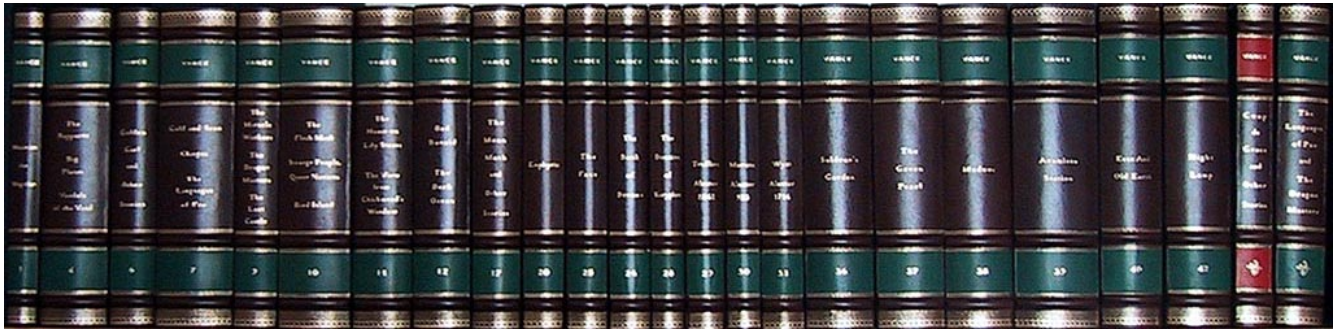

COSMOPOLIS

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The Wave I Deluxe Edition of The Complete Works of Jack Vance. Photo by Koen Vyverman.

Contents

Vance on Vance	1
<i>by Richard Chandler</i> Jack's published comments on his own work	
Work Tsar Status Report	4
<i>by Joel Riedesel</i>	
An Account From Milan	4
<i>by John Edwards</i> Italian cathedrals and food, and packing	
38's Ramblings	5
<i>by Paul Rhoads</i> <i>Palace of Love, 3-Legged Joe, Unspeakable McInch,</i> <i>Man in the Cage, Maske:Thaery, TEXTPORT,</i> Notes from Europe, Finkielkraut and Cadwal, Thomas Sowell's Cosmic Justice	
Sharing the Kudos	21
<i>by Suan Yong</i> Letters of appreciation for Wave 1	
About the CLS	24
<i>by Till Noever</i>	
Letters to the Editor	24
<i>Alain Schremmer, Carl Goldman, Paul Rhoads,</i> <i>A.E. Cunningham, Bob Lacovara</i>	
Closing Words	27
VIE Contacts	28
The Fine Print	28

Announcement

A number of VIE volumes were discovered with some pages out of sequence. In particular, there have been two reports of volume 6 having an error around pages 6-7. Please check your set to see that this error is not manifested. Further, you should try to make a thorough inspection of all volumes to see if they contain similar errors. We have made provisions to replace flawed copies, at project expense; but naturally we would like these to be reported as soon as possible. Please e-mail Suan, Bob, or Paul if you discover any errors.

Subscriptions to the VIE are still available; if you haven't purchased your set, take the plunge!



Vance on Vance

by Richard Chandler

Jack Vance has been famously reluctant to comment on his (or anyone else's) writing, but on several occasions editors or publishers have successfully inveigled a few remarks, clearly under protest. Some of you have wondered why, after encountering a particularly vexing problem of Textual Integrity, we don't simply *ask him* how to resolve it. I believe this question will be answered by the following commentaries.

Marvellously titled, *The Dogtown Tourist Agency* was first published in *Epoch* (Putnam, New York, 1975), a collection of short stories and novellas edited by Roger Elwood and Robert Silverberg. Each of the authors contributed a

short afterword to his/her story; here is part of Jack's, explaining his credo regarding authors' commentaries:

In regard to *The Dogtown Tourist Agency*, I have no particular comments to make. The less a writer discusses his work—and himself—the better. The master chef slaughters no chickens in the dining room; the doctor writes prescriptions in Latin; the magician hides his hinges, mirrors, and trapdoors with the utmost care. Recently I read of a surgeon who, after performing a complicated abortion, displayed to the ex-mother the fetus in a jar of formaldehyde. The woman went into hysterics and sued him, and I believe collected. No writer has yet been haled into court on similar grounds, but the day may arrive.

Beginning in the late 1970's Underwood-Miller published several collections of Jack's early pulp fiction and persuaded him to write introductions to two of these. The *Foreword and Cold Facts* accompanying *Lost Moons* (Underwood-Miller, San Francisco, CA and Columbia, PA, 1982) finds our favorite author in a dyspeptic, excessively self-deprecating state of mind:

This collection is difficult to describe. The phrase, 'a group of small gems hitherto neglected' might occur to someone selling Florida real estate. Fantasy-writers don't dare such violent excesses of the imagination. Honor, of course, is unknown to the field. Since I can't deny responsibility for this herd of dogs, the only way I can come out ahead is to present the hard cold facts.

No single theme unites the stories here included. They have nothing in common except that I was paid very little for all of them. They even lack the distinction of being the worst stories I have ever written. The publishers are saving this group for another volume, *The Worst Of Jack Vance*. The stories included here are only almost the worst. Two (*Dream Castles*, *The World-Thinker*) were so embarrassing that I rewrote a few stand-out passages, a lick-and-a-promise operation rather like putting rouge on a corpse. What then is the *raison d'être* for this volume? The answer can be expressed in a single word: avarice.

Specifically, in regard to the stories: *The World-Thinker* is my first published story. *Dream Castles*, *Sabotage on Sulfur Planet*, *Potters of Firsk* (with its smarmy ending) came while I was trying to produce gadget stories. *Seven Exits From Bocz* is so baroque that only a fan magazine would publish it. *400 Blackbirds* I can't remember, and furthermore, don't care to. There is no consistency whatever to this set of stories: *Meet Miss Universe* is actually not too bad, but it has a rotten title and so finds a place in this collection.

These are a few of the cold facts. The book is nicely bound; the title is great; and since only a few thousand copies are being printed you can always unload on some other innocent, perhaps at a profit if first you tear out the foreword.

It seems to me that Jack was being too hard on himself. Smarmy ending or not, I have always enjoyed *The Potters of Firsk* and *Assault on a City* (aka *The Insufferable Red-headed Daughter of Commander Tynnot, O.T.E.*) includes one of Jack's strong female protagonists, not all that common in the science fiction of the time. Paul Rhoads tells me that Jack is not ashamed of this one so perhaps it was added to the collection after he wrote the foreword.

The Introduction to *The Dark Side of the Moon* (Underwood-Miller, San Francisco, CA and Columbia, PA, 1986) finds Jack in a more sanguine state and he actually has some positive things to say (I excerpt from the two page original):

Introductions are the bane of a writer's trade, at least for this writer. I have already composed two for this collection and both have been discarded, on grounds of excessive frivolity. Herewith: the third version.

As I look over the Table of Contents, I move up and down the gamut of emotions, from enthusiasm and pride to indifference. There are stories here forty years old, which I barely remember. Since I refuse to re-read them, my opinions are not to the point.

Well then; as for the stories I do recall:

Planet of the Black Dust was my second story in print. I can remember the mood I wanted to generate but little else. Same with *Phalid's Fate*, my third in print, although I have never forgotten the name of the protagonist 'Ryan Wratch'. I selected this name because I did not want to call him 'Curt Wilson' or 'Kent Stevens' or 'Dirk Weston'. In a sense, I straddled two horses, 'Ryan' being an OK name, while 'Wratch' is overkill. I plead youth, inexperience and good intentions.

DP appeared originally in a magazine called *Avon Science Fiction and Fantasy Reader*. The editor was so affected by the story and believed so fiercely in its thesis, that he added an emotional coda to the last paragraph, thereby beating a very dead horse. I have deleted the editor's extraneous remarks in this present version . . .

As for *Parapsyche*: ??? I had been doing some reading in the field of psionics and decided to expatiate upon my own theories, using a story for the vehicle. The theories are as sound as any others in the field—which means that no one will want to use them for pitons while scaling El

Capitan. Need I say more? I have quite forgotten the story itself . . .

Before my first sale: *The World Thinker* (not included here), I wrote an epic novel in the style of E.E. Smith's cosmic chronicles. My own epic was rejected everywhere. I finally broke it into pieces and salvaged a few episodes for short stories. I think that *The Temple of Han* (originally *The God and the Temple Robber*) was one of these altered episodes.

As for the other titles, I can't come up with any recollections or insights, and hence will say nothing whatever . . .

So now do you see why we don't simply ask him every time a problem comes up in TI? In fact he has been asked on several occasions and sometimes has given important insight. Just as often he will say, "I don't care." or "Do as you like." I have seen the same severing of interest with scientists. They conduct the experiment, analyze the data, write up the results, and move on. Asked later about a specific result, it is astonishing how little they remember and how uninterested they are. There is simply so much to do and so little time in which to do it that they cannot dwell on past achievements.

It would be a mistake to leave you with the impression that Jack invariably hates his early work. In the Introduction to *The Dark Side of the Moon* from which we have previously quoted:

Alfred's Ark and *First Star I See Tonight* are two of my favorites. *Alfred's Ark* tells you all you need to know in regard to the human condition. Background for *First Star* was assimilated during my association with Palomar astronomer Robert Richardson ('Philip Latham'), during the time we both wrote *Captain Video* scripts for television. There are dark and sinister aspects to the astronomer's life of which the public is unaware; this story, so I am told, prompts astronomers to nod in grim corroboration and look over their shoulders.

First Star tells of a junior astronomer doing away with a senior colleague so he can get more time on the big telescope. Having spent my entire adult life in academia I cannot from personal experience speak of other professions. In the ivoried towers of academe senior faculty tend to monopolize most of the perquisites of the trade: *they* get first pick of classes; *they* vote on all personnel matters; *they* have more immediate access to grant monies, laboratories, etc. Since *they* cannot be forced to retire (except in cases of malfeasance or incompetence), many tend to work 'forever'. So it is easy for me (as a recently retired senior professor) to imagine a junior colleague so chafed and frustrated by his (or her) lack of access that he (or she) might want to hasten the deliberate natural processes of attrition more than a trifle.

Another place where Jack probably speaks is in the cover blurbs of some of his books. Who could doubt that he was a major contributor (tongue firmly in cheek) to the following (used in several of the Underwood-Miller titles):

He is especially renowned for his crafty wit, brilliant use of color and ability to depict both virtue and poltroonery across the entire spectrum of human interactions . . .

Paul Rhoads, our esteemed Editor-in-Chief, probably knows Jack better than any of us. Here are comments from him elicited by a preliminary version of this article:

I am intrigued by Jack's ambiguous relationship to his success/non-success. I think he knows who he is (an exceptionally great artist) but that his life experience and character are such that his natural exuberance and combativeness have become hidden so that he practices a modesty and detachment not fully representative of his deeper character. I do not mean to suggest that he would more naturally be an arrogant blow-hard (to say nothing of being more activist in the preservation and promotion of his work) but I try to explain to myself why his self-distancing from aspects of the world which would seem to be so important for him is often so extreme. His impulses sometimes seem baffled by his sense of irony, which he turns upon himself as much as on anything else. I think this can be glimpsed in his exaggerated and clearly ironic, and yet touching, anonymous self-panegyrics, as well as the emphasis on quite sincere public self-disparagement in his rare personal statements.

Jack told me the other day, speaking about how hard it was to finish *Lurulu* and in tone almost of annoyance, that each time he reads over what he has written 'it sounds so lame' that he feels compelled to rework. This is, to me (in stark contrast to almost all contemporary writers and painters who are obviously fascinated and delighted by each word/stroke which spins off their pen/brush), the mark of the true artist: single-minded devotion to the Muse.

Imagine him having to deal with the various editors who were convinced they knew how to say it better than he did. Imagine how it must have been to have them insist that their pedestrian wording was superior to his incredibly crafted gems. And then imagine having to accept their 'improvements' because they were the local god in charge of who got published and who did not. I'm not sure I could have accepted it. A couple of colleagues and I recently submitted a paper to what is perhaps *the* premiere journal for expository mathematics. In the editor's remarks there was not one iota of criticism of our mathematics but we had to accept many trivial

changes of language (*that/which* or *thus/consequently*, for example) before the paper was accepted. Even though word craftsmanship in a math paper is subordinate to the mathematics, it still angered me. How much worse for Jack for whom word craftsmanship is of singular importance.



Work Tsar Status Report

as of Apr. 27, 2003

by Joel Riedesel

WAVE 1

Some people already have their books. Some of us, primarily in the United States, are still waiting.

WAVE 2

Time passes. We still have *The Stark* in special handling. We still need to clarify the front matter that has some incomplete pictures.

DD work now appears to be complete. We have two texts in the Monkey phase (*The Stark* and *The Killing Machine*). And we are down to five texts in Techno-Proof.

TI has been really moving. There are currently 10 texts that are not yet assigned but we are down to 17 that are in-process.

Board Reviewers are also busy keeping up with TI. In fact, they seem to be getting behind! There are nine texts in BR. Six texts are undergoing implementation and one text is in Security Check.

Composition continues its activity. Two texts are in initial composition while 11 texts are in various stages of composition review.

Post-proofers are in a short lull. There are currently only two texts in post-proof and ten texts in post post-proof composition updating and review.

Last month there were four texts that were ready for volume composition. This month there are seven. At the rate of three a month we should be completed by near next eternity. I'll continue to be certain that we will exceed that rate.

Last month:

- + Pre-TI: 13 texts
- + In-TI: 33 texts
- + Post-TI: 32 texts
- + Volume Ready: 4 texts

This month:

- + Pre-TI: 7 texts (due to alternate versions and such)
- + In-TI: 27 texts
- + Post-TI: 41 texts
- + Volume Ready: 7 texts

Of interest is that over half of the texts have completed TI and are slowly making their way through the rest of the composition process.



