
C O S M O P O L I S

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Now Available! *VIE* Wearables!

Buttons, briefcases, jackets, shirts, and caps. Emblazoned with Jack Vance and the *VIE* logo (the Winged Being). Highly customizable with your name or team name. Or any other text you might desire.

If you don't see what you are looking for and would like additional garments available, please ask and we'll see what we can do.

These items are available at:

<http://www.ourstillwaters.org/stillwaters/viepromo/>

and brought to you by *VIE* volunteers Joel Riedesel and Robin Rouch.



*This fleece crew sweatshirt with *VIE* logo can be yours for \$26.*

Project Report

by Derek W. Benson

Joel Riedesel has taken over as Work Flow Commissar from Suan. Paul Rhoads writes:

“Joel will need to get up to speed about each and every *VIE* process and active job. He is hereby authorized to pester and hector all and any, from the lowly to the most exalted—full disclosure is obligatory! Once he has gathered his information he will know all there is to know about where every text, and its subsidiary parts, is in the work flow, and will be helping us coordinate our efforts and refine our processes.”

Damien Jones is now managing the entire Double Digitizing effort. Former DD-Scanning manager Richard Chandler writes:

“I have asked our Editor-in-Chief, Paul Rhoads, to replace me as manager of the DD-OCR effort. I believe that I was doing an exceptional job as a DD-OCR volunteer and a lousy job as its manager. Frequently, it was ‘easier’ for me to do a job myself than to find someone else to do it; that is the wrong way to manage any significant part of a project as ambitious as the *VIE* is.

“My recommendation to Paul was that my replacement *not* be an individual who was already involved with DD-OCR work out of concern that he/she would fall into the same trap (of doing rather than delegating) I was in. He has persuaded Damien Jones to extend his management of the DD-jockey force to cover OCR as well. This is a good choice for at least two reasons: Damien has already done an exceptional job with the jockeys, but more importantly, since jockeying immediately follows OCR’ing, it puts him exactly where he needs to be to smoothly coordinate the two tasks.

“Those of you with active assignments should send them to Damien on completion. I am sending my tracking spreadsheet to him, so he will know current assignments. He is one of the recipients of this message so you can get his e-mail address from the list above.

“As for DD-OCR work, I expect to continue to set the standard you can all aspire to, but you better get on the ball: there’s not that much left to do!”

Russ Wilcox has created a *VIE* online press kit which can be accessed from our main webpage.

Compostion is currently at work on the following texts, which have all been signed off by TI:

Novels:

The Book of Dreams
The Languages of Pao
Clarges
The Flesh Mask
Madouc
Night Lamp

Stories:

The Last Castle
Commander Tynnott’s Insufferable Redheaded Daughter
Cat Island
The World Thinker
The Men Return

YOU HAVE DONE IT!

VIE Work Credits

compiled by Hans van der Veeke

Following are the volunteer work credits for each text that has cleared Post-proofing and is printer-ready. Under the same rubric we will announce each collection volume that is completed.

Check your name! A misspelling here may indicate a misspelling in our database, thereafter in the books themselves (or else a simple Cosmopolis blunder). We don't want to spell your name wrong, or leave off a Jr. or Esq. or other important element. To correct your name, contact Suan at suan@cs.wisc.edu Also contact Suan if we have overlooked you.

MEET MISS UNIVERSE
Finished 28 Aug 2001

Digitizer
Gan Uesli Starling

Pre-proofers
Rob Friefeld
Matt Picone
John Robinson Jr.

Special Reformatting
Ron Chernich

DD-Scanners
Richard Chandler
John A. Schwab

DD-Jockey
Rob Gerrand

DD-Monkey
David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer
Bob Moody

TI
John A. Schwab

Implementation
Donna Adams
Damien G. Jones
Chris Reid

Composition
John A. Schwab

Post-proofing
"Penwipers"
Rob Friefeld (team manager)

Enrique Alcatena
Top Changwatchai
Robert Collins
Andrew Edlin
Rob Knight
Quentin Rakestraw
Mike Schilling

RUMFUDDLE
Finished 4 Sep 2001

Digitizers
Richard Chandler
Alan Hughes

Pre-proofers
John Foley

Special Reformatting
John Foley

DD-Scanners
Joel Hedlund
Thomas Rydbeck
Billy Webb

DD-Jockey
Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey
Thomas Rydbeck
Technoproofer
Peter Ikin

TI
Thomas Rydbeck

Implementation
Patrick Dusoulier

Composition
Andreas Irlé

Post-proofing
"The Tanchinaros"
David Reitsema (team manager)
Andreas Björklind
Carina Björklind
Top Changwatchai
Charles King
Per Kjellberg
David Mortimore
William Schaub
Gabriel Stein
Russ Wilcox

Reflections on being a Vance Reader, in Light of the War on the West

by Paul Rhoads

Having stated, here in *Cosmopolis*, that reading Vance will help save Western Civilization, the time has come when this claim can be considered in light of the menace, from the exterior this time, which is now so clear. I certainly think my own Vance reading is helping me to cope with recent events, both emotionally and intellectually. Looking back on the morning of September 11th, it still seems phantasmagoric; the news items tumbling in, one on top of the other, the World Trade Center buildings falling a quarter of a mile out of the sky and collapsing into dust carrying thousands to terrifying deaths before our eyes; contemplating the horror of what must have been lived by the people in the four planes, considering the damage to no less a building than the Pentagon, and realizing how, if not for the quick-witted heroism of a few men, the Capitol dome would have also been destroyed! And finally, amidst the surprise, shock, stupefaction, petrification, anger, vengefulness, and firm resolve to stomp out terror at all costs, the spectacle of contentment at our fate, in pockets of both Islam and the West.

