE texts can be called the best versions possible. They enjoy the approval of the

author; he and Norma Vance participated intimately in VIE editorial work. VIE texts, therefore, are definitive. Feht, rather than take any of this into account, for some malefic motive prefers to broadcast slander. Meanwhile we are not to see any 'breast-beating' in his exposés, and we must also presume he has been appointed to edit Vance's work by someone other than himself—perhaps one of those Russian publishers who have consistently cheated the Vances of royalty payments?

As for Feht's editorial points themselves, we must first

dismiss his confusion over 'loggias', 'laterals', 'feeders' and other features of Arrabus and its man-ways—apparently symptoms of a limited command of English. The only issue which might appear to present a problem is that Jantiff and Skorlet travel east to Tumb Flow. There is no question, however, that the subsequent westward movement of the bonterfesters is correct, since they then divert 'left' to the 'Great Southern Adit' and ride:

away through District 92: finally through the fringes of the city and out upon a soggy wasteland. . .

A left turn off a westward path leads south, in this case appropriately into the Wierdlands; the issue, then, is Jantiff and Skorlet's eastward movement to the rendezvous with Estiban. Why should this be 'implausible'? If we accept the text, Estiban arranged the general bonterfest rendezvous at Tumb Flow Lateral, at its junction with Uncibal River, a point east of Old Pink. Why to the east? It may be that some of the bonterfesters came from blocks in eastern sectors of Uncibal, or even Serce. But, even if that is not the case, an eastern point, relative to Old Pink, for this rendezvous is supported everywhere in the text.

Disjerferact is situated on the mud-flats north of Uncibal. Its eastern border is near the Field of Voices, from which it is separated by an area of empty mud flat and the Whery Slough Bridge. There is no explicit indication of its western border but neither is there indication it extends the whole width of Uncibal. In particular no indication exists that any part of Disjerferact lies westward, to any extent, of Old Pink. Disjerferact is described as a 'large area', a 'strip' on the Uncibal mud flats. Explicitly it does not extend into Serce, and 'large' does not mean 'as wide as Uncibal'. Even extending as far as shown on the map (see previous page), it is already about 20 miles long.

Various indications of Disjerferact's probable extent exist. In chapter 7, when Jantiff is returning to Old Pink from the Centrality on the Uncibal River, he:

. . . diverted to a lateral and was carried north to the mud flats. On the outskirts of Disjerferact he purchased a dozen water-puffs, and so fortified, returned to Old Pink.

This lateral is obviously east of Old Pink and would seem to be a convenient route between Uncibal River and Disjerferact, near a point east of Lateral 26. This lateral, by which Jantiff reached Disjerferact from Uncibal River, and by which, after purchasing his water-puffs, he returns to it, and then goes on to Old Pink, is most probably one and the same. Why would Jantiff hike to the next major lateral, westward along the mud-flats, when he might simply return by this one to Uncibal River, with its convenient access to Lateral 26 and Old Pink? We are not told its name but it is clearly east of Old Pink. On the morning of the bonterfest Skorlet, apparently with Estiban, follows Jantiff, distraught at the disappearance of poor Keddida, to Disjerferact. How does he get there? Does he use the same lateral described above? After confirmation of Keddida's suicide, Estiban announces the rendezvous at Tumb Flow. Why there? Skolet and Jantiff return to Old Pink, collect

Tanzel and the camera, and rejoin, at Tumb Flow, Estiban and the now assembled bonter-festers. Given the ensemble of these movements, and if we accept the text as accurate, Tumb Flow is a convenient lateral, east of Old Pink, with easy access to both Uncibal River, Disjerferact and Old Pink, like the lateral used by Jantiff when he bought the water-puffs in chapter 7. Are they the same?

We are never invited to imagine any lateral westward of Old Pink which is convenient to Disjerferact, nor to imagine that Disjerferact extend westward of Old Pink. So, whether Tumb Flow and the lateral in question are the same or not, indications gathered from the whole text suggest that the most convenient meeting place under the circumstances would be a lateral conveniently joining Disjerferact with Uncibal River, a some point east of Old Pink.

From Tumb Flow the united group then moves westward. During this latter movement Jantiff considers returning to Old Pink:

Jantiff, having discovered no massive black-haired man among the party once again became apathetic and rode somewhat behind the others. For a moment or two he considered leaving the group, inconspicuously of course, and returning to Old Pink.

Is this thought inspired to any degree by a return toward Old Pink from the east? The text suggests as much to this reader. How easy to slip off Uncibal River, making a convenient right turn onto Lateral 26!

However, the most powerful objection would be that the verbal construction 'continued westward' implies a continuation of Jantiff and Skorlet's motion, which had been eastward. But this assumes too much. The other bonterfesters may have come from the west, so they would be 'continuing' in that direction. But more importantly Vance often uses words like 'proceed' in the sense of 'start' or 'begin to go'—which is no personal eccentricity but characteristic old California speech. So there is nothing implausible about this series of actions, as described, even if it troubles minds which love extreme neatness to prevail. The VIE would not, and did not, change it.

Alexander Feht states that this matter does not deserve excess attention, but does it not deserve at least the sufficient attention he has not given it? Once he has smoothed the alleged kinks out of Vance's work, one can only speculate upon what sort of thing he will have fabricated, but that sorry matter likewise fails to deserve excessive attention.*

Meanwhile, for those who are interested, COSMOPOLIS is rife with demonstrations that the VIE is not shy of the

*If Alexander Feht, or anyone else, is not satisfied with my explanation of Arrabin geography, I urge and invite them to present their own, in EXTANT. Allow me also to anticipate Alexander's characteristic whining that, as I have access to VIE electronic texts—access I allegedly deny him—I am able to do such research more easily than he. Will this alleged VIE unfairness be his excuse to eventual readers of his 'smoothed out' translations? I personally digitized 7 stories or novels for the VIE (this may be verified on page 462 of volume 44). If Alexander wants a digitized version of WYST, he can make it himself, rather than trying to leach the efforts of the VIE volunteers he has spent several years publicly and energetically denigrating. However, my familiarity with WYST, plus reference to VIE volume 31, which Alexander also possesses, was all I needed to prepare these arguments.

† How to make Water Puffs: grind dried sea-weeds to powder. Add water. Mix into dough. Form small pieces, in odd shapes, about the size of marbles. Boil in 'oil' (human fat, ear-wax) until bloated and crisp. Sell to hungry Arrabins who can get no better.

sort of editorial work suggested by Alexander Feht. One example, which may not have been discussed, is from *The Man in the Cage*. Suan Yong wrote:

The road by which Noel must have returned from Erfoud led to a town called Ksar-es-Souk. Here he could have turned either southwest toward Ouarzazate, and eventually Marrakech and Casablanca, or north toward Meknes and Tangier. [But] Ouarzazate is clearly and unquestionably southwest of Ksar-es-Souk (now known as Er Rachidia).

In consequence the VIE's self-appointed editors changed 'southeast' to 'southwest'. The spatial relations in question are real and absolute, not imaginary and speculative, and thus subject to typotheosis, as in *Wyst*.

THE VIE EDITORIAL LEGACY

It has been suggested that, in addition to the electronic archive of VIE work-texts, the 'cor-bf's, or final Word documents containing all TI notes, as well as the 'PP bis files', or post-proofing errata notes, should be printed, bound, and offered to the Mugar library as a permanent archive. I do not know if the VIE has the resources for such a project or if the Mugar would be interested. However, it seems a worthy goal. These materials, it should be noted, do not include an exhaustive catalogue of all published versions of Vances work, only material relevant to TI work. The example, used above, from the DAW text of *Marune*, is not cited in the cor-bf (final VIE Word document, with TI notes) since only proposed modifications to the Amazing Science Fiction text were discussed.



VANCE'S WRITINGS AND THE SAGA OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

BY MICHAEL PARSONS

"AS YOU SAY, TRUTH DESTROYS MANY ILLUSIONS"

Etzwane: conclusion of The Asutra

As a great writer with extraordinary imaginative power Mr. Vance's works leave their mark on you. You risk being changed—literature is not an idle study. Of course his works are no manifesto. He touches on many themes: the operation of the free market and its impediments; the evils of bureaucracy; the evolution of species; material degradation, tyranny and soullessness in egalitarian regimes; town planning, the marvel of colour and light, exotic feasts and parties and so on.

Of all these COSMOPOLIS/EXTANT aroused my interest in the role of religion in the stories. Not that I see any personal religious commitment in the work itself, nor would I have expected that.

THE ROLE OF GODS AND PRIESTS

In *Ulhan Dhor ends a Dream* (VIE Vol. 1), we have a typical Vancian statement: "The people of Ampridatvir, released from toil, gave increasing attention to faddishness, perversity, and the occult". Their god resolves to teach them a bitter lesson: "You must save yourselves . . . You have ignored the ancient wisdom, you have been too indolent to learn, you have sought easy complacency from religion, *rather than facing manfully to the world*".* As a result the god destroys himself and his world, which he had made too caring. The characters must face up to reality if necessary without religious support.

EXTANT reviewed *Blue World*. From the USA this story looks like "freedom versus orthodoxy". I agree its message is necessity for manful, unsupported struggle. But also as an Englishman I see it as a devastating Dante-like criticism of church and priestly hierarchy. In *Blue World* the priests construct a fake God from a real creature called King Kragen. They enforce its worship by deceit; they summon it by secret drumbeats to destroy opposition. They use it as a guarantee of their domination. Their corruption infects society; even judging technical performance becomes deceptive. This priestly power was ended by honesty, realism, courage, and the shedding of human (not divine) blood.

