COSMOPOLIS

Contents

Scanners and Jockeys and Imps, Oh My!

by Damien G. Jones
DD-Scanning, DD-Jockey and
Implementation Coordinator

A few days ago Paul mentioned to me that it might be nice, fitting even, that I write a little something in praise of those volunteers engaged in the less than glamorous task of feeding the VIE machine: the Scanners, Jockeys and Imps! (Actually being an imp is fairly glamorous...) Although I disguised my initial dismay with toadying acquiescence, I was aghast! Write something about these people I hardly know? The names in my address book conjure up nebulous images, sometimes blanks (my relatives), each representing a life rich in experiences of which I am completely unaware. Is X a bizarre recluse? Would I trust Y to keep an eye on my lunch? Should I take the time to put real names in my address book? I don't know.

Yet each of these 'shades' has contributed to the VIE in a very real sense. The texts for over half of the VIE volumes have been scanned (monotonous work by any standard) and many of them jockeyed (tedious, yet rewarding!). The Imps run where others walk, often providing turnaround within days, yet sometimes becoming lost in the copious endnotes. All: Scanners, Jockeys and Imps, are dedicated to their tasks. Jocularity abounds, and playful cries of "No more!" are dismissed with a chuckle. Newcomers are often baptized in fire, their hard work criticized, sometimes even discarded (only in the case of time pressure), yet they endure. Should I meet any of the people I have worked with, I would shake their hands, wonder at their tenacity, and thank them roundly. In the meantime please accept my gratitude for the excellent work that has been completed thus far, and for that which is sure to follow.

For those interested in such things, below is a list of 'accomplishments' by those involved. As any Imp, Jockey or Scanner will be able to tell you, the largest texts are not necessarily the most time consuming. However, on

the whole the numbers do reflect the amount of effort an individual has been able to dedicate in a given area, and it is obvious that there is a 'core' upon whom I rely heavily. However, I would like to emphasize that *any* completed assignment is very much appreciated.

Scanning

Volunteer	KB Words	# of assignments
Richard Chandler	2332	82
Peter Strickland	888	14
Charles King	595	32
John A. Schwab	543	16
Dave Worden	434	26
Thomas Rydbeck	349	11
Billy Webb	327	6
Damien G. Jones	326	7
Herve Goubin	286	6
Paul Rhoads	285	14
Richard White	266	5
Joel Hedlund	251	8
Denis Bekaert	224	5
Dirk Jan Verlinde	155	1
Jon Guppy	149	3
Jurriaan Kalkman	147	3
Ian Jackson	144	2
Erik Arendse	117	2
Chris Reid	114	4
John Robinson Jr.	95	2
Mark Adams	88	3
David Mortimore	79	3
Huy Dinh	62	1
Koen Vyverman	59	1
Olivier Allais	49	1
Theo Tervoort	46	1
Mark Shoulder	40	1
Suan Hsi Yong	17	1
Axel Roschinski	10	2
Sean Rainey	3	1

Jockeying

Volunteer	KB Words	# of assignments
Damien G. Jones	1303	27
David Reitsema	225	6
Hans van der Veeke	216	6
Richard Chandler	215	4
Suan Hsi Yong	124	3

Christian J. Corley	116	5
Mark Adams	68	2
Joe Ormond	65	1
Rob Gerrand	36	3
Mark Shoulder	25	2
Dave Peters	17	1
Paul Rhoads	5	2

Implementation

Volunteer	KB Words	# of assignments
Mike Dennison	456	9
Derek W. Benson	449	9
Hans van der Veeke	298	5
John McDonough	216	8
Donna Adams	215	8
Damien G. Jones	168	3
Patrick Dusoulier	133	4
Chris Reid	86	3
Paul Rhoads	61	2

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Work Tsar Status Report as of Jan. 27, 2002

by Joel Riedesel

We have some interesting and very promising statistics for this month. For Wave 1 work, we have approximately a total of 2958.4 thousand words of text. As of now, 493.4 thousand words have completed Post Proofing and about 582.9 thousand words are active in Post Proofing and will likely finish by the end of February. That's a jump from 17% to 37% (of Wave 1 work). This represents text that is ready for Golden Master production for Wave 1 by the end of February, more than doubling the total amount produced to date. Promising indeed! Some details now follow.

Fifteen texts have completed Post Proofing, an increase of two since last month. However, Post Proofing is now completely active and we will be seeing rapid results from this moment forward. These texts represent 493.4 thousand words and about 16.68% of the total for Wave 1. Three volumes are completely represented: 1, 31, and 42.

(V.1) *Mazirian the Magician*
(V.6) *Masquerade on Dicantropus*
(V.6) *Abercrombie Station*
(V.6) *Golden Girl*

(V.6) *The Insufferable Red-headed Daughter of Comman-*
der Tynnott, O.T.E.
(V.6) *Meet Miss Universe*
(V.6) *The World Between*
(V.7) *Clarges*
(V.7) *The Languages of Pao*
(V.9) *The Last Castle*
(V.17) *Rumfuddle*
(V.17) *The Men Return*
(V.17) *Ullward's Retreat*
(V.31) *Wyst: Alastor 1716*
(V.42) *Night Lamp*

There are eighteen texts being Post Proofed or being composed for Post Proofing. These represent 825.6 thousand words and about 27.9% of the total for Wave 1.

(V.4) *Vandals of the Void*
(V.4) *The Rapparee*
(V.6) *Gold & Iron*
(V.9) *The Miracle Workers*
(V.9) *The Dragon Masters*
(V.10) *Strange People, Queer Notions*
(V.10) *The Flesh Mask*
(V.10) *Bird Isle*
(V.11) *The View from Chickweed's Window*
(V.11) *The House on Lily Street*
(V.12) *Bad Ronald*
(V.17) *The Kokod Warriors*
(V.17) *Dodkin's Job*
(V.17) *Alfred's Ark*
(V.17) *Green Magic*
(V.26) *The Book of Dreams*
(V.30) *Marune: Alastor 933*
(V.38) *Madouc*

The remaining 25 texts are in TI, of which six are in the review and implementation stages of TI. Those six represent 542.6 thousand words and 18.3% of the Wave 1 total while the remaining 19 represent 1096 thousand words and 37% of the Wave 1 total. The nineteen texts that remain in the throes of TI are all close to completion, we hope to see most of them complete over the course of the next month. The six that are essentially TI complete are:

(V.6) *Cholwell's Chickens*
(V.20) *Emphyrio*
(V.28) *The Domains of Koryphon*
(V.29) *Trullion: Alastor 2262*
(V.37) *The Green Pearl*
(V.39) *Araminta Station*

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Project Report

by Paul Rhoads

ENDORSEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

The trickle is becoming a stream. This recently in from Paul Di Fillipo: "I read *Coup de Grace and Other Stories* last night, and of course it was magnificent. As a pure biblio-object, the volume is wonderful as well. You guys are doing everything right, and I wish and predict big success." Paul Di Fillipo has been a reviewer for over ten years, who publishes regularly in *The Washington Post* as well as *The San Francisco Chronicle* and science fiction magazines. But he is best known as a fiction writer. His latest book, *Strange Trades*, was published by Golden Gryphon Press, and a new novel, *A Mouthful Of Tongues*, will appear this April, published by Cosmos Books.

In another recent letter a long time VIE volunteer/subscriber wrote: "My copy of *Coup de Grace* has finally arrived, and very handsome it is. It is pleasing to see that the concerns expressed in the debate about Amiante (including for a time my own) have not been borne out—the font looks good, elegant, and is easy to read. The feel of the book, and the paper, is good, too. Congratulations to the team for a magnificent effort." The letter goes on to point out some formatting departures from standard practice, such as the copyright notice not being on the back of the title page, and the frontispiece not following. These choices were made long ago. They deliberately give the reader nothing but Vance from the title page on. We call such items 'front matter' and restrict them to the area prior to the title page. This would not exclude putting illustrations into a text at the appropriate point, but in the case of the Gift Volume the illustration is a frontispiece, intended to enhance the volume per se. Another query was why we do not have a note giving when and where each story was first published. We will have a front matter note regarding changed titles, but in the volumes we will not give any kind of publishing history. All such information (to the extent there will be any, for the VIE is deliberately a set of *reading* books, not a scholarly edition) will be in volume 44, as part of the Textual Histories.
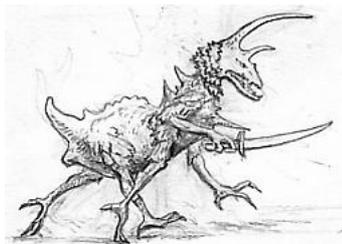
THE FEW, THE PROUD, THE CRT!

