
C O S M O P O L I S

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Post Proofing Report

by Chris Corley, Post Proofing Manager

Post Proofing for Wave 1 is complete! Post Proofing achieved this significant milestone through many hours of hard work, over many months, on the part of dozens of volunteers. The Subteam Managers have spent even more time collating comments from their teams, comparing them to TI docs, eliminating spurious or nuncupatory comments, and putting up with the cantankerousness of the Post Proofing Manager in rejecting many of their comments. The VIE community, managers and subscribers alike, owe a large debt of gratitude to Post Proofing Subteams and their managers for their heroic efforts in completing Wave 1 Post Proofing.

Some interesting data points:

- Post Proofing began at the end of April 2001.
- Including Gift Volume texts, 66 Post Proofing jobs have been completed.
- Of these 66 jobs, 41 have been completed in calendar year 2002: more than 60% of the jobs in less than 40% of the total elapsed time since PP inception.
- Between April 27 and June 7 (a mere six weeks) an astonishing 764,200 words (about a third of the Wave 1 wordcount) were Post Proofed.
- The total count of words proofed across all volunteers is about 19.8 million.
- The average number of proofers per text is 8.0, with equal numbers (on average) for long and short texts. The initial goal, based on estimates of average quality of proofing per volunteer, was to have a minimum of six proofers per text; in no case did a Wave 1 text have fewer than six Post Proofing volunteers.

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to the following Subteam Managers and their teams for their hard work and tremendous accomplishments in completing Wave 1 Post Proofing:

Erik Arendse — *Dragon Masters*

Rob Friefeld — *Penwipers*

Robert Melson — *King Kragen's Exemplary Corps*

Till Noever — *Spellers of Forlorn Encystment*

Dave Reitsema — *Tanchinaros*

Robin Rouch—*Clam Muffins*

Jeff Ruszczyk—*Sandestins*

We learned a lot throughout the Wave 1 Post Proofing effort, and I am confident that we are now even better equipped for continued high-quality Post Proofing output in Wave 2.

Work Tsar Status Report

as of June 23, 2002

by Joel Riedesel

Wave 1

All Post Proofing for Wave 1 has been completed! There are only 13 texts that are still undergoing Composition Review. RTF-DIFF has completed close to half of the Wave 1 texts as the last step to ensuring that they are ready to be assembled into volumes.

Volume assembly is very active. Front matter for about half of the volumes has been completed and Paul is up to his arms in acid (etchings) and will likely be so for the next month. Many accolades should go to the stars of these last steps: John Schwab, Paul Rhoads, Robin Rouch (and her minions), and Charles King (and his minions). But of course we cannot forget the other Composers: Joel Anderson and Andreas Irle! The end of July marks the Golden Master 1 meeting and the sending of files to the printer shortly thereafter!

Wave 2

There are no significant changes for Wave 2 this month. Pre-TI steps continue apace while many texts are in TI and are active. We will begin to see a lot more progress on Wave 2 in the coming months (especially as Wave 1 calms down and is completed).

How To Kill Dogs

AND OTHER JACK VANCE REMINISCENCES

By David Alexander

I don't know how Jack Vance will react to this publication. Many writers thrive on publicity, or at least enjoy it. But not Jack. He has always believed that a writer's personal life should be somewhat hidden so as not to color on the readers' perception of his (or her) work. Somewhat in deference to that philosophy, I won't try to relate any aspect of Jack's stories to any trait of his personality, character or upbringing. But, I will jot down a few remarks about Jack Vance himself.

Poul Anderson is directly responsible for my meeting Jack. Several years ago I was teaching a junior college class on Science Fiction and Poul was our guest speaker. I happened to mention that I greatly admired Jack's work and Poul revealed (perhaps to Jack's dismay) that Jack lived in Oakland. Sure enough, there he was in the Oakland phone book.

With some trepidation I called Jack and asked if I could meet him. He said that I could, provided that I did not talk to him about writing. I found him at his hilltop home, on his hands and knees, laboriously installing a slate floor in the living room. Somehow or other I managed to avoid mentioning his writing and our friendship began.

In the following years I often found Jack immersed in the building and re-building of his home. Jack's eyesight was very, very bad and it was with not a little concern that I watched him operate the radial saw or hoist four by fours into place. I particularly remember one Saturday afternoon when I found him clambering from beam to beam some twenty feet above my head. I was certain that he was going to lose his grip, plummet earthward, and land on me! Fortunately for both of us, my fears were unfounded. Month by month, year by year, the house took shape and not once was I fallen on. As the years went by, I would often take friends to the Vances for one of Norma's famous Sunday dinners (Norma Vance is one of best cooks it has ever been my pleasure to encounter) and I took increasing pleasure in giving my friends a tour of the house which I had watched take shape:

"That ceiling is hand-carved walnut from Jack and Norma's trip to Pakistan. Those painted panels on the kitchen ceiling were specially created by their friend Tony over a period of a several month long visit. There is the

famous slate floor. The walls of the breakfast nook are solid Koa wood from Hawaii. That fireplace Jack built and mortared, stone by stone. There is the breakfront which John Vance built by hand, beginning with raw oak planks and ending in that magnificent contrivance of wood and glass and metal."

On those visits the Vance household was always a place of laughter and activity. Norma would labor in the kitchen to cook a gourmet dinner for the six or ten or twelve guests. Some of the ladies (and the men) would help by cutting carrots or peeling avocados. Others would gather in the dining room where they would drink wine or sample one of the Vances' fifteen or twenty varieties of liquors and talk about everything from the political situation in Singapore to why all modern music is abysmal noise (Jack's constant point of view); the complete uselessness of dogs, or the various strong points of one computer or sail boat over another.

The participants at these evenings were always diverse: Dennis the boat repairman and Citroen aficionado would usually be available to decry the vices of steel-hulled boats or to praise the virtues of his three or four Citroens. Tim Underwood or Hayford Pierce would gently prod Jack on any one of several of his pet topics: the magnificence of classical jazz; the worthlessness of professional football; the iniquity of most politicians.

Jack, in turn, would give as good or better as he got, more than once making pointed remarks to Tim about the 'cult' of vegetarianism. (It is no secret that the portion of *The Book of Dreams* making reference to "the dark side of vegetarianism" was inspired by Jack and Tim's good natured bantering on this topic.) The guest list usually included persons of diverse professions: doctors, architects, pottery makers, cabinet makers, contractors, a lawyer (me), nuclear physicists, computer hackers, and even, occasionally, a writer, an agent, an editor, or more rarely, a publisher.

One Sunday night I stopped by Jack and Norma's on my way back from skiing in Tahoe to find a party in full swing, complete with band. In the middle of one of Jack's banjo and kazoo solos the phone rang. It was Donald Wollheim, publisher of DAW books. He and Elsie had flown into Oakland International, rented a car, and promptly gotten lost. They were stranded in an abandoned Texaco station down by the freeway. Would I go and rescue them?

I found the Wollheims huddled in their rented Dodge Dart and led them through Oakland and up into the hills.

At this time, both were in their late sixties. Finally, about nine-thirty, we reached the one lane road where Jack's house was situated. Then, carefully, we drove up the narrow, rutted, semi-vertical driveway to Jack and Norma's hilltop home. ("If you step three feet to the right," I warned them, "you will fall down an embankment to the road sixty feet below and surely be killed." This turned out to be untrue as recently Jack did fall down the embankment to the road below while on a nocturnal garbage emptying mission and he was *not* killed, or even seriously injured, though the garbage did take a hell of a beating). Anyway, after successfully negotiating the edge of the Vance Cliff, I led the Wollheims up the 15 stairsteps to the living room where the party was now in full swing.

With great weariness, Don and Elsie collapsed onto the couch and accepted a refreshment. Jack left the band to fend for itself and came over to welcome his guests. For some reason I do not now remember, I decided to set Jack off in absolutely the wrong direction.

"Jack," I said brightly, "have you told Don about the new manuscript you are going to send him?"

"Ah," Jack said, playing along, "which one do you mean?"

"You know, Jack, the coffee table book you've been working on: *How To Kill Dogs*."

"Oh, *that* book!" Jack replied enthusiastically. "No, I haven't, but I should. Don, this is a wonderful book, a big seller! It's an illustrated book describing forty-two methods of killing dogs through the ages."

At this point Don looked like a man who had just been offered a canapé consisting of a squirming tarantula impaled on a toothpick.

Sensing that Don was a bit disoriented and somewhat vulnerable, Jack continued:

"The first chapter is entitled *Medieval Methods of Killing Dogs*. Picture this: a drawing of a bedraggled hound with one end of a chain clamped to his hind leg and the other welded to a cannonball. In the next picture, the dog is sailing through the air, his ears back, his tail between his legs, on a collision trajectory with an encampment of raiding Norsemen." The Wollheims envisioned this scene with an expression of vast dismay.

The more Jack expounded, the harder I laughed, the more disoriented Don and Elsie appeared and, in turn, the more fanciful Jack became. The last chapter I can recall, before I practically rolled off the couch, had something to do with mad scientists, venal dogs and coruscating laser beams. (This joke became a favorite with Jack until one time he 'pitched' the book to the Editor

In Chief of one of his publishers who took him seriously. At the end of his 'proposal', she told him icily that she had two dogs which were the love of her life, and then turned her back on him and stalked away. After that, *How To Kill Dogs* was not mentioned very much.)

Over the years the parties have continued unabated. The books have emerged, longer and longer, from Jack's basement computer, and Norma's cooking continues as good as ever. I cannot envision a time when all that should change.

I realize that there is little in this brief essay that is profound, but perhaps it will strike a chord of resonance with those of you who read what Jack writes. The only connection I will suggest between Jack Vance's books and Jack Vance the man is to observe that Jack's characters inhabit worlds which do not lack for fine ale, invigorating teas, hospitable inns, talented musicians, and waggish scamps—which is not such a bad life at all.

38's Crucible

by Paul Rhoads

NOTICE TO READERS OF THIS RUBRIC

VIE Volunteer No.38—which is to say: myself—who with other volunteers is responsible for certain aspects of project work, treats various subjects under this catch-all rubric. These subjects include aspects of project work progress, technical and aesthetic information related to our work and books, as well as on-going commentary relative to the work of Jack Vance and the VIE project from both literary and philosophical angles. The various sub-sections are unambiguously titled; *Cosmopolis* readers who find any of these subjects without interest, or ideologically uncongenial, are cordially invited to not read them. The VIE project includes hundreds of people from all over the world unified only by their dedication to the work of Jack Vance, which is extremely rich and broad based, and appeals to many kinds of people. The VIE project is, therefore, necessarily heterogeneous, and its 'public space', Cosmopolis, should, and does, reflect this. In addition, though worldwide, the VIE project is based in America, Jack Vance himself is American, and the VIE is run on American principles—such as the First Amendment to the Constitution. (The *raison d'être* for

this notice, which really should be nuncupatory, is made clear in a section below.)

FINAL DAYS OF WAVE 1 POST PROOFING

On June 9th Chris Corley made the following announcement:

"Post Proofing for *The Face* is complete, and the PP Final Report has been uploaded to the archive. Robert Melson and his King Kragen's Exemplary Corps, who are rapidly becoming (in my eyes) famous for the quickness of their fast speed, lived up to the adjectival claim in their team's title in all ways.

"Details:

Text: *The Face*. File: facexx-fin-v2.pdf

Team: King Kragen's Exemplary Corps (Robert Melson, Corps Commander)

Participating: Robert Melson, Jeff Ruszczyk, Martin Green, Mark Bradford, Simon Read, Lucie Jones, Wiley Mittenberg.

"Side Notes:

1) *Suldrun* Post Proofing Draft Final Report submitted by me to Dave Reitsema and Rob Friefeld (Subteam Managers for this text); they have promised 24-hour turnaround, and final report submission of *Suldrun* is expected to be before end of the day tomorrow (Monday 10 June).

2) This text puts Post Proofing over the 50% mark for VIE wordcount completed."

And on June 10th:

"Post Proofing for *Suldrun's Garden* is complete, and the Final Report has been uploaded to the archive. Dave Reitsema and Rob Friefeld led their respective teams, the Tanchinaros and the Penwipers, to a speedy, high-quality and thorough completion of this job under a high-pressure and short deadline.

"Details:

Text: *Suldrun's Garden*. File: suldru-fin-v2.pdf

Teams: The Tanchinaros and The Penwipers

Contributors: Dave Reitsema, Rob Friefeld, Mike Barrett, Top Changwatchai, Bob Collins, Andrew Edlin, Rob Knight, Rod MacBeath, Betty Mayfield, Errico Rescigno, Bill Schaub, Gabriel Stein.

"Note: wordcount for several texts are as yet unknown. Once more accurate wordcounts for

these texts are known, percent completion of wordcount will be reported for Wave 2 and overall VIE.”

Commenting on PP errata, here are three of Patrick Dusoulrier’s TI notes on *The Face*:

PP-QUERY 123/27; winsome then ever / winsome than ever

COMMENT; usage error/typo not addressed in TI

TI-COMMENT 11; Aarrgh... And this text had at least 4 proofers, including the distinguished Rob Friefeld and Tim Stretton! Not to mention that I read it three times in a row... Woe is me! Just goes to show.

PP-QUERY 205/1; by Richard Pelto. / by Richard Pelto:

COMMENT; colon instead of the period as in the other chapter introductions

TI-COMMENT 11; This is a beautiful spot! MS does indeed contain a colon...

=> MAKE CHANGE by Richard Pelto. / by Richard Pelto:

PP-QUERY 254/8; surrounded by / surmounted by

COMMENT; This definitely falls into the realm of PP making a TI query, but it does not make sense for a roof to be surrounded by a weathervane. “Nunc” expected, but PP could not resist adding this query nonetheless.

TI-COMMENT 11; BINGO! I vote this one as one of the best PP remarks (among many excellent ones). I checked MS, and it contains <surmounted> as 254 surmised. Bravo!

Regarding other work progress, the redoubtable Chuck King, in his capacity as rtf-diff team manager, making arrangements to go on a short vacation, wrote the following:

“Over the last couple days I have assigned out all of the diffing jobs I have received from John S. and Koen. There are a dozen texts in process as I write this. The differs are plugging away, and those texts should be done by the time I get back.”

The day before leaving he wrote:

“I thought you would like to know that I have just sent off to John S. reports on the 25th and 26th texts to be processed by the diffing team, putting us past the halfway mark with respect to Wave 1. The landmark text was *Dodkin’s Job*,

completed by Bill Schaub, who was up against his own impending vacation but was able to turn around two short stories on short notice. Of course, the efforts of the other differs also contributed to this achievement: kudos are also due to Patrick Dusoulrier, Mark Bradford, Robin Rouch, Errico Rescigno, Sean O’Sullivan, and Hans van der Veeke.”

On the same day, Joel Riedesel wrote:

“There are still a few texts that need to finish going through the composition review cycle. Time is running out and everyone involved is busy! 22 texts have completed the RTF-DIFF process with about a dozen currently active. Charles is only doing his usual amount of work. Harumph. We also have about 8 or 9 volumes where the front matter has been set and is being reviewed. I fully expect that Herc will be finishing up the remaining volumes in the next week or two—does the man ever sleep? July is just about upon us. The end of July is GM1... no more need be said (because everyone that can do anything about it is already working way too hard on the remaining work).”

