
EXTANT

December 2005

#9

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2D PRINTING DELIVERED

Thanks to the special efforts of Bob Lacovara, Richard Factor, John Foley and Suan Yong, American 2d Printing sets are now delivered. The 2d printing packers deserve a special round of applause as well. Were it not for the Ellery Queen volume, still outstanding, the project would be 'done'.

THE ELLERY QUEEN VOLUME

The Ellery Queen volume is not an official part of the VIE set, however, it will be numbered 14 bis, and will slip nicely into its place among the other books. You must subscribe separately. It will include Jack Vance's 3 Ellery Queen novels in one volume. See Extant #8 for more details.*

A set of VIE stalwarts is hard at work on the volume. The last of the three, *Strange She Hasn't Written, (The Four Johns)* has just completed TI. When it came in for Board Review Steve Sherman noted: 'fourjn-cor-b1.doc has been forwarded to the primary archive. As Tim notes, "that concludes TI. We now know just about enough to do TI correctly. . . [It] still requires IMPing (2600+ endnotes) and Security Check, which may be nontrivial.' Rob and Chuck have called this the most massive TI job ever.

Hans van der Veeke, Donna Adams, Joel Hedlund and Mike Dennison are busy Imping this text.

* For a discussion of the stories themselves, see: 'The Case of the Missing Vance', by Richard Chandler, in COSMOPOLIS #37.

STRANGE SHE HASN'T WRITTEN, SIGNED ON

In honor of the last TI job of the VIE, I thought Extant readers might be interested in the 'sign on' section of the 'Four Johns' 'v-text'. The 'sign on' is a protocol put in place by Alun Hughes at the outset of TI work. It serves to keep track of who has done what, and for successive workers to communicate with each other, or as a reminder of the approach taken in a given work-pass. All these factors are at work in this dialogue between Richard Chaldrer, Chuck King, Rob Friefeld and Tim Stretton.

SIGN ON: Richard Chandler, 7, Text Entry, 04/12/03.
The Four Johns, Signet (1964), fourjn-raw-v1.doc
SIGN OFF: 7, 04/19/03
SIGN ON: Charles King (655), monkeying with fourjn-raw-v1-TB.doc, 05/13/05
SAVE 655; fourjn-raw-v2.doc, 05/13/05
SIGN ON: Charles King (655), TI review, 06/21/05.
TI-COMMENT 655; We have most of an MS for this book, which is generally similar to the published version, but with little differences in almost every sentence. Our MS fragments are from at least two drafts, since in one instance there is a JV edit at the bottom of a page which must have continued onto the next page, but the next MS page is unmarked. I hypothesize that JV did one more round of revisions, at least to most of it, but the EQ people also did their share of fiddling, up to and including rewriting some sections. I'm fairly confident that it's all JV's story, however, although the EQ changes in some cases alter the personalities of the characters. Where I have an opinion I've indicated whether I think a change is JV's or an EQ meddling. At present all the props are for reverting to MS, but the ones we conclude are in fact JV edits I will change during bouncing. So, if it says "JV revision" then my thought is that it should actually be "Stet" but I didn't change all those props this time around, yet. I am not married to them in any event.
SAVE 655; fourjn-cor-v1.doc, September 26, 2005.
SIGN-ON 15; Rob Friefeld, TI-SECOND, fourjn-cor-v1.doc, 27 September 2005
TI-COMMENT 15; 'Ellery Queen' was the pseudonym of the writers Daniel Nathan ('Frederic Dannay') and Manford Lepofsky ('Manfred B. Lee'). They apparently wrote over 40 EQ novels. Their earliest works in the 1920s and 1930s were written at the height of the hard-boiled detective craze. Lepofsky died in 1971, Nathan in the 1980s. I don't know how strong a hand they took in editing the EQ stories, but without question they were capable of doing a very great deal—much more than the vassarite grammarians we have presumed for the science fiction works. We are mindful of Jack's distaste for this 'tarted up' story; he would not allow that it be included in

the VIE without MS evidence for a restoration. And small wonder. Still, seductive as the MS often is, Chuck's evidence is that we are a few drafts removed from the final version, and it would be incorrect to simply restore the MS. Clearly, Jack edited in his usual manner, then EQ edited in their manner. The 'tarting up' is blatantly obvious at John Boce's party (around endnotes 900), where the writing bears no resemblance to Jack's at all.

Given the extent of EQ editing, my bias is strongly to the MS. EQ editors are experienced mystery writers, and their changes may well have been appropriate for an Ellery Queen novel. Since we are only interested in a Jack Vance novel, we should restore the MS unless we are certain that Jack himself has made the change. It won't do to ask 'Why would EQ make this change?' as we have done with fussy vasserite editors. Chuck has done a phenomenal job of wrestling with these issues! I am in agreement with his take on the evidence.

I'd like to note that the end of the story is pretty bad. It commits the cardinal sin of the 'lying narrator': although we are supposed to be inside his head, he knows crucial things which are not revealed to us. Mervyn's behavior is inexplicable. So is Susie's. The very end, when they get married, is that like the ending of Gold and Iron? There is no evidence to support a possible reconstruction, alas.

SAVE 15, fourjn-cor-v2.doc, 18 October 2005

SIGN-ON 655; Charles King, TI bounce, 10/19/05

TI-COMMENT 655; I was hoping that you, in your review, could take a wider view and put some of the differences between the texts in a broader context, and I think you have; consequently, I don't have many issues with your evaluations. I did go through the blue sections more carefully, and added a fair number of props there where I detect the hand of Queen.

I have tried to highlight new notes I added, notes where I disagreed with or questioned your evaluation, and some notes where you did not put a "restore" or "stet" notation. Certainly you are free not to comment on notes, but you were so thorough that I figured that those few notes were just missed. In any event, I highlighted them, so do with them as you will.

A note, for the board reviewer: When I was putting the notes in, I put all differences in the form of propositions. But after a while when it became apparent to me that the MS was not JV's last word, I had already put hundreds of notes in, so rather than go back and change them all, I kept with that format, but then went back and added a note to each, as to whether I thought it was a JV edit or an EQ change. So, the props don't say it, but if I put "EQ meddling" then my actual proposal was that the MS be restored, but if I said "JV edit" then my intention was that we stay with the vtext, i.e., stet, even though there is a prop there that appears to propose changing to the MS. Complicated and unclear, I know, but given the scope of notes in this text it was the best I could do and stay on any sort of reasonable timetable.

Rob, helpfully, put in his own entries on most of the notes ("stet" or "restore") clarifying. In most cases we evaluated them the same way; and, in most where Rob came to a

different conclusion, I either agree with him on reevaluation, or my conviction was sufficiently weak that I defer to his judgment. But in case it ever matters, please be aware that if I put "JV revision" in my comment, and there's no clarifying note, my actual proposal would be "stet" for those.

SAVE 655; fourjn-cor-v2[2].doc, October 31, 2005.
SIGN-ON 15; Rob Friefeld, TI-SECOND, fourjn-cor-v2[2].doc, October 31, 2005

TI-COMMENT 15; Hah! We're nearly done. I left the yellow endnote highlight on items for your review.

SAVE 15; fourjn-cor-v3.doc, November 3, 2005

SIGN-ON 655; Charles King, fourjn-cor-v3.doc, TI bounce.

TI-COMMENT 655; Looks good to me. Just a couple notes still highlighted.

SAVE 655; fourjn-cor-v3.doc, November 3, 2005

SIGN-ON 45; Tim Stretton, fourjn-cor-v3.doc, Board Review, 7 November 2005

TI-COMMENT 45; Deep breath . . .

TI-COMMENT 45; Naturally in a document in this length, with as many circumstantially-based calls, I have not agreed every time. On occasion I have even over-ruled you when you agree. The major areas can be found by searching on TS highlighted. All rulings, of course, are subject to subsequent challenge and debate.

This is a great piece of TI work! Well done to you both.

SAVE 45; fourjn-cor-b1.doc, <16 November 2005>

SIGN-ON 15; Rob Friefeld, TI-SECOND, fourjn-cor-b1.doc, 18 November 2005

TI-COMMENT 15; Other than being a little hyphen-happy, I think Tim is the ideal board reviewer. Most of the disagreements go in favor of the MS, and that's fine with me. TI-COMMENT 45; 'Hyphen-happy'! I take that as a compliment . . . And to me they are a distinctive, if minor, aspect of Jack's art.

SAVE, fourjn-cor-b2.doc, 18 November 2005

TI-COMMENT 655; At Tim & Rob's request I've reviewed the end-notes again. For the most part I don't have any problems with Tim's resolution of issues. I've flagged a very few issues, highlighted in magenta.

SIGN-ON 45; Tim Stretton; Final BR bounce, fourjn-cor-b2.doc, 3 December 2005

TI-COMMENT 45; I think we're done.

SAVE fourjn-cor-b2.doc, 3 December 2005



THE PULPISH PLOT

My days of science fiction reading ended a quarter century ago, and are unlikely to resume, so I wish someone qualified would write about this, but the other day I did pick up a book by E.C.Tubb.* It is often claimed that Vance has been a great influence in the field of science fiction, yet I was astonished at how true this of Tubb's *Eloise* (DAW, 1975). I do not fault Tubb for his Vance borrowings. He also uses many less unblameworthy ideas which I assume are fecundly his own—unless he is getting them from sources of which I am ignorant.

Tubb writes exuberantly but, ironically for a pulpist, he is handicapped by top-heavy literary pretensions so that, despite its gusto, *Eloise* is not much of a book. But an exposé of Tubb's borrowings, as well as some reflections on pulpishness, may be entertaining. Looking at pulpishness in analytical detail is interesting because the nature of such things, which we tend to think obvious, are not necessarily so. A recent comment on the VanceBBS stated that Vance, good as he is, is really just a talented writer of pulp. Even were I not banned from that forum I found myself without a ready argument of contradiction. Why, after all, is Vance not just a good writer of pulp, rather than something else? What is the difference, exactly, between pulp and that something else?

Tubb's and Vance's ways of composition are different. Vance begins with atmosphere.† I don't know what Tubb says about how he works but it seems clear he begins, as one imagines most writers do, with a concept. This concept includes a universe borrowed largely from Vance. The *Flash Gordon* or *Star Trek* type of science fiction uses a somewhat similar universe, densely packed with colonized planets, but Tubb's is more like Vance's because it is not dominated by warring empires but full of tramp freighters plying space-lanes between disreputable back-water mining planets. If Tubb's universe is vaguely dominated by the evil Cyclan—a Breakness Wizard-like, or Institute-style clan of logic-monger hegemonists—in practice it is scruffy and frontierish, as exemplified in his world 'Tynar'.

Tynar is clearly based on Vance, and its conceptual, rather than atmospheric, origin is revealed in its lack of depth. For all Tubb's adjectival strenuousness the atmosphere of Tynar remains crude and two dimensional, an important feature of the pulpish manner:

It was a harsh world with a ruby sun casting a somber light, the air heavy with the stench of sulfur, ammonia, methane; the natural exudations augmented by the fumes from the smelters, the acrid gasses rising in plumes from the pits a craters of the mines. An old world, dying, ravaged by exploiters eager for its mineral wealth.

The city hugged the field, a rambling place of raw buildings and great warehouses against which the shacks of transients clung like fetid barnacles. A nest of lanes gave on to wider

thoroughfares, streets flanked with shops, inns, places of entertainment. Narrow alleys led to secluded courts faced with shuttered mansions.

A normal city for such a world, the early residents withdrawn; hating the brash newness, the greed which had shattered their peace. From barred windows they watched as the great trucks headed towards the field loaded with precious metals; the workers thronging the city eager to spend their pay. Noisy men who had brought with them their own, familiar parasites; gamblers, harlots, the peddlers of dreams, the fighters and toadies, the scum of a hundred worlds.

ELOISE, DUMAREST OF TERRA: #12, DAW 1975. PAGE 16

The fading sun of Mizarin the Magician and Cugel is obviously one source of Tynar, equally derived from a place like Bissom's End. The infinitely more captivating mood Vance evokes in that place begins with a geological introduction unencumbered by Tubbian moral affect:

It was a smallish planet, cold at the poles, with a chain of low mountains forming a cincture of the equator, like a weld joining the two hemispheres. To north and south ran a belt of sea, shallowing somewhere near 50° latitude to bayous and jungles, beyond which were swamps and morasses, all the way to the permafrost.

THE KILLING MACHINE, 1964, VIE VOL. 23, PAGE 7.

Nothing is called 'somber'. The world is not defined as 'dying', it is not 'ravaged' by 'eager' exploiters. So with the city:

On a windy plateau sat the town Skouse, an irregular huddle of dingy stone buildings [...] a town of perhaps three or four thousand population. Nearby was a scorched field bordered by sheds and warehouses: evidently the spaceport. Nowhere were luxurious mansions or castles to be seen, and Gersen remembered that the Windles inhabited caves in the mountains behind the town. [...] There was a single other town. Beside a dock extending into the North Ocean. Nearby was a metal processing plant, so Gersen deduced from slag tailings and several large buildings.

IBID., PAGE 8.

As for methane stench, natural exudations and acrid smelter fumes rising from pits:

He spent an hour adjusting to the atmosphere, then stepped out into the night. The air was cool; like that of almost every planet it had a distinctive tang, to which the nostrils quickly became dulled: in this case a bitter chemical exhalation mixed with something like burnt spice, the one apparently derived from the soil, the other from the native vegetation.

IBID.