On January 9th Chris Corley made the following announcement: "Effective immediately, Robin Rouch is taking over from Chris Corley as the person in charge of the Composition Review Team and its work. This step is being taken because the now-previous Composition Review Team Lead (me) has found doing both PP and CRT coordination in a timely fashion not manageable. Robin has been doing lots of CRT work and some fill-in CRT report collation and generation, so it will be a small change in logistics for her to take over this job. She has been doing a fantastic job of being thorough and timely, and I welcome and am thankful for her continued (and now increased) participation in VIE work. I will continue as Post-Proofing Team Lead, and I hope to continue to participate as a member of the Composition Review Team."

Robin, as most of us are aware, is wife to VIE work Czar Joel Riedesel, and defines herself, vis a vis Vance, as 'one of the cutest fanatics'. Any who suspect this makes her either *serf* or *bimbo* would be mistaken; she also happens to be 'Goddess of the Universe', and as such she takes no crap. I mention this to help explain how CRT has managed to be so frighteningly effective. Other members of the team are: Marcel Van Genderen, Stéphane Leibovitsch, Per Kjellberg, Charles King, Christian J. Corley, Andreas Björklind: the Few, the Proud. Marcel and Charles deserve special mention for their recent, and formidable, work.

NEW PUBLICATION, AND NEW FORMAT?

Concerning the up-coming 'hor-serie' (outside the VIE set) volume, *The Languages of Pao and The Dragon Masters*: the book is in the making, but we still do not have a publication date. Stand by to place your orders! There will be a map of Pao, based on a sketch Suan copied in the Mugar Library. Suan also located a letter from Jack describing the dragons for the illustrator of the magazine, Gaughan. Based on these indications I have revised my own sketches. Last month the poor original Long-horned Murderer was not included in the series. We give him his chance in Cosmopolis this month, though he has already been superseded for the book.

We are considering the creation of a third VIE book format. This is not an official announcement, merely a heads-up, and no final decision has yet been made. It would be called the *Library Edition*. It would be identical to the Readers Edition, except for thicker, non-flexible cover boards, and probably a stout cloth spine. These features would make it a bit less agreeable in the hand, a bit less attractive, but more resistant to the sort of mechanical stress a library book must endure. This Library Edition, in the context of the VIE sets, would be produced for those sets destined for library donations, but made available to private subscribers as well — at an additional cost per volume (perhaps on the order of $10). On an experimental basis we may offer the Library format, along with Readers and Deluxe, for the up-coming book. It should be clearly understood that the 'Library' format under consideration represents no hesitation about the structural quality of the Readers Edition! The Readers Edition format is not only a book of exemplary durability, but also one that is exceptionally agreeable for personal use. The difference between the Readers and the proposed Library Edition may be thought of as equivalent to the difference between a Mercedes and a pickup truck. Should the Library edition become a reality, current subscribers will, of course, be free to up-grade from the Readers, or down-grade from the Deluxe.

MARUNE: ALASTOR 933, OUT OF TEXTUAL INTEGRITY INTO COMPOSITION

VIE readers will be gratified by another importantly corrected text, in many but not all respects a restoration of the magazine version. It is an interesting example of editorial meddling, and I have extracted a set of samples:

A sampling of word changes, motivated, to all appearances, by sheer caprice:

[Vance/Editors]
scope for change/room for change
made a...meal/took a...meal
redundant/unnecessary
so long as/as long as
emotion/agitation
almost/somewhat
spoke/responded
altered/changed
exit/departure
within/inside

these/those
which/that
in/into
into/to
in/on

Other words the editors saw fit to sci-fi-ify:
    Television/holovision
    Telephone/videophone

or dumb-down:
    in cryptograph symbols/in cryptic symbols
    gracious proffer/gracious offer
    three entities/three figures
    urgencies/urgent matters
    eventuate/take place, wind-up
    archaic/antique, ancient
    effectuated/carried out
    normality/normalcy

Sometimes such word changes do not simply vitiate the sense, they change it; as in this phrase where Vance's reference to quality of sound, and sorrow, is replaced by an adjective that can only be considered redundant:
Vance: fought in ritual attitudes, to the wailing clatter of martial instruments.
Editor: fought in ritual attitudes, to the warring clatter of martial instruments.

The editors actually do remove some commas, but mostly they shovel them in, by hundreds:
Vance: She told you in effect to help me make a fool of myself . . .
Editor: She told you, in effect, to help me make a fool of myself . . .

Vance: the Kraike Singhalissa is of course a positive force.
Editor: the Kraike Singhalissa is, of course, a positive force.

Vance: Additionally I am bound by a covenant
Editor: Additionally, I am bound by a covenant

Vance: I am glad that like myself you find . . .
Editor: I am glad that, like myself, you find . . .

Such added commas may seem like improvements to some, though their absence cannot reasonably be claimed to impede clarity. But in fact they do important damage

to the text, for only by their rarity do Vance's commas take on full flavor—as in this instance where Efraim pointedly confronts Agnois—and where the editors chose, for once, to remove them!
Vance: "What, precisely, were Singhalissa's instructions?
Editor: "What precisely were Singhalissa's instructions?"

Other kinds of punctuation are also altered or discarded, such as single quotes, which can give that special Vancian twist:
Vance: but 'purpose' means nothing if . . .
Editor: but purpose means nothing if . . .

Words and punctuation are added, subtracted, changed, refashioning the phrasing to the lean 'Hemmingway style', normalizing or 'improving' it. Often these changes are so petty as to be incomprehensible:
Vance: Singhalissa said drily, "Allow me," and pressed a boss; the doors swung open.
Editor: Singhalissa said drily, "Allow me," then pressed a boss. The doors swung open.

Vance: The fact remained: soon after making Lorcas' acquaintance . . .
Editor: The fact remained that soon after making Lorcas' acquaintance . . .

Vance: Before him spread the far landscape
Editor: Before him spread the distant landscape

Vance: sometimes ally, sometimes foe
Editor: sometimes an ally, sometimes a foe

Vance: With a reverential flourish he parted the covers, and one by one turned back the pages
Editor: With a reverential flourish he parted the covers, and one by one turned the pages

Vance: The clerk turned the pages with maddening deliberation.
Editor: The clerk turned pages with maddening deliberation.

Vance: the party from Eccord departed the Grand Parlor.
Editor: the party from Eccord departed from the Grand Parlor.

In other cases there is an attempt to 'enrich' the text:
Vance: a massive urn three feet tall carved of black-
brown Stoneware
Editor: a massive urn three feet tall carved of black-
brown porphyry

Vance: wide stone stairs flanked by balustrades
Editor: wide stone stairs flanked by heavy balustrades

Often typical Vancian usages, to say nothing of potent
and surprising turns of phrase, are annihilated:
Vance: he ingests his food behind a napkin, or at the
back of a table implement unique to Marune
Editor: he ingests his food behind a napkin, or at the
back of a device unique to Marune

Vance: the accord of Kaiark Jochaim and myself
Editor: the accord between Kaiark Jochaim and
myself

Vance: Allow me to revert to the act of eating
Editor: Allow me to describe the act of eating

Vance: We told each other the word 'forever'
Editor: We repeated to each other the word 'forever'

Vance: I attempted all my charm
Editor: I used all my charm

Vance: ... small mesh here by your ear, by which
the Kaiark can receive messages and advices
Editor: ... small mesh here by your ear, by which
the Kaiark can receive messages and advice

Vance: planted to orchards.
Editor: planted as orchards.

Inspired by the Hemmingway style, so influential up into
the 1970s, the editors often see fit to brush away Vance's
shadings:
Vance: I find my particular way of life orderly and
reasonable,
Editor: I find my way of life orderly and reasonable,

Vance: he felt an almost unconquerable reluctance
Editor: he felt an unconquerable reluctance

They callously foul Vance's poetic phrasing, sometimes
by regularizing it, sometimes by trying to enhance it:
Vance: ... grew in isolated copses, with here and

there a gnarled catafalque tree.
Editor: ... grew in isolated copses, with a gnarled
catafalque tree here and there.

Vance: In all the realm a single man he could trust:
the Port Mar vagabond ...
Editor: In all the realm was but a single man he could
trust, the Port Mar vagabond ...

Vance: His memory was yet gone, his enemy still
unknown.
Editor: His memory was still gone, his enemy as yet
unknown.
(note the added syllable in the second phrase!)

