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# COSMOPOLIS

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## Report on the Frankfurt Book Fair

*by Paul Rhoads*

*Photos by Koen Vyverman*

At the suggestion of Claudia Fuchs, and at the invitation of Sfera, the *VIE* was present at the Frankfurt Book fair, based at the Sfera stand. A few walk-by contacts were made, but we spent most of our time roaming the seemingly infinite spaces of the fair, following up various strategies, making fortuitous contacts, or researching the latest publication techniques: BOD, POD and e-books.

Claudia, who was a great help to us facilitating several contacts, informed me that this fair is the biggest of any kind in the world. The central activity is the selling of books and book rights internationally, but all branches of the book business are there in force. The fair occurs in a gigantic 'center' consisting of a dozen gargantuan exposition halls linked by corridors, some with mechanical sidewalks. It takes about 15 minutes just to get from one end to the other. The halls were organized by language, or language group. The Americans and British were in one hall, the French, and Francophone countries in another, the Italians and Spanish-speaking countries in another, the Slavic languages in another, etc. The Germans had several halls, and there were halls for miscellaneous specialties like art books, electronic media, literary agents, and so on. The English language hall, for example, was so big that simply to stride past each stand was a hike of at least an hour.

The Italian/Spanish hall, though smaller, was still formidably gigantic. We were placed next to the stand of the publication house of the infamous Silvio Berlusconi, media magnate and prime minister of Italy. Like many, this stand was a designer affair, taking up hundreds of square feet. The Sfera stand, by contrast, was the minimum unit. Sfera is a printer, but mainly an 'effecutator' of publication projects. Apparently, as Stefania Zacco explained, several years ago each Italian publisher had



Our first VIE products. Most VIE volunteers, even those whose names do not figure in the book credits, have made these beautiful books a reality, and all may be equally proud.

its own printing and binding branch. Now all branches of Italian book production are split up, and a company like Sfera does the work of regrouping them for clients around a publication project, such as the *VIE*. Sfera specializes in fine and unusual projects.

Andreas Irle and Axel Roschinski joined me Thursday. Koen Vyverman and Russ Wilcox came on Friday, and Koen stayed on through Saturday. Thanks to them we made many connections I could not have made alone. We spent four days working the Fair, and at the end of each my feet hurt pretty badly! We came equipped with a *VIE* poster, *VIE* business cards, sample books, and the *VIE* brochure. The latter, which presents the project and Vance in six languages, was a great success. People found it handsome and impressive, and we managed to distribute about 100 of them. The remainder will be used for ongoing *VIE* promotion, and sold on the site. The books, both Readers and Deluxe, provoked much admiration, and the brochure, designed beautifully by Joel Anderson, was well received.

The *VIE* is not Jack Vance's literary agent, but we

informed as many publishers as we could that his books are out of print, and told them whom to contact to get publication rights. We also tried to promote the *VIE* as a media story. To this end we distributed brochures with media outlets, and collected addresses of likely targets, like *Publisher's Weekly* which will be receiving a brochure in the mail. At least one reviewer received a complementary copy of *Coup de Grace and Other Stories*. One of the most exciting media possibilities stirred up was thanks to Axel Roschinski, who suggested we approach 3sat. Axel writes: "3sat [is] a TV channel owned by state-owned TV stations from three nations—hence the name 3sat. (Participating national stations are: ARD and ZDF of Germany, ORF of Austria and SRG of Switzerland.) 3sat is mainly focused on documentation and

cultural programming, and they carry the main evening news broadcasts from all participating stations. 3sat shows a TV magazine called *Kulturzeit* (culture-time) Monday to Friday from 19:20 to 20:00, and they do extra shows of one hour for special events. (They did one special [...] about the Frankfurt Book Fair.) Usually they present three or four focus themes taking five to ten minutes for each, they have a news section for small items and an agenda section for events taking place in the near future. There are three presenters—each of them responsible for the program for one week—taking turns. We spoke to [...] Gert Scobel, who is—to my reckoning—the most popular of these."

Approaching Gert Scobel was an act of craft. The 3sat stand, like most of the big stands, was protected by a barrier of receptionists who, naturally, turned us away 'illico'. Still, Gert Scobel seemed like a reasonable person, and we (Andreas Irle, Axel, and myself) being resourceful Vance readers, and each at least 6ft tall, were not to be stopped by mere receptionists! Taking Luke Grogatch (of *Dodkin's Job*) as our model; we awaited the propitious moment, penetrated the stand in force,

engaged Scobel in conversation. He seemed glad to talk to us, believed he had read some Vance, listened to us receptively for several minutes, and gratefully accepted a brochure.

We also spent time learning about the new publication strategies based on Print on Demand (POD) and Book on Demand (BOD). With Sfera, as those interested in such things may like to know, we are already in POD mode. Though the *VIE* is a big publication project (by total quantity, and value added quality), we are doing only limited runs of each volume. Thanks to POD technology the price for these small runs is reduced to something comparable to a much larger run with traditional printing technology.