Tubb cannot describe place or recount action with coherence or clarity. His narrative is wordy, not vivid. But his book does generate some atmosphere, of a certain sort. If we say that Vance's world is akin to the American cartoonist Winsor McKay's mysteriously harmonious soufflé of comedy, fantasy, terror and the mundane, Tubb—and pulp in general—can be compared to 19th century 'realism', as exemplified by the novelist Emile Zola; a dark, cynical and fatalistic view of desperate, hopeless and sordid struggle:

*Off the shelf of my friend Vladimir Degen.

†See EXTANT #7 for an elaboration of this proposition; 'Style and the Spenglerian Atmosphere', page 12.

Seated in corner of a tavern close to the field, Dumarest sipped slowly at his wine. [. .]

A woman hesitated before him; aged, dressed in bedraggled finery, face plastered with cosmetics, eyes hard with experience. They searched the plains and contours of his face, the line of his jaw, the mouth which she sensed could so easily become cruel. For a moment their eyes met and then, without speaking, she moved away.

Another, younger, confident in her attraction, took her place [. .] "You've a look about you—you've been in a ring, right?"

"So?"

"I can tell a fighter when I see one. If you're broke I could arrange something. Ten-inch blades, first cut or to the death. Big money for a fast man if he wants it [". . .] To her the fights were a spectacle to be enjoyed, something by which to make a profit; but to those engaged it was something far different. Dumarest leaned back, remembering; the bright lights, the crowd, the stink of oil and sweat and fear. The smell, too, of blood; and the savage anticipation of those who watched other kill and maim, to cut and bleed and die for their titillation.

ELOISE, PAGES 16-18.

There is crude, low feeling, expressed in a huffing, puffing style, but Tubb fails to generate a fraction of the dark, dangerous and irksome situation Vance projects in quiet, simple phrases:

The first night Gersen reconnoitered Skouse. The streets were unpaved and aimless; there was a commissary, several warehouses, a garage, three churches, two temples and a tram-way with spindly tracks leading down toward the ocean. He located the inn: a square three-story structure built of stone, fiber panels and timber. Skouse was a dull town, exuding a sense of boredom, sluggishness and ignorance; Gersen assumed the population to have little more status than serfdom. [. . .He] dared not speak to any of the patrons who at various times during the night staggered out and away though the twisting streets of Skouse. [. . .Across] from the inn he found a vacated structure: apparently at one time a machine-shop or fabricating plant, but now given over to dust and small white insects unnervingly like minuscule monkeys. Here Gersen ensconced himself and though the entirety of the greenish-yellow day kept watch [. . .] The life of the town moved past him; dour men and stolid women wearing dark jackets, loose flapping trousers of brown or maroon, black hats with up-turned brims, went about their affairs. They spoke in a broad flat dialect. . .

THE KILLING MACHINE, PAGES 8-9.

Tubb's style is more self-consciously literary than Vance's. Where the latter is restrained and efficient, the former strikes angular but 2 dimensional poses in a style that is gaudy but only superficially sophisticated. Successful or not, this is self-consciously artistic. Pulp, therefore, is not, or need not be, 'popular' as such, it might be sophisticated in a way, and in any case popularity is not vulgar. *Pride and Prejudice* is a popular book, and has certainly been read more than anything which might be called 'pulp'. But it is not low. Pulp aims low.

But vulgarity is not equivalent to artistic weakness. There is plenty of art that is both vulgar and effective. But, even if Tubb's work were more effective, it is not high and fine.

Another contrast is their approach to characterization. There is nobody in *Eloise* who is not a monad, while Vance's characters rarely lack families. Parsifal Pankarow, a tertiary character whose story is told in a page, has a denser history, a more three dimensional character, than the main characters in *Eloise*:

. . . a boy thirteen or fourteen years old stepped from the porch and approached Gersen.

"Are you from my father? Is he with the fat women?"

Gersen steeled his heart to the inevitable pangs, and put aside all thought of confiscating Pankarow's wealth. "I bring a message from your father."

"Will you come in?" Inquired the boy, tremulously anxious. "I'll call my mother."

"No. Please don't. I have no time. Listen carefully. Your father has been called away. He is not sure when he can return. Perhaps never."

The boy listened round-eyed. "Did he—run away?"

Gersen nodded. "Yes. Some old enemies found him, and he does not dare show himself. He said to tell you or your mother that money is hidden under the tombstone."

The boy stared at Gersen. "Who are you?"

THE STAR KING, VIE VOL. 22, PAGE 37.

Tubb makes an occasional vague stab at fleshing out a character's background, but only succeeds in emphasizing their monoid quality. Even when they're from somewhere, they're still from nowhere:

She said bleakly, "There was a world I knew once; a small place with farms and animals and happy children. A dull pace, I once thought, a world without excitement. I used to watch the ships land and long to ride with them. And then, one day, I did."

"And old tale," said Arbush. "I could tell one much the same."

ELOISE, PAGE 156.

Lacking past or context, they have no depth. Like Tubb's 'realism', which crushes all range or delicacy of contrast from his moral feeling, his vulgar attitudes unrelentingly force everything into harsh contrast. For example, he is obsessed with physical fitness, a preoccupation frequent with vulgar writers:

. . . fat dissolved from his body to reveal the firm outline of bone, the bulk of muscle. . .

IBID., PAGE 92.

Tubb indulges all sorts of puerile notions, as when Dumarest's revives Arbush on the frozen waste:

. . . he sent his right hand over the fat body, feeling the swell of the rotund belly, the thickness of the thighs, the tender flesh between.

Gripping, he squeezed.

Arbush screamed like a stricken beast.

"Earl! For God's sake!"

"Up!" snarled Dumarest. "Get on your feet!"

IBID., PAGE 86.

Even when he aspires to philosophy Tubb rises no higher such buffoonery:

Death would come, of that he was certain, but death delayed was better than death received at this very moment.

IBID., PAGE 50.

An aphorism worthy of Socrates, not.

If Tubb's tavern scene climaxes in a combat lifted from Gersen's fight at Smade's Tavern, Tynar never comes alive as a place or a society, but Tubb's hero, Earl Dumarest, is evidently a sort of Kirth Gersen. Dumarest is a loner, a vagabond knife fighter, to whom Tubb gives constant occasions to ply his skill. Like Gersen's mission of revenge—the thread linking the series—Dumarest has a quest. He was born on Earth, considered a non-existent world of legend, and his quest is to return. But he is such a hard-hearted desperado that this nostalgic urge only inspires the alert reader to bemused skepticism. The same might be said of the demon prince device, if Vance had not enriched and embroidered it. Dumarest is consumed by a tropism for his planet of origin, but Gersen does not lust for revenge. He is as perplexed by his mission as Tubb's reader's are by Dumarest's. Gersen is a tool of other people's passion, and he is conscious of the paradox.

Gersen is a compelling character, but each of the Demon Princes, with their motivations and special modes of evil, are as well: the juvenile romantic frustrations of Viole Falushe, the almost freudian study of Kokor Hekkus' insatiability, Lens Larque's wounded pride. Where Vance binds his series together with a cord wound of second and third degree strands of meaning, Tubb hangs his from a single thread-bare concept. His universe, motley in its borrowed finery, is mere mute backdrop. His hero is a paper puppet set in motion by an un compelling trick. Gersen is sacrificing himself to a cause not fully his own, like a man working for a corporation to support his family. The ambiguity of his relation to his mission is rich and real. Earl Dumarest is like a figure in a cubist painting; grotesquely angular, meaningless. We have no way to relate to him—except for reader who get-off identifying with a man to whom all women lust to enslave themselves, who propose themselves with a poetic verve as tawdry as they are:

"What do you want?"

"You, Earl. [. . .] You deserve the best. I shall give it to you. Anything you want will be yours [. . .] The feral anticipation of sensuous delight; the titivation of yielding to the demands of a man who would no longer have cause to restrain his appetite [. . .] willing to be degraded, humiliated, eager to pander to every bestial desire.

IBID., PAGE 112.

[. . .] the warm pressure of lips on his cheek.

"Earl! Earl my darling! Earl!" [. . .]

"What do you want?"

"You, my darling. You, Earl, how long must I wait?"

Her cheeks were flushed, the skin febrile, the eyes liquid with passion.

"Earl, I love you. You know that."

"So?"

"I need you."

IBID., PAGE 118.

This is too much for me. But for Earl Dumarest it is too little; he is obsessed with his quest and the other characters are obsessed with him, from the villainous Cyclan to each monadic vagabond he meets. The men are jealous or, facing up to their inferiority, wimpishly admiring; the women are mad with erotic longing.

How does Tubb expect readers to find such flat, brutal tastelessness compelling? I do not have the answer, but given the respectable number of books Tubb has published the expectation is clearly not unrealistic. Still, even if Dumarest is one hell of a knife fighter who never says 'die', and even if he is on a quest to return to Earth . . . as he himself might say: 'so what?'

"Earl!"

"Goodbye, Eloise."

Arbush took her arm as Dumarest walked to where the ships were waiting, turning her away, leading her towards the edge of the field.

"It's over," he said gently. "Earl has gone to find his dream. You can't go with him. No one can. It is something he must do alone."

IBID., PAGE 156.

But why must Earl go alone? In a unique act of authorial discretion Tubb, so often tediously voluble concerning character motivation, fails to tell us. In this crucial case, unfortunately, the discretion, so lacking elsewhere, is misplaced, since the only hints provided by the story itself suggest only this reason: Dumarest is an atavistic, anti-social son-of-a-bitch.

Tubb's oleaginous literary gallimaufry might still function, after a fashion, if his style were simpler and more effective, or if, one way or another, he made the story rattle along, but his flowery and ineffectual style gets in the way of his narrative:

A friend and more, a lover certainly; and such a man could be dangerous. Dumarest examined him from behind the cover of his wine. A body which was too soft, a face too worn. A man old before his time, lines creasing his cheeks; his eyes shadowed by sleepless rest, haunted. He drank too deep and too often, like a man seeking an anodyne for an inner pain.

IBID., PAGE 102.

The phraseology in *Eloise* is too often of this embarrassing stamp, when it is not worse, sometimes absurdly inept, as in the following description of the 'monitors' of Instone, robots incorporating human parts taken from corpses:

Red paint, yellow, fashioned to form a clown-like visage; the parody of mouth and nose. A pathetic attempt to regain lost humanity; proof positive of the residual awareness of the fragmented brain which had once known a different life.

IBID., PAGE 118.

To say nothing of how embarrassing such prose is, the image of robots ineptly painting crude features on their robotic face -plates in half-conscious attempt to regain a lost humanity might be intriguing if it were what Tubb meant. But he does not. And only if he did would it be

proof, or 'proof positive' as he compulsively writes, of residual awareness. What he meant was that someone made this attempt. The mistake is sloppy disrespect for his readers, or the exaggerated self-satisfaction of an 'artiste', or both.

The monitors are inspired by the Pnume, as their city, Instone, is influenced by the Shelters. Eloise is therefore a sort of Zap 210, but Tubb has no patience for nuanced awakenings, so Eloise is feisty and frustrated, a rebel who becomes annoyingly boisterous when Dumarest arrives in the prison city. Even Earl is annoyed by her, though not so much he won't spend a month in bed with her once they escape—and after her old lover, one of those Tubbian wimps, redeems himself by getting killed, naturally to save Earl.

Another borrowed character is Arbush, Earl's minstrel side-kick. Arbush plays the gilyre. Master Frolitz, we recall, played kitan, woodhorn and also darabence; one wonders if Arbush masters other instruments too; the banjyther, the eucalarp, the oudamer . . . sigh. Be this as it may, just as Dumarest is no Gersen, and Eloise is no Zap 210, so Arbush is no Gastle Etwzne:

"And so we leave," said the minstrel softly, the music from the strings rising a little, taking on a somber beat, a pulsing rhythm. "As legend has it that men of old first left their place of birth. To venture into the empty dark with nothing but hope as their guild. Shall we find El Dorado? Jackpot? Bonanza? A new Eden? Camelot? Worlds of mystery and untold wealth lying like jewels among the stars; lost planets or worlds that are nothing more than the figments of dreams. Is that what you seek?"

The music rose, loud, imperious, blended chords interspersed with vibrant tones; a strange, disturbing melody carried over the throbbing strum of the accompaniment, a masterly demonstration of skill.

It roared, softened, rose to fade again to a stirring whisper, against which the resonant voice of the minstrel echoed like an organ. [etc. etc. etc.]

IBID., PAGE 27.

Should anyone still doubt Tubb is leaning as heavily on Vance as I suggest, let them read chapter 5 where the broken-down tramp freighter *Stygast* wanders into a 'warp', where normal laws did not apply:

The room changed before the other could answer, the walls expanding, filled with eye-bright luminescence; the instruments changing into cones, cubes, tesseract of brilliant crystal, rods of lambent hue. The mind and eye baffled by the impact of wild radiation, trying to make sense from distorted stimuli. Or an actual, physical change in which familiar items altered to fit new laws of perspective and construction.

IBID., PAGE 49.

Contrast Vance:

. . .spheres melted into pyramids, became domes, tufts of white spires, sky-piercing poles; then, as a final tour de force, tesseracts. [. . .] Earth swam into a pocket of non-causality, and all the ordered tensions of cause-effect dissolved.

THE MEN RETURN, 1957, VIE VOL. 17, PAGE 79-80.