In addition to Joel Riedesel’s indications (see elsewhere in this *Cosmopolis*), all are invited to consult the Master Tracking Chart on our website to see the triumph of good green (our valiant efforts) over evil grey (the general indifference to which Vance’s texts are subjected). For Wave 1, we are ‘there’. There is nothing left to do but go through the, admittedly tedious, final tweakage and checkage leading up to GM1 (‘Golden Master 1’) and GM2. GM1 (for final aesthetic tweaks) will be hosted by John Foley in New Jersey, and present will be only as many cooks as are needed to prepare the broth (Foley, J. Anderson, P. Rhoads). Robin Rouch was to have participated to do final CRT, with her *chevalier d’honor*: Joel Riedesel, but this has become impossible to everyone’s regret. Luckily Marcel van Genderen, one of the proudest of the CRT Proud Few, has agreed to take her place. Bob Lacovara will probably also participate, as formal Sfera link. GM1 will occur from July 27 to August 2, and output the electronic files from which proofs (or ‘blues’) will be printed.

GM2, where the proofs themselves will be scrutinized, will be hosted in Chinon, France. This meeting is ‘open’ (by ‘invitation only’—all are encouraged to solicit invitations). The project will be aiding certain workers

with travel and lodging, but anyone prepared to pay their own way can certainly participate—to work, or just to drop by and get acquainted. GM2 will happen in mid-September.

Finally, it should be mentioned that John Schwab, in addition to everything else he does, is at work building the Wave 1 ‘front matter’ (credit page, title pages, and so on) and Joel Anderson is likewise building the covers and spines.

So much for a glimpse at what some VIE volunteers are doing to create your books.

COSMOPOLIS 27, EMPHYRIO, NIGHT LAMP

A wonderful issue! Derek Benson’s editing and Andreas Björklind’s composition have special flair; Cosmopolis is welcoming and attractive, and is filling perfectly its role in the project. I hope no one was confused by the somewhat casual formatting of some of the *Crucible* segments.

I took special interest in Chuck King’s experiment, and Derek’s reaction. I agree with Chuck’s analysis; this sort of rigidity is, in my opinion, caused by an aspect of human psychology to which not enough attention is paid. In this case it expresses itself as a tendency to denature art to the end of feeling good about ourselves, rather than using art as an avenue to beauty and truth. In our weakness and blindness we sometimes seek to enhance illusions about ourselves by conforming to some imaginary model; *self-image spin* so to speak. This is most clearly seen in anything having to do with vestimentary fashions, but it is just as operative in the fine arts. It boils down to being ‘cool’ because one likes the right music or reads the right books—whether we are talking about U2 or Beethoven. Vance, being so inhabital, and since no kudos are handed out for liking him—in fact the opposite—only people with independent minds can love him; therefore they surely love him *only* because he is lovable.

As best introductory book I would suggest the Gift Volume, because its presentation alone does so much to lull the suspicions and prejudices of the non-initiate reader. The Gift volume has scored several successes already, some noted in Cosmopolis.

Derek suggests *Emphyrio* as the ideal introductory work, and even argues it is Vance’s greatest work—an understandable point of view! I was particularly interested in Derek’s remarks because he explained something which I have been struggling to express in the SFV foreword. I consider it an important formal aspect of Vance’s work. It has to do with the relation of characters and story to the reader. Derek points out that he,

or any reader—I had the same experience—lives the book’s adventure (to put it in my own way) *not vicariously, by identification with the hero, but personally*. The deepest strata of the adventure are for the reader himself.

Vance made the following remark in the SF Weekly interview (see further down): “I have an utter revulsion to being part of an audience. Sitting there in an audience and everybody sniffing at once and everybody laughing at once. Everybody’s valves being turned on at the same time. I just feel like I’m going to some mass prostitution. I feel soiled sitting in an audience.”

What is often called ‘cynicism’—what I call Vance’s ‘coolness’—is his literary solution to this personal distaste to being absorbed in a mass. Out of respect for his readers Vance does not, emotionally or intellectually, impose upon them. He offers a *story*, not flattery, not escape, not vicarious experience.

In *The Insufferable Red-headed Daughter of Commander Tynnott, O.T.E.* we find the following: *I don’t have either time or inclination for vicarious living. Most urbanites, of course, don’t have much choice; it’s either vicarious experience or none.*

...an urbanite, whose instinctive tactic was empathy...

The people here are urbanites. The city festers with subjectivity.

Vance favors direct, independent, objective experience, and manages to make reading his books this kind of experience. Reading Vance even reinforces these qualities in us. It is unusual in our time.

Regarding *Night Lamp*, I have not followed my thoughts about this book through to the end, but here is a raw collection of them, offered for what it is worth. I think this book holds a particular place in Vance’s oeuvre. It seems in some ways to be a grand recapitulation, and may be related to *Ports of Call*, not in the sense that the latter is a ‘fresh start’, but somehow seems to be pure, or 80 proof, Vance, as if *Night Lamp* was a final triumphant variation on many Vancian themes. We have, once again, the child who has suffered tragedy in the past (*Demon Princes*, *Flesh Mask*, *Cadwal*, *Emphyrio*, *The Anome*), is in a troubled relationship with a parent, or with a weight of evil on his soul (*Lily Street*, *View from Chickweed’s Window*, *Bad Ronald*, *Palace of Love*, *Book of Dreams*), or in a special relationship with his father (*Emphyrio*, *Durdane*, *Cadwal*). *Night Lamp* takes a new approach, in the psychic link between the brothers Jaro and Garlet, to the implacable exploration of the dynamics of suffering and guilt.

There is high-school, or adolescent, adventures (*Flesh Mask*, *Cadwal*, *Palace of Love*, *Book of Dreams*) and, similar-

ly, it goes more deeply than ever into the erotic/affective awakening, or love triangle themes, treated all across the oeuvre; *Marune*: Sthelany-Efraim-Maerio, *Maske: Thaery*: Sune-Jubal-Mieltrude, *The Domains of Koryphon*: Elvo-Schaine-Gerd, *Cadwal*: Sessily-Glawen-Wayness—the latter being a significant variation, for Sessily is not evil but overcome by evil. But all these seem like warm-ups compared to the development of Lyssel-Jaro-Skirlet.

Aside from revisiting the ubiquitous musical theme, Books of Life (*Marune*) and academic foolishness (*Sulwen's Planet* etc.), and desire for a space yacht and independent travel (*Maske: Thaery*, *Emphyrio*, *Throy*) *Night Lamp* includes two cities of articulated social structure: Thanet and Old Romarth. The latter resembles Vervodei (Tschai: *The Wannek*), Wysrod (*Maske: Thaery*), Garwiy (*Durdane*) or Ys (*Lyonesse*), with their secretive aristocracies. The former, more unusual—though in fact modelled on the club-based San Francisco high society Vance knew in his youth—recalls *Araminta Station* in the scrambling and jockeying for position. These might be thought of as presentations, or *critiques*, of aristocratic and democratic picadillos.

Tawn Maihac's capture by the Loklor is a *Tschai*-like episode, which lasts only ten pages. I had the impression it was a summary of what might have been a book-long episode, which is one of the reasons I sometimes feel only seasoned Vance readers can fully appreciate *Night Lamp*.

Then there is this resume of the Connatic/Anome theme:

Over yonder is the Land of Coraz, which is ruled by King Tambar the Unpredictable. Tambar owns a wardrobe where shelves support a thousand faces. Each day he goes about Coraz in a different guise, prowling the streets and listening in the market. If he hears disloyal talk, the offender loses his head on the spot.

I think, more clearly than elsewhere, in *Night Lamp* the fault-lines between the tectonic plates making up the formal aspects of Vance's work, and his inner worlds, are made clear: mystery-fantasy-science fiction, adventure-travel, the voyage, or *restlessness of the awakening soul*, as well as the erotic awakening, the temptation of evil/selfishness, the joys and terrors of family and social organization, the necessity and terrors of political or public life (think of *The Chasch* (Reith at Pera), *The Brave Free Men* (Etwane at Garwiy), *Suldrun's Garden* (Aillas in South Ulfland), or *Cadwal*). It is a book that aims to please no one, and is certainly one of Vance's greatest. *Ports of Call*, I think, combines Vancian lightness in full

froth, with his depth of insight at full steam.

Regarding William Tahl's proposition: I could not agree more. Vance in the American education system would be a great benefit for American children individually and for the nation. Regarding Tahl's theory of thoughts affecting reality, while thoughts may or may not affect reality directly by some sort of physical action, most ways that man does affect reality is dominated by his thought. We do few things, breathing and evacuation aside, that we don't think of or, if we do something we did not mean, we did it with something or other in mind.

LIBRARY DONATIONS

At least two VIE members have responded to the call for library nominations. Thanks to Jim Pattison, VIE #658, I received the following letter from Lorna Toolis of the Merril Collection in Toronto:

"I have been following the progress of the Vance Integral Edition with great interest. I hope that you will consider depositing a copy of the VIE at the Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy.

"The Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy is a research collection of science fiction and fantasy founded through a donation made by writer and editor Judith Merril in 1970 to the Toronto Public Library. As a part of the Toronto Public Library, the Merril Collection is regularly funded and staffed, and is open to the public 48 hours a week.

"The Merril Collection currently makes over 60,000 books, periodicals and other items available to the public; it is one of the world's major popular culture collections. Should you wish to obtain further information about the Merril Collection, our web page may be found at: www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/merril/home.htm There is also an entry in The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, edited by John Clute and Peter Nicholls describing the Merril Collection.

"The Merril Collection is supported by a Friends organization; Jim Pattison, one of the VIE volunteers, is currently the Vice-Chairman of the Friends of the Merril Collection. The Friends raise funds, organize the Collection's public reading program and organize public support for the Merril Collection.

"As part of a public library, the materials

available in the Merrill Collection are available to anyone who asks for them. We have an extensive collection of Jack Vance's books, including the Underwood-Miller editions, however, as a research collection, we have an obligation to provide the most complete text available.

"Jack Vance's undoubted significance in the field makes his work a necessary part of any research collection. The Merrill Collection's unique blend of public accessibility and sophisticated research facilities make it a logical choice as a depository for the Vance Integral Edition and I hope that you will decide to place a set at the Merrill Collection.

"Thank you for your consideration in this matter."

—Lorna Toolis, Collection Head

Victor R. Volkman, VIE #592, wrote:

"I'm a VIE subscriber and I would like to nominate the Ann Arbor Public Library for a possible recipient of the Allen grant. The Ann Arbor area has a large and culturally diverse population, due in large part to the proximity of five colleges including the University of Michigan. It serves a population of more than 200,000. We have the Ann Arbor Science Fiction Association which is very active and puts on two conventions every year. The Ann Arbor Public Library won the National Library of the Year award in 1997 and has won many other honors for its innovation and successful outreach."

I support the candidature of these libraries, though the decision lies in other hands, notably those of the donator! Meanwhile, Alun Hughes is at work selecting libraries. Here is a recent communication from him on the subject:

"First, I think the split of 20 North America—22 R.o.W. is pretty reasonable; if anything a little generous to R.o.W. given the primary Anglophone populations.

"I think we must aim at the major science fiction libraries and I see that Norma has made a start with that in her list. These are the people who can be relied on to look after and promote their sets, and also where people will think to look.

"I'd also like to get sets into the major national repositories, typically the national or copyright libraries. This will (should!) give us long-term preservation and a bibliographic presence.

"I am a bit less certain about public libraries, at least in the UK. Here they are being driven mainly by usage; there has been unfavourable (and arguably somewhat unfair) publicity recently about public libraries refusing donations of collections of the 'classics' on the grounds that no one will read them; it is possible to argue that the collection policies of public libraries have reduced their readers to the lowest common denominator, so in a sense they are right; but what I am coming around to saying is that in the UK it is a rare public library or public library system who could be entrusted with a set.

"In the UK the major university-based science fiction collection is at the University of Liverpool, and they would be an obvious candidate for a set. (We have a UK university chief librarian (of Kingston University) on the subscribers list—and although I think that is an unlikely location for a set he might be worth my sounding out about any likely London locations.)

"There should be a copy in the British Library; possibly two—they maintain a national collection available for inter-library loan as well as a national reference collection.

"There are five other 'copyright deposit' libraries—these are libraries that have the legal right to a copy of anything published in the UK, though that clearly doesn't apply to the VIE. These are the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the National Libraries of Wales and Scotland, and Trinity College Dublin. I'd like to see a copy in Cambridge University Library—apart from it being my old university and my knowing the University Librarian, it has one of the strongest university sf societies in the country. The National Library of Wales might welcome a set if only because of a Welsh textual editor (and I know the National Librarian and the Keeper of Printed Books). Trinity College Dublin might be worth looking at to get a copy into Ireland.

"I could of course arrange for UHI to hold a set, but its commitment might last only so long

as my tenure . . .

"So for the UK, how about something like:
The University of Liverpool
The British Library (London, reference set)
The British Library (set available for loan)
University of Cambridge
The National Library of Wales
and Trinity College Dublin for Ireland.

"If we set that as something of a pattern for R.o.W. I wonder whether we come up with a reality check for the 22 sets. Let's try:

UK - 5
Ireland - 1
Australia - 3
New Zealand - 1
South Africa - 1
France - 1 (Bibliotheque Nationale?)
Netherlands - 1
Italy - 1
Germany - 1
Norway - 1
Sweden - 1
Denmark - 1
Finland - 1
3 from Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Sri Lanka, Belgium, Spain, South America?"

FRONTISPIECES

For *Emphyrio*:

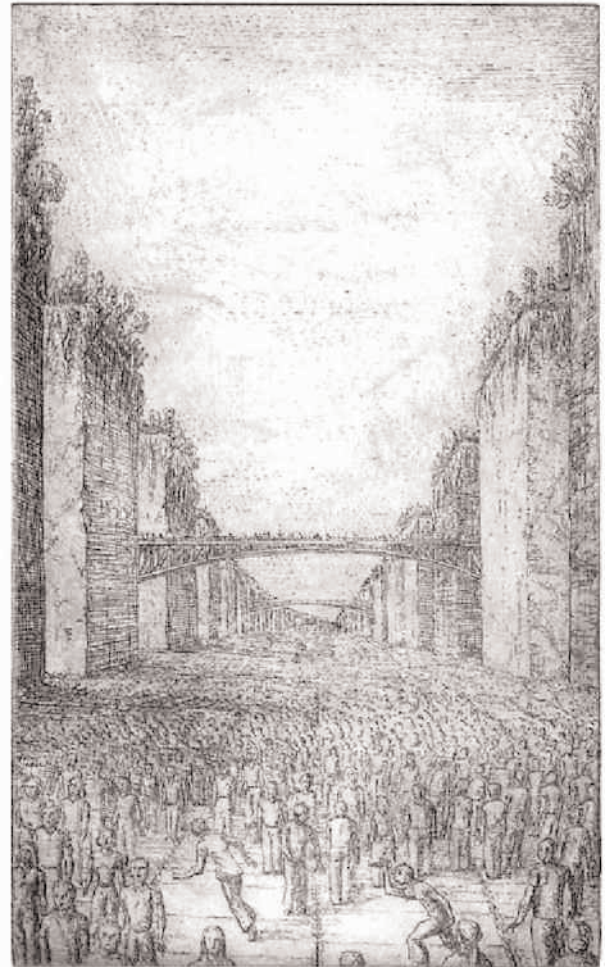


"Are you the puppet-master?"