An Account from Milan

by John Edwards

The most striking thing for me had nothing to do with the packing. It was my visit to Milan Cathedral. This was fraught with difficulty as it took me a while to work out how the automatic ticket machine on the metro worked and even longer to realise that the stations were not all called *uscita*. Eventually it dawned on me that this was foreign for exit. Not only is the Cathedral an astonishing technological achievement for its time, but it demonstrates the great wealth of medieval Italy. Even more striking was the sense of what I will call holiness as soon as I went inside. I am one of those lucky or deluded people, (choose one), who is, or thinks he is, sensitive to atmosphere. The Duomo is almost unique in having kept its atmosphere in spite of the hordes of people who visit it.

No less memorable was the food. My experience of factory canteens in the UK did not conduce to optimism but the food at the factory was outstanding. We packing scum were also lucky in that our Masters, you know who I mean, Patrick and Paul, liked to eat well and did us proud.

I was also touched by the friendly attitude of the people in the factory who very much took us to heart, and the pleasure they showed when they gave us a tour of their factory.

In case you think that I am surreptitiously bidding for the post of PR man to the VIE I will voice two criticisms. I like to start the day with a pint of tea, two eggs, lots of bacon, and another pint of tea. Small cups of coffee and bread rolls made entirely out of air came as a nasty shock.

The other shock was foot fatigue. Being inured to standing knee deep in wet concrete and squelching through mud all day I did not expect to have sore feet from standing on a nice level floor. Of course even when working at a bench in the workshop one is moving quite a lot. Come Wave Two I shall bring a roll of carpet. If questioned at the airport I shall assert that it is my prayer mat which will smooth my journey to the aircraft.

On reflection, the unexpected problem of my sore feet was not caused by the exceptional inflexibility of Italian concrete floors but by the added imposed load upon my feet of large Italian luncheons. As proof of this hypothesis I point to the fact that the trouble was only evident in the afternoons. I should also warn anyone thinking of volunteering for the Wave Two packing that

although in all other respects the Italians we met were wholly admirable and worthy people, they will assure you that a Mediterranean diet is not fattening, further they will tell this blatant lie with a completely straight face shining with sincerity.



38's Ramblings

by Paul Rhoads

The Palace of Love

Regarding *The Palace of Love*, 'Security Check' work has given me the opportunity to confirm Patrick's contention that the many small differences do indeed change the tone. The text now has more verve, is more sprightly, more twinkling, more vancian. Scanning over the more than 1000 alterations which this text required I again doff my cap to Patrick in admiration of his tireless dedication to our goal. A passel of 'and's has been expunged and an equal crowd of colons and exclamation marks released from editorially imposed oblivion. I'm not sure Patrick mentioned the restored words 'quixotry', 'pornoids' or 'cuplets' (meaning *small cups*). A wonderful Navarthism the editors saw fit to obliterate is this line from a scene we all remember; the editors have: "Must you moor so close?" when in fact Vance wrote: "Must you loom so close?"* In another place the editors used the flat: 'From far away came the merry sound of music', where Vance had created an atmospheric surprise: 'From far away came a merry sound: music'.

One of the most famous phrases from this book was known to me only in the editorial version. The restored version, even more pungent, is: "I am guest to the Margrave." There are many such restored idiosyncratic uses of this favorite vancian preposition such as: 'He is a man who halts at nothing,' now restored to 'He is a man to halt at nothing.'



3-Legged Joe

3-Legged Joe is also much changed; in this case the editors were heavy-handed, larding in a maximum of techno-jargon to smother the far-west setting which was Vance's obvious starting point. A typical change is the repeated editorial suppression of 'holster' in favor of such foolishness as 'weapon's clip'. When men finally do roam the far worlds I doubt they will be attaching their guns to them-

*Patrick's comment on this change: *A beautiful example of Editorial meddling, banalization at its worst! When Navarth the poet speaks, he says "loom", not "moor".*

selves with 'clips' and their holsters will still probably be made of good leather, a substance which can be synthesized but only to inferior quality. Bravo to Dave Kennedy for another fine job, as well as Steve Sherman erstwhile Second, and Tim Stretton for Board Review. I will think of you all each time I read this typically quirky vancian yarn!



The Unspeakable McInch

Here is a delicious passage from *The Unspeakable McInch* which I can not resist quoting. It includes one of my all time favorite vancian speeches:

A long yellow-scaled neck pushed down through a hole in the ceiling, and a flat head topped by a ridiculous little red fez turned a purple eye at them. A sleek yellow body followed the head, landing on thin flexible legs.

"Hello there, Mayor," said Boek heartily. "A man from Mission Headquarters—Mr. Ridolph, our Mayor, Juju Jeejee."

"Pleased-to-meet-you," said the Mayor shrilly. "Would you like my autograph?"

"Certainly," said Magnus Ridolph. "I'd be delighted."

The Mayor ducked his head between his legs, plucked a card from a body pouch. The characters were unintelligible to Magnus Ridolph.

"That is my name in the script of my native planet. The translation is roughly 'Enchanting Vibration'."

"Thank you," said Magnus Ridolph. "I'll treasure this memento of Sclerotto. By the way, I'm here to apprehend the creature known as McInch—" the Mayor gave a sharp squawk, darted its head back and forth "—and thought that perhaps you might be able to assist me."

The Mayor wove his neck in a series of S's. "No, no, no," he piped, "I know nothing, I am the Mayor."

Boek glanced at Magnus Ridolph, who nodded.

"Well, we'll be leaving, Mayor," said Boek. "I wanted my friend to meet you."

"Delighted," rasped the Mayor, and tensing his legs, hopped up through the hole in the ceiling.



The Man in the Cage

The restoration of *The Man in the Cage* is a difficult but interesting, and frustrating, job. Suan Yong is the wallah. The published sources are Underwood-Miller (1983) and

the much earlier Random House (1960) and two other apparently Random House derived editions of 1961. But in the Mugar, on the back of a *Miracle Workers* manuscript, is one third of a manuscript of this novel, which is from the mid 1950s. Patrick Dusoulier is the Second. Suan, Patrick and I did this job a first time when Suan had access to only a few pages of the Mugar manuscript. The text was then impeded. But we felt the partial manuscript too interesting to neglect so *The Man in the Cage* is being cycled through TI a second time, and is currently in the second round of Board Review. The differences between the Mugar manuscript, Underwood-Miller and Random House are often dramatic. After long work with these materials, and consultation with Norma, I am at last confident of several things:

- 1) The Mugar manuscript is a 2nd draft, so that many of the differences in Random House are clearly due to Vance.
- 2) The Random House text was altered by an editor.
- 3) The Underwood Miller was at least partly corrected by Vance from the Random House edition.

But a basic question remains: how to distinguish what, in Random House, is changed from the Mugar manuscript by Vance and what, from a later manuscript we do not have, was altered by Random House? The Random House editor seems to frown upon several of Vance's mannerisms: unusual use of words or non-standard phrasing, inhabital prepositions, alliteration, sparing use of 'he' and 'she' in favor of character's names. In addition the editor seems to have practiced a certain amount of *dumbing down* and even 'crudification', and there are even cases of sheer misunderstanding.

After several years of TI work we have learned something about how Vance edits himself. He does not tend to alter wording for its own sake; he generally makes substantive changes, and these changes, when they are not actual matters of plot or additions of matter, are, even when subtractions, interesting and meaningful. They sometimes may only correct the style, but they almost always enrich and refine the story. His cuts, while occasionally they seem unduly harsh, serve the same purpose. In some cases, in particular when he was maneuvered into reworking old texts—the stories reprinted in *Eight Fantasms and Magics*—or when he was asked to shorten a novel, as in the case of *The Languages of Pao*, I have felt that Vance sometimes fails to take context fully into account, with occasionally confused results. I attribute this to impatience with such reworkings. When he is in the heat of creating a new work, cuts function differently. Take a typical example:

Darrell put his arms around her waist, kissed her. . . . A peculiar kiss, he realized with the disengaged fraction of his mind: warm, pliant, earnest—but somewhere behind the honest emo-

tion lay another quality: cool careful attention, as if a sinister animal lay watching from a cave. Darrell kissed her forehead. Ellen made no move to stir from his grip. She felt alive and slender and quivering. Darrell looked down at her face, thinking and wondering. Am I insane? he wondered. Am I imagining things? Why is she watching so closely. Does she want to go to bed with me?

The above was written by Vance in a 2nd draft. Here is what was published by Random House:

Darrell kissed her. A peculiar kiss, he realized with the disengaged fraction of his mind: warm, pliant, earnest, but somewhere behind lay another quality. Darrell kissed her forehead. Ellen stood quietly. Darrell looked down into her face. Am I insane? Am I imagining things? Why is she watching so closely? Does she want me to make love to her?

An initial reaction could be that all the guts have been torn out of the passage. In the 1950s there was a great literary fad for the spare prose of Ernest Hemmingway and one is not unjustified in wondering if an editor, or even Vance himself, had not been carried away by it. Much of what is cut away from the Mugar draft is attractive material and it's tempting to wish to 'restore' it with the argument that we know for sure Vance wrote it. However, things are not so simple. As already stated many of the differences between Random House and the manuscript are clearly due to Vance. Note how the first kiss is described as 'pliant'. But since in the Mugar draft Darrell takes Ellen in his arms, and since this word would tend to apply to a body more than a kiss, there is emphasis on the physical aspect. Darrell senses that Ellen is 'warm' and 'pliant'. But in the draft the kiss is also described as 'earnest'. When the taking-in-the-arms is struck, the three adjectives are now more clearly about Ellen's spiritual qualities. Further down in her spiritual being there lay more qualities; the MS states much concerning them: *cool careful attention, as if a sinister animal lay watching from a cave*. Darrell attempts another kiss and the MS makes quite a fuss about the aftermath: *Ellen made no move to stir from his grip. She felt alive and slender and quivering*. In RH this is all reduced to: *Ellen stood quietly*. Vance seems to have decided to let the reader divine the deeper picture from a simpler, more exterior, presentation, and I think this 'sublimated' approach is more effective. Finally, the shift from wanting to *go to bed* with Darrell, and wanting Darrell to *make love* to her: the difference is not a simple shift from a raw *go to bed* to a more spiritual *make love*, it is significantly between speculations about something Ellen wants to do, and something Ellen wants Darrell to do.

All these changes seem clearly due to Vance himself. They are a fascinating glimpse into his 'creative process'.

A great writer does not simply rearrange words so they 'come out better', but establishes and refines an emotional image, making it ever more precise, profound and penetrating. The final version is a condensed and transparent version of the first, made alluring by a veil of things now only implied which before had been spelled out. Vance is working his literary *sfumato*. However, is the editor's hand anywhere present in the Random House version? Might she (I believe it was a woman) not have been impatient with some of Vance's punctuation, so the actual final draft might have read:

3rd draft?:

Darrell kissed her . . . A peculiar kiss, he realized with the disengaged fraction of his mind: warm, pliant, earnest—but somewhere behind lay another quality.

The RH version is at least a bit confusing. The passage 'A peculiar kiss' is not the beginning of a new sentence but a sort of prolongation of the previous one. The ellipsis makes the transition seamless, just as the dash seems to help replace all the precisions concerning how Ellen's emotions seem to Darrell. Still, would the editor have been so impatient with this punctuation as to bother to strike it? There are many other dashes which seem to have been suppressed but also many that were not. Did Jack himself feel this punctuation lacked all the simplicity he sought? Why use them in the first place?

Vance also added to the 2nd draft. The character Slip-Slip exists in the draft only as an unnamed Moroccan and his development into a fuller character is clearly due to Vance. Editors don't rework stories, they fuss with details.

Mugar partial draft:

Two wore rough brown djellabas.

Random House:

One wore a rough brown djellaba. The second wore baggy trousers and a green pull-over: Slip-Slip.

The characteristic use of a colon is a vancian signature. Given other sections it is not inconceivable that what Vance may have actually written in his final draft was something like: *baggy green trousers and a green cotton pull-over* and that the editor then weeded out a few adjectives, but this is pure speculation. That Vance seems to have certainly used 'rough brown', 'baggy' and 'green' in this passage makes the occasional brutal removal of all adjectives in other places suspect.

Some shortenings are clearly due to Vance:

Mugar partial draft:

The Moroccan who had investigated the truck clambered

Random House:

Slip-Slip clambered

Now that the character has a name, redundant and neutral expository matter can be sliced away. But sometimes the editor's hand seems to be at work. Take this episode at the beginning of Chapter 14:

Random House:

Darrell handed over the green booklet. Captain Goulidja assimilated what information it contained with an air of faint astonishment. "What did you wish, please?"

Mugar manuscript:

Darrell handed over the green booklet. Captain Goulidja flicked it open with an expert hand, assimilated what information it contained with an air of faint astonishment, placed it carefully down on his desk. "What did you wish, please?"

These changes are different; they lack an obvious logic. They fail to readjust or deepen anything and simply prune. They are, none-the-less, somewhat plausible because, though they affect the pace and atmosphere they do no obvious harm to the substance. Still, one can picture an editor saying to himself; 'look here! these are just wasted words; I can cut them out without changing a thing and the passage is improved; it is cleaner, crisper, shorter, more to the point!' Now note how the cut eliminates the transition between Goulidja's 'faint astonishment' and his flat question. The draft bridges them with the phrase: *placed it carefully down on his desk*. In this interval, and particularly with the word 'carefully', Goulidja's astonishment is given the time to dissipate, Goulidja himself the time to regain his mask of bureaucratic imperturbability. The *faint astonishment* becomes a mere flicker, and his sluggish question becomes more plausibly sluggish. In Random House Goulidja asks his question with his eyebrows still raised, his mouth still in an 'o'. It should be noted that the previous paragraph describes frustrated waiting and the exasperating bureaucratic atmosphere of the scene. Removing *flicked it open with an expert hand* is a little touch in harmony with what came before, the bureaucrat savoring each petty administrative act. By the same token it might have been considered by the author one touch too many. However, cutting this phrase makes Captain Goulidja marginally less exasperating, marginally more hard working and earnest, and there seems no particular reason for that in the rest of the text.