Cugel [. . .] could not control his right eye. The lid flew open; into his brain crashed such a wonder of exaltation that his breath caught in his throat and his heart almost stopped from astonishment. But concurrently his left eye showed the reality of Smolod, the dissonance was too wild to be tolerated; he stumbled and fell. . .*

CUGEL THE CLEVER, 1966, VIE VOL. 15, PAGE 25

Eloise could never be a great book but, even remaining as vulgar as it is, it might be improved were Vance's stylistic virtues Tubb's model, rather than superficial aspects of his themes. Instead of his cynical posings, his embroidered high-sounding phrases, Tubb might give more attention to constructing a lucid and compelling narrative.

Tubb's case is not unusual. His basic flaw is failure to carry the reader. He seems to think that the story he has conceived is fascinating as such, that each of his phrase is compelling in itself. He does not urge the reader forward by taking care to generate curiosity and hunger for his tale and his manner of telling it. A celebrated writer like Paul Auster, just as vulgar as Tubb and even less entertaining, makes the same mistake, and I am coming to wonder if the influence of a certain 19th century continental style is not at the heart of this problem—Balzac in particular.

Balzac has a way of writing totally different from, say, Vance. The latter, by contrast, seems typically American. The classic American literary manner is straight forward. Sentences are short. Clarity of meaning is emphasized. Of course not all American writers work that way. The late period contortions of Henry James are a notable exception, but Henry James had abandoned America by then; the English writer Wodehouse, who had taken up residence in America, used a more and more brief and chiseled style . . . but I cite these cases only to be cute! There have always been cultural cross currents, particularly between America and Europe. My point is that the approach of certain literary *posers*, including Auster and Tubb, seems to recall Balzac, though in a strongly debased and unsuccessful form, and the influence is probably at some remove. Balzac does not fail to tell a story, but for each of his units of narrative, for any two lines of actual dialogue, he regales the reader with pages of commentary and analysis. It is not possible to illustrate this tempestuous style in a short excerpt, but the quality of Balzac's commentaries, so different from clichéd descriptions like *old before his time*, or mindless analyses like *he drank too deep and too often, like a man seeking an anodyne for an inner pain*, may be suggested in an example. In chapter 2 of *La Vieille Fille* (THE SPINSTER) Balzac paints a portrait of Madmoiselle Cormon, a rich woman in her early forties desperate for marriage. The chapter is built around a few small blocks of narrative describing the nightly salons at her provincial house, and weave around them a great mass of

* Vance used these ideas again in 1983: . . . *the disks intended to assist perception were out of proper adjustment, and Shimrod experienced a startling set of dislocations: a sound reached him as a jet of ill-smelling liquid; other scents were red cones and yellow triangles which, upon adjustment of the disks, disappeared completely. Vision expressed itself as taught line striking across space, dripping fire.*

Suldren's Garden, VIE vol. 36, page 227.

explanation, including reasons why Mademoiselle Cormon failed to marry for so many years; it is a typical Balzacian verbal tesseract:

Madmoselle Cormon suffered from the very excusable mania to want to be loved for herself. You would not believe the extremes to which she was pushed by this desire. She had exercised her mind to create a thousand traps for her suitors, to test their sentiments. The traps were so well laid that all were lost to the baroque tactics she secretly imposed upon them. Mademoiselle Cormon did not study them, she spied on them. A word lightly said, a joke which she often failed to understand, sufficed to make her reject these postulants as unworthy: this one had neither heart nor delicacy, that one lied and was not Christien, one—under cover of marriage— wanted to cut her forests for money, another did not have a character corresponding to her happiness, there she sensed hereditary gout, here immoral ancestors terrified her: like the Church she demanded a fine priest for her alters; then she wanted to be married for her false beauty and her pretended faults, like other women for qualities that they fail to possess or for their only hypothetical beauty. The ambition of Mademoiselle Cormon took its source in the most delicate feminine sentiments: she planned to delight her lover by discovering in him a thousand virtues after their marriage, like other women discover a thousand imperfections they have carefully veiled from themselves; but she was misunderstood: the noble girl met only vulgar souls in which calculation and selfish interest reigned, who understood nothing of the beautiful calculations of the heart.*

This translation, even assuming its basic accuracy, and if it lacks the stylistic verve of the original French, conveys something of Balzac's deliciously merciless insight into the human soul, and his inventively seductive manner of parading and varying his ideas.

The example is chosen at random. All Balzac is composed of such performances, in which psychological and philosophical insight are embroidered in the most brilliant art. If Balzac is somewhat cynical he is never vulgar. He knows wickedness, but he knows nobility as well. He can follow the knots in the soul of the sinner, but relishes the freshness of innocence. This non-vulgar, or broad and deep perspective, fills his writing with

* From 'Scènes de la Vie de Province', Paris, Société d'édition Littéraire et Artistique, 1902. page 63. Translation by P. Rhoads.

[Mlle Cormon eut la manie très excusable de vouloir être aimée pour elle. Vous ne sauriez croire jusqu'où l'avait menée ce désir. Elle avait employé son esprit à tendre mille pièges à ses adorateurs, afin déprover leur sentiments. Ses chausse-trapes furent si bien tendues, que les infortunés s'y prirent tous, et succombèrent dans les épreuves baroque qu'elle leur imposait à leur insu. Mlle Cormon ne les étudier pas, elle les espionait. Un mot dit à la légère, une plaisanterie que souvent elle comprenait mal, suffisaient pour lui faire rejeter ces postulants comme indignes: celui-ci n'avait ni cœur ni délicatesse, celui-là mentait et n'était pas chrétien; l'un voulait raser ses futaies et battre monnaie sous le poêle du mariage, l'autre n'était pas de caractère à la rendre heureuse; là, elle devinait quelque goutte héréditaire, ici, des antécédants immoraux l'effrayaient: comme l'Eglise, elle exigeait un beau prêtre pour ses autels; puis elle voulait être épousée pour sa fausse laideur et ses prétendus défauts, comme les autres femmes veulent l'être pour les qualités qu'elles n'ont pas et pour d'hypothétiques bautés. L'ambition de Mlle Cormon prenait sa source dans les sentiment les plus délicates de la femme: elle comptait régaler son amant en lui démasquant mille virtus après le mariage, comme d'autre femmes découvrent les mille imperfections qu'elles ont soigneusement voilées; mais elle fut mal comprise: la noble fille ne rencontra que des âmes vulgaires où régnaient le calcul des intérêts positifs, et que n'entendaient rien aux beaux calcul du sentiment.]

compelling nuance, so that his contrasts are both rich and subtle.

In Vance one senses an analogous breath and depth of sensibility, but his approach is nothing like this. He makes no superficial play of his psychological penetrations, or the springs of character motivation. These remain a sub-strata. Here is passage from *The Deadly Isles*, illustrating the very modest extreme of commentary and analysis which Vance allows himself, and even these are the thoughts of one of his characters, and thus distorted by their perspective:

. . . Jean was cool and didactic: her emotions were carefully intellectualized. Kelsey, saucy, spoiled, effervescent with mischief, clearly intended to waste no concern on troubles not her own. A fascinating little creature, thought Luke— more self-aware than Lia, more feminine than Jean. . .

VIE VOL. 14, PAGE 382

Cleaving to an American style, Vance's manner has more in common with painting than with talking. To put this another way: where Balzac tells Vance shows. Vance is like Plato; he does not reveal his own thoughts, only those of his characters.

The superficial problem with Tubb is not that he writes pulp or, to be more exact, not that his subjects and sensibilities are crude, low and un-nuanced, it is that his writing, whether it tries to show or tell, is not effective. Vulgarity would seem to lead to formal weakness; it should not seem amazing that a composer who can only conceive of 8 bar, 4 to the bar, songs about sex and drugs, when he goes to play them on a piano can only bang.

On the other hand Balzac himself says:

. . . qualities of heart are as different from those of the spirit as the faculties of genius are from nobility of soul. Complete men are so rare that Socrates, one of the most beautiful pearls of humanity, agreed, with a phrenologist of his time, that he was born to appear strange. A great general can save his country at Zurich, and come to special understandings with his suppliers. A banker of doubtful probity can end up a statesman. A great musician can conceive sublime songs and write bad checks. A woman of fine sentiment can be a idiot. And finally, a person of piety might have a sublime soul, and yet fail to recognize the reverberation of a beautiful soul by their side.*

Might this not suggest that a writer can have a mean appreciation of humanity, a taste for violence and filth, a gift for invention confined to that narrow register from flat to grotesque, and yet express such things in compelling style? Even though I am convinced there is connection between the inner and the outer, I suppose, after all, it

*. . . les qualités de cœur sont aussi indépendant de celles de l'esprit que les facultés du génie le sont des noblesses de l'âme. Les hommes complets sont si rares, que Socrate, l'une des plus belles perles de l'humanité, convenait, avec un phrénologue de son temps, qu'il était né pour faire un fort mauvais drôle. Une grand général peut sauver son pays à Zurich et s'entendre avec des fournisseurs. Un banquier de probité douteuse peut se trouver homme d'État. Un grand musicien peut concevoir des chant sublime et faire un faux. Une femme de sentiment peut être une grande sott. Enfin, une dévote peut avoir une âme sublime, et ne pas reconnaître les sons que rend une belle âme à ses côtés.

La Vielle Fille, page 78.

might. But even so, how could such writing fail to be less seductive than the work of equally compelling style whose content has more range? Tubb is better than nothing; he is also better than Paul Auster. But how much does that say?



FROLITZ BANNED

Abstracting from the vast difference of scale and moral import, at times I can't help feeling a certain . . . self-pitying empathy, shall we say, with the Duke of Marlborough. This great man was not 'one of', but verily *the* greatest military commander of all time. Unlike Alexander, Caesar or Napoleon, he was not a head-of-state controlling the resources of a nation, and so never enjoyed that absolute authority these famous captains held over the armies they led. And yet his campaigns were a suite of unbroken and astounding successes; he never made a maneuver which failed to throw his adversaries into confusion. He never fought a battle he did not win. Yet he never faced an enemy who did not out-number him. Often under fire, once run over by horses, the number of fortresses he captured and the number of times he forced famous marshals into retreat, all without firing a shot, is astounding. He accomplished this against no less a genius than Louis XIV, absolute ruler of the richest and most powerful nation in the world. The French armies enjoyed interior lines, while Marlborough commanded the heterogeneous forces of a fractious coalition.

A key to Marlborough's success, beyond his miraculous military genius, was his diplomatic talent, of which every ounce was needed to maintain the suspicious, fearful and jealous coalition, as well as his position at home in England in the face of intrigue, slander and lawless maneuver which, for moral blackness and bleak consequences, has few parallels in history. In 1711, having fought France to its knees, Marlborough's political enemies finally got their way; by vote of parliament the savior not only of his own country but all Europe, was publicly censured, disgraced and chased from England, on the basis of slander and

malice, as the world looked on bewildered or, in the case of the French, with amazed delight.

The VIE is not to be compared to Marlborough's 9 years fighting the so-called war of the Spanish Succession, which Winston Churchill calls the first World War, but is there not a certain likeness in the coherence of 300 heterogeneous far-flung folk who, over a period of 5 years, manage to accomplish an unprecedented literary task of tremendous technical difficulty, in the teeth of the new global corporate world and triumphant pop-culture, and despite behind-the-scene intrigues and relentless public slander? I may one day tell the inside tale, in a future number of EXTANT, but for now the latest *pass of arms* on the VanceBBS prompts me to a new burst of empathy with 'The Old Corporal', as his soldiers affectionately called John Churchill, eventually ennobled Duke of Marlborough.

To savor the redolence of the virtual frolics which are the subject of this *exposé* some background is necessary. The main *rendezvous* of the Vance Internet 'community' is the 'Vance Message Board', or 'VanceBBS'. It began as part of the original VIE site, itself first created in the context of Mike Berro's famous 'Vance Information Page'. The various steps towards its current independence were taken in response to stresses within the VIE project. Today it is visited by dozens or even hundreds of people every day. It is a major destination for neophyte Vance-surfers. It is advertised on the VIE site, which provides a link. The chief Moderator of this board, for the last 3 years and more, has been the celebrated Dan Gunter, well known to EXTANT readers. His replacement of Mike Berro at this important post occurred for reasons explicated, and contested, in COSMOPOLIS, and on the VanceBBS itself—as well as on 'the other' vancian message board, that zone of blue-ruin orbiting farther out in virtual space, which calls itself 'the Gaeian Reach'.

In the summer of 2002 the great Alexander Feht had already begun his famous carrier of anti-VIE agitation which eventually, after an amazing series of maneuvers including phone-calls and visits to Oakland calculated to co-op the Vance family into a plan of pure destruction, blossomed into public slanders even against them. Ultimately Alexander claimed that Jack Vance himself is a senile weakling, manipulated though a greedy, ambitious wife and morally crippled son, by an arch-villain, 'Paul Rhoads', a name which lives in infamy. As surreal or inconsequential as this may seem to normal people, it was not, and is not, without negative result. To say nothing of other things Feht's statements have been picked up and used against us by 3d parties. Happily there was no catastrophic effect; the book sets are printed and delivered. But our triumph need not mask the degree of trouble and delay such things provoked. Hostility oozes from the VanceBBS which, if less explicit than the salvos of raw slanders shot off from the Gaeian Reach, has the same roots in calumnies authored by anti-VIE trolls.

In the summer of 2003 Dan Gunter opened his own anti-'Paul Rhoads' campaign, and now he and Alexander

Feht, like Vus and Vuwus, hulk over their respective posting boards muttering similar imprecation.