Regarding *Wyst*, it was pointed out that my original sketch did not give a proper idea of the scale of Uncibal River. Then, in a spate of enthusiasm for showing maritime aspects of Vance, I took a different approach with a sketch of Jantiff and Glisten collecting Percebs:



One of the reactions to this was that it was too bad to lose the Uncibal river concept, which is at the heart of the book. So I redeveloped it, trying to get the scale right, as well as the feeling of the special light of Dwan, and the colors of the housing blocks. [Illustration top of next page]



Here is the result as an etching, though not yet in its final 'state':

[Illustration top of next column]

Here are key passages from *Wyst*:

In the morning, after Wyst's short night, Jantiff rose from his bed to find Dwan already halfway up the sky. Jantiff looked out across the city in great interest, studying the play of light among the blocks and along the man-ways. Each of the blocks showed a different color, and, possibly because Jantiff was bringing to bear an expectant vision, the colors seemed peculiarly rich and clean, as if they had just been washed.

The man-way curved westward; the blocks in lines to right and left marched away to the horizon, dwindling to points. Laterals poured human streams upon the man-way; Jantiff had never imagined such vast crowds: a marvelous

spectacle in itself! The city Uncibal must be reckoned one of the wonders of the Gaean universe! Across his course at right angles slid another of the mighty Arrabin man-rivers: a pair of boulevards flowing in opposite directions. Jantiff glimpsed rank behind rank of men and women riding with faces curiously serene.

Jantiff paused to inspect the face of the structure. The surface paint, peeling off in areas, showed blotches of pink, old rose and pale pink which gave the block a raffish and restless air, in contrast to its neighbor, which was painted a supercilious blue. Jantiff found the color congenial and congratulated himself on the lucky chance of his allotment. Like all the other blocks, the walls showed no windows, nor any openings except for the entrance. Over the parapet surrounding the roof hung foliage from the roof garden. Constant traffic passed in

and out of the portal: men, women and a few children, in identical garments, of colors somewhat too garish for Jantiff's taste, as if the folk were dressed for a carnival.

"There's Uncibal River! I do so love watching from the bridge! Oh, please come, everyone! Over to the deck!"

Tanzel ran out upon the prospect deck. The others followed more sedately, and all stood leaning on the rail as Uncibal River passed below; a pair of slideways, each a hundred feet wide, crowded close with the folk of Arrabus.

Jantiff bounded recklessly across to the crowded high-speed lane, where he thrust forward past other passengers, heedless of their annoyance, pouch and camera still gripped in his hand. After came Esteban, with Sarp lagging behind. The blade in Esteban's hand was plainly visible. Jantiff lurched ahead, eyes starting from his head in disbelief. Esteban meant to kill him! On the man-way, in full view of the passengers? Impossible! It wouldn't be allowed! People would help him; they would restrain Esteban! . . . Or would they? As Jantiff lunged forward he looked despairingly right and left but met only expressions of glazed annoyance.

As usual, Vance artfully mingles plot, character, atmosphere and philosophy with his extreme acuity of observation and power of synthesis.

As of this writing frontispieces for the following volumes are 'ready': 1, 20, 29, 30, 31, 36, 38, with the others in various stages of sub-readiness.

LINE-BREAK HYPHENATION MECHANICS

Patrick Dusoulrier asked Joel Anderson:

". . . I'm curious about the 'rules' of hyphenation at break of line, at Composition time. I stress 'rules', because they're probably mostly 'of-thumb' rules, or common sense, or artistic appreciation rules!"

Joel replied:

". . . As to effective 'rules', there are so many possibilities that it's hard to state them as such. As I'm sure you know, page layout applications offer automatic hyphenation for justified paragraphs, and with more than a page or two of text to deal with, naturally we use it. Where a word breaks is determined whichever dictionary

you choose, in our case Adobe's version of US English. There are many other user-defined variables, of course. We can build lists of words not to be hyphenated or hyphenated in a certain manner, allow capitalized words to be broken or not, and most noticeably, define the number of characters required before and after a 'legal' break. The new version of InDesign even has a sliding scale which balances better line spacing against fewer hyphenations. It's an embarrassment of riches, and unfortunately the load of work probably prevents us from taking full advantage of them.

"In practice we format paragraphs with one of several style sheets developed (by me I admit) for the VIE page geometry and primary typeface. One of them works for perhaps 70% of the text. When it doesn't, others are tried and accepted or rejected; a back-and-forth procedure. A paragraph is then sometimes further adjusted or customized, both its hyphenation rules and justification parameters. 'Discretionary' hyphens are sometimes inserted to make a line look better, and any word can manually be denied hyphenation.

"US English hyphenation rules, as far as I know, allow breaks between syllables. What constitutes a syllable seems a matter of opinion. I know US usage doesn't agree with British, and I'm not sure that Canada, Oz or NZ don't have their own ideas. I was told in school a syllable breaks between two consonants, but I've seen comments from VIE folk that disagree with that. And I wouldn't defend 'near-desert-ed'.

"But to cut off this essay before it requires serialization, although I do notice it, I don't give hyphenation a lot of scrutiny. It's more in the line of cleaning up and eye-balled spot-checks. There are other factors that are more demanding. What InDesign does seems good more often than not—depending on which style sheet I use.

"So I welcome specific citations about this. Moving a break a couple of characters in either direction is usually easy and makes no big difference in the spacing of a particular paragraph. You can safely assume that you won't see many words that have been intentionally or manually hyphenated in our books, at least not those I've done."

MORE ABOUT VANCE AND SCIENCE FICTION

I recently finished the foreword to the 'Science Fiction Volume' (*The Languages of Pao* and *The Dragon Masters*; visit the VIE website order page)—quite different from the warm-up version published in *Cosmopolis* a few months back. Meanwhile an interview with Vance, conducted by Kathie Huddleston of *Science Fiction Weekly* has appeared on the Web—along with a review of *Ports of Call*, by Brooks Peck. The interview is quite amusing and I recommend it to all. It includes remarks relevant to those interested in Vance's relation to Science Fiction. Do not mistake, as some have done, Vance's good humor for crankiness! Supply in your imagination the different voices Vance uses to give personality to his various satiric sallies:

<http://www.scifiweekly.com/issue266/interview.html>

The interview sparked an e-exchange between Timothy Virkkala, Byron Marshall (a couple of my *e-cronies*) and myself. Meanwhile my father sent me some commentary on Vance by Ursula K. LeGuin. Selections from all this material, arranged by me and verified by Tim and Byron, constitute a sort of 'dialog' on a set of related questions: what is Science fiction, what is good writing, what is necessary to 'profundity' and 'greatness' in literature, is Vance a 'great' writer? My interpolations are commentary for *Cosmopolis*. Timothy and Byron have added 'last words'.

HUDDLESTON: Did you have any influences when you started writing?

VANCE: Well, I think everything I've ever read contributes to the background from which I write. But, for instance, when I was awfully young, I read all the Oz books. They were an enormous influence on me. And then there [were] the Edward Stratemeyer fiction-factory writers. [Howard R. Garis and other writers] had a pseudonym of Roy Rockwood. [They] wrote different kinds of science fiction stories[:] *Through Space to Mars* and *Lost on the Moon* and *The Mystery of the Centre of the Earth*. That kind of stuff. These were really, I believe, the first true science-fiction stories that were ever published. This is, if you want to discount Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, which were never intended to be science-fiction stories. They were intended for different motives or different feelings. H.G. Wells was a philosopher and Verne, I think, was an engineer. I think Verne's stories were a mixture of engineering stories and adventure stories, whereas H.G. Wells had philosophical axes to grind. But I'm not a student of either one of those writers. That's just my general impression. But Roy Rockwood, it was science fiction for the sake of science

fiction. Later, I loved P.G. Wodehouse. I thought he was a marvelous writer. I still do to this day. I think he hasn't been appreciated enough for his magnificent creativity and his beautiful writing. Oh, they laugh at him, but they don't take him seriously because he seems frivolous. He did what he set out to do and he did it beautifully.

HUDDLESTON: Do you see [your influence] when you read other science fiction?

VANCE: I don't read other science fiction. I don't read any at all. I haven't been to a movie since somebody gave me free tickets to *Star Wars*, which I went to. It's just I have an utter revulsion to being part of an audience. Sitting there in an audience and everybody sniffing at once and everybody laughing at once. Everybody's valves being turned on at the same time. I just feel like I'm going to some mass prostitution. I feel soiled sitting in an audience. I do read books. I suppose it's more or less the same thing, but at least I'm alone and I'm an individual. I can stop anytime I want, which I frequently do. But I just despise mass media. As I say, I never ever look at science fiction. I don't even know what's going on. I know [Robert] Silverberg, of course, but I haven't read any of his stuff. And Poul Anderson, who was a dear friend of mine, I read one of his stories once because he happened to be in a little book produced by Ballantine. There were four stories in it. One was by me. [...] Poul had a very good story in there. It dealt with some mermaids and his command of the underwater life was beautiful to me.

HUDDLESTON: *Ports of Call* and *Lurulu* take place in the Gaeen Reach Universe. What's special about this universe for you?

VANCE: There's nothing special. Its space ships are very useful in that you can get from one star to another within a reasonable time, which we cannot do now, of course. It would take us lifetimes under prison conditions to get from one star to another. It's so impractical I doubt that anyone will try to get from here to any star. Unless we get a quicker way. So most writers, they just assume there're ways of hopping through space so fast to get from one star to another in some reasonable time, so that's just one of the conventions of science-fiction writing, which has several conventions. Oh, [there are] a whole gang of conventions that aren't very reasonable. Another convention is that everywhere you go people are using the same language, which in the case of the Gaeen Reach would hardly be logical. People, after being isolated for thousands of years, would have developed dialects that wouldn't be comprehensible to strangers.

But just in order to make it possible for us people to come to a world and communicate with the people that live there, you have to assume that they all use the same language. It's a convention of science fiction that we all blandly pretend is feasible.

HUDDLESTON: Maybe it would have made more of a difference if you were writing mainstream rather than science fiction and fantasy.

VANCE: Oh, I think so too. I don't pretend. If anybody asks what I'm writing, I never say I write science fiction. I think Kurt Vonnegut, although he's more furious and intense, if anybody accuses him of writing science fiction, he has a fit. Me, I correct them. I say [surely Vance used a mock pompous voice here:] "Well, I don't know what I write. It's speculative fiction. Fiction of the future. Fiction of sociological anthropology. And some people even use the [term] science fiction, which I don't like." I have to go through all that. It would be so simple if I could bring myself to say science fiction, which I can't because I detest the field. I don't like the people in it. Not the writers, but the fans. The young fans and some of their adolescent attitudes of going to conventions in funny clothes and being Star Trek-ians and getting all these strange societies up. I think I don't want to be associated with those people. There are a lot of people, well, up in Seattle (at NorwesCon) I met a number of them, extremely nice people who are bright, intelligent.

RHOADS: I develop an idea, in the new Science Fiction Volume preface, that Vance's comment supports. My point is that 'science fiction', in the proper sense of the term, means a certain kind of story that came into being in America and does not properly assimilate Wells, Verne, or Orwell and Huxley. Vance here makes the definition only negatively; 'science fiction' to him is not 'engineering adventure', like Verne, or 'philosophy' like Wells. Wells, he seems to mean, is really social criticism from a Utopian (or Marxist/Socialist/Modernist) perspective, and Verne is stories that are simply fantastical voyages made possible by clever technology. Stated positively, I think, by 'science fiction', Vance means: *faith in a future of scientific progress*. I have not read the Roy Rockwood stories, but I bet something like this is what distinguishes them from Verne. Verne, apparently, was a very Christian writer, which would preclude the *SF faith*. I have no proper familiarity with Verne, but have seen analyses that present his work almost as the kind of apologia that Lewis' Narnia stories are—disguised explications of the Christian world view. Whether or not this is true, 'science fiction' in this sense, is the lit-

erary expression of a sort of religion—obviously incompatible in important respects with Christianity (Commandment #1: You Will Have No Gods Before Me)—whose critics (of which I am one) call scientism. I think that Vance was once a more or less *card carrying* 'scientist', but it has become a secondary aspect of his work from the 1960s onward. I think he is still sympathetic to it in certain ways, but he was never uncritical of it. By 'critical' I do not mean that he strained to point out scientism's flaws, but in the basic sense that he always went as far as logic and imagination could carry him in his explorations of scientism's premises. I even think Vance does this to a greater extent than any other writer, and is therefore the 'greatest' science fiction writer, because the most 'profound'. An example of this would be his efforts to explain spiritual phenomenon in materialist terms, in such stories as *Nopalgarth* and *Parapsyche*. The light-heartedness or phantasmagoric aspects of these stories do not compromise the import of the 'criticism' of scientism they embody.

HUDDLESTON: What advice do you have for new writers just starting out who are looking to get published?

VANCE: Just the obvious, just to work. That's the key. And not try to write too flamboyantly. In other words, don't try and be ultra-spectacular. Try to do sound work, not inflate their writing with lots of adjectives and adverbs. The main thing is to have a good story, a good plot. Have good characters and don't try to hit the gong every time. Use a little restraint in your writing.

BROOKS PECK REVIEWS PORTS OF CALL: . . . Sadly, what *Ports of Call* lacks is a central plot to carry it from port to exotic port, adventure to adventure. Myron and company encounter intrigues, they gamble, explore, fall in love, perform, fight, escape and sample innumerable ales. But each event is isolated, unconnected. It's all great stuff, but the only point of doing it is to do it. In the hands of many, this catalog of events would be dreck, but Vance is so talented, so good, that, even plotless, he's a great read. *Ports of Call* is a tour de force of his fervid and boundless imagination. What makes the book frustrating, though, are the feints at a greater plot that are never carried through. In addition to the regular small escapades, Myron and the crew sometimes brush up against more meaty conflicts. Some of the carnival troupe, for example, are being held in illegal indentured servitude, and the Glissa's captain vows that decisive action will be taken. None is. Dire warnings are given to another crewman to the effect that terrible evil will befall him if he collects a full set of primitive talismans. He does; nothing happens. It's these forgotten threads

that might shake readers' confidence in Vance, one of science fiction's grand masters. After 50 prolific years of writing, is he finally losing focus? Is he slipping?

RHOADS: The above critique—which is the usual complaint, based on the most leaden premises, that Vance can't plot—is *SF Weekly's* presentation of their 'B' selection. It is preceded by the 'A' choice. Here are extracts from Susan Dunman's comments on: *The Neutronium Alchemist*, Part 2: *Conflict*, the fourth book in Peter F. Hamilton's *Reality Dysfunction* series, a work preferred by *SF Weekly* to *Ports of Call*:

DUNMAN: . . .spirits from the dead compete [. . .] with the living in a galaxy-sized chess game whose outcome will determine humanity's destiny. Joshua Calvert, ace starship captain and adventurer, finds himself pursuing one of the queens on the chessboard as he races against time and the possessed to locate a doomsday device called 'the Alchemist'. While Joshua's busy with the biggest bomb in the universe, Quinn Dexter—the very personification of evil—methodically makes his way toward Earth to 'convert' its inhabitants to his 'Light Bringer' sect. Dexter uses fear, cruelty and hatred to enhance his power and extract obedience from his small band of possessed followers. Unlike Dexter's disciples, however, most of the possessed are intent on capturing highly populated planets and then moving them to a different dimension, where there is no conventional time or space. When an ominous red cloud accompanying the possessed begins to swirl in the atmosphere of Ombey, the military there plots the invaders' destruction with an arsenal of biotechnology constructs. Meanwhile, the Edenists—whose culture is based on so-called 'bitek', as well as group consensus and the amalgamation of individuals' memories into a corporate identity—seek answers from the Kiint, an alien race claiming to have succeeded in its own confrontation with death. Even the placid, near-perfect habitat of Tranquility becomes one of the biggest pieces in an incredibly complex puzzle demanding to be solved. [. . .] For those readers who are up-to-date on the series, Hamilton proves adept at introducing enough new elements to keep things interesting. The hi-tech gadgetry alone should be enough to satisfy most space opera aficionados [. . .] it's hard not to like an alien with a tractamorphic body, mental telepathy and grandfatherly-type wisdom. There's also the Tyrathca, unattractive aliens with personalities like sacks of oats, but whose mysterious Sleeping God may help solve the crisis. . .