This event is certainly unprecedented. It has been compared to Pearl Harbor but, as Bob Lacovara has pointed out in a *VIE* e-mail, that attack was made by an enemy who did not hide. It was perhaps a dastardly surprise, but it was a conventional act of war, the rationale of which was understood by everyone on both sides. By contrast with September 11th, Pearl Harbor might even be seen as a challenge, a modern version of the thrown gauntlet of chivalry. It was aimed at our military power in the Pacific, and not civilians with no idea their country was, or might be, at war. But September 11th was neither a challenge, nor the act of an enemy with conventional territorial and political goals. It is part of an ongoing, escalating campaign of annihilation by a diabolical and clandestine brotherhood of 'pures' who, like the Cathars and other sects of the past, believe any act they commit, like any thought they think, is smiled upon by Heaven. This is the basic temptation of evil, and it is something we learn much about in Vance.

Evil is generated when, like infants, we remain the center of the universe. Unlike other writers, who use villains merely to get things moving, Vance, attentive to the whole spectrum of reality, shows us something of their spiritual anatomy. His evil men have many motivations, including spite and revenge, but Vance exposes the varieties of solipsism that is the essence of evil. Solipsism, in the last analysis, is according to oneself god-like status, or assuming that one's own thoughts are the divine thoughts, or that one is the privileged instrument of the divine. The anti-Western terrorists we are up against practice evil in this undiluted form, and Vance readers should have little trouble grasping what kind of folks these are.

The unprecedentedness of September 11th is undeniable, but must be put in perspective. There is nothing new about hijacking of airliners or indifference to innocent life. Suicide attacks have been more and more frequent, notably the back-pack bomb at the Tel Aviv discotheque, and attacks on prominent American symbols, governmental, military and economic, have also recently been made: the U.S. embassy bombings, the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen, and the attacks in France—by Green extremists led by the anti-globalist* Bove Jose, or carried out by groups under his influence—of

MacDonald's restaurants, including the murder by time bomb of an innocent French MacDonald's employee. And all over Islam it is notorious that America is commonly referred to as 'The Great Satan', a term even invoked in daily prayer at many mosques, so the jubilatory reactions should be no surprise to anyone. Lastly, the attitude of those in the West who agree with the jubilators, can shock no one who is half awake. Anti-Westernism, and anti-Americanism in particular, is a staple of the Left and though, for many leftists, this is merely a sort of pose, now dropped in the face of this blatant menace to our existence, for others it goes deeper, and many Westerners are eager to cast Israel and America, not to say the whole West, something close to the role cast for them by Islamic propaganda. Western anti-Westernism is not identical to Islamic anti-Westernism, but many of the ideas imbued by decades of Communist propaganda are common to both.

Radical Islam and Communist propaganda agree that the West is militarily aggressive and aggrandizing, dominated by moral turpitude, greed, exploitation and indifference to human suffering. As many Islamic countries leave the cold war era and enter the 21st century, they carry with them the Communist inspired 'anti-colonialist' baggage which has been wreaking havoc in so much of the third world for the last half century.**

Living in France as I do, where Communist propaganda has penetrated minds even more deeply than elsewhere, I can report, for example, that the average Frenchman is convinced that the streets of American cities are notable for palaces of the super-rich, and throngs of homeless paupers. Many Frenchmen really think the American poor, a significant proportion of the population in their minds, starve to death in the gutters to general indifference. They refuse to believe, or are amazed or indignant when informed, that America indeed has a system of unemployment compensation, which antedates their own, or state financed medical care for the poor (from which I, personally, benefited, to the tune of \$40,000, about 20 years ago), or that black people are in fact not subject to incessant and institutionalized racism. There are also few Frenchmen, to say nothing of Americans—and in particular Jews from New York such as myself—not convinced that the Israelis are

*a post cold-war cover for anti-Americanism

**Of course there was an American brand of anti-colonialism, after World War II in particular, but this was pro-democratic, and not anti-Western.

fascist-imperialist terrorists, while the Palestinians are noble freedom fighters; totally ignoring, and even indifferent to, the historic and contemporary realities, and eager to buy into the anti-Western version of this story. Ordinary people, both French and American, are not to be blamed too harshly for this; the international news media is complicit in the campaign of unrelenting propaganda that maintains this malicious calumny. According to this version of what goes on in the world, the Israelis are gratuitously and systematically exterminating the Palestinians, the poverty of Africa and Asia is a direct consequence of American riches, and the most deplorable thing going on in recent years is the American embargo of Iraq and Cuba, which is being blamed for hundreds of thousands of deaths in that country, while the chemical weapons which Saddam used on both Israel and the Kurds are never mentioned, and so on and so forth!