Another trick: simple elimination of text, which occa-
sionally reduces a phrase to nonsense:
Vance: Benbuphar Strang harbored hostility: no ques-
tion as to this. He could expel his antagonists,
but to what purpose?
Editor: Benbuphar Strang harbored antagonists, but to
what purpose?

Vance: ... in company of course with the Kraike and
the Lissolet.
Editor: ... in company with the Kraike and the
Lissolet.

A corresponding crime is to add words and phrases,
mostly in unnecessary attempts to fill in the narrative:
Vance: many attitudes had hardened, and shameful
misgivings had been
Editor: many attitudes had hardened, and where
before shameful misgivings had been

Vance: At Benbuphar Strang the portals were thrown
wide
Editor: On their return to Benbuphar Strang the por-
tals were thrown wide

Finally, and worst of all, the sort of picky changes
shown in the examples above, can do serious harm to the
essence of the stories. Two examples:
Vance: Lorcas laughed. "You may inform the Kraike
Editor: Lorcas laughed. "Please inform the Kraike

The change of 'You may' to 'Please' softens Lorcas' high-
handed character, an alteration that makes his place in
the story more difficult to comprehend.
Vance: He is purposely grotesque, an abstraction of

male sexuality; his costume depersonalizes him and maximizes the 'fantasy' or 'unreal' elements. The man enters the chamber where the woman sleeps, or pretends to sleep; and in utter silence procreation occurs. Virginity or its absence is neither significant, nor so much as a subject for speculation; the Rhune dialect contains no such word.

Editor: He is purposely grotesque, an abstraction of male sexuality. His costume depersonalizes him and maximizes the fantasy or unreal elements. The man enters the chamber where the woman sleeps, or pretends to sleep; and in utter silence copulation occurs. Neither virginity nor its absence is significant, nor are either so much as a subject for speculation. The Rhune dialect contains no such word.

Of all the damage done to this passage, the worst is the obliteration of Vance's evocation of the life cycle, and consequent reduction of Marune sexual customs to their most limited and sensational aspect.

Marune: Alastor 933 was corrected by Tim Stretton and other members of the TI team.

This just in from the owner of a fantasy and science fiction book store, in Toulouse, France: "My name is Raphael Oved, I have a bookstore of Science Fiction and Fantasy in France:
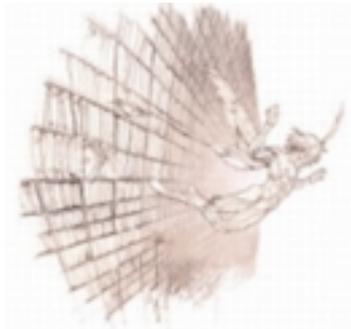
IMAGIN'ERES

We used to have a lot of Vance's books in French but not any more; no one seems to want to print them again; but there are still a lot of fans here. I was looking for English books when I saw your site, it's amazing. Would you work with dealers? I would like to order two or three VIE for the store."

The answer to Rafael was that, of course, we would work with dealers, or anyone else, on the same basis as any subscriber. Raphael Oved has placed an order for several sets and Gift Volumes.

The situation in France is particular. There seem to be more French Vance readers, in absolute numbers, than American; and the French readership of Vance is less corralled in sci-fi. Of course most of them use French translations, but the French are well behind the Americans in Internet connections†, proportionally speaking. This means that the majority of French readers, potentially an important boost to VIE subscribership, remain ignorant of the project. Such an initiative as Raphael's will help publicize the VIE in France, a very Vance-friendly place.

MORE ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION

I just saw a TV special about *The Mars Society*. For a group that pretends their goal is the colonization of Mars they are disproportionately obsessed with global warming. Their obsession is such that their plan for the habitation of Mars, rejecting more obvious methods, is to build Martian green-house gas generation stations. These, so they claim, will produce at a rate equivalent to the current green-house gas production on earth. After 50 years the resultant climatic change will melt the Martian polar cap, apparently composed of frozen gas, accelerating global warming to the point where the water, supposedly trapped in permafrost, will emerge and cover a third of the planet in ocean. This in turn will generate water-vapor clouds, and rain. The remaining problem, lack of Martian oxygen, will be rectified by pine trees, now viable thanks to water, warmth and CO_2. According to the Mars Society this plan will give humanity a refuge just at the point Earth becomes uninhabitable, and will, above all, provide the experience in planetary ecology necessary to reanimate a dead Earth.

Given this program, I suspect these folks of being another Greenpeace type, crypto anti-western, propaganda organ. They claim the raw materials for green-house gas fabrication are present on Mars in sufficient and easily obtainable quantity, and the energy necessary for the transformation can be provided by solar power.

† There are three reasons for this: 1) The French minitel system was generalized in the 1970s. The existence of the *minitel*, a sort of primitive internet which has now mostly faded from use, dampened interest in the Internet until about 1998. 2) An unfortunate heritage left to France from General deGaulle is a spirit of bitter competition with America, which sometimes results in government policies of erratic response to novelties of American origin. 3) The State run telephone system has made Internet connection costs prohibitive, a factor still impeding French Internet growth and use.

Even if this is true, why fix the target output at the *same* level as present terrestrial industrial green-house gas production? Why not much more? Or, more realistically, much less? And is it not suspiciously convenient that Mars will become inhabitable just as Earth becomes the opposite? An obvious tactic to call attention to the supposed crisis of global warming! (as I write this, much of Europe is in the throes of the coldest winter in decades, to say nothing of the respectable scientists who contest global warming alarmism*). But even if raw materials and energy is not a problem, who is going to build all these transformation stations, out of what materials, and what will they eat and breathe while they are busy maintaining this gigantic industrial installation — equivalent to all the factories, cars, and home heating systems on Earth, to say nothing of the secondary effect of deforestation — for half a century?

As for the water calculations, they are patently ridiculous. The Mars Society claims a third of Mars was covered in oceans which, on average, were several hundred meters deep. All this water is now, so they say, tied up in permafrost, in crevasses about 100 meters deep, which occur at intervals of 100 meters in certain areas of the planet. Given these parameters, and even if Mars were evenly covered with these permafrost crevasses, it is clear that this theoretical water is not equivalent to such an important ocean as is claimed to have existed. It is not necessary to make complex calculations to see that, when the ground melts, there can only result localized swamps, some streams, and the occasional shallow lake.

Vance's solution to the problem of planetary ecology seems much more sensible, and even easily applicable to Mars! Mars has some atmosphere, and is neither a poisonous inferno pickled in mercury vapor nor a frigid rock immobilized by temperatures approaching absolute zero. Why not, as did Bernisty on the 'world between' — in fact old Earth — sow '6-D basic vetch', with the attendant 'symbiotic lichens'? Given our capacity of genetic manipulation, and that life teems in such environments as submarine volcanoes, the polar seas, and airless crevasses deep underground, why could not plants or microbes be designed to thrive on Mars, organisms whose life-process by-products would be green-house gases, and

* N.B. I am not denying that pollution is a problem, or even that global warming is not real; the nasty agricultural pollution in France sensibly fouls both air and water. But the claim that human CO_2 production is damaging the environment is a highly technical question I have no competence to judge. More moderate analyses, mostly stifled by the leftist establishment, seem just as convincing to me as the more alarmist ones.

oxygen? Finding themselves in a congenial environment, and without competition, they would rapidly over-run the planet and cause swift climactic change. When conditions were sufficiently evolved new organisms could be introduced to accelerate the work, until the planet became inhabitable by man. The infection of Mars could even be achieved by robot probes, eliminating the need for a human colony before the planet was ready to be 'New Earth'.

Has the Mars society never read Vance? Since their leaders don't really care about colonizing Mars, reading Vance won't reform them! Their true work is not the colonization of Mars (a project I would eagerly support) but converting Earth's population to their fanatical, moribund and absurd religion of post-communist anti-capitalism.

VOLUNTEER WORK

All VIE work is volunteer work, and text work will be credited in the books. But there is other work that receives no such credit. We aspire to function 'professionally', though some of us do not necessarily have experience in certain areas. Hats off therefore to those who successfully brought off the production and delivery of the Gift Volume. Bob Lacovara, who does have some business experience, not only conceived the volume but supervised the operation globally, as well as making all non-European deliveries. Suan Yong created the on-line order form, and processed the orders, making sure each subscriber got what he paid for. I myself delivered European orders. Joel Anderson, in addition to setting the book, worked with Sfera over several months to get all the right bits, the different parts of the cover, front matter, and text, in place. John Foley, Andreas Irle and Errico Rescigno were also involved. A first for the VIE, and a good presage for the future.