RHOADS: Here is what 'science fiction' readers are reading, and liking: high-tech gadgetry-gobbledygook

and Yoda-ish aliens saving our skins and souls. How different from *Ports of Call*, or anything else in Vance. *Tschai* or *Durdane* might verge a few degrees in such a direction but, founded firmly on a poetic core-story, they never over-ripen into such quivering masses of trendy pseudo-notions. As for the formal aspect, Dunman seems to feel that piling up new elements is what keeps a book interesting—would she have found pleasing what Peck found objectionable in *Ports of Call*? In the Huddleston interview Vance made this comment on his way of working:

VANCE: . . .My writing is fun for me sometimes. I get sidetracked on things that I think are fun. "Oh, I think this sounds a lot of fun, writing this." So I'll write it, and then I'll find out that I actually wrote something that is utterly useless. You can't use it in the story and it doesn't fit. So I just throw it away. I've done that countless times. Sometimes some of these little side excursions are useful and I manage to fit them in the book somewhere.

RHOADS: In his advice to writers Vance emphasizes the need for 'good story', by which, as he makes clear, he means 'plot' and 'good characters'. He also states awareness of the problem of a story degenerating into a collection of episodes or passages, perhaps interesting in themselves, but which do not contribute to the 'story'. Since, to me, Vance's 'plots' and 'characters' are exceptionally strong, and since I find nothing extraneous in his work, I am not surprised to see him emphasize these things when talking about writing. Peck implies that only now is Vance losing his grip on plot, but similar complaints have been made for decades. What is going on? I maintain that readers of the Peck-Dunman caliber are not satisfied by Vance because they are too involved with the non-literary, or proto-literary, aspect of a particular genre. We are now living the results of promoting Sci-Fi to the status of literature, allowing, and even encouraging, people to waste their educational years gnawing on this meagre bone. What of more developed readers?

VIRKKALA: One of the more interesting aspects of the interview was [Vance's] bold confession of enjoying the Stratemeyer factory. . .Vance is the perfect writer for a multicultural age—almost the ultimate in [postmodernist] writers in that he accepts some elements of relativism in our culture, and obviously revels in attacking others (implicitly). But I know other fans of Vance who infer a very different ethos from Vance than what I take away. . . I think [Iris Murdoch] is a very realistic writer, even when she strays into the fantastic and mystical (life

is full of hard-to-explain things). Her basic comic realism, which strikes me as a revival of George Meredith's anti-egoistic ethic, strikes me as profound. Cabell is another prolific comic writer—to whom Vance is often compared, and of whom Gore Vidal rightly associates with Nabokov—who ploughed similar furrows in literary fields. I like in Cabell, also, his basic sense of life, which is comic. But Cabell, unlike Vance and Murdoch, was a prolific reader, and knew his forebears, his friends, his competitors and—if we can believe Jack Woodford—the future history of American literature as well. Well, that future is here, and Cabell is mostly unread. Will Vance, too, suffer such a fate? Not soon, I think . . . it looks like his unfairly despised fans will keep his work alive a little longer than Cabell's crowd could. (Perhaps because Vance never had a success like Cabell's *Jurgen*, his reputation experienced a more natural growth, and was thus less likely to suffer a bubble and its bursting.)

RHOADS: Virkkala is impressed by Vance's 'confession of enjoying the Stratemeyer factory' because he himself holds it in contempt, and would be ashamed to admit to having had such a vulgar taste. Virkkala's contention that Vance reflects a quasi-relativist attitude ideal to the multicultural age—is even 'the perfect' writer for it—I interpret as approval and liking of Vance on the basis of his endorsement of Virkkala's own attitude. Such an attitude on Vance's part may be there, or it may not, and if it is there it may be a good or bad thing, interesting or uninteresting; but in itself it is a non-literary quality. Note also that Virkkala treats the attitude of the intelligentsia toward Vance readers in terms of justice and injustice. It is absurd to despise people for their taste in books, but such attitudes, however foolish, are in any case non-literary. Like Virkkala, I am struck, and long have been, by Vance's modesty and straight-forwardness. These are also the foundations of his humor. (See the interview itself for many examples. Vance repeatedly, but never with meanness and always to his personal disadvantage, deflates poor Huddleston's silly questions.) Virkkala has more to say about it (see below), but his basic position is this: *Vance is a good, but neither a great nor a profound writer*. Neither Virkkala's nor Byron Marshall's comments on the subject are more than e-mail musings, and must be read in that perspective, but together they sketch out aspects of a question: what is profound writing? Above, Virkkala makes a cryptic comment; I think that by *comic realism* he means some kind of dialectical materialism or some more-or-less progressivist or crypto post-Marxist view—basically the ever

more popular cynicism of the disappointed Utopian. By *anti-egoistic ethic*, I think he means *collectivist ethic*. In other words I think his ideas are poisoned by Leftist ideology. And it is this which forbids him to recognize profundity or greatness in Vance. Here are LeGuin's comments:

LEGUIN: And while we are on the subject of humor, Jack Vance must be mentioned, though his humor is so quiet you can miss it if you blink. Indeed the whole tone of his writing is so modest that sometimes I wonder whether, like Leiber and Zelazny, he himself realizes how very good a writer he is. If so, it is probably a result of the patronizing attitude American culture affects toward works of pure imagination. Vance, however, never compromises with the patronizing and ignorant. He never lets his creation down in order to make a joke, and he never shows a tin ear for tone. The conversation of his characters is aloof and restrained, very like his own narrative prose: an unusual kind of English, but clear, graceful, and precisely suited to Vance's extraordinary imagination. It is an achieved style. And it contains no archaisms at all.

RHOADS: LeGuin emphasizes Vance's modesty and skill. When she complains about the patronizing attitude American culture affects toward works of pure imagination she certainly had her own troubles in mind more than Vance's, because while she was self-consciously an artist of the realm of the imagination, Vance is not. Note Vance's comment on Poul Anderson's story: "It dealt with some mermaids and his command of the underwater life was beautiful to me." What was 'beautiful' to him was not the mermaids, which were merely creatures in the sea, but the picture, the atmosphere, of 'underwater life'. For Vance imagination is the tool whereby the artist recreates, or represents, the world. LeGuin, rather than speaking of the attitude of American culture, might better have emphasized the patronizing attitude the cultural milieu reserves for comedy. Most Americans don't care one way or the other; she is really only talking about the elite. The reason for this attitude is that the cultural milieu takes itself so seriously. French intellectuals adore Charlie Chaplin, but when they talk about him you would think they were discussing Strindberg. What they concentrate on is his presentation of exploitation and misery, which they love to dolorously drone about—an extremely logical, and annoying, Leftist behavior. But Vance remains an unapologetic comic. More than the Roy Rockwell Sci-Fi, Vance emphasizes his interest in L. Frank Baum and Wodehouse. I agree with him about these writers; they

are fabulous, and, in my opinion, as profound as you can get—in the true sense of the term. No one pays attention to what Wodehouse is up to, but, like Vance, he tackles themes of such basic importance that most of the 'greater' artists seem to have missed them. One of Wodehouse's main themes, which of course he treats comically, is the danger women pose to men—particularly in well regulated societies. Read any Jeeves story from this perspective; between the lines the very structure of civilization will reveal itself in full fragility, a delicate tissue constantly menaced by foolish, selfish and careless passions.

VIRKKALA: [Re *Wyst*] a very good satire on egalitarianism [and] fairly accurate about the New Left and its fantasized Utopias. It is not a political book. The individualism is in the character of the hero, and the peculiar nature of his response to threat. The formally political element in the book, however, with its *deus ex machina* figure of 'The Connatic' strikes me as less than profound. But fun. Like almost any power fantasy. In this case it helps a revenge/justice plot to resolve . . . I note that [Vance] goes a long way to make the egalitarian society work, more than we have any real reason to believe it would. Drudge would never work to make an even marginally efficient society, and people would soon rebel against bad services, bad health care, bad everything. In a way, it makes his attack on that society all the better . . . However: The part I object to in the book is the mystery aspect, and the very ending, with the Connatic biz, though it is all satisfying in a low-key way. 1. The Connatic is no more realistic than the FTL drive. It deserves a satiric treatment, not an adventure treatment. Vance gives it more credit than he gives his egalitarians . . . and this detracts from some of the merits of the satire against the egalitarians. 2. The plot by Ravensroke's enemies is not very emotionally compelling. The unraveling of that plot is amusing, but this ain't high art. Not much appears to be on the line. It doesn't seem serious, and mass murder should seem serious. (Unless the satire were to cut several directions, as in my suggestion: against the Connatic; but it doesn't. A general, chilling satire is not what Vance is up to.) 3. So often in Vance the form of the mystery doesn't lead to much but adventure. Revelation of character—that is, of the main character—isn't quite in his repertory. What Vance reveals, in each book, is some plot. Okay: fun, yes. But it is this element that prevents his books from being 'in the *Middlemarch* class', as a critic might phrase it. Vance is an exquisite miniaturist. He limits himself with his mystery and adventure plots, and remains uninterested in

peeling back layer and layer of human nature. His revelations are not of the Oedipus class; his mysteries more closely resemble Agatha Christie's than that of Sophocles.

MARSHALL: This is why I think he is a great writer, and very revealing of the human condition.

VIRKKALA: Of course, he's a better writer *qua* writer than most authors who do concentrate on the humanist theme, with its greater import.

RHOADS: Virkkala excludes Vance from the *Middlemarch* class (I found *Middlemarch* rather trying). His discussion of *Wyst* is a reaction to a point I made that what was most remarkable in the book is the revealing accuracy of the types of people generated by a radically egalitarian society (Skorlet, Tanzel, Esteban, Sarp, Kedi-dah, the Ephthalotes . . .) He does not mention this but addresses the following list of flaws:

1 - Story elements are weak because unrealistic: Connatic, structure of radically egalitarian society, take-over plot.

2 - Tone is wrong: Connatic should be treated satirically, take-over plot should be treated more seriously.

3 - No character development.

In all these ways I think Virkkala is making, on another level, the same critical error that Peck and Dunman make; he is blind to aspects of the book he is reading because some of the concerns he brings to the book are non-literary, and ultimately 'political'—but more about this further down. Byron Marshall responded to these criticisms:

MARSHALL: The peeling back layer and layer etc. is something which I think is basically a stunt, and presumptuous; the result is false profundity, triviality. [. . .] an author may reveal [more] about human nature by not digging to the true self within, but by granting his characters (and people) a close relationship between their ego and inner selves, a satisfactory identity, indeed, an active soul, and in that case the author has this message to convey, by not pretending to presume, not pretending to carry out an inappropriate task: the message is that there is a soul there; that the individual is pretty much who they think they are, and neither the critic nor the social critic nor the outside viewer—nor the author as sage and wit—is apt to know more of them than they do themselves. This then provides this kind of author's deep message about human nature, and I think it is what Vance conveys, along with his many other complimentary graces and entertainments and charms: the message is that people are who they think they are, certainly more who they think they are than whom some-

one else might think they are, and sink or swim, what is interesting about them is what they are going about doing. This is a view of the freedom of human nature which in Vance's use of it I find refreshing, and very profound. I will not accede that simply by pretending to concentrate on the humanist theme, any greater import is likely to be brought up from the deep [. . .]

VIRKKALA : And, formally, his craft is almost *sui generis*: he has created a new form of novel; his books do not behave like any other popular novelist living, so much so that I don't like thinking of him as a popular novelist at all: he has transcended the category.

MARSHALL: That's nice. I haven't thought about it enough, nor do I read enough other popular novelists to know what they do (or don't.) I believe that Vance himself says in that fine interview that he just does what he wants, and was fortunate in finding there were people who liked it. (If I could only be that brave!) And he also indicates his independence, in that he didn't make that much money, didn't sell big, but while he would like more money, he didn't let it get to him. With respect to form I'd like to mention in passing a formal aspect of Heinlein's novels, something Heinlein does quite frequently. I again have no idea whether it is that unique. But many of the Heinlein novels, especially I think the supposed juveniles, will carry a plot to a certain point, a sort of sufficient conclusion. And then the novel expands, in its vista or point of view, issues, contexts. One could describe this very simply (and for all I know, accurately) as saying that Heinlein had delivered what he knew his readers required—a quick paced novel of events and plots, and provides the conclusion. Having given them what they paid for, he gives them a little more: and he puts in what he thinks makes it interesting. He's the author, after all. So this formal aspect arises out of content, or real needs. But it makes for a rather delightful formal property as well.

VIRKKALA : Vance's imagination is broader and more delightful than most other writers. His asides are better than most others' main thrusts. And his attitude towards life and civilization is, by and large, congenial to me, and compelling. Which is why I read him, and avoid many a greater writer. (Though I do read the greats, too.)

MARSHALL: . . . I think that Vance qualifies very well as one of the greats. There are many many kinds of greats. He's one of them. He manages to be a great by being quite boldly an individual, and [. . .] by providing us a view of human life, and of individual life, which is I think quite serious and profound. [. . .] Therefore I'm not praising Vance by saying he is an amusing trivialist.

Nor am I saying this is the only kind of greatness, nor that other profundities aren't available. But people don't need the validation of a great external system to be reasonable, all on their own. They are important even if they are neglected and forgotten and just did what they did. A great truth here: the cornerstone that was rejected.† By writing as he does, Vance clears the air and opens up the territory. Vance [. . .] reveals this to us. Which is perhaps at times more important than writing in a fashion in which the justification of the character lies in the analytical skills of the author.