I am not naive enough to think that reading Vance can directly combat such disinformation, but I do feel it must help develop critical imagination and leave people more open to realities. Readers of *Cadwal*, certainly, are warned forever against dubious characters like Yassir Arafat who present themselves as champions of 'peace' and 'freedom'.

To round up this review with a comment on religion: there are those who draw a parallel between Christianity and Islam, comparing the former unfavorably with the latter by references to such things as the 'holocaust' of the American Indians, the crusades of the middle ages, and the famous 'tolerance' of Islam. In these regards certain facts should be brought to everyone's attention:

The 'holocaust' of the American Indians:

It was not Christianity that 'slaughtered' the American Indians, in the clear sense that it is radical Islam which destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the Pentagon, killing thousands. It may have been Christians who fought in the Indian Wars, but that these reflected a policy of gratuitous slaughter is a lie. Certain Indian tribes were war-like, and practiced slaughter upon each other before the white man came on the scene. The image of the Indians as a bunch of happy campers whose primitive idyll was fouled up by the pale faces, is simply un-historical. The story of the American Indian may not be one that America can look back on with complacent

satisfaction, but it is far from integrally shameful, and certainly not to be compared with the terror of Communism, responsible for over 100,000,000 murders in the 20th century. European colonists and Indians often interacted productively and peaceably. The French colonists intermarried with Indians. Our image of the Indian on horse-back is part of that picture, since horses were in America before the advent of the Europeans. Many individuals and tribes (speaking of the American Indian is a distortion) integrated themselves into United States society, and others still exist, living in their traditional places. The Gay Head Indians of Martha's Vineyard were a fixture of my childhood, and they are still there as the proprietors of some very exclusive real estate. The idea that the United States ever had a policy of annihilating the Indians, or that the policy of displacing certain troublesome tribes was in any way 'Christian', is absurd. I myself am 1/64 Cherokee, which should prove something, though I'm not sure what, and I am as indifferent to the fact as I am to the 32/64ths of Russian Jewish blood running in my veins, or the European mish-mash of the remaining 31/64ths. I refuse to be reduced to my genetic heritage. Vance is very interested in genealogy and cultural heritage, but his cosmopolitanism is certainly the overwhelming message of his work.

As for racism and slavery, let it not be forgotten that in Africa, Arabia and China slavery is still a way of life, and the blood shed in the American Civil War, the most murderous war in history up to that time, is certainly some expiation for American slavery. The idea that Abraham Lincoln did not fight the Civil War to end slavery is one of the most despicable calumnies perpetrated by Leftism today.

The Crusades:

The crusades were indeed Christian religious wars, and their objective, as almost no one seems to care to learn, was not gleeful slaughter of Moslems, but only to reopen Jerusalem to Christian pilgrims. That city, where Christ taught and was crucified, had been closed by the Islamic power then running the Near East. The actual battles of the crusades were fought with the famous chivalry of the time, which included respect for one's enemies, as any honest record of the time will make clear, though the Assassins, a hashish chewing Islamic group, did practice terrorism, including suicide attacks. There was indeed a notable, and inexcusable,

crime committed by the 'Christian' soldiers—in this case mostly mercenaries—during one of the later crusades, but it was committed upon the citizens of Byzantium, and is partly responsible for the break between Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity that persists today. The sacking of Byzantium was, of course, not planned, or sanctioned, by Rome.

Christian Doctrine:

It is explicitly stated by Jesus that his followers are to love their enemies. It is also stated that killing is a sin. Few care to learn anything about Church doctrine, but if they did they would know that in the Christian view 'Christians' are just a bunch of sinners, like non-Christians, and they are not made holy by mere adherence to the Church. The Church is a 'light on a hill' for all mankind. Repentance and confession are perpetual Christian duties, and Christians are distinguished only by looking to the Church for correction of their fallen state, and their adherence to Christianity implies recognition of that. 'Christianity' is not a tribe, or a culture, or a country, or a government, while Islam merges easily into these things. But Christianity, like Islam, has a history, and is an element of our culture. For historical reasons (the collapse of the Roman empire in the 5th century) bishops found themselves administrating many areas of Europe and, people being what they are, some of these situations became institutionalized or hereditary in different ways. But such unnatural arrangements are centuries gone, and the Church is glad of it. The Church is not defined, in its essence, by the people who look to its light, and certainly not by those who merely say they do. There are 'Christians' who do not love their enemies, as they are commanded to do by the God they imperfectly, or hypocritically (not the same thing) worship. As for the first Commandment, it has always, from the time of Moses (a murderer himself) been understood to imply a set of exceptions. These include legitimate self-defense, and killing of enemy soldiers in a just war (for any pacifist among my readers, a 'just war' would include clearing Europe of Hitler's armies.)

