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Remarks in Connection with the VIE

I have previously expressed my reaction to the *VIE* publications verbally to family, friends and assorted *VIE* volunteers. But it occurs to me that I should do the same in a more personal and direct way, to Paul Rhoads, the *VIE* membership, and anyone else who happens to read *Cosmopolis*.

First of all, I am overcome by marvelling incredulity when I handle these books. Fifty years ago I thought I would become a million word per year practitioner, and wrote the first two Magnus Ridolph stories in one weekend, and sent them off in first draft to Startling Stories (who, incidentally, bought them without so much as wincing). If at that time someone had speculated that many years later my stories would be the *raison d'être* for such a project as the *VIE*, I would have rolled up my eyes and bought him another drink.

In any case, the *VIE* is now extant, to my natural approval. Unquestionably, for these books we have Paul Rhoads to thank. He initiated the project; he created a distinctive typography for the edition, he has contributed original art-work to the effort, and has worked full time for close to four years to see the job through. Paul is clearly an artistic genius, and comes with a full complement of talents and idiosyncracies, some of which are revealed in the pages of *Cosmopolis*. Particularly in view of his achievement, when he chooses to articulate his thoughts, I see no reason why he should be denied the protection of the First Amendment, as well as the benign acquiescence of his colleagues.

Many others have of course contributed tremendous time and effort to the project. I hope one day to congratulate everyone personally, perhaps at some grand festival where the cuisine is Class AAA111, where all the Scotch has been distilled on Islay, and where Champagne flows everywhere, even from the drinking fountains.

Until then, best regards to everyone,

Jack Vance

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 29, 2003

From the Editor

Bob Lacovara, Acting

This is another transition issue in the life of our project. Derek Benson now joins the exclusive ranks of Editor, Emeritus, and I am sure that we cannot properly thank him for his efforts. Derek has edited *Cosmopolis* since issue 17: in fact, Derek edited, proofed, directed his proofing team, and set *Cosmopolis*. This is an enormous amount of work, for each issue, and I doubt that he ever spent less than 25 hours per month on this immensely important volunteer effort. Many thanks!



Jack in the Cage

Patrick Dusolier

Relentlessly pursuing my trivial research work through Jack's texts for nuncupatory details, paltry occurrences and uninteresting connections, I have selected for this month's article a recurrent theme used by Jack: the cage.

After collating references throughout the texts (some may have escaped me, I will be pleased to receive further contributions from the *Cosmopolis* Readers), I have distinguished seven categories of cages in Jack's oeuvre. They are:

- The Swinging Cages
- The Detention Cages
- The Punishment Cages
- The Execution Cages
- The Nuisance Cages
- The Observation Cages
- The Conveyance Cages

They are detailed further down in this article.

The other distinction between cages is based on their composition and construction. I will leave to the readers, as a game, to try to identify which cage is referred to, and in which book. The answers are in the part where I expand on the detailed categories . . . Do not peek, do not cheat! Essentially, we find:

- a capsule woven of iron bars
- a cage two feet wide, three feet long, and four feet high
- a wicker cage

- a withe cage
- cages on drays, with a heavy wire-mesh
- a cage made of flexible splines, charged with electricity
- a cage of light
- a cage of hardwood bars
- a beehive-shaped cage
- a giant bird-cage
- a cage, about three feet on a side, framed with heavy timbers, grilled with iron bars three-quarters of an inch in diameter.
- a rusted cage
- a cage of silver bars
- a gigantic cage made of glass

I have found cage references in a large number of texts (24!), as follows:

- Araminta Station*
- Big Planet*
- Blue World*
- The Book of Dreams*
- The Brave Free Men*
- The Chasch*
- Charges* (previously published as *To Live Forever*)
- Coup de Grace*
- Cugel The Clever*
- The Dirdir*
- Domains of Koryphon* (previously published as *The Gray Prince*)
- Madouc*
- The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet* (previously published as *Showboat World*)
- The Man In The Cage*
- Mazirian The Magician*
- Palace of Love*
- The Pnume*
- Ports of Call*
- Rhialto The Marvellous*
- Sjambak:*
- The Star King*
- Suldrun's Garden*
- Trullion: Alastor 2262*
- Vandals Of The Void*

The seven categories of cages, as I saw them:

1/ The Swinging Cages:

These are specially designed to keep prisoners above the ground, generally in public so that they can provide an educational message to other potential wrongdoers.

- in *Clarges* (previously published as *To Live Forever*): we have the famous 'Cage of Shame':

"From the Actuarian hung a capsule woven of iron bars: the Cage of Shame."

- in *Sjambak*: in Singhalût, on the planet Cirgamesç, the reporter Wilbur Murphy discovers a gruesome sight:

"In the center of the square a twenty-foot pole supported a cage about two feet wide, three feet long, and four feet high. Inside this cage crouched a naked man."

Prince Ali-Tomás is more detached about the whole thing:

"That," said Ali-Tomás, "is a sjambak. As you see," a faint note of apology entered his voice, "we attempt to discourage them."

- in *Ports of Call*: from Tutter's description, it seems that the Arctcs also practice the 'swinging cage' game:

"The Arctcs came down and I heard their outcries, but their bats grew tired and they failed to find me; otherwise, at this very moment I would be dangling in a wicker cage high over Slevin Çulch."

2/ The Detention Cages:

These are just to hold slaves, prisoners, condemned people awaiting execution, and suchlike. They may be uncomfortable, but not sadistically so. They constitute the largest category:

- In *Blue World*: when Sklar Hast and his group of malcontents have left the Home Floats and found their new home, they must ensure that the few intercessors they took with them as hostages will not have access to coracles as a means of escape. The threat of being encaged should dissuade them:

"The problem was debated at length, and finally a solution was achieved. Most of the coracles were to be taken to a distant float and hidden, where the intercessors could not find them. Only sufficient coracles to serve the needs of swindlers and blackguards and hooligans, at their respective tasks of fish-swindling, arbor-building, and net-emplacement, would be retained. These would be moved to a location forbidden to the intercessors on pain of incarceration in a withe cage."

- in *The Chasch*: cages on wheels. The caravan that the Emblems planned to attack includes special detention drays:

"To the river-bank lumbered motor-drays with six-foot wheels, piled to astonishing heights with bales, parcels, and in certain cases, cages in which huddled men and women."

and again, later

"Çreat drays rumbled past. Some were top-heavy with bales and parcels; others carried tiers of cages, in which blank-faced children, young men, young women, were mixed indiscriminately."

The Flower of Cath is also encaged in a dray:

"a particularly massive dray carried a house with barred windows and iron-bound doors. The front deck was enclosed by heavy wire mesh: in effect, a cage."

- in *Coup de Çrace*: a sophisticated detention device to contain the "temporary wards" of Lester Bonfils, "three savages in all reality: palaeolithic inhabitants of S-Cha-6":

"The three palaeolithics were confined in an ingenious cage of flexible splines, evidently collapsible. The cage of itself could not have restrained the muscular savages; the splines apparently were charged with electricity."

- in *Mazirian The Magician*: Turjan is keeping one of his creatures in a cage:

"Turjan sat in his workroom, legs sprawled out from the stool, back against and elbows on the bench. Across the room was a cage; into this Turjan gazed with rueful vexation. The creature in the cage returned the scrutiny with emotions beyond conjecture."

- in *Mazirian The Magician* again, in the 'Guyal of Sferè' episode: Kerlin imprisons one of the ghosts in a cage of light:

"Here the ghost wept in its cage of light, and searched constantly for a dark aperture to seep his essence through."

- in *Palace of Love*: on Sarkovy, a set of cages for condemned men awaiting execution. Let us listen to our guide Edelrod, a Venefice of the Undermaster category:

"This is the seat of the Convenance, from which the judgments come." He pointed to a platform at the top of the caravanserai, where four caged men gazed disconsolately down into the square. "To the far right stands Kakarsis Asm."

- in *Domains of Koryphon* (previously published as *The Gray Prince*): Jemasze instructs the Wind-runner met on the Palga:

"Seek out Moffamides the priest; tell him you have met us; tell him what occurred, and tell him that if the flaps guarding the sky-car are as false as those he gave us, we'll take him down to the Alouan and lock him in a cage forever. He'll never escape us; we'll follow his track wherever he goes. Take him that message, and be certain that he hears you out!"

- in *Palace of Love*: while exploring the Palace, Gersen sees

"various types of rooms and cages. They contained an assortment of boys, girls, youths, maidens, young men and women, sometimes separate, sometimes together" . . .

This is where Virole Falushe's 'experiments' are conducted . . .

- in *Ports of Call*: Myron looks into the *Handbook to the Planets* for the world Taubry, and reports his findings to Dame Hester, who is not enthusiastic:

"There is no mention of exotic ceremonies or anything which sounds particularly interesting, except that criminals are placed in cages and displayed for public edification in the central plaza?"

Later, reading the "Advisory", Myron is informed of the rate of penalties, with typical Vancean imprecision:

"Trivial misdeeds incur confinement in one of the cages at the eastern edge of the plaza, for one-half day, one day, or longer."

- in *The Brave Free Men*: two Roguskhoi imps, "two small red-bronze creatures", are held in a cage of hardwood bars. According to the superintendent, "on the right stands Musel; on the left Erxter".

- in *Madouc*: Twisk is giving advice to Madouc, Sir Pom-pom and Travante:

"Do not fare west along Munkins Road; you would come to Castle Doldil, the seat of three-headed Throop the ogre. He has caged many a brave knight and devoured many more, perhaps including gallant Sir Pellinore."

Fortunately, for a happy ending to the novel, we later find that no such fate befell the noble Sir Pellinore.

- in *The Star King*: once on Beauty Dasce's hideaway red dwarf, Gersen spots the crater where Dasce has built his dome:

"In the center of the crater was a cage, and in the cage sat a naked man: tall, haggard, his face a ghastly wreck, his body crooked, marked with a hundred welts."

This is the unfortunate Robin Rampold, who has spent seventeen years in this uncomfortable position.

- in *Suldrun's Garden*: in the village Vervold, where the village smith is to be boiled alive in a giant cauldron:

"Chief Archer Hunolt came first down the lane from Fair Aprillion, followed by four guards and a wagon carrying a beehive-shaped cage, in which sat the condemned man."

- in *Suldrun's Garden* again: the last apartment occupied by Carfilhiot before his execution is a cage:

"Carfilhiot occupied a cage on the parade ground at the base of the castle. A great gibbet was erected, with the arm sixty feet from the ground. At noon on a raw overcast day, with wind blowing strangely from the east, Carfilhiot was carried to the gibbet; and again passionate voices were heard. "He escapes too easily!"

- in *Suldrun's Garden* yet again: we have the cage of all cages, the great cage in which Carfilhiot imprisons Mad King Deuel, where he will meet an appropriate demise:

"Mad King Deuel attempted a gallant flight across the cage, but his wings failed him; he fell to the floor and broke his neck."

- in *Rhialto The Marvellous*: upon leaving the manse Falu to "stroll in the forest for a period", Rhialto gives instructions to Ladanque, "his chamberlain and general factotum". When Ladanque inquires about the clevenger, Rhialto gives this beautiful reply, another Vancean jewel:

"Pay it no heed. Do not approach the cage. Remember, its talk of both virgins and wealth is illusory; I doubt if it knows the meaning of either term."

3/ The Punishment Cages:

These are the really uncomfortable ones (the 'swinging cages' excepted), designed to inflict pain in addition to detention, although not deadly.

- in *The Man In The Cage*: of course . . . how else? Led by El Kazim through the Dar Batha, Darrell Hutson discovers:

"The center of the room was occupied by a cage, about three feet on a side, framed with heavy timbers, grilled with iron bars three-quarters of an inch in diameter."

And later, he will be in a position to appreciate a similar contraption at close hand.

- in *Mazirian The Magician*: while Mazirian is pursuing T'sain, he thinks of punishing her for the exertion she is imposing on him. At least, in context, we can assume the cage he has in mind will not be upholstered with velvet:

"He drew nearer to her, exulting. He must punish her for leading him so far. . . The ancient stone stairs below his work-room led deep and at last opened into chambers that grew ever vaster as one went deeper. Mazirian had found a rusted cage in one of these chambers."

- in *The Pnume*: when the Pnume have captured Zap 210 and are preparing her to be crystallized, Adam Reith finds her:

"Beside the river stood a cage of silver bars; huddled in the cage was Zap 210."

- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet* (previously published as *Showboat World*): on board the *Fironzelle's Golden Conceit*, sitting in the felon's cage, we find a prisoner with "black-bearded face and a pair of glittering eyes". He is to play the part of a condemned man in a play, where realism is pushed to the limit. I love the watchman's answer when Zamp asks him what was the man's crime:

"Brigandage, raid, atrocity and murder. Still, all in all, not so bad a fellow."

How is that for tolerance of other human beings' faults?

4/ The Execution Cages:

- The 'drowning' kind is found in *The Book of Dreams*: on Moudervelt, when trying to smuggle weapons into Maunish, Kirth Gersen is told by a border guard that

"across on Maunish you would be placed in a cage, submerged in the river for three hours, or until you were thoroughly drowned. They are barbarically strict in this regard. Give me the other parts, please."

Another instance of 'drowning cage', but with no details as to the actual *modus operandi*, is found in *Suldrun's Garden*. This is one of the accessories used by Faude Carfilhiot to punish his enemies (of which there seems to be plenty):

"Carfilhiot mounted his horse and gave the signal to ride. Two abreast, the troop galloped west, past the reeking poles of penance, beside the drowning-cages along the riverbank and their accessory derricks and down the road toward the village Bloodywen."

- The 'freezing' kind can be found in *Araminta Station*,

where the unfortunate Lilo is put to death in the Monomantic Seminary. As told by Danton to Glawen Clattuc:

"Lilo was blamed. They chided her for bringing you extra sheets, and would not listen to her denials. Mutis and Funo put her in the owl's-cage. Last night the winds blew harsh and bitter. This morning she was dead."

- The 'frying' kind is in *Trullion: Alastor 2262*, as part of the prutanshyr process. This is described by Shira, who has gone to see the execution of captured starmenters:

"Thirty-three they caught, and had them all in cages out in the square. All the preparations were put up before their very eyes."

The cages are then

"grappled by hooks, then lifted and dipped into the oil, then hung up on a great high frame"

- The 'hunting' kind is found in *The Dirdir* and in *The Pnume*: in Sivishe stands the famous 'Glass Cage' as it is called in *The Dirdir*. But in *The Pnume*, Jack has modified it to 'The Glass Box' . . . No matter, cage or box, this is where condemned men are 'executed by hunting', an original form of death penalty.

5/ The Nuisance Cages

I found one case only:

- in *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet* (previously published as *Showboat World*): competitors are trying to disturb one of Apollon Zamp's representations. Fortunately, Bonko is ever vigilant, and has spotted "two men in voluminous robes", carrying 'concealed objects' . . . His instinct was correct, and he can triumphantly report to Zamp:

"Villains as I suspected! They carried cages of pests, vermin and fire-hornets, which they were about to release into the audience. We thrashed them and threw them into the river."

6/ The Observation Cages

A specific utilitarian type of cage, with no sinister connotation (except perhaps in *Vandals* . . .):

- in *Vandals Of The Void*: let's look at the big telescope on the Moon, also known as 'The Killer':

"The mirror hung at the bottom of the trusswork tube; almost at the top was the observer's cage, dwarfed in comparison with the mirror."

- in *Big Planet*: we are now in Myrtlesee, and Nymaster is taking Glystra on the way to the pens, where he hopes to find Nancy:

"Sometimes a priest stands in the turret watching across the desert. This is when they expect important guests, and wish to ready the oracle." He peered, squinted. "Hah, there he is, scanning the wide world."

Glystra saw the dark shape in a cage atop the dome, standing stiff as a gargoyle."

7/ The Conveyance Cages

In fact, I found only one instance of a cage being used for transportation . . .

- in *Cugel The Clever* (previously published as *The Eyes Of The Overworld*): when Iucounu sends Cugel on a mission to Cutz, Cugel has to use a cage:

Iucounu pointed to a cage. "This will be your conveyance. Inside."

This cage is carried by a demon. The take-off is fine, but the pilot is rather negligent in landing procedures:

"At last the demon reached the north shore of the ocean. Swooping to the beach it vented a vindictive croak, and allowed the cage to fall from a height of fifteen feet. Cugel crawled from the broken cage."



Post Proofing Update

Chris Corley

Post-Proofing has been operating at full capacity for the past several weeks, with all seven teams busy and a backlog of up to four assignments. Post-Proofing for Wave 2 is approximately half-complete, and as of this writing (September 27), all teams are busy and one assignment is in the queue. The Composition team has been doing an outstanding job of keeping Post-Proofing busy. Statistics reported here include all texts that have completed Post-Proofing, as well as four assignments that require only a final review before submission of the Post-Proofing Final Report and which will be complete by press time for this issue of *Cosmopolis*.

A total of 40 of 82 Wave 2 texts (49%) have completed Post-Proofing, for a total of 784K Wave 2 words (40%). The beginning of Wave 2 Post-Proofing was characterized by a high percentage of shorter texts, but lately we have proofed several novel-length texts, including: *Chasch*, *Dirdir*,

Pnume, *Anome*, *Dogtown/Freitzke*. Half the remaining texts are longer than 20K words, which is about the length of *Rumfuddle* and *Abercrombie Station*.

The normal procedure for assigning incoming texts to Post-Proofing teams is round-robin, with the longest-idle team receiving the assignment. This occasionally is modified slightly depending on length of texts previously assigned and length of current assignment. For example, at beginning of Wave 2 all Post-Proofing teams were clamoring for longer texts after a string of three or four shorter assignments, so priority for long texts was given to teams that had worked on only short texts.