These considerations are not in the realm of absolutes. If the excision is vancian after all (and, alas, we will probably never know for sure) it can be argued that it was over-hasty. The phrases in the draft were at least certainly written by him. Each time I re-examine this issue I suspect the cut is an aspect of an editor's campaign of extermination upon un-Hemmingwayesque prose, and intend to propose restoration of this particular passage.

Because it is cycling through TI for a second time it is fun to see many of Suan's pre-Mugar speculations born out by manuscript evidence. Patrick Dusoulier's sensitive, penetrating and humorous comments as Second have been a crucial guide.



Maske:Thaery

At the Oakland Festival, the first VIE gathering four years ago, and before TI work had begun, Alun Hughes and Tim Stretton organized a test in which a few pages of the published version of *Emphyrio* were passed around and we were asked to indicate possible editorially introduced changes. Our speculations were then checked against the setting copy, the final Vance manuscript prior to editorial intervention, or so we then thought. The results were not particularly brilliant and since then we have learned a great deal. We know, for example, that an errata sheet is likely to have intervened between the setting copy and the published text so that even the setting copy is not necessarily the 'last word' we then took it to be, and we have had the chance to compare and study many manuscripts and variant published versions. Were I to take that test again today I would be more confident and capable in some ways, and more cautious and doubtful in others.

Maske:Thaery was written in the mid-1970s, two decades after *The Man in the Cage*. *Maske:Thaery* is currently in Composition and I had no direct hand in the TI work which was carried out by Steve Sherman as wallah, Patrick Dusoulier as Second and Alun Hughes as Board Reviewer. The VIE is fortunate that Mike Berro owns a manuscript and made it available to TI. Steve has shared page 163 of this manuscript with me. Before Vance became computerized in the 1980s his method of working was to do a first draft in longhand. This was then typed by his wife Norma. Vance then worked and reworked this typescript, with Norma retyping pages as necessary. Page 163 of the Berro manuscript has some interesting examples of Vance transforming his own work, which reinforce my notions about his way of working. Vance's changes are enrichments, never mere abbreviations or petty fussage. Some examples:

MS original:

I traced him to the People's Joy Tourist Agency, and found that he had gone to visit one of the outer planets.

MS change:

I traced him to the People's Joy Tourist Agency, and *once again missed him*: he had gone *on a tour* of the outer planets.

Jubal does not merely learn what Ramus Ymph has done, but 'missed him'; Jubal is not simply investigating facts but tracking his prey. Ramus Ymph has not merely gone to visit the outer planets but has in fact joined a 40 module tour—a touch that is both comic and strengthens the link between Ymph's desire to travel and discover, his lust for a certain sort of freedom, and tourism. Like a thrum on a sustained base note this little change helps bring out the story's theme.

MS original:

The experience was not to my taste.

MS change:

The experience was memorable.

Here is truly vancian change and a perfect example of classic vancian allusiveness.



TEXTPORT

In February there was a great to-do about creating a team to prepare updated electronic texts suitable for use by non-VIE publishers or other institutions and individuals, both before and after VIE publication. The VIE has already cooperated with several individuals and publishers in this way, but with texts that have been updated in a catch-as-catch-can manner. Some of these VIE partners include Electric Story, a publisher of digital books, who is using our texts of *Lyonesse*. Then there are French publishers currently reissuing some 40 Vance texts who wish to use our texts to update their translations—Patrick Dusoulier has already worked closely with them on *Space Opera*. There are also individuals we cooperate with, including an American junior high-school teacher and a French doctoral student. These partnerships have been mentioned in *COSMOPOLIS*.

There is some confusion about the status of VIE texts. The stories as such belong to the Vances, of course, but the VIE, through its volunteers' work, has created electronic objects, which become more and more correct as they are cycled through our various processes (Pre-proofing, DD, Techno, Composition Review, known as 'CRT', Post-proofing, and then the various steps of the so called 'Golden Master' process). It is this work which 'belongs' to the VIE, and which takes the concrete form of an electronic object, which we call a 'v-text'. The result of our work is what will be made available to the world through the VIE book set, and our electronic archive will become the exclusive property of the Vances upon completion of the project. Meanwhile our texts, even in less than totally corrected form, remain the real property of the VIE corporation and the moral property of the Vances, and any sharing of VIE materials with outside institutions or individuals is subject to a process

of review both by the VIE board and the Vances, (keeping in mind that two Vance family members are VIE board members).

The VIE has garnered a certain prestige in its 4 years of existence, a prestige which is sure to increase with publication of our first 22 books. I am concerned, and I believe the rest of the board is as well, that this prestige be used to the best advantage of the project itself and, above all, to the advantage of Vance's work.

The creation of electronic texts suitable for sharing with outside publishers and others with authorized access to v-texts, has been dubbed `TEXTPORT` by Bob Lacovara.

Mike Miller and Josh Geller came forward to my appeal in *COSMOPOLIS 34* to help do the work. But actually getting the job underway has been more difficult than imagined. The first reason for this was a mistake I made in terminology by referring to these corrected texts as the 'electronic archive'. The VIE 'electronic archive' already exists; it is the sum-total of all the texts and other material we have generated, including Word files of the 'raw', 'cor' and 'bis' variety, 'TI narratives' and image files of several kinds, as well as Quark, PageMaker and InDesign files and the PDFs derived from them. A second problem arose over confusion about how to proceed in order to generate 'updated electronic text files'. The problem is that the path from 'raw-v1' (the first scan or typed VIE electronic version of a text) to 'cor-bf' (the last text file before composition), is not the end of the correction path. This path continues after the texts are set in InDesign (now the exclusive VIE setting tool), in the so called 'fin' files. Fin files are subject to CRT and PP, which often adds to correction of the texts. But even this is not the end, for the texts are then 'booked', and correction work continues in the two Golden Master phases, on a volume by volume basis.

For several weeks there was discussion between two camps: the 'up-from cor-bf-ers' against the 'down-from fin-v-lasters'. The latter felt that since all corrections existed in the most updated fin file, that going 'up-from-cor-bf' required mucking around with bis files, the solution lay in some sort of text-extraction method from InDesign, perhaps with support from *TOTALITY*. The 'up-from-cor-bf-ers' insisted that: 1) extracting the relevant information from bis files is not such an onerous matter as pretended and 2) that the fin files include a great deal of VIE composition specific elements which must complicate the 'going down from' process, and which in certain categories of cases even sometimes alters the text itself so that going backwards becomes a way to introduce errors. The discussion included hundreds of mails and the 'up-from-cor-bf-ers' (Suan and myself in the lead) carried the day.

This discussion was interesting in that it permitted a clarification of the difference between 'text' and 'set text'. One would think that 'set text' is simply 'text' to

which setting dispositions have been added, and that if these dispositions were washed away the naked 'text', in all its skeletal glory, would remain. This is, of course, true to a great extent, but it is not absolutely true. The most obvious difference, and ultimately a trivial one, is that the 'texts', being electronic and having no 'pages' have footnotes inserted at the point where they occur. For those who have never worked with v-texts, we use the following convention:

```
text text*<<*footnote>>text text
```

The indicative brackets are not part of the 'text' but they are needed by the composers to locate the footnotes. The footnotes are then torn out of the text and hammered onto the bottom of the page. When updates of the 'set text' are made, care is taken that footnotes remain on the proper page even when the text slips around. No imaginable automated 'down-from-fin' process would restore footnotes to the textually convenient locations, to say nothing of indicative brackets, they had in the cor-bf file. At best they would float in the text at a point based on VIE layout; inconvenient for non-VIE composers.

An electronic text is a special animal, and even electronic books, as far as I know, do not use a naked stream of text. In addition to footnotes, there are other page based aspects to texts that are absent from electronic, or even manuscript text. The VIE books are set on a certain page size, with certain fonts, according to a certain aesthetic. The same is true of all other books. Vance's texts are particularly rich in things that require special formatting, and the better they are set up, the more in the spirit of the author's intentions they are, the better the book. The special history and possibilities of the VIE have, furthermore, created a situation in which a whole range of specialized fonts is available to composers. Certain bits of text have even been replaced by images (of text) for special effect. VIE composers have two kinds of 'italics' and two kinds of 'small caps' at their disposal. Use of the latter, or other special fonts, can sometimes actually undo aspects of the 'text' that ought to be present when they are presented to non-VIE publishers. These could include distinctions of capital and lower case letters, as when it has been deemed best to use `SMALLCAPS` in 'all caps' or 'all l.c.' form. Or aspects of punctuation where special highly vancian punctuation of 'hors-text' speeches within speeches has been employed, giving a lead many regular publishers might not choose to follow. In other cases we have confounded text with 'images' (see vol. 4, p27). The most extreme example would be the `SPACEGRAM` font, which is used only in *Vandals of the Void* (see vol. 4, p481), but it is a dramatic illustration of a kind of problem that may occur. Electronic fonts have certain common characteristics, specifically a matrix of 'letter positions' which indicate

to computers which letter is which. There are as many different 'a's as there are fonts but each font puts its 'a' in the 'a' position. This position, rather than anything else, is what is recognized as 'a' by your computer. SPACEGRAM uses spaces between letters, but these spaces are represented by a special 'glyph' rather than by emptiness. The 'space' position in a font can contain a glyph but there are special aspects to the 'space' position, involving how lines break, that make it inconvenient to put the SPACEGRAM 'space' glyph in the 'space' position. This glyph was therefore put elsewhere, in fact in the '=' position. So, when something set in SPACEGRAM is changed to another font, all the spaces become equal signs.

Setting aside questions of aesthetic ultimates, these examples indicate that a 'set text' is not equivalent to a 'text', and that each has its own mode of existing.

Patrick Dusoulier has taken on the responsibility for TEXTPORT work, with the help of a new team.



Notes from Europe

As I write, Bob Lacovara and John Foley, with Richard Factor and his associates at Eventide, are working up a sweat hoisting boxes. Eventide in Little Ferry, New Jersey, and its loading dock and floor space has been made available to us by VIE volunteer Richard Factor. The ship carrying the container suffered a storm in the Atlantic and there is report of damage, but it seems not to have been washed overboard and apparently the books themselves are okay. Their arrival in the USA is part of the Wave 1 delivery process, begun in Milan.



Patrick putting address labels on cartons in Milan. Photos by John Edwards.

It behooves us to remember that not only the editorial, compositional and proofing work on the VIE is being done by volunteers but the unglamorous packing and labeling of boxes as well. Such work takes days and days of hard work and people's free time.

Two of the people who spent a week in Milan packing books were Thomas Rydbeck and Andreas Irle. Thomas also does TI work (*Trullion, The Dogtown Tourist Agency*, etc.). Andreas' beautiful German editions, for some of which he is the translator, inspired the VIE. Andreas is on the VIE Composition team and is responsible for the setting of volume 17 and many others.



Thomas Rydbeck and Andreas Irle.

But the project also depends on the good will and expertise of the folks in Milan at Sfera, GlobalPrint and Torriani. No publication project like the VIE has ever existed, and we are therefore particularly grateful that Stefania Zacco has been so constantly helpful and indulgent with our amateurish wafflings. Stefania has invested herself personally in the project, and without her benevolent care and guidance, over the last 3 years, the project could never have been.



Sfera's Stefania Zacco, VIE good fairy.

We are also lucky that Luigi Biffi is not yet retired. 'Biffi', as he is called, is eager to get into Wave 2. Fewer and fewer books of VIE quality are being made today and the folks at Torriani are sorry about that. Biffi is capable of working miracles with a bit of cardboard, a scrap of paper, a strip of leather and a pot of glue. All of us in Milan who spent time watching him at work have stories to tell.



Luigi Biffi: last of the great book-making magicians.



Stefania, eager that Waves 1 and 2 have a uniform appearance, ordered the leather for both all at once. The hides awaiting Wave 2 books are stocked in the Torriani leather room in a heap of rolls. Ennio Regoldi, Torriani production manager, and VIE E-in-C display Readers' Edition spine hide (mountain ram) awaiting cutting for Wave 2.

These people have become our friends and we look forward to seeing them, and new VIE volunteers, in Milan next year. As I mentioned last month, the folks at Torriani were eager to show the Americans among us some of the old machines which Torriani, after the destruction of Milan by American bombs, was given under the Marshall Plan.



This plaque, on a cutting machine in Torriani's leather room, a piece of equipment that participated in the creation of the VIE books, inspires a reflection on past and current events.

Men of my father's generation, including one of my uncles, made up the American armed forces that liberated Italy from Fascist domination almost sixty years ago. My uncle was an Air Force captain at Foggio, in southern Italy, from where American bombers were sent on daily raids of Germany and occupied Europe. I am well acquainted with men who participated in the allied landing at Salerno, the battle of Monte Cassino and the abortive flank attack on Rome known as 'Anzio Beach'. The past is close to us.