The Nature of Islam:

Rarely is any attempt made to show, rather than just to affirm, that the Koran is a great spiritual document or that Islam is a great religion; it is a silence that should arouse question. The Koran notoriously promotes Jihad, war against the 'infidels', to whom Islam forbids access to its most sacred places, so that, as in some of Vance's

invented religions, it has a strong local character. Islam is more about identity and power, and its current expansion is based on sheer demography, or a program of identity and hate politics as with the 'Nation of Islam'. It lacks the universal appeal of Christianity, or Buddhism (which is, in fact, not a religion, but a 'sage' approach to life, based upon renunciation and a mystical metaphysics). Islam was invented as a political tool by an aggrandizing tribal hetman, and his book, a farrago of bible texts and inventions, is the faithful reflection of his habits and ambitions.

To return to September 11th: what was unprecedented about the attack was nothing in its nature, only the scope of its daring and success; and it was intended to be even more devastating than it was. The idea, grandiose but pathetically naive, was to obliterate the political and economic power of the United States with one blow. I am sure the ongoing threats and attacks, causing the evacuation and even destruction of facilities in Europe and America, are the work of a sacred army of thousands, and that further acts of murderous terror will be unrelentingly perpetrated. Why should they stop now? They have been at it for decades.

So we are by no means confronted with something new or unknown, but the scale of this act of terror is a wake-up call. In the 1930s many knew that another world war was on the way and that the longer we waited to do something about it the worse it would be. And many have long known, and publicly stated, that we must not sit by and let radical Islam steal a march on us. Is not Saddam doing all he can to develop nuclear devices, as Pakistan, Korea and China, have succeeded in doing? Don't make the mistake of thinking these places are backward! They have an elite, well educated in Western schools. Has everyone forgotten that Saddam launched gas missiles at Israel only 10 years ago, and used these same missiles to exterminate thousands of Kurds? Are people not aware that Qaddafi in Libya, and the criminal Syrian regime are also engaged in such schemes at the highest level of national government? And yet, a staple of news about Iraq, for the last decade, has been the 'scandal' of the American sponsored boycott. The behavior of Syria, in Lebanon and on the Israeli border, is occluded in favor of presenting Israel's acts of self-defense as 'unprovoked state terrorism'. The American anti-missile shield, which Ronald Reagan promised to share with Russia—a logical gesture which I assume

will be respected—is spoken of mainly as an example of American militarism, though such arguments are laughable; would radical Islam have used suicide hijackers if they had an intercontinental ballistic missile armed with a nuclear device? Does anyone not know that China has just such machines, or that North Korea is one of China's closest allies? We must wake up, or be woken up by even more fabulous events than those of September 11th.

It has now become obvious, to all but the willfully blind, that we are up against enemies who are not, as we fondly like to think, 'rational', by which we mean, without knowing it, 'motivated by Judeo-Christian principles'. For what is 'irrational' about killing people you hate? What is irrational about hate itself? Nothing. It is only love of others, the love we are instructed to have by a loving God, that guides us to abjure the 'rationality' of self-interest, to love of our enemies. So, at last we must admit: we live in a world where some people are motivated by pure hate and the intention to destroy and kill. Israel has long known this. Europe and the West, and America in particular, has been hiding from the facts. In ten years of life in France, with about one trip to the States a year, I have lived through two terrorist incidents in Paris airports, one even involving an exploding bomb, billowing smoke, shots, and running men armed with machine-guns; not a good percentage. These incidents never made it onto the French news, which was too busy filling up prime-time with anti-Western non-news sponsored by the very people who attacked New York and Washington, as part of a global strategy of weakening the West.

Apart from the debate about what we knew or didn't know, what we do have or should have in the way of material, diplomacy and espionage; what we need most of all is a renewed conviction that we, in the West, are what we indeed are: the champions of Freedom and Life. In Europe, the Left's favorite bug-bear, Silvio Berlusconi, is currently being lambasted for announcing that the West is the acme of civilization. I will not debate this question here, other than to point out how profoundly anti-Western it is to try to win an argument by force or dismissal which, as usual, the Left is trying to do. If other civilizations are equal to, or greater than, Western civilization, this should be demonstrated by stating, and defending, a true definition of civilization, and then objectively measuring different civilizations by the

resultant criteria. Let the Left do this, rather than proclaiming this equality, and dismissing all discussion with the despicable trump card of relativism.

It is my conviction that readers of Jack Vance are non-ideal propaganda targets. I have often pointed out that, in my view, Vance is a poet of the real. Other artists love to present themselves and their art as exponents of tolerance, compassion and the various fashionable virtues, like peace. This is either a pose, sincere sappiness, or anti-Westernism served up in the form of art. I would like to be shown samples of writings promoted by the literary establishment (which lets out Solzenitsyn for the last 20 years!) or any others, which embody such a rich and unblinking lesson of compassion as the passage in *The Palace of Love* where Gersen rescues Dundine, or such a wrenching lesson of tolerance as when Aillas hangs Sir Hune in Suldrun's Garden. There is nothing like this, that I know about, even in contemporary authors I respect, like Kundera or Lem, to say nothing of clownish scribblers like Paul Auster and Umberto Eco. I would love to see *Cosmopolis* print even extended excerpts from such authors which any *Cosmopolis* reader thinks has powers approaching Vance in these regards.