The machines that do POD are, of course, very expensive, and gigantic. The POD publishing industry is being set up with storage and distribution networks, and it offers interesting possibilities to serious book sellers. But for amateurs it functions mainly as a low-cost (though not that low) vanity press. I had a long talk with someone from *p.o.d. print*, a German company, who explained their whole operation. They have an automatic contract with Amazon, but for book stores to be able to order and sell a book the publisher must have an individual contract with each retailer (which would state, mainly, the price of the books, and the percentage taken by the store). *p.o.d. print* takes care of the bookkeeping, for a reasonable fee. It is easy enough to create a good quality book with POD technology, and companies like *p.o.d. print* do provide an interesting range of services, which in their case is mainly limited

to Europe. But it is clear that making books, and selling them *without losing money*, is a big job. Andreas, who now has seven Vance titles to his credit, explained to me his extensive publicity efforts, and the strategic problems he has selling his editions. For example, he has trouble selling any book that is readily available in another edition, at a lower price, or that, in one of his hardcover editions, is not a 'first edition'. The Vances may eventually be able to market their books, in *VIE* versions, in such a way, but I believe it will mean becoming a more or less full-time book professional. It is not for nothing that marketing is of such importance!

Speaking of which, Russ Wilcox, who is responsible for the new *VIE* publicity strategy (see the on-line press kit on the site) is the head of the e-ink company, about which we will certainly be hearing more. Koen and I visited the stand where Russ' e-paper was on display. It is an amazing technology. In my opinion: if e-books are ever going to be more than another high-tech gizmo, it



At the Sfera stand, Claudia Fuchs (left) shows the Deluxe edition and brochure, and Stefania Zacco (right) holds the Readers edition. Claudia is the Sfera commercial agent; Stefania is head of production for our project.

will be thanks to e-paper. They present a black and white image, at over 150dpi, which is not back-lit, but really made of ink, electronically manipulated in tiny cells in the substance of the 'e-paper'. The resultant

image is so vastly superior to LCD that it is another world.

We also managed to make contact with Vance's literary agency. They were barricaded in a restricted area, and we left a brochure for them on Wednesday. But an old friend, who just happens to be a literary agent, ran into us, and in the great bustle that reigns at the Fair arranged a rendezvous: in the agency conclave. So next day Koen and I cleverly took advantage of the situation to approach Chris Lott, and speak with him for a few minutes. He was very pleasant, and seemed glad to see us. All part of the 'never say die' Vancian ethic!

On Saturday night Koen and I drove back to Trier (a particularly beautiful and interesting place) and I finally got a full demonstration of the VDAE. I have always been a firm supporter, but having now seen it in full glory I am more impressed than ever. It offers vast possibilities of search, with the main limit apparently being one's imagination. Koen regularly adds features to the tool, suggested by TI wallahs with new search ideas. We did some informal work on several texts, and in minutes came up with several 'bingos'. There must be an ongoing VDAE effort on all texts. All wallahs should get in the habit of using it!

Finally, some gastronomic notes: I highly recommend that *Auflauf* place in Trier where Koen took me (you check off the ingredients you want on a slip, and they cook to your order); and the phrase of that loquacious culinary gnome in Neu-Isenburg was, as my note taken at the time reminds me: "I need to want to eat that food!"

## The VIE at the Frankfurt Book Fair

by Koen Vyverman - *The Laughing Mathematician*

Friday October 12th, up early and on the train from Trier to Frankfurt. Multiple trains, that is. Living in some forgotten corner of the empire means that you can't get anywhere easily by public transport. And I don't feel like driving into Frankfurt. Rule of thumb: add one hour to your estimated arrival time for each additional train you need to catch. Connections are rarely made, that is. Rather surprisingly, this time all goes as planned. Although switching platforms in Koblenz is a

matter of hooking luggage on a shoulder and dashing in Brownian motion through idling crowds while mumbling *tschulligung* at every collision.

On the Koblenz-Frankfurt trajectory, I have a tiny table available and unpack my doorstep, err . . . pc, intending to mess around with some databases. The fellow who plumps himself down in the seat opposite mine obviously has the same idea and whips out his own laptop simultaneously. A fine example of geek social dynamics ensues. The table is too narrow to accommodate two laptops with both screens set back at a comfortable reading angle. When I turn aside briefly to dig through my luggage for the train ticket, my opponent stealthily pushes back his screen a bit, thereby forcing mine to sit too straight for easy reading. In turn, while he's distracted buying a cup of coffee, I re-adjust the angles to my advantage. He slumps down in his seat and glowers at his screen. I find this quite hilarious, it's almost like that famous scene from Terry Gilliams' *Brazil* where two office workers in adjoining rooms share a single desk that fits through a slot in the separating wall, so they end up pulling at the table on both ends in order to gain desk-space . . .

In Frankfurt, the *S-Bahn* takes me to the Book Fair where Paul Rhoads picks me out of the crowds at the entrance and guides us to one of the at least ten massive exhibition halls, each one the size of a few football fields, where there is an invitation-only area for literary agents. It's good to see Paul again, even though we talk *VIE* matters over regularly on the phone. Paul has cunningly provided us with an invitation into the restricted agents' area where we hope to intercept Jack's agent and engage him in a conversation about the *VIE* project. Unfortunately we only get to see the chap's assistant who politely refuses to accept a copy of the Gift Volume, for reasons of too much stuff to lug around. We skulk off and have a coffee with Paul's friend Karen, a charming lady who provided our invitation here.

Then we're off to the hall of the Italian publishers, where Sfera, the Milan-based printers of the *VIE* books, have a booth. No Sfera people are to be seen. The Fair's closed to the public today, so many of the smaller booths remain unmanned as people swarm out to create and maintain business contacts. However, it is at the Sfera booth that I first get to clutch in my eager paws the first fruits of the *VIE* tree of life, the Gift Volume *Coup de*



*Grace and Other Stories*, both in the remarkably solid looking Readers edition and the glitzy Deluxe edition. I'm impressed. The Deluxe edition is every bit as deluxe as its name indicates, and even the Readers edition should have enough appeal to convince all but the most snobbish bibliophiles.