Here is a summary of the work completed by all extant teams, for both Wave 1 and Wave 2:

TEAM	ASSIGNMENTS COMPLETED	*KWORDS PROOFED
Clam Muffins	20	4398
Dragon Masters	12	3097
King Kragen's Exemplary Corps	11	2193
Penwipers	12	4458
Sandestins	11	2120
Spellers of Forlorn Encystment	17	4332
Tanchinaros	16	4538

(*Note: KWords completed computed as product of assignment and number of proofers completing the assignment.)

The grand total of word-count proofed is 26.4 million. This is a monumental achievement—a result of many thousands of hours of volunteer hours and a tribute to the dedication of dozens of Post-Proofers. In fact, 117 volunteers have completed at least one Post-Proofing assignment. Here is the Post-Proofing Roll of Honor, including number of assignments and word-count completed:

NAME	KWORDS PROOFED	ASSIGNMENTS COMPLETED
Joel Riedesel	622.121
Robin Rouch	600.3	20
Bob Luckin	583.121
Jim Pattison	576.9	20
David Reitsema	570.716
Robert Melson	566.519
Bill Sherman	563.118
Robert Collins	556.513

Andrew Edlin	556.5	13	Anthony Thompson	116.9	6
Rob Friefeld	556.5	13	Sue Manning	115.0	4
Rob Knight	556.5	13	Mike Nolan	114.7	4
Till Noever	549.1	17	Harry Erwin	105.4	4
Karl Kellar	525.7	14	Enrique Alcatena	104.9	3
Mike Barrett	524.4	12	Ivo Steijn	104.6	2
Errico Rescigno	519.7	11	Glenn Raye	99.1	2
Malcolm Bowers	512.8	19	Bob Lacovara	94.3	2
Bob Moody	495.6	17	Greg Delson	83.8	5
Charles King	493.1	15	Richard Chandler	80.3	1
Betty Mayfield	487.3	11	David Gorbet	80.3	1
Mike Schilling	479.0	12	Jody Kelly	80.3	1
Jeff Ruszczuk	477.3	14	Jurgen Devriese	75.1	4
Ed Gooding	452.0	15	Patrick Dymond	74.1	4
Rod MacBeath	404.6	9	Eric Newsom	68.4	3
Rob Gerrand	404.4	15	Mark Shoulder	67.9	5
Top Changwatchai	386.8	8	Nicola DiAngeli	62.7	2
William Schaub	379.9	9	Derek Benson	59.2	2
Marc Herant	362.5	13	Kelly Walker	54.2	3
Michael Smith	361.3	9	Cameron Thornley	53.6	1
Gabriel Stein	359.2	10	Ken Kellett	51.2	2
Erik Arendse	334.4	14	Brian Bieniowski	49.4	2
Peter Ikin	320.9	14	Dave Worden	46.3	1
Hans Van Der Veeke	320.4	13	Dave Kennedy	44.3	6
Marcel Van Genderen	320.4	13	Andreas Björklind	37.2	3
Michael Duncan	310.4	11	John Hawes	23.4	2
Yannick Gour	298.6	11	Frank Dalton	22.1	1
Angus Campbell-Cann	296.6	11	Dan Chang	17.4	1
Mark Bradford	288.8	11	Brian Koning	17.4	1
Dirk Jan Verlinde	285.5	10	Stephane Leibovitsch	17.0	2
Carina Björklind	282.6	7	George Bouchie	16.9	2
Lucie Jones	282.6	10	Linda Heaphy	14.9	1
Mark Straka	279.3	9	Patrick Van Efferen	12.8	2
Luk Schoonaert	265.4	4	Matt Picone	11.7	1
Ian Allen	259.4	4	Russ Wilcox	9.1	1
Chris McCormick	250.6	8	Michael Abramoff	9.0	1
Juriaan Kalkman	247.9	11	Jeffrey Cook	9.0	1
Charles Hardin	244.5	6	Jason Ives	9.0	1
Fred Zoetemeyer	239.6	10	Quentin Rakestraw	9.0	2
Mark Henricks	231.1	3	John Ludley	8.3	1
Willem Timmer	229.9	10	Jean-Marc Dardier	7.4	1
Simon Read	229.4	9	Scott Benenati	6.9	1
Matt Colburn	221.0	7	Gilbert Harrus	6.5	1
Deborah Cohen	211.3	9	Carl Spalletta	6.5	1
Martin Green	210.8	6	Dominic Brown	4.6	1
Michel Bazin	210.0	9			
Patrick Hudson	205.2	6			
Mark Adams	189.5	4			
Neil Anderson	188.9	7			
Brent Heustess	187.9	5			
Tony Graham	181.2	5			
David Mortimore	170.1	5			
Per Kjellberg	169.1	7			
Michael Turpin	167.7	4			
John Audcent	167.3	2			
Erec Grim	163.7	8			
Evert Jan de Groot	159.8	9			
Christian Corley	148.5	4			
Wiley Mittenberg	147.8	4			
Jasper Groen	147.8	6			
Michael Mitchell	137.2	6			
Axel Roschinski	124.7	7			
Antony Kimlin	122.4	4			
Kristine Anstrats	120.9	3			

A few comments on the Post-Proofing Honor Roll:

A total of ten new volunteers have joined Post-Proofing in the past two months. There's still time—get involved in the *VIE* if you are not already!

Every Post-Proofing, from top to bottom of the list, is important to insuring a high-quality final result: *VIE* volumes with a minimal number of errors. Every reader for a text reduces the chance that an error will slip through into print.

Sixteen Post-Proofers are members of the Half-Million club, with the Dynamic Duo of Joel Riedesel and Robin Rouch leading the pack with 622 and 600 KWords respectively.

The Nitpicker's Corner

Dr. A.S. Axo, TVS, HTMD

Editor's Introduction: here is a new chronicle in Cosmopolis, destined to become a regular feature. Its purpose is to address continuity or consistency issues as found in Jack's texts, particularly (but not exclusively) when they are of a scientific nature. Dr. A.S. Axo, Head of the Trivial Matters Department at the Trembling Waters Academy on Thesse, has accepted to take charge of this new feature. The format of this chronicle is in two parts: a first part where the "issue" is presented, and where the Reader is invited to reflect upon it on his own. In the second part, Dr. Axo expounds his personal reflections and theories.

Dr. Axo asks me to stress that he will welcome any contribution or reaction from the Cosmopolis Readers, who will receive due credit.

I have chosen for this month's theme the delicate question of *Pao's* Characteristics.

In *Languages of Pao*, Chapter 1 opens with the characteristics of the planet *Pao* (Jack does not indicate the name of the book from which those characteristics are extracted: no doubt it is some sort of *Handbook To The Planets*, as in several other novels):

In the heart of the Polymark Cluster, circling the yellow star Auriol, is the planet *Pao*, with the following characteristics:

Mass: 1.73 (in standard units)
Diameter: 1.39
Surface Gravity: 1.04

What do these characteristics suggest to you?
See the Nitpicker's own reflections, which follow here.



Pao's Characteristics: the Nitpicker's reflections

No matter what the reference planet is (it is most likely to be "Old Earth"), at least one can be sure that all the characteristics detailed here refer to the same standard planet. There is then an inconsistency in this set of characteristics. Mass, diameter and surface gravity for a given planet are not independent values, but are linked according to a basic law of physics, worked out by Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727 according to the Christian Calendar). The surface gravity of a planet is proportional to its mass, and inversely proportional to the square of its radius. Therefore, in standard units (in which the radius value is equal to the diameter value . . .), the characteristics of any planet should respect the formula:

$$(\text{Surface Gravity}) \cdot (\text{Diameter})^2 / \text{Mass} = 1$$

This is not the case for *Pao*: the corresponding value is 1.1615

This may mean that the given mass is too small, or that the diameter or surface gravity is too high, or any combination of variations that can be applied to those values so as to reach the value 1 in the formula.

Let us examine some possibilities:

Let Mass and Diameter be assumed as correct: then the Surface Gravity of *Pao* should be $1.04 \cdot 1.1615 = 1.208$. If the reference planet is "Old Earth", as we have assumed it to be, this is then substantially higher than what the human body, as we know it, can bear for long without severe strain. A population having lived for generations on such a high-gravity planet would have adapted over time, and would now be heavily muscled, squat, with large and strong bones, in particular a strong backbone structure (no Frenchmen on *Pao*, then), fallen arches probably. In no way are we informed that the *Pao* population presents such characteristics. We only know that:

"The *Paonese* are a homogeneous people, of medium stature, fair-skinned with hair-color ranging from tawny-brown to brown-black, with no great variations of feature or physique."

The description made of the Panarch Aiello Panasper is more informative:

"He was a large man, small-boned, well-fleshed."

A small-boned man, especially a well-fleshed one, would be in a sorry state under 1.208 G . . .

The summary description of the younger *Paonese* women, part of a brood destined to Palafox's insatiable appetite, also seem at odds with what would be required to survive such a gravity. In the eyes of young Beran Panasper:

"The women in their early maturity he disregarded, but the girls seemed easy and graceful, visions of erotic delight."

Of course, one might argue that Beran is hardly an objective observer: he has just reached puberty, and at that age, any female would seem "a vision of erotic delight". . . Not so! Note that Beran "disregarded the women in their early maturity", which indicates that he has already some discerning capacities (although he is still too young to realise that he may be disregarding a category most worthy of attention . . .) Another more acceptable argument would be that beauty (and grace) is in the eye of the beholder,

and that a squat, heavily muscled young buck, would find squat, heavily muscled young girls very attractive.

But it is most probable that the Surface Gravity of 1.04 is correct: in the human expansion across the Universe, let us assume that the criteria of a surface gravity close to that of Old Earth would have been a major factor in electing to colonise a planet. So assuming this value is indeed correct, let us consider what happens to the two other characteristics, as we re-calculate them accordingly:

Let Mass=1.73, then Diameter should be
 $1.39 * 1.1615 = 1.614$

In this case, the volume of the planet *Pao* would be 4.2 times the value of Old Earth (since the volume of a sphere varies with the cube of its radius). With a Mass only 1.73 that of Old Earth, *Pao* comes out with a specific mass of only 41% of that of Earth (1.73/4.2). It would then have to be made of much lighter elements than Old Earth. It is difficult to say more than this, because the inner structure of *Pao* might be very different from Earth's, in particular might have a central core of a different, lighter composition . . . At least, there is no indication (as there is amply for Big Planet), that *Pao* is lacking "precious metals" on the surface. I welcome any comments from *Cosmopolis* Readers on this matter.

Let Diameter = 1.39, then Mass should be 1.73/
 $1.1615 = 1.489$

In this case, the specific mass of *Pao* would be roughly 55% of that of Earth. A bit more "reasonable" than the previous case, but still raising similar questions..

There is another possibility to consider, which would explain away the apparent inconsistency of *Pao's* characteristics: that the laws of physics operate differently in the Universe at the time of *Languages of Pao*, at least in terms of "universal constants". Moreover, one would have to assume that the constant in Newton's Law is different in the vicinity of *Pao*, as compared to the vicinity of Old Earth (if the constant were simply different from our Universe's, but identical across Jack's Universe, it would not change anything to the basic issue of consistency).

Yet, another possibility is that the law of mutual attraction of masses might be different in Jack's Universe. For instance, if it happened that the Surface Gravity is still proportional to the Mass, but inversely proportional to the Radius to the power 1.56 (instead of 2), then the *Pao* characteristics could be consistent . Would such a formula throw a severe spanner in the cosmic works? Would we still have planets following graceful ellipses with a Sun at

one of the foci? Hard to say, it depends on whether other "physical laws" would have been modified as well . . . I will welcome any scientific analysis of this question from *Cosmopolis* Readers . . .

Conclusion:

I would argue that we should now:

either write to the editor of *Handbook To The Planets*, drawing his attention to this matter so that he can check: it might just be a typo in the edition that Jack had in hand . . .

or, should the first action fail to give satisfactory results, organize a scientific expedition to the planet *Pao*, and make our own measurements. This project will be known as the PEACE (*Pao* Expedition to Analyse Characteristics Extensively). In the name of Science, funds should be collected from Volunteer Contributors with no delay, in particular to procure a spaceship (I have a Fantamic Flitterwing in mind, available for a reasonable price at T.J. Space-yards): I volunteer to act as Treasurer, to gather the funds and keep them safe: any potential contributor should contact me personally, and I will provide the specifics of my numbered account at the Bank of Soumjiana.



You have done it!

VIE Work Credits

Compiled by Hans van der Veeke

Here we are again with new credits. A lot of work has been done in the past few weeks and slowly but surely we are getting there!

Credits that have been will to be published in *Cosmopolis* can now be found on the internet also. I have made a small website where they can be retrieved as soon as a vtext is finished. Surf to www.vie.tmfweb.nl/credits/index.htm to find them.

Check your name! A misspelling here may indicate a misspelling in our database, and thereafter in the books themselves.

We don't want to spell your name wrong, or leave off a Jr. or Esq., or to overlook you altogether! For any corrections, contact Hans van der Veeke at hans@vie.tmfweb.nl.

SPA OF THE STARS

Finished 1 July 2003

Digitizer

Luk Schoonaert

Pre-proofer

Steve Sherman

DD-Scanners

Charles King
Peter Strickland
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey

Hans van der Veeke

DD-Monkey

Charles King

Technoproofer

Matt Westwood

TI

Rob Friefeld
Paul Rhoads
Steve Sherman

Implementation

Joel Hedlund
Hans van der Veeke

Composition

Joel Anderson

RTF-diffing

Mark Bradford
Deborah Cohen

Composition Review

Chris Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation

Robin L. Rouch

Post-proofing

"Clam Muffins"
Robin L. Rouch (team manager)
Mark Herant
Karl Kellar
Dave Kennedy
Bob Luckin
Jim Pattison
Joel Riedesel
Patrick Van Efferen

NOISE

Finished 9 July 2003

Digitizers

Thomas Rydbeck
Hans van der Veeke

Pre-proofers

Helmut Hlavacs
Ralph Jas

DD-Scanners

Hervé Goubin
Damien G. Jones
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey

Hans van der Veeke

DD-Monkey

David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer

Matt Westwood

TI

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Paul Rhoads
Steve Sherman

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Hans van der Veeke

Composition

John A. Schwab

RTF-diffing

Charles King
Errico Rescigno

Composition Review

Marcel van Genderen
Brian Gharst

Correction Validation

Bob Luckin
Robin L. Rouch

Post-proofing

"King Kragen's Exemplary Corps"
Robert Melson (team manager)
Neil Anderson
Michel Bazin
Mark Bradford
Dominic Brown
Martin Green
Lucie Jones
Eric Newsom
Simon Read

CAT ISLAND

Finished 9 July 2003

Digitizer

David Mortimore

Pre-proofer

Chris McCormick

DD-Scanners

Richard Chandler
Joel Hedlund

DD-Jockey

Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey

Suan Hsi Yong

Special tasks

Steve Sherman

TI

Paul Rhoads
Steve Sherman
Anton Sherwood

Implementation

Mike Dennison
John McDonough

Composition

Andreas Irle

RTF-diffing

Charles King

Composition Review

Chris Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Robin L. Rouch

Correction Validation

Rob Friefeld
Charles King
Robin L. Rouch

Post-proofing

"Clam Muffins"
Robin L. Rouch (team manager)
Marc Herant
Karl Kellar
Dave Kennedy
Bob Luckin
Robert Melson
Jim Pattison
Joel Riedesel

THE WORLD THINKER

Finished 9 July 2003

Digitizer

John A. Schwab

Pre-proofers

Rob Friefeld
Per Kjellberg
Lyll Simmons

DD-Scanner

Richard Chandler

DD-Jockey

David Reitsema

DD-Monkey

David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer

Karl Keller

TI

Paul Rhoads
Jeffrey Ruszczyk
Steve Sherman

Implementation

Mike Dennison
Damien G. Jones

Composition

John A. Schwab

RTF-diffing

Deborah Cohen
Charles King

Composition Review

Christian J. Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Robin L. Rouch

Correction Validation

Marcel van Genderen
Robert Melson
Robin L. Rouch

Post-proofing

"Sandestins"
Jeffrey Ruszczyk (team manager)
Michael Abramoff
Deborah Cohen
Jeffrey Cook
Michael Duncan
Ed Gooding
Erec Grim
Jason Ives

GIFT OF GAB

Finished 15 July 2003

Digitizer

Thomas Rydbeck

DD-Scanners

Mark Adams
Richard Chandler

DD-Jockey

Dave Peters

DD-Monkey

R.C. Lacovara

Technoproofer

Ron Chernich

TI

Rob Friefeld
David A. Kennedy
Steve Sherman

Implementation

Derek W. Benson
Hans van der Veeke

Composition

Andreas Irle

RTF-diffing

Mark Bradford
Charles King
Bill Schaub

Composition Review

Joel Anderson
Marcel van Genderen
Brian Gharst
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation

Marcel van Genderen
Bob Luckin

Post-proofing

"Clam Muffins"
Robin L. Rouch (team manager)
Ed Gooding
Mark Herant
David Kennedy
Bob Luckin
Jim Pattison
Joel Riedesel

DREAM CASTLE

Finished 15 July 2003

Digitizer

John A. Schwab

Pre-proofers

Rob Friefeld
David Reitsema
Paul Wedderien

DD-Scanner

Richard Chandler

DD-Jockey

Hans van der Veeke

DD-Monkey

Steve Sherman

Technoproofer

Joel Riedesel

TI

Jeffrey Ruszczyk
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

Implementation

Derek W. Benson
Patrick Dusoulrier
David Reitsema

Composition

John A. Schwab

RTF-diffing

Mark Bradford
Bill Schaub

Composition Review

Christian J. Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Charles King

Correction Validation

Charles King
Robert Melson

Post-proofing

“Clam Muffins”
Robin L. Rouch (team manager)
Patrick van Efferen
Mark Herant
Karl Kellar
Dave Kennedy
Bob Luckin
Robert Melson
Jim Pattison
Joel Riedesel
Andrew Thompson

THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS

Finished 15 July 2003

Digitizer

Richard Chandler

Pre-proofers

Jasper Groen
Lee Lewis
David White

DD-Scanners

Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey

Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey

Charles King

Technoproofer

Rob Friefeld

TI

Rob Friefeld
Steve Sherman
Koen Vyverman

Implementation

Donna Adams
Joel Hedlund

Composition

Joel Anderson

RTF-diffing

Mark Bradford
Patrick Dusoulrier

Composition Review

Christian J. Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Charles King

Correction Validation

Bob Luckin

Post-proofing

“King Kragen’s Exemplary Corps”
Robert Melson (team manager)
Nicola de Angeli
Michel Bazin
Mark Bradford
Lucie Jones
Simon Read

SEVEN EXITS FROM BOCZ

Finished 25 July 2003

Digitizer

John A. Schwab

Pre-proofers

Brian Bieniowski
Rob Friefeld
John McDonough

DD-Scanners

Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey

David Reitsema

DD-Monkey

Charles King

Technoproofer

Hans van der Veeke

TI

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Robin L. Rouch
Tim Stretton

Implementation

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David Reitsema

Composition

John A. Schwab

RTF-diffing

Mark Bradford
Bill Schaub

Composition Review

Christian J. Corley
Charles King
Robin L. Rouch

Correction Validation

Rob Friefeld
Robert Melson

Post-proofing

“Spellers or Forlorn Encystment”
Till Noever (team manager)
Malcolm Bowers
Rob Gerrand
Ed Gooding
Peter Ikin
Bob Moody
Axel Roschinski
Bill Sherman
Mark Shoulder

THREE-LEGGED JOE

Finished 26 July 2003

Digitizer

Gan Uesli Starling

Special reformatting

R.C. Lacovara
Koen Vyverman

Pre-proofers

Patrick Dusoulrier
Damien G. Jones
R.C. Lacovara
Menno van der Leden

DD-Scanners

Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey

Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey

Charles King

Technoproofer

Fred Zoetemeyer

Special tasks

Suan His Yong

TI

David A. Kennedy
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

Implementation

Donna Adams
Mike Dennison

Composition

Joel Anderson

RTF-diffing

Patrick Dusoulrier
Charles King

Composition Review

Mark Adams
Marcel van Genderen
Karl Kellar
Charles King
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation

Marcel van Genderen
Rob Friefeld

Post-proofing

“Spellers or Forlorn Encystment”
Till Noever (team manager)
Malcolm Bowers
Harry Erwin
Rob Gerrand
Gilbert Harrus
Bob Moody
Axel Roschinski
Bill Sherman
Mark Shoulder

DOVER SPARGILL’S**GHAFTLY FLOATER**

Finished 31 July 2003

Digitizer

Gan Uesli Starling

Pre-proofer

Kurt Harriman

DD-Scanners

Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey

Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey

Charles King

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Fred Zoetemeyer

TI

David A. Kenndy
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

Implementation

Donna Adams
Hans van der Veeke

Composition

Joel Anderson

RTF-diffing

Mark Bradford
Deborah Cohen

Composition Review

Christian J. Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Charles King
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation

Robert Melson

Post-proofing

“King Kragen’s Exemplary Corps”
Robert Melson (team manager)
Neil Anderson
Michel Bazin
Mark Bradford
Martin Green
Lucie Jones
Wiley Mittenberg
Eric Newsom
Simon Read

THE FOX VALLEY MURDERS

Finished 1 August 2003

Digitizer

Mike Dennison

Pre-proofers

Deborah Cohen
Rob Friefeld
Steve Sherman
Suan Hsi Yong

DD-Scanners

Richard Chandler
Billy Webb
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey

David Reitsema

DD-Monkey

David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer

Hans van der Veeke

TI
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Steve Sherman

Implementation
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Derek W. Benson

Composition
Andreas Irle

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Deborah Cohen
Charles King

Composition Review
Marcel van Genderen
Charles King
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation
Rob Friefeld
Robert Melson

Post-proofing
"Tanchinaros"
David Reitsema (team manager)
Kristine Anstrats
Mike Barrett
Greg Delson
Charles King
Rod MacBeath
Michael Mitchell
Fred Zoetemeyer

THROY

Finished 2 August 2003

Acquire
John Vance

Special reformatting
John A. Schwab

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Michel Bazin
Deborah Cohen
Suan Hsi Yong

Technoproofer
Patrick Dusoulier

Special tasks
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TI
John A. Schwab
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Norma Vance
Steve Sherman

Implementation
David Reitsema
Hans van der Veeke

Composition
John A. Schwab

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Mark Bradford
Charles King
Patrick Dusoulier

Composition Review
Christian J. Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Charles King

Correction Validation
Rob Friefeld

Post-proofing
"Sandestins"
Jeffrey Ruszczky (team manager)
Mark Adams
Michael Duncan
Sue Manning
Mike Nolan
Glenn Raye
Mark Straka

TO B OR NOT TO C OR TO D
Finished 5 August 2003

Digitizer
Luk Schoonaert

Pre-proofers
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Patrick Dusoulier
Andrew Edlin

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Charles King
Peter Strickland
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey
David Reitsema

DD-Monkey
Charles King

Technoproofer
Rob Friefeld

Special tasks
John Rick
Koen Vyverman

TI
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Charles King
Steve Sherman

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Composition
Joel Anderson

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Mark Bradford
Deborah Cohen

Composition Review
Marcel van Genderen
Brian Gharst
Bob Luckin
John A. Schwab

Correction Validation
Charles King
Robert Melson

Post-proofing
"Spellers or Forlorn Encystment"
Till Noever (team manager)
Malcolm Bowers
Harry Erwin
Rob Gerrand
Ed Gooding
Peter Ikin
Bob Moody
Axel Roschinski
Bill Sherman

Mark Shoulder

THE AUGMENTED AGENT
Finished 5 September 2003

Digitizer
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Pre-proofers
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Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey
Dave Worden

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Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

Implementation
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Composition
John A. Schwab

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Patrick Dusoulier
Deborah Cohen

Composition Review
Marcel van Genderen
Bob Luckin
Billy Webb

Correction Validation
Marcel van Genderen
Bob Luckin

Post-proofing
"King Krage's Exemplary Corps"
Robert Melson (team manager)
Michel Bazin
Mark Bradford
Martin Green
Linda Heaphy
Lucie Jones
Wiley Mittenberg
Simon Read

THE DEVIL ON SALVATION
BLUFF
Finished 5 September 2003

Digitizer
Derek W. Benson

Pre-proofers
Jasper Groen
Helmut Hlavacs
Joe Ormond

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Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey
David Reitsema

DD-Monkey
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Technoproofer
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Ron Chernich
Rob Friefeld
Tim Stretton

Implementation
Mike Dennison
Hans van der Veeke

Composition
John A. Schwab

RTF-diffing
Deborah Cohen
Bill Schaub

Composition Review
Brian Gharst
Bob Luckin
Robin L. Rouch

Correction Validation
Rob Friefeld
Robert Melson

Post-proofing
"Penwipers"
Rob Friefeld (team manager)
Mark Adams
Bob Collins
Andrew Edlin
Tony Graham
Rob Knight
Betty Mayfield
Errico Rescigno
Mike Schilling

SAIL 25

Finished 5 September 2003

Digitizer
John Council

Pre-proofers
Fred Ford
Steve Sherman

DD-Scanners
Richard Chandler
Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey
Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey
David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer
Joel Riedesel

TI
David A. Kennedy
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

Implementation
Mike Dennison
David Reitsema

Composition
Joel Anderson

RTF-diffing
Deborah Cohen
Bill Schaub

Composition Review
Chris Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Charles King

Correction Validation
Bob Luckin
Robert Melson

Post-proofing
"Dragon Masters"
Erik Arendse (team manager)
Marcel van Genderen
Erec Grim
Jasper Groen
Evert-Jan de Groot
Yannick Gour
John Hawes
Jurriaan Kalkman
Willem Timmer
Hans van der Veeke
Dirk-Jan Verlinde



Wave 2 Progress: a Totalitarian Perspective

The Laughing Mathematician

Most of you are probably aware that while normal project work proceeds and texts pass from one phase in to the next one, the Totality database quietly crunches numbers in the background and occasionally spits out a report for this team or that. What you may not know is that Totality also keeps track of the jobs it processes. Prompted by our Work Czar's recent Wave 2 round-up, I had a look at Totality's internal book-keeping, whence this little report.

Four particular Totality activities would seem interesting in the light of Wave 2 progress tracking. In chronological order:

- VDAE: pre-TI, a VDAE spreadsheet is produced for Techno-proofing. With exception of Lurulu, Techno has been completed.
- VCR: when a text clears TI, the final Word document is analyzed for all manner of undesirable formatting and hidden garbage that may cause Compositional headaches.
- Initial RTF DIFF: after initial Composition, an RTF dump of the text is compared to the final Word

document. Differences in word-frequency are indicative of (in)voluntary text-changes incurred during the transition from Microsoft Word to InDesign and PDF.

- Final RTF DIFF: at the end of Post-Proofing, a final Composition iteration yields a volume-ready InDesign file. A final RTF dump is compared to the initial RTF dump to ensure that nothing has become FUBAR during the Composition cycles.

So, looking at the Totality production of VCR reports is actually a good measuring stick for TI-progress. The chart in Figure 1 shows in cumulative fashion the number of reports produced over time for each of the four types outlined above. The time-axis runs from shortly after GM2, when work on Wave 2 took off in earnest, until today, September 1st 2003.

(see graph on 14, following page.)

Note how closely together the VCR and Initial RTF DIFF curves lie? That is a good sign. It means that a text never lingers long in the limbo between TI and Post-Proofing. Our Composers generally churn out an initial PDF-file in a matter of days. A bit of a gap occurred from mid-May to mid-August, but it has been closed entirely by now.

Also note how the slope of the Final RTF DIFF curve is slowly getting steeper? To the point of it now running more or less parallel to the VCR and Initial RTF DIFF curves. The average horizontal distance between the Initial and Final RTF DIFF curves is an indicator of how long a text typically remains in the Composition and Post-Proofing cycles. Judging from the chart, I'd say that's about three months these days.

VCR production has been flat-lining for a couple of weeks now, but otherwise the rate at which texts come out of TI appears pretty constant. The second chart, see Figure 2, shows a trend-line fitted to the VCR line, extrapolated to the point where it hits 80 texts. From the looks of this, and the fact that there are 82 texts in Wave 2, with a few rather trivial ones (TI-wise) yet to be dealt with, the end of TI shortly after New Year's Day seems rather realistic. Further assuming that the Initial to Final phase continues to last for about three months on the average, we should be looking towards general Wave 2 volume-readiness by early April. Perhaps even a bit earlier as more resources become available towards the end, and fewer tasks are outstanding.

(see graph on 15, second following page.)

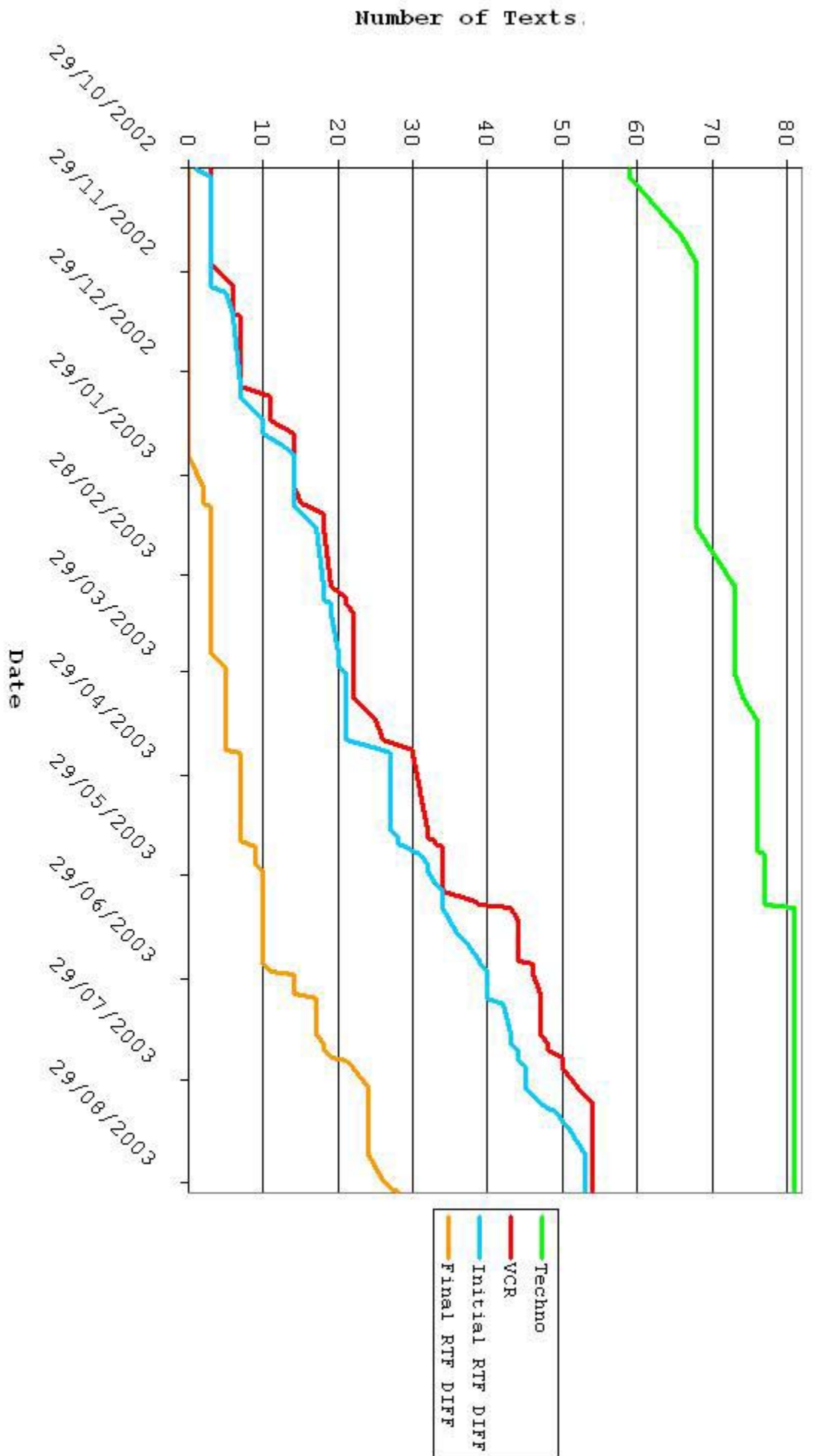


FIGURE 1: SELECTED WAVE 2 TOTALITY PROCESSES.

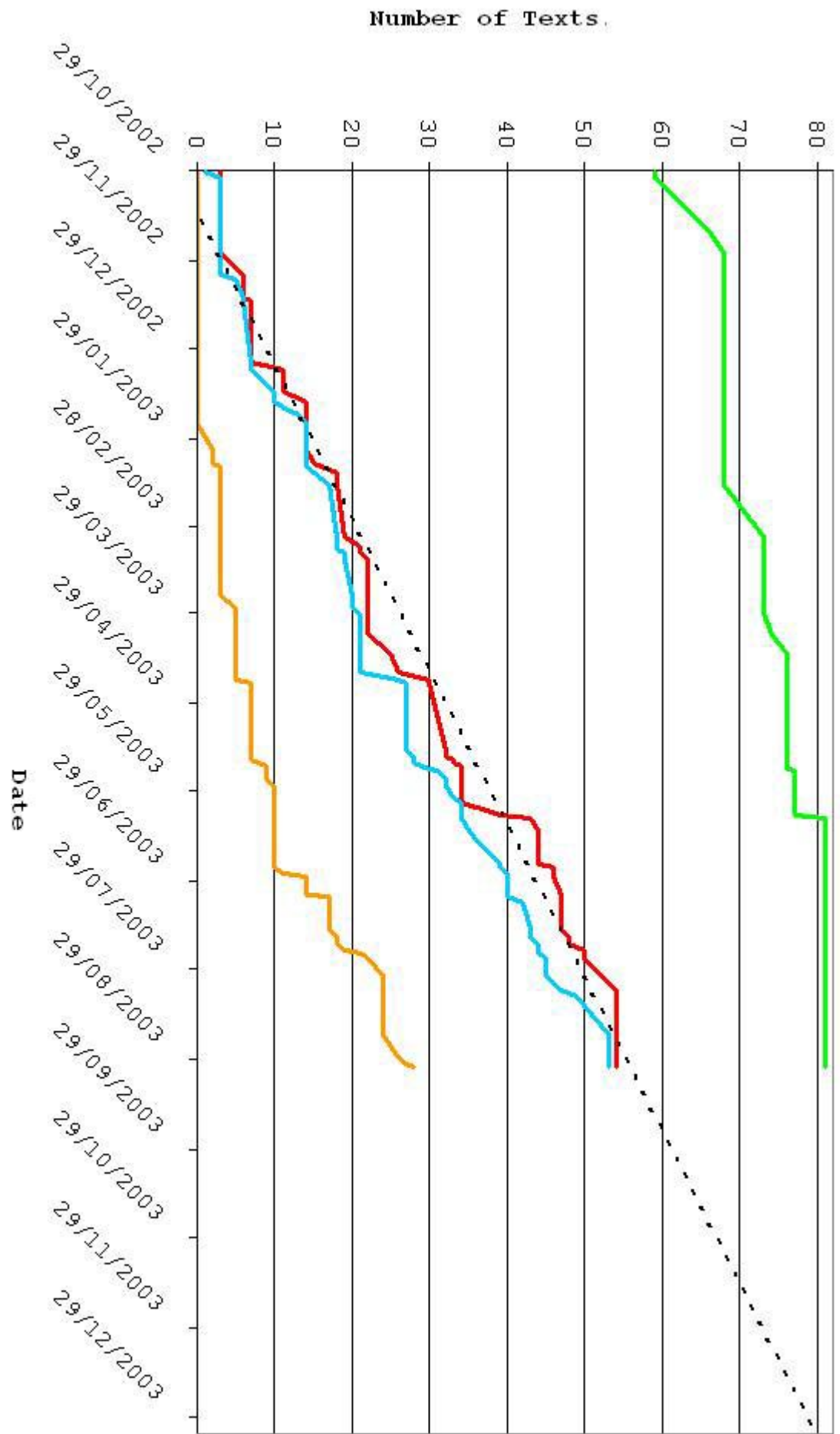


FIGURE 2: WAVE 2 PROGNOSIS.