Reading Vance, among other things, is training in seeing things as they really are. Vance, despite toying with neo-Rousseauian relativism, knows good from evil and makes no bones about it. He has shown us, in broad perspectives, the link of the self—the libidinous, isolated self—and evil. He has written: "The man is evil who coerces obedience to his private ends, destroys beauty, produces pain, extinguishes life." Such a phrase may seem obvious, but like all profound truths it is not obvious at all! Vance has shown us, in clever comic sketches, the tangled intellectual traps of the various isms which plague the contemporary mind. In captivating narratives he has displayed the conduct of true men and women, people not the puppets of the insidious forces of envy and indifference. But he does this without the least whiff of Manichaeian simplification. As a quick demonstration of this, Jeff Ruszczuk, who runs a *VIE* Post-proofing team, appended this quotation to one of his recent e-mails:

"These, then, were Srenki, men whose virtue was an excess of vice, who with leaden zest performed quintessential evil and so redeemed their fellows from turpitude."

It is just a tiny sample, but take a sighting across the points it makes, and recent events are elucidated. Are we not awakened from turpitude by the quintessential evil performed with zest by these Islamic Srenki? Is not their evil, in their own and many other peoples minds, their virtue? Has not patriotism been renewed? Has not the need to worship God been re-legitimized?

Another Post-proofing team head, Till Noever, a New Zealander, recently wrote in another e-mail to all his American friends, myself included:

“ . . . Those who rejoice at this depravity; those who even think that there is any shred of a rationale or justification behind this; those who think that, like I heard people say, anybody ‘brought this upon themselves’; those who support it in any way . . . they are as guilty as those who perpetrated it. I don’t care why they think the way they think . . . How anybody gets to the point where s/he is doesn’t really matter. What matters is where they are, in their lives and in their heads. What matters is what they do. And if they condone this shit . . . well, we — and that means Americans foremost, and just about the whole ‘Western world’ next — should stop feeling guilty about being who and what we are. Let’s instead be proud, for, despite our many bad mistakes, at least it is our ideal not to hurt the innocent . . . However — and this we must all come to grips with in this post WTC era — we may have to seriously re-think the concept of ‘innocence’. A Palestinian youth dancing with joy at the notion of tens of thousands of innocents dying for . . . what? . . . Is he still an ‘innocent’? My thoughts are with you all; and — despite my ingrained antipathy toward anything nationalistic — today I am an American.”

The only respect in which I do not fully agree with Till is that this is a matter for Americans foremost. The whole West is fully implicated.* It is not just that people of all nationalities were killed in the World Trade Center, or that such acts have been committed already in Europe, but that America, like New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and South America, are an extension of old Europe, and their civilization is a prolongation of the

civilization founded on the twin pillars of Classical philosophy and the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Let us ask the question: have we, as Till points out some are saying, brought this upon ourselves? My readers know me for an uncompromising anti-leftist, and a devout Christian (though, sadly, just another sinner!). I therefore cannot condone those aspects of our society which are anti-Christian or anti-‘tradition’ in the sense meant by the people who use this term. Hatred of Christianity and such things as classical works of art and literature, traditional morality, or even architectural forms, is the other side of the coin of Western openness, curiosity and self-consciousness. The true critical spirit, so often abused by those of us who are its lucky inheritors, is absent from other cultures. Our rampant materialism, our cult of sex, our famous and supremely fatiguing ‘youth culture’ with its corybantic absorption in besotting ‘music’s and drugs, the grotesque, self-mutilating scandal of our ‘contemporary art’, our pathological addiction to revolution and radicalism, which it pleases us to export** to more normal and human parts of the world like Africa, Asia and South America where life could be so sweet, but sadly is not! are a list of things that I, a staunch defender of the West, find to criticize. But if I don’t like it here, where can I go? The West, despite these problems — which are by no means superficial — is nonetheless still the expression of all I love most, the most splendid spiritual vistas. Western ‘culture’ is not tribal or local, or static, or introverted, like all other cultures. Judeo-Christianity comes out of the Middle East. Philosophy comes from Greece. But what these places, at a certain moment, carried to great heights, was carried forward by all who let themselves be touched by them, in classical North Africa, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, England, and many other countries, sometimes including Russia and other ‘non-Western’ places. So ‘Western culture’ is something like American citizenship; it does not depend on birth or blood, but allegiance. It is really the ideal of knowledge and Beauty, in the absolute. Only the West studies other ‘cultures’, a concept invented by Westerners (Germans, as it happens), it is therefore the universal culture. Anything else, however rich or charming, is parochial. Do Westerners flock to the east and south? No, the opposite, and it is no accident.