Our story begins in mid-October of this year, when I discovered, though banned since 2003, I was able to post on the VanceBBS as 'Frolitz'. I made a test, consisting only of the boards 'moo' icon, posting on an obscure forum reserved to format trials. Having no intention to violate the ban I left it at that. But even such a speck did not escape notice; I was welcomed by Dan in his adipoid style:

Welcome, Frolitz! Your first post is short, but impossible to dispute.
I look forward to other, perhaps more extended, posts by you.
Best regards,

Dan

But the truth will out, and in the next few days hints were made, by Dan himself, that the dark shadow of 'Paul Rhoads' had once again, as in the bad old days, fallen upon the VanceBBS. Then a very nice commentary on Vance was posted; a certain 'Halsey', under the title JACK'S LIGHTNING, wrote:

For me, one of the hallmarks of Jack's writing is his supernatural ability to use the absolute perfect word or turn of phrase. Or perhaps I should say better than dictionary-perfect, in that he is inventing a new, better, and inevitable English language as he writes (our second Shakespeare?).

Mark Twain famously said, 'The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.'

Thinking about all the things I love in Jack's writing, I believe that this is one of the most important—although I have not been able to precisely verbalize it until lately. Here's one example of a wonderful turn of phrase. In the story Cholwell's Chickens Vance describes the genesis of the mining town Angel City due to certain wonderful hexagonal crystals:

...These possessed the singular property of converting sound into quick colored flashes of light. In the early times miners went forth at night to fire off guns, and stand watching the swift sparkle responding in a wave down the distance.

The second clause in the second sentence is amazing. I don't think there is another writer anywhere who could have captured such a subtle, complex phenomenon in as few words, at the same time creating such a vivid mind-picture into the bargain.

My second example is an example of a Vancian "lightning" word, better than perfect. In the Fox Valley Murders Ausley Wyatt is suspected of multiple killings. Sheriff Joe Bain stops by to inform Ausley that now Willis Neff is dead. Ausley reacts with casual insouciance:

"Neff? Willis Neff?" Ausley's demonstration of astonishment was convincing...

Now "demonstration" is not the dictionary-perfect word. Perhaps "air of astonishment"? "appearance of astonishment"? But Jack's totally unprecedented use of "demonstration" in this context is more than perfect, carrying all the meaning that "air" or "appearance" would, but also with an ambiguous hint that the astonishment may in fact be an act (without actually saying so, as a choice like "pretense of astonishment" would).

For me, absolute lightning.

It was a lawless thing to do, but I indulged a guilty impulse, and joined a conversation about Vance's work:

I could not agree more with your assessment of Vance as ultimate master of phrase, and it's nice to see examples from infrequently cited stories. I'll just point out, however, that his use of 'demonstration', in your second example, is not unprecedented. This is a normal, if not currently popular, usage—perhaps of a somewhat pre-war Californian flavor. But that takes nothing from you point; whether the usage is standard, non-standard, archaic or 'experimental', as you say, Jack always captures a subtle, complex phenomenon in few words while creating a vivid mind-picture!

David B. Williams then made this contribution:

Regarding JV as wordsmith, and at the risk of getting this thread transferred to The Robles, I will quote Paul Rhoads:

"His use of words, as brilliant or charming as it may be, is characterized above all by expediency. It is vividness, not style, which distinguishes his writing. . . . The famous magic of Vance's voice is not an empty arabesque but a function of his unparalleled vocabulary, his mastery of the meaning and force of words."

If David did not suspect the secret identity of 'Frolitz', his post was flattering. If he did it was mischievous. Whatever the case it provoked Dan Gunter—a regular compulsion with him—to throw a dart:

Has someone here mentioned "Paul Rhoads"? In that regard, let me note that there are curious rumors afoot. For the nonce: 'nuff said.

But let me remark on this comment by M. Rhoads: "It is vividness, not style, which distinguishes his writing." Obviously, "vividness" is a quality of "style."

Vance's style is both vivid and—where appropriate—deliberately vague. Halsey's comment is more accurate: Vance (almost always) chooses the mot juste, even if he must coin a word—and even if the coined word is, it would seem, no more than a mere sou.

Dan, clever fellow, had penetrated my disguise! Not only had he already hinted as much but, using Moderator Power, he had attached a sobriquet to FROLITZ, as it appeared on posted messages: A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME.

What did Dan, who thunders against both flaming and 'petty attack', hope to accomplish with such pricks? Had I flung my famous vitriol? Had Frolitz conducted himself without decorum, indulged in 'snydeness' or 'rabbit punching'? Frolitz, like myself an admirer of Winston Churchill, saw no reason to take this lying down; he snatched up the dart and tossed it back, in a classic 'patient explanation of the obvious':

The ominous speculation my advent has provoked on various ez-board communities is flattering—it is always pleasant to get special attentions!—but mysteriously inexplicable to a fresh personality exploring a virtual world. Still, though I hesitate to encourage surrealist suspicions that I am other than I am, I will succumb to the temptation of making a delicate suggestion, for which simple use of a 'moo' icon will be insufficient.

Dan Gunter felt it necessary, or at least useful, to make a nice distinction regarding his own use of the word 'precise'.* *"In using the term "precise," he explained, "I do not mean that Vance describes events with hyper-realistic detail: often he*

* Dan had amplified his previous remarks in a further post, to which this message made reference. The tedious originals may be found on the VANCE DISCUSSION FORUM in the 'Jack's Lightning' thread.

eschews button-counting precision. Instead, what is "precise" is the way that he differentiates between available terms.'

So there is 'precision', and then there is 'precision'. And perhaps, again, there is also 'precision'. The meanings are indeed distinct, and they ought to be distinguished by any 'homme de cœur'. Now with regard to the quotation from the apparently both famous and controversial Paul Rhoads, which was bravely put forth by David B. Williams, Dan Gunter notes that since "'vividness" is a quality of "style"' Paul Rhoads' comment is less accurate than Halsey's. I suspect, however, that Dan Gunter is not reading Paul Rhoads with the same care and sympathy he uses to clarify his own words and explain his own ideas. Vividness, would indeed seem to be a quality of style, but is 'expediency' also a quality of style? I suppose it could be so defined. The quotation from Paul Rhoads, however, suggest, at least to me, that he is making a distinction regarding the word 'style' of an order similar to that made by Dan Gunter regarding the word 'precise'. Paul Rhoads seems to suggest that there is an aspect of writing, including brilliance, charm, and arabesque for its own sake, which he (with unpardonable idiosyncrasy?) calls 'style', and another aspect, under the heading 'expediency', which is neither style, nor yet content, but, perhaps, an attitude toward the delivery of information, a measure of force regarding the projection of meaning. If this is indeed Paul Rhoads' idea he might have illustrated it by pointing out the impossibility of improving upon the economy and force of the word 'STOP' as used in the famous road sign. The literary aspect of this sign is an exemplar of something, which is probably not style in any common definition of the world, and particularly as Paul Rhoads seems to understand it. Perhaps this aspect could be called: efficacy of meaning transmission. The structure of the quotation from Paul Rhoads suggests he is using the word 'vivid' in this connection. But, if this aspect of the literary art may not be distinguished from 'style', as Paul Rhoads seems specifically to do for the purpose of making a nice discrimination, then Dan Gunter would seem to be correct.

To David B. William's credit, he seconded this post:

You are correct. In the brief quote pulled from a much larger context, Rhoads is distinguishing between "style" as used by the many commentators who have called Vance "baroque" (thus the reference to arabesques) and Vance's remarkable talent for word usage, which of course is also a form of style.

Vance startles readers and achieves vividness by picking just the right word, even if he has to invent one; he rejects empty flourishes for the sake of dazzle alone. He is expedient: For Vance, choosing the right word is the shortest distance to the thought or image he wants to communicate to his reader.

If Dan knew who Frolitz was to begin with, why had he tolerated his presence at all? It is a mystery about which we can only speculate; at this point he rolled out his Moderator's cannon and made blast, under the title I CAN IGNORE SO MUCH:

Paul, this is ridiculous. Do you really think that anyone was fooled by "Frolitz"? I wasn't. If anyone was fooled, even briefly, this absurd, third-person post would unblinker their eyes.

You were banned from this board. You're still banned. If you want to be unbanned, do these things: (1) apologize to

Mike Berro; (2) apologize to Matt Hughes; (3) apologize to John Vance; and (4) promise to adhere to the rules of this board.

When you're ready to do that, Paul, send a message to me. John Vance has my email. When you apologize to John for the grief that you caused him, you can ask him to forward that message to me, along with your request to be permitted to return to this board.

In the meantime, if you have anything to say, go say it in Extant.

Like the raging marshal Vendôme at Oudinard* Dan had taken an exposed position, and I, like the elegant duke of Marlborough, advanced. To 'Axolotl', subordinate VanceBBS moderator, I sent the following:

Statement by Paul Rhoads: I apologize to Mike Berro, and to Matt Hughes, and for all the grief I have caused him to John Vance. I promise to adhere to the rules of the VanceBBS. I request to be unbanned from that board.

The next day I got a reply. Dan, having made a foolish public engagement, could now only shoot a pyrrhic arrow, gracelessly imposing extra conditions. Axo conducted the negotiations:

I've been in touch with Dan. Two administrators are prepared to give you what is called "a second chance". Dan also agrees, provided that you authorize him to post your statement on the Board.

Big doings! Since I had hoped to post it myself, the problem was to beat Dan under the wire; I put it on the Gaeon Reach.

I was banned for failing to obey Dan's strictures regarding that board (see EXTANT #1); would he continue to seek global authority, or limit his suzerainty to the VanceBBS? My GR post went officially unnoticed, and the next day, after almost 3 years of exclusion, I was unbanned! Dan made his formal announcement, with pomp and condescension befitting rehabilitation of a famous criminal of inferior intelligence:

Paul Rhoads had forwarded to me the following message, which I reproduce by permission:

Quote: I APOLOGIZE TO MIKE BERRO, AND TO MATT HUGHES, AND FOR ALL THE GRIEF I HAVE CAUSED HIM TO JOHN VANCE. I PROMISE TO ADHERE TO THE RULES OF THE VANCEBBS. I REQUEST TO BE UNBANNED FROM THAT BOARD.

This response meets—though minimally—the conditions that I put on Paul's return.

Paul [. . .] Please review the rules of this board set out in this thread.

Let me take this as an opportunity to remind all persons who post to this board that I am very serious about the issue of civility. From August 2002 through Memorial Day 2003, this board underwent serious flame wars. Such conduct is

* 'A fierce fire-fight at close quarters along the hedgerows began. . . The loud, increasing fusillade drew Vendôme to the spot. He would better have discharged his duties as a commander had he joined the princes on the steps of Royegem mill. Instead he plunged into the local conflict. . . and ordered a renewed attack. . . Marchal Vendôme was now in a fighting frenzy. The violence of his nature, which so often cowed or quelled his equals and superiors, determined him to have Groenwald at whatever the cost. . . Where was Vendôme? Where was the brutal, bestial, but none the less tremendous warrior. . . in the cauldron fighting hand to hand, organizing and reorganizing attacks, sending messages which were incomprehensible and orders which were obsolete by the time they arrived.'
Marlborough, His Life and Times, by Winston Churchill, Harap 1949, book 2, chapter 21, 'The Battle of Oudenard', page 366 & etc.

unnecessary and detrimental.

I do not intend to allow the vitriol that once marred this board to return. All discussions on this board can be conducted with due decorum. The mere fact that persons disagree with one another does not require that they resort to name-calling, slyness, or petty attacks. After all, even boxing matches can be conducted without low blows, rabbit punching, kidney punching, hitting on the break, and hitting after the bell.

So I will remind everyone: I will ban anyone who—in my estimation—fails to abide by the rules of this Board.

To translate this into plain language: *though Paul is scum, by satisfying my conditions he demonstrates submissiveness, though not as much as I'd like.*

What did he expect? How much more fulsome should an apology be to persons who have not asked for it and who, as far as I knew, did not even want it? My friendship with John Vance is not only long-standing and productive, it is intimate. As for Mike, our relations are likewise productive, cordial, and even warm. Mike, for example, took it upon himself to let me know he disassociated himself from Dan's silly initiative.

Most of all; what the heck was I supposed to be apologizing for? That I have, during the 5 years of the VIE project, occasionally been in more or less public conflict with John or Mike is nothing amazing: cannot, as the man said; *'even boxing matches... be conducted without low blows?'*

As for Matt Hughes, he would express disdainful disinterest in anything 'Paul Rhoads' might do or say, a point he has emphasized publicly, more than once. And why not? It is the only line that scoundrel can take, consistent with his orotund self-absorption. Dan's 'insult and injury' did occur in one case; it was Matt Hughes who inflicted them on me. In the early days of the project, in the spring of 2000 when the second series of anti-VIE aggressions were rolling in, I was dealing with them on the original VIE message board, in the serious and cordial manner which, in those long-gone days, I thought appropriate, when Matt Hughes—the post are no doubt still rotting on some dusty old web page—mocked all parties to this conversation, asking if we had failed to take our medication—or 'meds' as he put it.*

I hesitate to sound the melodramatic note but the project was faltering. The tribulations of those days were neither widely suspected nor publicly discussed. A bid to make the VIE E-in-C look like a mindless maniac, on the very stage the project had its virtual existence, was a serious matter. What did Matt hope to gain by this graceless act? Certainly not my friendship and gratitude! It was a snickering bid to draw attention to himself at the expense of me and my interlocutors who, though misguided, were at least in earnest.