After some ooh- and aah-ing, the glazed look gradually recedes from my eyes and I remember that Russ Wilcox, one of the *VIE* PR wizards, had mailed me about seeing us at the Fair this very afternoon. I had assumed Russ and Paul had arranged a meeting. Not so! Paul

suggests we leaf through the exhibitor's catalogue and try to locate Russ' company so we might attempt to pinpoint his whereabouts in this maze of a book fair. This plan fails on two counts. One, said catalogue is fatter than *The Lord of the Rings*, addenda included. Two, neither of us knows the precise name of Russ' company, other than that some revolutionary e-ink procedure is involved. Nevertheless, we apply ourselves with great zeal to leafing.

Luckily the situation resolves itself as after a quick lunch consisting of a vastly overpriced sandwich at a ramshackle table which must have been specifically engineered to facilitate massive spilling of coffee by merely looking at it, we return to the Sfera booth and find Russ there engaged in conversation with the Sfera people. Russ' time is limited as he needs to catch a plane, so we go for a beer together and talk about the *VIE* Press Kit, press releases in general, and e-ink.

After waving Russ out, Paul and I set off to find the



The *VIE* section of the Sfera stand, with Koen Vyverman doing his bit for the good of the *VIE*.

booth of Meulenhoff, the Dutch publisher of all Vance's works—with the exception of the mystery novels. We manage to talk to two Meulenhoff people who show a keen interest in the *VIE* project, and even offer to do a three-page Vance/*VIE* feature article in their quarterly SF fan publication *Warp*. We are also allowed to leave a small stack of project brochures at their counter. The books of Vance have always been very prominent in the Meulenhoff catalogue, with regular reprints and a large fan-base both in the Netherlands and in Flanders. I strongly believe that the success of the Dutch translations of Jack's books is at least partially attributable to the quality of the translators employed by Meulenhoff. Upon asking whether Meulenhoff or their translators might still have useful—from a *VIE* Textual Integrity work perspective—typescript material laying around and gathering dust, the answer is less direct, as there might be legal issues involved. It is something that might be checked upon later.

With the Fair closing at six, we head off by *S-Bahn* to



Russ Wilcox (right), designer of the new on-line press kit and *VIE* promotional strategy, stood Koen and Paul to a beer before catching his flight, in one of the three food and drink outlets in the Italian/Spanish hall.

Neu-Isenburg where Paul has taken up quarters at the Holiday Inn. I fire up the laptop upon which I had loaded Totality, the *VIE* data warehouse, and proceed to show Paul the principal components of the system, how it generally works, what information is currently stored for each text, and how all this is exploited in various reports like the Incredible String Retriever.

After which we go for supper in downtown Neu-Isenburg, in a rather Vancian looking pub/eatery which Paul had discovered the night before while out eating with the Sfera team. A somewhat dimly lit establishment. Or perhaps the lighting is adequate, but those poor photons just don't stand a chance against the dark brown wooden panelling? Many dozens of collectors' model cars lining the walls, and scores of model airplanes dangling from the ceiling. Speciality of the house: bourgeois Frankfurt cuisine. Which to my memory boils down to pungent cheese, vinegar, onions, and a thick extremely green sauce, aptly named 'green sauce'. All this washed down with giant pints of German wheat-beer. The place even comes with an innkeeper—I assume he is either that, or the cook—who might have leapt straight from the pages of a Vance story: a bald

grinning gnome-like character who entertains us with intermittent statements and some after-dinner conversation from which we learn that he has to eat this very food every single day, as if cursed by some magician gifted with a singular culinary sense of humour. A friendly chap really, but sort of hard to make sense of. . . . Paul and I finish the evening at the hotel bar with a pint of dark beer. Somehow Aristotle and metaphysics start popping up in the conversation. It must be getting late. . . .

Saturday October 13th. The Book Fair is open to the public today, so the place may get pretty packed. We check out from the hotel, leaving luggage in locked storage. While waiting for the S-Bahn, I notice a squarish windowless brick building opposite Neu-Isenburg station. It announces 'If' in metal lettering. Being a master of cheap associations, I start thinking of *Chateau d'If*. What else. . . .

We spend most of this day trudging from one hall to the next, trying to locate more European Vance publishers. With mixed success. Inspired by the many *bratwurst* distributors, I start imagining whether we

might generate *VIE* interest by opening an *ahagaree* booth? We bug the German Vance publisher, Heyne, but it's difficult due to the crowds. And none of their SF-series people are present at the Fair. The Italian publisher isn't represented at all. I manage to extract their address from a bored and sighing Italian info desk. We find the British publisher, Granada, with some difficulty: as it turns out Granada was recently eaten by a bigger fish, Harper-Collins. No SF-representatives present, but promises to pass our brochure and biz-cards on to the gods in London. The French publisher? Can't remember. We give Tor a try. Lukewarm at best.

More interesting, the Print on Demand (POD) business. Paul talks to several POD suppliers, but the problem is: they merely POD. The distribution of the printed books is not their problem. Eventually we discover a small POD booth that also offers distribution services. Along these lines: customer coughs up some dough to print at least twenty copies. These go in storage. Customer strikes a deal with the Amazon sites to list the book. When an Amazon customer buys the book online, the order gets transferred to the storage company who proceed to mail it off. Once a month or so, a statement is produced.  $N$  copies sold at such amount of money, minus Amazon's share, minus storage cost, minus shipping and handling, this is your balance. It seems easy enough, but it is more something for the Vances to consider, as the *VIE* has as yet to fulfil its *raison-d'être*, namely producing the Vance Integral Edition.