RHOADS : The above discussion is one demonstration of how a literary aspect, such as character, may be approached in several ways, and needs to be understood in a way appropriate to a given author. Most authors are not great, and their ways of doing things are either half-baked or more or less shabby imitations. But Vance does not imitate, and his work is not half-baked. He is, in addition, so original that he must be understood freshly. His critics must also escape the prejudices against comedy, genre, and other barriers that make Vance difficult to consider great. This escape is not easy, and I am interested in why Timothy Virkkala, in particular, has trouble doing it. Virkkala is a well read, articulate, and sensitive reader. It is easy to see why Peck and Dunman have this trouble, but people like Virkkala are another matter. Again, I think the reason is that, like so many other people (the overwhelming majority in fact) their minds are poisoned. By this I do not mean that they *are Leftists* but that aspects of Leftism have perverted their thinking, making it more or less difficult for them to get in contact with aspects of reality. What are the elements of this perversion, and where can traces of it be perceived in Virkkala's remarks on *Wysyt*? One of these poisons is 'deadly seriousness'. The closer one's relation to reality, the more gaiety is one capable of. This somber seriousness can be masked by a post-modernist style of cynical detachment or aristocratic distance, but fundamental snobbishness, regarding anything frankly lightsome and gay, remains. For this reason Velasquez is a 'greater' painter than, say, Fragonard, and Richard Strauss is a 'greater' composer than, say, Percy Grainger. No matter how much more enjoyable so much Grainger may be compared to so much Strauss, and no matter how obvious it may be that Fragonard's mastery (to speak only of that) is easily equal to Velasquez', associated with froth and fun, they are lesser, un-profound. It is disdain for lightness that account for the difficulty to accept an invention like the Connatic. As Vance has

† PWR: Marshall is referring to a passage from scripture.

pointed out to me in our conversations, the idea of the Connatic is preposterous; one man who governs billions of people on thousands of planets! But Vance likes the idea; his words, as I recall them; “. . . an intelligent man, who wanders from place to place, listening to conversations in bars, solving peoples’ problems. . . but I hardly expect President Clinton to come rushing in the house when I get a splinter in my finger!” [*mimic of pain of splinter and glad surprise at the prompt arrival of Clinton*]. The right attitude to adopt toward the Connatic comes naturally to the ‘unjustly despised’ Vance reader. Why not to others? How can they be so leaden? Is the Connatic really so unrealistic that it damages the story? The Connatic corresponds to a deep reality; have we not all dreamed of a universal reign of benevolent intelligence? More; have we not dreamed of despotic powers that we ourselves would use with perfect justice, for the good of all? The Planets *Wyst*, *Marune*, *Trullion*, and the others, all have their own governments; the Connatic represents universal morality, transcendent intelligence. Is this not enough? In the real world did Franklin Roosevelt, at certain moments, not fill at least some of the Connatic’s role when, with his ‘whelm’, he saved millions of people all over the globe? The egalitarian society of *Wyst* is indeed, in all probability, impossible. But, in so far as the book concerns egalitarianism, it is an attack on a Utopia, an attack on a dangerous and impossible idea. Arrabin society is as close to a decent, functioning and truly egalitarian society as it is possible to imagine, and what makes the critique of it so surpassingly useful. Virkkala does not do justice to this. He mentions drudge, but nothing else. The Arrabin drudge system is specifically presented as non-functional. Instead, the society is kept afloat by the sale of bodily fluids which citizens are obliged to be drained of, so many days per year. The money from sale of these fluids is used to pay the contractors, outside non-egalitarians, who do all the real work: maintenance of the man-ways, and, above all, conversion of waste, or sturge, into food. Food is the obsession of the Arrabins. They are all tortured by anti-egal lust for bonter, just as they are torn between egalitarian sexual norms and *chorism*. Meanwhile their egalitarianism has destroyed the social fabric, which is to say the family, and Vance gives us a pathetic picture of this in the miserable group of the scheming Esteban, the dissolute and unbalanced Skorlet, and their careless and defenseless daughter Tanzel, full of the natural charm of youth. Is Esteban’s plot far-fetched? The point is that egalitarianism itself, on all levels, excites the egoistical passions and fosters human indifference. Do

Esteban and Skorlet not heartlessly try to sell Jantiff as food? They are horrified by the mistake that results, but their ambiguous attitude to that disaster is one of the most excruciating moments in the story. This attitude, whether indifference to the life of one, or of one million, is no more than historical reality. Lenin became the ruler of Russia by ruse, and proceeded to slaughter and starve humans in droves. If there is anything unrealistic in *Wyst* it is the occasional Arrabin who seems well adjusted and socially responsible, such as the legitimate Whispers. But there must have been some of these in soviet Russia for it to have persisted for seventy years.

REGARDING TONE: Vance uses exactly the pinch of whimsy, and the precise measure of narrative coolness adapted to his story. Would Virkkala really prefer that Vance beat his breast after inventing people who planned to massacre hundreds of thousands of imaginary Arrabin citizens? As Stalin massacred his real, living, breathing millions, Western intellectuals stood by, approving or silent; and now it is demanded, as a literary quality, that artists ape a sensitive heart? I find it odd that a reader of Virkkala’s caliber should make such a demand. Vance has a heart immeasurably more sensitive than most other writers, as his multifarious and accurate presentation of things prove. I can not see how anyone can read *Wyst*, which has a character like the unforgettable Skorlet—a creature at once repulsive and even dangerous, but human and pitiable—and then say Vance’s characters are ‘weak’. Like his other books, Vance has thought this one through, but not with the intention of ‘making it convincing’ (it could be ‘convincing’ without being *true*) but in light of the moral virtue of facing up to all the aspects of a situation, while being as indulgent as possible. Does the plot have some simplified ‘mystery’ or ‘adventure’ elements? Any plot—by any writer not doing some sort of historical fiction—is a tissue of invention from one end to the other. The true artistic rule governing this aspect of fiction is simply that the reader’s interest be sustained, that he be entertained, surprised, amused, by whatever happens; naturally the destiny of the protagonist will be exceptional. I don’t suppose it will be claimed that the farfetched Melvillian concept of piscine malevolence spoils *Moby Dick*, or that the coincidence reuniting *Oliver Twist* with his grandfather spoils the story of that name?

Last Words

MARSHALL: I have little to add to the above except to say that LeGuin describes Vance’s dialog and prose beautifully, and that I think Paul Rhoads (not surprisingly)

makes an excellent case for Vance! His discussion of *Wyst* encourages me to turn to it afresh; and his call for realizing the independence with which Vance writes is on the mark. I think this is very interesting, and I'm very flattered at having my comments included. I think Vance is *so good* that I'm very honored. Vance is exemplary.

VIRKKALA: The most fascinating thing in life is what makes people tick. But our secrets, the diverse springs of our motivations, these are not what Vance is after. His approach eschews interiority. And that may be part of his charm, bringing an almost medieval approach to Romance back into the popular novel, framing it with an arch view of human nature. But Vance's apparent preference for crime mysteries to the central mystery that the greatest novelists have explored strikes me as diminishing the stature of most of his novels. My criticism of Vance is the opposite of Dunman's: his books are not under-plotted, but *over*-plotted—or at least focusing too much on the crimes and not enough on the souls. My reaction to Byron's attack on character development in the art of the novel is twofold: 1. delight in its audacity; 2. utter incredulity.

Since Paul brought up Stalin and Roosevelt, let me just say that Roosevelt may have had a 'whelm', but Stalin was a part of that whelm, for much later ill. As for mass murder, I'm not suggesting that Vance should have increased our sympathy for his Leftist criminals, I'm suggesting that the enormity of the eradication of thousands of lives should have hit the reader harder. But in the book it is quickly glossed over, as *Wyst*'s plot churns to its rousing conclusion.

I suppose I should clear up a few minor things. I enjoyed the Stratemeyer fictions as a boy, and admire their craft, far in preference to later children's literature. I am neither ashamed of this nor contemptuous of these books. At their best they evoked a sense of place—which is something Vance has developed far more brilliantly. (Modern fiction factories for kids do not emphasize place or the social milieu: it must all be action, action, action.) And regarding anti-egoism, George Meredith's understanding of egoism was not particularly Leftist, but common-sensist: egoism is the inability to give others their due. The role of comedy, as Meredith saw it, was to 'put people in their place' by showing their hypocrisies, pretensions, and obsessions for the trivial things they often are. Perhaps we should place Vance in this tradition, too.

I enjoyed Paul's discussion of the relative merits of Richard Strauss and Percy Grainger. Neither much interest me, and I tend to hear their faults more often

than their successes, but I feel compelled to say that nothing in Grainger has moved me more than one performance (among many). I've heard of Strauss' Death and Transfiguration. Most of the time I listen to other, very different composers: Haydn, Boccherini, Beethoven, Sibelius, Stravinsky, Bartok, Martinu—the list could go on and on. Unlike Vance, I don't much care for jazz, though works by Milhaud and Bernstein, based on jazz, strike me as exquisite. If I were to compare Vance to any composer, I might choose the cultivated, joyful, amusing, exotic Darius Milhaud. Vance and Milhaud seem of the same stature in their respective arts.

Finally, though I don't consider Vance a Great Novelist, I do consider many of his stories to be profound, artistic triumphs in their own right. The mentioning of Wodehouse seems on target. Wodehouse is a fine writer, and his comedy very droll. Still, I think he (and Vance) are a step below some other comic writers, such as Cabell and Nabokov and Murdoch. But this does not mean that one should not read or admire such a writer. I'll accept one of Paul's criticisms of me, with reservation. Some of my reasons for liking Vance may be construed as extra-literary. But I have literary reasons for admiring him, too. Don't we all?

CENSORSHIP OF COSMOPOLIS?

This month, once again, I have been subject to an umpteenth censorship campaign by the forces of political correctitude. The same arguments are always used:

- That Paul Rhoads is a political extremist and religious fanatic exploiting Cosmopolis to diffuse propaganda upon an unsuspecting audience.
- He wastes much precious Cosmopolis space, better used for other things than right-wing rantings having nothing to do with the VIE.
- Because he is VIE E-in-C, and because he contributes so (too) much to Cosmopolis, people will confuse his unsavory opinions with those of Jack Vance, and abandon the project, to its detriment.
- If he is not censored, or if he will not censor himself, counter-measures may be taken, such as desubscription.

I point out, to no effect, that no one is obliged to read what I write and that nothing is left out of Cosmopolis in favor of my contributions. I complain that censorship and threats are shabby tactics, to which comes the reply: *We make no attempt at 'censorship', and proffer no 'threats'*—the only basis for this dishonest rebuttal being that the words themselves are not used. I point out that I sign all

my articles and never suggest that what I think is what Jack Vance thinks, which is countered with 'concern about appearances'—but if this does not hide a censorial attitude, it must indicate contempt of Cosmopolis readers' intelligence by self-appointed protectors of the stupid.

When I argue that there are political and religious aspects of Vance, and that discussing these, and pursuing the discussions where they lead, is legitimate in Cosmopolis because it is what some participants in the multifarious VIE are interested in doing, the reply is that my opinions are so 'extreme' they are necessarily false and thus forcibly irrelevant. These arbitrators of what is extreme and what is relevant are self-proclaimed moderates whose opinions, so they claim, are shared by the majority. When I quote Leo Strauss, *a majority opinion is just an opinion with a long tail* (a nice way of pointing out that majority rule, as such, is not the law of the most just or most intelligent, but merely of the strongest), no response is forthcoming.

When I argue that some people are interested in what I write, and that those who disagree might yet tolerate the free expression of opinions they disapprove, the reply is that it is not worth alienating even a single person, that the project is a greater value than free expression in Cosmopolis. But that *I* would be alienated if Cosmopolis were censored does not count with them.

What good will the VIE do if, as soon as his texts are re-issued, Vance is marked as a 'conservative reactionary', and censored? Western art depends on freedom of thought and expression.† Finally, I point out that, despite threats, no one, so far as I know, has desubscribed from the VIE because of opinions in Cosmopolis they do not like, but that I will surely drop out of the project if censorship is introduced. Furthermore, if people want to unsubscribe, that is their affair. We hold no one hostage.

I can only shrug my shoulders in frustration. It is obvious to me, if not to themselves, that these people—

† Without them you get the charming, but numbingly repetitive, five centuries of Egyptian art, the perhaps spiritually profound, but stultified, icon painting that has been going on in Eastern Europe since the age of Byzantium, the centuries old round of the Ramayana in India, and the extremely charming and lovely minor arts of Japan. I am intimately familiar with many of these arts and appreciate them in full degree. But in the West we do something more, and I want that to continue. The accomplishments of Hokusai and Hiroshige, great, wonderful and lovable as they are, are not to be compared with the vaster accomplishments of painters like Rembrandt or Claude Lorraine. It is not that Rembrandt and Claude are greater artists per se, but that their richer and wider cultural perspective and possibilities allowed their art to flower to a greater extent. It is, of course, wonderful to continue to sing the Ramayana, with accompanying puppet shows, and I hope that never stops.

who are technically 'cultural Marxist', knowing or unknowing disciples of the Frankfurt school of 'cultural revolution'—will stop at nothing to win arguments by putting their opponents out of bounds. This tactic is not to be sneered at. It is now impossible, in 'polite company' to use many perfectly good words, or make many statements, however obviously in conformity with the objective truth of things, or however acceptable as an honorable opinion during many recent centuries, without incurring instant and rhetorically violent reaction. Draped in their mantels of 'impartiality' and 'moderation' they maintain a stance of radical (but presumably not *extreme*) relativism (*The Truth* is that there is no truth: an absurd self-contradiction), and compound their self-contradiction by insisting my pretension to tell the truth is illegitimate. An unfriendly attitude! Naturally I think what I say is true! Any other attitude would be dishonest or irresponsible, since I would believe myself to be lying or talking nonsense, and it is not good to knowingly propagate lies or nonsense. But I know that I am only a fallible human; I am willing to listen to others who might know better than I. The attitude of the censors about themselves is much more, shall I say, 'positive'.

The VIE is caught in the crossfire of the 'cultural wars'; there is no way around it. Some of us are on one side, and some on the other. The side I am on tolerates, and encourages, free expression. In regard only to free expression in Cosmopolis, as long as I am associated with the VIE, my side will win.

Though the sides in the culture wars are not monolithic, there is a major current on the other side that rejects exchange of views, or debate; for their opponents they accord the right to silence, and no other. Again and again I invite them to make their points of view known in Cosmopolis. Tim Virkkala points out that different people see different things in Vance; can we not profit from each other's insights to perhaps test or perfect our own?

Despite the claims of some, I never mistake my own opinions for those of Jack Vance. Still, I can often take comfort in his work, for example this, from *Emphyrio*:

Amiante at last spoke—obliquely, hyperbolically, so it seemed to Ghyl. "Freedom, privileges, options, must constantly be exercised, even at the risk of inconvenience. Otherwise they fall into desuetude and become unfashionable, unorthodox—finally irregular. Sometimes the person who insists upon his prerogatives seems shrill and contentious—but actually he performs a service for all. Freedom naturally should never become license; but regulation should never become restriction."

In *Emphyrio* the people of Ambroy, supposedly to protect their commerce in quality hand-made goods, have lost the right of mechanical reproduction, including printing—which, as made clear in the mayoral election episode, is a basic support of democracy. Their activities and opinions are also closely monitored. By their puppet masters? Not at all! Just as there are always ‘capos’ in concentration camps who are corrupted, tricked, and/or opportunistic prisoners, so, in Ambroy, guild officers control their own members. The system is corrupting and self-perpetuating, to the ultimate advantage of the oppressors.

The Ambroy oligarchy had fatal weaknesses that Ghyl Tarvoke is able to turn against it. In the same way Moscow’s control over so much of Europe, direct and indirect, was only able to impose itself for seventy nightmarish years, and with the recent elections the French Communist party has evaporated (fallen below the 5% level required for government funding eligibility). The French labor unions, mostly Communist or crypto-Communist, are at record lows in membership. Several trades (such as miners) have long put themselves out of work thanks to the aggressive Utopianism of these unions, and membership is now mostly restricted to that 25% of the workforce who are government employees; these enjoy special privileges (retirement at age 55 at full pay, unlimited right to strike, right to private retirement pensions—denied to workers in the private sector—guaranteed life-time employment) making them a class apart, and providing the incompressible Socialist electorate. In *Emphyrio* the people rise up against their oppressors; first the guilds, then the puppet masters; and so it will be, sooner or later, everywhere and always.

The front line forces of ‘politically correct’ censorship in our society are, or would be, or will be, like the guild officers. They are members, dupes, or proto-members of more or less occult organizations whose aim is to dominate society by corrupting democratic processes.* Michael Gorbachev is now the head of an NGO which is nibbling away at national sovereignties thanks to the ideology of global ecology—the arguments of which are, doubtlessly, familiar to all. But Gorbachev and his NGO, like EU bureaucrats, do not inform us how our leaders will be chosen when at last their ideologies triumph. This is the new face of International Socialism. The Americans among them care nothing for the Constitution—remember this line from Araminta Station: *they*

* I use the term ‘democracy’ in its wider modern sense, not in the restricted original sense of pure majority rule.

[. . .] *think to hold the high ground by waving funny old documents at us.*—for our freedoms of religion, thought and expression, which have been won in America, and in the West in general, *and there only*,† by centuries of effort and blood. The skirmish that goes on behind the scenes in the VIE is a minor—or even ‘very minor’—episode in this battle of civilization, but it is part of it.