It is little recalled that Winston Churchill hoped to build on allied successes in Italy by a continued offensive up the 'Ljubljana Gap' in order to hurry the liberation of central Europe. This idea was rejected by Roosevelt and the Allied High Command in favor of the plan preferred by Stalin: an all-out and exclusive push into and through France, across the Rhine, and into Germany. Regarding this strategy, at the human level, I have the honor of being acquainted with a certain Walter Monaco, born in New Haven, Connecticut, member of the '2nd Wave' on Omaha Beach (arriving 2 minutes after the 1st) and first man to cross the Remagen Bridge (first bridge over the Rhine captured by the Allies after the failure of the notorious 'Market Garden' operation, contentiously re-

counted by the book and movie: *A Bridge Too Far*). Walter has described to me how the Germans tried to bomb the bridge with ME-262s, the new German jet. According to Walter the ME-262s were so fast the American gunners couldn't cope with them but the German pilots had had so little training in their new toys that, also unused to the speed, their bombs repeatedly fell beyond the target. So, while the armies which had conquered Italy under Mark Clark rested from their historic effort, and without forgetting the D-day landing near Nice, armies under Montgomery, Patton and Bradley pushed through France and into Germany, to meet the Red Army in the neighborhood of what soon, under quickly asserted Communist domination, became 'East Germany'. Churchill was further disappointed when Eisenhower ordered a retreat of Allied forces to a boundary previously agreed between Soviets and Allies, without taking into account the non-cooperation of the Soviets in other matters touching this agreement, such as the treatment of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Stated generally: Churchill felt that the Americans were too trusting of Stalin and not concerned enough for the millions of people living in that zone somewhere within which the Communist Iron Curtain was destined to fall. These millions of folk, including Czechs, Hungarians, Slovenians, Serbs, Croats, Albanians, Greeks (though probably not Bulgarians, Romanians and Poles whose fates were no-doubt sealed) were still no majority of Europeans, and though they continue to suffer consequences of their tragic fate it is perhaps a mere 'detail of history'. President Chirac certainly does not think much of them either. When these countries, which are all soon destined to enter the European Union, joined in a public declaration of support for American foreign policy, he commented that: *ils ont manqué une bonne opertunité de se taire* (they missed a good opportunity to shut up). From 1939 until 1943 Churchill had been the dominant spirit in the Allied effort; when the American forces finally equaled and then quickly outnumbered English forces in 1944, his diplomatic and strategic influence waned. The war ended in 1945 thanks to American determination and the industrial and military might that is the fruit of freedom.

The main 'Allies' were England, America and Russia. But with the Iron Curtain on one side and the Hitler-Stalin pact on the other, the non-Anglo-American part of it was short-lived and ambiguous. Recall how the Hitler-Stalin pact ended. The Nazi attack on Soviet military might, in June of 1941, destroyed it within minutes. This military might, if measured in numbers of troops, tanks and aircraft, trumped Nazi power not by a factor of 2 or even 3, but of 5 or 6. Its configuration, amassed in a posture of attack along the Nazi-Soviet border (at that time drawn through a Poland obliterated by Hitler and Stalin in cooperation) invites speculation upon Stalin's intentions. Had this force been disposed defensively—in

deep reserve, dispersed, hidden in bunkers—the incredible success of Hitler's surprise, and the near success of his attempted conquest of Russia which followed, might not have been. Did Stalin, in line with the openly stated intention of the Soviet Union to spread its rule over the entire globe, not intend to conquer Europe by betraying Hitler? What if Stalin had surprised Hitler before Hitler surprised him? Be this as it may, once the dust settled in 1945 Stalin was tyrant over only Eastern and part of Central Europe. For the rest of the 20th century Western Europe, dwarfed by the Russian bear, sheltering under the umbrella of American atomic missiles, took the opportunity to redescend into the pre-war pacifism that had led to Munich* and again disarm, while Soviet thugs and their dastardly collaborators in the West continued their policy of infiltration, propaganda and more or less petty armed conflicts worldwide. Prominent among these collaborators were famous intellectuals and artists such as Sartre, Picasso and Brecht.

But freedom, what we somewhat loosely call 'democracy', with the superior force of its inevitable prosperity and happiness, won the day. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989, and ever since, despite crochets, back-peddling and complaint, the world is proceeding globally toward greater freedom and prosperity. The conflict between the 'left' and the 'right', while it continues to dominate our imaginations, and while its categories continue to define debate, is evaporating in the winds that now blow across the world. Americans may be naive. They may (or may not) be ham-handed diplomatically and militarily. But they love justice and freedom and seek to work for good. Just as America freed Italy, perhaps with a superfluity of bombs (I am in no position to say), America, with the important help of its English allies and tens of other countries including Poland, Australia, Hungary, Spain, Romania and Italy, has now freed the people of Iraq. Unlike the none-the-less attractive Afghans, the majority of Iraqis are not primitive tribal folk but developed people. I am impressed each time I hear one of them speak and I share the confidence of the 'right-wing fundamentalist' George Bush and his 'hawkish' administration that Iraq, for all the troubles it,

*The notorious conference at Munich where, in 1938, the French and English officialized the annexation of Czechoslovakia by Hitler in return for mendacious assurances of future peace. The recent confidence of certain countries in the word of another tyrant recalled that notorious episode to all with knowledge of 20th century history. But this time the lesson, that dastardly dictators can not be appeased, had been learned—at least by the English, Spanish and Italians. As for the Americans, they played no part at the Munich conference, and in fact only entered the war when Hitler had attacked them first. It might be complained that, by then, it was somewhat late; Hitler had already taken over continental Europe.

In January of 1941 Winston Churchill said: "It is no exaggeration to say that the future of the whole world and the hopes of a broadening civilization founded upon Christian ethics depends upon the relations between the British Empire or Commonwealth of Nations and the U.S.A."

like all other countries, inevitably must have, will soon provide a unique example of beneficial influence for all Middle-Easterners. Despite the media's constant efforts to paint as black a picture as possible, signs of this positive development are strong. The people of Iran and Syria are already wondering if, or when, America will come to their rescue. Looking beyond the hysterical accusations of some and the careful diplomatic language of others, indeed: Syria, Iran, and eventually Saudi Arabia, are 'next on the list'. When the evil tyrants and demagogues lording it over these places are removed or persuaded to change their ways, the world will be a better place for all; in particular the long-suffering folk squirming under the heels of tyrants.

All the above as a prologue to the following remarks: I know many French people are as horrified by the official behavior of France during the recent crisis as many Americans. The phrase: 'I am ashamed to be French' has been pronounced more than once in my hearing, and while many French do indeed share the confused anti-Americanism that inspired recent French policies, some prominent Frenchmen, of all political stripes, have not. Alain Madelin was the first to speak out. Madelin is the foremost French standard-bearer for what, in Europe, is called 'liberalism'—which on this side of the Atlantic has its primary sense of freedom; freedom from high taxes, heavy government regulation and detailed bureaucratic control of private and public life. An American who learns about French government is amazed to see that, in addition to government control of vast areas of the economy, much of the bloated public budgets are controlled by certain 'labor unions'.* The health care system is one case, retirement pensions are another. Most of the unions which have these powers are run by Communists or crypto-Marxists. This odd manner of controlling huge sectors of the public budget, to say nothing of the corruption generated, is responsible for a situation where France, the second biggest European country, has difficulty benefiting from the new winds of freedom. But willy-nilly she is being carried along by the tide, kicking and squawking. Madelin, who has bravely chosen an ideologically unpopular path, was swallowed up in the fake scandal of last year's French presidential election where the alleged neo-nazi Le Pen out-scored the alleged Socialist Jospin. There followed a deployment of profoundly un-democratic, superficially anti-nazi, agitation by politicians and journalists of all stripes to shock any true American. The result was the re-election of the center-right candidate—now an international celebrity—Jacques Chirac, with 80% of the vote.** Madelin has now re-emerged as one of the few critics of

*A historic consequence of the compromises de Gaulle was forced to make with the powerful Communist party which loomed over the French political scene after the war.

French international policy who is allowed to be heard. In various debates where, alone against phalanxes of overt or crypto anti-Americans his most devastating argument has been his tranquil trust in the rightness of the 'Anglo-American' position, its prospect of success and its long term beneficence.

Another critic of the French position is Claude Lelouche, a younger politician and theoretician of the emerging French non-left. The intellectuals Alain Finkielkraut and Jean Francois Revel should also be mentioned, though Revel is rarely allowed media access and Finkielkraut's more prominent media position has been gained at the price of a cautiousness, or even self-effacement, which seems to make him both uncomfortable and unhappy. However, despite his constant bows to the left, his position is clear: France's arguments hold no water and it was wrong to brandish its veto and dress itself against its greatest ally. Revel is enjoying a certain vogue as the leading analyst of anti-Americanism, the many absurdities of which he has demonstrated with devastating effectiveness.

On the left Bernard Kerchner, doctor, politician, champion of charity and internationally prominent thanks to his role in the Kosovo war as U.N. administrator, has also spoken out clearly in support of military intervention, a lone voice on the left—if the despicable Arno Klarsfeld is not also counted. Klarsfeld is typical of the young generation of nazi-fighters, a leading force in the condemnation of Maurice Papon, 91 year-old alleged nazi-criminal. A petty administrator before and after the fall of France in 1939, of a district near Bordeaux in south western France, Papon's signature on documents relative to the deportation of Jews was seized upon as evidence of collaboration, while evidence that, like many French bureaucrats of the time, he used his position to

**The favorites going in were Socialist Prime Minister Jospin and President Chirac. Clandestine and anti-democratic means were deployed by the corrupt Chirac party to eliminate candidates on the right by pressuring the signatories needed for officializing candidatures. Le Pen managed to get his signatures, though only at the very last minute. Had Charles Pasqua also done so his party's score in the previous European elections, superior to those of Chirac's party, would have made him extremely dangerous to Chirac. Meanwhile the government coalition of Socialists, Communists and crypto-Communist Greens had fallen apart because of their incoherence in the face of growing world freedom, with consequent flourishing of extreme-left splinter parties. The French election takes place in two rounds; the two winners of the first face off in the second. Chirac won the first round with a mere 19%. The rest of the vote was divided up among a myriad of tiny parties, with the left vote even more dispersed than the right. In the end Le Pen came in second with 17%, just bumping aside Jospin. This was the signal for nazi-fighters of all stripes to swarm out of the woodwork. Perhaps to make up for perceived failure to fight this battle in 1939, full force, or at least great shrillness, was deployed against Le Pen with as one consequence, in my opinion, the murder in Holland of another alleged neo-nazi, the 'xenophobe' homosexual Pym Fortuyn. Chirac's 'victory' has since been claimed by the left, which uses this argument to undermine Chirac's legitimacy and promote their moribund agenda. Were Chirac's party not corrupt, and were the left not living in woo-woo ding-dong land, things might be different in France today. This sort of situation is a serious problem in much of Europe.

resist collaboration, including saving many Jews, was swept aside in a hyper-mediatized trial. I, for one, am disgusted at the pathetic eagerness of certain of our contemporaries to strike such a blow, half a century too late. The truly malefic force that was Fascism, against which their clownish agitations would have been singularly ineffective, at best, though at the price of hundreds of thousands of lives, many of them American, was, luckily for them, extinguished by 'Anglo-American' military might 60 years ago. After the war Papon had a distinguished career for many decades as a minister in several post-war governments, including that of de Gaulle, and was at one time chief of police in Paris (he has recently been allowed out of jail for health reasons, to the yawlps of Klarsfeld). Klarsfeld, who is nothing if not courageous, not to say bumptious, is also that rarity in France: a supporter of Israel. It was mainly his non-failure to understand the threat Saddam posed to Israel that inspired his pro-coalition stance.

Meanwhile, as an observer of the French scene, despite ongoing anti-American fervor, I now detect embarrassment among those recently so gleeful. The brave diplomatic combat is over; the world-wide tide of 'popular outrage' that seemed to threaten to wash the American army out of the Middle East, broke like a wavelet against the serene determination of George Walker Bush to 'smoke 'em out 'n round 'em up'. Three weeks later, after much boyish excitement about 'Bradley fighting vehicles' and 'M1A1 Abrams tanks', and much giggling at the Iraqi 'information' minister, the war is over. And what now? A brief telephone conversation between Chirac and Bush is the top item of French national news. The most pressing question of the day: 'Will Bush invite Chirac to the ranch?' Expert analysts are nervously fearful that the invitation will not be forthcoming. There is still a euphoric glow among a certain brand of French patriot at the spectacle of France in the role of world-class leader, even if all it led was a vaporous 'moral majority'. There is embarrassment among others at the new anti-American coalition grouping France with Germany, Russia and China. Still, it is no surprise. The deep motive for France's behavior is not, as many would like to think, nostalgia for her lost grandeur or a noble if pathetic attempt by Chirac to ape the unshakeable independence and profound patriotism of General de Gaulle, but the anti-Americanism that transparently structures its positions and tactics. This anti-Americanism is the fallout of half a century and more of Communist propaganda, now seriously infecting most European minds, and alas almost as many American. The same Frenchmen who will say they love America—and mean it—also have notions about that 'young', 'savage' country which demonstrate their internalization of the anti-capitalist anti-imperialist foolishness that has passed for history and analysis in schools and public discourse

for so long. I cannot say how many Frenchmen I know who, even though they have traveled extensively in America, love to watch American films and even drink Coca-Cola, believe that a significant segment of the American population is homeless and dies on the streets of starvation while cigar smoking millionaires tool by in Cadillacs, that here are no retirement pensions, no unemployment relief, and that blacks are systematically repressed. The greatest fuss of all is made about executions of criminals in Texas—never any other States, and never before the elections in 2000, only Texas, now that you-know-who who was governor there has become president. This Bush-bashing fixation on Texas, to say nothing of the motives of those who enforce it, ignores several facts: 1) France only eliminated the death penalty 20 years ago, later than many American States, 2) according to polls, France would reinstate the death penalty if the issue was made the subject of a public referendum, and 3) such countries as China and Russia, France's great allies in the anti-American coalition, practice murder in a manner and on a scale that makes the lawful execution of a handful of multi- and child-murderers in Texas, who have had the benefit of due process under the Constitution of the freest country in the world, look like a charity picnic. This sort of selective awareness indicates an anti-American mind-set which, I say, is the product of decades of pro-Communist propaganda.

The Western intelligentsia has, in its majority, notoriously and treacherously taken, if not the Communist line as such, a more or less anti-Western or anti-freedom line, including most 'contemporary artists' and writers. Just as Communist propaganda pretends that 'capitalism' means slavery, and that America is the most terrible country in the world, this anti-freedom line presents itself as pro-freedom.