Synchronicities. . . In a glass display case I spot the complete works of Aristotle. Five massive leather-bound volumes. . . We wave goodbye to the Sfera people and pick up luggage from the Neu-Isenburg hotel. Paul has accepted my offer to stay overnight in Trier, so off we drive. Paul drives, I navigate us out of Frankfurt as the darkness sets in. Interesting. I've been driving the motorways around Frankfurt on several occasions, but always ended up somewhere I really didn't want to be. This time it all goes smoothly, not one wrong turn. We make it to Trier easily through the Hunsrück area. At some point I start noticing that cars approaching from behind all tend to get very nervous. Flashing headlights, hooting, irritated overtaking manoeuvres. I suggest that, perhaps, our rear fog-light is on, which would be blindingly intense to cars behind us as there really is no fog. Paul reassures me that his car is certainly not equipped with any such device as a fog-light.

We make it to Trier by 10pm. My spouse Christina is in Cologne tonight, wanted to go to a Jack Bruce concert. So I take Paul out for supper at Astarix, one of the university students' hang-outs. We have an excellent *Auflauf* with a dark wheat-beer and a shot of *Asbach-Uralt*, the latter for strictly digestive purposes of course. Back at the flat, I delve into my stock of fine Belgian beers, thoughtfully provided by my sister in Brussels. Enjoying some Brown Leffe and Grimbergen Trappist beer, I continue my Totality demo. Paul and I laugh our heads off with some as yet unexplored output from the Stochastic Vancifier. Paul sees the VDAE spreadsheets for the first time—he has no Excel application on his home pc—and waxes truly enthusiastic. At some point in the early morning, Christina comes home. The concert has apparently been quite good. We decide to call it a day. . .

On Sunday, I brew some really strong Lavazza, and we set forth for a late breakfast at the Bagel Sisters'. Who've decided to be closed on Sundays, it appears. Bummer. A brunch at the Krokodil then. . . Followed by a tour of historical Trier, dragging Paul from the Porta Nigra to the old city center square, the many-styled Dom with its lovely cloister, the Roman Basilica, the ghastly pink electoral palace, the imperial baths, back along the Mosel river. Paul decides to drive only till Landstuhl today, as it is getting quite late already. As he drives off the parking spot, I check the rear lights on his car, and yes, there is a single conspicuously bright red light. After trying some switches and buttons on the dashboard, the newly discovered fog-light gets switched off and Paul is on the way. Time to write up a report about all this. . .

## Project Report

by Paul Rhoads

Please consult the Master Tracking Chart to see the invasion of green (completed jobs) steadily overwhelming the gray (jobs yet to be done). In September there was a bottleneck in Composition, which accounts for the slow PP output. This is the consequence of a procedure whereby all composers were obliged to review each others' work. But this period of mutual training and thrashing out of formal issues—which has been so fruitful, if necessarily a bit slow—is now over, and John Foley, head of Composition, with Chris Corley,

head of Post-proofing, have created a *Composition Review Team* (CRT) to take over preliminary Composition review. Texts are now flowing from Composition at a steady rate.

For Composition, and at the initiative of Joel Anderson, VIE Master Composer, several new specialty fonts have been created for 'hor-text' elements. For *The Book of Dreams* (TI by Patrick Dusoulier) there are *Galactica* (in both 8 and 10 points) and *Truth*. The former is a sort of Helvetica of the Vancian future, for Gersen's contest questionnaire. The latter is a caps-only alphabet for the slogans of the Partitioners Positive of Creative Truth. For *The Moon Moth* there is *SpaceGram*, and for *Meet Miss Universe* there is *Gala* (an 'ironic display face') which has also found utility in *Clarges*.

### *Damien Jones and Joel Riedesel*

On other fronts work proceeds apace. Special mention should be made of Damien Jones, who has somehow ended up being head of all phases of DD scanning, Jockeying, and the IMP team. Not a day goes by without an announcement from Damien of newly completed jobs. All who work on his teams are to be saluted. Meanwhile, our new work Czar, Joel Riedesel, has seized the *VIE* work in all its phases and has been shaking it down, picking up jobs which have fallen between the cracks, and helping us direct our efforts more efficiently in general. Joel is also co-head, with his wife Robin, of the Clam Muffins PP team, and is behind the *VIE* promotional items now available on the site. One gets the impression that Joel and Damien are conspiring together to make the *VIE* happen faster, and better, than we ever expected or planned. Hats off to Joel R. and Damien!

### *Coup de Grace and Other Stories*

The books have arrived! Subscribers will soon be receiving their copies, and may have already gotten them by the time they read this (but attention; world mails are slowed by the crisis, and French postal workers are, for a change, on strike). Patrick Dusoulier and his wife visited us in Chinon, and thus got his copy, less mailing charge, as well as box of persimmons from the garden.

On the TI e-mail list Patrick offered this about the book: "For those who haven't considered buying it, let me tell you: I have one in my hands right now (the modest Readers version), it's an immense pleasure, for a measly 27 bucks. The ratio of Quality over Price is the closest to infinity that I've ever seen. . . . And the Deluxe is splendid too (but I'm not a fanatic of elaborate book

bindings myself). So hurry, there might not be enough for everybody! PS : I'm not paid on a commission basis, this was a volunteer and free plug for the product, although it sells itself once you've seen it..."