Speaking of VIE volunteer work that goes unsung, maintaining the archive is a demanding, and daily, job for John Schwab. The archive now consists of many hundreds, or even thousands, of files. John not only keeps them in order using a set of security measures, but he receives and dispatches all files for all jobs to all teams. John ("Hercules" to insiders) does this constant work with his unfailingly robust and cheerful rigor.

Suan Yong, as VIE work record-keeper, also performs a constant, absolutely necessary, and inglorious service. As I write, Suan is in Boston doing TI work at the Mugar. Perhaps he will favor Cosmopolis with a report of his experiences.

Chris Corley is creator and manager of both the Post-

Proofing (PP) teams and the new Composition Review Teams (CRT, recently taken over by Robin Rouch of *Clam Muffins* fame). PP constitutes the largest of all the VIE work structures, and will carry out the greatest amount of VIE work, probably more, statistically speaking (in man hours and words processed) than all other VIE work put together. The actual work done by PP and CRT continues to grow in importance as more and more texts flow though TI and Composition. Chris is handling this with his usual grace and quiet aplomb.

Norma Vance has, as always, been doing much work resolving for us the sort of knotty textual problems that would remain utterly opaque without her assistance.

Finally I can't resist again mentioning Joel Riedesel, our 'Czar', who has become the nerve center of VIE work. His weekly progress reports, timely reminders, and warning signals have been keeping us on the straight and narrow path these last few months, as more and more texts are strung out in a long series of steps ('Techno, Monkey, TI, BR, SC, Comp#1, CRT, Comp#2, PP, GM', to use our internal jargon). With about a hundred active volunteers, and so many different teams, each organized in its own way, we depend on Joel's constant supervision.

As for Damien Jones, head of three teams, what can one say? Joel Riedesel, in his January 6, 2002 Wave 2 report, says: 'As usual, Damien manages astounding progress in the DD OCR work.' One might add: '*All work proceeding under Damien's aegis is done to exacting standards and in a timely fashion*'. Beyond such kudos, and as a further token of our esteem and gratitude, we would like to offer Damien his name in gold letters:

Damien G. Jones

These are exceptional cases, but all VIE work depends on constant volunteer work by many people. What is special to me in this wonderful manifestation of generosity is not so much the generosity itself—which can be found in other areas—it is the underlying motive of *gratitude*. No sentiment more rare! What Vance's art has given us, is what moves our work forward. It can therefore be said that it is, fundamentally, Vance's work itself which is the motor of the VIE.

WESTERN CIVILIZATION

I don't want to make an absurd or exaggerated statement, but I do tend to see in the VIE project itself an example of how Jack Vance can help save the West. What, after all, are we grateful to him for? Luk Schoonaert, a great-hearted and refreshing young man—whom I love to quote—likes to say: 'Jack is God'. What I think Luk means is that Vance's stories are, for him, a source of something essential. Where else is someone like Luk (cut off from his Christian and cultural roots by our weird society) or many of the rest of us, to get the basic spiritual food we must have to become and remain whole, in the world we actually inhabit? Our culture has come to mock such virtues as courage, perseverance, faithfulness, or even knowledge and strength. Their vulgar exploitation in films of terror and violence is a repellent caricature promoting them only in a criminal mode. Vance is one of the few contemporary writers, the only one I know of, who presents Western culture in a positive light. 'Artists' like Maya Angelou, Stockhousen or Basquiat do their best to inspire us with disgust for ourselves. A pseudo-'popular', and apparently non-malefic, composer like Phillip Glass inspires us only with a sense of languid decadence. The Western cultural scene is a swamp, or a desert. The fashionable Western 'virtues', 'tolerance' and 'openness', which are indeed Western qualities (of Christian origin) have a place of honor in Vance. But, unlike elsewhere, in Vance they have their proper place. They are not used as clubs to crush and destroy our sense of ourselves or positive aspects of the West—which make it, with its faults, the greatest culture. This is the sense of Vance's critique of, for example, anti-colonialism, or environmentalism. Vance gives us unvarnished truth, in the round. Without artists like him it is impossible for the West to maintain its vigor and coherence, now visibly slipping away.

The West, meaning the ensemble of peoples who descend from the Roman Empire, Christendom and the Renaissance (including Australia, New Zealand and—to one extent or another—the Americas) are indeed the most powerful, technologically advanced, prosperous and enlightened nations of the Earth, where (in notable contrast to other places) slavery is abolished, law and order reign, private property is lawful, prosperity is generalized, and freedom of religion is taken for granted. But fourteen hundred years ago the Roman Empire was as relatively powerful as we; and it collapsed. This occurred for the same reason we are collapsing; rot on the inside. Like the Roman Empire the modern West is a magnificent fruit, corrupt at the core. The essence of the West is not aircraft carriers, chemical plants and car factories; it is *us*. But if too great a percentage of us become obsessed with materialism (consumerism), and licentiousness, willing to leach on others, and incapable

of critical thought to the point of confusion before what ought to be obvious choices between right and wrong, the West is doomed. Great nations will fall into chaos; oligarchies and tyrannies will take the place of democracies; the barbaric hordes will engulf us in darkness. When Rome collapsed, it took a millennium to restore the situation to a semblance of the peace and prosperity spread like a benediction by Rome over what is now Europe, the Near East, and the Mediterranean basin.

Islam, invented after the collapse of Rome, inflicted on the world the first 'crusades', the jihads which spread out from Arabia* and, like a nightmare, engulfed North Africa, Spain and Byzantium, gnawed at eastern Europe as far west as Vienna in modern Austria, and western Europe as far north as Tours, in modern France. It was the work of centuries to undo this illegitimate conquest of pure tyrannical aggression, as also was to reform the peoples of the West, a work done by the Church. And now, again, the oppressed Muslim masses, crouching under the bejeweled scepters of new Islamic tyrants, seek to expand into the West, looking on with complaisance as their fantasized brethren exultantly seek to destroy us.

How can a people defend itself whose culture is disintegrating before its complaisant eyes? A Western soldier returning from Afghanistan, a place where every man puts God above himself, comes back to what? A militantly secular culture dedicated to medical insurance, job security, and 'self-fulfillment', whose 'thinkers' spend their energies defaming its history, philosophy and religion, and where grotesqueries, or clownish pranks, are presented as its *fine fleur* in its temples of art.

In the work of Jack Vance we see a truer picture of ourselves, a picture that nourishes by attaching us to what we are and making us conscious of the nature and value of our kind of society, and by teaching us how to become a part of it.

THE COSMOPOLIS LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

The poor CLS, which is finally coming out again this month, has not been seen for a long time! The reason is that Joel Anderson and I, struggling to move texts like

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* Rome, as schools no longer bother to teach, did not gain an empire by wars of aggression, but through courageous and persistent self-defense. When new areas came to be securely part of the empire, citizenship was extended to the local people, with important protections and rights still the basis of Western legal systems. Slavery was also a matter regulated by law, and the status of 'slave' was not, in itself, an obstacle to riches or power. Provincial governors were sometimes 'slaves'. Rome was a haven of peace, order and prosperity, not for nothing—with Greece—called the 'cradle of civilization'.

Madouc, *The Rapparee*, *The Last Castle*, *Vandals of the Void*, etc. through the various stages of Composition, have been too busy. But we have forgotten neither it nor the many faithful CLS readers; each month we have planned a new number, and this month we deliver, but the time has come to admit that, with Composition now in full swing, we often lack time to create the CLS. This does not have to mean that it must die! If others will step forward (an editor and a composer, or editor/composer) the CLS can live on! Please contact me if you are interested in taking over editorship. Joel and I apologize to readers and contributors alike. CLS 11 is now available at the VIE download page. Don't miss it!