For us in Europe, which is about to make itself a priest-free zone for the first time in two thousand years, the story can have direct and even alarming implications. I am left wondering: what does the future hold for those people or indeed now for Europe? G K Chesterton wrote: once men lose their faith, they do not believe in nothing, they believe in anything.† This is no idle story, and the future is insecure.

* Italics added by author.

† The British PM's wife is variously reported to send her husband's toenail clippings to a clairvoyant for mystical analysis, though some deny this. Who knows?

In *Madouc* our heroine's precious (precocious?) and unique personality strives against a harsh background, and she is snared by the treacherous and oleaginous Christian priest Father Umphred, along with his vain patroness, a spiritual social climber obsessed with cathedral building projects and achieving the status of "Blessed".

Her tale is not presented with derision. The power of religion is not questioned here. Indeed, as an example of religious power take the story of the great white stone. The white-cowled monks kneel in prayer, as their rule demanded every sunset, while their black-cowled opponents cut their throats, with the sun sinking gently in the west. All that is left of them is a great white stone set in the city walls, taken from their monastery.

Priests feature widely. In the *Demon Prince* saga, Celtic priests visiting the Palace of Love are secretive, cruel zealots. Kirth Gersen defeats their attempt to bury two youths as a living sacrifice simply by digging an escape hole—a practical solution.

In the *Cugel the Clever* pilgrims are shown as deluded and easily corrupt, even when sincerely led. The devout Gilfigites are bound for the Lustral Rite at the Black Obelisk. There are moderate and extreme factions. The Funambulous Evangels, for example, argue that we should all walk on stilts and ropeways out of respect for the dead, since their dust now makes up most of the earth's surface. Fantastic? Well, they might instead have made the beautiful wear sacks on their heads, lest they distract the others from balancing on their ropes, and reciting the Sacred Texts—if you want a realistic case.

Cugel plays on their credulity with the tricks of priest craft, and uses the pilgrims to protect his journey through the great desert; and their destined Holy Place proves to be a snare and a delusion. Then they come to a wretched village of lizard people who bare their teeth and lash sinewy tails in defiance.

"Gilfig, O Gilfig, guide us to thy fane!" but the divine pointer yields no guidance. So "with the briefest of farewells the pilgrims marched [back] to the village of the lizard folk, where they slaughtered the males, filed the teeth of the females, dressed them in garments of reeds, and installed themselves as lords of the village." Action, even in the face of unpalatable choices, offers them what tawdry salvation they might find.

Cugel then meets an ugly folk who, contrary to appearances, prove very well disposed:

"Here is a village of true saintliness," declared Çarstang (one of the remaining sincere pilgrims) "are you by chance worshippers of Çilfig?" "No; we prostrate ourselves before the fish-god Yöb, who seems as efficacious as any . . ."

RELIGION AS THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIAL EXISTENCE

In *Tschai* (The Planet of Adventure) we have both ubiquity and variety of religious belief. Everywhere language and belief form the warp and weft of cultural life, a varied social pattern is woven against the background of human genetic variation. This sets the scene for the tribulations of Adam Reith, marooned on Tschai. His journeys are an

exacting demonstration of physical geography, of the link between variations in the landscape and in its people. We experience an intoxicating flow of ideas and descriptions. Our author repeatedly demonstrates his ability to encapsulate the essences of a particular world outlook in a few terse phrases. My quotes must be judged only in that light.

Adam Reith's journey across Tschai succeeds as a cracking adventure story—and as much more.

In section 3 of *The Wanneck* the travellers on the good ship *Vargaz* fall to discussing religion. They have just touched land at Gozed, and Anacho had explained the situation there to Adam Reith as they approached that island. By the shore, trees have been defoliated and trimmed to crooked poles, each supporting two or three round huts. Anacho explains:

"No mystery. The folk of the island are highly religious; they worship the sea-scorpions native to the waters around the island. They are as large, or larger than, a man, or so I am told."

"Why then are the huts so high in the air?"

"At night the scorpions come up from the sea to spawn, which they accomplish by stinging eggs into a host animal, often a woman left down on the beach for that purpose. The eggs hatch, the 'Mother of the Çods' is devoured by the larvae. In the last stages, when pain and religious ecstasy produce a curious psychological state in the 'Mother', she runs down the beach and flings herself into the sea."

"An unsettling religion."

The Dirdirman admitted as much. "Still, it appears to suit the folk of Çozed. They could change anytime they choose. Men are notoriously susceptible to aberrations of this sort."

Reith then draws a parallel between the scorpions and the Dirdir—Anacho's much admired alien master-race: both are non-human beings who use men for their particular needs—a shrewd comparison which Anacho naturally resents, especially as his philosophy regards other human beings as degenerate aberrations, "men" who left their proper service of the Dirdir. So that evening shipboard conversation turns to religion.

"It would not be thus in Murgen . . . We pay sizeable tithes to the priests: they take all responsibility for appeasing (the god) Bisme; we have no further inconvenience," a rich merchant explains.

"A system as sensible as any," agreed Pal Barba. "This year we subscribe to the Pansogmatic Çnosis, and the religion has much virtue to it."

"I like it much better than the Tutelanics," said Edwe. "You merely recite the litany and then you are done for the day."

"Tutelanics was a dreadful bore," Heizari concurred. "All that memorising! And remember that dreadful Convocation of Souls? Where the priests were so familiar? I like Pansogmatic Çnosis much better." Dordolio laughed, "You prefer not to become intense." . . .

THE RELIGIOUS IMPACT OF ADAM REITH

Still smarting from Reith's comparison of his kind to the scorpion-worshippers, Anacho challenges our hero:

"Well then, what of Adam Reith, the erudite ethnologist? What theosophical insights can he contribute?"

"None" said Reith. "Very few, at any rate. It occurs to me that the man and his religion are one and the same thing. The unknown exists. Each man projects on the blankness the shape of his own particular world-view. He endows his creation with his personal volitions and attitudes. The religious man stating his case is in essence explaining himself. When a fanatic is contradicted he feels a threat to his own existence, he reacts violently."

Man is a social animal, domesticating his own kind from his very beginning. He is rooted in his background and society and so his religious choice. As a man from Earth Adam's world-view must be at odds with everyone around him on Tschai. Religion is fundamental to our sense of our place in the moral and spiritual universe, and so his adventures are illuminated all the time by their religious references and conflict.

We can see this truth outside the story, in the present-day emergence of the "politics of identity" — such as Black Soul movements; or the claims of Islam through which God is taking revenge on the forces of "western modernisation", overthrowing the nihilism that has resided at the heart of Western values for centuries; bewildering and destroying the disenchanted, unmanly, Newtonian, materialistic, bureaucratic, "explained" world of the West.

NO RELIGION OR A DIFFERENT ONE?

The merchant is interested: he asks: "And the atheist?"

The question could be a simple next step, but is much more. In the *Tschai* chronicles the Conversion of Anacho is a thread running through the action and Adam's loyalty. This thread ends when Traz verifies the earth space shuttle as real and Anacho is convinced. It is clear that Adam's planet-wide impact lies in the fact that (as his name tells us) he is the first true man there. The Pnume — historians of Tschai for millions of years — swim past the ship (whether by flotation device or not) watching his progress, and their agents track his every step. His existence undermines the social stability of the entire planet.

The Chasch — decadent races that have colonised their part of Tschai for centuries — survive unchecked because the proto-men they captured from Earth have been bred to their likeness, and believe they are the larval stage of Chasch. By simple priest-craft a Chasch imp is placed in the cold brains of dead men, and hailed as the imago* of the human grub. The Chasch decadence makes them (like the British in Singapore 1930's) easily overcome; varieties of "sub men" are trained and encouraged by Reith to defeat them: Adam proclaims that their myth of subjection must be overthrown.

By contrast the Wannekmen have contrived to lead their alien masters by the nose and arrange matters to their own liking. But Reith enlightens the Wannek, who expel their treacherous servants and prepare to evacuate their territory on the planet. He is aided in this by the effectiveness of genuine human magic and religion — the effects of drugs and hypnotism in the hands of the Dugbo priest.

But Anacho is the tough nut to crack. He is intelligent, refined, trained in the subtle philosophy and disquisitions of the Dirdir, whom his kin have been bred-up to resemble, and whom he admires and lusts after. Reith regards them only as magnificent creatures, which he contrives to kill and rob as hunters do elephants, aided by the natural ruthlessness of Tschai. They are technically proficient, scholarly, and bound by ancient codes under all circumstances. They are apparently atheists, but have a very complex breeding and clan system that they live by. They have escaped decadence

by maintaining their ancient traditions and hunting skills, using a great arena for that purpose, as the Romans once used the Coliseum; and they also hunt and consume treasure-seeking men (or sub men) in a designated reserve.

Anacho believes all true men originated on Sybol the Dirdir home world, hatched from the twin egg. For him the other races of man wandering Tschai are garden escapes (so to speak), degenerate wild and incompetent strays breeding hopeless admixtures. And compared to him and his courage many are. Meeting this challenge comes close to destroying Reith. In spite of Anacho's help and loyalty he is hunted, deceived and betrayed as a blasphemous traitor by the half-breed Wooddiver, who has Dirdir pretensions in their full non-human force. Wooddiver regards Reith with horror — exactly because his own identity is challenged by any suggestion of a technically competent world of true men living somewhere else called Earth. He both despises and fears Adam and is his most worrying opponent. Where did Wooddiver's accusation of blasphemy and contumacious sedition come from? From Adam's suspected links with the Cult.