Likewise true art is denigrated as fascist, or pro-repression. I can attest to this personally. In the 1970s, because I was interested in drawing in the traditional sense, which supposedly involves, oh horror! 'rules', I was accused of 'fascism' by fellow art students. What they were doing was, ergo, anti-fascist. Anti-fascist 'art' seems to mean gluing dead cats to the ceiling, hanging rags to the wall or spilling garbage to the floor. These people destroy the very possibility of art by re-defining the word to the point where what it should designate is excluded from our consciousness. Likewise pseudo nazi-fighters like Arno Klarsfeld or those opposed to Le Pen instrumentalize a prestigious past in order to acquire prestige in their own eyes or to expiate the imaginary faults of past generations. Rather than grapple with reality they re-invent it, which means, like Ulan Dhor, living a dream. Their prestidigitations, their manipulations of their own fantasies exclude them from contact with reality.

Jack Vance carries no taint of this profoundly irresponsible foolishness supported by a vast international network of ideologically disciplined institutions. His obscurity is a badge of honor.

If it is not already, it will soon be clear to all that our real problem, the same one we have been having for the past 2000 years, is the war of Heresy against Christianity, or of multiplicitous luxurious Falsehood against Truth. I mention in passing that this problem, as grave and even cataclysmic as I think it will prove to be, is not of much moment for Iraq's near future. However many leaping anti-American Shiites CNN uses to fill up TV screens, the fact is this: Iraqi Islamic fanatics are a divided minority who cannot substantially interfere with the good government the Iraqi people will soon establish for themselves, with a bit of American help and encouragement. God bless America, Honor to her founding fathers, and good luck to General Jay Garner!



Alain Finkelkraut and Cadwal

Saturday 26 April: Today, on his weekly radio program, Alain Finkelkraut addressed the subject of the secularization of society. According to his guests two ideas concerning secularization are current. According to the first, which might be called the 'naive' approach, modernity is an original phenomenon in history, defined by the 'disenchantment' of the world following upon the defeat of religion, so that the world has become a rational object manipulable by Man. In exchange for this temporal power Man has had to abandon hope for eternal salvation, and has done so willingly. According to the second idea, evolved by the philosopher Carl Schmitt, modernity has no essential originality because all its components are merely transpositions of things religious, Christian in particular. For example, Schmitt would argue that God's omnipotence and omniscience now exists as Man's technical and theoretical mastery of the world and all its phenomena from the micro to the macro level. Examples would be the explosion of hydrogen bombs and the publication of the human genetic code. God's benevolence now exists in our ideal of universal material prosperity or the political will to create happiness and prosperity for all men.

This debate is not so much about the superficial nature of modernism, or the 'project of modernity' but its originality. If it lacks 'originality', the argument goes, it is less convincing, less worthy of our support—an argument I find nuncupatory.

Finkelkraut introduced another idea: Modern Man claims to have disenchanting the world—by ridding it of magic and angels. But, now that Man has taken over God's omnipotence, he works technological prodigies that alter

the world, the climate and the genetic code of life forms, affecting the world in ways he cannot foresee. He has therefore, if unintentionally, re-enchanted the world. Like the 'pocket of non-causality' into which the world swam in *The Men Return*, a zone of mystery has closed in around the world and Man finds himself, once again, in a situation of total ignorance and total defenselessness. This transformation of naive materialist optimism into a new uncertainty and awe is, according to Finkelkraut, exemplified by the effacement of the proud word 'progress', symbolizing man's bold thrust into a wondrous future of his own creation, in favor of the much less audacious word 'development', indicating a cautious advance in favor of limited goals.

In light of these perspectives the Naturalist Society's dream for Cadwal, the absolute preservation of that planet in a state of pristine unsulliedness, emerges as a defense of enchantment. The Naturalist Society, and its administrators at Araminta Station, are not interested in progress. They do not even wish to affront the challenges of development. Their ideal is a worshipful awe before the mysterious dispositions and workings of nature. They are deeply suspicious of Man. Man is unnatural. His activities, his very presence, disrupts the Natural Order. This order has an absolutely higher status than Man and his intentions, including his desires for happiness and prosperity. From the perspective of the Carl Schmittian critique of modernism can Araminta Station not be considered a theocracy? If so, what can be said of the various phases of the real-world ecological movement?



A Comment on Thomas Sowell's Concept of Cosmic Justice*

In his essay *The Quest for Cosmic Justice* Sowell is eager to make the point, with which any sensible person should agree, that leftist social policy is a catastrophic misreading of reality whose true source is the quest for a feeling of moral superiority. Less generally it is a critique of the futile efforts to correct inequalities and historical injustices by law, bureaucracy, judicial activism and use of taxpayers' money. The most important example he gives, it seems to me, is how the politicization of historical injustices corrupts society by infecting minds with vindictive resentfulness on questionable or even mendacious grounds. This, above all, prejudices personal happiness, to say nothing of disrupting necessary social order. Sowell's exposé of poverty statistics—though not fundamentally revealing since the facts are obvious to anyone with their eyes open—is amusing: when, in addition to the usual measure (annual net income in a

*Dedicated to Brian Gharst of the Proud Few, and Wave 1 Packer.

given calendar year) two other factors are introduced (over-all assets and time, or the evolution of an individual's income and total holdings over decades), the actual number of persistently poor turns out to be 3% of the American population, rather than the 20% figure usually advanced. Likewise the rich turn out to be only 3.5%, the great majority of whom made their money in their own lifetimes. So in addition to showing the counterproductive nature of leftist solutions Sowell complains that leftist concentration on an allegedly scandalous inequality, which does not involve 93.5% of the population, is doctrinaire grandstanding prejudicial to serious treatment of the real problems of the poor, to say nothing of even more pertinent matters.

Based on this critique Sowell proposes the view that society is better served by a form of justice which he calls 'traditional': a set of straightforward rules applicable to everyone. He is against government meddling in people's private lives (meaning 'income redistribution') and defends this attitude by indicating the far greater effectiveness of 19th and early 20th century private initiatives for reducing poverty as well as the personal charitable initiatives of such famous capitalists as Milton Friedman and Adam Smith. The contrary effort—to enforce what Sowell calls 'cosmic justice', or the righting of inequalities based on certain understandings of historical events, however sympathetic seeming the arguments in favor might be—is doomed, insists Sowell, to worsening the overall situation. He makes the obvious point that very few American Blacks emigrate to Africa while very many African Blacks immigrate to America. This consideration, he hastens to point out, does nothing to undo suffering unjustly imposed upon Africans 300 years ago, or on their descendants in more recent times, but baffles the argument that the lives of today's American Blacks have been prejudiced by the past.*

Sowell is a freemarketer. He mentions several times, and with favor, the *freemarket economist Milton Friedman*. He constantly speaks of *rewarding productivity and performance*, of how the social *costs and benefits of social justice* should be *weighed*. *Economic development*, he says, *has been the most successful of all anti-poverty policies*—which is certainly true. But, though he does cite the great 18th century economist Adam Smith to the effect that *a certain measure of justice is a prerequisite of social survival* and, while he does say that *material well being is not everything*, one is left wondering what, beyond accumulating money, really matters in life? I do not mean to complain that Sowell fails to discuss things he never intended to discuss within the scope of his topic, but his essay has certain undertones, or lack of them, that left me with the impression that, even if he

knows it is inevitable, Sowell, like those he criticizes, also feels it is unfortunate that all incomes are indeed not equal. Perhaps it is therefore not surprising that Sowell makes so many references to God.

Apparently Sowell is addressing that aspect of leftism which might be called 'atheistic Christianity', or 'post-Christian moralism'. The most radical example of this important aspect of modernism is Marxism whose goal is to realize an earthly paradise of justice and prosperity. Obviously Sowell is no Marxist but he does seem to share the atheist/materialist perspective. At the very least he fails to disagree with the leftist critique of Fate which blames God for the allegedly poor design of the world. Marxists think they can do a better job than God in this regard, and Sowell agrees—if only to the extent of admitting that a better job, at least theoretically, could have been done. Since, unlike Marxists, Sowell recognizes human powerlessness to do or redo such work, his stance might be called 'regretful non-leftism'.

Where does Sowell stand exactly? While he believes we must abandon Utopian aims and deal with realities he also makes such statements as: *there is no question that a world in which cosmic justice prevailed would be a better world than a world limited to traditional justice*. He calls such aspects of life as bad breath and bad luck 'unjust' *from a cosmic perspective*, and remarks that 'injustice', *if we were creating the universe from scratch, is not something most of us would choose to include in it*. Such statements may only be Sowell's efforts to indicate to his ideological opponents that he understands their perspective. But if these opponents are as careless of reality as Sowell says they are, and as dishonest and self-centered as he implies they are (and I would agree with these assessments) such efforts would seem to be nuncupatory. But on a deeper level, beyond their tactical dubiousness, such statements are characteristic of the confusion and poverty of contemporary thinking.

Why does Sowell not simply reject 'cosmic justice' as an unreal fantasy and build his case on that basis? This would be cold-hearted pragmatism. Pragmatism rejects such things as the human soul, much less the saving of same, as foolish fairy tales. The only goods it recognizes are clear-cut, measurable, solid material benefits. But pragmatism is thoughtless, for why is being warm, dry and well-fed better than being cold, wet and hungry? The answer comes thus: *for the sake of survival*. But why is survival better than death? . . . The pragmatist knits his brow; the question had never occurred to him; it catches him off balance. But after a moment of doubt he dismisses the problem with an impatient gesture. In doing so he fails to consider that the greatest murderers of all history share his underlying perspective, or lack thereof. The pragmatist may act as if life is self-evidently more valuable than death, but the Marxist and Fascist regimes responsible for tens of millions of murders in the 20th century were equally incapable of justifying the

*This argument is necessarily a cultural not a racial one since few if any contemporary American Blacks are pure-blooded Africans, a point Sowell insists upon. For a cultural, and more unsettling perspective on this, see: *The House on Lily Street*, VIE vol. II, p160.

superiority of life over death, with horrific consequences. The slip of contemporary democracies into what the Pope calls the 'culture of death'—meaning the banalization of divorce, abortion, euthanasia, human organ harvesting in the Third World, cloning—indicate contemporary incapacity to justify, or even care about, the so-called 'sanctity of life'.

This abyss in modern metaphysics, or the poverty of our underlying understanding of what the universe is all about, is the essential characteristic of our time. By clinging to what he calls 'cosmic justice', if only in a nostalgic form, Sowell is in fact both harking back to, and in disagreement with, the traditional understanding of reality succinctly formulated by the poet John Keats in the famous line: *Truth is Beauty*. For Sowell thinks that cosmic justice is both beautiful and not true. But hopeless fantasies, no matter how glittering, are not beautiful. This is illustrated by Vance in Dame Hester Lajoie's pathetic relationship to herself. Speaking of her skirt with a slit up the side, Vance writes:

The leg was long and thin, the knee was knobby, but Dame Hester felt certain that pulses quickened and hormones raced whenever the slit allowed a glimpse of the lank member.

(*Ports of Call*, Underwood, p10)

Dame Hester's fantasy that she retains her youthful glamour may be gratifying to her at the moment, but the contrast between her real state (somewhat degraded) and her actions (giving herself the airs of a woman 30 years younger) are undignified and must eventually cause her serious disappointment or even humiliation. Dame Hester's lack of dignity, which stems from a misreading of reality, may be comic but it is not beautiful—in fact it is comic because of Dame Hester's sad confusion concerning Truth and Beauty.

It is not difficult to see why Sowell clings to 'cosmic justice'. If he simply dismissed it as unreal he would expose himself as heartless (which he most probably is not). Illness and accident are often no fault of the individual concerned, and even if they were they remain worthy of pity. It is also true that certain social disadvantages do indeed stem from historic, racial, cultural and social circumstances which are beyond the control of the individuals concerned and may be possible to overcome with a bit of help. It might indeed be the best policy that governments not intervene in such situations but it would be heartless for people not to acknowledge their reality. While it is universally counterproductive to award diplomas to people who have not earned them, not to offer extra help to those having difficulties is heartless indifference, at best.

Such considerations carry us back down into the messy realm of reality; let us return to the supernal regions of theory, namely the alleged botch God made of his creation and the improved plan Sowell wistfully

approves: a universe without injustice. What would be the nature of this universe? Sowell looks at this problem in his second essay, *The Mirage of Equality*, and patiently explains what any common-sensical person knows about this. But he fails to follow through on the critique he shares with his opponents about God's failure to have constructed the world properly, in other words: his failure to have included equality. Let us repair this lack at least in speech, let us create a world in which there is equality and see how it is. In this world, to begin with, the sun would shine, and the rain would fall, in identical amounts everywhere; soil qualities and topography would be everywhere identical—presumably an uninterrupted flatness of good brown humus, robbing us of the dramatic multifariousness of our planet. The anatomical differences between men and women would likewise be reduced to a strict minimum (going any farther is just too dismal to conceive!) eradicating most of that delightful and exciting aspect of life.* Each person would be endowed with identical talents and qualities so that whether all were dullards or all were geniuses would be lost in the overwhelming fact of universal relative averageness. Con-

*Vance sheds light on this aspect of life from a novel perspective:

Madouc discovered a flaw in the plan. "Have you not noticed? I lack the attributes of my mother Twisk! Will any of the three be inclined even to approach the post? I see them coming in haste, taking note of me, stopping short, turning and running back the way they had come, careless if I were to be liberated or not."

"The point is well taken," said King Throbius. "I will cast a glamour upon you, so that folk will be enthralled, and mistake you for a creature of allure."

"Hmmf," said Madouc. "I suppose that will have to be the way of it."

"The scheme is sound," said Twisk.

Madouc was still not totally convinced. "Might not our plans go awry in some unexpected way? Suppose the pebble lost its force, so that, willy-nilly, I was liberated even though I needed no such help?"