Wave 2 Czar Report

Joel Riedesel

There are 20 texts in TI. Two of these are in Board Review and the other 18 are assigned and active. I've added *Lurulu* to my tracking and placed it into TI for now as unassigned and awaiting the text.

4 texts are in Implementation and two are in Security Check.

There are two texts in initial composition while 7 texts are in various stages of composition review.

There are 12 texts in post proof and 4 texts in post proof composition updating and review.

There are now 31 texts that are volume ready and, indeed, 3 volumes that are ready for volume composition.

Last month:

- + In-TI: 25 texts (30.49%)
- + Post-TI: 32 texts (39.02%)
- + Volume Ready: 25 texts (30.49%)

This month:

- + In-TI: 20 texts (24.39%) (includes *Lurulu* tracking)
- + Post-TI: 31 texts (37.8%)
- + Volume Ready: 31 texts (37.8%)



38's Crucible



The French Connection

Jacques Garin reports on his Vance site:

The VIE has realized the first half of its ambitious project (to publish the entire oeuvre of Jack Vance, entirely re-edited and corrected) by delivering 22 volumes to the happy subscribers. The fruits of the VIE are also having a direct effect on works published in France, by the new translations of the original texts reworked for 'Croisades', 'Space Opera and 'Madouc'.

The reworkings are being done, as far as we know, by the VIE's own Patrick Dusoulier.



Vie Promotional Fliers!

Joel Anderson has created the new VIE promotional flier which was used at Torcon3. We have several hundred

more available, and want to spread them around anywhere they might help drum up subscriptions. Where? Libraries, book stores, conventions, fairs? Do you have ideas? Could you distribute some? If so, contact Bob Lacovara (in the USA), or Paul Rhoads (in Europe), with ideas and requests.



Torcon3

*See how the fineness of your culture has caused you a worthy distinction!**

Though we only got into gear at the last minute, the VIE made its mark at the Toronto science fiction convention. Joel Anderson designed a special flyer, Joel Riedesel sent various promotional materials, and Stephen Trump, official 'VIE rep', organized a contest. Here is Stephen's report:

The convention was a dizzying experience for a novice. I got to meet with David Brin, Frederik Pohl and Joe Haldeman in kaffeeklaches. I organized a 'writers' circle' for a discussion of Vance, an event which went well; there was a complaint that I indulge in too much description; no doubt the Jack Vance influence.

Here are the contest winners and the prizes they received:

First prize:

BRIAN BAMBROUGH: *The Dragon Masters/Languages of Pao*

Second prizes:

GRAHAM DARLING: *The Moon Moth and Other Stories* (VIE vol. #17)

ROBERT HEPPERLE: *The Green Pearl* (VIE vol. #37)

TARAS WOLANSKY: *The Domains of Koryphon* (VIE vol. #28)

KELLY PERSONS: *The Book of Dreams* (VIE vol. #26)

Runner Up: DIETRICH BURBULLA

The following people got 4 correct answers out of 5: Richard Rostrum, Leo Doroschenko, Eric Weber, Werner Fuchs. Runner up and winners also received a Frankfurt Book Fair Brochure. Almost all these gentleman expressed interest in VIE subscription.

As for VIE buttons: having only 12 I had to ration them.

I am sure we could have reached many more people with a booth, or panel discussion. I spoke briefly to

* From what story is this a paraphrase? Next month: the answer and list of winners.

Alex Van Thorn (head of operations). In the weeks leading up to the convention he was getting 5,000 emails a day. This is why he never responded to our inquiries. I did speak to a couple of people at the *Noreascon Courtesy Suite*, one of whom is a Jack Vance fan. I think I sold him on the idea of a Jack Vance panel discussion next year in Boston, but the organizers still need to be hounded at the early planning stages to make it happen for sure. The last minute nature of our venture combined with the understaffing in Torcon operations limited the publicity generated for the *VIE*. Ideally, with a panel discussion the local media outlets could be contacted (promotional materials and press packs sent to them a month or 2 before.) You could actually get on the souvenir program (even buying an inexpensive print ad in the program). Literature could be distributed to delegates as they register.

Stephen did a wonderful job. He estimates that 4 to 12 new subscriptions may have been generated. Having collected the Torcon winners e-mail addresses I subjected them to the following spam: 'If you are interested in the *VIE* project please know that we have about another year of work before us, and new volunteers are welcomed with open arms. Any project job earns your name in the *VIE* volume affected, as well as mention in the volume 44 'honor roll'. Since '*VIE* corrected' has already become the ultimate reference in Vance publication (with a growing number of commercial publications, in English and translation, proudly mentioning the *VIE* as text source), and since *VIE* books are designed to last for centuries, this is one way to associate yourself permanently with the Vance oeuvre. *VIE* work includes proofreading of various kinds, as well as more specialized tasks for those so inclined.

'If you have visited our site you may know that our project magazine, *Cosmopolis*, is published every month. Whether or not you wish to become a subscriber or a volunteer, I warmly invite all so inclined to contribute to *Cosmopolis* thoughts they may have about Vance's work, the *VIE* project and books, or whatever they feel may be of interest to other Vance readers. *Cosmopolis* has an extensive and varied readership world-wide.

'Should you wish to subscribe allow me to emphasize that *VIE* books are intended to be a permanent and correct archive of Vance's work. The current real-world reserve of Vance's work consists mostly of textually and physically problematic paperbacks browning with *acid fire*; a number of manuscripts have already disappeared. The hardcover editions are not extensive and not always textu-

ally correct. An important aspect of the *VIE* effort is the sheer protection of Vance's work, though the *VIE* set is also designed to make clear the scope of Vance's artistic stature. The *VIE* book set, as archive, is constituted by any one given set, but even more it is the ensemble of sets, in world-wide distribution, allied with their correctness, ruggedness and beauty, that constitutes the true archival power of the *VIE*. The various qualities of the books, and the set itself, are conceived to contribute to the protection and usefulness of the volumes, and ultimately to help get Vance where he belongs: in the literary mainstream. The more sets created, the stronger the action of the project. Note also: despite the total price, the per-volume cost is exceptionally low because, outside printing and binding, the work is all volunteer.

'Only a subscriber can bring a *VIE* book set into existence; subscribers are therefore '*VIE* project volunteers'. The underlying concept of the *VIE* is this: *His readers, in gratitude to Jack Vance, offering his work to the world.*'



Some Aesthetic Remarks

Speaking of the *VIE*, someone on a posting board expressed: . . . *a preference for the original pulp editions of the works. Textual integrity*' he wrote, *concerns me not a whit, and good science fiction belongs in its natural setting, between covers bearing [pulp style] illustrations [with rockets and busty women] not in solemn faux-antique editions.*

An example of 'faux-antique', not to say 'self-conscious quainterie', would be the Lemmony Snicket books which unabashedly feature 'faux' uncut pages, resurrected Victorian fonts and 'dixneuf-cent' cover design. And why not, if it amuses them?

As for the *VIE*; does printing on paper and sewing signatures between boards, the way *Gutenberg* did, constitute 'faux-antique'? This *VIE* critic would keep Jack Vance locked into a mode of presentation 50 years out of date, characterized by shoddy materials and a vulgar illustrative manner famous for non-relation to what is illustrated. Vance himself deplores such presentation — to say nothing of the editorial degradation that often went with it, to which our critic is so pointedly indifferent.

Surely being inspired by the past (or respectful interest in what has been accomplished by many generations of good workers in various countries with famous literary traditions) and *faus-antique* are not the same thing? *VIE* covers, title pages, text pages and frontispieces are not copies of anything, either directly or indirectly, unless the

simple fact of such features constitutes *faux-antique*. As for the font, what could be more *faux-antique* than ‘Garamond’ or ‘Caslon’? These fonts actually pretend *to be* fonts many centuries old! Amiante, by contrast, is a completely new font and does not pretend to be anything else. It was even designed specifically for Vance’s prose; what could be more timely and appropriate?

How is Amiante better for Vance than another font? Vance’s prose is not ‘baroque’; it is simple, clear, rhythmic. Digital Old Style fonts are a strange mix of mechanical regularity and frilliness.

While we are on this subject another point concerning *VIE* composition might as well be made regarding line ‘justification’. This typographical term means: making lines equal length. Justified lines have become so prevalent that we did not dare use unjustified right margins for the *VIE* pages—though some of us would have liked that. The advantage of an unjustified right margin is that it allows the natural and intended spacing of the letters and the words to express themselves fully in each line. The disadvantage, if it is a disadvantage, is that it gives a ragged right margin. But which is more important: the horizontal relation between the letters and the words on each line, or the vertical relation between the end point of each line on the page? Is not the former as closely related to legibility, and thus meaning, as it is possible for typographical composition to be, while the latter only a feature of page design? Right Justification would seem to be a false compositional value, giving preference to page-tidiness over clarity of the text as read word by word and line by line. But even with regard to the graphic aesthetics of a page; why is evenness and regularity more handsome than irregularity? What of William Hogarth’s ‘serpentine line of beauty’, or the famous poem by Hopkins?

Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow,
For rose-moles in all stipple upon the trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches’ wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Be this as it may; the *VIE* composition team uses a feature made possible by InDesign (the electronic compositional tool chosen by the team) called ‘hanging punctuation’. This feature, which allows small deviations from absolute straightness, is not really a somewhat relaxed form of right-margin justification; the small deviations introduced, or allowed, are not intended to break up the straight right margin but to optically reinforce it. The idea is the same that prompted the builders of the Parthenon to bulge the base and architrave, as well as shortening the distance between terminal columns. Small elements, like periods, are weak points in the straightness of a right margin, and seem to collapse inwards. Making them ‘hang’, while violating factual straightness, is supposed to reinforce its optical straightness. Sometimes it does, but much depends on how you look at page (as much depends from what angle you look at the Parthenon) and how Adobe’s InDesign does its work, so sometimes the ‘hang’ hangs. Personally, I welcome this as a rebellious beautification of the mindless linearity of the right margin justification ideal.

Regarding how justification reflects the whole line, since Amiante letters are narrower than those of other available fonts, InDesign has more elbow-room for adjustment than it normally would. Here are two lines in a book using typical contemporary compositional features:

philosophy of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Early followers had heard her use the term *libertarian* freely and approvingly, but

From *Getting it Right*, by W. F. Buckley, published by Regnery. p250

And here are two *VIE* lines:

reprisals. The Kraike Singhalissa and the Kang Destian are much disadvantaged by your presence. The Lissolet Maerio

From *VIE* volume #30, p95

Both are scanned at the same scale; the *VIE* line is almost 20% shorter, which makes *VIE* books very nice in the hand. The other book, typical of the best current hardcover octavos, is composed at 12pts; the *VIE* book at 10 points. The number of characters in the lines of the former is 66, counting punctuation and spaces. In the *VIE* sample it is 56 and 58, not forgetting that both lines have a period and consequently a ‘Vancian space’ (almost 2 spaces wide, here counted as one).

much disadvantaged
metaphysics, epist

18 characters fill the same distance.

In the superimposed sample note the difference in width of each letter. Note how standard words are squeezed compared to *VIE* lines, often resulting in letters actually touching. To say nothing of Amiante's greater 'darkness' and less homogenous letter shapes, squeezing can only result in reduced legibility, for the reader must struggle to disentangle and interpret deformed letter shapes. I am not saying that contemporary composition is 'illegible'; I am simply pointing out that *VIE* composition, even at smaller sizes, has superior legibility.

Since the letters of standard fonts, being too wide, need to be scrunched closely together, InDesign, like all other composition tools such as Quark and PageMaker, seems to have been made able to do this. Amiante's more appropriate proportions, combined with InDesign's pragmatic capacity to make the best of the less wieldy proportions of most fonts, occasionally results in lines of *VIE* text that are unnecessarily closely spaced. CRT is there to call these instances to the composer's attention.

A final point: it is sometimes claimed that the process of reading involves 'the eye' interpreting whole words rather than individual letters. While it is true that we learn to take short-cuts, or get used to seeing and interpreting groups of letters, the process of reading depends, fundamentally, on recognition of individual letters. 'pot' is not the same word as 'pet', even though 'e' and 'o', in most fonts, are extremely similar. Meanwhile context does not always provide enough clues. The following sentences all mean something different: 'pot a pot', 'pot a pet', 'pet a pot', 'pet a pet'. When letters touch or overlap by cramping their edges disappear behind each other. This can create serious confusion; 'lo' becomes b, 'rn' becomes m, 'el' becomes d. The Amiante 'e', for example, with its low horizontal and truncated lower limb, is doubly protected against this danger.



Remarks on Steve Sherman's Remarks:

I want to thank my friend Steve for his public expression of agreement with my thesis regarding Vance's alleged anti-Christianism.

My article had no positive intention. I was not trying to show that Jack Vance's work endorses this or that. My intention was to demonstrate that it is a poor tool of anti-Christianism. It was also an attempt to explain how a serious Christian—who cannot be comfortable with anything anti-Christian—can be comfortable with Vance's work, or that Vance's alleged 'anti-Christianism' is shadowy at best.

Regarding one of Steve's points: things like 'bi-sexuality', 'pedophilia', 'bestiality' or 'necrophilia' were not relevant to my limited presentation. I raised only the narrow question of homosexuality and homosexual acts. It was not my intention to explore the sexual status of the characters mentioned or to enlist Vance in Vatican moral politics, though I did want to show that his work makes a poor club to beat them with. I can agree with Steve that the formula *generous tolerance* is not a fundamental distortion of Vance's attitude toward homosexuals and homosexuality. I can affirm that the Vatican's attitude may also be described in these terms—unless they are redefined as radically open-ended. Steve, however, mentions that he finds it difficult to reconcile what he sees as Vance's attitude with what he qualifies as *the Pope's assertion that a homosexual's love of another human being is somehow less worthy of respect than any other form of love*. There are also other references to alleged papal attitudes, but the information seems to have been gleaned from sources other than encyclicals or the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, where all these matters are discussed. A difference of views between two people, even if both are Vance readers, regarding papal positions is not, I imagine, of much interest to *Cosmopolis* readers, so I will not go into details. However, if the pope's thinking is going to be directly cited in a somewhat contentious manner it would seem appropriate that proper research underlie the presentation. As for the underlying question, and merely to indicate its scope, while there is certainly overlap between 'carnal acts' and 'love', they are not identical.

Regarding pre-marital sex, adultery, divorce and abortion, my basic point was very simple: these things occur very infrequently in an oeuvre of 60 books published over as many years, particularly when compared to other contemporary authors. Others may draw different conclusions from this fact, or from the manner such themes are treated on the rare occasion. My view is that Vance's work, unconventionally, is in basic accord with what our transgressive age calls 'traditional morality'.

Regarding the abortion; I did not claim it did not occur. I said this: 'Gally, though she has so little going for her, *resists*.' It is this heroic resistance to what not only the evil Paul Gunther but all rational and worldly calculation thrusts upon her, which I wanted to indicate. Whether or not Gally eventually did get the abortion is another matter. It seems notable that the book leaves open the possibility, however slim, that she did not. At any rate the abortion does not take place in the book. For Paul abortion is the automatic and easy solution to his abuse of Gally. Paul did not love Gally; he exploited her for the

sake of selfish, loveless carnal acts. To Gally this solution was not unproblematic. She loved Paul. She wanted to stay with him. She wanted to have the baby. She certainly saw staying with him in a family as a strategy to escape not only her own milieu but even America, to a place where she thought she could be more beautiful and happy; but these things are complementary not contradictory. Gally was repelled and fearful of the operation; her reaction included disgust and fear of pain or possible permanent physical damage—to say nothing of the risk of death. Gally’s resistance is an aspect of what makes her appealing. This is not because it makes her sympathetic to anti-abortionists but because it is one more way she is life-affirming in circumstances so mired in what the Pope has called ‘the culture of death’.

I made no special point with regard to the relation of Atheism and Communism. The declarations of such writers as Marx, Lenin and Stalin, to say nothing of the history of all Communist regimes, may be consulted in this regard. My point was very narrow: the words ‘Stalin’, ‘atheism’, ‘evil’ and ‘Hitler’ are mentioned together in a single phrase, which I cited, with a query as to whether this can be seen as a: *condemnation of atheism by association?* I was not thinking of condemnation by association with ‘communism’ but with ‘evil’; I wrote:

. . . does [the passage in question] written 50 years ago, indicate that Vance thinks atheism is evil? This would be a hasty conclusion. However, there it is: at one point in his work, with no obvious irony, ‘atheism’ is linked with ‘evil’.

That atheism is linked in Vance’s work with other, or even positive, qualities, as Steve points out, is not something I denied or even explored. Just as sex and love are not the same thing, communism and atheism are not the same thing, and good and bad are inextricably mixed in every aspect of life. However, since the subject has been brought up, that Vance’s work includes a passage where Stalin is called ‘arch-atheist’ might be confronted more squarely by those who pretend that Vance’s message is anti-Christian. Steve, of course, is not to be found in their meager ranks.



Durdane Geography

My initial approach to the ‘problem’ of Durdane geographical inconsistencies was disinterest. It is my position that Vance’s ‘mistakes’ are not mistakes for the *VIE*. But we had discovered an un-published map of Durdane in the Mugar, and Suan argued that the map—which of

course we will publish—highlights in an unacceptable way certain geographical inconsistencies which previously were less obvious. It is good to have principles but it is also good to react flexibly to new situations. I was convinced by Suan’s argument, particularly since correction of the inconsistencies in question is a trivial matter affecting only some names in a handful of cases in a three-volume work. In this I did not totally abandon my non-interventionist stance and opposed several proposed changes for various reasons. Regarding the map issues, the first thing I wanted to know was: how did these mistakes come about?