* * *

My VIE Story

Edition
Andreas Irle
by Andreas Irle

Paul encouraged me to tell my story about Jack Vance and my Edition. So here it is: my first contact with Jack Vance was the novel *Maske: Thaery*. Until now this book has been something like the Number One Dime is for Scrooge McDuck. My mother brought it home from a shopping trip in Cologne in 1980; since then I have been entranced by Vance—I've collected all I could lay my hands on. In 1983 I made a big deal with a reader who broke up his Vance collection (unbelievable). I then thought to have stuff to read for one or two years or so, but it held barely one or two months (thanks to being in school still).
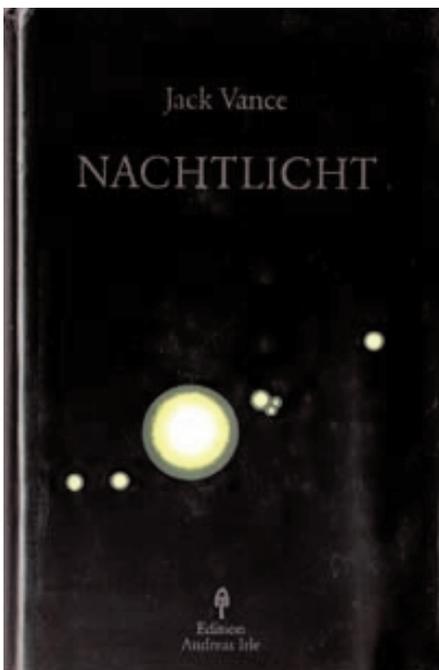
In 1984 I was conscripted for military service and in 1985 I was stationed in Hamburg which is more than five hours away by train from where I lived (and still live). Because of this long travel time (for German conditions) I tried to read in the original language, for I had been a bad language student. So *Cugel's Saga* was my first full length read in the original.

Since then I have first read all Vance novels in the original language. The same year I bought my first Underwood-Miller book—also *Cugel's Saga*. After mili-

seventies. Here I had the possibility to shape more detailed plans and in the summer of 1995 I contacted the agency: the European partner of the Ralph Vicinanza Agency answered my request by phone, asked some questions, and so the project came into existence. I decided to be traditional and in October 1995 I started with *The Dying Earth* as my first published book, as Underwood-Miller and Jack Vance had done before.

Over the years I noticed that the German translations weren't always satisfying: I noticed that some of them were abridged up to 20-25% and that *Rhialto the Marvellous* hadn't been published in Germany (except for *Morreion*) at all. So I sat down and translated the introduc-
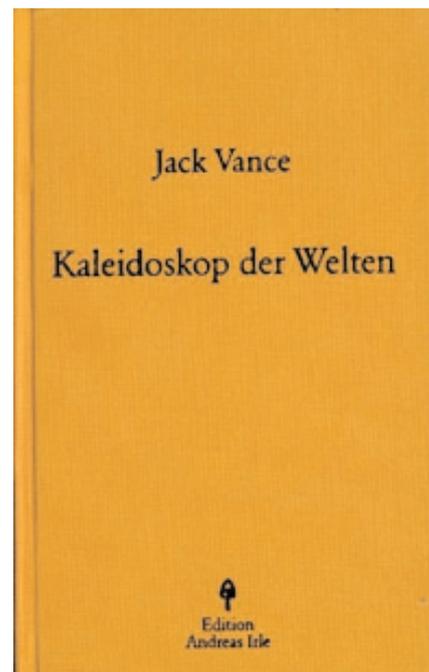
tary service I took an education as assistant librarian and proceeded with a study as certified librarian which ended in late 1990. Because of the unification of Germany, jobs were very rare and after two years of working I began another education, this time as a publishing manager. During this time I got in touch with the stuff that books are made of; it was the time the idea formed to do a thing similar to Underwood-Miller.

For several reasons I ended up working in a wire factory in 1994 where I had worked often since the late

tion of *Rhialto* and the first pages of *The Murthe* and put it into a drawer, this was even before *Die sterbende Erde* came out. At the end of the year I pulled it out of the drawer, read it and thought it was a good translation; so I proceeded, asked for the rights, got them and published it in May 1996.

The reviews of my translation were good to very good (with one exception which was destroying). But the most exciting thing was that the agent offered me *Night Lamp* in February 1996, even before it had been published anywhere—I even got the manuscript for translation. But it was a very big book and I had just started publishing . . . I decided to do the real thing: I would like to have illustrations, a dust jacket (usually my books are without one, only *Night Lamp* and *The Domains of Koryphon* have), and if possible it should be a signed edition. So I asked the agent about the latter, but they said

that I should ask Jack Vance directly which I did. And it worked: Jack Vance agreed and I was very proud about it.

I managed to publish *Nachtlicht* in December 1996, barely three months after the original book came out in the US (in the Netherlands it was published in April 1996). It has been an immense financial risk, but it worked (in the long term, Heyne bought this translation). Since two *Dying Earth* books had been published, I wanted to do the Cugel books also. To spare binding costs I did a bundle purchase: both Cugel books, *Domains* and the then new one *Ports of Call*, and in December 1997 I published *Der Lachende Magier* (*The Eyes of the Overworld*) followed by *Die Domänen von Koryphon* in March 1998 (the book Paul later saw at the Vances).

In March 1999 *Kaleidoskop der Welten* (*Ports of Call*) came out as another signed edition, and in May 1999 *Cugel der Schlaue* (*Cugel's Saga*). In the meantime I got another job; I changed to an office job at ABUS, a German crane company, where I take care of organizing training (sometimes translating), make up documents and other things—in a small team of fine colleagues. This has only been possible because of my side job as a publisher and the occupation with the English language through Jack Vance.

Having published the first series of books (the *Dying Earth* books) I decided to do another one: *The Demon Princes*, for the first three books only exist in abridged versions in Germany; many of the chapter headings, poems and footnotes have been left out. High time to make it the right way. *Der Sternenkönig* was published in December 2000.

All books are limited to 150 copies, except the first three books which have been limited to 250 copies. The paper is high quality (recommended by the library association) and the cover is Charmantgewebe—a sort of linen. The sheets are smyth-sewn and have a stamped lettering in different colors per book. The printing is a traditional offset printing. By the way—my format is the same as the VIE's . . .

Die Mordmaschine has been available since December 2001 and *Der Palast der Liebe* is due in February 2002. Perhaps you can imagine the influence Jack Vance has had and still has in my life and I hope the VIE will have the same impressive impact on it's readers too. Now I am waiting—as eagerly as every Vance reader—for *Lurulu*. And many German readers are waiting to get a translation of it. Perhaps from the Edition Andreas Irle first.

Security and SSH

by Gan Uesli Starling

Security is an important concern to the VIE. Thus it is well to know how hackers are able to break into computers from across the Internet. Such break-ins are termed 'remote exploits' because they remotely exploit some weakness in the system they've broken into. How does this happen?

On any computer there are various services running. Services are house-keeping tasks that need to be done regularly. These are performed by special programs which may be likened to servants in an old English manor: butler, footman, maid, gardener, etc. On UNIX platforms, they are called daemons because they can be made to appear and disappear on command.

Internet servants are like butlers, they answer the door. Just as with any hired help there exist both smart and dumb ones. Any operating system (UNIX, Linux, Windows, Mac) comes with a default cadre of these servants . . . rather like inheriting an English manor complete with staff.

In Windows land, butlers are clones of one another. They are all life-members of the Windows butler union. They do their jobs all just exactly alike and never mind if you even wanted it done in the first place. You can't boss your butler around, nor fire him, nor give him even a single day off. A Windows butler will answer the door no matter what. The best you can do is give him a list of who to let in . . . and hope he obeys it.

But in UNIX and Linux land things go differently. UNIX-land houses hire minimal staff. And barely do they lift a finger unless you tell them. They await your orders. Nor are they clones. So you can replace them if you want to. Most of them you can even tell to go to bed and not wake up until you say so . . . including the butler. And without a butler, nobody's going to answer the door.

Say, for instance, that I tell my butler, footman and maid to all take a holiday. Then intruders may knock on my door all day long to no avail. Sorry, it's the help's day off. Nobody is here to answer the door. Well . . . maybe the gardener is still around, but he does not even know where the door is, much less how to answer it.

Or better yet, what if I just fire the butler and hire myself a bouncer instead? My favorite bouncer is called SSH, which stands for Secure SHell. (A shell is a self-contained program session.) SSH is no polite English butler. SSH is more of an ex-military commando type.

SSH is never polite, but rather behaves like an old-time bouncer in a speak-easy from Prohibition Era in the USA of the 1930's. SSH simply refuses to open the door. Instead he will only open one of those speak-through hatches. SSH will communicate only though this tiny portal, and only in a secret language which SSH reinvents anew each visit. SSH reinvents its language, based upon a password given by the visitor and input to a secret decoder ring which, SSH presumes, is the twin of one possessed by the visitor. SSH will then compose a brand new language, and a new password in that language to challenge the visitor with every few minutes. The secret decoder ring is ex-military too: the RSA encryption algorithm, the same as relied on by the CIA.

When strangers knock and say hello, they expect the whole door to open and be greeted by the usual polite butler. They expect to be able to put their foot in the door and be rude to the butler, to confuse him and to lie to him. But instead, with SSH, the whole door will never open, but only the speak-easy hatch instead. And answering it will be a suspicious, foreign speaking commando-type demanding rudely to see their ID, and to hear the password encrypted via the secret decoder ring using the key which they don't have. None of the other help are around. They have all been sent to bed.