If at that moment, in a faddish effect of emulation, I were to have become a public laughing stock, the power struggles which had broken the inner structure of the project would have overwhelmed it. So I suggested

we'd better drop our discussion and take up a matter of import: Matt Hughes. Shortly afterwards I interrupted an unrelated discussion with the same suggestion. Matt's friends protested, as if he, not I, were the offended party, but too late; pausing long enough only to make a petulant remark, the great writer, with whom it is such a privilege to correspond, evaporated from the virtual scene, not for an hour, not for a week, not for a month, but for over a year. He created a personal board but it was a dud, and he crept back to suck Vance-forum juice.

Matt had some trouble resisting more dart-tossage but, despite his sycophantic human shield, when each dart found its way back into his neck he eventually lost interest. Occasionally goaded on these subjects by provocateurs, such as the peace-loving Moderator himself, Matt grunts protestations of bored disdain, the conviction of which I leave others to judge.

Matt's unprovoked hostility, as object for Dan's noble quest for justice, would be a matter of substance, so to speak. But it is the rarest thing in human experience that people like Matt repent bad behavior, so I would predict—though Dan should do as he thinks best!—that it would be a thankless task. If Matt simply continues to leave me alone, that will be enough for me; I will even feel grateful!

So, given the enormity of my crimes, my response to Dan's conditions was too minimal. He would have preferred a detailed confession—that way he could have learned what he was accusing me of; the whole magilla is even more unreal and imaginary than the famous peculation charge against Marlborough! Dan had been maneuvered into ignoring my 'unacceptable behavior' on 'other forums' and unbanning me. Now he redeployed in his rear: he would tolerate me if, by meek submission, I tacitly endorsed his version of VIE history and my character. As Frolitz might have said: 'dream on, dude.'

Among the rules Dan had admonished me to review was #6:

THOU SHALL KEEP TOPICS IN THE APPROPRIATE SECTIONS...

There are various forums on the VanceBBS. The JACK VANCE DISCUSSION forum is defined thus: *Vance's writings, sayings, opinions, and life are all valid topics for this forum.* Another forum, called THE BEYOND, is: *for discussion of topics not directly related to Jack Vance.* Dan now made a new tactical error; he started a thread on the JACK VANCE DISCUSSION forum entitled: VANCEAN/HUGHESEAN CONVOCATION:

A few of us—Matt Hughes, Ed Winkill (my esteemed brother-at-law), Eric Halsey (my esteemed telescopic friend), Eric Stavney (my esteemed brother-in-law), and I—will be gathering at my humble abode here in Seattle tomorrow, October 28, for an evening of beer and grilled sausages. I don't know whether any other board members or lurkers live in this vicinity. If you do, you are welcome to join us. Please respond here on the board, and we can arrange how best to arrange your appearance.

Cheers,

Dan

* Memories are long in the land of Cutz, and just as long everywhere else.

I had no reason not to hope this Chowder and Marching Society of esteemed brothers in, or at, law would enjoy a pleasant evening, but Dan had warned he would *ban anyone who... fails to abide by the rules*, and I could not help wondering if Dan himself had not violated rule #6. This would be subject, of course, to Dan's own adjudication. For someone who emphasizes matters of comporture so heavily it was a ticklish situation, redolent with conflict of interest!

I sent Dan my best wishes, in a message which tried to promote harmony and mutual understanding:

Please have a nice time! Also, and perhaps, in case you don't already know, Dan, would you ask Matt Hughes if he has accepted my apology?

Frolitz (penitent)

p.s. Thanks for unbanning me!! Also, and I ask this with all due respect; would this thread not be more appropriate for The Beyond?

Dan replied:

Paul,

I suggest that you ask Matt whether he has accepted your apology. As for the placement of this thread: I think that it belongs here.

Dan

The ruling was clear even if its justification, like my response to the conditions, was minimal, or even totally absent. But hundreds of people, not all of whom are humorless fools, were reading the exchanges:

ok, then I'll take this opportunity to ask Matt Hughes in case he sees this:

Do you accept my apology? *

Frolitz (aka Paul Rhoads)

p.s. I am also curious if Mike and John have accepted my apologies...and while I'm at it I might as well admit that I am also curious about what I am apologizing for—!!! though this should be seen as neither a complaint nor a sign of insincerity! I am very happy to apologize! I'm just curious.

Dan walked a whole regiment of blather blithely into the ambush:

Paul,

I am surprised that you cannot recall your interactions with Matt, Mike, and John that might have caused offense. In any event, I will not discuss this issue further on this board—nor will I allow further discussion of this issue on this board. I am not going to turn this board into a discussion of the relative merits of your conduct. You already have a forum for that topic: it's the Gaeen Reach.

Your contributions to discussions of Jack Vance and related issues are welcome. But this is not the Paul Rhoads BBS, and I will not permit it to be transmogrified into such a forum.

If you want to discuss this issue with me, you can telephone me. axo can put you in touch with me. But there will be no further discussion of this issue on this board.

I am not going to ask you—or anyone else—whether this instruction is clear to you. It is clear. Discussion on this issue on this board will now end.

Dan

P.S.: Matt, if you wish to discuss this issue with Paul, take it off the board. [...]

Since Dan, during the crisis of spring 2003, was in the best position to have prevented the creation of the Gaeen Reach, and therefore bears some responsibility for its disgusting existence,† and since he knows perfectly well that anything I say there provokes a storm of mindless recrimination from the goon-platoon, his suggestions expose a personal hostility, to which the message provides several other clues. Dan may flatter himself, after posts like this, that he can evade the suspicion of being insulting, contemptuous and mendacious by hiding behind preachy injunctions and lofty insinuations, but only those who wish to be hoodwinked by such transmissions are enspoiled.

What does Dan really have against me? I am not inside his head but clearly Calumny has passed that way. Where did he get the idea I have been torturing members of the Vance family, or that Mike Berro craved an apology? I'm not paranoid mind you; Dan's heavy hand falls on others as well! The irrepressible snake, Martin Read, probably inspired by the Grilled Dog of EXTANT #8—just published—posted a poem which Dan deleted, sermonizing and menacing poor Martin for his crime—taking the opportunity to toss another dart at public enemy #1, whom he did not fail to mention four times:

Martin, I deleted your post to *Paul*.

I'm not going to allow this board to degenerate once more into flame wars. I'm not going to let *Paul* lead it down that path—and I'm not going to let anyone else do it. Your doggerel was nothing more than an attack on *Paul*. It was not acceptable.

If you have problems with *Paul*, deal with them in some other forum—not this one. If you can't respect that rule, then I'll ban you.

And now the infamous *Paul*, like Marlborough ordering the cavalry charge at Blemheim, made a CAUTIOUS SUGGESTION on the JACK VANCE DISCUSSION forum—poor Dan was having a bad-board day:

Dan,

as instructed, I have carefully reviewed the board rules, and I feel I should bring to your attention rule #6. Of course it is your decision, and yours alone, what is appropriate and what is not. Still, might not a majority feel that discussion of a party at your house belongs in the 'Beyond' forum? Now I know that it does not, that it belongs here! Since you think it belongs here, then it does. Still, might you not be creating an impression of an attitude of arbitrary dictatorial abuse—completely untrue—which might reflect poorly on Jack Vance? See what I mean?

I make this suggestion most respectfully.

Paul

Dan's honorary brothers-at-law, Ed Winskill brought succor to his beleaguered relation:

Vancian conclaves are Beyond? Categories on the board are inflexible? Have we not inveighed against categories? Of course the Historic Conclave was Beyond, at Smades, but it wasn't a Vancian conclave. Anything pertaining to Jack Vance or his work is perfectly proper here.

* I have received no response, public or private.

† see EXTANT #7, page 10

Unlike Dan, Ed is good humored, witty and non-malevolent, and of course cares no more than I, or Dan for that matter, whether rule #6, or any other rule, is respected. But Ed's post, for all its adroit benevolence, does not undo, or even address, Dan's bluster. If it was any part of Ed's intention to blunt Dan's malice the post was a failure.

Having got this far, like Marlborough breaking through the *nec plus ultra* line, it was time to give battle; what else was there to do? There was certainly no point in talking about Jack Vance in the presence of an unreformed Moderator. The post was entitled LESS MINIMAL, A TINY BIT IMPISH, BUT SINCERE! :

My dear Dan,

because my first response to the conditions of my return was only minimal I wanted to prove that there was genuine feeling behind my apology. So I have expressed my sentiments in a little poem. Sometimes, it is true, I have used a slightly humorous twist, but my feelings are genuine; I wanted to make a fulsome demonstration of the lessons I have learned and my resolve to behave better in the future, as well as showing the important part you have played in my reformation. Please don't think I am just trying to be funny; I mean this sincerely. I know you are very serious about the issue of civility, which I respect, and also how difficult it is for you to tolerate even an appearance of disobedience, and I am deeply appreciative of the stentorian efforts you deploy to maintain both order and discipline on the VanceBBS, and I sincerely hope to prove myself a worthy subject of this virtual kingdom both now and in the future; so if you read my versification with care, objectivity, and an open mind, I am sure you will see, aside from one or two little jokes, which are only meant in good fun, that it is a genuine expression of contrition, an honest effort to satisfy not only the letter but the spirit of the generously and spontaneously offered edict by which you have, after several years of probation, so kindly unbanned me—for which I am truly grateful. I confess that I have insulted you in the past, since you say so, though I never used bad language or vulgar expressions such as 'you have your head up your ass*', or anything like that, and, of course, I never injured you because I could not if I tried,† but I would like to take this opportunity to beg your pardon for all the bad things I have done to you, personally, even though, with great forbearance and nobility of spirit, you have asked for no pardon from me for yourself even when, with clairvoyant insight and preternatural empathy you demanded it for others who did not ask themselves. I know you are a sensitive man whose style of humor runs more to slyly phrased put-downs and bloated bonhomie, than self-deprecation as mine obviously does. It's a question of temperament! It takes all kinds to make a world, no? Is this not a basic message in the work of Jack Vance? So would not the joyous rehabilitation of the Editor-in-Chief of the VIE not be a good occasion to, well, just start laughing at yourself, a little bit, for once? I intend this suggestion in a

* Extant Note: I do not use bad language, except, as now, in a charitable cause, and only repeating Dan's own words. This phrase is the worst of the grossness Dan Gunter has flung at me, and, given his lord-high guardianship of civility and decorous comporture, it must do him good to have it rubbed in his ear.

† so Dan claims.

respectful, positive and helpful way! I hope your prejudice and hostility will not blind you to my true feelings, and to the fact that if a few little jokes punctuate my poem they are a thin foam of innocent raillery lightly flecking the surface of an ocean of deeply felt contrition for all the grief I have caused not only you, but everyone else as well, and I hope these words will be a satisfaction to your spirit, and theirs.

Perhaps your first opinion will be that a dirge, a homily, a tragic peroration, or some other solemn and decorous form would be more appropriate to a sincere expression of regret and request for pardon; but on deeper consideration I feel sure you will agree with me that a smile and a laugh are most precious things! And if they are directed at ones-self, are they not most precious of all? So please, PLEASE, I beg you, don't go flying off into one of your snits and ban me again, just at the moment you have indulged me in a fresh chance after all these years!

Sincerely hoping that you will be my friend in the future, as I have always tried to be yours, however misguidedly;

Frolitz.

Non-Minimal Expression

*Though long I have been in learning my lesson,
Now is the time for public confession;
All of my mischief and all of my crime
Will here be atoned in a dactylic rhyme!
First I must humbly both thank, and admire,
The patient Dan Gunter—eschewing satire;
If not for his timely and wise admonitions,
His 'amicus' counsels, suggestions, petitions;
If not for his out-reach, proposals, reproach,
His kind interference as personal coach,
It is to be feared that my great lack of judgement
May well have resulted in tragical fudge-ment,
To such an extent that the whole V.I.E.,
All forty four books with their typo-graffee,
Would still be no more than they were long ago:
A man with a plan and a lap-top or so.
But thanks to Dan Gunter at last I have learned
That brawling in public must always be spurned.
Nothing excuses such vulgar behavior,
Which carries about it a criminal flavor.
Good men and true will tolerate never
Those who indulge in such futile endeavor.
Forward and proudly they march with their banners,
Loudly proclaiming the fact that good manners,
And good manners only, transcending all else,
Must be respected, and practiced, or else!
Transgressive behavior, so rightly they crow,
Should not be indulged in, oh never! no no!
Once—a sad truth—this great law I ignored,
And watching my antics Dan Gunter grew bored:
"I'll show that amateur business exec."
Softly quoth he, "I'll make him a zek!"*

*"Into the Gulag of public derision,
 "Obloquy, slander and banished condition,
 "Surely I'll thrust him, to rescue and save
 "The good name of 'Vance', which this rampaging knave
 "Is busy destroying with each passing year.
 "So great is the danger that quite soon I fear
 "No one will read him but voters for Bush,
 "Bigoted fascists whose brains are all mush.
 "They're the majority, that may be true,
 "But taking their money just will not do;
 "Jack would not want to thus sully his bank,
 "With ill-smelling dollars of such a low rank!"*