Before Chuck discovered the new ‘early-map’, by various indications it was clear that an earlier map probably existed. Chuck located one such map but others may also exist, and in fact a third map was also found; a very general sketch of Durdane including no cantons. But nothing proves that Vance made only two versions of the canton map, or that our late-map is the absolutely final version—though I happen to think it is.

At any rate, my studies revealed, as I related in a previous article, that the inconsistencies are explained when one postulates that there was authorial confusion, by reversal of the names of cantons 8 and 14 (late-map). On the early-map the placement of these cantons is basically consistent with the late-map, but they are numbered 20 and 21:



Early-map detail, showing canton number key for Ereva and Conduce. At this stage at least 6 names seems to have been explored for these places.

I say ‘basically consistent’ because there are interesting differences of detail not irrelevant to the consistency issues. One of these is that canton late-map #8 and early-map #21 (Conduce), enjoys some distinct and definite Shellflower Bay waterfront on the early-map. This waterfront just barely escapes existence on the late-map but certain textual considerations, in conjunction with familiarity with Vance’s slashing style of map drawing, made me suspect that this late-map detail was more a matter of accident than intention. The early-map does not prove, but does comfort this view. In other respects the late-map is more convincing, in particular the relation of the course of the Jardeen river which, rather than just meandering across the map in an approximate fashion,

seems to be thought out in relation to the canton borders of which it would be a natural element.

My proposed solution to the map-text consistency problems, as explained in *Cosmopolis*, is essentially text-based. The text, I felt, should not be made to agree with the map, but if anything the opposite. The text comes first but the map is important evidence. However it must be understood that, in my view, the text and map are not in real conflict. According to my hypothesis the inconsistencies are merely a clerical error. Jack made no positional errors, he just called the right places by the wrong names on a few occasions. The early-map does not contradict this hypothesis.

There are two problems: the Brassei Junction issue, and the Conduce/Erevan issue. The former is resolved in the text itself; Maiy is preferred by more frequent and more important use. This matter is clarified by the maps; Maiy Brassei Junction is shown in the late-map and the confusion, which was the result of hesitation, is explicated in the early-map. As for the Conduce/Erevan issues the early map provides no clear answer to the question of how, at some point—certainly while revising passages in *The Brave Free Men*—the author got these canton names mixed up. In any case the matter is perfectly clear. Whether this mistake occurred, as I speculated, because the numbers '8' and '14' got reversed on some document, is not germane. The early map, using the numbers '20' and '21', adds a new way a number-name confusion might have occurred. However it happened, it happened; even if the cause is not a number confusion, the facts of the matter are clear and appropriate correction can and will be made.

In the absence of the early-map I preferred a #14=Erevan #8=Conduce solution because the most extensive and circumstantial mentions of these cantons in the texts put them clearly in these positions, and I favored textual evidence over map evidence. However the early-map has the same name-positions as the late-map supports authorial intended #8=Conduce #14=Erevan. Rob Friefeld has also adduced considerations, which are highly subjective but not without interest, that support the map name positions. None of this affects my hypothesis which merely shows what happened, or the nature of the error. The solution is clear, but there are 2 ways to implement it.

1) Change the names on the map to reflect the most circumstantially rich mentions of Conduce and Erevan in the text, with consequent adjustment of lesser textual mentions of these cantons to reflect the corrected map.

2) Leave the map as it is and adjust mentions of Erevan and Conduce to agree.

Given that the early-map supports the late-map name positions I now prefer the second solution. The texts are currently adjusted to solution #1. Changing to solution #2 will be a straight-forward matter of changing each mention of 'Conduce' to 'Erevan', and 'Erevan' to 'Conduce' in the texts.

- o -

9/11 x 2

If you want my opinion, here it is: plummeting 2003 terrorist statistics indicate that folks in Afghanistan and Iraq are much better off, as well as folks in Pakistan, Iran, the Sudan and the rest of the world. Difficult and painful situations persist but we won't see the last of these old friends until the End of Time. Meanwhile good folks in some places are wishing American benevolence would be exercised in their favor as well. It probably will not, at least for now. Soldiers, mostly American volunteers, are offering their lives that so others may have happiness; this is ennobling to all who pay them the sacred respect they have infinitely merited.

The escalating violence in Israel indicates, above all, that a real solution may be close. It seems obvious that the Palestinian handlers have never recognized the right of Israel to exist. Until they do the only 'choice' is war. The people in this part of our world have suffered decades of trauma. Egypt has long been converted to the right side, and now both Iraq and Syria, to say nothing of Saudi Arabia, have been converted, or at least neutralized, by Western strength and justice; steps in the right direction.

George Bush, leader and champion of the west, though there has been much shrill crabbing, has managed all this in a perhaps improvisatory but brave and pragmatic manner. This manner looks 'Vancian' to me. Kirth Gersen could hardly pretend to the status of nemesis for five demon princes if he could not handle one Bel Ruk; but what of a game of haudal? He had never played before, and the tricky Darsh might ally themselves against an *iskish*. But what had to be done had to be done; Gersen survived the haudal, and then disposed of Bel Ruk. He may have limped off the robes but he was one step closer to Lens Larque.

The world is not going to get any safer; only by vigorous action now can we hope to avoid the worst later. If, for example and against all expectation, the 'sleeping dragon' wakes up and refuses to be seduced by the gleaming gold of commerce into a more western attitude—if, in other words, it decides it wants to own Asia—it will be nice to have the Middle East pacified before America is faced

with the choice of defending or abandoning its allies in Taiwan, Japan, Malaya, Thailand and Singapore, to say nothing of Australia, New Caledonia and New Zealand.

France, despite the egg on its face, still dreams of itself as the epicenter of rebellion against American 'hyper-puissance' and 'unilateral' 'imperialist' 'hegemony'. But if the UN and NATO insist on behaving like naughty children, what would be the Vancian way; sterile talk or right action? If Poland and other new European Union members do not manage to counter-balance France, and if the European Union does not collapse under the weight of its accumulating incoherence and rigidity, we might have occasion to recall Hitler's proposition of 1945: *Europe should unite against America, in alliance with Islam*. Such a development, however, is highly unlikely; for the time being the good guys are winning.



Editorial Notes

'PPV' has just been done on *Telek*, *Dirdir* and *Chasch*. Bravo to Karl Keller and the *Clam Muffins*, and Robert Melson commanding *King Kragen's Exemplary Corp*, for some spectacular catches, including nasty typos not spotted by PreProofing or TI, as well as some genuine TI issues.

Doing SC for *Nopalgarth* and *Cugel the Clever* revealed to me, once again, how each step, from pre-proofing and DD through to IMPing, adds its bit of typo elimination, retrieval of lost phrases, and the occasional dramatic correction. As someone who sees most 'bis' files, I can say the same of CRT (and PP) with regard to our 'fin' (composed) files. It is gratifying to see the real effect of the work of so many people on the final quality of *VIE* texts.

With regard to *Nopalgarth* and *Cugel the Clever*, my attention was caught by approaches to the question of malice:

. . . a winged sprite came to flap alongside the cage and peer within. It seemed to find Cugel's plight amusing, and when Cugel sought information as to the land below, it merely uttered raucous cries of mirth. It became fatigued and sought to cling to the cage, but Cugel kicked it away, and it fell off into the wind with a scream of envy.

The sprite is in-your-face nasty, but malice is not always easy to detect:

"Certain aspects of your appearance impress us as feral and barbarous: your protruding fangs, the black mane which surrounds your faces, the cacophony of your speech — to name only a few items."

The villagers laughed incredulously. "What nonsense!" they cried. "Our teeth are long that we may tear the coarse fish on which we subsist. We wear our hair thus to repel a certain noxious insect, and

since we are all rather deaf, we possibly tend to shout. Essentially we are a gentle and kindly folk."

Malice is a basic element of the human situation, one of the great mysteries of existence which Christianity ascribes to it the influence of demons—similar to Vance's *winged sprites* and *erbs*. In *Nopalgarth*, by contrast, Vance proposes a 'materialist metaphysics', and an interesting aspect of it is its account of malice.

Despite the 'telepathetic' advantages the nopals provide man in their parasitic-symbiotic relation, the nopals cannot be called 'benevolent':

The nopal, in a final malignant fit, kills the Chitumih.

The same is true of the gher:

The monster pulled itself erect and plunged at Burke, pincers wide. . . "A most peculiar creature," said Tarbert, in a voice still strained and choked. "Not at all nice"

But the gher, like the nopal—poor innocents!—are only trying to survive:

"I'd guess that when it couldn't derive sustenance from the physical world it turned to the para-cosmos and became a parasite."

"It's a strange kind of evolution," said Tarbert. "The nopal must have evolved along similar lines, probably under similar physical conditions." . . .

"The gher is dead. We shall destroy the nopal. Then we will need no more protection."

Burke gave a short laugh. "Now who's absurd?" He pointed to the sky. "There are millions of worlds like this one. Do you think the gher and the nopal are unique, the only creatures who inhabit the para-cosmos?"

Apiptix drew back his head like a startled turtle. "There are others?"

"Look for yourself."

Apiptix stood rigid, straining to perceive the para-cosmos. "I see shapes I cannot understand. One in particular — an evil creature. . ." He looked at Tarbert who stood staring fixedly into the sky, then returned to Burke. "Do you see this creature?"

Burke looked into the sky. "I see something almost like the gher. . . It has a bulging body, two large eyes, a beaked nose, long tentacles. . ."

The paracosmos—and thus the normal-cosmos because the para-cosmos is continuous with it—is populated with creatures repeatedly designated 'evil'. But this evil exists only in the human perspective. The nopal and gher are no more malicious than grasshoppers and worms competing for the same corn. Insects like nopals and gher are evolved to feed on brain waves; they protect their food by

inoculating it against competition. The hostility between Tauptu and Chitumih is a humanly absurd by-product of the struggle for survival between the morally neutral nopal and gher; the 'malice' generated is as 'moral' as a fever.

This sort of thing is pure scientism, of the 'separation of facts and values'* stripe, and depends on a 'materialist metaphysics', which Vance gives us in the following passage:

What we know of telepathy and the nopal suggests that the analogue particles enjoy considerably greater freedom than our own — balloons compared to bricks. They're constructed of very weak fields, and also, much more importantly, aren't constrained to rigidity by the strong fields. In other words, the analogue world is topologically congruent to our own but not dimensionally. In fact, dimensions have no real meaning."

"If so, 'velocity' is also a meaningless word, and 'time' as well," said Burke. "This may give us a hint as to the theory of the Xaxan space-ships. Do you think it's possible that somehow they enter the analogue universe?" He held up his hand as Tarbert started to speak. "I know — they're already in the analogue universe. We mustn't confuse ourselves with fourth-dimensional concepts."

"Correct," said Tarbert. "But back to the linkage between the universes. I like the balloon-brick image. Each balloon is tied to a brick. The bricks can disturb the balloons, but vice-versa, not so easily. Let's consider how it works in the case of telepathy. Currents in my mind generate a corresponding flow in the para-cosmos analogue of my mind — my shadow-mind, so to speak. This is a case of the bricks jerking the balloons. By some unknown mechanism, maybe by my analogue self creating analogue vibrations which are interpreted by another analogue personality, the balloons jerk the bricks; the neural currents are transferred back to the receiving brain. If conditions are right."

"These 'conditions,'" said Burke sourly, "may very well be the nopal."

"True. The nopal apparently are creatures of the para-cosmos, constructed of balloon-stuff, and for some reason viable in either of the universes."

Initially understood as communication without 'physical' means, telepathy turns out to be a 'physical' phenomenon after all. The evolution of gher and nopal into parasites

* A formula expressing that there is no connection between 'the world', or 'nature' or 'reality' or 'what is', and what people think is 'good', 'beautiful' or 'true'. This, it may be said, is the 'philosophy' of scientism. The opposite idea is that things (facts) do have 'value'; they really are more or less good, bad, beautiful, ugly, true or false. The 'fact-value separation' is 'theoretical' or 'abstract' because it contradicts our ordinary, non-theoretical or 'direct' perception of life and things. Things seem to us good and bad, true and false, beautiful and ugly. Scientism asks Man to look at himself as if he were a rat, and at the world as if it were a maze. Is this perspective the right perspective?

of the para-cosmos, is provoked by the need to physically survive. The para-cosmos is constructed of 'analogue particles' and 'weak-fields', the quarks and 'strong-fields' of the normal-cosmos. The 'balloons' and 'bricks' are not different orders of things, like a *rock* and an *idea*, they are only different in their metrics. This is interesting because, if the pretensions of scientism are correct — that there is nothing non-material that 'exists' — and if it turns out to be impossible to exclude whatever lies behind what Vance sometimes designates as 'psionics', then there must be something like Nopalgarthian metaphysics to explain the situation. To say nothing of how amusing the story is, the rising tide of Wicca, demon worship, Islam, crystal-power and so on, in a culture where scientism is more and more shrilly triumphalist, continues to make *Nopalgarth* worth reading from a socio-cultural perspective. In fact is to be doubted whether the underlying philosophical tension will ever be decisively clarified.



The Roots of Variety in Vancian Characters and Societies

NOTICE

The following remarks concern how Vance does justice to things, and why doing justice is artistically important. They are somewhat abstract and too brief to be more than a sketch; readers must follow as best they can and fill in gaps for themselves. I often use the example *atheism-religion* or *philosophy-belief*. Others examples could be used, and sometimes are; it is not these opposition in particular which are of interest, but such contrasts in general. My subject is the tension between such elements — *philosophy-belief* is only one among an infinite variety many of which tend to be less obvious for us today — and how they flower in Vance's work.

PROLOGUE: THE ELEMENTS OF VARIETY

A beloved aspect of Vance's work is the promenade he leads through the multifarious garden of the world. There is certainly more to the enchanting quality of this Vancian variation than mere difference itself, as if it were nothing but an extremely clever account of how orange hats are worn in one town and blue hats in the next. Vance's societies are characterized by such obvious contrasts as technologically advanced/not advanced, religious/unreligious, egalitarian/hierarchical, new/old, ideological/pragmatic. Soumi society (of *Throy*), for example, might be labeled *religious, egalitarian* and *pragmatic*, while Cadwal society might

be labeled *unreligious, hierarchical* and *ideological*. But whether it is about hats or technology, Vance is doing more than dumping such elements in a box, shaking it, drawing out random combinations, and tossing them into his stories. Such a game would soon pale, for the world's profligacy of outward forms is news to the dullest souls only. In fact Vance is a cartographer and dramatizer of the fundamental variety which underlies, animates and structures the human experience.

The variety in Vance is much more than social. It is also emotional and psychological, political and philosophical. There are different ways men can do and be. The way of the philosopher is to question. The way of the believer is to obey. The way of the artist is to observe. The way of the scientist, therefore, is partly artistic and partly philosophical. The way of the soldier is very like that of the believer. But all men have philosophical, believing and artistic parts. Obedience must be the soldier's cardinal virtue but a general must be artistic and philosophical—if he does not observe the enemy and question tactical matters his army may suffer defeat. What of the atheist? An atheist may be like the philosopher if he questions dogma and ideology, and he may be like the artist if he observes facts to nourish his questioning, but as someone convinced of (or obedient to) certain metaphysical thesis, or 'truth', he is like neither observer nor questioner, but believer. No matter how extensive our observations and powerful our critiques, since we continue to lack final knowledge about ultimate things, we must confess that our observations and arguments, no matter how attached we are to their implications, remain incomplete or may prove to be erroneous; the ultimate status of any metaphysical preference is permanently in doubt. The role of belief in human life cannot be eradicated. To put this another way; the alleged conclusions of the atheist are exposed to his most powerful objection against religious believers, namely that their conclusions are provisional.

When it comes to careful distinctions between such basic elements underlying the charm of the variousness of the world, Vance never disappoints his reader. There are many places people 'come from'. These account for the variety of people and societies. The elements that underlie these distinctions, when fully worked out, eventually distinguish each individual, one from the other, like the infinity of snowflakes all built on the same hexagonal model of a limited number of crystalline components. Each configuration is in a relation of tension with every other configuration. The basic elements that account for variety are therefore the ultimate source of the tensions

that animate the world.