The first Tschai folk to develop that idea were the Yao — a race descended from proto-Mongoloids brought over by some long-gone alien group. They live in a ritualistic Confucian way. They cope with loss of face only by outbursts of murderous violence. They developed what is now called the Cult when a long-dead ruler correctly surmised men's origin, and sent out the radio message that, reaching Earth centuries later, prompted Reith's expedition. But they had been decimated for doing that, and then decimated themselves further for loss of face. The Yao 'Religion of the Yearning Refluxives' survived tenuously, in a distorted form of that original belief. In the story it is only a typical despairing sect — sketched with telling accuracy. It was feared out of all proportion because of the threat its religious ideas represented. Adam's unwitting identification with some tenants of this belief (because of his Earth origin) dogs him throughout the story, and he grapples with it only half-comprehendingly.

So the merchant's question "what of the atheist?" is a fraught one. Reith replies that the atheist "projects no image upon the blank whatever. The cosmic mysteries he accepts as things in themselves; he feels no need to hang a more or less human mask upon them. Otherwise, the correlation between a man and the shape into which he moulds the unknown for greater ease of manipulation is exact".

The discussion then takes a very American pragmatic turn, (rooted in Pearce?). The captain proclaims that in religions he sees differences, he sees identities, but all try to extract the maximum advantage and all die. His god is the ship he lives by. The swordsman agrees his sword is his own god. In other words, men worship their means of survival: religion is rooted in practicality.

Dordolio, the Yao aristocrat, ominously responds to this human pragmatism by openly nailing Adam with an accusation of Cultic sympathies. Disaster can now strike. There was a similar case in England recently: Mr. Huddle,

* Mature version of an insect.

the English team football manager, was driven from his job for suggesting that disability results from inherited karma (the ancient Hindu view). "Hodde declares cripples deserve their fate" proclaimed the headlines, the exact opposite of his truth. In the same way the Cult was blamed for the destruction of two Yao cities. On hearing this Reith shook his head. "Incomprehensible. An enemy destroys your cities, your bitterness is directed not against the cruel enemy but against a possibly sincere and thoughtful group of your own people . . ." Dordolio replies that they somehow caused it and says "A frightening idea, to begin with, an ancient world of men . . . there is a dark side to humanity."

A TAXONOMY OF RELIGIOUS CLASSIFICATION?

We see here the outline of a classification-scheme for religions; the intensely personal type, the highly ritualised type, the sacrificial nature-mystery type (imagine those moons, the wind and tide, with the giant scorpions emerging . . .)

And so too a relationship of religion to occupation and geography is hinted at: the wealthy merchant going happily for a system of large tithes, the islanders for spirits residing in awesome local beasts, the instructor in swordsmanship and his daughters from the Isle of Clouds for urban life-style convenience.

But in none of that is ethical relativism supported, which is held elsewhere to result only in a self-interested egoism

Perhaps there is a taxonomy of religions; a classification by style, type and place and expectation; and by the social strata of the likely believer. We know of linkages such as the protestant ethic with the emergence of capitalism (disputed); or the characteristic Negro background of spirit churches; or the emergence of messianic vision (Let the trumpet Sound) among the downtrodden. We need Baron Bodissey to give a wider review.

Would a total and thorough taxonomy be possible? Do some religions correctly foresee their own end? (Etruscan millennia, Inca cycles of 500 years, Odin's final battle). If they are social creations, then can dead ones be revived? Could the Norse Gods or the Greek Gods walk again among us?

"She lives!" murmured T'sais aghast. "She moves! Who is she?" "It is Ethodea, goddess of mercy, from a time while the sun was still yellow . . ."

T'SAIS: VIE VOL. 1

A god can linger in a place where he has been worshiped for generations, long after his civilisation has vanished and worship ceased.

How does a religion die? In what index-stage is Christianity? Can we imagine that index and if so where would modernised Christianity be placed? Is battle in Heaven at the start or ending of a Faith? How do gods vanish?

In section 13 of *Fader's Waft* Rhalto seeks the Holy City, where glorious youths (Paragons) purportedly await resurrection after unimaginable periods of time: their priest had predicted the Barbaric Age of Darkness, and sealed them

away until it would be over. Rhalto asks for help: "We are curious with regard to Luid Shug, which at this time should be waking to an Age of Gold. Instead we find only rubble . . ." Douka spoke "Centuries passed by, one upon the other, and the gods stood steadfast, by day and night. At last they succumbed to the grind of wind and rain. They became dust and their powers were gone. The "Paragons" slept their long sleep and few remain . . ." (in fact they were dug up and devoured by the savages of succeeding ages).

So in the stories, with the passage of time, the strength of a religion evaporates along with its civilisation. Language, religion and genetics may define us, but do not give our lives their final assessment, ultimate judgement and meaning.

THE HISTORICAL PROCESS

Religion may place us as individuals and groups in our social context, and imply judgements on us there. It inspires solidarity (*re-ligio* = to bind together). But its judgements are not judgements of fact, and if religions rise and fall they would not be the final arbiters of our lives. So what is? Perhaps only history gives the final and absolute and dumbfounding account.

History is in fact new. It is a means of knowing which began in the nineteenth century and is (I think) the modern mode of true apprehension. No change of belief will last forever. No technical achievement, even the possibility of Eternal Life made real by scientific advance, can provide our final salvation (in: *To Live Forever* our author suggests the availability of a medically-achieved immortality which proves pretty disastrous). Only if we indulged ourselves in the fantasy of an end to History could history not have the last word.

On Tschai the historians are the Pnume. They watch the arrival and departure of peoples and beliefs over fifty millions of years. Deep underground the terrifying zhusma kastchai are the ultimate judges. They organise a silent and perpetual world of historical records. They destine Adam Reith for Foreverness, where he will be crystallised, frozen in time, preserved for the future, his tale complete and done and all about him known and final. By escaping from them Adam avoids finality, and we have no completion of the truth of his existence. "Reith took a last look around the sky. He bent, touched the soil of Tschai, crumbled a handful of mould between his fingers." Throughout his adventure he asks himself: if he escapes will he be able to stay away? He still has possibilities.

THE ASUTRA: A HERO CONFRONTS HIS HISTORY

Gastel Etwane (*Durdane* book 3) has driven the savage Roguskoi from Shant, but gained no lasting satisfaction from his victory. He resigns abruptly. His destiny leads him to work with Ifness, the appropriately named Research Fellow of Earth's Historical Institute. Ifness is bound to total detachment. He functions as pure intellect, testing hypotheses about the trajectories of contemporary history.

But the Roguskoi are still active, and Etwane again fights

STYLE AND THE SPENGLERIAN ATMOSPHERE

them in difficult circumstances, is enslaved along with his brave tribal allies, and eventually wins free—all the time expecting help from Ifness that does not come. The story is reminiscent of WW2 Japanese POWs' tribulations.

Ifness, having judged likely outcomes, became history acting on an interplanetary level to defeat the enemy. Our hero Etwane was simply neglected entirely. There are no gods for or against this hero. Historically, he is a tiny sideshow, and worse, he has been wrong in his most basic assumptions about the participants in the conflict. Ifness, the 20/20 vision of hindsight, explains it to him as it ultimately will appear.

"Etwane sat hunched in his chair. He thought of the silver and white ships which had driven the Ka ships back . . . With a pang of bitter humour he recalled how pathetic and defenceless had been the training camp and with what illusory ease he and his men had captured it. The spaceship, which they had taken with such grim determination—actually it had come to rescue them."

Ifness spoke in a voice of polite concern "You seem troubled. My account has not distressed you in any way?"

"Not at all. As you say, truth destroys many illusions"

Earlier Ifness encountered Fabrache, who snared a dozen mud crabs, which he cracked, cleaned and toasted. And meanwhile cooked meal cakes on a hot flat stone.

"You are highly efficient," said Ifness. "It is a pleasure to watch you at work."

Fabrache gave his head a dour shake. "I know nothing else but this; a skill acquired across a lifetime of hardship. I take no great pleasure from your compliment"

"Surely you have other skills?"

"Yes. I am reckoned a good barber. Occasionally in jest I imitate the mating antics of the ahulphs. But these are modest accomplishments; ten years after my death I will be forgotten, and one with the soil of Caraz. Still, I count myself a fortunate man, more so than most. I often wonder why it was given to me to live the life of Kyril Fabrache"

"These reflections, at one time or other, have occurred to all of us," said Ifness, "but unless we are agreed upon a religion of graduated reincarnation, the question is ingenuous"

Etwane's friend tries to console him when Ifness departs.

"The man is gone, and just as well. He has had a baneful influence upon you; in fact he has distracted you from your music. Now he is gone, and things will be as before."

But Etwane's seeing himself as in History means they never could be so again. He sits with his head in his hands; he craves to work with Ifness. Truth destroys many illusions.