If the visitor satisfies the commando that they are on the official welcome list, can also speak today's secret language and render the password, then still the commando won't let them in. Instead he will wake up one of the servants. The commando will stand there at the door and translate between the visitor and the other servants, all the time using the secret language via the secret decoder ring. The lesser help are not allowed to come within hearing of the door. The visitor stays on his side and the help stays on their side. Any work necessary to the home can be done this way, but the visitors will not be allowed to do it themselves, only the help. This process is called 'port forwarding.' That is to say, the port which would ordinarily connect a visitor with a servant is forwarded through SSH to a non-standard portal.

This process is *not* a firewall. A firewall is something else again. Firewalls are made to let people in based on where they say they have come from. SSH lets no one in, not directly. SSH is a secret-code translating service. Whosoever does not speak the language is not permitted to talk to the servants. To employ a buzz-word, SSH is a communications protocol. The Internet too runs on protocols, different ones. SSH can be made to wind its way inside of the Internet's other protocols. This is called tunneling. Tunnels can be permanent, just like

your cable modem or DSL can be permanent. A permanent tunnel linking two systems is called a Virtual Private Network. And that is quite enough buzz-words for now.

Know that SSH is maintained by a world-wide team of security experts. SSH is free. SSH is not a commercial product. SSH is open source. The source code is known by all, tested and attacked by all, commented upon by all, and critically reviewed by all. It is so very not like anything Microsoftish. There is no room for back doors, security holes, glitches and bugs inside SSH because its inner workings are not secret.

SSH has two components: server and client. Think of these as the general and his lieutenants. The server program is the general, keeper of the decoder ring, maker-up of the daily language, and issuer of the once-only keys. Client programs are the lieutenants, users of the one-time keys. SSH clients come free for both UNIX and Windows. The server too will run on Windows, but not directly. To make the server run on Windows you need a free package called CygWin. Here is the URL for a how-to on SSH for Windows. It includes a link to Cyg-Win.

http://www.jfitz.com/tips/ssh_for_windows.html

For anyone wanting more information, there is a book: *SSH, the Secure Shell, the definitive guide* by D. Barrett & R. Silverman, published by O'Reilly.

It occurs to me much of the VIE's most sensitive data are sent in-the-clear as e-mail attachments. One solitary UNIX or Linux box running SSH as a server and accessed via free SSH clients on Windows might be worth the time and effort. Or else to install CygWin on a Windows box so as to make use of SSH or one of its brethren.

* * *

You Have Done It!
VIE Work Credits
Compiled by Hans van der Veke

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 <u>suan@cs.wisc.edu</u>

*

Night Lamp
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* * *

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

As one of many VIE subscribers who have paid their 'up-front money', but who otherwise take no part in the Great Labour, I find myself feeling a tad graceless and unthankful in telling Cosmopolis that I am most disturbed to discover that each VIE volume may contain a prefaratory 'Introduction' that is not written by Jack Vance.

I subscribed to the VIE in order to obtain all Jack Vance's literature in the most pure and unpolluted form possible. I want the pellucid stream of the Master, uncontaminated by extraneous verbiage.

Introductory polemic can only detract from the purity of the product—Would you scrawl graffiti on the Parthenon? Or allow Dante to do so?

Respectfully yours,
Mike Ralston

*

To the Editor,

Regarding my 'preliminary thoughts' for a preface to the upcoming *The Languages of Pao and The Dragon Masters* VIE publication:

Several people mistook my article in Cosmopolis 22 for a first draft of a preface, though some of the ideas it contains, and even passages, may be reused. As I stated in the first paragraph: "This is a preparatory exercise for an introduction to the upcoming *Pao/Dragon Masters* book. I hope Cosmopolis readers will contribute comments and ideas—in letters to Cosmopolis. This is not a draft, merely a collection of preliminary thoughts."

Derek Benson suggested that my characterization of H.G. Wells as an 'intellectual thug' would be inappropriate for an introduction to one of our VIE books on the grounds that it is 'an offensive remark concerning a very well-known author'. The resumé of proto-SF where this passage occurs will probably not be used for the preface, which I hope to make short. Still, Derek's reasoning escapes me. Wells *is* an intellectual thug, whatever the quality of his work or his reputation. This is my opinion—granted!—but it is also true, and as Navarth once remarked; truth is beautiful. Wells being 'respected' is quite a different thing from his being or not being a thug. Plenty of thugs are respected. Stalin, for example, is a respected military leader. This fact, justified or not, may impose an obligation to use terms of polite kindness, only when speaking of him concerning military matters; but does it also impose an obligation to avoid all strong language when speaking of him regarding all other matters? And why is it permitted to speak the truth in the vestibule but not in the antechamber?

As for Mike Ralston's concerns voiced in this issue, he may lay them confidently aside; the books he is paying for will have no prefaces (not counting VIE material that will be included in volume 44, such as the Chronological List, Textual Histories, and Project work credits). *The Languages of Pao and The Dragon Masters*, like the Gift Volume (*Coup de Grace and Other Stories*) is a special VIE publication, not part of the 44 volume set (though these texts will be published in the set as well!) whose purposes include testing and development of the book format, greasing our production wheels, promoting Vance and the project. Mike's concern with *pure and unpolluted form*, his desire to drink only at *the pellucid stream of the Master*, *uncontaminated by extraneous verbiage*, can be realized by the simple expedient of not ordering this book, which—take warning, all!—will indeed be *polluted* by an *introductory polemic*—though others might call it an 'effort to promote Vance to the rank of his merit'.

As for Dante writing on the Parthenon; since already each passing wastrel and vagabond has freely left his mark, why exclude Dante? He would certainly have something more interesting to note.

Paul Rhoads

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From the Editor,

Paul Rhoads' remarks above indicate that he has missed my point entirely concerning the possible mention of H.G. Wells as an 'intellectual thug' in an introduction to the *Pao/Dragon Masters* book. One doesn't write an introduction to an author's book (in this case, Jack Vance) and in that introduction deride or disparage some other author (in this case, Wells). It simply isn't done; it's bad form, bad manners, arrogant. And one doesn't score any points for the author one is introducing (Vance). Paul must be aware of the fact that the introduction is tied to the author of the book (Vance), and that derogatory comments about another author in the introduction will be linked to Vance's name. It doesn't matter that the writer of the introduction is someone else (in this case, Paul Rhoads). Would Jack himself want to publicly state that H.G. Wells was an intellectual thug? Paul should ask himself this question. If the answer is no, or one can surmise that the answer is most likely no, then Paul's characterization of Wells should not be made in the introduction.

I have no interest whatsoever in Paul's opinion of Wells; I have no particular opinion of Wells myself due to the fact that many years have passed since I have read anything written by him. My concern with the possibility of Paul's characterization appearing in the introduction would have been the same if it had been a different author.

Derek W. Benson

*

To the Editor,

I am strongly of the view that introductions to Jack Vance's works are not the place to argue whether he writes science fiction or not. Paul Rhoads' notes are fine for Cosmopolis, but will be irrelevant to most potential Vance readers — not to mention offensive, if he includes his gratuitous criticism of H.G. Wells, one of the great writers in the English language (his *Country of the Blind* has been described as a perfect short story in an anthology of the greatest short stories). To call him an intel-

lectual thug can do no damage to Wells, but will surely create an unpleasant impression of the name-caller.

Also, arguing whether or not Vance writes science fiction in the VIE is counterproductive. For people like me who believe that science fiction will increasingly be seen as the source of much of the only interesting writing of the 20th Century (as Kurt Vonnegut wrote, "Everything there was to know about life was in The *Brothers Karamazov*, by Feodore Dostoyevsky. But that isn't enough any more.") — and that Vance is one of the shapers of this new direction of literature — we will feel our noses are being rubbed in excrement.

For people who don't particularly care for science fiction — and they are increasingly dying out, along with the Leavisites — having this issue put to them will simply provoke the thought, where there's smoke there's fire. They wouldn't have thought about the science fiction issue but for the essay.

Professor Tom Shippey wrote recently: "The dominant literary mode of the twentieth century has been the fantastic. This may appear a surprising claim, which would not have seemed even remotely conceivable at the start of the century and which is bound to encounter fierce resistance even now. However, when the time comes to look back at the century, it seems very likely that future literary historians, detached from the squabbles of the present, will see as its most representative and distinctive works books like J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, and also George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughter-house-Five* and *Cat's Cradle*, Ursula le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed*, Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot-49* and *Gravity's Rainbow*. The list could readily be extended back to the late nineteenth century with H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr Moreau* and *The War of the Worlds* . . ."