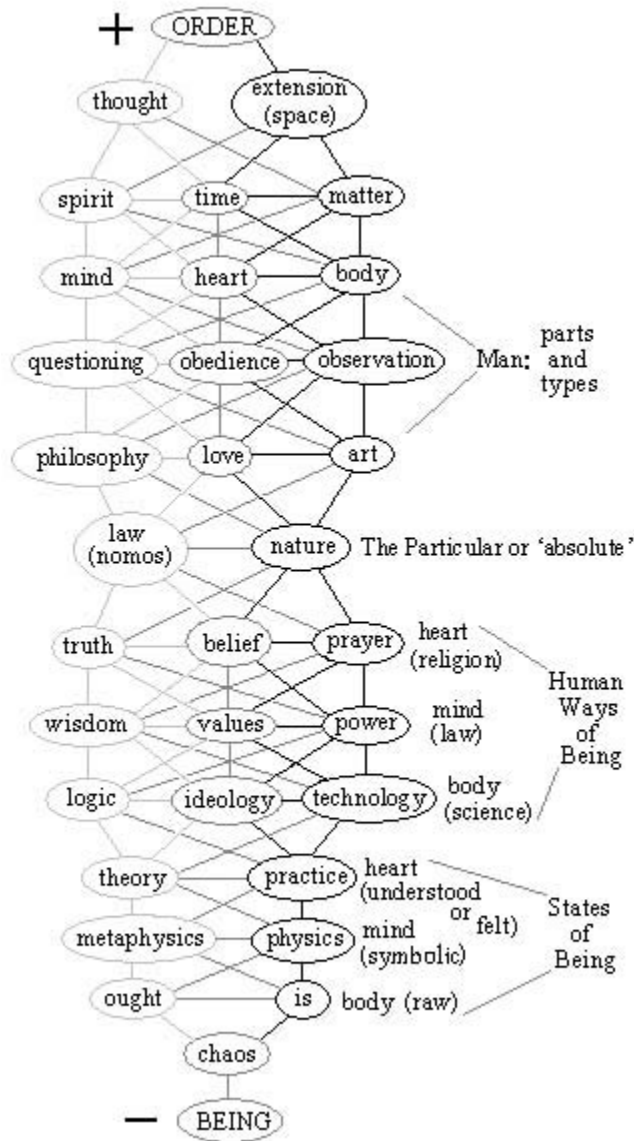
Among these basic elements are what I am calling *philosophy, belief* and *art*. These terms, as I am using them, designate things people do and the people who do them but, above all, this element as it exists, as a tendency or capacity, developed or undeveloped, in each person. But for the purposes of this exposition such terms must be even more broadly understood; for example, by *philosophy* I mean: 'science' in the sense of ideas and theory as opposed to practice or technology.* By *belief* I mean religion, but also any conviction that cannot depend on proofs, such as the conviction that one's wife will remain faithful to her marriage vows. In this sense *belief* is allied to *practice*. In life it is not enough to question, we must do. For example, we may question, theoretically, which food is best to eat, but each day we must eat, and each person has his eating habits, or *practice* of eating. This practice must be conditioned by circumstances—some people live where the only food available is rice, beans and bananas—or what we know, feel or think about food, as is pointedly the case with vegetarians, gourmets and anorexics. We can have practical, ideological, knowledgeable or erotic relations to food—in fact we necessarily have all these, to some degree or another. In the same way we can or must or might question whether or not we do, or should, believe in God (or trust our wife), but *in practice* we either believe or not, or we remain in some specific, perhaps changing, state of puzzlement, hesitation, fury or indifference. These ways of believing or not believing, or something in between, are 'practices', 'ways of doing', even if they are only unexamined habits. Whether it is eating or believing in God, getting up in the morning or staying in bed, we cannot escape doing some specific thing with regard to all our powers, physical, emotional and intellectual. We are forced by the nature of reality to act (non-action itself being an 'act'), and our practice, however tepid, may or may not follow our theory, however skimpy.

There is tension between belief and practice—examples are too common to need elaboration—but there are also tensions within, say, belief itself. Belief or unbelief, in God for example, can be by the path of *questioning* (Voltaire questioned and as a result did not believe; Aquinas questioned and as a result did believe), *obedience* (the 'philosophy student' learns (imitates) unbelief; the catechumen,

* Science used to be a branch of philosophy. The success of technology has reversed this; philosophy is now a branch of science. The growing incapacity of science to resolve the moral problems posed by technology (the atom bombs, contraceptive pills, genetic modifications and therapies, 'aesthetic' surgery etc.) may again change their relation.

likewise, believes), *practice* (faced with possible martyrdom the 'believer' is obliged to chose or deny God; the steady church-goer's belief may be unchallenged), *knowledge* (the atheist philosopher knows that God does not exist; the priest or mystic 'knows' that he does.) and etc..

The Skein of Being and Order



This chart attempts to symbolize the flows and tensions underlying the variety which develops into the different real forms (types of people or societies) by development, branching, separation, swirling, declination and reunion. It is like a map of eddies in a stream that flows in several directions at once. Read it along one column from down to up, and vice versa, then horizontally and diagonally, until it is seen or felt as a whole.

The terms and the form are approximate; they must be understood, completed and corrected by the reader.

The nature of such terms as *thought*, *spirit* and *mind*, as used in this chart, are revealed by horizontal readings. *Thought* here means something like 'idea', or 'the ideas' in the platonic sense, or even 'word' for those inclined to theology—though no theological thinking is required. *Spirit* can indicate thinking itself (not specific ideas) or 'incarnated thought', as opposed to thought as such, or even nopalgarthian 'ghostly matter' for those inclined to psionics. *Mind* indicates the products of the human brain, ratiocination, actual thoughts, concepts or ideas, as opposed to a mere category like 'thought' or 'idea'; it is the mind in action producing specific manifestations, thinking, or merely the alpha and beta waves of a purely materialist view.

Questioning is different from *philosophy*; the former is cold, pragmatic or 'scientific', the later is 'erotic' or driven by 'love of knowledge' (the etymological meaning of 'philo-sophy'); in the same way *obedience* is a cold form of *love*, while *observation* is a cold, or foundational, form of *art*. *Wisdom* may be understood as 'information'.

Regarding the central eddy, the English *law* is more restricted than the Greek *nomos*; this eddy englobes both concepts, which is to say 'invisible' or 'spiritual' 'reality', in its declinations from mere 'values' to what some people, rightly or wrongly, call 'Truth'. Just below, *truth* is meant to indicated the end of the search for truth; it is related to *philosophy*, as 'product' is related to 'process'; *truth* underlies a 'true belief' (as opposed to ordinary belief which might or might not be true). 'True belief' is belief in something that cannot be proven but which is true. *Philosophy* is love of 'search for truth'.

Reading horizontally, the terms *philosophy*, *love* and *art* may be replaced with 'Philosopher', 'Lover' and 'Artist' just as all the other horizontal terms stand for all things that come under their headings.

In the notes to the left, in the category *Human Ways of Being*, the 'law' under 'mind' may also be read 'justice'.

A final hint: *prayer* can be understood as 'wish', 'hope', 'dream', 'passion', 'longing', 'desire'; it is the link, through the heart (or the desiring part of man), from *nature* to *power* or, to put it in other terms, from raw materials to realized desire, which is to say 'things', or from potential to actual.

Each term, or eddy, could itself be explicated by a similar diagram of its own inner tensions and flows. The diagram as a whole may be thought of as the detailed diagram of the term 'BEING'.

UNCOVERING THE TENSIONS BETWEEN THE ELEMENTS OF VARIETY

The varieties generated by the tensions between what we see, what we think, what we believe and so on, are often masked by the popular or vulgar understanding of such things. For example, the pairs: *atheist-questioning*, and *religion-obedience*, is how this variety is often perceived or theorized, even though the pairs *atheist-obedience* and *religious-questioning* may be more frequent in fact. The vulgar view is promoted with the simile of culture being like the child who grows to adulthood: the child is ignorant, confused, fearful; he clings to his mother's skirts. This is the early, primitive, or religious stage. Then he grows to maturity, gaining confidence, observing, learning and eventually mastering the world; this is the developed, progressive, or scientific stage.

Leo Strauss draws the following distinction between philosophy and religion; philosophy is the attempt 'to know on our own', using exclusively human powers; religion is the attempt to know with the aid (or decisive guidance) of divine revelation. But to know anything man must first have a power of knowing. Philosophy (or 'science' in the sense of *observation* and *questioning*) must therefore be prior to religion because it is impossible to know anything without knowing it for and by ourselves. The pedestal may be subordinate to the statue, but in a basic sense it is prior to it. Likewise the body is prior to the mind, and the mind is prior to its contents. To put this another way: for the gods to talk to prophets, who are men, there must first be language. Men spoke to each other before the gods spoke to them.

Several decades ago the 'bicameral mind' theory suggested that, in its early development, man's brain perceived thoughts as if they were voices from the outside, so that he took his own thoughts for the voices of ghosts or gods. This is an attempt to explain religion, or divine revelation, on physiological grounds. A more recent theory is that any isolated person starts hearing voices, so that prophets are merely persons who have been or are isolated. But to say nothing of the frequent cases of people who 'hear voices' who are not isolated, these theories add nothing to what we already know about the origin of religion and divine revelation. To say nothing of recent or contemporary events, there are historical records of exactly how man came into contact with divine knowledge. Abraham, Moses and Mohammed are the most famous cases. The details of how they, and the people around them, reacted to each divine intervention they experienced, to say nothing

of the circumstances of their lives, their education and social milieu, are given in the book of Genesis and the Koran. God's messages to Abraham and Moses were always so strange, so against human instincts, logic, training and apparent self-interest that, in most cases, they themselves protested on the spot, accusing God of unreasonableness. Abraham's wife Sarah, and the Israelites who followed Moses, did not hesitate to mock at or complain about God's orders and advice. Even after the Israelites saw the curses to which Egypt was subjected, after they were saved from the Pharaoh's army by the miraculous passage through the sea, led by the pillar of fire and nourished in the desert by manna from heaven, they continued to complain and revolt! In each case they had perfectly reasonable arguments; in fact their arguments always seem better than God's—were it not for his confounding omniscience and omnipotence.

Today, believers in prophecies are regarded as 'irrational' because of a prejudice in favor of what is called 'science'. But the opposite of belief in God's existence, which is belief in His non-existence, may be the correct belief but it is not 'rational' by definition. Being wrong is not equivalent to being irrational. We do not consider Ptolemy 'irrational' because he thought the earth was at the center of a planetary system characterized by circular rather than elliptical orbits. Ptolemy's concept turns out to be only one step toward a more complete understanding of the structure of the solar system, but even today there may be more to discover about the structure of the planetary system so that in another few centuries there may be chuckling over the primitive naiveté of the 21st century.

It is possible to be both rational and wrong. This even occurs often, notably in science where what turns out to be the truth, whenever it is surprising, is almost systematically rejected by 'rational' people. Examples of this are too common to need illustration, but I recently came across an example of particular interest. It is the initial attitude of no less a person than Leo Strauss (1899-1973) toward the theory of Relativity. Leo Strauss is regarded by some people, myself included, as one of the greatest philosophical lights of the 20th century. As a young man he studied natural science and also philosophy, under such professors as Husserl, Heidegger and Schmit. In 1962 Strauss was asked to give a talk on the subject; 'Why we remain Jews'. In this talk, while discussing the assimilation of European Jewry in the 19th century in relation to Nietzsche and anti-Semitism (a term Strauss rejects completely in favor of 'hatred of Jews') he made the remarks quoted below. The lecture took place before

a small, mostly Jewish, audience at the University of Chicago; Strauss's uncompromising attitude toward himself is a mark of his thinking in general:

There exists a kind of Jewish glorification of every clever or brilliant Jewish mediocrity — which is as pitiable as it is laughable. It reminds me of villagers who have produced their first physicist and hail him for this reason as the greatest physicist that ever was. I refuse to quote chapter and verse, but when I read statements in Jewish periodicals about Jewish celebrities I am always reminded of that. I became so distrustful of it [at one time, that I did not] believe that Einstein was of any significance. I am not a theoretical physicist and, therefore, I was as entitled to my opinion as any other ignoramus. Then I asked a trustworthy friend of mine — a physicist, a Jew. I told him my opinion [about the matter, and] I had a feeling that this was really a propaganda machine organized by Einstein's wife. I believe that was, by the way, true; I had heard that [there was such an effort]. But then he told me; "You are mistaken. He [Einstein] was presently at a seminar in Berlin, and that was tops in physics: Planck and other such men were present. And it was simply so. Einstein had the defect that he didn't know elementary mathematics. I mean that was his genuine defect, but his conceits, his inventions, were surpassing that of all the others there. You must believe it. He is really a first-rate physicist, and surely the greatest physicist of this epoch. It is an empirical fact."

*So I accepted that. I must say I am still proud of my resistance, because this inclination to self-glorification in things in which there is no reason for self-glorification is a disgrace. That we have today so many outstanding Jews is due — let us not deceive ourselves about that — to the general decline, to a general victory of mediocrity. It is today very easy to be a great man. "Among the blind the one-eyed man is king", goes the proverb.**

Rationality is not the preserve of any category of person and, in itself, is no guarantee of rightness. The cardinal characteristic of rationality is not that it can solve any problem correctly but that it cannot reach beyond itself. This limitation is what gives it its power, or 'quality of sureness', but it also limits it, or renders it totally powerless, or without purchase, in certain ways or circumstances. Faith is 'irrational' but this does not, or should not, or did not used to, mean that faith is 'absurd'

* From the transcript of a talk published in: Leo Strauss; *Political Philosopher and Jewish Thinker*, Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 1994. Matter in square brackets is adjustments by the transcribers. Strauss' response to the question of the lecture title is that, while individuals can have the chance to obliterate their Jewishness in assimilation, the mass of Jews, even if they convert to Christianity as they once did in Spain, or become highly assimilated as they were in parts of Europe, even, in other words, if they do not want to remain Jews, are not allowed the choice, as the holocaust so pointedly demonstrated. For this reason Strauss supported Israel, something by no means automatic among European Jews of his generation who often favored assimilation.

or 'unreasonable'; it means that rationality cannot follow where faith leads. To remain its sovereign self, rationality — when it is truly rational and not a mere label attached to rationalization — keeps itself within its domain, the area it dominates, there where its sovereignty holds.

Rather than exploring the contrast *faith/logic*, we might have looked at the contrast between what we see with our eyes as opposed to how we interpret or remember visual information. Or we might have looked at the contrast between the Hippocratic oath and recent developments in medical technology. Or physical-love versus spiritual-love, or to put it another way: sex versus love (Vance treats this issue interestingly in *Night Lamp*, as suggested in *Cosmopolis* 41). Things separate and overlap at different levels in an infinity of ways, expressing themselves through the different parts of ourselves, to color our action in any given area.

THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF THE ELEMENTS OF VARIETY

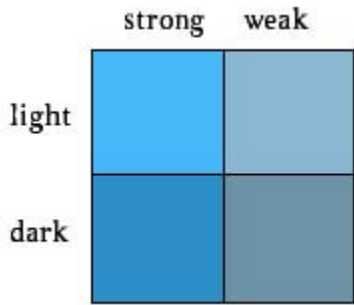
Just as a human being can be thought of as a collection of different aspects, like body and mind, color has various qualities. These include 'value' (lightness, darkness), 'strength' (pureness) 'temperature' (coldness, warmth) and hue itself ('red', 'green' etc.). 'Red' is in fact a very general term covering a multitude of colors which might be dark or light, strong or weak:



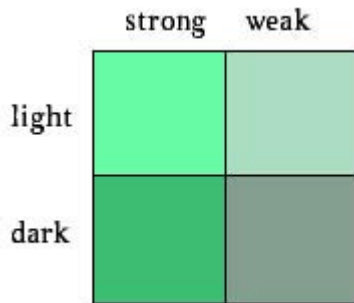
Red chart. Very Light red has a name: pink.

It is possible to talk about these qualities of color and to illustrate them by such a comparative chart. But it is not possible to represent weakness or darkness in themselves; they are only concepts, not facts. What of colors like black, white and gray? Black and white are colors at the outer limit of lightness and darkness. You can't get darker than black or lighter than white without leaving the realm of visibility, and thus of 'color' in the ordinary sense of the word. Blacks and whites are very dark and very light colors. As absolutes they are abstractions. What of gray? It is often thought of as a color without hue, a

pure expression of lightness and darkness. But grays are also colors, often weak colors of bluish or 'cold' hue. The term is also used to designate absence of varied hue, as in 'gray wash drawing'. But any given gray is a color with all the inevitable aspects of color. The blue and green charts are constructed, like the red chart, from one 'color', or hue, with varying strengths and lightnesses:



Blue chart



Green chart

Note how certain of these colors might be called 'gray'.

Concepts, often very useful as such, do not have independent reality. When it comes to color, even though it is useful to painters to speak of 'lightness', there is no such thing as 'lightness' independent of such qualities as 'strength' (or 'purity' or 'intensity').

Though they can likewise be separated in speech, concepts like 'belief' and 'rationality' cannot be neatly untangled in reality. It is possible to build castles in the clouds with words but it is not possible to build real castles on real clouds. We must think, but when theory becomes too enchanted with its powers, when thought takes place in the realm of pure verbal logic without constant reference to reality, it generates absurdities. Navarh indicates this in the title: *Castles in the Clouds and the Anxieties of Those Who Live Directly Below by Reason of Falling Objects and Wastes.*

SUPERSTITION, BUREAUCRACY AND FAIRY MUSIC

In the light of these reflections, and leaving aside the book of *Genesis*, let us reconstruct the circumstances of the first allegedly prophetic message. The first primitive man—call him Og—who received the first report of the first prophet—call him Mog—is not likely to have been so unrational, or credulous and foolish, as to believe anything that was reported, particularly since Mog was almost certainly his neighbor. If Og had spent his life believing false reports—about the location of food, water and shelter—or had failed to develop his powers of observation and deduction, even if his own thoughts about these things seemed to him like words spoken by ghosts he would never have survived to the day Mog reported the alleged words of an alleged ghost. Assuming the message concerned important matters, why would a sensible person suspend his critical faculties in regard to it? Og and Mog, in their primitive ignorance, may have been susceptible to terror at thunder and fear of the darkness. They may, on occasion, have been addled by swamp gas. By why would such things impede Og from using his good sense, however limited, in this particular matter? Surely he would have asked such basic questions as: where were you when you heard this stuff? or: what did the ghost look like? or: what did you drink last night? or: what sort of foolishness is this?

Perhaps Mog, disgusted by the impossibility of being a prophet in his own country, refined his oratorical skills and searched out more credulous people farther away. But unless we assume undemonstrated theories about the development of the brain, the critique of religion would seem to be co-evil with religion itself. The claim, correct as far as it goes, that credulity regarding super-natural matters is 'irrational', is simply not to the point.

The following objection may be raised: if the Aztecs were so rational, such good 'scientists', how did they become convinced it was necessary to make daily human sacrifices in order that the sun rise? When some fool 'prophet' leapt up to announce that a human sacrifice was necessary to encourage the sun, to stave off the imminent onset of a perpetual night, did all the other Aztecs just start sharpening knives and designating victims? Was there no one to point out that the sun had risen that morning without any special encouragement? To whatever arguments the believers made against this objection, can we not assume the further counter arguments by the non-believers were as vigorous as possible, particularly if they were the designated victims?*

* Not that the prospect of getting killed is a sure corrective to thinking; the Palestinian suicide bombers being a notable contemporary example.