To read Vance is to be ceaselessly ravished. His command of English is so profound that a hypersensitive reader, when not delighted by each phrase in detail, is almost never irked by any protruding infelicity. The exception to prove the rule is the construction which closed the penultimate section of Chapter X of *The Face*; here, in a unique lapse, Vance employed a trite and vulgar cliché. But, brought to his attention, he gratefully corrected it for the definitive edition of his work which therefore lacks even a single unhappy phrase. I mention this to warn away any who might be tempted to accuse me of denying that a principal pleasure of Vance reading is enjoyment of his style.

Praise of Vance as stylist, however, are frequently accompanied by complaints of other aspects of his writing, namely weak plotting and characterization. But such complaints imply something which, if one takes the trouble to consider it, seems odd; that the pleasure of style can be disassociated from the rest, as if any half-backed hodge-podge, written sentence by sentence with grace and force, would offer the fulfilling pleasure of a well written story. But aspects of a literary work, like aspects of many apparently compound things, are fully distinct in speech only. The classic example is soul and body. A man may be separable into ghost and cadaver, but his existence as a 'human person' depends upon their undisassociated melding.

A more obscure but more apropos example is color. Color has four aspects which may be meaningfully identified in speech: hue, value, temperature and purity. One may say that a color is green (this is its hue), dark (its value), warm (as opposed to cool or bluish) and weak (or grayish, or impure, or pale)—but it is not possible to incarnate or reify these qualities individually in a real color made of paint or dye. One may speak of the weakness of a color but this weakness, by itself, cannot exist outside the context of hue, value and temperature.

So with style. One may pluck out individual sentences which are well made, but no mere collection of such gems, however great a narrow, specialized enjoyment they offer, can provide that full-blown delectation which is the enjoyment of a wonderful story, that luxurious and seductive charm proper to Art, which Technique on its own, however strong its special appeal, can never have.

The full power of style, therefore, would not be unrelated to other literary qualities, such as we seek to designate by the terms character and plot. Style in this larger sense cannot, therefore, be properly illustrated in extracts. I will none-the-less present one or two, even if this procedure tends to contradict my thesis that style, in the true sense, is not limited to its internal aspects, is not a matter of mere phrase construction and word-smything but, in the final analysis, is indissociably related to all the other literary qualities.

I do not deny that it is possible to construct an isolated sentence well, that an individual sentence might have its

own delightful verve. I deny that a writer can be enjoyed†, in the full and proper sense of the term, as a stylist when other fundamental literary aspects are lacking. I assert a dynamic relationship between all these aspects, that they partake of each other, as hue and value are both distinct and indistinguishable in any incarnated color.

In the category '20th century literature' Jack Vance, great as he is, must share the palm of 'stylist' with a handful of other writers, Winston Churchill in particular. Though Churchill's style, like Vance's, is fraught with wit, irony and striking effects of vocabulary, where Vance is poet and fictionalist Churchill is orator and historian. It is appropriate, therefore, that Churchill's style be rolling and sonorous.

Take this representative passage from book I of *Marlborough, His Life and Times*, chapter 10 (The Unseen Rift):

But all these hopes and projects, real or shadowy, came to naught. The new Parliament was fiercer than its predecessor. Shaftsbury was at the head of a flaming Opposition. A fresh Exclusion Bill advanced by leaps and bounds. The ferocity of the Whigs knew no limit, and their turpitude lay not far behind. Their cause was the cause of England, and is the dominant theme of this tale. Their conduct was sullied by corruption and double-dealing unusual even in that age. Their leaders without exception all took for either personal or party purposes French gold, while they shouted against Papist intrigues and denounced all arrangements with France. Upon this squalid scene Louis XIV gloated with cynical eyes.

This stylistically fabulous passage is focused and matter-of-fact yet histrionic and vast; a succession of phrases ringing like trumpet blasts in a land of stone cliffs. But, fine as they are in themselves, they cannot be savored to the full in absence of their context, without which, for example, the leaps and bounds of the fresh Exclusion Bill, to those ignorant that its aim is suppression of Papist intrigues by forbidding public office to Catholics, do not suffuse their meaning into this paragraph, while Louis XIV's gloating

cynicism likewise fails to permeate its sense, for those unaware that this king was both persecuting Protestants on his side of the channel and, in secret cabal with Charles II, restored to the throne after the Protestant revolution of Cromwell, advancing Catholicism in England.

Each word, each phrase, carries its own meaning, but the context gives a discrete spin to each. These spins in turn generate effects of intra-word or intra-phrase counter-spin, generating an ensemble effect which the words and phrase on their own lack.

Churchillian style phrasing is not alien to Vance. Take this famous example from Chapter 12 of *Bad Ronald*:

The thought of supple young bodies and the fascinating things which might be accomplished urged him to gallant enterprise.

Vance has recast such Churchillian epithet—'supple young bodies', 'fascinating things', 'gallant enterprise'—from the great theater of world history, to neatly bundle them into a totally different context: the tension between itching lust and animal caution. But note how, here in particular, ignorance of context drains a phrase of stylistic power. 'Gallant enterprise', in the context of this story, suggests something to the reader it could suggest nowhere else. Ronald Wilby, like the rest of us, has a higher and lower side to his nature but, given Ronald's character, Vance is here going beyond the obvious suggestion that the 'enterprise' Ronald has in mind is both romantic and sexual, for the gallantry, in the full nuance of that famously ambiguous French term, is here stretched to the breaking point. Ronald's sexuality is not only prurient and exploitive in the extreme but his enterprise, the reader understands, by-passing 'brave undertaking', may extend to murder of the most sordid type. In context, therefore, Vance is spinning 'enterprise' to mean murder, and 'gallantry' to mean rape. These are such great distortions that they would normally destroy the words by reducing them to non-meaning. But Ronald's romantic fantasies accord perfectly with the term

* Churchill is such a great writer it is extremely difficult to locate a stylistic fault. Still, occasionally they appear, however small. His faults, naturally, are the vices of his virtues; for example, take this interesting passage from book I of *Marlborough, His Life and Times*, chapter 14, 'The National Counter-Plot':

The Pope, in accordance with the policy of the Holy See, which the next chapter will explain, deprecated James' excessive zeal, and his legate in England urged caution and prudence. The old Catholic families in England, apart from individuals advanced to high office, were, as Ailesbury's Memoirs show, deeply apprehensive of the headlong adventure upon which the King was launching them. They felt this sudden disproportionate favor was far from being in their true interests, and would only bring upon them the wrath and frightful passions which were being raised all about them. Still the King hardened his heart and strengthened his Army.

Before taking note of what may be pointed to as stylistic flaws in this passage, allow me to insist that the exercise is almost dishonest since most writers are incapable of anything so good. Critique of the great and good should be motivated by no snickering desire to reduce. That said, and adjusting our critical faculties to their most pinched and intolerant, we may finger three problems. The first, the quadruple use of the third person plural pronoun in the second to last sentence—they felt, their true interests, bring upon them, raised all about them—is perhaps less a flaw than an almost miraculous example of how such repeated use may be brought off with minimum ill effect. Be that as it may, Vance never involves himself in such complications. The second, which is formally related to the first, is the eventually tedious build-up of asides: *in accordance with the policy of the Holy See, which the next chapter will explain, apart from individuals advanced to high office, as Ailesbury's Memoirs show*, to which may be added the effects, harmless in themselves, of compounding the first two phrases: *The Pope deprecated James' excessive zeal, and his legate in*

England urged caution and prudence rather than: The Pope deprecated James' excessive zeal. His legate in England urged caution and prudence—though these points cannot be complained of in detail since the alleged fault appears only as a cumulative effect. The third is a plethora of orotund compound or parallel constructions which, to be absolutely acceptable, must always be perfectly adjusted: excessive zeal, caution and prudence, deeply apprehensive, headlong adventure, sudden disproportionate favor, far from being, true interests, wrath and frightful passions, hardened his heart / strengthened his Army.

I would not go far as to say the passage could be improved by their excision, since it is a solution easy to test:

The Pope, in accordance with the policy of the Holy See, which the next chapter will explain, deprecated James' zeal, and his legate in England urged prudence. The old Catholic families in England, apart from individuals advanced to high office, were, as Ailesbury's Memoirs show, apprehensive of the adventure upon which the King was launching them. They felt this disproportionate favor was not in their interests, and would only bring upon them the wrath which were being raised all about them. Still the King hardened his heart and strengthened his Army.

Some of this pruning might not hopelessly be defended as 'improvement'. Caution and prudence are not identical, though in this context the former may be assumed to be contained in the latter, but it is hardly illegitimate, in this context, to suggest the nuance. The passage as modified, however, not only loses much of its impact but even some of its meaning, as revealed by the fuller context I cannot give. The King is not only zealous, he is indeed excessively so. The wrath of the Protestants, with many 'judicial murders' as Churchill calls them, is indeed frightful. But, if the sense is just, the effect veers toward the perfunctory. Churchill's voice begins to reach us from a mighty pulpit, rather than the depths of a scruffy club-chair in his library, with his comfortable slouch hat vaguely replaced by a toga.

gallantry so that, anchored in its proper meaning, the spin is both mastered and augmented to an amazing degree. Vance here creates a meaning-pattern of exceptional inner tension, but the tension exists only in context.

It is a typically vancian structure, and helps explain why his his prose is so charged it gives off sparks. These sparks, which we identify as 'stylistic power' depend, as we see, not only upon manipulation of words as such, but also, and crucially, upon plotting and characterization; if Ronald and his doings were not what they were, if in particular they did not carry conviction with the reader, or if Ronald and his doings seemed implausible and uninteresting, it would be impossible to generate these sparks at this point, no matter how clever the word use. If the reader were not transfixed with fascinated repulsion at the acts of young master Wilby no juggling of words would make up for that.