*So thanks to Dan's wisdom and prudence and grit,
 Off I was packed, sent away with a flit.
 But oh, what a blessing is punishment! truly!
 For now I can see what a boisterous, unruly,
 Undignified, scandalous, fellow I've been!
 Imagine my horror, self-loathing, chagrin,
 To see all that injury, insult and grief—
 The hurt I've inflicted quite baffles belief!
 Nowhere in all the vast reaches of time,
 The infinite spaces, the depths of the brine,
 Are there amends to undo what I've wrought.
 I should have comported myself as I ought,
 And now it's too late . . . but yet I may hope
 To proffer apologies even a dope
 Can see are sincere, are both honest and good,
 That from today forward I'll act as I should!
 My heart is agape: I beg pardon from YOU!
 At this point what more can I possibly do?
 The books are all published, there's nothing at stake;
 It all was a tragic, a ghastly mistake!
 I hope beyond hope that I'll pardoned be;
 If not: 'high-ho fiddly, bo-diddly dee-dee!'
 Especial atonement, however, is due
 To one special writer of science fish-stew.
 We all know this writer, he is very great;
 We know him, and love him, and must venerate
 His convolute stories so vividly styled,
 His heroes so clever, his manners so mild,
 His belly so paunchy, his pen such a sword,
 His fame daily spreading abroad from this board!
 We all know his name. We all love his work.
 Oh what a scandal to call him a 'jerk'!
 You might call him Nick or you might call him Sean,
 You might call him Pinkerton Blunderbuss Maughan.
 You might call him 'Kit' or in some cases 'Kitten',
 Or just say 'Hypocrites Addlepate Lytton'.
 You might call him Freddy or Fanny or Foster,
 Or how about Hummel van Dongobel Auster?
 You might call him Beasle or Proofrock or Gus,
 But what's in a name, why all of this fuss?
 His name is most certainly not Judith Krantz,*

*So why not speak boldly and say 'Mr. Vance'?
 Or cast out punctilio and just call him 'Jack'?
 The reason is this: he'd not answer back!
 And why not, pray tell? can it be that his manners
 Are less than might wish our brave marchers with banners?
 My verse is now done, your suspense I'll defuse:
 The name of the author in question is Hughes.*

After 'Hughes' I added an icon of an idiotically smiling doctor brandishing a bottle of 'meds'. Overwhelmed, Dan wiped the game off the board, and locking the thread admonished me in the severe tones befitting the low, childish creature I am:

Stop it, Paul
 I'm in no mood for any discussion on this issue—none.
 Get that straight.
 The past is past. Get over it. If you can't, just don't
 post here. If you can't get over it and you raise this issue
 even one more time, I'll ban you again.

I can understand why Dan is adamant about this, but that is not my problem. I replied in a message entitled: PLEASE DON'T BAN ME!!!, and who knows if Dan's sputtering fit would not have escalated into actual hysterics if the U.S. cavalry had not come riding over the hill. Axo himself, a veritable virtual 'MAISON DE ROI', *rich in scarlet and silver facings*, deleted my post, leaving in its place:

[Content deleted by axotl. Personal and derogatory remark, despite repeated warnings.]

Surprise! Axo does not lack 'fine discrimination', so how did he mistake for a 'remark' what obviously was a 'query'? It is a nagging mystery. The 'content' was this:

Dan, why are you such a sour-puss?

I'll admit this is nothing children under 12 should be allowed to read—at least not without parental consent. Still, in Dan's case, this particular 'derogatory remark' seems more like an act of charity. As for Axo, this decent into humorlessness is the tip of an iceberg; seconding one of Dan's booming threats he had posted:

. . .Frolitz, you seem to be playing games on this Board, nothing remotely looking like the Vancean contributions I thought you were itching to bring forth.

Note also that this Board is as much a democracy as the VIE project was. Meaning by this, the very concept is irrelevant. Like "how tall is the colour red?"

So, please, stop. Next post like this, if Dan hasn't done it already, I will ban you myself. With sorrow, but resolutely.

'Vancian contributions' I was 'itching to bring forth'? Axo here referred to a remark I made during the un-banning negotiations. Instead of fighting off slanders, I wrote;

. . .I would much rather talk about Vance among civilized folk. Do not the hundreds of pages I have devoted to purely Vancian analysis in Cosmopolis and Extant prove that my center of interest, and my penchant, is there?

But I also made clear my non-intention to take crap.

As for the reference to Democracy, it was apparently a response to my crack about Dan's disregard of rule #6

(. . . *might not a majority feel* . . . [see page 12]). From Dan, as foolish as he is dishonest, nothing can be expected, but Axo is a man of intelligence and character! Old hand that I am, I had carefully avoided even the appearance of pro-democratic agitation, so I am disappointed Axo made this ungentlemanly leap. It reflects poorly on the Maison du Roi. I had kindly warned Dan it might make a poor impression to cavalierly exempt oneself from one's own adamantly propounded strictures—and indeed it might. As for the cry, 'The VIE is not a democracy', it was used in one category of circumstance only: when malcontents, always outsiders, demanded alteration of VIE policy by vote. Where had I demanded any vote?

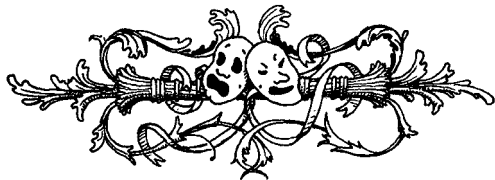
But enough hair-splittage; Dan, in a state of frazzled rout, petulantly re-banned me. A few days later he made another post on the JACK VANCE DISCUSSION forum and since, being gentlemen, we like to give the other guy the last licks, here it is:

We have just completed another Vancean/Hughesean Conclave. Ed Winskill, Matt Hughes, Eric Stavney, Eric Halsey, Ben Gunter (my beloved son), and I gathered for some hours to eat grilled sausages and discuss the writings of Jack Vance, the writings of Matt Hughes, and matters of interest to us all.

It is difficult to imagine a more congenial group of people. I am honored to count each of them among my friends.

We dedicated the evening to [. . .](axolotl). We spent some time reading from his translation of *The Blue World*. axo, your translation earns you immense slope.

My thanks to my guests and friends. I am honored.

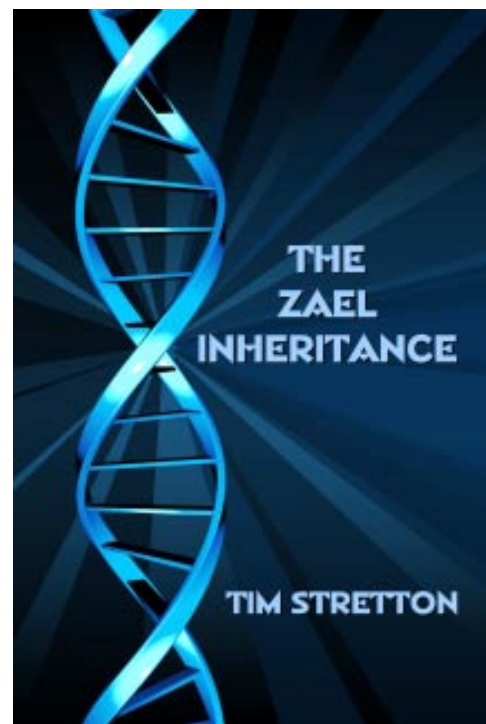


A PERTINENT AND ENGAGING VISION

*'The Zael Inheritance', by Tim Stretton,
reviewed by Paul Rhoads.*

Those attracted to the new and original but unwilling to compromise their reading pleasure; repelled by the vapid experimentation of so-called serious literature but fatigued by the deep-worn paths of the genres; who want something into which to sink their mental teeth but relish the stylistic *crème chantilly* which only English humorists can whip up, will cheer the entrance on the literary scene of Tim Stretton. The territory staked out in his first novel extends from the Demon Prince stories of Jack Vance to a hypothetical episode of *Yes Minister* as written by P.G. Wodehouse. This story is a merry quadrille as mechanically oiled as a Sherlock Holmes mystery, and a socio-cultural study as casually astute as a cycle of Thurber drawings, both elaborated against the background of a futurism as intriguing as anything in the SF genre.

The setting will be readily understood by readers of



Jack Vance. The Terran Hegemony, however, is no mere imitation of the Gaeian Reach. Vance's Interplanetary Police Coordination Company, Historical Society (with its military arm), Jarnell corporation (with its monopoly on faster-than-light drives) and Institute (clandestinely and subversively controlling technology and morals), are private organizations providing, or supplementing, a loose or absent structure of galactic governance, while Stretton has postulated a future in which the ensemble of government services have been privatized, corporatized and inter-

planetized. Juggling with the worst nightmare of today's forces of anti-globalization, Stretton offers a spectacle which must please the philosophical; the elite of the Terran Hegemony are subject to the full range of human failings, notably mediocrity. They are shown in a constant struggle to balance or blend personal interests with professional duties, personal weakness and official power.

The main characters in *The Zael Inheritance* are mid-level operatives in the 'Historic Monopolies', such as Pangalactic Security Services Incorporated, Genix, or TLZ Spaceways, source of the Zael fortune. Stretton's day-job, as a bureaucrat in English local government, has profoundly informed his story. The major protagonists, Lamarck and Voorhies, are Apprehensors in Pangalactic's Contracts Division, and that Voorhies is a woman is no mere sop to political correctness. The ever more involute, baroque and spectacular search for the missing heiress Taslana Zael which Lamarck and Voorhies undertake, is both driven and baffled by the sexual tensions endemic to our own contemporary work-place. These are by no means limited to conflicts of power and seduction between Lamarck and Voorhies: they are inter-hierarchical, inter-service, inter-corporate. Stretton's adroit handling of this matter promotes his story to the status of a fable for our time.

The enthusiastic plotting of *The Zael Inheritance* will be savored by connoisseurs of that aspect of the literary problem. Stretton orchestrates a series of chechendo and de-chrechendos, punctuated by interludes of variegated atmosphere, in whose fiery finale the story loses none of its point.

When Voorhies suspects Lamarck of romantic interest in one of the more likely pretenders to the perilous identity of Taslana Zael, she maneuvers him out of the investigation. Lamarck, insubordinate, escapes supervision by carrying the investigation off-planet, but bureaucratic entanglements follow him. The weight and luster of the Zael fortune weighs in every possible manner on the investigation. As matters advance on official and unofficial fronts, the investigation is baffled by a shadowy crime organization, the outlines of which slowly emerge. Progress is hampered as professional and personal jealousies pollute relations between the glaxes and Genix laboratory workers charged with screening DNA samples from the various Taslanas.

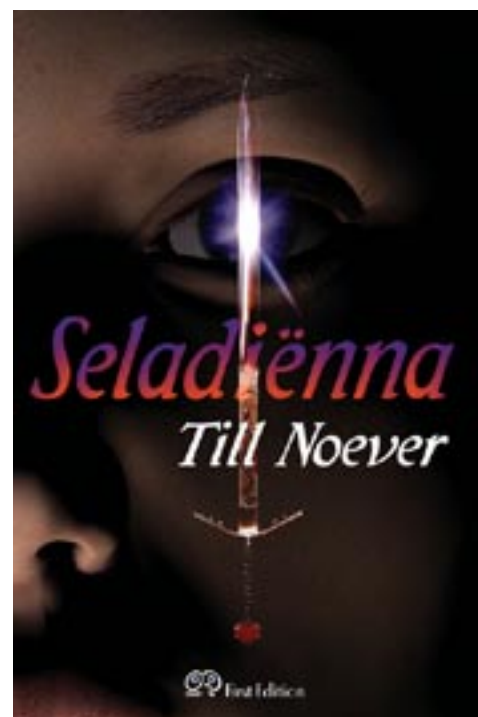
In the course of the story we are introduced to several societies, as well as various more or less repellent galactic fads, such as 'lizard skin', mirrors of today's multi-cultural experience and emerging global culture. Stretton deploys a varied arsenal of pathos and humor, which only the most audacious writers attempt to control, and control of which only the most talented achieve. Those who delight in pointed repartee, thought-provoking conceptions and speculations, sociological and psychological insight, all suavely marshaled in a beautifully constructed story, will savor this book.

THE ZAEL INHERITANCE is published under the author's own imprint, *Acquired Taste Books*. It can be ordered, along with *Dragonchaser*, Stretton's second novel, directly from the printers at www.lulu.com/dragonchaser, or through major online retailers such as *Amazon* or *Barnes and Noble*.

BOOKS OUTSIDE THE VANCE UNIVERSE

by Till Noever — owlglass.com

Paul has graciously offered some 'advertising space' in *Extant*, and how could I refuse? To have the opportunity to 'pitch' to such a distinguished audience . . . I know: enough butt-kissing already! Here's the first of those novels, which so far have not made it into any form of publication, brought to you courtesy of 'owlgassproductions.com' (one needs a name, right?) and your friendly neighborhood vanity-publisher (this is the technical, though somewhat derogatory, term for these kinds of enterprises) called lulu.com. Typing: lulu.com/content/175985 (or, for the hardcover: lulu.com/content/185264) into your browser, you'll come across:



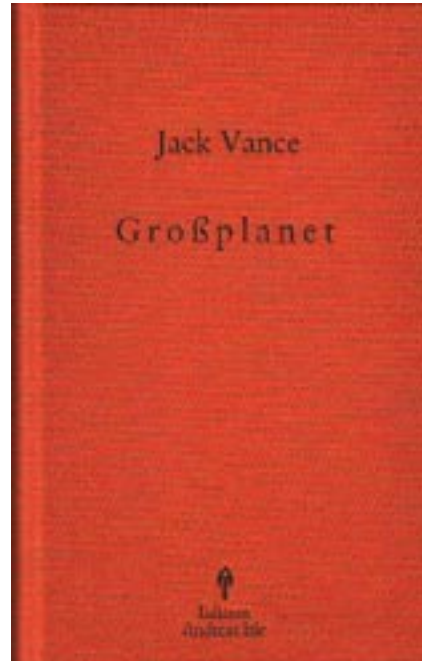
A romp through an alternate universe, mostly separate from our own, though joined through occasional glitches in the space-time continuum. A long time ago such a glitch swallowed half a Roman legion. Over a period of almost 1800 years their descendants, with the occasional addition of new blood from other 'glitched' victims, have built a civilization that covers their version of continental Europe and Britain.