As of now, there are a few overrun copies still available. If there are enough extra orders we may also do a second printing; after all, we are in the era of POD!

And other books? On the same basis as we have published *Coup de Grace and Other Stories*, we are contemplating the possibility of publishing a few other titles before the appearance of the *VIE* set. These may include Jerry Hewett's updated Vance Bibliography, and the new *VIE* version of *The Languages of Pao*. In the *VIE* set this story will be grouped with two others, in volume #7. And after *VIE* set publication? That is too far in the future to speculate about, but my own hope is that the professionals will pick up the torch.

### *The French Connection*

In lands where Vance is read more than in America, there is Vancian activity afoot. Philippe Monod, a young French fantasy writer who recently published his first book—dedicated to none other than Baron Bodissey—is editing an anthology of stories set in Almery (with the permission of the Vances). It will include texts by such French literary notables as Pierre Bordage and Roland C. Wagner. Patrick Dusoulier's translation of *The Nameless Town* is also a candidate for inclusion. Philippe met Vance at the Utopia festival in 1998. In a conversation about writing, Philippe invoked the popular notion that characters do as they like, leading the writer along, and generally directing the story. Vance responded with a guffaw, and informed Philippe that if he could not control his characters, he had better abandon writing. It was an incident Philippe, who though young was not born yesterday, has taken to heart. Philippe and other Frenchmen, though they cannot contribute to the *VIE* effort because of the language barrier, follow our progress with attention.

### *Publicity*

From Russ Wilcox: The *VIE* was covered on October 9 by the Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal. The same writer has also interviewed Bob Lacovara today, as research for a future longer story.

"Internet being used to help publish Oakland author's entire works"

<http://sanjose.bcentral.com/sanjose/stories/2001/10/08/daily22.html>



# You Have Done It!

*VIE Work Credits*

*Compiled by Hans van der Veeke*

Here 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 volume that is completed.

Check your name! A misspelling here may indicate a misspelling in our database, and thereafter in the books themselves. We don't want to spell your name wrong, or leave off a Jr. or Esq., or to overlook you altogether! For corrections contact Suan Yong at [suan@cs.wisc.edu](mailto:suan@cs.wisc.edu)

*The Insufferable Red-Headed  
Daughter of Commander Tynnott,  
O.T.E*  
Finished 19 Oct 2001

*Digitizer*  
Joel Hedlund

*Special reformatting*  
Joel Hedlund

*Pre-proofers*  
Lori Hanley  
Thomas Lindgren

*DD-Scanners*  
John A. Schwab  
Richard Chandler  
Suan Hsi Yong

*DD-Jockey*  
Suan Hsi Yong

*DD-Monkey*  
Suan Hsi Yong

*Technoproofer*  
Mark Bradford

*TI*  
Suan Hsi Yong

*Implementation*  
Donna Adams  
Mike Dennison  
Damien G. Jones

*Composition*  
John A. Schwab

*Post-proofing*  
"Sandestins"  
Jeffrey Ruszczuk (team manager)  
Daniel Chang  
Deborah Cohen  
Matthew Colburn  
Michael Duncan  
Brent Heustess  
Brian Koning  
Mark Straka  
Anthony Thompson  
Errico Rescigno

*Clarges*  
Finished 26 Oct 2001

*Digitizer*  
Chris Reid

*Pre-proofers*  
Ron Chernich  
Rob Friefeld  
Suan Hsi Yong

*DD-Scanners*  
Mark Adams  
Peter Strickland

*DD-Monkey*  
Patrick Dusoulie

*Technoproofer*  
Danny Beukers

*TI*  
Patrick Dusoulie

*Composition*  
John A. Schwab

*Post-proofing*  
"Spellers of Forlorn Encystment"  
Till Noever (team manager)  
Malcolm Bowers  
Rob Gerrand  
Peter Ikin  
Bob Moody  
Bill Sherman  
Michael J. Smith

# The *Cosmopolis* Literary Supplement No. 10

We apologize to our many CLS readers and contributors for our delay in the publication of issue #10. *VIE* work must be given precedence, there are only a few of us working on the CLS, and the last few months have been particularly busy.

In CLS #10 you will find chapters from *Tergan* and *The Zael Inheritance*, as well as a story from a new contributor concerning the raking of leaves, which we recommend to the attention of all. Also beginning in this issue we will be serializing *Wings of Iron* by Ken Roberts. Ken, like Till and Tim, is a *VIE* volunteer. He recently completed a particularly delicate TI job on *The Men Return*.

## Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

Jack Vance isn't the only great writer whose punctuation was homogenized by editors. The following, from <http://chronicle.com/free/v47/i49/49a01001.htm> a discussion of recent critical reevaluations of Jane Austen, quotes one of the co-directors of Cambridge's forthcoming critical edition.

*Steve Sherman*

"There's been an explosion of new literary research based on the fallout from literary theory, which is really problematizing a lot of aspects of Austen," says Michael Wheeler, a professor of English at the University of Southampton, in Britain. His catholic stance on such questions is noteworthy, because he is one of two co-directors of Cambridge's new scholarly edition, which will include extensive glosses and will note variants among early editions. The 10-volume Cambridge set—including the six published novels, the juvenilia, the unpublished later work, and two volumes of commentary—is scheduled for completion by 2004. It will be the first full scholarly edition since R. W. Chapman's 1923 edition, which was the first such treatment of an English novelist and has been the basis for most Austen volumes since.