Furthermore the phrase in question, being a sly joke, is part of a light comical counter-current in a book about revolting horrors. Together these currents make the book what it is, and here again we see how style and content are inextricably related, how the ensemble is greater than the sum of the parts.

One imagines the process of story writing would be as follows: the writer begins with a 'story idea' which he then fills out with incidents and characters. But Vance claims that in his method characters are created prior to plot. Even prior to this he begins, so he says, with an 'atmosphere'. His stories are so charged with this quality that, even if we might not understand how characters come out of atmosphere, at least we seem to understand what he means by this word itself—but let us look more closely.

I interpret Vance's statement to mean that he starts with a feeling. Perhaps this is a feeling about the sort of story he would like to write, but I think, above all, it is what might be called a formless flavor, which he dreams of capturing. The story he will write is his way of capturing that feeling, atmosphere, or formless flavor.

Atmosphere is like soul. The written story is body, or incarnation of soul. Since such elements may only be separated in speech it is probably impossible to work backwards from a story to the original atmospheric inspiration. We may, however, try to work around the problem; Vance claims he derives characters from the atmosphere, and around the characters builds the story. Such a process would seem, at first, to lead exactly to that plot weakness so often complained of. If the plot is not the central object or goal, but merely a mechanism or a frame to permit the agitations of a character which, in turn, is, somehow, the incarnation of an atmosphere, the plot need be nothing but the flimsiest thing which will serve, since it is the last thing the writer seems to be interested in.

On the other hand, peering in from the outside as we are, one might calculate that Vance's creative procedure was neither what one would expect (first plot, then characters) nor what he says it is (first atmosphere, then characters, then story), but that he begins with an idea, or an intellectual concept. Take *Wyst*; this story seem to be a novel of ideas; a critique of egalitarianism. All its parts,

or at least the characters and the plot, seem adjusted to that end.

Wyst is one of the Alastor books which, as was often the case, Vance originally planned as a vaster cycle of stories than the 3 actually published.* Their context—3000 planets and 5 trillion people—is only one declination of a vancian inspiration we find in the STARK, the Gaeon Reach, or Lyonesse. We may attempt a label for this inspiration, as follows: 'the dream of humanity's movements and interactions through time and space'. The sources of this inspiration clearly include the history of migrations and adventures of tribes, peoples, nations, explorers and colonists. But Vance arrived on the scene when this cycle of events in world history had been achieved, or seemed to have been. Was the impulse which fueled it now thrust back upon itself? Was some basic human impulsion now to be forever frustrated, or was this basic impulsion, assuming it is one, to find new outlets? Having come to know the world, 20th century was in the process of mastering it; might the way into new adventure be via the microcosm and macrocosm? Perhaps, but the world where Vance found himself no longer seemed to hold room for spatial quest of the old kind, and even cultural adventure seemed menaced.

In that Bodissian epigraph which opens Chapter 6 of *The Star King*, Vance, almost in his own name,† makes references to infinity. These references, however, function as well, or even better, when applied to finitude, or closure of the terrian topology to human yearning:

There is a stifling quality to this age which has been observed, remarked on and lamented by a number of the contemporary anthropologists: an oddity, for never before have such variegated opportunities and possible channels of life existed . . . The most important fact of human life is the infinity of space: the bounds which can never be reached, the worlds without number still unseen — in short, the Beyond. It is my belief that the awareness of these awesome possibilities has somehow clotted at the core of human consciousness, and has diminished or dampened human enterprise . . . ambition is turned inward, rather than out toward the obvious goals . . . is there current a feeling of frustration and staleness, the conviction that all glory has been won, that all the meaningful goals have been achieved?

Why should man be frustrated by infinity? Infinity has always confronted us and it never frustrated us before. What has always been frustrating is finitude. This staleness, this conviction that all glory has been won, that all the meaningful goals have been achieved, seems more like an effect of constriction, of spacial finitude. All explorations, all meaningful discoveries have already been made. But, infinity or finitude, it is a sentiment echoing the Spenglian critique of modern times. Its source may be the earth's mastered typography, but there is more to it. The West, having conquered the world, had sloughed into a mode of feverish and flaccid consumerism which, by the 1950s, had replaced the old dynamism and adventurousness. This is how I read Vance's Spenglerian outburst. Tourism on the one hand, and nascent multi-culturalism (the transformation

* See the Catalogue of Titles in volume 44, at 'Alastor', for mention of plans for a 4th Alastor story.

† Jan Holberk Vaenz LXII

of culture from essence to object, from mode-of-being to consumable) on the other, had replaced the old world where life was fresh, where consumption, or the choice between Pepsi and Coke, was not the far edge of our cultural horizon. Even in the 1940s there was a dismal pressure not merely to consumerize culture but to destroy it, and history as well, through homogenization of humanity, and thus time itself, in a world state.

The Soviet hegemony is most the famous attempt, and the example which drew the attention of the young Vance. It had succeeded in covering half the world in its shadow — and if the spiritual parents of today's Leftists had had their way it would have covered the rest. But this is not the only attempt to create a world state. It is an impulse which, despite the failure of Communism, is more pressing than ever. The logic of the European Union, as currently directed, is to co-opt other continents through a non-military process. The EU is a society without borders, seeking to absorb all into its universalist culture. It lusts to envelope humanity under the umbrella of its so-called human rights. One indication of this state of affairs is Eurocrat affection for the United Nations, that hopelessly corrupt expression of Western post war idealism and post-colonial fatuousness, that bull-horn for petty ankle-biting tyrants. The actual declarations of certain EU enthusiasts are explicit; The EU, they say, has no natural borders. Its vocation is to cover the earth in a single government. Failure of a Eurocrat majority to articulate a counter vision, modest and finite, is likewise telling. Meanwhile other wannabe global hegemonists are at work, sinister figures such as Gorbachev, Bill Clinton and Ted Turner hungrily promote world government on an environmental basis. Brandishing a global threat* they hope to cow humanity into submission to a supreme world authority. It may or may not be ironic that such Greens share their emblem color with their major competitor, Islam.

Were any of these hegemonic attempts to succeed we would find ourselves, perhaps gratefully, bereft of war or even non-military cultural conflict. Civilizations would neither rise nor fall; they would not even exist. A universalist society, drawing on the resources of the whole planet, would create and impose a permanent and total world-order. New or individual impulses would be repressed; the function of the global government would not be facilitation of the human adventure but its own perpetuation.

Such were the thoughts, circa 1954, of Vance, as we see, to begin with, in section 23 of *The STARK*, when the so-called Transcendentalists take over the Star Ark, a planet Earth in miniature:

The Transcendentalists ruthlessly press standardization of everything aboard ship. . . Scientists [were] ordered to abandon research; current level of technology frozen, for the reason that any new breakthroughs might disturb standardization procedures. Fundamental research becomes a crime; research tools and equipment are destroyed.

VIE VOL. 44, PAGE 81.

In fact advocacy of such measures had been rife for decades aboard the Star Ark; in section 7 a group calling themselves Humanists, have the goal of:

* Consisting mostly of SUV driving Americans.

. . . blending of all races into one, with one language, one tradition, one ethos. By this means they hope to avoid future war on the future home of man.

IBID. PAGE 58

Opposing this, in section 6, the founder of the Socratics, who later defeat triumphant Communism, claims, in the Marxian terminology current in the 1950s, that:

. . . any governing system must provide scope for human creativity, and the mechanisms whereby an individual may market his production.

IBID. PAGE 56

Vance implicitly warns that not everyone shares this so-called Socratic attitude. A global society, lacking outside enemies, would have no need of gaining any new strength. It has no motivation for openness to individual genius, a Columbus or an Einstein. To say nothing of more fundamental considerations (respect and empowerment of individuals for its own sake) the universal state will never be in danger and need like 15th century Spain or 20th century America. New facts or conditions could only up-set its peace and order. With respect to the space age, the universal society can be counted upon never to allow, let alone sponsor, exploration of the stars — unless we are attacked by giant zucchinis from Zuben El Genubi but then it will be too late. Today's global hegemonists already protest against resource allocation to beautiful futilities such as a Mars shot when there is still poverty and human misery on Earth. But, just as the poor will always be with us, so will their exploitation as ideological barrier to our gratuitous yearnings. The only way to overcome this particular barrier — and this will remain as true as it has always been — will be to ignore it. Ignoring such a fine rationalization for suppressing individual freedom will never be in the interest of global hegemonists. Though the power and control of which they dream is a chimera, the price of its trappings will be human stagnation.

Travel, in the global state, will be even less like real adventure and discovery than tourism. When everything really is the same everywhere, going exactly equals staying. Culture might retain a tepid consumable status, if only on the basis of nostalgia, but why recall, in old local customs, the bad times of war, slavery and the oppression of women? Already we are trying to forget, by smothering true history is a stew of victimology. But the hegemonists have an even deeper objection; why run the risk of dangerous dreams? Might not profound hungers for quest, for glory, be awoken in the human heart through titillation, though toying with old facts and old desires still glowing in old books like the last ember in a fire? Man, having at last reduced himself to a socialized insect, his adventure — thank goodness — will be terminated. The end of history, the final peace and ultimate order, will have arrived once and for all.