"It is a chance we must take," said King Throbius. He stepped forward, fluttered his fingers over Madouc's head, muttered a cantrap of nineteen syllables, touched her chin, then stood back. "The glamour is cast. To work its effect, pull at your left ear with the fingers of your right hand. To suspend the glamour, pull at your right ear with the fingers of your left hand."

Madouc asked with interest: "Shall I try it now?"

"As you like! You will notice the change only as it affects others; you yourself will not be altered."

"For a test, then, I will try the spell." Madouc tugged at her left ear with the fingers of her right hand, then turned to Sir Pom-pom and Travante. "Can you notice a change?"

Sir Pom-pom drew a deep breath and seemed to clench his teeth. "The change is definite."

Travante made a wild, if controlled, gesture. "I will describe the change. You are now a slender maiden, of perfect if not better conformation. Your eyes are as blue as the warm summer sea; they are melting and sympathetic, and look from a face tart and sweet, clever and wry, of a haunting fascination. Soft copper-gold curls swing past this face; the hair is scented with the perfume of lemon blossoms. Your form is enough to make a strong man weak. The glamour is effective."

Madouc pulled at her right ear with the fingers of her left hand. "Am I myself again?"

"Yes," said Sir Pom-pom regretfully. "You are as usual."

Madouc heaved a sigh of relief. "With the glamour upon me I feel somewhat conspicuous."

King Throbius smiled. "You must learn to ignore it, since, in your case, the glamour is no more than a reflection of the near future." (*Madouc*: VIE vol. 38, p375)

sequently we would have nothing to offer each other, no help to give or get, no enrichments to exchange, which would probably imply a universe of tiresome simplicity graspable by a single mind. With identical senses of humor, identical capacities of empathy and analysis we could find no gratification or profit in each other's company and conversation. All would be subject to the same illnesses at the same moments or there would be no illness, rendering life that much less precious. We would all suffer identical accidents, such as falling off a ladder, or no accidents would ever occur—presumably thanks to invisible beings who would catch us when we tumble and interpose protective shields between our thumbs and poorly swung hammers. We would live to an identical age, be buried in identical tombs, be mourned by an identical number of tears and missed for an identical period of years, or identically not missed at all; when everyone is exactly the same what would there be to miss?

But let's be fair: this is certainly not what Sowell means by 'equality'. Probably, in a general and vague sort of way, he means that economic inequalities, to say nothing of inequalities of fortune in the larger sense, are somehow regrettable. He probably has a pious wish that all people should have full, or at least adequate, access to the good things in life. I am aware that Sowell's remarks are not metaphysical but, in a mere 45-page essay, directed at failures of specific leftist social policies. It is clear he is not concerned with establishing a theoretical basis for his arguments but with urging policy changes all of which I personally support. Still, his argument is not the hard-bitten one that there is no such thing as justice and that, given a specific goal (material prosperity) we should cold-bloodily do thus and so. It is instead a somewhat dewy-eyed argument to the effect that since, unfortunately, the economic and social world cannot be remade, let us accept it as it is with its regrettable imperfections. This, at a fundamental level, is the attitude of a person who might be tempted by Marxism—and Sowell admits that he was indeed a dupe of the anti-war movement of the 1960s.

For Sowell, were it possible, it would be best to remake the world since God, or whatever, has clearly made a botch of it. This view, which can be called 'honorable atheistic-materialism', seems to me to seriously compromise his thesis. Theoretical weaknesses such as this lead to futility.

Thanks to the potent combination of advancing political freedom and advancing technology and industrialization, globalization is spreading riches over the world at unprecedented speed. Meanwhile current world events are showing the limits of this advance as more profound aspects of humanity impede democratic and industrial advance, most visibly the fundamentalist Islamic assault on the Christian/atheist West. However, even in areas where democracy and industrialization have

a more or less free hand, the human consequences provoked by the contrast between the fluid mobility of money and the rooted immobility of human beings leaves a trail of wreckage. Such wreckage may or may not be extremely minor compared to the global benefits of advance but it is real to the people involved; this consideration would seem to show a legitimate place for government intervention; it may be best to partly impede globalization for the sake of a basic degree of human tranquility and preservation of aspects of life and the world that do not harmonize with globalization. I doubt Sowell would have any violent disagreement with this, or perhaps no disagreement at all. I mention this to show, again, that I do not see him as a hard-bitten materialist. It is all very well to point out the global benefits of globalization and it may be true that the masters of globalization, the entrepreneurs who make, transport and sell goods world-wide, are aware of and concerned about the human beings who become their partners as factory workers or service providers in and related to their global enterprises. But clearly, even if the masters of globalization, unlike the conquerors of the past, have no territorial ambitions, they are also not motivated by exactly the same set of impulses that drive Christian missionaries to save souls everywhere indiscriminately. Even if they are all remarkable humanists, the goals of their actions concern economic things, not spiritual things. If Sowell, as a 21st century freemarketer, represents the conscience of globalization, and if that conscience triumphs, the world might end up looking like Taiwan seems, a place where obedient and orderly people are born, live in apartment blocks, are ferried to work on an infrastructure of public transportation, earn equitable salaries, receive a proper old-age pension and then die at a statistically correct age for a developed country. If there is no eternal reward for truly good behavior it is not clear what incentive mortals have to practice anything beyond 'enlightened self-interest'. If there is no beauty in the universe, if our lives are equivalent to the earthworm who spends it's days eating holes through the dirt without asking why, it is not clear why we should live at all. But the Bin Ladens and Saddam Husseins have no doubts about what makes life worth living, or who should be helped to die. Spirit being superior to matter these folk have a great advantage over Thomas Sowell.

God created Man (man and woman), and gave him Paradise as his home. He made him master of the world. Man could come and go as he liked, was spared all work, strife, sorrow and pain. In those days there was no question of justice because there was no conflict. Man was the work of the 6th day, the apogee and master of the world, a being 'made in the image of God', meaning that Man, like God, and unlike everything else, is aware of himself as God is aware of Himself. But Man, for all his similarity to his creator, remains a created creature.

Not being a god he lacks both omnipotence and omniscience. Pretence to these, forgetfulness of his true status, is sin. This is not because God is offended by uppityness but because by pretending to be what he is not Man rejects reality, or the Paradise which is the universe God created for him, and thus exiles himself from it. Because of sin Man falls into worry and pain, vain strivings after power he can not have and knowledge he cannot conceive. His acts become grotesque and his inner life a dark fantasy. Baron Bodissey wrote:

The malefactor becomes the creature of his own deeds. Once the transition has been overpassed a new set of standards comes into force. The perceptive malefactor recognizes his evil and knows full well the meaning of his acts. In order to quiet his qualms he retreats into a state of solipsism, and commits flagrant evil from sheer hysteria, and for his victims it appears as if the world has gone mad. (*The Face*, VIE vol. 25, p56)

Original sin thrust Man from Paradise, but Paradise remains real. We glimpse it in our ideals, in Sowell's regret for a world of perfect justice for which we feel we were made and to which we hear ourselves called. Much has changed since the Fall but Man's mastery of the world and his freedom are still intact. Man is free to rule the world well or badly, to accept reality or rebel against it.

The world looks the way it does, full of cruelty, horror, pain and injustice, because of freedom, or free will, or the possibility of sin. Without free will humanity is reduced to the status of microbe, without awareness, judgement or gratitude. The justice we long for means nothing outside God's greatest gifts to Man: our Being, our Freedom. These gifts create the possibility of human life which is co-equal to the possibility of sin and thus injustice. The fantasy of a world without injustice could only become real at the cost of human extinction. The world is the theater of justice and injustice. The only other thing it can be is a non-thing. In Sowell's failure to clearly recognize this he contradicts his own demand that analysts work with reality rather than unverifiable fantasies pleasing to them. The reason leftism can arise is because of the tension between how the world is and how it should be. By elevating that 'should' to a mandate for a dictatorial power that squashes human liberty, leftism makes a bad situation worse. But reducing that 'should' to a hopeless fantasy also leads, if by other roads, to the extinguishment of human flourishing.

Another vancian hint concerning the nature of the contrast between the gifts of God and sin, or to put it another way; between the infinity of true human freedom and the collapsed space of lust for worldly power, is Navarth's complaint about Virole Falushe:

I preach augmented existence; Vogel wanted me to approve his solipsistic ruthlessness. (*The Palace of Love*, ch. 9)

If the world can be hell, it is only denied by cynics that paradise is constantly flickering around us. The sun rises each day to warm the earth; plants grow, flowers bloom and we are enchanted. The beauty of creation, often as revealed through art*, holds us in a spell. The stars, the clouds, the trees, the elegant animals, beautiful buildings, but above all, at least for human males, the beauty of women. This beauty is so immense, so delectable, so overwhelming, that it is even the force upon which society is built. If it were only a biological effect (which in part it surely is) it could not serve the vast functions it does in society—from advertising to marriage to the quest for self-knowledge. Animals are affected by biological necessities only when necessary. The Mona Lisa is no sex symbol yet this painting is one of the most important objects in the world because of how much it has to tell us about feminine beauty. Man is perpetually fascinated by the beauty of that creature made in 'the image of God'.

Sowell points out that the rich Americans are not who the leftists would have us think they are; rather than snooty heirs to ancestral fortunes most are self-made men living by the modes and norms to which their often modest youth acculturated them. Again, Sowell does say: *material well being is not everything*, but one is left with the impression that he would have nothing to say if attacked from the vulgar or cynical point of view which sneers at higher things and recognizes only touchable, countable benefits as real. Sowell is neither vulgar nor cynical but like so many contemporary thinkers he is brought down toward this level by the sucking maelstrom of modern thought. Vance is fully alive to the hard-bitten materialist attitude:

Luxury and privilege are the perquisites of wealth. This would appear a notably bland remark, but is much larger than it seems. If one listens closely, he hears deep and far below the mournful chime of inevitability. To achieve wealth, one generally must thoroughly exploit at least three of the following five attributes:

- a. Luck.
- b. Toil, persistence, courage.
- c. Self-denial.
- d. Short-range intelligence: cunning, improvisational ability.
- e. Long-range intelligence: planning, the perception of trends.

These attributes are common; anyone desiring privilege and luxury can gain the precursory

*By which I mean even such things as video games.

wealth by making proper use of his native competence.

In some societies poverty is considered a pathetic misfortune, or noble abnegation, hurriedly to be remedied by use of public funds. Other more stalwart societies think of poverty as a measure of the man himself.

(Paraphrased from: *The Face*, VIE vol. 25, p236)

Compared to Baron Bodissey's robust if sly social Darwinism, Sowell is tepid and hesitant. On the other hand Sowell gives no hint of the opposite vision, as Vance does in Sistine Fael's passionate panegyric of spiritual wealth:

I am poor; I admit it! Am I then a churl or a nobby? I deny it with all the vehemence of my soul! I take my bite of seed-cake and my sip of tea with the same relish as any paunchy plutocrat with bulging eyes and grease running from his mouth as he engulfs ortolans in brandy, Krokinole oysters, filet of Darango Five-Horn! My wealth is my shelf of books! My privileges are my dreams!

(*The Face*, VIE vol. 25, p237)

Sowell's underlying thesis, that leftism is essentially a mechanism to leverage a sense of moral superiority, is powerful and important. In the third essay in the book, *The Tyranny of Visions*, he points out that *those with cosmic visions must disdain the bourgeoisie*, but that in fact *the underclass pay the price of not having the self-discipline of the bourgeoisie while the truly wealthy and powerful can often disregard . . . laws, without paying the consequences*, so that leftists espouse relativism because they *romanticize the unruliness of the underclass and the sense of being above the rules found among the elite*. In other words: leftist thinking is presumptuous and imprudent in the extreme [*disdaining*] *the kind of society that evolves over the generations through experience*, rather than supporting *[r]ules, traditions, and self-discipline* which is *guidance from the distilled experience of others*.

Sowell, to show what I call the 'nasty-mindedness' of leftists, gives many examples of their disdain which englobes both persons and facts. He cites reaction to Reagan's policy of collapsing the U.S.S.R. with pressure of an arms race, and the absence of later acknowledgement that such disdain, both for the man and his policy, had been proven unjustified. It is important to make such points if only to encourage people with a more normal perspective by helping them understand the topsy-turvy intellectual topography of this fallen world.

The fourth and final essay in Sowell's little book is entitled: *The Quiet Repeal of the American Revolution*. Two decades before Sowell's book was published Jack Vance wrote the following passage in *Araminta Station* where Dame Clytie Vergence is speaking of Glawen:

"You heard this gentleman, a Bureau B patrol officer, describe his work. Surely you noted his lack of self-consciousness—or could it be a moral vacuum? I find it unnerving in a person so young [. . .] what do we learn of Bureau B? We discover indifference for human dignity and disregard for basic human rights. We learn of dire deeds done with a chilling finality. We find a swaggering arrogant autonomy, which the Conservator apparently does not dare to challenge. Clearly he has abdicated his responsibility, while agents of Bureau B range the continent capturing, killing, deporting and who knows what else? In short, I am appalled!"

Warden Ballinder turned to Egon Tamm. "There you have it, Conservator! How do you answer these extremely blunt charges?"

Egon Tamm gave his head a dour shake. "The Warden Vergence speaks with gusto! If her charges were accurate, they would be a serious indictment of me and my work. Luckily they are balderdash. The Warden Vergence is an estimable person, but she has a selective comprehension which notices only what fits her preconceptions.

"Contrary to her fears, I monitor the work of Bureau B with care. I find that the personnel faithfully administers Conservancy law, as defined by the Charter. It is as simple as that."

Julian Bohost stirred himself. "But in the end it is not so simple, after all. The law you mention is clearly obsolete and very far from infallible."

Warden Ballinder demanded: "You are referring to the Charter?"

Julian smiled. "Please! Let's none of us be truculent, or irrational, or even hysterical! The Charter is not divine revelation, after all. It was designed to control a certain set of conditions, which have changed; the Charter remains: a stark mouldering megalith, glooming over the past."