And, I would add, the works of Jack Vance.

If indeed introductions are needed at all, then they should simply be a short appreciation of the virtues of Vance, and maybe some context of when they were written. The VIE should not be the forum for personal views on Vance: that place is Cosmopolis. Surely we don't want to risk being seen as mere vanity publishers.

Pontificating about how to label Vance is demeaning to Vance: as he so often said, Let his words speak for themselves.

Rob Gerrand

To the Editor,

Since we're still defining science fiction, I'll offer mine: A subset of fantasy literature that uses the tropes of modern science as its fantasy elements. This is broad enough to include Gene Wolfe and Jack Vance, whether or not they are 'optimistic' about the future.

While I'm here, it seems to me that the Syrenese culture in *The Moon Moth* is a take on the Italian Renaissance: much art, and much cruelty.

James Jordan

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To the Editor,

So, poor Till Noever, author of an "innocuous missive"—in which he tries to take an axe to the roots of the beliefs of the majority of the people on the planet—is "surprised" when others respond in the negative to his ideas! Indeed, he accuses me of "hurl[ing] intemperate and uncivilized invective" at him! Since this accusation seems to refer to my statement that I regard it as regrettable that Cosmopolis should be made the vehicle for "primitive, anti-religious bigotry", I would be curious to know what I could have said regarding Mr. Noever's uninformed views that he would *not* have regarded as "invective"?

In any event, the truth is a perfect defense. I will merely suggest that Mr. Noever's own statements are the best evidence vindicating my characterization of him: anyone who candidly admits an inability to distinguish between Judaism and Christianity must be considered not only ignorant, but wilfully so.

Moving on to the gravamen of Mr. Noever's argument, I note that he has made no effort whatsoever to engage the substantive arguments, grounded in historical fact, made by his three interlocutors, except to repeat his earlier assertions, which hardly advances his cause. Has Christianity failed in many instances to live up to its ideals? Certainly. But which other religious (or indeed non-religious) tradition would Mr. Noever advance that even propounded such ideals? There are none.

Could scientific advancement have occurred in a polytheistic society in which the great ethical monotheisms did not emerge, as Mr. Noever asserts? By his own reckoning, his beloved Egypt existed for at least twice as long prior to the emergence of Christianity as the Christian era has lasted: yet their scientific advancements were negligible. Other polytheistic societies fared no better: science also stagnated under Greece and Rome, and did not achieve its full flourishing until the Middle Ages. Even the latecomer Muslims contributed substantially to modern mathematics, astronomy, chemistry and medicine, through such scholars as Avicenna and Averroes.

Why should scientific advancement be linked to monotheism? The three great ethical monotheisms have this in common: they all believe in an omnipotent deity, outside of conventional space and time, who created the universe. Further, they believe that man is God's highest creation, and that man's highest purpose is to worship and glorify God. As is evident, there are few better ways of doing this than to explore the underlying symmetries and orderings of the universe: a point of view which will result in the emergence of systematic science. Conversely, in a polytheistic society in which men are the playthings of wanton and cruel gods, there is no rational reason to suppose there is a systemic architecture underpinning the universe: no systemic thinking, no science.

Very respectfully,
David G.D. Hecht

*

To the Editor,

Till Noever, in Cosmopolis 22, replies to letters written previously by David Hecht, Paul Rhoads, and me in response to a letter of his. In this original letter, as I understand it, Till claims that monotheism is 'bad' and polytheism is 'good' by certain measures, one of which is tolerance for those who beg to differ.

In his last letter, he asserts in his fourth paragraph that he cannot distinguish Judaism and Christianity. This is a problem, since his letters concern religions. Surely, he cannot mean this literally. If he does, then he might ask how his comments are to be taken seriously.

Till also presents an equation to illustrate his point, but unsurprisingly some of the terms are unknown. In engineering, we call these terms 'fudge factors'. Engineers use them to make an equation say whatever is convenient, just as in discussions we use unsupported assertions.

I think, however, that I understand the gist of Till's argument on tolerance: that it depends inversely upon the power of the deity in greatest worship. I disagree, however, that it has much to do with the religion of the dominant culture. It does, however, have a dependence on a cultural, or at least, demographic issue. Some studies performed in the late 60s or early 70s (apologies: I cannot provide references, so if you wish, take my claims

as mere unsupported assertions) indicate that outsiders are tolerated perfectly well by any society until the percentage of the 'outside' individuals reaches about 10% of the population.

This figure accounts for persecution of Jews by Christians, blacks by whites, and some other distinguishable groups in African and Asian countries. So here it is folks: anyone is tolerated until they become too noticeable. You can point to any culture which has an on-going clash between identifiable groups, and you'll find that the small group is still at least 10% of the whole. When a culture proudly asserts that there is harmony between the majority and the minority, either the minority is well under 10%, or kept, as was the case in South Africa, under lock and key.

Consider: you can't blame the Jews for economic woes unless there are enough of them to make the claim plausible. You can't blame the blacks for crime unless there are enough of them to account for the crime rate. The Yingsturms can't blame the Walzools for a bad smell unless there are enough of them to make a reasonable case that they are the culprits…whether or not the Yingsturms smell exactly the same way. This notion, that tolerance and its sidekick prejudice, are related more to how many of an odd thing are around seems somewhat more reasonable to me than blaming the number of arms or heads the current deity has…

In passing, I note that Till gives the credit to Science for the comforts and technological advances. I cannot help but note that he should really credit Engineering. Science produces equations; Engineering produces heart valves. I hold degrees in both: I assure you this is the case. The Greeks and Babylonians weren't too bad in some aspects of Science, but they didn't develop video games partly because they were pretty much indifferent to Engineering.

Till wasn't raising this as an issue, though. He wonders why people credit these benefits of, well, let's say science, to a Judeo-Christian European culture. The reason that no polytheistic society or other monotheistic society ever produced these benefits or even cared to, despite the fact that some of these cultures endured thousands of years. In the relatively short period from the Renaissance to present time Science (and Engineering, Engineering!) has remade the world, and it seems clear that only a Judeo-Christian Europe could provide the breeding grounds for this explosion of thought and action.

Bob Lacovara

To the Editor,

About Till's plaint; my advice: unilaterally treat all correspondents as if they understand and obeyed the 'rules of civilized debate', if such exist. If yes, I hope among them figures: *All assertions should be, minimally, 50% concordant with reality*. Though disregard of this particular rule is certainly a more serious infraction than overheated phrasing, no one likes to get morally slapped. We all ought to know this, since our Lord and Savior has said: DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU — an instruction which has been given universal publicity! Which reminds me; Till is not explicit in his hints concerning *the unique document worth the paper it is written on*. I fail to catch the reference, unless it is that obvious candidate: the Pentateuch…which seems doubtful; it was not written on paper but on stone — and on our hearts — and, what's worse, is deeply tainted with monotheism.

Regarding the relation of Christianity to Science, here are several ways I 'contrive to make it sound' like there is one; or to put it another way, 'why it seems evident to me':

1) The great advances of modern science from, say, the 17th century, occurred in a completely Christian society, and in no other. If the source of modern science is not Christianity, what is it? This does not mean that Christianity is science, but that in Christian culture only does science flourish.

2) The Church, despite distortions of the historical record*, has been a great, not to say *the* great, protector and promoter of the advancement of human knowledge. It is Christian missionaries, for example, who still educate children in the ex-colonies of Europe, and it was the monastic orders which preserved and diffused ancient (and contemporary) knowledge in the Middle Ages. The preservation and advancement of knowledge at the time of the Islamic empire, famous for a 'tolerance' it did not in fact practice in any remarkable measure, has been shown to have been largely the work of Jewish and Christian scholars.

3) From an anti-religious (or anti-Christian) perspective, religion is just superstitious nonsense; but from the perspective of serious Christians, such as the vast majority of men responsible for the advancement of sci-

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* Like the facts of Galileo's dust-up with his friend the Pope. As I have mentioned before in Cosmopolis: though it is perhaps not nice to lock people up for such things (a practice still current) the Church (which was also the government of that part of Italy at the time) was closer to being right on the scientific points than Galileo. At any rate the reasons for the imprisonment were not his views but his overheated methods of expressing them; the Pope did not care for uncivilized debate, any more than other people.

ence from the time of Newton and Descartes until recently, the Christian understanding of reality is the true and ultimate understanding, in which human knowledge (science) finds its rightful place. The opinions of men like Newton are not to be dismissed as if they were immature stupidities.