*Let not the IRA and other Western terrorist groups be invoked; these people, bad as they may be, have local goals and were not involved in September 11th, though the anti-mondialists are ‘Islamist fellow travellers’ to coin a phrase.

**Marx was a German, Pol Pot and Ho Chi Minh both attended the Sorbonne, etc.

For those who think me too extreme in my condemnation of our cultural decay, take note: Karl Heinz Stockhausen, one of the most famous of all contemporary composers, when asked about his reaction to September 11th, had this to say:

“What happened there is—they all have to rearrange their brains now—is the greatest work of art ever. That characters can bring about in one act what we in music cannot dream of, that people practice madly for ten years, completely fanatically, for a concert and then die. That is the greatest work of art for the whole cosmos. I could not do that. Against that, we, composers, are nothing.”

Stockhausen is now in trouble. His concerts have been cancelled. Realizing he had gone too far, he tried to explain:

“I recalled the destruction of art. Any other words outside of this context have no relation to what I meant.”

Which should only aggravate his case. Pretending to be the inheritor of Palestrina, Monteverdi, Handel, Mozart and Schumann, this diabolical fabricator of cacophony and repellant noise is interested, naturally, only in the ‘destruction of art’. He is so confused that the worst terrorist act in all of human history is, to him, a ‘work of art’! It seems to me that no Vance reader can sympathize with the view, or the ‘work’, of Stockhausen, to any degree. Vance loves music too much, and speaks of it with too much force, for readers who love him ever to be able to make the mistake of confusing cacophony, music and terrorism. Perhaps I am wrong about this, but I would be amazed to learn that any *VIE* volunteer or subscriber, which is to say people for whom reading Vance has become a basic part of life, have fallen into such an error. Should it seem to my readers incredible that anyone has, as someone who has spent his life in the milieu of the arts I can affirm that Stockhausen’s attitude is by no means some perverse minority phenomenon. It dominates the élites in all the arts. Note how Paul Auster made the same rapprochement (of art and terrorism) in *Leviathan* (see *Cosmopolis* #14).

It has been suggested, as Till alludes, that America brought September 11th on itself by sponsoring the anti-Communist resistance in Afghanistan. As much as I

deplore the horrific acts of the Clinton administration—support of the Islamic Albanian adventurers, the bombing of Belgrade, a European capital, the lobbing of 75 Tomahawk missiles into Afghanistan, which raised no eyebrows in the press!—I am proud of the long-term American opposition to Communism, which has been one of the important factors in the demise of that most hideous tyranny of all human history, and is a badge of honor for America and all Americans. We have supported anti-Communist forces in other places, like Nicaragua and South Viet Nam, and these people are still our friends. The link between American anti-Communism and this terrorist attack exists only in the minds of Leftists who still can’t forgive America for its struggle against the red plague.

Finally, what should our attitude be toward Islam, Arabs, and Arab countries? While I am convinced that Islam itself is a non-religion that carries the seeds of hatred and war, I am also convinced that many Moslems are sincerely religious and use their imperfect spiritual path, as all paths are imperfect in this world, to search for the reality of the true God. I know there are many people of Arab descent who are patriotic Americans or citizens of European countries, or non-anti-American Arabs in Moslem countries, just as there are Christians who hate, and Americans of European descent who are anti-American and anti-Western. New York is full of Arabs, driving taxis and running businesses, and I always quiz them about why they are there, and how they are doing, and obviously many are good and normal people. And although the political systems of many Arab countries are repellant to a Westerner, and insure the stagnation or degradation of their citizens, many are respectable and, after all, they are nations and have the right to live as they like—so long as they do not make war on the West. But the time has come to take stock of the menace looming in the world. Certainly we must do our best to protect the civil rights of Arab-Americans and Arab-Europeans, assuming they are on our side—which ought to be their side if they are citizens. But many Arabs, alas, have failed to integrate; if airport security, for example, continues to concern itself with the confiscation of nail-clippers from ladies from Minnesota and Bordeaux, we have not yet learned our lesson. Much has been done to minimize the celebrations that took place all over the world on September 11th; nonetheless it is true that much anti-Americanism has evaporated. But much remains and, along with its anti-

Western basis, it must be seen for what it is, and where it is—whether in Africa, Palestine or the suburbs of European cities—with lucidity, calm, determination and courage.