The Cambridge edition's ten editors, including Mr. Wiltshire, are based in Britain, the United States, and Australia. They will take note of old-style textual studies—nailing down the precise chronology of Austen's writings—as well as the newer approaches and recent work on Austen's place in the history of the book and of book publishing.

One increasing interest is punctuation, in particular the way Chapman edited the texts in the early 1920s, says Kathryn Sutherland, a reader in bibliography and textual studies at the University of Oxford, and another of the editors of the Cambridge project. Working in the immediate aftermath of World War I, she says, Chapman linked the precision of Austen's English usage to "a kind of moral probity". As a result, his approach to editing her work was somewhat schoolmasterish, and included changing her punctuation.

Says Ms. Sutherland: "In the later, mature novels, Austen became more and more interested in experimenting with conversation, with voices that interrupt each other. A great deal of this relies on a kind of ungrammaticality, on vocal encroachment, and capturing the rhythms of conversation, which are counter-syntactic."

To retain that, she argues, "it's vital to keep her own, fairly eccentric punctuation", or the closest one can come to it judging by early editions, because no manuscripts of the published novels remain.

Restoring expressive punctuation may further new approaches to Austen by reintroducing "what I would call the noise of her text", says Ms. Sutherland.

To the Editor,

In *Cosmopolis* 19, Carl Goldman recounted his quest for a complete set of Vance titles in hard covers. It's true that old paperbacks don't last long when read again and again. But Carl has acquired many choice collector editions in hardcover, and those don't recommend themselves as reading copies either.

I also suffer the conflicting passions of the avid Vance reader and collector. For reading I have developed a fondness for ex-library hardcover editions. These books, with their spine stickers, stampings, and card

pockets, are naturally scorned by collectors and sell on eBay and elsewhere for a fraction of the cost of pristine volumes. But they serve well as indestructible reading copies. While my fine and mint copies of Vance titles rest secure in their protective wrappings, I look forward to many future readings of my sturdy ex-lib volumes.

Carl also mentioned that the one hardcover title he didn't have was *To Live Forever*. His specialty dealer told him "the only hardcover printing was done by a small English press". The dealer located a copy available for \$1,000, but Carl passed on that one. I'm not familiar with an English hardcover edition (can anyone enlighten me on this?). But there is the 1956 Ballantine edition, which was published in hardcover as well as paperback. Copies are available from several dealers on the ABE web service in the \$400-\$600 range, or less for copies in various states of disrepair. This is more than the going price for the fabled 1950 Hillman paperback edition of *The Dying Earth*, so it would appear that the Ballantine hardcover edition of *To Live Forever* is the rarest, or at least the most costly, Vance collector's item.

*David B. Williams*

To the Editor,

My friend Paul Rhoads' letter on the subject of religion in *Cosmopolis* 18 draws a response for a number of reasons. I am not myself a Christian, but I hang out with them: I sing in an American Episcopal church choir in Munich. Few of my Christian friends would accept Paul's notion that respecting the views of another religion denatures both. Rather, they would argue that respect for the faith of others is a direct consequence of what I have heard them refer to as 'humility in my faith', which is nothing more or less than a recognition that, as imperfect human beings, we can all—even Paul!—be wrong.

However, the main reason for writing this letter is the misrepresentation of the marriage of Aillas and Suldrun in *Suldrun's Garden*. Paul claims that their turning to the odious Brother Umphred to perform the marriage is an acknowledgement of the Church and its Sacrament of marriage. But in fact they turn to Umphred for no other reason than that he is conveniently at hand (he has come to rape Suldrun): as Suldrun says, "He will witness our wedlock; in fact, he will marry us by the Christian ceremony which is as lawful as any other." Thus it is not the sacrament, but the law that must be satisfied.

Furthermore, Umphred doesn't actually marry them. He declines to do so on the grounds they are not baptized Christians (Suldrun was baptized as a child, but he can't know that). Rather they chant 'the peasant litany of wedlock' and it is clear that they are as thoroughly married as they might have been by any other rite.

Paul has been talking about writing a piece on Vance and religion for some time now, and we've had some discussion of the subject via email. As usual, I don't start thinking about any of these subjects until someone else raises them, but Paul's initiative had led me to do some pondering. I observe that there are gods scattered throughout the Vancian oeuvre, some patently false (*Emphyrio*), some undeniably real (my own favorite is Spirifume, who in *The Green Pearl* rules the Cam Breaks "and also a goodly duchy on the planet Mars"). I observe further that the false gods are frequently distinguished from the true ones by the claim of the former to rule an entire world; the true gods are invariably local.

In other words, Vance has effectively undone the great invention of the ancient Hebrews: a portable god. The Hebrews were the first to claim universality for their god; other ancient peoples believed in a god of a particular place; if they moved from one place to another, they acknowledged the god of that place. In Vance's worlds, the last three thousand years of history might as well not have happened.

*Steve Sherman*

To the Editor,

What, to respond to Evert Jan de Groot's query, did I mean by the phrase: Respecting all religions amounts to respecting none, and is part of a disposition whereby we take nothing seriously?