Be this as it may, it is in fact easy to see how such things as the nasty Aztec religion got going. It is a process with which we are all intimately familiar and Vance has explicated it in several places.

When self-willed micro-units combine to form and sustain a durable macro-unit, certain freedoms of action are curtailed. This is the basic process of Organization.

The more numerous and erratic the micro-units, the more complex must be the structure and function of the macro-unit — hence the more pervasive and restricting the details [. . .] the population [. . . becomes] forgetful of curtailed freedoms, as a snake no longer remembers the legs of his forebears.

— *Dodkin's Job, The Moon Moth and Other Stories*, p153.

Rationalization of foolishness or naughtiness, with escalating ritualistic and bureaucratic convolution, are a constant danger when the problems of hunger and shelter do not stare us in the face every minute:

"Carrying a shovel back and forth to the warehouse three hours a day! It's not economy, it's a disorganized farce!"

"Come now [. . .] the Chairman chided humorously. [[He] sat in a lounge chair on the deck of his penthouse at the pinnacle of the tower [holding] a glass of pale effervescent liquid.]

"So long as you're not carrying the shovel yourself why the excitement? It works the very devil with one's digestion. Until Policy Evaluation changes its collective mind — as it often does — then we've got to string along. Can't go counter to Policy Evaluation, you know. They're the people with the facts and figures."

"Neither here nor there," mumbled Luke. "Carrying a shovel three hours —"

"Perhaps a bit of bother for the men concerned," said the Chairman with a hint of impatience, "but they've got to see the thing from the long view.

— *Ibid.* p189

A religion may be silly but even the silliest religion is not necessarily less 'rational' than many non-religious things. Man is capable of being silly and naughty about anything, like o-rings of rocket launchers or trying O. J. Simpson for murder. Meanwhile there is nothing inherently 'irrational' about many aspects of religion — the command to honor one's parents comes to mind. So, while the origin of a supernatural belief does not necessarily depend upon a failure of critical thinking, once a religion is established, giving it 'weight of tradition', social opprobrium and even legal constraint add their pressure on critical thinking. But there is nothing specific to religion about that; our current worship of science is in exactly this situation. Life is a theater where belief and

logic ineluctably interact, generating ideas, and then social structures, and then ideologies and cultures, which then weigh on people's thoughts and beliefs.

". . . The fairies ordered musicians for a pavane, and the music began. I felt that I must run out and join them, but I knew that if I danced so much as one step on fairy sward, I must dance without surcease the rest of my life, so I put my hands over my ears and went staggering away like a man bereft."

— *Suldren's Garden*, p335

Take the idea that black people are members of an inferior race. This idea had scientific respectability in the 19th century and was held by people considered, then and now, as champions of science. There is nothing in the Bible about black people being an inferior race (ask any black Christian), and this was not because biblical authors were unaware of black people; many Biblical events occur in Africa. This idea has now become disrespectful and is mostly rejected by scientific people. But this particular progress of rationality does indicate some sort of general 'progress' of science. Science, or 'rationality', is no less subject to odd ideas than it ever was. The 20th century may have rejected racial theory, but what about such 20th century 'scientific' fads as encouraging mothers to feed their babies on factory products rather than breast milk? What about how, in the name of 'science' — in this case so called 'dialectical materialism' — many 20th century 'intellectuals' participated in, cheered on, or closed their eyes to the murder of some 100,000,000 people by Communist regimes? The highest religious authorities protested, just as they had against 19th century racial theory, and earned the label 'reactionary' for their pains. If progress has undeniably been made in some areas, for each positive example there is a negative one as well.

However it is extremely difficult to tell what is and is not progress. For example many people disagree about such important issues as nuclear power stations, socialized medicine, military budgets, progressive taxation, foreign language study and global warming. In France there is a majority favorable to nuclear power, socialized medicine, a small army, highly progressive taxation, foreign language studies and the fight against global warming. In Texas the majority opinion tends to be exactly opposite. Furthermore each person who reads this article will probably disagree with either the French or the Texans on at least one of these points. The French and the Texans can't both be right — and it would be a foolish prejudice to dismiss Texans as 'stupid', as some French people do, because Texas has one of the most highly developed educational

systems in the developed world.

That the French and the Texans tend to agree among themselves shows that social pressure is a powerful influence on opinion. But such pressure does not affect all men to the same extent; when the fairy music plays some men cover their ears. Those with more of the philosopher in their nature will question majority opinions. If questioning (as opposed to cussedness) leads them to different opinions than their neighbors, and if they are obedient to their inner convictions, they may have the courage to publicly disagree with their neighbors. That such people exist is obviously true because it is possible to find minorities of 'French thinking' people in Texas, and 'Texas thinking' people in France.

QUESTIONING, BELIEVING, KNOWING, AND DOING

Questioning is no guarantee of getting answers, and does not automatically lead to certain answers. For example, questioning religion does not automatically lead to rejecting religion. Some famous questioners of religion became believers as a result. The essential thing about questioning is that, when we start to do it, we do not know where it will go. Questioning, or the way of the philosopher, is the opening of oneself to reality. To put this another way, true questioning plunges us into mystery. If we know where questioning is going to lead—if we know, for example, that it is going to lead to atheism—it is not 'questioning' but 'pretending to question'. Since no one knows the ultimate nature of the universe, statements such as: 'God created it', 'everything is an illusion' or 'everything is made of atoms', are provisional. To put this another way, assertions that cannot be demonstrated to any reasonable person's satisfaction are not knowledge, they are beliefs. The philosopher, as philosopher, has no beliefs. This is not to say that it is unreasonable to believe things or that a philosopher is not a man who, as a man, also believes things. For instance; atheists think that the deep holes which have been drilled into the earth without breaking into a demonic underworld shows that such underworlds do not exist, while those who think that everything is illusion point to dreams and drug-induced states to show that our 'normal' feeling about the reality of reality is a prejudice conditioned by the extremely limited perspective of our consciousness, while religious people think that the books of prophetic sayings are evidence that divine messages have been received from ghosts or gods. The evidence for each belief supports it in non-irrational ways. If a new hole, deeper than any other, were drilled

the atheists, non-irrationally, could feel that their case is strengthened, while the religious people, also non-irrationally, can continue to claim that an even deeper hole would pierce into the demon realm. The frequent attempt to solve such problems by disqualifying one's opponent as 'irrational', is just a tactic that resolves nothing.

This particular variety, the difference between philosophy and religion, or between questioning and belief, or between 'science' on the one hand and 'obedience and gratitude' on the other, is exemplified in the famous passage from *Spatterlight*:

At the entrance to the bridge stood a monument ten feet tall, holding a bronze plaque to the attention of those who passed. The characters were illegible to Cugel. Çaulph Rabi thrust close his long nose, then shrugged and turned away. Doctor Lalanke, however, declared the script to be a version of Sarsounian, an influential dialect of the nineteenth aeon, in common use for more than four thousand years.

"The text is purely ceremonial," said Doctor Lalanke. "It reads:

TRAVELERS! AS DRY SHOD YOU CROSS
THE THUNDERING TURMOIL OF THE RIVER SYK,
BE ADVISED THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ASSISTED
BY THE BENEFICENCE OF
KHAIVE, LORD-RULER OF KHARAD
AND
GUARDIAN OF THE UNIVERSE

As we can see, the river Syk no longer thunders a turmoil, but we can still acknowledge the generosity of King Khaive; indeed, it is wise to do so." And Doctor Lalanke performed a polite genuflection to the monument. "Superstition!" scoffed Çaulph Rabi. "At the Collegium we turn down our ears in reverence only to the Nameless Syncretis at the core of the Hub."

"So it may be," said Doctor Lalanke indifferently and moved away. Cugel looked from Çaulph Rabi to Doctor Lalanke, then quickly performed a genuflection before the monument.

"What?" cried the gaunt ecclesiarch. "You too, Cugel? I took you for a man of judgment!"

"That is precisely why I gave honor to the monument. I judged that the rite could do no harm and cost very little."

Varmous dubiously rubbed his nose, then made a ponderous salute of his own, to the patent disgust of Çaulph Rabi.

—Cugel, the Starbreak Spatterlight

Here we have a dramatization of the fundamental relationship between philosophy and religion, or *questioning* and *belief*. Dr. Lalanke, a savant (or 'philosopher' or 'scientist') is devoted to philosophy, or questioning. He states that it is 'wise' to 'acknowledge' the 'generosity' of Khaive.

Philosophy, aware of its limits, considers that it is unwise to be ungrateful (to say nothing of how, in this case, the cost of gratitude is interestingly low).

Cugel is a practical man. He has some philosophical and questioning temperament but not to the high degree of Dr. Lalanke. He is therefore hard put to understand such matters on his own. Likewise he lacks the religious or believing or obedient temperament in a high degree, like Gaulph Rabi. If Cugel were strong his own belief, or inner conviction, whatever that might be, he would be less intimidated by the social opprobrium exerted by Gaulph Rabi. Dr. Lalanke may not be as totally indifferent to Gaulph Rabi's opprobrium as the description of his manner of moving away ('indifferently') would suggest but, being obedient to his wisdom, he is armed against social pressure.

Let us parse this situation to an even more delicate degree. Dr. Lalanke believes that gratitude is the wise course at this particular junction; he does not know this, he believes it based on the exercise of his wisdom. Being more attached to questioning than obedience Dr. Lalanke does not attempt to exert a heavy influence on his fellows, though he does not deny them the benefit of his wisdom. Cugel is influenced, or somewhat convinced, by Dr. Lalanke's arguments; he therefore makes the effort to overcome the embarrassment caused by Gaulph Rabi's opprobrium. Cugel makes the cost-benefit calculation of putting Dr. Lalanke's wisdom into practice. The costs include braving Gaulph Rabi's opprobrium, and abasement, or expression of gratitude. The benefits, though less obvious, are not necessarily negligible. With regard to the cost Cugel has enough chutzpah to brave the opprobrium and enough modesty to acknowledge generosity. Gaulph Rabi, the religious man, refuses to acknowledge generosity to Khaive, but this is absolutely not because he lacks gratitude or obedience! It is because obedience to the injunction of the stele would conflict with obedience to the Nameless Syncretism. Gaulph Rabi's position is not irrational, it is consistent or non-self-contradictory. Neither Dr. Lalanke nor Gaulph Rabi can prove or disprove the claims of the stele but, in the context of obedience, it would be irrational to be indiscriminate; according to Gaulph Rabi the Nameless Syncretism deserves our gratitude and obedience and Khaive's pretensions to guardianship of the universe are in contradiction with the scope of the Hub. Such is his considered opinion; he has devoted his life to study of the questions. He may be living a foolish dream but we cannot pretend he is wrong until we ourselves have investigated the matter.

Dr. Lalanke, Cugel and Gaulph Rabi, each in their own way, and to various degrees, question, believe and obey. The wonderful tensions in this scene are a function of how Vance does justice to the basic elements of variety.

LAW

From the basic varieties explicated above—observation, logic, belief, practice—others emerge; variants, radicalizations, developments, combinations. An obvious example would be *radicalized religion*, or 'fundamentalism', of which Vance gives us an occasional glimpse, though it is not something he is particularly interested in judging by the number of times he makes it a key element in a story. A more characteristic target of his explorations is *radicalized questioning*, or 'relativism'.

The basic thing any thoughtful person has to understand about relativism is that it is self-contradictory or absurd. The essence of relativism is rejection of truth claims as such, but relativism fails to recognize its own status as a truth claim. For this reason relativism gets little support from serious thinkers. But it has always been an element of popular, or vulgar, thinking* and it is neither infrequent nor unimportant at the level of ordinary life; Vance dramatizes the important varieties it introduces into the world. In *Araminta Station*, for example, he shows how relativism relates to law. This would seem to be a simple thing to do, but Vance's way of doing it carries us into the true richness of the thing. To begin with he lays bare the true motor of relativism; self interest, often parading as 'need'. This usually expresses itself as an attempt to disqualify law as prejudice:

"— *musty old laws quite irrelevant to our needs. Still they exist and every day we are thwarted and demeaned by some long-dead prejudice.*"

Jardine in this case referred to the laws which banned the mining of precious gems: a sore point among the Bold Lions, since a month or two of prospecting the Magic Mountain mineral beds might well make millionaires of them all.

— *Araminta Station*, p248

But no matter how dishonest relativists may be, their arguments are far from negligible. Laws are not everywhere the same; jurisdictions overlap and conflict. This seems to indicate a situation where everyone is simply trying to gain advantage:

There was a witness, or a near-witness, named Zamian Lemew

* Plato, writing in the 4th century BC, treats relativism in *The Republic*.

Çabriskies. He is now here at Yipton. I therefore request that you find this person and give him into my custody."

"Certainly, and without hesitation! But I must charge you a service fee of one thousand sols."

"You will be paid nothing for conduct required of you by the law, which you know as well as I do, perhaps better."

"I know your law, certainly, but on the Lutwen Islands we use my law."

"Not so. I agree that you exercise a personal rule here, but only by default, in the absence of established authority, which may be reasserted at any time. The situation is tolerated only as a temporary stopgap, and because, in general, proper social order seems to be maintained — give or take a few distasteful circumstances. In other words you are allowed to rule because it is expedient, not because you have the acknowledged right to do so. The moment you step out of line and start flouting established law, this temporary accommodation comes to an end."

"Use whatever words you like," said the voice. "The Lutwen Islands are in fact independent, like it or not. Let us all recognize reality. . . ."

— *Araminta Station*, p168

Note Sharde's reference to 'proper social order' and 'expedience'. The first term indicates a transcendental standard in the light of which the de facto law on Lutwen atoll can be judged. The second indicates the pressure of reality. There is a struggle between abstract principles and naked power. How does this work itself out?

Çlawen spoke in puzzlement. "Where does morality fit into your scheme? . . . We are not agreed on the meaning of the word 'morality'."

Milo said soberly: "For convenience we can define it as 'cosmos, space, time and the Conservancy arranged to the tastes of Julian Bohost'."

"Come, Milo, be serious!" said Julian. "Must you forever act the clown? Morality has nothing to do with me. Morality regulates the needs and by democratic processes guarantees the rights of all the folk, not just the caprices of a privileged few."

"Superficially that sounds good," said Çlawen. "But it would seem something like a special case. It does not address the situation here on Cadwal, where a colony of illegal vagabonds, who should not be here in the first place, far outnumbers the hard-working folk of Araminta Station. If you gave them the vote, they'd blow us away."

Julian laughed. "I will generalize, to clarify my point. In the largest morality, the first axiom ordains equality, which means equal perquisites, equal treatment before the law and an equal share of decision-making power for each member of every civilized race: in short, a truly universal democracy. And that is a truly universal morality." . . .

Is Julian wrong? . . .

Once again Milo protested: "Please, Julian! Can't you get your head out of the clouds? This isn't morality; it's Peefer egalitarianism in its most hypertrophied form. What is the point of expounding these windy platitudes when you know them to be, at the very least, impractical?"

"Is democracy impractical? Is this what you are saying?"

Çlawen said: "As I recall, Baron Bodissey had something to say on the subject."

"Oh? Was he pro or con?"

"Neither. He pointed out that democracy could function only in a relatively homogeneous society of equivalent individuals. He described a district dedicated to democracy where the citizenry consisted of two hundred wolves and nine hundred squirrels. When zoning ordinances and public health laws were put into effect, the wolves were obliged to live in trees and eat nuts."

"Bah," said Julian. "Baron Bodissey was a man from the Eocene."

— *Araminta Station*, p394

If democracy does not prevail in the society of wolves and squirrels, do the former eat nuts? Are the Conservators wolves while the poor Yips are squirrels? Even if democracy is 'impractical', are not 900 squirrels much better off when 200 wolves adopt their life-style and diet? Why did Bodissey-Vance not chose a different example, like 900 squirrels and 200 bunnies? Bunnies don't live in trees or eat nuts, but they don't eat squirrels either.

How can the strong be stopped from exploiting the weak? Is democracy a ploy to trick the strong into abandoning the advantages of strength? Peefer 'democracy' may indeed have that element but it also counts on strength; the Yips vastly outnumber the Agents, and a Yip, particularly one armed with a projac, is not exactly to an Agent as a squirrel is to a wolf. It is only thanks to precarious circumstances that the Yips can be kept off Deucas. In WW2 it took the allies several years to build up the capacity to cross the English Channel and force a landing in France.

One of the premises of Cadwal is that Julian is an insincere opportunist willing to say anything to gain advantage. But this does not prove that what he does say is false. What argument does Glawen really have against Julian's 'equal perquisites, equal treatment before the law, equal share of decision-making power', other than such remarks as:

"At the Station we consider the Charter to be the First Law of the Universe. Anyone who thinks otherwise must be a Yip, a madman or the Devil himself."

— *Araminta Station*, p267

This is no different from saying that the Mosaic law was written by the finger of God on a slab of stone. That the Agents believe the Charter to be the first law of the universe—if they are not being hypocritical—proves nothing. What justifies this belief?

Consider Dame Clytie's denunciation of Araminta Station and Egon Tamm's argument against it:

" . . . indifference for human dignity and disregard for basic human rights . . . dire deeds done with a chilling finality . . . 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!"

" . . . 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." . . .

Tamm's reply is ambiguous. He characterizes Dame Clytie's charges as 'balderdash', a rather loose term. He says that 'if' her 'charges were accurate they would be a serious indictment'; a statement with gaping loopholes. Tamm fails to specifically deny that murders and deportations are being committed. The only positive statement he makes is that Conservancy law is being applied. But it is exactly 'Conservancy law' that Dame Clytie condemns, and Tamm does not deny that things which *do* fit Dame Clytie's preconceptions and which *are* noticed by her selective comprehension, might be true.