On September 14th Islamic arsonists burnt down a church in Limoges, and the explosion in Toulouse, despite the patient attempt of the socialist French government to obscure the facts and blame the oil company Total, it now seems clear was an act of terrorism. Thirty were killed and hundreds were gravely wounded, and a sector of the city was destroyed. So the whole West is suffering gigantic blows from a shadowy enemy, gorged with hatred, which has infiltrated our open society; but at the same time we are in a civil war—at this point still only ideological, thank the Lord—against crippling internal forces. The brave and the good must remember what they are, and must re-consecrate themselves to the Western ideal and their Western heritage—so perverted in the last 40 years. We will not defeat aggressors with our arms only, we must fight with our hearts and minds.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Sara Pearson's comment in *Cosmopolis* 18 that she "... discovered many of [Vance's] creations to be out of print" took me back to my own challenge in building a Vance library. I had acquired a few of his titles in paperback, and had *The Dragon Masters* and *The Last Castle* in a hardcover Hugo Winners collection. The day came when I realized that I had re-read the paperbacks so many times they were falling apart. The fact that the hardcover book was doing fine suggested the obvious: get hardcover copies of them all, and while I was at it, since I enjoyed the Vance works I already had so much, why not get more?

So off I went to my local sci-fi specialty bookstore (sorry, Paul, but that's the store in this area that always had the best Vance selection) to ask them to order a bunch of Vance titles in hardcover from the publisher. The image I had was of massive stocks of old book—everything the publisher had ever produced—sitting on shelves somewhere just waiting for an order like mine. As we all know, and as the bookstore owner gently informed me, this was a most naïve assumption. First she

acquainted me with the phrase 'out of print'. Then she told me that except for his latest title or two, practically everything Vance had written fell into that category. She added that getting hardcover versions of his work would be exceptionally difficult, since they were usually very small print runs. She concluded by saying my only chance was to work with a specialized book collector/seller if I was serious about this.

Fortunately, she had on hand the business card of a sci-fi/fantasy book collector who had told her that he specialized in Jack Vance—whom he considered an under-appreciated artist! (Clearly a man of early discernment.) I called him up, verified that he had Vance hardcovers for sale, made an appointment, and headed for his place of business, which turned out to be his garage. There, he showed me books of a quality I had never seen—or imagined—for Vance works.

He had the signed, limited editions of *Suldrun's Garden* and *The Green Pearl*. (*Madouc* was not out yet.) He had the UM 'First Cloth' editions of all four *Tschai* novels, with the beautiful full-color illustrations of a Blue Chasch, a Wankh, a Dirdir and a Pnume on their respective covers. (I recently did a little psychological field research by setting all four out on a table, and asking my wife which being she found the most alien, and which the least.) He had the three *Alastor* novels (although *Trullion* was missing its dust jacket). He had all the *Dying Earth* novels, including the Brandywyne Books limited edition of *Rhialto The Marvellous*, in royal blue custom protective box, with a gorgeous cover illustration of Rhialto sharing a special moment with the beauteous Shalukhe the Swimmer beside the River Ts, his manse Falu floating mystically in the background. He had the UM first hardcovers of all five *Demon Princes* novels with the faux leather covers. He had others. All were signed by Vance.

I went over there expecting to spend maybe a couple hundred bucks. I ended up writing him a check for over \$1000, and took practically every Vance title he had. Just couldn't help myself. What's money for, anyway?

Then I dispatched him on a search mission. I wanted every Jack Vance title in hardcover. Over the next couple years, as he went to book shows and found other collectors to trade with, every few weeks or months he would call to tell me he had found another book. Most, not all, were signed by Vance. My instructions to him were

invariably, “jump in your car and bring it to my office in 10 minutes.” Couldn’t wait to get my hands on it. I usually dedicated the next weekend to reading my new Vance hardcover.

About the only major ‘imagination’ (i.e., looking for a word that isn’t ‘sci-fi’ or ‘fantasy’, but excludes the mystery novels) title I don’t have in hardcover is *To Live Forever*. The collector told me that one was exceptionally rare. He believed the only hardcover printing was done by a small English press. He located one copy for me during the period we were working together—price: \$1000. Not one of my favorite Vance works anyway. Told him to pass on that one. If I want to re-read it, my paperback edition will have to do.

He also never found me a copy of *Galactic Effectuator*. Now I’ll wait for the *VIE* to fill that gap.

By working with the abovementioned bookstore, I was able to order hardcovers of later publications as they came out, having been warned about how fast (and how completely) they go out of print. I was too late to get a limited edition of *Araminta Station*, but managed to score a trade hardcover. I was able to get signed limited editions of *Throy* and *Ecce* and *Old Earth*; *Nightlamp*; and *Madouc*.

When one of these later titles came out (don’t remember which one for sure, but I think it was *Araminta Station*), Jack Vance did a local booksigning tour. I live in the San Francisco Bay area, as he does, and noticed to my great delight that he would be appearing on a Saturday afternoon at the store I patronized to sign copies of his new book. I was assured by the store owner that it would not be a violation of protocol to ask him to sign copies of his other titles, but that it would be courteous to do just six at a time, then get back in line if I had more to sign, to give others a chance.

So down there I went. Two passes through the line got me signatures on all my previously-unsigned Vance hardcovers. More importantly, during the brief moment at the signing table, I got to tell Jack Vance how much enjoyment his work had brought me over the years, and how much I valued finally getting a chance to meet him and shake hands. As he signed my copy of *Showboat World* (another terrific cover illustration, by the way), he mentioned that that had always been one of his favorites. Now, every time I re-read *Showboat World* (which the title

page correctly calls *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet*, and which was probably considered just too much title to fit on an illustrated cover), recalling Jack’s comment adds to the experience.