I used the word 'respect' in a radical sense. A phrase of equivalent logic structure might be: "Giving equal credence to contradictory physics indicates confusion", like thinking the earth is a sphere hanging in space, and a flat expanse of indefinite extent. To refer to another of Evert's points, though most will agree that the earth exists, no one can seriously maintain that it exists both ways. Such people would be intellectually un-serious, and it is to be doubted that they really care about physics. To use the word 'respect' in the ordinary sense of 'civil behavior toward', it is possible to respect all

religions; and very often that is how it goes—as the many ecumenical gatherings, promoted by the Pope and others, demonstrate.

But, to be perfectly clear, my point is this: a serious Christian can respect Islam, in the sense that its adherents are respectable people, or that aspects of Islam are not bad; but he cannot think it more than a shadow of true religion, without compromising his own beliefs. This is because, despite Evert's disinterest in the matter, and to repeat myself, to a genuine Christian the divinity of Christ, for instance, is supremely important while, to a Moslem, Jesus is merely a prophet, inferior to the prophet Mohammed. Those who dismiss religion as a galamophry of archaic foolishness may regard this as so much wrangling over nothingness. Those who wishfully pretend that the common values promoted by various religions are their most important aspects (so why not get rid of the contradictory and nuncupatory superstructures?) may regard this as persistence in blind partisanship. *Cosmopolis* is not the place for an adequate treatment of the question, but I claim, echoing better men than myself, that the divinity of Christ is not merely important, but of urgent universal import—an assertion which must be understood as a simple replique to Evert's unargued statement that religion is nuncupatory!

Evert also, blandly, claims that all religions are intolerant of each other, but I suspect he defines the word 'tolerance' in the fashionable manner, whereby it means 'according equal status to all truth claims'. In other words: as soon as anyone thinks there is 'truth', they are, by definition, 'intolerant'. I warn my friend Evert that this is relativism, and if he is really concerned about intolerance he should note that nothing is more intolerant than relativism; only those who admit the possibility of truth (aside from not violating elementary logic) have even a chance of being tolerant. This is because sensible people know they are fallible and, if they care about truth, must stay alert. But relativists, who begin by being illogical, are utterly convinced they possess the ultimate and absolute truth (which is: "there is no truth") and they dismiss all other truth claims as embodiments of ignorant intolerance, and refuse therefore to confront their ideas with others. They thus look down upon (or 'despise' to use the word in the exact sense) all who do not share their doctrine. Relativism therefore, to use its own terms and definitions, might be defined as intoler-

ance of intolerance. But, as a Christian, I am more tolerant because I tolerate intolerance; I 'respect', in the ordinary, civil, sense of the word, intolerant Islam, for example. There is no virtue in this of course, and even relativists, who regard themselves as The Tolerant, are forced, willy nilly, to be as tolerant as I, for we are all in the same boat; forced to live with Islam whether we like it or not.

Which brings us to taking nothing seriously. Evert is not among those who pretend to respect all religions, and those are the people I was crabbing about. Evert, playing into the hands of the Freemasons, prefers the swashbuckling course of disrespecting all religions. Still, like the universal respecters, the universal disrespecters also fail to take things seriously. Though I risk scandalizing Evert by saying so, Religion is indeed a more serious subject than others, because it treats of the ultimately important things, like eternity and the nature of good and evil. Science, by contrast, is properly silent on these issues, or else escapes from its domain to label such issues as nuncupatory, or make foolish claims such as that they are mere cultural quirks. Not a good way to take serious things seriously! In fact there is no avoiding hard choices, or the difficult search for the truth of things.

As for Socialism; either we have a natural right to property (within whatever reasonable limits you care to choose) and, as an inevitable corollary, theft is wrong, or there is some incomprehensible economic 'law' (probably the law of Envy) according to which if A has more than B, A has somehow stolen this excedent from B, and the power of the State should be used to restore to B his rightful property. Need more be said?

*Paul Rhoads*

To the Editor,

Finally, this month, as at times in the past, there has been a certain amount of back-channel chatter to the effect that "[my] ultra-right-wing reactionary, bigoted" views have no place in *Cosmopolis*, and that I am abusing my position as E-in-C of the *VIE* to promote my personal, extremist, and offensive politics, to the detriment of the project. This chatter was sparked by someone, doubtlessly a PC champion, who was offended by something I wrote. In the communications that followed, as before, I made the following points:



1 - I write in *Cosmopolis* about the project and the work of Vance. Doing the latter sometimes necessitates going into philosophical, historical or political details. Some deny the existence of political content in Vance. This seems ridiculous to me, but I can only wish they would argue their point, in *Cosmopolis*.

2 - *Cosmopolis* is an open forum (concerning any and all aspects of the *VIE* and the work of Vance) and no one is forced to read it. All may, and are even urged, to contribute. An argument runs that because I am the 'E-in-C', and because I contribute a disproportionate amount of *Cosmopolis* material, there is a problem of perception, that the *VIE* seems like an organ of right-wing propaganda. But I do as much as I can to promote *Cosmopolis* contributions of all kinds. Personally, I am always interested in reading the opinions of others, whether I agree with them or not, and regard a contrary attitude as indifference or immaturity. Finally, though I am proud of my important *VIE* roll, my little title was bestowed upon me by Mike Berro in a moment of levity, and is merely a label. There are many other people just as important to the project as I am, as *Cosmopolis* readers should all know. If I have earned enough of their respect to still be able to use my label without shame, they have earned an equal amount of mine. Finally, many other people do contribute to *Cosmopolis*. I consider the quality of *Cosmopolis*, which is the creation of Bob Lacovara, an important motor of the *VIE*.