Are such reflections, in the face of attempts at censorship, irrelevant in the context of the Vance Integral Edition project, which seeks to promote the writer of *The Chasch*, *The Brave Free Men* or *Cadwal*? Vance is more than a political writer, but he is that. Again and again he writes about the problems of liberty and government. Is it irrelevant that, among my own motivations for originating the VIE, is the desire to protect and promote basic freedoms that the work of Jack Vance, or so it seems to me, supports? In my Cosmopolis contributions I am concerned, first and foremost, with technical aspects of the project, and Vance’s literary qualities (a quantitative analysis would bear this out). But Vance’s defence of freedom, for example, is not unrelated to his literary qualities, as I have hinted in other articles.

I agree that Cosmopolis should not contain anything irrelevant to the VIE project, but this is not a moral law, it is a practical consideration. The publication would fail to interest its destined audience if it did not remain on topic. The real danger is not alienating Cosmopolis readers, but boring them. But no writer can interest all readers; diversity of content is good for Cosmopolis, and tolerance for diverse content is required. Would it be positive for the project, or even non-negative, that I, or anyone else, be censored? It would be good if there were even more contributions to Cosmopolis, not so I would be contradicted but so the publication would be richer. Each reader will judge whether or not I abuse Cosmopolis, and will naturally take action by reading or not reading my contributions. But why would I bother? Who would be interested in reading opinions with no bearing on Jack Vance or the VIE, in Cosmopolis? Those who cannot see the connections between the VIE and some of the things that some of us are led to discuss, or have no interest in them, might yet, on the basis of trust in our good will, tolerate their presence in Cosmopolis.

I doubt that anyone, and certainly not those who try to silence me, does more to drum up Cosmopolis contributions, by urging others, of whatever color of opinion, to write; or by quoting them, even when they disagree with me. If I were an ideologically motivated propagand-

† Try having freedom of religion, thought, or speech in China, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Burma, Nigeria etc.

dist I would certainly not do this. Please note that my Crucible section is usually made up of over 50% quotation.

Vance casts a further light on the above discussion (from *Araminta Station*):

Milo explained to Glawen. "L, P and F stand for 'Life', 'Peace' and 'Freedom'. Julian is an ardent member of the group."

Glawen said: "With such a slogan, how dare anyone raise his voice in opposition?"

"It's generally agreed that the slogan is the best part of the program," said Milo.

Julian ignored Milo's remark. "Against all sanity, opponents to the great LPF movement not only exist but flourish like noxious weeds."

"These are evidently the 'DWSers': the advocates of 'Death', 'War' and 'Slavery'. Am I right?" said Glawen.

The Left, self-proclaimed defenders of kindness, eschew honest confrontation in favor of disqualification of the opposition: since they are for life, peace and freedom, their *opposition* are dirty dogs who love death, war and slavery. It has been suggested that my commentaries on current French politics are particularly irrelevant to the VIE, and yet they are a striking confirmation of what Vance is showing us here, and its real world consequences. If my June Cosmopolis time had not been absorbed by a fatiguing rear-guard action against clandestine and nameless censors I would have liked to transcribe the current Socialist campaign arguments, which are a remarkable counterpoint to this amazing passage from *Araminta Station*.

However, what about the basic question? Is censorship permissible at all? And if so, why not in Cosmopolis? If society were 'perfect', if each person's mind were a perfect reflection of the truth, censorship would not be an issue because everyone would think the same, correct, thoughts—and debate would be obsolete. But this situation does not prevail; instead the truth struggles to make itself heard amidst a jostling crowd of lies and half truths. What to do? Is the best solution not toleration of erroneous points of view, or competition in the marketplace of ideas? The alternative is exclusion of all points of view but one. This would mean less, or no, argument but almost surely among the excluded views would be the truth, whatever you take it to be—to say nothing of the frustration of those who espouse the excluded views, whatever their truth value.

A THOUGHT CONCERNING SCIENCE FICTION, ASTROLOGY, MAKERS OF TALISMANS, CHRISTIANITY AND VANCE

In the SFV preface—which everyone will soon read in their own copy of the book—I develop the argument that the essence of science fiction is scientism, or the materialist religion of technological progress. This religion was full of whim and hope in the first part of the last century. Today it is the triumphant ideology, being the basic, if hidden, belief even of most 'religious' people. But thanks to the bomb etc., we have become wary of technology. The metaphysics of materialism are also radically unsatisfactory to thinking people; as a result scientism, if not in retreat, is at least no longer progressing rapidly—if its *elán* is not actually broken. The rise of Islam is one consequence of this.

Regarding scientism—which is, at base, atheist and materialist—there is a parallel between it and the Astrologers and Makers of Talismans of old.

Regarding talismans: though still very popular, they are now laughed at by adherents of scientism. However, not all talismans are frauds! A bag of garlic on the chest may indeed have therapeutic properties, with or without the shaman's blessing, and perhaps not without! The alchemists who searched for the 'philosopher's stone' (which was to turn dross to gold) were proto-chemists and, just like their descendants, worked many real material transformations with fire and acids. Today we are no longer mystified by cures or astonished by transformations, we no longer call them magic, but only because our mastery of so many techniques has made us blasé.

Regarding astrology: pop-astrology is, of course, meaningless, but real, or *esoteric* astrology is a fascinating and rich universe of symbols and mysterious keys to reality. Astrology may be a 'superstition' but it is not a 'religion', or if it is, it is a materialist one. Astrologers believe that the planets and the heavens exert an influence via some kind of ethereal influence, like waves.


My point depends on the distinction between spirit and matter. It is acceptance or rejection of this distinction that marks the divide I am trying to show. The emanations of the planets cannot be pure spirit, because they operate in a manner that is mechanical; they exert their influence in harmony or disharmony depending on their relative physical positions. But spiritual things, such as *meanings*, do not depend on anything physical, like position. You can think about good and evil while standing upright, or on your head, while you are outside in the daylight, or in a dark room.

Atheists/materialists share with Astrologers and Mak-

ers of Talismans rejection of the distinction between spirit and matter.* They do not acknowledge the reality of spirit, or they conceive of it as something that may be freely manipulated, or that functions in predetermined ways, as the Astrologers say—in other words their definition of spirit is fundamentally materialist.

Things like the genetic code have replaced astrology as the materialistic way to know what we are, and genetic therapy replaces talismans as the way to fix what is wrong. Our technology is magical apparatus, talismans, amulets, potions, by other names. We are like Visbhume with his almanac; we can make calculations and access Tanjecterly, but once there, what next?

True religion is the eternal opposite pole to astrology/atheism-talismans/materialism. What, if anything, does Vance teach us about this? My opinion, to state it without demonstration or argument, is that Vance starts out, in the 1940s, as a convinced atheist/materialist, a more or less full-fledged supporter of scientism. But he is too honest a man, too keen an observer of life and his fellow creatures, to shoehorn his developing sense of reality into the glass slipper of this ideology. He therefore puts the slipper carefully on a shelf—another interesting object of observation—and goes on collecting other observations. With each new book we see him open to an ever larger reality. The equation he develops in the early sixties, Magic=Language, is a notable milestone.



A Review of *Fool Me Twice*

Matthew Hughes' Second Novel


by Luk Schoonaert

Being a Jack Vance fan it was inevitable to run into Matthew Hughes at a certain point... And where I feared that the comparison with Jack Vance might put the expectations very high, Matt succeeded in creating a wonderful fantasy/SF world with all its funny inhabitants and colorful places.

It's the first time that a new writer manages to catch the Vance feeling in his writing! Especially the magnificent blend of fantasy with science fiction is unique in Matt's decors! Matt pictures a very old earth that is inhabited with magical influences as well as the remains of a high-tech society, which creates the very unique atmosphere in which he sends his protagonist, Filidor, on a mysterious mission...

In this second book about Filidor Vesh, the nephew of the archon gets himself caught up in a strange plot to overthrow the ruling archon... Or is it another test bestowed upon Filidor by his uncle, carefully planned and crafted to get him out of the nonchalant and easy life he's been leading since his last adventure?

Matt Hughes is a new and promising writer clearly influenced by Jack Vance (*Cugel's Saga*, *Eyes of the Overworld*), yet one can see he is creating his own style: funny, innovating and sometimes broodingly dark... For all those that love experiencing strange new worlds, colorful places and strange inhabitants you *need* to read this... Well done Matthew!!! We want more!!!



* The category of talismans overlaps the two views; a miraculous medal of the rue de Bac is not the same thing as a love potion. The first is like a prayer, it is a symbol of love and intention. The second aims to directly alter reality by a mechanical action.

You Have Done It!

VIE Work Credits

Compiled by Hans van der Veeke

Here are the last volunteer work credits for Wave 1 texts. Yes, an important milestone has been reached. Something we can all be proud of!

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 Hans van der Veeke at hans@vie.tmfweb.nl

Unfortunately, at the time you read this a change cannot be made for the Wave 1 volumes. But one of the Wave 2 volumes will list the credits in more detail and changes can be applied there.

DODKIN'S

JOB

Finished 29 May 2002

Digitizer

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Pre-proofers

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Chris McCormick
Hans van der Veeke

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Richard Chandler
Thomas Rydbeck

DD-Jockey

Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey

Paul Rhoads

Technoproofer

Rob Friefeld

TI

David A. Kennedy
Paul Rhoads
Steve Sherman

Implementation

John McDonough
Hans van der Veeke

Composition

Joel Anderson

Andreas Irle

Composition

Review

Andreas Björklind
Christian J. Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Brian Gharst
Paul Rhoads
Robin L. Rouch

Post-proofing

"Spellers of Forlorn
Encystment"
Till Noever (team
manager)

Malcolm Bowers

Rob Gerrand

Peter Ikin

Chris McCormick

Bob Moody

Bill Sherman

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Hans van der Veeke



ECCE AND OLD EARTH

Finished 6 May 2002

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Special reformatting

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Pre-proofers

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Till Noever

Steve Sherman

Technoproofer

Patrick Dusoulrier

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Alun Hughes
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Norma Vance

Implementation

Donna Adams

Derek W. Benson

Composition

John A. Schwab

Composition

Review

Andreas Björklind

Marcel van Genderen

Brian Gharst

Charles King

Paul Rhoads

Robin L. Rouch

Post-proofing

"Spellers of Forlorn
Encystment" / "Clam
Muffins"

Till Noever (team
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Rouch (team manag-
er)

Malcolm Bowers

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Karl Kellar

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SULDRUN'S GARDEN

Finished 10 May 2002

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Compare

Norma Vance

Pre-proofers

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Paul Rhoads

Peter Strickland

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Steve Sherman

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Implementation

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Composition

Joel Anderson

Composition

Review

Marcel van Genderen

Charles King

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Paul Rhoads

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"Penwipers" /

"Tanchinaros"

Rob Friefeld (team

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ager)

Mike Barrett

Top Changwatchai

Robert Collins

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Rob Knight

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Betty Mayfield

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Gabriel Stein



THE FACE

Finished 10 May 2002

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Davies

Special reformatting

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Suan Hsi Yong

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Composition

Joel Anderson

Composition

Review

Charles King

Paul Rhoads

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Lucie Jones

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Simon Read

Jeffrey Ruszczyk



Volume Work Credits

Check Your Credits!

by Hans van der Veeke

These are the last volume credits for Wave 1. The same reservation concerning corrections applies here. Please send any corrections and additions to Hans van der Veeke at hans@vie.tmfweb.nl

Here is the credit list for Volume 17 which contains:

- Rumfuddle
- Sulwen's Planet
- The Kokod Warriors
- Ullward's Retreat
- Coup de Grace
- Dodkin's Job
- Alfred's Ark
- The New Prime
- The Men Return
- The Moon Moth
- Green Magic

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- Suldrun's Garden

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- Ecce and Old Earth

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Brian Gharst

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Paul Rhoads
Joel Riedesel
Robin L. Rouch
Bill Schmaltz
John A. Schwab
Bill Sherman
Steve Sherman
John Vance
Norma Vance

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

I read with interest Chuck King's experience with the Logan Square Book Club. (Is it, perhaps, the one in which Michael Stec's wife holds membership? If so, 'Ho!' to Max . . .) Like him, I've many times mulled over the VIE's goals, perhaps with more pessimism. I feel that Vance *is* 'Nectar of the Gods': goes down sharp stingingly and beautifully: you either love him or cough up a fit. (I have taken notice of George Rhoads' wonderful piece regarding sentence repair.) It's quixotic but worthy to attempt such aims: hence I volunteered. Still, I must admit to scepticism regarding outcome, especially the VIE's play of packaging Vance in staid volumes to be conservatively shelved all in a row, with the apparent intention of tricking normal people into reading them. This, I thought, was especially hare-brained (but very sweet).

And this is where, I believe, Chuck went wrong: he did not introduce Vance to the Logan Square crowd in the proper way. Here's my experience:

I'd ordered two of the *Tschai* books from the web in DAW paperbacks. I'd also ordered the VIE's Gift Volume: the two packages happened to arrive on the same day. My husband, who'd never before even *glanced* at any of my Vance books, picked up the Gift Volume with its wonderful spine and all the words set in that font with a soul, paged through it, put it down, picked up *City of the Chasch*, and began to read. He read all the Vance books that I had immediately available, then went downstairs to retrieve the ones packed away. I had to get *The Pnume* for him from ABE (he couldn't find the paperback, packed away somewhere), after which he announced that all my Jack Vance books now belonged to him (he claims 10% of my collection: he helps me with them when we move). In order to test his sanity, I asked him if he too now believed that Vance could save the Western world. His reply was that if Western citizens could adopt Vance's clarity of thought let alone deftness with words, then certainly that would save our world.

Now that I am certain that our marriage will last, and now that all my books are shelved in my new library, I am a content but still bewildered woman. Why did Martin suddenly begin to read Vance after looking at the Gift Volume? Why, especially, did he begin with the DAW paperback, sporting a sword-bearing Blue Chasch on the cover?

Oh well! My best wishes to Chuck in any renewed attempt to further our cause.

Deborah Cohen



To the Editor,

It seems that writing to the Editor of *Cosmopolis* has become part of my routine even though I am now used to perusing Rhoads' pronouncements on LePen and Socialism without paying too much attention. By the way, as a (mathematics) student when LePen was the head of the Law Students Union, I was mostly persuaded by his 'force de frappe' since his ability to put an argument together was completely non-existent. Of course, I am ready to believe that since he inherited, I think the Say money, or a big chunk thereof, he has been able to make up all the study time he lost back then. He sure needed it.

As for the election, here is what happened: Chirac needed to remain President else he went to jail, while

Jospin needed to remain Prime Minister else he would have to be suicided. But, by the rule of the game, the one had to run against the other and one was bound to lose. What to do?

Elementary, my dear Watson. We merely need to avoid a Chirac versus Jospin run-off. So, encourage everybody to be a Presidential candidate and *help* a few. The more the better. That already will cut into Jospin's numbers. And then, traditionally, on the first tour, the French vote, if not their heart, then at least their hatred. So, since the Socialists *did* betray the people, that one was easy. Just twist the knife some more. And how do you *help*? Equally easy and I will leave it to your imagination. (Hint: keep in mind that it is a lot simpler to exacerbate problems than to solve them and that, here, to exacerbate the problems was, as is currently the case in Israel, politically expedient.) And, of course, the Socialists, so called, will soon get the government back. Et voilà!

Religion. Why did John Rappel feel there was a need to "demonstrate why such a debate has no place within Cosmopolis"? It was a great pleasure to read his letter which, by his own admission, he would not have written if not provoked by Rhoads.