It took time, effort and cash, but my Vance hardcover collection is one of my most prized possessions. The ‘enjoyment rate of return’ is beyond measure. And when the cases with the *VIE* volumes show up at our doors, it’s great to think of that same enjoyment level happening again—this time to be shared with so many others.

Carl Goldman

Replies to Paul Rhoads letter in *Cosmopolis* 18:

While I do not wish to engage Paul Rhoads on the issue of socialism in *Cosmopolis*, I cannot help but register my stupefaction at the summary way he executes it in the footnote of his letter to the Editor.

If nothing else, I would argue the, probably inflammatory, point that the connection of socialism—as well as, by the way, that of religion—with ethics is tenuous at best. For the record, my own view on the matter proceeds from Pascal’s wager and the contemplation of Gates, Soros, Louis XIV and the like.

I must also say that I am most grateful for, as well as deeply admiring of, Rhoads’ devotion to the *VIE*.

Regards,
Alain Schremmer

There is apparently something curious about Vance’s general treatment of religion: Paul, a religious man and a Catholic, finds nothing objectionable in Vance’s writings. I, a non-religious man and atheist, also find nothing objectionable in Vance’s writings. And yet, he has quite a bit to say about religion and the human condition. Perhaps this is a tribute to Vance’s own flexibility of thought.

I have always enjoyed Vance’s satirical, farcical, or even terrible descriptions of religions. In the galaxy, there is no universal religion. My favorite exposition on

the subject is in *Servants of the Wankh*, when Reith and company are travelling aboard the 'Vargaz'. There is a little discussion of some wholly arbitrary local religious beliefs, then Reith is challenged to express his own views:

"... The unknown exists. Each man projects on the blankness the shape of his own particular world-view. He endows his creation with his personal volitions and attitudes. The religious man stating his case is in essence explaining himself..." "Interesting!" declared the fat merchant. "And the atheist?" "He projects no image upon the blank whatever. The cosmic mysteries he accepts as things in themselves; he feels no need to hang a more or less human mask upon them..."

Please don't tell me that TI work has determined this passage to be bogus!

Rob Friefeld, Long Beach, CA

In response to the letter by Paul Rhoads I would like to point out that Paul may be an ardent proponent of his beliefs, but his argumentation is unconvincing to say the least.

A perfect example is his argumentation against the acceptability of a 'lowest common denominator of morality and religion'. He misunderstands the word 'lower' in this case quite clearly. Lower does not mean worse in any way, just *more common*. People who believe you have to be nice to other people will surely object to theft, as in no way theft can be construed as being of a more general morality than being nice. It is a question of sub-categories and super classes, and not, as Paul mistakes, opposites or contraries. A good example would be—though not in favor of Paul's beliefs—a hypothetical belief in which one has to honor (whatever that may be) all animals above humans. An equal specific belief could espouse the view that it is the humans who deserve to be honored more (than animals). Both views are clearly at odds with each other, but both do subscribe to the *more common* view of honoring all living beings.

In this context, Paul, at one time, uses the word 'intolerable' in his letter. He quickly introduces absurd (meaning unthinkable, a somewhat more neutral term) to

cover this up, but I think it clearly shows one of the main and most common (yes, there is one) aspects of religious beliefs and religions: they are intolerant of each other.

Further on in the text Paul claims that Jesus being 'just' a prophet is absurd to those believing him to be the Son of God. Perhaps you can believe this, but I fail to see why they are mutually exclusive. Perhaps to some his Son-of-God-ness is more important whereas others believe his propheting is more important, so what? In any case they are not mutually exclusive traits. I can imagine Christians getting rather annoyed about non-Christians saying Jesus was/is not the Son of God, as this clearly refutes one of their core beliefs, but I cannot remember (correct me if I'm wrong) any part of the Koran (for example) explicitly denying this feature of Jesus.

I also think that Paul is making statements that he does not back up—and surely not because they'd have to be abundantly clear—such as his statement that "Respecting all religions amounts to respecting none*", and is part of a disposition whereby we take nothing seriously". I find this very curious. If somebody does not respect any religions as such, from this follows he/she doesn't take anything seriously? I would very much like to hear the reasoning behind this. I hope you do not mean to imply that religion is of some abstract superior importance compared to other issues?

Evert Jan de Groot

* A belief more than fact, and based upon the non-existent impossibility of a lowest common denominator of morality and religion.

CLS No. 10,

contrary to what was promised in the last issue, will not appear with *Cosmopolis* No. 19. We apologize again for the delay, and please look for it soon. We have a good stock of stories ready for *CLS*, but this month producing Vance books has taken priority.

Joel Anderson and Paul Rhoads

Closing Words

Thanks to Evert Jan de Groot for composition and to proofreaders Carina Björklind, Rob Friefeld, Till Noever, and Jim Pattison.

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Derek W. Benson, Editor

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