3 - When the discussion takes a secondary course, as it has with Evert's response to a certain point, I see no reason why it cannot be pursued, with appropriate discretion (i.e. in the letter section) in *Cosmopolis*. These issues are not only important in themselves, but they have a bearing, even if oblique, on the interpretation of the work of Vance. Given my Platonic bent, I consider the path toward truth to be that of amicable discussion. I am therefore grateful to all who disagree with me, and are willing to talk to me; they are my teachers—and the feeling might even be mutual.

4 - Familiarity famously breeds contempt, but it continues to be somewhat galling to be called a 'right-wing extremist bigot', which, though clearly not terms of endearment, no one has deigned to define for me. I do not demand universal love, but I continue to be surprised by the growing spirit of intolerance in the world. Were

we not taught to stand up for what we believe, and to respect others? If people don't agree, let them have the courage and honesty to present their arguments! I, for one, am prepared to listen with attention, which is an oft ignored precondition of 'freedom of speech' (what is it worth if no one listens?). Silencing others, like refusing to hear them, is a procedure known as censorship; it is bad. Let us keep *Cosmopolis* free. You can help: contribute!

*Paul Rhoads*

To the Editor,

I read Paul Rhoads' latest essay, on the War on the West (*Cosmopolis* 19), with interest. He is worth reading, even if he does occasionally resort to the horrid Hollywood vulgarity 'sci-fi' when writing about science fiction. His opinions this time seemed even more likely to foster debate than usual. Since no doubt hundreds of articles will flood into *Cosmopolis* as a result, I'll confine myself to a short letter, agreeing, disagreeing, and opining on only a few points.

In a footnote, Paul says "Let not the IRA . . . be evoked". Why not? All terrorists are marked by brutality and unreason. Local goals or not, they are violent and hateful thugs who want to destroy an established order through terror; some simply lack an apocalyptic faith to fan their madness to suicidal heat, and so snipe and bomb and murder from hiding like the cowards they have always been. Islam is in fact "marked by its strong local character" as Paul himself pointed out—it has simply spread beyond one country.

I certainly agree that modern 'serious' literature and art is in a sad state—perhaps the product of serious derangements, as Stockhausen shows in what he creates as well as what he says. One wonders, sourly, if terrorists will cease to call themselves 'freedom fighters' or 'holy warriors' and settle for 'performance artists'. The critical establishment, those who claim authority to say what is art and literature and what is not, seem largely to ignore the truly rich and diverse art and culture of Western civilisation, and focus merely on the new, trivial, and shocking. Their preferred literature is feculent with Foucault, dysentric with Derrida; their preferred plastic arts indistinguishable from rubbish (a cleaner at a London gallery recently disposed, in apparent error, of 'artwork' consisting of cigarette butts,

beer bottles, and papers piled on the floor).

Sometimes good art and literature, showing genuine talent, intelligence, and humanity, are acknowledged, but it often seems as if the artistic elite ignores the true heritage of the Western tradition in favour of material more likely to generate turgid dissertations. Most of those interested in the arts allow them to remain unchallenged. There is a parallel with the Muslim world here. Moderate Muslims have let the fundamentalists remain unchallenged for so long that their rantings seem to be the only voice of the faith (despite the current rise of extremism, there are moderates: more passages in the Koran enjoin the faithful to tolerance than urge them to kill). As in the West, the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of a passionate intensity.

Paul claims that it is “profoundly anti-Western to try to win an argument by force or dismissal” yet dismisses Islam off-handedly in a few lines. This lacks both vigour and resolve! The problems of Islam in itself and in its interaction with the West are dealt with in more depth in well-known pieces by B. Lewis (*The Roots of Muslim Rage*) and V.S. Naipaul (*Our Universal Civilisation*)—see below. The latter shows quite clearly how the static and exclusive nature of Islam promoted by the zealots is inimical to both Western civilisation and art (in the best sense of art, that is, in the traditions within which Jack Vance writes, not what we let degenerate critics define as art for their own purposes). A pithier appraisal of the religion was made by Winston Churchill (also part-Amerindian, as it happens) in his book *The River War*, covering a jihad in the Sudan. This was a hundred years ago, but I think the comments are as relevant today.

“How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries. Improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live. A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement; the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property—either as a child, a wife, or a concubine—must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men.

Individual Moslems may show splendid qualities. Thousands become the brave and loyal soldiers of the Queen: all know how to die. But the influence of the religion paralyzes the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step; and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science—the science against which it had vainly struggled—the civilization of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilization of ancient Rome.”

*Regards, Malcolm Bowers*

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V.S. Naipaul, *Our Universal Civilisation*

(<http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/wl1990.htm>)

B. Lewis, *The Roots of Muslim Rage*

(<http://www.TheAtlantic.com/issues/90sep/rage.htm>)

W. Churchill, *The River War: An Account of the Reconquest of the Sudan* (1900).

## Closing Words

Thanks to Evert Jan de Groot for composition and to proofreaders Till Noever and Jim Pattison.

**CORRECTIONS:** In the article *Reflections on Being a Vance Reader*, in *Light of the War on the West* in *Cosmopolis* 19, the following corrections are necessary. Mention of the First Commandment on page 6 should be the Fifth Commandment. Also on page 6 ‘demography’ was not intended, the phrase should read: “. . . and its current expansion is based on sheer demagoguery. . .”. Our apologies for these mistakes.

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*Derek W. Benson, Editor*

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