Into this world are sucked Sam and Helen, quite against their will—and though they escape from there by freak chance soon after, they bring back with them a sword that keeps hiding itself, a bunch of murderous riders intent on killing them and retrieving the sword, and a strange fellow called 'Mirlun', who's come to recruit them to deliver his world from an evil that even he doesn't fully understand.

Großplanet

In German, based on the V.I.E. text, translation by Andreas Irle (with help from Patrick Dusoulrier). 202 pages. Published Nov. 2005. ISBN 3-936922-04-7.

info@editionandreasirle.de



EDITION ANDREAS IRLE

Andreas is one of the first VIE volunteers. His publication, *Die Domänen von Koryphon*, inspired the project. Andreas was member of the VIE composition team, and participated in several of the Golden Master meetings, and packing trips. Andreas has been publishing German language editions of Vance for the last 10 years. The following is the bibliography of EDITION ANDREAS IRLE*:

- 1995: Die Sterbende Erde (*The Dying Earth*), translated by Lore Strassl.
- 1996: Rhalto der Wunderbare (*Rhalto the Marvellous*), translated by Andreas Irle (German first edition).
- 1996: Nachtlicht (*Night Lamp*), translated by Andreas Irle (German first edition).
- 1997: Der Lachende Magier (*The Eyes of the Overworld*), translated by Lore Strassl.
- 1998: Die Domänen von Koryphon (*The Grey Prince*), translated by Lore Strassl.
- 1999: Kaleidoskop der Welten (*Ports of Call*), translated by Andreas Irle (first German edition).

* "Großplanet" and "Showboot-Welt" are both limited, numbered editions with a circulation of 150 copies each.
All books are thread-sewn, bound in linen and stamped.

Sam and Helen have enough problems of their own, and saving a world sounds like a tall order. But fate has a way of contriving inexorable necessity, and in the end they go; of their own free will, determined to make the best of a bad situation.

But nothing is as it seems, and what looked 'difficult' soon turned into apparently 'impossible'. And the price for accomplishing what they set out to do might just turn out to be their doom.

Seladiënna is the longest book I've ever written. It was first written in late 2000, in a period of less than eight weeks; one of those tales that just seemed to write itself. Only the last part suffered some later revisions in the story-line; otherwise this is basically as it was penned. It may be my most personal book; and, looking back at it from almost five years on, I realize that it is as much a homage to Heinlein as it is to Vance.

Seladiënna is rated 'mature'. It includes a considerable amount of sex and violence; none of it gratuitous, but occasionally very explicit. Not for children; nor for the faint hearted, or politically or religiously touchy. A friend, who has read most of my books (often on a computer screen) and who has not been reluctant to be critical when he thought he needed to be, said this about it (the review is at lulu.com):

'A brilliant book, one that really made me think. The opening evokes vivid and memorable scenes of an Arthurian legend, but the characters then face very real, every-day, modern issues and choices that are anything but fairy tales.

Especially the scenes at Loe Pool and the flight to the spirits were absolutely gripping. I read them on-screen with my finger glued to the scroll key. I could feel the wind on my face, the emotions of Helen and Sam, hear the riders bearing down. Throughout, the environment is beautifully depicted. In the descriptive passages of the alternate Earth, its landscapes, people, and cities, there was a definite flavor of Noever's novel, *Kaean*, coming through.

The violence in *Seladiënna* gave me pause for thought. People can broadly be classified into two groups: those who impose their ideals and modify their environment, at whatever cost; and those who adapt to the given conditions. Which is the right approach? Superficially, Sam and Helen's trigger-happy willingness to destroy the spirits shocked me, and yet I could not fault their reasons. Till Noever invariably juxtaposes 'right' versus 'wrong,' forcing one to reconsider these labels. The protagonists are such likeable, engaging people who end up doing things one might find ethically questionable. But would I do better? Does anyone have the right to change someone else's destiny? On the other hand, can inaction be justified? The answers may not be as straightforward as we often like to pretend.'

Making people think is probably a good thing; and questions have always been much more important than the answers we give.

For those who cannot afford the cost of either softcover or hardcover editions, the book can be downloaded as a PDF at very low cost indeed. I would appreciate your comments, no matter what you have to say. Story tellers thrive on feedback from their audience, even if it is negative. The worst a story-teller can suffer is indifference.

- 1999: Cugel der Schlaue (*Cugel's Saga*), translated by Lore Strassl
 2000: Der Sternenkönig (*The Star King*), translated by Andreas Irle (first unabridged German version)
 2001: Die Mordmaschine (*The Killing Machine*), translated by Andreas Irle (first unabridged German version).
 2002: Der Palast der Liebe (*The Palace of Love*), translated by Andreas Irle (first unabridged German version).
 2003: Das Gesicht (*The Face*), translated by Andreas Irle, with Patrick Dusoulier.
 2003: Das Buch der Träume (*The Book of Dreams*), translated by Andreas Irle.
 2004: Sklaven der Klau (*Slaves of the Klau*), translated by Andreas Irle (based on V.I.E. text).
 2004: Lurulu, translated by Andreas Irle (First World edition)
 2005: Großplanet (*Big Planet*), translated by Andreas Irle (first unabridged German version, based on V.I.E. text).
 2006: Showboot-Welt (*Showboat World*), translated by Andreas Irle (based on V.I.E. text).



DISSECTING ANTI-AMERICANISM IN FRANCE

La Bannière Étalée, by Erik Svane — eriksvane.com
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*Préface de Guy Millière**, translated for EXTANT by Paul Rhoads

With an impressive arsenal of evidence 'La Bannière Étalée' irrefutably shows that, contrary to what numerous Frenchmen think, their opposition to Washington is not explained only by their innate lucidity, the presence of George W. Bush in the White House, and the supposed injustices of U.S. foreign policy.

From the Cold War to the Iraq crisis, from fast food to the Kyoto agreement, from the poverty of the American population to *capitalisme sauvage*, Erik Svane dissects the arguments of the French press, examining them minutely to show how French anti-Americanism is based on extreme partiality and prejudice.

Erik Svane does not limit himself to describing anti-Americanism, which he observes on a daily basis, or to explaining how the anti-American obsession has influenced French foreign policy for the last 60 years, he also lifts

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the veil on how prejudiced French foreign policy choices, often lauded to the skies in France, are seen in the rest of the world, from the land of the 'cowboys', to other European Countries, to post-Saddam Iraq.

Erik Svane is a free-lance journalist of double nationality: Danish and American, who spends three quarters of his time in Europe. He is the founder of the association Americans Anonymous.



La Bannière Étalée

See: underbahn.gorillaguerrilla.com/0977422410.html for more information.



VIEW FROM AMERICA

Spending most of November in the USA I met with experiences running counter to my advertised optimism about the current way of the world. Of course I was going among my old friends and relations, members of what may somewhat justly be called the 'north-eastern socio-cultural elite'. These people, who regard themselves as the creme de creme of the world's most enlightened folk, in the current atmosphere of near-hysteria regarding Iraq and global warming cannot be brought within hailing distance of a grudging admission that the electors of the current American President might not all be fanatic morons shamelessly manipulated and probably sub-human.

The *New York Times*, principal organ of this self-anointed 'intelligence' of the most powerful country in the history of the world, has disintegrated into the most caricatured partisanship, as if we had gone back 300 years to the time when Jonathan Swift lent his powerful

pen to the absurd and self-destructive cause of slandering the Duke of Marlborough—though, on second thought, the level to which the *Times* has sunk is more in the spirit of the scurrilous attacks on Marie Antoinette, which prepared her execution before an audience of bloodthirsty knitters, the famous 'tricoteuses' of the French Terror.

On one *Times* cover they showed a solemn photo of their hero of the moment, Congressman John Murtha, in a gesture of episcopal blessing, lit by a gleam of spiritual light against a background of sober columns, with the capital dome, glimpsed though a window, in the guise of Universal Church illuminated in glory. Another day the cover had a series of photos, like a cartoon, showing the adventures of George Bush trying exit a locked door from a stage in China. The 3rd panel showed the comic expression with which Bush, I would say, good-humoredly mocked himself when door turned out to be locked, but presented by the *Times* as yet another example of his shameful stupidity. How the editors think such pandering to their prejudices is going to enhance their influence on the national debate is beyond me. Their circulation is dropping, as they cannot fail to know, even among Leftists. I had personal evidence of this when a certain concert* though advertised in the *Times* yet remained unknown to many people who normally would have been aware of it from that source.

The spirit of democracy, that foundation of the unprecedented freedom, and consequent wealth and power, enjoyed by Americans today, seems dead in many minds. The president, his cabinet officers, and that electoral majority who brought them to power, have been vilified to me by almost everyone I know or met during my 3 week stay, and in terms so round, that sometimes, in my peregrinations around Massachusetts and New York, I wished to escape to some 'red state', where another opinion might occasionally be heard. These folk—my own family and friends mind you!—have forgotten how they got where they are. Many of these people are first generation Americans. Many have lived though the 1930s. Given the nature and intensity of their philosophical and political convictions, it is ironic that they could do nothing better to prepare another Democratic defeat in 2008.

Wondering what motivates this crescendo of extremism, the very quality the Left complains so bitterly about in their political opponents, I come to this speculation; the triumphant doctrines of the last 300 years, the rationality and progress which have been the key-notes of the thinking of generations of this elite, are foundering. The tools of their intellectual ascendancy, already rusty, are now disintegrating in their hands. Human motivation is not, after all, resumed by economics. Human good is not reducible to brute pleasures and comforts. The glossy veneer of this conceptual world has been scratched; the tawdry substance of pride and cynicism underneath is beginning to show.

If America, and modern European liberal democracy, are importantly based on the doctrines of Hobbs, Locke and Adam Smith, according to which the best foundation for government and society are the natural human passions

for security and acquisitiveness, that is not all they are based on. It is becoming more and more obvious that, while such explanations may not be untrue as far as they go, humans have other motivations as well, and the more idealistic classical philosophies, as well as religion, which are the intellectual back-drop to these other understandings, are also part of the foundation of the American and the European liberal democracies. We need not, therefore, fear the collapse of our culture or our regimes by a shift in emphasis between these understandings, quite the contrary—but worries of this order do not seem to be on anyone's agenda.

The most distasteful, but also an ironic aspect of these elite behaviors, is the unmitigated contempt shamelessly expressed for common folk, as well as members of other cultures, groups until so recently ardently championed in the name of democracy and diversity. The patronizing regard of the elite for these groups has evaporated; ordinary people who dared vote for Bush, and members of other cultures like the backward Iraqis have become 'extremist fanatics', or 'unfit for democracy'. And yet any of the emerging politicians of the new Iraq whom I have seen speak, seem to me people of such gravitas and character I would be proud to have American politicians behave half as well as they seem to me to be doing. I am no multi-culturalist but, weather or not we are freeing Iraq, I think we could learn lessons of civilization from some of those people. Yammer about time-tables for Iraq withdrawal, sniveling about the stupidity, greed and mendaciousness of Bush and his neo-cons, disdain for red-state red-necks, amounts to a bigoted, if unarticulated, isolationism which will fail to win votes in an era when most Americans, however they understand the nature of our problems, agree that they are urgent and, however they calculate the battle ought to be waged, feel America, and the West, should meet the crisis with vigor and exercise world leadership. The majority of Americans remain idealistic, whatever their disagreement on pragmatic questions. Retreat into smug isolationism, however masked, will not win a presidential election in 2008, just as Kerry, to his credit, did not try to win it that way in 2004.

It happens to be my personal opinion that the war in Iraq, and Bush policy generally, is good, but it is also my opinion that I might be wrong. I lack the metaphysical assurance of my elite relations, which is such that conversation is impossible—not that I sought it; I had no intention of trying to convince anyone that Bush is not a liar or that the Iraq war is not a disaster. I was assaulted and regaled with their passions. The best I could do, in conversations I never initiated and which began with sneering or embarrassed references to my alleged 'right wing extremism' or, to the contrary, the assumption I must be in agreement with their so self-evidently obvious positions, was to suggest that, even if the 'radical Christian right' has indeed 'highjack' the country and is positioning itself to destroy the Constitution as well

* Of music by George Perle (my step-father).

as the world in general, nothing is gained by imitating the blind obstinacy and slander which they complain these fanatic rednecks display.

This controversy and these passions are not, however, confined to the north eastern united states; the virtual world is also loud with them, and the neighborhood of the VIE is not exempt. On his 'Gaeen Reach', Bruce Yergil complains that Christian and Republican fanatics have given us 'a moron for a president', which provoked Parsifal Pankarow to the following questions:

. . .and so all the people who voted for the evil moron Bush and—arguendo—elected him twice were—what?—duped, hoodwinked, stampeded like cattle?

And Bush and his masters were able to do this because--why?—Americans are stupid? Too stupid to deserve democracy?

And if so, then therefore. . .