And, last but not least, the "modern educational malaise". First, unlike William Tahil, I distrust industry mouths. They have a way to eat their cake and keep it too. Consider for instance how delicately the article says "Kids exposed to light screens" rather than "Kids watching TV". Now why should that be? Could it be that the aerospace industry has no wish to antagonize the TV industry? More seriously, when I see a sentence like "We're one of several industries that has concerns about its future workforce", I don't know whether to laugh or to cry. Given that education, at least at the post-secondary level, is completely industry-driven, what exactly are they talking about? Mr. Tahil ought to try teaching a calculus course that is not merely a sequence of examples and exercises. If he lives to tell the tale, he will be lucky. On the other hand, the industry is more than a little bit disingenuous since most engineering these days requires little creative thinking, if any. And, on the third hand, where is their concern for fundamental research? They are too concerned with improving their shareholders' short time capital gains to deal with any such thing. If it were to have been invented today, the transistor wouldn't be. A good reference is *The False Crisis in Science Education*, a 1999 article by Gibbs and Fox in *Scientific American* prompted by the fact that America's high school juniors had placed near last on the

Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). 281:87-93. None of this is to say that TV does not have a deleterious effect—and not just on children. But, this I know, it is *industries* that are pushing 'light screens' in the classroom. It is *industries* that are pushing TV's inane contents.

Alain Schremmer



To the Editor,

In reply to Alain Schremmer and John Rappel: Regarding Alain Schremmer's defence of Socialism: though living below the 'poverty line' I have no objection to other people making scads of money, and I do not sympathize with envy. The money other people make is not money I do not make. (Excepting what is made as a result of contemporary-art style-favoritism. This excludes me from the art market—but if people want to participate in this imaginary world, they are free to do so! The money diverted into artistic frauds is not what bothers me; it is how our culture and art is corrupted in its favor. The art market has therefore become all but non-existent, despite high-profile auctions designed to maintain the illusion something is going on, not to mention what is infinitely more important, that the cultural atmosphere has become unbreathable. The promotion of ugly, stupid and pornographic 'art' is part of the anti-Western cultural revolution of radical egalitarianism, sexual libertinism, and the rest that goes with the slogan: 'down with dead white males'.)

Those who deem European Socialism superior to the semi-Socialism of America—such as Alain Schremmer?—should come to France and be edified by the spectacle of the collapsing socialized medical system. French doctors, serfs of Socialism, have been earning less, much less, than plumbers and electricians. They are forced, *by the police*, to work overtime—in a country proud of its latest bit of 'social progress': the 35 hour work week! In a recent incident, doctors and police clashed, with several injuries. Meanwhile the government has been forced to accede to their more than reasonable demands, recognized as such by their patients—increasing their pay to less than half that of a plumber†—and which, in essence, spells the end of socialized medicine in France, or its continued existence

† I mention plumbers only as a measure of comparison. What they earn is fully justified, given the law of offer and demand, and plumbers are, obviously, no more dishonest than members of other professions, and more competent and hard-working than many.

in only token form (it has seriously eroded over the last seven years already). This system has also corrupted the doctors themselves, who have been encouraged to exploit their semi-functionary status to limit the size of their corporation and so grab bigger shares of the government medical-spending pie, by strangling medical school admissions. Now there is a dearth of doctors, particularly for rural areas, where the socialized system (for example the absurdly low charges allowed for house visits, and the obligations to do stand-by duty) makes country doctoring so unattractive (This is no reflection on the quality of doctoring in France, which is exceptional, but that has nothing to do with Socialism. It was already exceptional, the best in the world, a century ago. It is now stagnating due to Socialist induced brain-drain. The best 'French' medical researchers, such as the doctor Montaigné, work in the USA.). (I had an opportunity to be disgusted about a year ago when I was forced to listen to a musician, freshly returned from Cuba, who complained about the American embargo by saying that it was strangling the country, and boasted that Cuban medical service was superior to American. So, I wanted to ask: 'which is it: strangulation or superiority?')

And what about the Bernard Tapies of this world? Tapie is a French celebrity. In the 1980s he became one of the richest men in France by doing the then fashionable thing of buying up weak companies, breaking them apart and selling off the pieces (remember that?). He then bought himself a famous boat, a famous soccer team, and swindled thousands of small investors bedazzled by his success and promises. Before they threw him in jail he became a minister in the Socialist government of Mitterand, and then founded a party, politically to the left of the Socialists, which recently fielded a black woman presidential candidate of Trotskyite tendency. Since his stint behind bars (where most French businessmen seem to end up at one point or another) he has started a new career as celebrity film star—which seems to be the profession he should have been in all along.

Why is the finger pointed at those who make a bundle by successfully exploiting a good idea and giving jobs to dozens, or hundreds, while the finger is never pointed at some under-educated tennis or soccer player who makes millions?

From the standpoint of what might, in distinction to *Marxist analysis*, be called *classical analysis*, Socialism is simply a form of populism. Alain Schremmer's 'status quo' of America is an incitement to envy. Socialists are slaves to this sin. The following commentary on envy, and the essence of the Socialist program, can be found

in *Madouc*; in the episode where Madouc and Pymfyd try to hide in a grove of poplars:

... a pair of vagabonds roasted a rabbit. One was short and big-bellied, with a round flat face surrounded by a froust of black beard and black hair. The second was tall and thin as a stick, lank of arm and leg, with a face long and vacuous, like the face of a cod. Both wore ragged garments and tattered buskins. The tall vagabond wore a high piked cap of black felt; his fat comrade wore a low-crowned hat with a very wide brim. To the side were a pair of sacks in which they evidently carried their belongings. At the sight of Madouc and Pymfyd, the two rose to their feet, and stood appraising the situation.

Madouc gave the two a cold inspection in return, and concluded that never had she encountered a more unsavory pair of rogues.

The short fat vagabond spoke: "And what are you two doing here, so fresh and airy?"

"That is none of your concern," said Madouc. "Pymfyd, let us proceed; we disturb these persons at their meal."

"Not at all," said the short vagabond. He spoke to his tall comrade without taking his eyes from Madouc and Pymfyd. "Ossip, have a look down the lane; see who else is near."

"All clear; no one in sight," reported Ossip.

"Those are fine horses," said the burly rogue. "The saddles and fitments are also of fine quality."

"Sammikin, notice! The red-haired brat wears a golden clasp."

"Is it not a farce, Ossip? That some wear gold, while others go without?"

"It is the injustice of life! Were I to wield power, everyone should share alike!"

"That is a noble concept indeed!"

Ossip peered at Tyfer's bridle. "See here! Even the horse wears gold!" He spoke with unctuous fervor: "Here is richness!"

Sammikin snapped his fingers. "I cannot help but rejoice! The sun shines bright and our luck has turned at last!"

"Still, we must exert ourselves in a certain way that we know of, in order to safeguard our reputations."

I applaud Alain's full disclosure regarding Stalin and Mao. In my view Mao is just as bad as Stalin, and I get the impression Alain has not fully recovered from his one-time allegiance (doubtlessly dating from the 1960s) to the slogan yelling author of the little red book. I would like to hear more about how he was bamboozled, and how he wriggled off the fly-paper, even if he did leave a leg or two behind. The cultural revolution in the West has been running since the yippies went around with copies of the little red book in their back pockets.

Things have since gotten very serious, and my best estimate is that by 2007, as Pius XII predicted, things will have really heated up and the fighting will be both ubiquitous and no longer figurative. I hope everyone will have taken full advantage of the last 60 years of relative, exceptional, peace.

Thanks to Alain for the book: *Inequality Reexamined* by Amartya Sen. The volume was mailed to me direct from India in a true 'manila' envelope of a beautiful oriental buff yellow. The paper of the envelope, which exuded a tantalizing zest, was surprisingly feeble, falling apart in the fingers. But the Indians fabricated it cleverly with a cloth lining. I am not sure what this cloth is; silk? It is extremely fine and strong, printed with flowers, and I have been using it to make etching varnish tampers. Regarding the book, I have dabbled in it only. Off hand it seems like an up-to date Marxist analysis, a watered down defence of radical egalitarianism tempered by a dose of common sense. Stylistically it is delightfully indigestible:

The rationale of the axiomatic structure of real-income comparisons depends on the interpretations of the comparisons, and both the selection view and the options views have been extensively used—explicitly or by implication. (p34)

Though he teaches at Trinity College, Cambridge, in England, I am struck by an 'Eastern' tinge to Sen's thinking, which I find completely uncongenial. Take section 4.3, *Can Freedom Conflict with Well-Being*, of which this is the beginning:

In arguing for a freedom-based evaluative system, a general presumption is sometimes made that more freedom is always advantageous—at least not detrimental. Is that supposition correct? It seems clear enough that it cannot be, in general, correct. Indeed, sometimes more freedom of choice can bemuse and befuddle, and makes one's life more wretched. There are costs of decision-taking, and it may be comfortable to lie back and relax while others make the detailed choices.

It may indeed! Repose, therefore, ye untouchables, on your soft cushions of Socialism, while the Bramans of technocracy trouble themselves to activate the cooling fan—before you even realize you require refreshment! One wonders what motivates this incredible degree of self-sacrifice; surely not, we must hope, some motive of

personal advantage!

In any case: thank you Alain, for this gift. It is a treasured part of my library which I will continue to study.

Finally, I have marked Alain down on the subscriber list for my tentatively titled: *About Jack Vance*, which, according to Alain's suggestion, will use an original cover color. Five subscriptions left! Publication planned for 2004.

In reply to John Rappel, he writes that I made a defence of the truth of Christianity which depends "mainly on [...] insistence that [...] the] chronicles of [these] events [i.e. the Gospels] assures us that the events themselves are accurately depicted and explained." But this does not address the issue. Though happy, even eager, to do so, I was not defending Christianity. My remarks were provoked by the pretension that religion is irrational and based on nothing but faith, while science is rational because based on evidence. I pointed out that the truth of Christianity is, to the contrary, based on more than faith, because there is a good deal of evidence. John Rappel may not consider this evidence any good, but I was simply pointing out that it is essentially of the same nature as so called 'scientific evidence'; it is all merely indications of various kinds. Proof, which is not the same thing as evidence, is also less than absolute. You can prove that Newtonian physics are correct, but you can also prove that they are not. Much depends on the perspective you start out with. In recent years the atheistic perspective has become more bumptious than it ever dared to be in the previous decades, not to say centuries or millenia, of recorded history. Apparently all those dead people were hopelessly confused and only now do we see the light.

I could also have pointed out that there is an aspect of faith, in science. Nothing proves that new and wonderful discoveries will continue to be made in science, yet scientists *believe* that they will make discoveries, so they keep at it. May God bless them!

In regard to the present discussion, I present myself as what I am: a convert to, and defender of, Catholicism. I have studied the matter and am convinced not only of the truth of Christianity, the fully true religion, but of the preeminent and decisive role of our relation to the Church and the trinitarian God, not only for our own lives but for the world, and not only for believing Christians but for everyone. By contrast, John Rappel and Co. do not present themselves frankly as the militant anti-Christians they are, but as people of superior rationality who, though supposedly their 'lack of faith makes the

task of comprehending the universe paradoxically more difficult', are none-the-less 'much more likely to be successful'. But, unlike John Rappel's lackers of faith, Christians do not pretend to be trying to comprehend the universe. They pretend to be trying to live in a way pleasing to God. When John Rappel finally does succeed in comprehending the universe, for the sake of his *amour propre*, I hope it does not turn out that the thing we most need to comprehend is the mystery of salvation.

John Rappel asks: "What is it about Christianity which makes the evidence for it more compelling than the evidence for Islam or Mormonism to any objective observer? And if there is nothing, does it not seem more reasonable to reject all three rather than embrace one?" The evidence for Christianity is indeed much better, but John Rappel, like all radical anti-Christians, is not really interested, so I won't bore him with it. However, assuming his question is not purely rhetorical—that he entertains the possibility that the thesis of radical-anti-Christianity might be false—the essence of it is this: were Mohammed and John Smith prophets, madmen, or frauds? My answer would be: Mohammed was a fraud and John Smith was a madman. Mohammed presented himself as a greater 'prophet' than Jesus, contradicting the Gospel account according to which Jesus was not a prophet but the Messiah himself. Mohammed did not contradict what might be called the 'basic validity' of Christianity, he only claimed it was, like Judaism, perfected in Islam. The Mormons consider themselves a sort of Christian sect, like the Quakers or the Mennonites.

With regard to John Rappel's question, this means that Christianity, Islam and Mormonism, however much they may disagree, are still more in agreement with each other than with atheism. To put this another way, all three would rather argue among themselves about their relative truth than agree with John Rappel that, because they contradict each other at certain key points, they are all false. The argument among the religions would be won very easily by Christianity, and Catholicism in particular, if Islam and Mormonism would engage in it. (Note that only the Pope organizes great ecumenical gatherings, and Lutherans, the only ones so far really willing to engage with Catholics, have discovered that most of what they thought separated them from Catholics in fact does not.)

As for John Rappel's 'objective observer'; what is objectivity in this context? Does knee-jerk scientism rejection of the truth of miracles demonstrate objectivity? One source of knowledge about this matter might be Jack Vance. My reading of him indicates that inhab-

itual, unexplainable, contradictory phenomena exist, some of which might well fall under the rubric 'miracle'. I may be wrong in this reading or, if not, Vance himself may be in error, so John Rappel need not be troubled!

Militant atheists think miracles are obviously fraud or delusion. But if at least some miracles are true, why could not the miracles of Jesus be real and those of Mohammed be false? For Christians, however, the problem does not exist: there are delusions, frauds, and true miracles. Regarding true miracles, men do not perform them, God does. There are also demonic miracles (I will not go into the relation of divine to demonic miracles, unless someone insists). Both are performed by *faith*. If your soul is full of charity, even if you could not possibly know about Jesus—the case, for example, of Socrates, and there is a movement to have him canonized—you are a Christian even without knowing it. Those who know about Jesus, and deny him, are in a somewhat different situation; at the very least their souls offer an anchorage to the deadly sin of Pride.

John Rappel, no more than I, cannot explain what holds him down to the earth, or makes the sun rise in the morning. He can *describe* these phenomena, but he has no idea what the strong force and the weak force are, where they come from, or why they are there. The *thing* he boasts of eventually being able to comprehend, escapes him utterly. Furthermore, he has already reduced that *thing* to almost *no-thing*. If asked what relation his feelings, ideas and passions (for example his curiosity to comprehend) might have to these raw 'scientific' phenomena in which he coralls all that is worth understanding, he can only reply that they are ultimately chimera. But, if so, why does he not take advantage of this important insight, supposedly so superior to my Christian understanding, and treat the 'archaic quirk' of my earnest, sweating attachment to what I love and believe with appropriate and exemplary indifference? Is the cold void of the mechanistic universe urging him to convert me to his faith in this *no-thing*? Why would it bother? What does it care? I defend truth because I love it. I love it in the warm beauty I see and feel, in the divine order of things that delights my soul. I can do nothing but respond with gratitude, whatever the cost, without becoming disgusting in my own sight.

This is why we all do things in life. Jack Vance has done something for us. We are struck with admiration, and gratitude. Our souls are warmed to action, and we respond. Is John Rappel responding with gratitude to the admirable void, so famously indifferent to him and everything else? In fact the militant anti-Christians are

indeed responding to someone's call. They have even been offered special rewards for loyalty to his cause! These include forbidden pleasures detached from all qualms of conscience and, above all, the sweet sensation of personal superiority, the gratification of holding *the key of truth* in the weltering crowd of deluded boobs (such as myself). Perhaps Till can guess who I am referring to?