This line of thought is alien to Vance. He follows

Oswald Spengler. Unlike Marx, Spengler did not imagine an historical process culminating in a world state and the end of history. Spengler did perceive ineluctable developments and phases in the life of a civilization, but if the last was inevitable—decadence and collapse—new civilizations, he proclaimed, would sprout from the ashes. In the Western cultural crisis of the 19th and 20th centuries he saw neither progress nor signs of a new society. He saw moribund decline. That his own culture, as he thought, had come to its end may have given him an austere and tragic tone, but his message, if somewhat deterministic, is essentially optimistic: civilization will go on, in new and revitalized forms.

If, for Modernity, atheism and science would culminate in technical mastery of matter and the universal material comfort of the world state, it was because the adventure in space and time is over, or that they could, and should, end. If, for Vance, the adventure in space (exploration and discovery) was over, the adventure in time was not. History would go on. Civilization, as such, would continue. Even confined to a limited sphere, like earth, or the Star Ark, the progression of cultures, the rise and fall of societies, would not, could not, end. Decadence itself, in the spenglerian manner, would re-open the spaces of exploration and topographical wonder as Vance suggests in section 21 of *The STARK*:

Another generation passes. The STARK is for the greater part deserted. The new race lives up forward; the Stern is a kind of wilderness inhabited by wild men, criminals, desperadoes, fugitives. A new frontier. Adventure!

According to Spengler a civilization begins as a culture. A culture is rooted in individuality, instinct, magic and religion, tradition and rurality—or direct contact with nature. From this root a civilization develops and these ur-factors transform into their opposites: collectivity, intellect, science, the cult of newness and urbanity. Eventually these transformations drain the vigour off the original culture, and the civilization, falling into decadence, collapses. We recognize the Bodissian analysis. I have called it 'neo-rousseauian', which it is. Rousseau, before Spengler, deplored sophistication and anti-instinctive intellectualism. He is the prophet of that Romantic taste for the natural and primitive, of that suspicion of rationality and industrialization, that taste for myth and the magical roots of culture, which still has a hold upon our thinking. We see it in anti-colonialism and environmentalism. It has been an important influence on me personally. Spengler's specificity seems to have been to have incorporated Rousseau's view into a theory of the fall of civilizations, ignoring or countering the Marxian end-of-history analysis.

But if Vance is profoundly impressed by Spengler's approach he is not in absolute harmony with it. Vance does not supinely accept the spenglerian doom. The aim of the Institute is to foil it. Success of the Institute

means salvation of the West, of that civilization which, from Ptolemy, though Copernicus, Kepler, Newton and Einstein, launched man to the stars. In the time of Gersen, many centuries from now, Vance predicts the prolongation of Western civilization and its spread into the galaxy. Combating the various forms of urbanity, the Institute will deflect us from spenglerian decadence, throwing our society off-balance to maintain its vitality though contact with nature and obligation to confront challenge. Thus the prolongation of the need for individual virtue, of intelligence, effort, discovery, and, in happy consequence, postponement of the feebleness and degeneracy of civilizational collapse.

This defence of our civilization is for us, today. The vancian future is our present. His heroes are middle class folk of our time and culture. They may come into contact, like the explorers of old, with strange civilizations but they, and the world they live in, are us and our world.

What do such considerations tell us about Vance's style? We imagine him probing and feeling, with prophetic ear and eye, into the foggy labyrinth of space and time to sense the

unsoundable cosmic clouds in wild pavanne, the gargantuan parade of matter-motes, laced with dancing swirls of humanity like celestial schools of darting fish, each a quixotic hero of a life-drama, an 'infinitely precious spark', one note in a chord of the eternal symphony. This vision, this insight, is the essential vancian atmosphere. The atmospheres of his individual stories are details, momentary images plucked from this theater-in-the-round of the universe. The three Alastor books seem a particularly conscious effort, not to systematize the vision but to carefully explore or map it, or

perhaps a sketch for a universal catalogue of human modes, as if, on the 3000 planets and among the 5 trillion people, were to be found all human types and all cultural forms.

Can such a contention be demonstrated?

In *Marune* Vance treats the basic unit of culture: the individual. It is almost as if he were exploring the problem of the relationship between that ur-mote and the great ensembles it generates; is a person a thing of its culture, or vice-versa, or are they poles in eternal tension?

The protagonist is a member of the universalist Alistrid culture—which is to say a man like us. A special sort of amnesiac, he has, for mysterious reasons, been voided of his cultural identity, but gains a fresh one on cosmopolitan Numenes. As the story proceeds he eventually reintegrates the strikingly archaic and even neurotic Rhune society from which he was wrest, but this reintegration is not atavistic. If shards of his old personality remain, like dregs in the well of his soul, the Pardero who arrives on Marune is no Rhune. Before he re-becomes Efram, thanks to a local drug, he has freely chosen to reintegrate his Rhune fate, even though he remains unable to function smoothly in its context. The reasons for



DETAIL: VIE VOLUME 44 FRONTISPIECE.

this choice are important, and have everything to do with the sort of person he is, a very different sort of person than the protagonists of *Trullion* or *Wyst*. In *Marune* Vance suggests that human material has remarkable cultural flexibility, and to define aspects of the tension between the individual as such, and culture as such.

In *Trullion* Vance looks at the structure of culture itself, or how its extremes generate their opposites. In *Wyst* Vance makes an exploration up and down the scale of politics, that vital organ of the strange monster we might call: Individual-Culture. This scale terminates at one end in egalitarianism, where the fear of man for man is eliminated by making all men equally weak, and at the other in the Hobbesian state-of-nature where strong men tyrannize the others with impunity.

Described this way these books seem not to owe their origin to an atmosphere, to a vague feeling or artistic impulse, but to a rationalistic calculation. They seem like mechanical constructions fabricated from intellectual theories about homo-sapiens and society, like novels of ideas. Notice, however, the special relationship between the protagonists and the plots.

In *Marune* the hero rediscovers his culture, his family and childhood home, as a stranger. They seem strange and even repellent to him. But, bit by bit, the possibilities offered by the situation engage his passions. Were Padero not encouraged and helped by others, who are motivated by their own passions regarding Rhune culture, he might never have ventured so far. Again, it is important to understand that his return is not atavistic. It is a choice driven by a passion more fundamental than the attachment to an origin he cannot feel, which it is even physiologically impossible for him to have. If he reassumes his Rhune status however, he will be rich and powerful, he might ally himself to a remarkable woman, and he can satisfy his urge to vengeance.

Efriam and Maerio, thanks to Efram's strange status, are thus confronted with a problem of cultural identity:

Maerio and Efram stood on the parapets of Benbuphar Strang. "Suddenly," said Efram, "we are at peace. Our difficulties have dissipated; life lies before us."

"I fear that new difficulties are just beginning."

Efram looked at her in surprise. "How can you say so?"

"It is clear you have known life outside the Realms; I have had the merest hint of a taste. Will we be content to live as Rhunes?"

"We can live in whatever fashion suits us," said Efram. "I want nothing but happiness for both of us."

"Perhaps we will want to travel to far worlds. What then? How will the Schardes regard us on our return? They will consider us tainted — not true Rhunes."

Efram looked away down the valley. "We are not Rhunes of the clearest water, for a fact. So then — what shall we do?"

MARUNE, PAGE 196

No obvious solution presents itself but, simply confronting the question, they slip into the Western mode. They will never be proper Rhunes. Efram is a not a non-entity who succumbs to his past, he is a fully conscious man of passion; he could deliberately reject, but cannot calmly ignore the temptations of power and erotic adventure (marriage to Maerio) which Rhune culture happens to extend to him personally. This eroticism, in the Greek sense, defines his essential nature. It is, impossible

to imagine, say, Jantiff Ravenstroke behaving as Efram does. And the culture which confronts Efram, the element of the story which contains all the springs of the plot, might have taken any non-Western shape. It is Efram's personality, therefore, which generates the story—in the context of the vancian atmosphere—not the other way around.

Jantiff Ravenstroke is not a man a passion. He is a dreamer, a wanderer, a man mild and just. In the vancian atmosphere a different story evolves from his character, one about the political extremes to which his personality is foil and antidote. In *Trullion*, the essential characters are two brothers, one darkly discontent and strangely enterprising, the other simple, vigorous, cheerful, and thus conservative of temperament. Their family conflict spawns a story of social tension. The confrontation of traditional Trullion society and Fancherade is the confrontation of Glinnes and Glay writ large. In *Marune* Vance shows the tensions between individual and culture; in *Trullion* he shows how tensions within society are generated by the character differences, as much as the class differences, among the people who make it up.

Efram, Jantiff and Glinnes are very different sorts of people. Glay, in his impassioned convictions, seems like Efram, but Efram is not discontent with society. He is a private person intent on his personal situation. He is no reformer. He does not dream of changing Rhune society, only of augmenting his own existence. He is attracted to beauties and powers which might be his to have and hold. He does not reflect on their real values, or the state of a soul which unreflectively lusts for them. He is enchanted by them; that is enough. They are his compass and chart on the mysterious sea of life. Glay, by contrast, has a larger and more critical view—whether or not it is in truth superior to Efram's is another matter. Glay wishes to change society not only to deepen the meaning of his own life, to raise it above the animal scramble for pleasures and sensations, but to improve the lives of others, even if, in their selfish short-sightedness, they object.