I am not trying to put words in your mouth, just trying to follow the train of thought that starts with the premise that at least half the US electorate has, twice, voted for an evil moron. If you believe that, what in the world must you believe about democracy? Dead-serious question.

Y'know I remember being in Europe in 1982, and recall how many young European "progressives" had worked themselves into a true hysteria of fear and rage over Ronald Reagan. To them, he was clearly a war-mongering imbecile who would settle for nothing less than a totally gratuitous nuclear Armageddon, and was sure to bring it about within the year.

Many of the folks I spoke to were—no exaggeration—actually expecting to be incinerated at the whim of the religious madman who the Americans, in their blind stupidity, had elected.

Didn't turn out that way, did it? Don't mistake me—I am no fan of all that Reagan did. . .I didn't vote for him and didn't like him, but I never believed he was a Bible-thumping imbecile on the brink of incinerating the world on a whim. And I DID hear just that from a lot of the "progressives" in Europe in the 80s. So please understand when I sigh and roll my eyes now, when I hear similar crap re Bush from the neo-Trotskyite Left .

Bruce, however, confined his response to insistence that elections have been stolen, and:

. . .the problem of the shift in media ownership. The public is woefully uninformed. Now that the public is finally catching on, Bush and his cabal are headed for jail. Us Berkeleyites knew the Bush family were crooks back during Reagan's tenure, which threw our country into record debt and created a whole new class, the homeless.

To which Parsifal responded:

. . .is democracy dead, and dissent repressed, and [are] our neocon masters just [allowing] us to natter and vent on these harmless boards, in a show of Marcusian Repressive Tolerance? [. . .] If so, what next? If not, why not?

Bruce Y, calling Parsifal a 'heartless bastard' for, as he illogically alleged, ignoring those killed in Iraq, as if that were the only factor to be considered, he went on to press his conspiracy theory of American elections:

. . .If the US press was as free as the foreign press, the public would never have swallowed the lies of the gop [but we're] fighting back and making ground. I do worry that Bush will allow another terrorist attack on the US to bolster his standing in the polls.

Democracy has been stolen. The thieves have been identified. The wheels of justice are slowly turning and prison looms for the Bush regime. Democracy will be restored.

How do you talk to guy like that? Parsifal Pankarow, in his classic style, used a quotation from Lincoln's 2nd Inaugural:

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Which, I suppose, is just one more example of fanatic Christian extremism.

There are always more than two opinions on a subject however, and the great Alexander Feht can be counted upon to supply it. He joined this discussion in a repost entitled, I DON'T BELIEVE IN DEMOCRACY which, as I am sure we can all agree, is a fine sentiment for a immigrant to American from Soviet Russia. Feht propounded his Ayn Randian Social Darwinism in a couple of panscient pronunciamenti:

Modern democracy is a technologically supported oligarchy where the ruling class of hereditary nomenklatura is in collusion with the unproductive majority of the tax users to exploit the productive minority of the tax payers.

Reason and freedom can exist only in a republic where only those who pay taxes can vote, where the weight of the vote is proportional to the taxes paid, and where government workers and wards cannot vote (because of the obvious conflict of interest).

Wow. Since the poor, and government employees, get to vote in America it is, ergo, a place of Irrationality and Slavery. You heard it first on the Gaeen Reach. Though ideologically perfervid Feht is not absolutely rigid:

In real world [. . .] we need to chose the lesser of evils. A man who inherited his wealth is preferable to a man who married his wealth. A hereditary member of nomenklatura who has some principles, however outdated, is preferable to an unscrupulous social climber without any principles.

Moron or not, Bush so far has been thinking two moves ahead of his political opponents, who are reduced to standing on the sidewalks and batting their eyelids. Saddam is in jail, Chirac is in tar and feathers, sheikhs paid their national debts and thank Bush profusely, Syrian dictator beshat himself in fear, while dollar is climbing up, economy is growing, and oil prices are returning to normal. As to the government spending, the only way to limit it is to create a

huge deficit (as Reagan has shown); the bigger the deficit, the better for all who need smaller government.

Not that I am happy. The right thing to do (and I am not joking) was to nuke Damascus and Tehran one hour after WTC towers toppled, and to tell the remaining scum fascists: "Know your real Lord, or Mecca is next!"

Feht is not happy. Should we weep with him in regret that a trigger-happy American president didn't 'smoke 'em out' with nukes on 9/11/2000, inaugurating what might be called the 'Fehrtian Era'?

Still, I do like the idea of bombing Mecca—the way Churchill liked the idea of bombing Turin and Milan when Musolini got uppity in 1939—but I'd run the operation somewhat differently than Feht would. My plan calls for conventional explosives, menaces and alerts over time, and detailed effecuation per the developing situation, reserving the kaaba for last; and before that monument to pre-islamic animism is reduced to dust, like that monument to world trade, the twin towers (with 3000 people inside), one may hope that the doses of their own medicine already administered would have cured what ails them.

If this plan is not particularly inspired by Christian charity, it might, at least, satisfy Skogel:

Skogel, throwing back his head, laughed and slapped the counter. "That's more like it! Too many wrong-doers escape with whole skins and profit! Revenge! There's the word! I wish you luck! Good modes, sir." And Skogel, turning his back, stalked stiff-legged back into the dimness of his shop.

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ECHOES IN THE ETHER

Paul,

I for one enjoy Extant thank you for writing it. Now the comment:-

Derek Benson "thinks that you may have written some good stuff in your Lurulu review but is not re-reading it to find out".

This is an extraordinary discourtesy, as well as being an example of intellectual arrogance that goes a long way to discrediting whatever argument, valid or not, that he wants to support. The only way to convincingly attack someone's opinion is to take it one block at a time and to say this or that assertion is nonsense for this or that reason. Only in

this way can a third party make a sensible judgement about the relative merits of the contending parties cases. Sorry. That's quite enough rant from me.

What I would like to know is how the VIE got the permission from the copyright owners to republish the works that they owned. This has puzzled me nearly as much as what sort of divine madness overcame the founders of the VIE to think that they had the remotest chance of not merely re-publishing all the books but doing so in the unimproved form as JV wrote them.

I cannot realistically hope for an answer to the "divine madness" question, if there is one you would be putting it in bottles and selling it, but I really would like to know about copyright.*

Regards

John Edwards.



Dear Sir,

Today I came home from a somewhat depressing day at work to find a large box waiting for me - my VIE Special Collection (I purchased the "Hard SF" set) had arrived.

I can't quite describe to you the delight with which I opened the superlative packaging and studied the lovely volumes that emerged one by one from their wrapping. The books are a visual delight as well as, of course, a literary delight.

While the VIE project represents the combined labor of many volunteers, including myself, I'm addressing this email to you as Editor-in-Chief. You may regard it as an unavoidable side-effect of that lofty title.

My message is simply this: thank you very much. For everything.

I hope you will find it in you not to be affected by the inevitable and ineffectual carping of certain would-be critics. In such cases, I find a lofty dismissal of their croaking most conducive to maintaining an appropriate mental equilibrium.

Vance-pastiche-prose aside, thank you for your heroic labors. I (and many others) owe you.

Sincerely,

Ivo Steijn, Pasadena, CA



The long-awaited VIE reader's edition is now arrived, and I have begun theunpacking/scrutinising/reading revel. No doubt I shall be occupied with examining this treasure for countless days to come.

Please accept my thanks for your efforts in bringing this magnificent project to a successful (dare one say triumphal?) conclusion.

Best wishes,

Michael Rathbun



* See reply, page 22.

All,

I had a very curious and interesting experience. A routine Google search turned up an option to search in Google Books. After my search there turned up no hits, I searched for "Jack Vance". This turned up quite a few hits, many of which were not Jack Vance novels. One item was "Biological Performance of Materials: Fundamentals of Biocompatibility" by Jonathan Black. Curious, I checked this one out. It is a book published by Marcel Dekker in 1999. In Section 11.5, "Thinking Twice about Tissue Engineering", there is a serious discussion of *Clarges*:

However, I would like to note a more fundamental concern about TE that was raised nearly half a century ago by Jack Vance (1956) in a novel entitled *To Live Forever*. Vance imagined a city society, *Clarges*, on a remote world, in the last stages of societal decay. Its citizens on one hand possess an obsession about immortality but on the other, submit to an agreement for State limitation of life span through the use of public assassins, with postponement of "termination" based upon a continual measurement of one's individual contribution to the public good.

As one would suspect, in *Clarges*, some people are more equal than others and society, in Vance's account, has evolved into five social classes: Brood, Wedge, Third, Verge, and Amaranth. It is the privileged Amaranth, the social and economic elite, who have solved the problem of immortality. When those few judged to have achieved the most and contributed the most are admitted into the Amaranth class.

"Five cells were extracted from (the) body. After such modification of genes as might be desired, they were immersed in a solution of nutrients, hormones and various special stimulants, where they rapidly evolved through the stages of embryo, infant, child and adolescent. . . . When invested with the prototype's memory-bank, they became the identity of the original: full-fledged surrogates." (Vance, 1956)

Amaranths zealously keep their memory-bank recordings up-to-date, and their surrogates are carefully guarded against the day that the original (the prototype) might have a fatal accident, develop an incurable disease, or be irrecoverably injured or killed by violence.

The novel centers on a problem: one of the surrogates escapes and tries to lead a life independent of its prototype. There are issues raised of the meaning of self, of the value of life, of involuntary servitude, and of manipulation of the fundamental elements of human existence.

(One wallah noted: 'The quote from Black's book is in error. The book doesn't center on a surrogate trying to live independently of its prototype. This is a sideline in the novel.'

It may be a sideline but it is also the denouement; when the surrogates are liberated at the end of the story the legal and social problems created brings down the whole system.)

Dear John,

In 1999 the copyrights to various Vance texts were in diverse conditions. The Vance's own the copyrights, of course, but some texts were under contract to various publishers. These outstanding obligations were more or less limited, and the longest one, if memory serves, was to expire in 2003. Since at the time we thought we would publish prior to 2003 (in fact only Wave 1 was ready by that year) the holder of that contract was contacted and was ready to wave the final months of his rights, if need be, for the sake of the project.

The EQ books were not then a consideration because Jack preferred that they not be included, but special permission was needed for them, which was given by the Ellery Queen Estate, which will be acknowledged in volume 14 bis.

It also turns out that there is an American copyright law which allows any writer, one time, to print a limited edition of his work. So, since Jack himself supported the creation of the VIE, the copyright situation seemed unproblematic. There was, however, a difficulty. The literary agent was not interested in the project, since it seemed to them to compromise the possibility of sales of future reprints. This obstacle was overcome in several ways. First of all Jack Vance expressed his desire to the agent that the VIE project be carried out, pointing out his legal right. However, it is my opinion that he would not have stood on it in the face of determined opposition by the agent given that his whole income derived from their work, even though most sales of Vances' books are in foreign translation. It was explained to the agent that the set would be limited, and that, for various reasons, potential subscribers would already own as many of the books as were already available, and particularly the collectors among them were not unlikely to buy future publications even if they doubled their holdings.

Thanks to this combination of approaches the agent finally agreed, on the understanding that the set be limited to a few hundred—I think it was 300 or 500, but I can't remember now. This number was negotiated up to 1000. In the event we had subscriptions for some 600 sets—and would have had more if Dan Gunter had done his duty.

Regarding divine madness; since you are one of the persons afflicted with it, and so gave the project a week of back-breaking labor as a Wave 1 packer, the answer is in, so to speak, your own breast.

Paul



GRILLED DOG

A musical version of cyber events recounted elsewhere in this issue of EXTANT:

BANNER MAN

*Hay fiddle dee-dee,
Dan went on a spree,
Dan, Dan, the banner man,
Re-banned me: one two three!*

*Hay fiddle dee-cow,
Dan re-banned me: pow!
Dan, Dan, the banner man,
Yes he did, and how.*

*Dandy verbal fop,
Righteous cyber cop,
Dan, Dan, the banner man
Really blew his top!*

*Hay fiddle dee-dum,
Dare I ask: 'how come?'
Dan, Dan, the banner man,
Told me: 'cause your scum!*

*'Also cause your crass,
'Yer head is up yer ass,'
Dan, Dan, the banner man,
Said; 'I don't like yer sass.'*

*Hay fiddle dee-poo
Whatever shall I do?
Dan shoved his banner
Up the old wazoo.*

*Hay fiddle dee-dee
What will become of me?
Dan, Dan, the banner man,
Proclaimed 'obscurity':*

*Is it true?
Am I through?
To silence doomed by Dan's taboo?
O're his knee
He punished me,
Spanked with bland hypocrisy;
A hurricane
Of pompous blame;
Can I bare the public shame?
My little joke
Went up in smoke,
My spirit and my pride are broke!*

*How I brood,
In dismal mood,
Upon a fate which Dan has skewed.
Where the court,
To bring a tort,
Of banning Dan to make report?
Where the judge
To slake the grudge
And pull as fudge,
Or make to budge,
A destiny,
So cruel and 'gris',
Dan's fixed for me:
To be the public enemy!*

*Hay fiddle dee-dong,
A mighty boom and bong!
Dan, Dan, the banner man,
Pounded on his gong.*



LAST WORD

EXTANT will not survive much past delivery of the EQ volume. Anyone who wishes to commemorate the VIE project in their own words, or to make other statement in this publication of record, now that COSMOPOLIS is no more, should not hesitate long.

*ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Thanks to Rob Friefeld for his
help with Extant #9.*

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