Dame Clytie chuckled. "Julian's metaphors are perhaps a bit exaggerated, but he speaks to the right effect. The Charter, as of now, is moribund, and at the very least must be revised and brought into phase with contemporary thought."

Glawen said [. . .] "I notice that [Dame Clytie] has been elected to an office which derives directly from the Charter, with duties and responsibilities defined by the Charter, including unqualified defense of the Conservancy against all enemies and interlopers. If Dame Clytie demeans or diminishes or in any way seeks to invalidate the Charter, or despoil the Conservancy, she has instantly removed herself from office. She cannot have it both ways. Either she defends the Charter in whole and in part or she is instantly expelled

from office. Unless I misunderstand her, she has already made her choice, and is now no more Warden than I am.”

(*Araminta Station*, VIE vol. 39, p278)

The Charter of Cadwal is not an exact parallel to the Constitution of the United States of America (which is mostly what Sowell means by his phrase ‘the American Revolution’), and the mechanisms of the government of Cadwal are not an exact parallel to the mechanisms of American government but, with appropriate and easily made adjustments, Cadwal is fully relevant to the contemporary situation Sowell is concerned about. Sowell sums up his underlying message by pointing out that what its critics call ‘society’ is really ‘civilization’ and that the *prerequisites of civilization are not an interesting subject to those who concentrate on its shortcomings — that is, on the extent to which what currently exists as the fruits of centuries of efforts and sacrifices is inferior to what they can produce in their imaginations immediately at zero cost, in the comfort and security provided by the society they disdain.* Sowell points out that the American Revolution established the ‘rule of law’, a phenomenon almost unique in human history, whereby the freedoms of ordinary people, the great prevalence of which distinguish American society from all others, are protected by limitations imposed upon those who hold power, including power flowing from democratic majorities. These protections are embodied in Constitutional formulas, such as “Congress shall make no laws . . .”, and structural foundations such as the ‘separation of powers’ and ‘checks and balances’ upon which American government is built.

In *Araminta Station* Vance dramatizes an assault on a society built on the rule of law. That the Cadwal Charter exists to protect Cadwal’s plants and animals, rather than human freedom, transpose the case against the rule of law, from both aristocratic and criminal élites (embodied by Warden Clytie Vergence and Julian Bohost on the one hand, and Smonny and the Oomphaw on the other) to a philosophical lowest common denominator more clearly revealing of its underlying weaknesses. In *Maske:Thaery* Vance shows how a society dominated by aristocrats depends precariously on the individual virtue and determination of privileged members of society. In *Durdane* he shows how an overweening concern with security and tranquility leads to a dangerously stifling elimination of human freedom.



Sharing the Kudos

by *Suan Yong*

As the person in charge of tracking the VIE shipments, I’ve been privy to much e-mail communication with

subscribers, many of whom have extended compliments to the VIE: on the quality of the books, on the great packing job, and on the VIE endeavor as a whole. It would be unfair for me to hoard these kudos for myself, so herewith are some of the kind words I’ve received to date, so that all who have contributed to this incredible project should not feel unappreciated.

FedEx rang me and delivered the next day (last week).

WOW!!! These books are beautiful; I thought they were going to be good, I just wasn’t expecting them to be this good. I keep going to them and touching them and smelling the leather, well you know or soon will when you get yours.

So if you could pass on my heartfelt thanks and praise to everyone concerned for creating what can only be described as works of art I would appreciate it.

And the bonus, 22 more to come. O’ happy day.

Thanks,

—Mike Nolan

Thank you again for all the work you have done, and for appreciating Jack Vance.

—Graziano Carlon

Thanks muchly,

They look good, the packing job was excellent, and they even smell nice! (Some of the new book smell survived the long trip.)

My one problem now is not to devour all too quickly: Vance should be read as single malt is sipped, with time for contemplation.

—John Ashmead

These look great!!

—Jeff Rutherford

Looks great—thanks to you all for the excellent work!

—Vaughn Rokosz

Thanks, and Congratulations

—Richard Campany

. . . they were packaged very well and all the volumes that I have checked are in perfect condition.

A red letter day for sure!!

—Bob Collins

Don’t know who was more interested in the process of unpacking and shelving them . . . me or my cats.

The books are beautifully made and full of Vance . . . fascinating to nose of cat and eye of man.

—Mark Nielsen

Thanks for all your hard work.

—James Clark

Great job guys, very impressive!

—John Hawes

Thanx thanx thanx.

I have recieved all the books from Wave 1 yesterday.

They are awesome . . . this is awesome.

No damage.

All accounted for.

Beautiful.

Grand.

Attention to details evident.

Impressive variety of cover borders and illustrations.

Font gives similar feel to reading old copies of Vance.

Pleasing to experience something lacking corporate sponsorship.

Only slight: gold title printing on spine on a few books are shifted slightly, like double typed; but it's ok, only thought it should be noted.

Thanx again.

—Jay Stupak

My books arrived on 5/5/2003. I'm so happy!

—Andrew Thompson

. . . the books look great on my bookshelf.

—Philip Lafornera

The First Wave arrived Saturday and in excellent shape. The Packing job was fantastic! The books look good . . .

I'm very happy with the look and feel of the editions to date.

—Joel Hedlund

The volumes are beautiful and the packing job was very professional.

Kudos to the entire team; I'm one happy subscriber.

—Gene Spears

Very nice books, by the way! I think they turned out great, and they were packed very well. I like the little touches, like the little curly-que in the middle of the cover with semi-unique themes (like the 5 faces on the *Demon Princes* series). Can't wait for the next 22 volumes!

—Dave Kennedy

Everyone is amazed and pleased at the beauty and quality of the books. Many thanks.

—Charles Kopfstein-Penk

They are magnificent books.

—John Lundstrom

. . . they are beautiful and packed very securely.

—Karl Kellar

My compliments on a fine packing job.

—Gary Casper

They look great. I can't thank you enough for all of the work that you have done. Thanks Again!!

—John Fussell

Like many others, may I also thank the packing team for the wonderful job of packing? The all-sides styrofoam cushioning, double-thick cardboard boxes, and individual book wrapping were the most thoroughly wrapped books I have ever received! Thanks again.

Sincerely yours,

—Kyle McAbee

I am of course very pleased with the overall quality and must give my congratulations to everyone at VIE who has contributed to this magnificent achievement in the making.

—John McDougall

I was impressed with the great packing job. Those books were well protected! My congratulations to the packing party!

—Kurt Martin

The books are exquisite, and worth every penny. I am beyond delighted. Once I discovered what was in the box, I unwrapped them with haste! I know that I now have enough to read for quite a while (as well as everything else that I have to read), but when is the projected date for Wave II to be completed and shipped? I think I may construct a special bookcase just to house the Jack Vance books. Thanks so much for all of your efforts.

—Kris Sperry

I probably should have waited until I was able to check all received volumes to write this . . . , but I could not wait to express my gratitude with everybody involved in this huge effort, and my happiness having all these *wonderful* books, even if I have to check the dictionary from time to time.

Thank you, all of you.

—Jaime Alemany

A real pleasure to open and leaf through these volumes, by the way. All who had a part in this are to be thanked. Thank you.

—Bob Cocks

Thanks so much to you and all the volunteers. I'm giddy with joy. The books are splendid.

—Paul Chadwick

Hi, I got my books, thank you very much! And let me also compliment you, or whoever, on the excellent design of the packing. They arrived in pristine condition.

—S.A. Manning

Hi,

We just received our shipment of the VIE, and we are so pleased! They're really very nice. We're in the book business (op, used and rare), and see a lot of bindings and are very picky. These are 1st rate.

—Gene Muehlbauer, Aardvark Book Depot

The books are perfectly executed in binding and printing, and in pristine condition due to the excruciating attention given to wrapping, organizing, and packing. Rhoads' art is really evocative of the texts. The illustrations appear as if an image from the protagonist's memory was literally cast upon the page. Please convey my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the efforts of those responsible for all of this. I am sure that Jack Vance will be moved by your work.

— Wiley Mittenberg

The books look great. I can't wait to start reading them. . . . Thanks for all your hard work in this heroic endeavor.

Best Regards,
— Fernando Maldonado

Books are beautiful and in great shape. Excellent production and packing.

— Bill Schaub

Thanks to all! They look VERY good.

— Robert K Melson

Congratulations on a monumental effort culminating in a real treasure.

— Robert Summers

The books are very nice. Can't wait for the second half!

— Stephen Lee

They're beautiful. Thanks!

— Phil Stecco

All looked GREAT, much appreciate the effort put forth.

— Donn Olmsted

Hurrah! . . . Very beautiful work! . . .

In general my deluxe addition is beyond reproach, although volume 20 (*Emphyrio*) is rather warped and wouldn't initially stand up without other books around it. I worked the leather a bit and it seems fine now!

Anyway, the main message remains: I received the books and am very happy with the quality and very grateful for all your hard work!

Thanks,
— Charles Thorland

Thanks for all your dedication and hard work. The books look beautiful.

— David Goyer

The volumes are gorgeous. Thank you so much.

— Kenneth Freedman

VIE shipment received in good condition. Excellent packing! Thanks!

— Don Holzwarth

Looking wonderful, expertly packed and on my bookshelf in pride of place. Thank you.

— Andrew Edlin

They have been placed upon the shelf long reserved for their arrival, where they look terrific, and I'm planning on spending large blocks of quality time with them in the very near future. Great job, people!

— Carl Goldman

I'm most impressed with the production. The packing job, too, was first class, and I received the books in perfect condition. . . .

I'm looking forward to adding the rest of the books to the already-impressive row on my bookcase!

— Bill Burns

. . . thanks to all the folks who helped with the packing and shipping, both here and in Italy!

— Bob Luckin

They are wonderful. Thank you for such a great job. I look forward to receiving the remaining books.

— Sharon Bennett

Got them today and what a joyous day it is indeed! What a beautiful sight to behold! Thanks for all your patience and support. Thank you for such a great job.

— Karl Radtke

Dear VIE,

Our Wave 1 Deluxe box arrived safely this week to our great delight! The quality and beauty of the volumes is just astonishing; with all those wonderful words inside too, this is easily our most prized possession. VIE folks have achieved their goal with the competence of any Vance protagonist. Our deepest thanks to all!

— Diana Hamilton

They are really stunningly beautiful. I am so happy to have these. All of you VIE volunteers have created an amazing thing.

I remember back in the 60's, when I was in High School,

I wished that I would some day have all of Vance's work.

I could not ever have dreamed of editions as nice as these.

I look forward to years of reading the restored texts, too!

THANKS SO MUCH!!!

— Henry Kaiser



About the CLS

Sorry, no CLS this time. Tim Stretton delivered his material in ample time, but Till was remiss and pressed by other duties. However, there will be a CLS with the next COSMOPOLIS.

Apologies to all,
Till Noever



Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

Word's dictionary gives:

ob-lo-quy *n* (*formal or literary*)

1. statements that severely criticize or defame somebody.

So, it is indeed regrettable that Rob Friefeld "do[es] not know [me] at all" since anyone who does will readily testify to my total lack of restraint when severely criticizing somebody. There was thus no need for him to fear any "whiff of glancing obloquy" on my part.

My request for elaboration merely stemmed from my not "recogniz[ing] the ingenuous naïveté of Omon Bozhd's remarks" and taking both what he says and Farr's words at face value. I suppose that Friefeld sees, say, Nike letting third world children make sneakers for less than a pittance as yet another "classic expression of Yankee post-war dynamism".

As for his clarification, I am afraid it is a bit . . . disingenuous. The issue is not of 'giving or not giving' but merely of 'not taking'.

Regards,
Alain Schremmer

P.S. Re. Rhoads. For the life of me, I still cannot understand what the hullabaloo is about: COSMOPOLIS is just a place where people converse. There is no more reason for them to restrict themselves to talking about Vance than, say, for mathematicians having tea in the Department's lounge to restrict themselves to talking mathematics. I note, by the way, that there was no objection to the piece on whisky.

But, Rhoads finally did it: I will not tolerate anyone ascribing to me a "noble attitude". I demand an apology.



To the Editor,

Following are a few miscellaneous comments, the sharing of which allows me to free up some communication output buffer space, and a modicum of closure is thereby achieved.

First and foremost, it was with great relief that I read that Wave 1 books are on their way, and should arrive at

my door in California very soon. I am suffering from an acute case of VDS: Vance Deprivation Syndrome. Admittedly this is self-inflicted. Several months ago I made the decision not to read any Vance until I got my VIE, so the VIE reading experience would be maximally delightful, or at least fresh. A Vance book is usually prominent in my current reading stack, and it is rare that I have gone as long as a month without a Vance tarriance. If Wave 1 doesn't get here quick, who knows what grievous damage unchecked VDS might wreak upon my inner processes and sensitivities. I can only ask for maximum expeditiousness from all concerned, and suggest with a certain sinister silkiness that the spell of the Guileful Guilt Trip will be directed toward those who cause delays, as soon as I can find a sandestin who is currently accepting new consulting assignments to implement the dreaded spell.

Next, I must thank Chuck King for getting me interested in rye whiskey. I had tried virtually all the other whiskeys and labels he mentioned—particularly the single malt scotches—but had always disdained rye. He's right: it's a worthy spirit. I even found a bottle of hard-to-find Old Potrero (for \$61), and am enjoying its distinctive attributes, including the way the 124.4 barrel proof strength lightens the heart and enlightens the soul.

Finally, as the conclusion of this really quite incredible project nears, I want to tip my hat to everyone who has contributed. There has been some controversy, some conflict and some inflammatory/accusatory prose, but none can doubt or deny the extraordinary achievement on the horizon. I encourage all in the VIE community to now lay down the words of strife, and prepare to join in celebration of meaningful, creative work well done, in fitting honor of a remarkable literary talent. And as I open that first VIE volume, I'll toast Jack Vance and the entire VIE team with a dram of Old Potrero.