Jantiff, by contrast, is easily contented. He is ravished simply by the poetry of the world, entranced almost to the point of emotional immobility. Compared to Efram he is tepid. Compared to Glay he is insipid. Compared to Glinnes he is ineffectual. He lets himself be dominated by the harridan Skorlet. He moons after the intractably flighty Keddida. These relationships are shameful failures. But, reduced to a clam digger, he finds, and even creates, beauty in a cold hard world—just as the Connatic, later with Jantiff's help, injects justice into an unjust world.

Glinnes, like Jantiff and unlike Efram or Glay, is content with what is his; but that, at least, he must have. He is the salt of the earth, a pillar of society, the foundation of civilization. He has travelled and seen the cluster as a soldier of the Whelm, but this has not taught him either wander-lust or a cosmopolitan attitude. His object is his home. He fits into his world, and when it is threatened he seeks to defend and maintain it. Otherwise he is easy-going; he nourishes no culture-generating dreams like his brother. He lacks the universal and somewhat vague

sympathies of Jantiff, or the self-sufficiency of Efriam. He is robust and unimaginative, he clings to what is his, to his roots. He disapproves of his bohemian and worldly mother. He is suspicious of the extravagant and imprudent Akady. His brother's dreams seem alien and repugnant. He is both uncritical of his society and attached to it. He is not a man of personal passion but of passionate traditionalism, an exponent of his society.

Vance underlies this point in a most powerful manner; the object of Glinnes' tradition, of his conservatism, is no ideal of order and discipline, but a slovenly society of sexual licence, drugs and beach parties. Glinnes' is not rigid, he is attached. His eroticism is for his roots.

Glinnes's relationship with Duissane, therefor, is not a pure relationship of two individuals, but a sullen and ungenerous confrontation of two cultures. Both are xenophobes. They approach each other unsentimentally and even brutally. There may be sexual attraction, but if there is to be more something must give:

. . . "You're all alike, you Trills! You reek with cauch; your brain is a single lecherous gland. Do you aspire only to turpitude? Have you no dignity, no self-respect?"

. . . "It is no great matter," said Çlinnes. "I wonder if you would gather firewood while I fetch plantains?"

. . . bear in mind my utter contempt for all your disgusting habits. Furthermore —

"Woman," roared Çlinnes, "be kind enough to shut your mouth. You have blighted the day and the evening as well. Eat your meal in silence and we will return to Welgen." Scowling, Çlinnes hunched down upon the sand. He ate plantains, quorls, meat, and bread; he drank two flasks of wine while Duissane watched from the corner of her eye, a peculiar expression on her face, half-sneer, half-smirk.

TRULLION, chapter 16

Efriam, by contrast, is not attached or even attracted to 'his' society. He easily imagines abandoning the strange and dangerous situation which it presents to him. Glinnes would never abandon Trullion society to become a Trevanyi for love of Duissane, which, in essence, is what Efriam does for Maerio, though the Rhune culture is just as bad, or worse, than Trevanyi culture. Vance makes Efriam's attitude clear when, for instance, Sthelany suspects his true condition:

Sthelany watched his every move. "Why have you returned to Sharrode?"

Efriam laughed hollowly. "Where else could I rule a realm and command the obedience of a person as beautiful as yourself?"

VIE VOLUME #30, PAGE 96.

In contrast Efriam's solipsistic or personal — though natural and normal — eroticism, Jantiff's relationship with Glisten begins as an act of selfless charity, and would remain only that had not the Connatic plucked her from her Wierdland fate.

Jantiff blew up the fire, boiled tea and toasted bread. For five minutes Glisten watched apathetically, then — abruptly, as if prodded — she sat up, swung her legs to the floor. She slipped on her sandals and with an inscrutable sidelong glance toward Jantiff, walked from the hut. Jantiff sighed and shrugged and turned his attention back to the food. Çlisten doubtless longed for the company

of her own kind. He could offer only temporary security, at best. She was better off in the Sych. Nevertheless he felt a pang of regret; Çlisten had invested his hut with something heretofore lacking: companionship? Perhaps.

WYST, VOL. 31, PAGE 239

Her relationship with Jantiff, in the full sense, can finally occur in the civilized context of Zeck, Jantiff's bourgeois home. Glisten, having suffered the worst the state-of-nature can inflict, sees what Sthelany does not; the non-Western context may be an adventure, it is also a nightmare.

RECAPITULATION

In the introduction to this essay, and with the example from Churchill, I have tried to show that stylistic power, or artistic use of words and excellent phrase-making, even if it may be identified in speech as a discrete literary element, and may have some functions limited to its own sphere, it is none-the-less not correctly understood, or fully tasted, if divorced from the larger meaning-context of a text. In the example from *Bad Ronald* I took this a step further by trying to show the crucial role, to the most powerful phases of stylistic effect, of non-stylistic aspects, namely plot and characterization.

In the following section I tried to account for an aspect of Vance's artistic impulsion in the historical and cultural situation of his youth, in order to explain, and then justify, his declared but counter-intuitive method of story construction, or his artistic method. This is important to the discussion of style because it is preliminary to a demonstration of the link between style and original inspiration — in Vance's case what he calls atmosphere. I then tried to show that, first of all, Vance's protagonists arise from this fundamental impulse — rather than being invented to meet the needs of a given story — or how characterization arises from atmosphere and, therefore, how plot, in turn, arises from characterization. My thesis, to repeat, is that stylistic power is not a stand-alone quality, that it depends for its own full development upon the effectiveness of the other literary aspects. But since, at least in Vance's case — and, I would argue, in the case of all great literary artists but not of lesser suppliants to the Muse — these other aspects proceed, as I have tried to show, from a single source, I hope my readers will feel invited to suspect that style, also, proceeds from this basic source, and thus partakes of and participates in the unitary force which I pretend is the nature of a great artist's creative acts.

My readers, I calculate, will at least agree that Vance's voice, which is certainly a fundamental aspect of his style, is itself redolent of his atmosphere. His gentle ironies, his allusiveness, the coy glances peeking out from a workman-like lattice of prose, a whole approach to story-telling which scrupulously respects his readers' intelligence by avoiding — precisely — stylistic indulgence, cannot be improved upon as an invocation of his inspiration: that wide and deep impulse which, non-stylistically, expresses

itself in moments and points, or stories, showing people and places plucked here and there from within a vision of the universal adventure.



GRILLED DOG

Among the most assiduous of the 'Gaeen Reach' BBS's sixty three (count them) registered users, some may catch the obscure allusions in the dittology below. Memories of little-known, indeed forgettable, phases of VIE historical arcana would also help the eager interpreter, though all will see the vancian inspiration of the *Glicca's* terpsichorean legalist. Others must do the best they can or, as will certainly be proclaimed the path of wisdom, not bother.



DANCE OF THE FANCY PANTS

*Bloated Barishnikov's 'paté ah deuh'
With Mister Bojangles — 'pardon un peu'!
Proceeded quite nicely for one step or two
Then all came apart in a hullabaloo,
Was it the fault of a jive syncopation,
A soft-shoeing slither-and-slide combination,
Or did the Fat Russian fall on his face
For some reason other than Bojangle's grace?
How will the truth of this matter be known,
The genuine cause of a Carper thus prone?
Will it be tweeted and chirped by a Bird
In falsetto notes on a premise absurd,
Or will the Great Russian Himself take up pen
To rehash and rebake his story again?*



THE THREE LITTLE PIGS:

AN AMERICAN PARABLE, BY MATTHEW PARIS

When the third little pig, the most clever of these classic etudes in miniature swine, had carted the carcass of the wolf to the cemetery, he noticed that this parcel of empty land without gravestones nor marked by any sign whatsoever of its nacrual function was to his eyes a spiritual citadel of material oblivion worthy of his endlessly

ravenous and seemingly immortal adversary.

He thanked the riddling God that had produced them both that this wolf was not like his cousin a few miles away, an adept in deception as well as a cosmic devourer. Little Red Riding Hood might have been stale fare for this magical beast had it not been for the benefices of a kindly hunter.

The burial place of the wolf was near the pig's thick brick house, a crucible in which he had destroyed his greedy foe in an audacious coup that mirrored its own thaumaturgical sagacity. The third little pig sighed with a visible fatigue he had not allowed himself to savor whilst this beast was climbing with loud grunts down his chimney.

It had been for our protagonist a tireless siege from this lupine killing engine, from the first cooed warning about this scurvy wolf from his mother. Certainly the sorry and piteous devouring of his brothers by this monster, the sometimes direct, occasionally elusive struggle they had had for who was going to kill whom, had made him weary as any soldier in a hermetic celestial war.

The pig had in his heart no mirroring hunger to munch on the flesh of the wolf after this slaving animal and fallen down his chimney. It was enough to seal his tomb with a gesture; walling this feral and odorous animal into a pot of boiling water. The pig had clamped the lid on the vessel instantly as the wolf hit the transparent froth of the scaling bubbles.

He had locked the cauldron with three heavy steel clamps, added a few stout logs to the fire, then waited until many hours after the trapped wolf was finally silent in his fiery death. Still, before the pig went near the red hot vessel he was leery of his imminent discovery in the sizzling vapor.