John Rappel asked me several questions which I did my best to answer. Perhaps he will answer one: what are you militating for? But, fool that I am, I forget: militant anti-Christians know no self-interrogation, and to such questions regurgitate only counter-cultural boiler-plate. So in case John Rappel is tempted to serve this up, let me beat him to it: *religion is bad—crusades, Inquisition, sexual inhibition—should be eradicated to favor flowering of the individual*. Inflation of this adequate précis is not called for, for *my* sake.

Regarding the superiority of Christianity to Islam, please don't get me started! Islam is a demonic plot invented by a charismatic bandit. Christianity is not only the foundation of Western Culture, but is like one of those 'disagreeable truths' militant atheists pride themselves on having the courage to face up to—though in this case they fail to have the courage of humility.

Paul Rhoads



To the Editor,

"We have escaped King Kragen; we acknowledge no overlord", said Sklar Hast pessimistically. "Misery brings jealousy and resentment. The intercessors can whip them into a sullen fury." He pitched his voice to a nasal falsetto. "Those insolent fugitives! How dare they scamp their responsibility to noble King Kragen?...Everyone to the coracles! We go to punish the iconoclasts!"

The intercessors of *The Blue World* are an easy target for derision. Who could respect an individual who maintains his personal power at the expense of his society? Who could respect the antagonist who resents and punishes those who seek freedom and a better life? We all have read the story; we all know the reasoning and persuasive tactics of the intercessors. If you try to make a better life for yourself, you're only going to increase the hardship of everyone else. You owe it to your society to stay in your dependency just like everyone else does, as it's the only way to guarantee a minimum of comfort for everyone. Finally, if you do escape, the miserable mass-

es are there to 'whip into a sullen fury' and drag you back down where you belong. I make no apologies for observing the obvious (and dare I say intentional) parallel between the intercessors of *The Blue World* and Socialist-leaning politicians in the

United States. Whatever pure motives either may have held are compromised once dependency is established. Their power flows from the dependency they have created. The most threatening scenario either can encounter is the men of their societies rising up to make better lives for themselves. The politician responds to this threat as the intercessor does. Both may be discerned by their attempts to incite envy towards achievers. Alain Schremmer (Letters to the Editor, *Cosmopolis* 27) has taken the bait.

Economic growth just doesn't happen the way Bill Bradley wants you to believe. In America, the rich can only get richer when everyone else has the opportunity to benefit as well. Consider Senator Bradley's observation that "in the twelve years between 1977 and 1989 the richest 1 percent of the population collected two thirds of the increase in personal income during those years." The only purpose of this statement is to plant a seed of resentment. Fortunately, other facts exist and they demonstrate the manipulation of Senator Bradley. Economist Walter Williams reports the following findings of the Center for the American Experiment in Minneapolis:

"There has been a net decline in the number of middle-class Americans—families earning between \$15,000 and \$50,000. But all of this decline is the result of families moving into a higher income category, above \$50,000 in inflation-adjusted dollars. The number of families earning more than \$50,000 grew from 24 percent of the population in 1970 to 32 percent in 1990."

The middle class seems to be riding the wave of prosperity; what about low-income earners? Williams continues:

"There's considerable income mobility in our country as seen by a Treasury Department tax returns study. Of those in the bottom 20 percent of income, in 1979, 86 percent moved to a higher income class by 1988."

And how about this:

"Fifteen percent of those who were poor in 1979 went all the way to the top income category by 1988."

Incredible! But surely someone has been left out. Where are the downtrodden who couldn't overcome the oppression of the evil rich? Williams:

"In 1990, of the families that comprised the lowest 20 percent in income, only 45 percent worked at all, and of those working, only 24 percent worked full time. By contrast, of families in the top 20 percent, 93 percent had two or more members working."

The lesson is simple. Senator Bradley wants you to believe that the oppressors have stolen your opportunity and that he can punish them and confiscate their loot for redistribution to you. He only needs for you to grant him the power with your vote. He is being deceitful, of course, as America grants as much opportunity to its citizens as does any other country in the world. It is a tragedy that his propaganda frequently succeeds. ('Might makes right' is indeed alive and well in America, though the irony may be lost on Mr. Schremmer.) Thanks to Senator Bradley, private citizens and businesses are subjected to relentlessly expanding tax burdens. They lose a large amount of the spending and investing power which is the primary fuel for any economy. The people who buy into this mongering will be ready to vote for Bradley's ilk in every election, because there will always be inequality to exploit.

This is exactly what has happened over the last several decades in America. Politicians lament the unfairness of it all, we buy into it and they raise taxes on everyone. Inequality still exists, the politicians act, we react, taxes go up, on and on, ad infinitum. It ought to be clear by now that raising taxes doesn't eliminate inequality. Hypothetically, taxes could rise to such extreme heights that the most wealthy, industrious people in the country would be brought down to the level of the poorest. We'd all be equal then, but doesn't that sound a lot like the situation in the city of Ambroy? Inequality will always exist while differences in skill, personal drive, and other factors exist. (These factors don't necessarily reflect poorly on an individual; a lot of intelligent and determined people take low-paying jobs and to their credit they don't want the government to give them other people's money.) If a small amount of taxation won't alter all this inequality (it didn't), and a moderate amount of taxation is just as useless (it didn't help either), and egregious taxation is failing stupendously (thanks to Alain for pointing this out, although I'm sure it was unintentional), then what is really going on with this

envy baiting and property confiscation? Way back in Cosmopolis 8, Paul Rhoads made a relevant observation:

"[Socialists] are almost identical to the tyrants endemic to anarchy but they camouflage this with the myth of collective ownership, and try to gain support by playing on the envy of the poor (i.e. the majority). These demagogues hope the poor will ignore their own sufferings for the sake of seeing the rich deprived of their 'disproportionate' wealth."

It might take another century to drive the United States into a complete welfare state; I don't know. Mr. Rhoads may be right about Jack Vance saving Western society, but if not then Vance could raise it from the dead! If my descendants are all wards of the American State, one of them might find my copy of *Emphyrio*...

On to Alain's second quote, a snippet from a newspaper advertisement in which Congressman George Mitchell tells us that "...if corporations paid the same share of taxes they did in 1954, the deficit would be gone in one year, with no cuts required." This statement is shamefully manipulative and deceitful. Personal income taxes and corporate taxes are both vastly higher than they were in 1954. The United States government is confiscating a greater percentage of our GNP now than it has in history, and it can't balance its budget? Who is to blame for that? I guess it doesn't matter when you can play the envy card and get a bunch of gullible voters to grant you the power to grab even more money. The solution to the problem of US budget deficits is not to continually raise taxes; the solution is to stop spending money! This ploy is really so brazen that it is worthy of a parody. I imagined what the advertisement would look like if it was submitted to the original Cosmopolis...

Attention populace: Through decades of vigilance we, the Agency of Cooperation, have provided the citizens and business entities of the Gaeen Reach expanding opportunities to Cooperate for the common good. Our achievements to date are substantial; Cooperation dignifies every wage, dividend, portfolio appreciation, tangible asset—in short, every financial consideration imaginable. We select an arbitrary point in the past to illuminate our progress. With indignation we note the Cooperation permitted all parties at that moment, to which we summarily apply the label 'inadequate'.

But let us not dwell overlong on the bleak past! Let us celebrate progress! Our ministrations have elevated the Cooperation of the citizenry to 'Bountiful Excess'. This is a glad state of affairs; all may rejoice! Yet we must

not allow the swell of optimism to relax our focus. We discern an unfortunate sleight, whereby the business ventures of the Reach are elevated to profit garnishment in mere 'Plentiful Excess'. Should we not grant these noble institutions equality with the multitudes? Do they not deserve the privilege of Cooperation in 'Bountiful Excess'?

Certain well-intentioned citizens have asked: "May we not restore equality by other means? Let us reduce the 'Bountiful Excess' of Cooperation afforded the citizenry." Unthinkable to deprive the inhabitants of the Reach their favorable station! We need not regress to restore the delicate balance of equality. Furthermore, the needs of the Reach are undiminished. By the vagaries of fate the cost of meeting these needs remains above the vastly expanded generosity of Cooperators.

So it is settled! Cooperation must advance that all may share in feelings of good will and equality of purpose! We implement the increase with no further delay!

Alain takes other jabs at the United States and Western society; he does not support these with quotes or statistics. His logic on these matters is sparse although forgivable because his errors are passionate. In fact, I am willing to concede the points he makes about education and health care, because under examination they are really points for the opposition, much as his quotes have been in the case of the politicians versus the achievers.

Enough of all this! I actually hate conflict; I expect Cosmopolis 29 to hold unpleasant responses directed at me and it's enough to make me want to delete this letter and forget the whole debate. But no, I'll let it fly and see what comes of it. Alain, I'm serious but only in the most lighthearted sense! To everyone else, thank you for providing me the opportunity to 'Cooperate' in this great endeavor. To Derek Benson, I couldn't agree with you more about *Emphyrio*. It is truly one of the greatest stories ever told, and I have always loved the *Fantastic Stories* introduction. It's no accident that two prominent features of the VIE are fashioned after elements of this book. To Bob Lacovara,

"Amen brother!" To Paul Rhoads, a million thanks for having the vision to start this project and the endurance to see it through.

Brian Çharst



From the Editor,

I am compelled to comment on Paul Rhoads' writings in this issue's 38's *Crucible* concerning censorship in Cos-

mopolis or lack thereof. If I were a newer reader of Cosmopolis, a brand-new project volunteer or subscriber, I wouldn't have the faintest idea what Paul is talking about: I haven't seen any massive public campaign in the pages of Cosmopolis calling for the censorship of Paul's or others' political/religious/philosophical views, nor have I seen such a campaign on the VIE website message board, nor on Mike Berro's Vance Information Page BBS forum.

Paul is referring to private e-mail complaining about political content which is considered irrelevant or off topic or not directly pertaining to our job of restoring the texts and publishing the books. I have seen a handful of such complaints during my thirteen issues of editing, either sent to me as Cosmopolis Editor or forwarded by Suan Yong from the Gatekeeper address. (This is not counting any Letters to the Editor published in Cosmopolis.) Each of these e-mails has been sent by some individual, none has been signed by a Gang of Four, or gang of twelve or group of any kind; there is no organized campaign to change the nature of Cosmopolis: if there were, I would certainly be aware of it as they (the 'group') would have contacted me to put forth their demands and utter their 'threats'.

My impression of these e-mail complaints is that the writers would prefer to see a project newsletter that has content directly pertaining to project work and to Vance's works and words and Vance himself, instead of an 'open forum' newsletter which also contains personal opinions on various political, religious, philosophical issues which have been linked to something Vance has written. There are many thousands or possibly millions of publications worldwide which have a specialty subject matter, wherein writings dealing with other subjects not directly related would go unpublished. Such publications are completely legitimate, and if some would prefer Cosmopolis to be this type of specialty newsletter, it is a legitimate preference.

As an illustration, I will use a magazine with a specialty subject matter with which I am familiar: *Tropical Fish Hobbyist*. Let's say Paul is an avid aquarist, a contributor of articles to the magazine, and his most recent article describes his successful breeding of, just to give Paul something a bit challenging, the species *Botia macracantha*. The day after the spawning occurred, Paul is visited by his local French politician, who oohs and ahs at the fish as he is also an aquarist, having his goldfish bowl at home placed advantageously in the den. While they're having their required coffee or tea, whichever they prefer, the inevitable discussion ensues

concerning the recent elections. Later on, Paul writes a Letter to the Editor of *Tropical Fish Hobbyist* describing the visit of the aquarist politician, and then putting forth his views on the French elections etc., considering these personal opinions to be related to the aquarium hobby because his thoughts were set in motion by the visiting aquarist politician's discussion. The editor of the magazine writes him back, stating that the letter is not accepted for publication because it has nothing to do with tropical fish or aquarium keeping, suggesting that the letter be sent to a publication which welcomes political content. The question is this: is this editor censoring Paul? The only answer is, of course, no. The publishers of this magazine have the right to create and publish their magazine with its specialty content; they cannot be required to publish anything and everything sent them by a contributor; and when they reject a letter like the one above, they cannot be denounced and condemned as censors. Their readers purchase the magazine *because* of its specialty content; if some of these readers are interested in opinions concerning the recent French elections, they purchase the French politics magazine.

The illustration above is primarily for the benefit of Paul, who refuses privately to acknowledge the feasibility or legitimacy of such specialty publications. And if some individuals, readers of Cosmopolis, should happen to prefer that this publication was such a specialty publication, each of them is considered by Paul automatically to be a disciple of cultural Marxist revolution, a self-appointed protector of stupid people (themselves), a dupe or member of some occult organization. Ridiculous assumptions on the face of it, and not particularly charitable or tolerant assumptions.

Cosmopolis was created as an open forum publication by the original Editor, Bob Lacovara, after consultation with others in VIE Management. The President of the VIE Board of Directors, John Vance, also supports Cosmopolis in this current form. There are no plans to change the open forum nature of Cosmopolis, a fact which Paul must certainly be aware of.

Derek W. Benson

Regarding the CLS

by Till Noever

CLS 14 will be published with this issue of Cosmopolis. It contains an early 'Lamarck' story by Tim Stretton, more chapters from *Coralia*, and even a letter.

I was also encouraged to hear from two people—whose names I shall not mention here, for fear that they'll disappear in a puff of smoke—that they are planning contributions for the next two issues. With their help we might keep the CLS going for a while yet. I'm used to taking CLS plans one issue at a time, keeping my fingers crossed all the way. The notion that I can actually look ahead a couple of issues, as I can do right now, is almost making me giddy!

Keep it coming, writers of good-to-honest-fiction! Cosmopolis readers *need* you. Boy, do they need you!



Closing Words

Thanks to Andreas Björklind for composition and to proofreaders Carina Björklind, Till Noever and Jim Patison.

CORRECTION

In Cosmopolis 26 on page 2, Poul Anderson is incorrectly named as editor of *The Dragon Masters*. The original editor in the *Galaxy* publication of *The Dragon Masters* was Frederik Pohl.

COSMOPOLIS SUBMISSIONS

When preparing articles for Cosmopolis, please refrain from fancy formatting. Send raw text. For Cosmopolis 29, please submit articles and Letters to the Editor to Derek Benson: benson@online.no Deadline for submissions is July 25.

Derek W. Benson, Editor



VIE Contacts

The VIE web page:

www.vanceintegral.com

For questions regarding subscription:

subscribe@vanceintegral.com

To volunteer on the project:

volunteer@vanceintegral.com

Paul Rhoads, Editor-in-Chief:

prhoads@club-internet.fr

R. C. Lacovara, 2nd-in-Command:

Lacovara@vanceintegral.com

Joel Riedesel, Work Flow Commissar:

jriedesel@jnana.com

Suan Yong, Process Integrity:

suan@cs.wisc.edu

Damien Jones, Double-Digitizing:

dagjo@pacbell.net

Ron Chernich, Techno-Proofing:

chernich@dstc.edu.au

Alun Hughes, Textual Editor-in-Chief:

alun.hughes@btinternet.com

Steve Sherman, Textual Integrity Administration:

Steve.Sherman@compaq.com

John Foley, Composition:

beowulf@post.lucent.com

Christian J. Corley, Post-Proofing:

cjc@vignette.com

John Schwab, Archivist:

jschwab@dslnorthwest.net

Hans van der Veeke, Volunteer Ombudsman:

hans@vie.tmfweb.nl

Derek Benson, Cosmopolis Editor:

benson@online.no



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