Carl Goldman
Arroyo Grande CA, April 24, 2003



To the Editor,

Clifford Abrams crabs that 'AMIANTE's x-height is very small' and informs us that we should use Palatino. Here are the relevant letters of the two fonts blown up large and set side by side:

bbddgghhjjkkppqq

Palatino and AMIANTE stemmed letters.

If AMIANTE's x-height is 'very small', and assuming as Clifford Abrams suggests this is a bad thing, what are we

to think of Palatino's which is even smaller? (note the 'p' in particular.) In regard to 'darkness' (more typographical jargon) Palatino is as good as AMIANTE at 10pt. but in all other technical respects it is inferior. At a bigger size it would have to be compared to AMIANTE TITLE; then its width would be equally good but its darkness would be too marked and its x-height too great. As for which font is prettier; if Clifford Abrams wishes to prefer Palatino I can only say there is no accounting for tastes—particularly when it comes to people who don't know what they are talking about. When Clifford Abrams uses AMIANTE as a reader he will find it not only more legible than Palatino but than all currently available book fonts—just as Jack's Vance's stories are more worth reading than those of other contemporary writers.

As for that snake Martin Read, I doubt he will oblige me by noting in which paragraph on which page of which of the 38 published issues of COSMOPOLIS evidence of my alleged racism, xenophobia, holocaust-denial, anti-Semitism and neo-nazism are to be found. My doubt is founded on having requested this information for as long as such mud has been slung at me (close to a year) with no response but continued innuendo. Unlike Martin Read and like-minded vermin infesting the 'Vance BBS', I do not call, here or elsewhere, openly or in an underhand manner, in full or in part, for him to be silenced. His allegations touch upon the most amazing crimes of human history; the murder, committed within living memory, of literally tens of millions of our fellow human beings. Where each of us stands on the related issues is no matter for slinking instrumentalization. If Martin Read is eager to put me on public trial, very well; he should slither out from under his rock and present evidence. If he dares to do so, rather than evaporating like Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard, I will rejoice in the opportunity of demonstrating—to the satisfaction of intelligent and honest persons, the only kind that count—that the reality smothered beneath his circumloquacious outrage is the disgusting stupidity and nastiness he and his cronies have been demonstrating on the Vance BBS for so long.

Folks: it is really not as if I mind being criticized! Naturally I prefer kind words and praiseful cooing, and I am always gratefully attentive when such come my way—as they have abundantly both for me and all loyal hard-working VIEers in COSMOPOLIS 37. But even criticism can be of interest when it is less than 100% dumb and poisonous.

As for feeding bonbons to Robin; her conjectures are accurate! Clifford Abrams may not know a good thing when he sees it but not all of us suffer that shameful handicap. And as for Joel Riedesel . . . what can one do but bite one's lip in envy?

Paul Rhoads

P.S. A typographical note for those interested; note Palatino's 'squashed' 'g' (see above). This form descends, as far as I can tell, from Grandjean's *Romains du Roi*. It is a natural, or inevitable, development because of the need to enlarge the 'x-height' (or size of the body of letters relative to stems) when fonts are small. In fonts like Palatino, however, the squashed form, becoming a 'design element', starts to lose coherence.



From left to right: Garamond (16th century), Grandjean's Romains du Roi (early 17th), Fournier (mid 17th), Adobe Garamond' (late 20th), Lahure (mid 19th). The Adobe 'g' is 10pt and the others are actual relative sizes. The Garamond is a typical 16th century book size.

Regarding the 'g' stem, or fillip off the upper lobe, rather than the more modern foliate form, Adobe and Palatino retain Garamond's vague bar. But in the modern versions it becomes a hard-edge shard. This probably reflects the actual cut metal Garamond type, but certainly not the real end result; a gentle blot due to old printing technology and rough 16th century paper. It is a case of mistaking the skeleton for the essence; the same mistake is made by theoreticians of 'abstract' painting. Grandjean uses the foliate stem—also used, with variation, by Fournier and Lahure. Fournier shows the emergence of the open lower lobe, practiced with verve by Lahure. The Lahure letter was the basic model for the AMIANTE 'g', though AMIANTE retreats to more classical aspects, like the downward drooping foliate stem and lower lobe emphasis.

As contemplation of the above sample will show, the circumstances of Modern printing technology makes a return to actual 16 and 17th century type not only undesirable but absurd. Effort to cash in on the prestige of the past, resulting in such fonts as 'Adobe Garamond', produce non-functional hybrids which, on the deepest level, lack not only coherence but character. AMIANTE daintily steps out of a slough of typographical stagnation and decadence. It is, to my knowledge, the only typeface since Times which proceeds on the simple and proper basis of taking modern technology fully into account, drawing true nourishment from typographical history, and excluding faddishness. By 'nourishment' I do not mean mere gleaning of undigested bits of older letter forms in the Adobe manner, but integration of the ensemble of purposes motivating typographical innovation over the centuries. One example: a seductive aspect of old fonts is soft contours. When 19th century technology began to permit sharply defined forms, the design

excesses practiced by many typographers provoked the 'Old Style' reaction; an aesthetic which still holds sway. But contemporary imitations of Garamond, for example, while superficially imitating letter forms, fail to capture the mood of the great fonts because they fail to give the letters softness. Compare the Palatino and AMIANTE 'b' to see how this problem may be solved. Palatino's spiky busyness is just confusing at 10 or even 12pts.



To Mr. John Vance II,

On behalf of the British Library, I am writing to thank you, and through you the entire VIE Project Team, for the kind donation of a set of the VANCE INTEGRAL EDITION, the first twenty-two volumes of which have been received and are now being catalogued.

The sheer scale of the VIE achievement is impressive in every degree. For so many people to work in such a thoroughly professional and well coordinated way, exploiting the technology of the Internet to manage an immensely complex project must surely be a first, and is in itself an impressive demonstration of purpose, integrity and dedication.

The ends to which such work has been directed more than justify the effort. That the reconstruction of so many texts has been worthwhile has been evidenced by the many examples of editorial 'mangling' detailed in COSMOPOLIS. To have recaptured the author's unique voice in the original, and see these definitive texts used in future editions, will be a very rewarding experience for all those involved.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the key role played by Paul Rhoads, and the kind generosity of Mr. Paul Allen which has made this gift possible.

Yours sincerely,
A.E. Cunningham
28 April, 2003



To the Editor,

I read Mr. Read's letter in the last COSMOPOLIS. I fear that I am usually prepared to dislike opinions, no matter how infrequent or even bizarre, critical of my friends and me, as it saves time in the long run—after reading the opinion, I need not waste yet more time revising my opinion. Sadly, I have not taken a very favorable opinion of Mr. Read's letter, and hence this note.

I find that I cannot discern Mr. Read's object in writing. In his extremely long letter, he does seem to express these points: (1) he finds the ideas of Paul Rhoads "peculiar", he asserts that Paul has the right to express them, and he feels that these ideas are unlikely

to affect the VIE's success very much; (2) "Mr. Rhoads' polemics are objectionable...", publication in COSMOPOLIS "precludes even-handed debate" as might be the case on a BBS; (3) that bad feelings abound over Paul's articles; and (4) although Paul undoubtedly holds his convictions sincerely, these convictions have given offense to unnamed but sincere people but that fortunately Paul still has time to apologize.

This is all very curious. That someone's ideas are found to be peculiar to another person is hardly surprising. Perhaps "peculiar" isn't the word which Mr. Read was searching for. That Paul has the right to express his opinions is in fact the law of the land. That Paul's "polemics" are objectionable, however, is another story. Mr. Read does not describe the people who have suffered from reading objectionable opinions. I assume that the suffering is in proportion to the amount of reading which was done, but I was unaware that anyone would read such material involuntarily. Presumably, Mr. Read is one of these individuals who find themselves unable to stop reading Mr. Rhoads, since I can't imagine that he'd be so long-winded in print to defend, say, the delicate feelings of, oh, let us not name names, but simply imagine that Mr. Read knows A. Friend on Mike Berro's BBS. Perhaps this friend is too shy to speak up for himself.

I am almost in laughter at the thought that COSMOPOLIS does not provide a civilized forum for discussion: in Mr. Read's letter, he compares the situation of publication in COSMOPOLIS, with respect to debate, unfavorably to that of Mike Berro's bulletin board. My opinion is quite different from Mr. Read's: the situation on Mike's BBS is typical of a BBS: many people are pleasantly chatting about Vance, engaged in 'conversations' of interest to themselves—others have engaged in an inflammatory and disreputable series of slanders, insults and intimidations thinly disguised as 'debate'. The difference between the two types of discussion is night and day, as is their purpose. And in this latter category the difference in the two venues, COSMOPOLIS and the bulletin board, could hardly be greater. . . one might as well compare the New York Times to graffiti.

To Mr. Read's notion that publication in COSMOPOLIS confers unfair advantage on the article writer, I have two comments. I understand his objection: Bob Lacovara writes an article with which Mr. Read chooses to disagree. Mr. Read then writes a letter for the next issue, but the Editor sends Bob the letter, and Bob responds carefully and at his leisure, and in the perspective of a third party reader, Mr. Read is refuted immediately after his letter is printed. Mr. Read must then chew his mustache until his following letter may appear another month later. I share this sense of frustration with Mr. Read: it is one of the reasons I eschew a mustache.

The Editor, Mr. Benson, will tell anyone who asks that at one time I made precisely this objection to the

way my letter in objection to some idiocy written by Till Noever was handled. . . I felt that I was debating from the bleacher seats. Derek made the same sort of response to me that he has made to Mr. Read in the previous COSMOPOLIS: in general, this doesn't happen, and the management circle of the VIE does not review COSMOPOLIS prior to publication.

My second comment is more general: the author has taken the time and effort to write; the critic's letter follows, and as a courtesy to the author he is permitted to refute the critic with immediacy. Anyone who reads magazines which publish letters from readers will see that it is not uncommon to give an author the cat seat, and allow him to answer his critics in the same edition in which the critical reader's letter appears. In any event, COSMOPOLIS is published to the standards of discussion which are held by the officers and board of the VIE, and executed by its editor, so however Derek wishes to handle such matters is entirely up to him: there are arguments for and against.

(A sidebar: since the articles and letters in which Till Noever and I debated the pleasure of life in ancient Egypt, I have had a long and surprising e-mail correspondence with him on another topic entirely, a complex topic at that. I was astounded to see that Till had become far more intelligent and discerning in the interval since we first crossed ideas at least in this sense: he was actually in agreement with my position, in fact, he had thought about it more and more clearly than I had. I now hope one day to have the opportunity to return to the topic of ancient Egypt with Till, preferably over good food and as many bottles of Tanglefoot Ale as are necessary to resolve our disagreement, no matter how many it may require.)

In any event, at the end of the letter I come to the strangest thing of all. I read that Mr. Rhoads still has opportunity to apologize (to whom?) for writing (oh my!) objectionable (peculiar?) but (naturally) sincerely held ideas. Now look here folks: apologies are offered to ameliorate injury. Mr. Read states that he doesn't think that Mr. Rhoads' opinions have injured the VIE, and I cannot imagine how any other injury has been done, therefore I cannot imagine what makes Mr. Read think that Paul Rhoads owes anyone an apology.

Well, I have said this often, but why not say it again, it's just ink on paper, right? Here's a take on the matter, Mr. Read: if you don't like Paul Rhoads' opinions, don't read his articles. You will be a happier person as a result, since there's just about no chance at all that Mr. Rhoads will alter his opinions merely because he discovers that some people disagree with him. Further, you asked to receive COSMOPOLIS, you aren't forced to read it. We can't refund your money. . . we don't charge. If you feel that COSMOPOLIS is a poor place to conduct debate, then by all means return to Mike Berro's BBS, and debate all

day. The VIE isn't a debating society, in any event. In fact, I do not see that you are a subscriber, or a volunteer: you are an interested party who has chosen to appear with criticisms, non-constructive ones at that, and you expect a polite hearing. Despite the fact that you have little standing in our effort other than casual interest and possibly total ignorance of who we are, how we formed this venture, and how we have struggled to publish Vance's works, you have had at least that: a polite hearing. If you had written a similar letter to a commercial firm about one of the vice-presidents, you might have gotten a polite form letter, if that much.

I mention the fact that Mr. Read has only a tenuous connection with the VIE for a purpose. In fact, there's no requirement that anyone be a subscriber or a volunteer to the VIE to participate in an article or essay in COSMOPOLIS. I mention it because Mr. Read expresses the notion that Mr. Rhoads' personality and opinions are in some way, shape or form disadvantageous to the work of the VIE. Well, here's another opinion. The work of the VIE isn't to provide a forum for endless discussion between those of us who work and bystanders on the street. It is to produce the best possible version of all of the work of Jack Vance for those who would purchase same and further to promote the work of Jack Vance. Here is a crucial point: it is precisely because of the sort of opinions which Paul Rhoads holds, and the energy with which he moves beyond words into actions that books are now on their way to subscribers. In contrast, the various critics who have surfaced over the years have rarely had a net positive effect towards reaching VIE goals.

Mr. Read: Paul Rhoads is a do-er in this effort, not a talker. If you wish to make a positive contribution, by all means do something positive. If you wish to criticize, it's really too late. Don't waste any more of your time. The works of Jack Vance are in the finest shape they have ever been in, and the first half is already in the hands of very happy subscribers. It is bootless to criticize the fielding of the winning team.

Bob Lacovara



Closing Words

Thanks to proofreaders Linda Escher, Rob Friefeld, and Jim Pattison.

COSMOPOLIS Submissions: when preparing articles for COSMOPOLIS, please refrain from fancy formatting. Send plain text. For COSMOPOLIS 39, please submit articles and Letters to the Editor to Derek Benson: benson@online.no Deadline for submissions is May 28.

Derek W. Benson, Editor

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