Suspecting the wolf might be faking his own demise, he kept the fire going for three days before he let the oak tinder burn out. Still he did not open the lid until he could sniff the strong and all too familiar odor of carnal demise known to him in a slaughterhouse world of many rotting cadavers and dry bones. Probably the wolf had regarded this same realm of massacre as a tireless and bountiful food source, reliable as a tree basking in perpetual sunlight. The pig knew it was the nature of carrion feeders, as well as mad predators like the wolf, to see their entire planet as an elegant banquet set by invisible lackeys for their consumption.

Himself by nature a porker, a muncher of carrion trash and rodent carcasses, though notably intelligent and cunning it suited him, as pig, as well as the wolf, to reside in such regions heaped with diverse hills of garbage; yet, after a month, and then a lustrum, he became intolerably lonely in a world empty of lovers or kindred in which even his classical enemies had disappeared.

He wondered whether any starry foe of pigs would replace the wolf. Would an involute Creation bring him some rank machine of bottomless hunger like the bear, the cheetah, the departed lion, some ooze of bacteria or perhaps some other antagonist more subtle and cunning to

the point of escaping language and ken altogether? The most masterful of such assassins would invite one to believe that one hadn't been murdered at all but was the murderer, he thought.

He became, in spite of himself, a recluse; his home was a prison and a hermitage. He wondered what pleasure there was, if any, in being a monk without a deity or a cult. He had in fact built his excellent house with walls thick and sturdy unlike his foolish brothers. Not even the vaporous elementals of the past could enter this ultimate citadel of enclosed architecture, built to resist the assaults of wolves and the more subtly lethal vultures of his realm forever. He was ready with bottles of vaccines and disinfectant sprays to deal effectively with any microscopic bug. He was very aware from his mother's tales of the seductive power of swinish lackeys and courtesans and knew enough to be at once civil and distant from these fawning and amorous but saurian courtiers. His home was festooned with many magic boxes that offered tiny imaginary worlds of smiling clowns which he had been given by his friends, many of them awesome and melancholy necromancers who offered perpetual amusement at their caprice.

The larders in his cellar was well stocked with wines, brandies and excellent ripe cheeses he had purchased at the very market where he had avoided the jaws of the wolf a few days previously with a set of deceptive pretexts. When he was hungry he could produce banquets for himself, trained as he was in all manner of skills of civil but solitary survival.

When he needed, as pigs sometimes do, the guise in others of affable company, he would visit the emerald castles of local wizards and parley about life and death. He could feel comfortable with them. He knew that with their puissant magicks they had every reason to be amiable; they wanted and needed nothing from him.

Though he was not a magician himself he felt these dour necromancers were his peers. They too were strong enough, through their arts, to have extinguished the life of their foes. The oldest of them, a wizard from Lemuria, told him that it was the lack of terror which now characterized his environment which was making him passionless, and even somewhat daft.

The pig took this as a joke. What was the alternative for him, or these daemonic warlocks? Would any of them want to resurrect their old foes? It was a subtle prophet who asked God not to wake the dead or invite some sanguined messiah to guide him into paradise, but to quicken the sinews of his enemies with fierce and malodorous life.

Yet, on a planet in which his antagonist, lupine, human or otherwise, had been destroyed or were skulking balefully in some tropic hinterland, banished to oblivion, he felt himself prey to all manner of strange folly he never would have found enticing when he had been struggling to avoid the lank jaws and capacious innards of the wolf.

At times he looked at the pot in his house with a kind of nostalgic rue. Though keeping the wolf alive would have opened himself to real peril, he missed the danger and alacrity of that midnight treasure hunt which, though

sinister as a slender dirk at a carnival, was certainly the most intriguing season of his long existence.

Glaring at that empty pot became for him an act of meditation, also a velvet means of entertainment much as watching one's slavish vaporous clowns cavort within the magic rectangles of the transparent boxes he'd been given by his charitable sorcerer friends.

He stared at the still cauldron for a few hours at dusk one night, then took a walk to the nameless landfill beyond the town, an atomized heap of trash which served as cemetery for a community of eerily blue-lit suburban haunts, creatures maundering towards this ultimate refuge God had set aside for the more purblind acolytes of his hells for sloths, crannies in space richly adorned like an ebon and opaquely dense point of comfortable material nothingness worthy of a soporific ghost. Weekly he walked through this landfill, but found no sign of the grave he had dug for the wolf.

One day at dusk he stood on the bare plain, looked up at the pulverized sky and muttered a mute prayer he had not known he ever had in him, to whatever deities and furies lurked beyond the ashy veil of the sky, to bring him an electronic game filled with sinister little lupine monsters, a real wolf, or at least a nearly palpable magical sprite with sinews of bloody vapor, howling though the Plutonian ether loud enough to keep him dully awake.



ECHOES IN THE ETHER

From Koen Vyverman

[*The Laughing Mathematician offered these reflections on the VanceBBS (<http://pub1.ezboard.com/bjackvance>), in a recent conversation there about LURULU:**]

During last month's holiday, criss-crossing the western United States, I read the VIE volume containing both *Ports of Call* and *Lurulu*, a few chapters at a time, at the closing of each day of the trip, with a mind free of thoughts about work and various private affairs. Hence, the setting was perfect.

After a while, it began to dawn on me that there were remarkable similarities between the book† and my vacationing. E.g., I saw the episodic nature of the storytelling reflected in my own doings. In the book the *Çlicca* travels from one place to the next, and in each port of call, stuff happens. My trip had the same format: in a different town or city every night, see/do stuff while there, then drive to the next place. Furthermore, a lot of

* Discussion of this masterwork can also be found in COSMOPOLIS #57 ('How to Praise Lurulu'), where Paul Rhoads reacts to another VanceBBS discussion.

† For the sake of simplicity, I refer to the combined volume *Ports of Call/Lurulu* as 'the book' or 'the story'. As a matter of fact, reading the two in sequence renders the fact that there are 2 visible parts rather irrelevant. . .

alien scenery and geography passed before my eyes, with unusual combinations of colours and shapes. Indeed, in some places even the local population appeared quite off-worldish, even though their physiology was obviously very human††. Costumes, customs, architecture, vegetation, all varied daily as I travelled to my next stop-over. Yes, even language was subject to interesting fluctuations*. There were meetings with friends, dining in remarkable restaurants, hanging around in bars and cafes. It was really a lot like the book I was reading!

All these circumstantial factors contributed to an even greater enjoyment of finally reading the book. And though I can't say that it is my favourite Vance book, it certainly is one of my favourite Vance books now.

A nice coda to all this is that when I visited the Vances in Oakland near the end of my trip, I handed the VIE volume to Jack so he could get a feel for the Deluxe edition†. John Vance and I described the book to him, including the elegant JV monogram on the front cover. Jack obviously enjoyed the sheer quality of the book, and seemed happy that the two parts of the story were at last combined into a single hefty handsome volume.



From Frans Langelaan

Hello Paul,

a few weeks ago I received my VIE set (readers edition) and I decided that a big THANK YOU!! to you and the rest of VIE management would be in order. So here it is.

I myself had little contribution to the VIE, my name is listed in only three of the volumes, but it's something I'm genuinely proud of.

I joined the VIE only a year and a half ago or so. I had it on my radar screen for quite a while, but was a bit of a coward to jump in, first because I thought it might be one of those internet scams that takes money from you and then disappears, but also because somewhere, I think it was in some older edition of COSMOPOLIS, there was this bitter to and fro going on about the Amiante font. I was sad and thought that it was too bad that such a noble idea as to finally publish all that wonderful Vance stuff degraded into old wives bickering like that. That was

†† Of note: this was particularly the case on a planet called Las Vegas. If aliens ever wish to visit Earth incognito, I suggest they land at night, on the middle of the Strip. Everyone will assume it's some kind of outrageous attraction, and pay no further heed.

* A good example hereof is the following: at the drinks-and-munchies booth on the edge of the Grand Canyon, the Asian-looking fellow in front of me points to a list of available wares, and declares in a high-pitched voice: 'Hooooooooo Shukulei'. The lady in the booth blinks and goes 'Whaa?'. The fellow points agitatedly at the list, and keeps repeating 'Hooooooooo Shukulei', interrupted by an occasional 'Whaa? Whatcha waaaaan?'. The fellow now begins hopping from one leg onto the other, and the lady finally leans out and cranes her neck to see what he's pointing at: 'Awww... U waaan hawt chucklit!!!'

† The Vances having a VIE Readers' Edition on the shelves, or so I gathered.

when I temporarily gave up on the VIE, thinking that it would never work.

But the itch remained. It is said that you don't regret things that you did, but things you didn't do. After checking with a colleague of mine who was also part of the VIE, I persuaded myself that I should get enlisted.

Back to the present: the other day some friends dropped by and needless to say I proudly showed them my VIE set and of course singled out one of the volumes that had my name listed in it. Now: these people are professionally involved in the publishing business, and while not being Vance-o-philes and knowing nothing of the VIE or its history, they commented that these books were indeed beautiful products of craftsmanship, and, finally I'm getting to the point, that it was set in such a wonderful font!

So here it is. Praise from an unsuspected, (and might I say, non-ignorant) source!!

This is something I just wanted to share with you.

Regards,

Frans



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thanks to Deborah Cohen and Rob Friefeld for their help with EXTANT #7.



PAUL RHOADS

Contact EXTANT:

prhoads@club-internet.fr
paulrhoads@wanadoo.nl
emeraldofthewest@yahoo.fr

Letters and articles welcome.