A related remark: 'Tolerance', that ultimate contemporary value which many gratuitously associate with modernity and science, has nothing to do with either; it is a uniquely Christian virtue. The corresponding Eastern virtue, should anyone think to look there for its source, is not tolerance but detachment, something much closer to indifference, which, unlike tolerance, is an expression of weakness. The importance of tolerance in Western societies today, however it should be adjudged, has its source uniquely in our Christian heritage.

Paul Rhoads

*

To the Editor,

Paul Rhoads caught me red-handed: I had indeed "repeated the meaningless formula that [Mr. Rhoads] is entitled to his opinions". Advantage Rhoads. Arguing with Mr. Rhoads is a strenuous exercise.

Rhoads is truly a master of the dismissive paragraph but, while that is obviously fulfilling to write, it does not necessarily make for convincing reading. The meaningless formula, for instance, *does* correspond to something, which is why we often cannot help using it. But the interesting question is indeed what the entitlement derives from. The problem with *rights*, natural or unnatural, is that they are themselves *properties*, won, lost, bought, sold, given, seized, etc, with the unsurprising result that some people have more rights than others.

Following Sen, I would argue that entitlement proceeds *logically* from all of us being in the same boat and, rather than paraphrasing it, I would prefer to send him *Inequality Reexamined* if he would accept it. One unfortunate connection between all of us being in the same boat and property is that, by now, the men of property are likely about to sink the boat. That they won't be able to escape either, is poetic justice but not very comforting. I did not intend to suggest that being in the same boat justified envy which, in this case, is a red herring: I don't *envy* Gates, I even paid for Word 98, and I still think that he is immensely destructive.

As for the French Socialist party, Rhoads is definitely wrong: it hasn't had any brain for at least half a century. In any case, to invoke it in matters of *equality* is much like invoking Bush II in matters of *Res Publica*. Neither has any idea of what's involved.

Alain Schremmer

*

To the Editor,

The debate started by my Eulenspiegelian remarks continues; the volume increases; as does my bewilderment. What is happening? Have I stumbled into one of Jack's strange worlds, where bizarre, exotic theories abound, and colorful characters hold forth on pedestals on intricate systems of thought that nobody but themselves can possibly comprehend?

But, no!, I am not dreaming or high on some designer drug. I pinch myself, read again, pinch myself harder, feel the pain. I perform further tests of wakefulness and, finally convinced, admit that this is as 'real' as it gets.

Highlights from the recent debate follow. Some are verbatim; others paraphrased; a few interpolated; a smattering serving to illuminate between-the-lines material. The material speaks for itself.

- The contents of religious edicts are more significant to the understanding of a religion than its practice.
- The utterance of opinions that go against widely-held beliefs by implication makes the utterer the legitimate target of vitriol, and furthermore excuses the behavior of the dispenser of said vitriol, who is justifiably incensed and thus should be accorded the courtesy of being *allowed* to be intemperate and uncivilized. This is especially true if the utterer promulgates opinions which — and I just have to insert a quote here in order to convey the full weight of the opinion — "take an axe to the roots of the beliefs of the majority of the people on the planet". This is indeed a heinous deed which would, once upon a time, have drawn the instant attention of Inquisitors, who would have disposed of perps like me without delay or compunction. In our liberal society however these creeps are tolerated, all of which contributes to the progressive decay of said societies. The Roman Empire caved in under the pressure of such subversives, and we've got to watch our step that it doesn't happen here, too. Of course, the Roman Empire also suffered from an absence of monotheism . . .
- Galileo was persecuted for his opinions not because

he offered evidence for heliocentrism, but because he expressed his opinions in a manner unconducive to public and religious peace and safety. Pope and Church on the other hand — who had a much firmer grasp on scientific truth than Galileo anyway! — were basically justified in their actions. Can't have people disturbing the peace now, can we?

- Hence — and this is a between-the-lines thing! — maybe the Inquisition wasn't such a bad thing either and probably had some justification. Maybe we could do with another round of it to tidy up the loose ends — so that the masses can sleep easily, knowing their spiritual virtue is safe and unthreatened by anybody asking questions about the tenets of their Faiths.

- 'Tolerance' is a Christian virtue, and the closest those Eastern primitives come to anything like it is the — morally, ethically, philosophically — 'weak' notion of 'detachment', which is closely related to 'indifference' — all of which provides further evidence, if such were needed, for their cultural inferiority.

- The ancient cultures of the Middle East did not develop to build video games because they had no taste for engineering. It goes without saying that building pyramids, cities, irrigation systems, and the like is not 'engineering'. Developing video games on the other hand *is*.

- Since yonder loaf of bread was made from dough kneaded with yeast, and since yonder loaf rose, the inescapable and obvious conclusion must be — and how could anybody argue differently? — that yeast was necessary to make yonder loaf rise.

- Islam, being a monotheism, has actually contributed more to science than any of those polytheist or near-atheist cultures that have adulterated our planet.

- It is possible, in principle and in practice, to design an objective measure, and a formal procedure or algorithm for the determination of, the percentage of objective, observer-, axiom-, and context-independent truth (or, as it was called, 'concordance with reality') contained in any given statement phrased in the context of a natural language. To help us with determining what that 'reality' is, we must never forget that "the Christian understanding of reality is the true and ultimate understanding".

- An appropriate 'relationship' with God justifies almost any action to glorify him.

- As an 'outsider' you're probably safe from persecution until the likes of you swell their numbers to constitute about 10% of a population that thinks differently than you do. And — and here again I feel compelled to quote since I couldn't possibly do the statement justice by paraphrasing — "This figure accounts for persecution of Jews by Christians, blacks by whites, and some other distinguishable groups in African and Asian countries." It would be handy if it also accounted for the persecution of Christians by the Romans, the Jews by the Germans, Atheists by Christians, Zoroastrians by Muslims, smokers by non-smokers. In order to create world-harmony let's adjust all groups such that 'outsiders' constitute less than 10%. Simple and straightforward: why search for complex explanations when simple pseudo-scientific ones will do?

- Equations with as-yet-undetermined constants of proportionality or parameters are unscientific. Thus, for an arbitrary spring operating in its linear range, to apply the formula $f=-kx$ to describe it is unscientific, because k is unknown — and therefore the parameter could be adjusted to prove just about anything about the spring, including possibly that it wasn't a spring at all!

- In polytheist societies men are the 'wanton playthings' of cruel gods, while in the monotheisms of the world — especially in the Christian case; or, on second thought strike 'especially' — the god is beneficent and possessed of infinite kindness — and, so one would hope, though nobody ever mentions it, a commensurate sense of humor, which s/he needs badly! Also, the actions of the followers of monotheist gods — again, really only in the Christian case — provide clear and unequivocal evidence for the beneficence of their god — quite opposite to the evidence provided by the followers of polytheisms, who are brutish and primitive, also reflecting their gods' predilections. Of course, deviants exist, but while in 'other' cultures and belief systems they are evidence for their backwardness, in our own they merely constitute statistically insignificant aberrations from the norm, which is that of an 'advanced' culture.

- The gods worshipped by Judaism and Christianity are distinct. This distinction is more than just a matter of doctrinal nitpicking. Anybody thinking or saying anything different thereby demonstrates his ignorance of religion.

- The desire to worship and glorify a deity provides the greatest impetus to explore the order contained in the universe. The 'greater' the deity, the greater

this desire. Simple 'curiosity' about how and why things are as they are and work as they work has nothing to do with it. It is therefore self-evident that Christianity is the ultimate reason for the development of modern technology.

- You can have engineering without science. In other words, you can design and build machines which do what you want them to do, and do so in a reliable and predictable fashion, without having some pertinent pre-existing cause-effect theories rooted in some form of empiricism.

This dazzling panoply of intricate feats of logic; tightly woven chains of reasoning; surprising revelations of historical 'facts'; references to weighty documents and propoundings by significant propounders; profound understanding and in-depth appreciation of social dynamics, cultures, and philosophies, Western and Eastern alike; left me breathless. I was looking for a simile from Jack's work, and finally found it in *The Dragon Masters*. Remember the exchanges between Joaz Banbeck and the Sacerdotes, the Basics' emissaries, and even Ervis Carcolo? Do they sound at all familiar?

Kindest regards,
Till Noever

P.S. Paul is, of course, *way* off the mark with his guess at my mystery edict/document, which is completely devoid of references to deity.

* * *

Closing Words

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