Vance is an accurate writer. It would have been easy to put an unambiguous statement in Tamm's mouth, like: 'No murder or deportations have occurred'. The passage continues:

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. ". . . 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[!]" . . . The Charter, as of now, is moribund, and at the very least must be revised and brought into phase with contemporary thought . . . We must come to an accommodation with the Yips; this

is our great problem. We cannot continue our abuse of these submissive folk: killing them and sending them away from their homes. I see no harm in allowing them the Marmion Foreshore; there is still ample space for the wild animals."

Milo spoke in wonder: "My dear Dame Clytie! Have you forgotten? The original franchise to the Naturalist Society established Cadwal as a Conservancy forever, and specifically prohibited human residency, except as specified by the Charter. You can't contravene this state of affairs."

"Not so! As a warden and a member of the LPF party I can and I will; the alternate course means war and bloodshed."

" . . . Glawen[!] "My remarks concern Dame Clytie. I notice that she 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. . . .

— Araminta Station, p278

Milo and Glawen's argument boils down to the famous tautology: 'the Law is the Law', and fails to meet Dame Clytie's arguments face on. We want something more than a bald assertion of property rights, particularly dubious in this case because they put animals and plants above human beings. The following extract highlights exactly this problem, and its flippancy only aggravates the case against the Conservators:

The night-whisk . . . almost became extinct, and all the biologists wondered why. Then someone discovered that the Yips were taking time off from work to climb up to the nests, kill the birds and sell the plumes to the tourists. Bureau B quickly invoked Statute Eleven of the Charter, which addresses willful destruction of indigenous species for profit. Under this law the killing of the night-whisks became a crime punishable by death, and the poaching stopped at once."

"Death?" cried Julian in consternation. "For hunting a bird? Isn't that extreme?"

"It doesn't seem so to me," said Glawen. "No one stands in the slightest danger unless he breaks the law. It is transparently simple."

"I understand!" said Milo. "I will explain to Julian. If I jump off a cliff, I will die. If I kill a night-whisk, I will die. Both acts are discretionary, both are suicide, and a person makes his own choice."

Wayness said virtuously: "I'm not afraid of the law. But then I don't intend to kill night-whisks and sell plumes."

Julian, with a sardonic chuckle, said: "Naturally you do not worry, since no matter what, the law would never be applied to you. Only to some miserable Yip."

Milo asked Wayness: "What of that? Is Julian right? Would Father sentence you to death for poaching?"

"Possibly not," said Wayness. "I'd certainly be sent to my room."

— *Araminta Station*, p392

Let us admit that the ancestors of the Yips were indeed rapscallions who defied the Charter with effrontery, and let us grant that contemporary Yip society is barely civilized and that Yips have many personal faults. The fact is they have now been on Lutwen atoll for centuries; the original offenders are long gone and Yip children are not responsible for the society into which they are born. The irresponsible Agents allowed them to pullulate on Lutwen atoll, but when they try to catch a bird the Charter condemns them to death, without any corresponding rights or advantages. Their only 'crime' is having come to be, through no choice of their own.

On the other hand, however mean-spirited the Conservators seem, as they cling to their 'lawful' rights, what proves that the Yips, despite their numbers and essential innocence, embody a higher morality? If a higher morality cannot be demonstrated it is absurd to accuse the Conservators of having a lower one. The Yips exist, but the Agents exist to the same degree. The fact that the former outnumber the latter 1000 to 1 is only significant if a human life is less than infinitely valuable, if one person is not as important as a million persons. If so the logic of killing, or disadvantaging, one person for the sake of two becomes morally justified. Devaluing human life from infinite is the precondition for all justification of murder. Smonny has her vengeful passions; the Peefers have their 'progressive humanism'; the Agents have their ideal of Conservation. Are all conflicts naked struggles for power and survival?

Glawen is imprisoned on Tassedoro:

What now? Something must happen, he told himself. A person simply did not live away the days and weeks and years of his life immured in a cave. Still, there was no immutable law of nature which stated the contrary.

— *Araminta Station*, p624

Are there immutable laws of nature? Can there be appeal to a transcendent morality or higher law? If not, the 'democratic' and 'progressive' arguments of the Peefers are as worthless as they think the Chartist arguments, whether or not the Peefers resemble the *third Degree Acolyte at the Bogdar Kadesh*, who explains himself in these terms:

Our task is to promulgate the Right, not exemplify it in every trifling

detail of our life.

— *Araminta Station*, p442

A COUNTER EXAMPLE

Unless we take such dilemmas seriously reality is flattened out and drained of color, and Vance uncompromisingly confronts the reader with the warp and weft of the variety of world. But such sensitivity to the dilemmas, does not mean neutrality in the face of basic choices. Even as he pitilessly exposes the problematic character of the Agent's position he does not lose sight of their moral superiority, which only seems obvious.

Smonny and Dame Clytie may be monsters, but underneath, if we are willing to look, there is more to be said. It is not altogether Smonny's fault that she fell in love with Sharde. It is not altogether her fault that she failed to retain agency status. By the same token unforeseeable and uncontrollable circumstances might have interfered with the agency status of the intelligent, hard-working Glawen. However lazy and bad Smonny was, and however good and deserving Glawen was, luck and chance loom large in both their fates. In the end Smonny was driven from her childhood home, through the cold workings of a law intended to defend some animals and plants who never even asked to be defended. Boiled down to basics, how is this worse than what the Demon Princes did to Kirth Gersen at Mount Pleasant?

Ayn Rand held 'bleeding heart liberals' in absolute contempt. In *Atlas Shrugged* she dramatized 'collectivist' argument in this speech:

*. . . all those millions you're going to inherit are not for your personal pleasure, they are a trust for the benefit of the underprivileged and the poor, because I think that the person who doesn't realize this is the most depraved type of human being.**

Infinitely confident in her ideology Rand exempts herself from the artist's duty of careful observation of reality; even if the arguments in favor of collectivism or selflessness are ultimately no good, they are certainly much better than this. Thanks to *Atlas Shrugged* the world became full of converts to Rand's brand of self-righteous 'selfishness'. By contrast Vance is a true artist because he is a profound observer, and *Cadwal* is a truly philosophical book because it is animated by love of questioning and search, not love of an ideology or belief. But, again, Vance is not without belief; he does not conceal that he

* This passage is quoted in *Getting it Right*.

favors government by law despite the theoretical objections to which it is exposed.* That some readers can come away from *Cadwal* suspecting that Araminta Station is a reprehensible 'police state' is a testimony to Vance's philosophical artfulness.

ANOTHER VIEW

An interesting Internet commentator on Vance's work has also discussed this subject:

I think that Vance, like an experienced traveller, guides us through various distinct peoples and races with their distinct cultures, moralities, and rituals to show that there is no absolute, universal morality. . .

Vance's work is not a show; it argues a thesis:

. . . [that] men are born and shaped too [differently] to be able to agree 100% on what is good and what is bad, and that they must, therefore, dissociate and form different societies, often antagonistic ones.

We are what we are not because of how we shape the elemental skein of tensions which flows through us and the cosmos, but because of the shape we are given by birth and circumstances. The differences between us are like the differences between wolves and squirrels. Without coyness or compromise the commentator pursues his thesis to its logical conclusions:

I don't see how disparities between cultures or social institutions can be studied at all without paying constant attention to genetics, which. . . determines our inclinations and limitations. . . Talent and lack of it are purely genetical phenomenae. . . A relation between genetic inheritance and specific talents and limitations of individuals and groups is an empirical fact. . . It is well known that musical, mathematical, and all other special abilities are of genetical nature.

Upon this foundation cultures, and thus societies, are built:

. . . A handful of talented people determines the following culture of millions. Therefore, genetics is paramount, while culture is merely one of the ways genetical make-up expresses itself.

Such non-traditional, 'scientific' ideas have made great progress in the last few centuries, and it is interesting to see them applied to Vance's work. They may collapse when extended out to their theoretical limits, like Newtonian physics applied to situations at or near the speed of light but, just as Newtonian physics functions well at

the speeds of normal human activities, they have potent sub-theoretical real-life consequences.

I suspect the commentator may be influenced by Objectivism, the doctrine of Ayn Rand. Rand, like Vance, expressed herself not in philosophical treatises but in works of fiction, and the commentator seems to see in Vance's work a Rand-like body of crusading philosophy-fiction, a proselytizing *Kulturkampf*. Basic elements of Objectivism are rejection of 'mysticism' and the recasting of morality on the basis of 'selfishness'; in short, an *Übermensch* creed of pride and strength:

. . . I think that in most cases, where traditional religious upbringing doesn't play a role, a need for religion can be explained by simple psychiatric self-deception: weak people need to sooth their blood-freezing fear of death. . .

The genetically inferior, winnowed out on the flail of religion and talent, are shamelessly designated for exploitation:

. . . need for religion could be a genetical trait of a certain large part of the population carrying the genes that don't allow for independent thinking. After all, any human tribe always needed cannon fodder and slaves to survive. . .

The cosmos so arranged that the genetically superior are naturally furnished with the supply of genetic inferiors they need for survival? Who determined, decreed or ordained this situation, and do the genetically superior think their inferiors will take it lying down? I refuse to be treated like an animal, even by my superiors or, to put it another way: the genetically superior can go fuck themselves. How would they account for this rebellion?* The commentator has addressed a related problem posed by acts of kindness:

. . . 'altruistic attitudes' . . . don't exist in principle, because any external expression of 'altruism' is a behavioral manipulation tool driven by internal selfishness. . .

To put this more broadly: traditional morality is a fraud concealing self-interest. This is a staple of materialistic reasoning which denies transcendence. There is a natural relation between materialism and Darwinism which the commentator, to his credit, makes unambiguous:

I, personally, don't regard the term 'Social Darwinist' as pejorative. In my view, sociology and history without application of genetics and evolutionary biology lose much of their value. If a scientific theory is

* See *Cosmopolis* #42, p29 concerning the trial of the Peefers.

* Van Vogt's null-A stories are fantasies of genetic superiors beset by rebellious inferiors.

experimentally proven (and Darwin's most certainly is), its application to sociology and psychology is not only interesting, it is necessary. Even cosmological and microphysical theories (and, therefore, high mathematics) have immediate social . . . applications; since we are animals, any sound biological and genetical idea must become a paramount factor in our self-understanding . . .

The human animal is locked into a deterministic scheme:

I can look at the three-year-old child and predict, with some certainty, what he or she will never be able to become. If I am given an opportunity to acquaint myself with the child's parents and grandparents, I could even generally predict what this child, most probably, will do in his or her life. Culture is an epigenetic set of factors that plays upon our genetical keys, pressing on them or freeing them up. The outcome is more or less widely varied but the range of possible outcomes is pre-determined genetically, and knowing this range is as important as knowing your fuel tank capacity before taking off in a plane.

But what can 'independence' or 'freedom' mean in such a context? Even assuming the 3 year old child is genetically superior, what range of choice does she have? It may be 'more or less widely varied' but how varied is that? Are the genetically superior free to become religious? Are the genetically inferior free to abandon religion?

The moral consequences of such ideas, to say the least, are dubious. Let us, very briefly, contemplate them in their naked majesty:

. . . how much of the today's humanity is genetically dead sinking ballast? . . . Isn't saving, curing, and procreating everyone a crime against humanity?

Hurrying away from this, let us again look at how the commentator approaches the work of Vance:

. . . writers of Vance's caliber are much more challenging than it seems at the first glance. Vance doesn't lie about human nature . . . that's why he is so attractive, and that's why he is so . . . complex and scary.

To paraphrase the commentator, the appealing, difficult and unconventional truth taught by Vance is that there is no absolute, universal morality and that men must dissociate. Vance's presentation of a variety of races, cultures and moralities is a demonstration that evolution, or survival of the fittest, is the root of variety; the commentator explains how genetics generates variety:

. . . any actual, observed culture is a result of an interplay between genetical make-up of the population (that is, its biologically pre-cast inclinations, strengths, and limitations) and that accrued heap of

unsorted and often dubious information that we call 'traditions' and 'written records'. In my view, genetics plays an important role in that interplay, and has been habitually underestimated in the process of comparative cultural studies since the times of Montesquieu. Every astute observer of human nature (Balzac, for example) noted the somewhat fatalistic importance of inheritance as opposed to cultural upbringing.

It is certainly incontestable that parentage and social circumstances play an extremely important part in life, but is the variety of humanity and culture wholly reducible to genetics? And, if so, on what basis can any genuine moral distinction be made? With respect to variety in the work of Vance, the commentator's position on moral choice is based on a Social Darwinist redefinition of morality:

Some of these different societies and cultures are more benign and can tolerate independently thinking men; some of them are rigid and sadistic, and don't allow for existence of free minds . . . Vance definitely [prefers] a more benign society, which at least has a chance for change and further evolution, whereas a society of fanatics or savages doesn't have a chance when it faces a drastic change of conditions . . .

Vance prefers 'independently thinking men' and 'evolution'. But, beyond being a code word for atheism, what scope does 'independent thinking' have in the materialist context where evolution is not spiritual or moral but a product of Darwinian mechanisms? The commentator suggests a solution to this problem:

I think that Vance . . . recommends to his readers [a] more developed, higher system of moral values [which] cannot be complete or rigid — it is in . . . constant flux . . . accumulating knowledge [and] experience [through] experiment, trial and error . . . In other words, [while] there is no place for faith or other primitive moral certitudes in Vance's [work, he] has a moral position, occupying a high place on the scale of possible moral systems, both ends of which, the lowest and the highest, are lost in the invisible mist of unknown — and, therefore, as far as we are practically concerned, don't exist and cannot be argued for or against. There are no moral absolutes but moral relativity doesn't mean that one moral system isn't higher or lower than another. Relativity pre-supposes comparison.

Ignoring other aspects of this cake eating and having statement, 'invisible mist' and insistence on a moral scale seem to carry us back to a more traditional morality. But there is nothing traditional about the commentator's 'higher' morality, which he has transposed into justification for dividing humanity into superior and inferior races:

I suspect that within a huge pool we call 'human race' there are

already many 'mental species' that [refusing] to interbreed . . . separate themselves, voluntarily, into the groups destined to become biologically distinct . . .

Regarding the commentator's emphases on such things as musical talent, if the variety of humanity is understood as our evolution into different and incompatible species, if, in other words, the watershed of differences between men is not what they love and honor but their genetic capacity to survive, and if art is 'homage to beauty'; is not a cockroach, that champion of survival, more 'beautiful' than a broken down relic of a defunct race, like the *Venus de Milo*?

Let us leave aside such conundrums. Concerning the question of variety the commentator does not see diversity within humanity but divides it into different species:

The idea of 'unity' of the human race is very convenient to those who exploit the human race — thieving magnates (of both conservative and liberal kinds, they are the same), and their lackeys, American academicians and European socialist snobs.

The lower species are impeding the evolution of the higher species in order to cravenly enrich themselves.

It is tempting to dismiss such reasoning as 'crack-pot'. Modern history ought to have taught us that to do so is a tragic, even inexcusable error.

CONCLUSION

I have given a few examples of how Vance displays the variety of the world and humanity. These have mostly concerned clear, or even obvious, elements. But Vance's rigor of observation, sensitivity to the nuances of things and desire to do justice to everything, penetrates the details of his work. From descriptions of how the least of things looks, sounds or feels, to encounters between the most minor characters, Vance does justice.



CLS

The new *Cosmopolis Literary Supplement*, No. 25, is available at the *VIE* download site (www.vanceintegral.com). Included this month are Chapters 21–24 of *Dragonchaser* by Tim Stretton, Chapters 7–9 of *Finister* by Till Noever — and letters!

Letters to the Editor

Editor's note: this month, almost all of the letters are responses to B. Yurgil's letter in the last Cosmopolis. I had written one myself, but insofar that I have taken on the privileged position of Editor of Cosmopolis, and also that the letters below pretty much cover my thoughts, I was in the amusing position of rejecting my own offering to Cosmopolis.

Of course, this month I have also received a letter from Jack Vance, which for reasons readily appreciable to all I have chosen to lead the issue with, not bury back here the "Letters" section. Here's the month's letters, which appear in alphabetical order by author:



To the Editor,

I would like to call attention to a few points regarding Bruce Yurgil's letter in *Cosmopolis* 42.

1. Mr. Yurgil repeatedly refers to Paul Rhoads' 'crimes' which include, according to Mr. Yurgil's letter: writing articles for *Cosmopolis*, shutting down one or more e-mail lists, participating either directly or indirectly in the institution of moderation (in the sense of editorial review) of the Jack Vance Message Board. However much one might disagree with Paul Rhoads' words and deeds, there is no sense in which they can possibly be considered 'crimes'. Mr. Yurgil's attempt to portray Paul Rhoads as a criminal is intentionally deceitful.
2. Mr. Yurgil and others have decried the aforementioned shutting down and moderation of Internet venues related to Jack Vance as a violation of 'free speech', which is absurd given that anyone with access to the Internet in the first place has innumerable outlets from which to expatiate upon their views. Furthermore, *Cosmopolis* itself is just such a venue, and Mr. Yurgil and the world at large have been invited to publish their views therein. Interestingly, Mr. Yurgil himself proposes exactly the sort of action he has decried in the past: he is 'demanding Paul's . . . banning from *Cosmopolis*'. So does Mr. Yurgil support 'free speech' or doesn't he?
3. Regarding Mr. Yurgil's call for Paul Rhoads' resignation from the *VIE*, I suggest that he take up the issue with the *VIE* Board of Directors. Mr. Rhoads is responsible to the Board and is unlikely to be swayed by calls from *VIE* subscribers like Mr. Yurgil whose volunteer participation in accomplishing the work of the *VIE* is exactly nil.

Christian J. Corley

To the editor,

Regarding Alain Schremmer's fears, the FN's alleged ancestors—which, incidentally, they deny having—disappeared 58 years ago, but Communist regimes are still hard at it; so what puzzles me is this: why is there no media fear, plausible or otherwise, respecting political parties boasting this vivacious ancestry? As for 'leftist ideology', Alain seems to be a purist; it is easy to protest that 'ideology' is too dignified a term for the declared strategies of folk who run head first into the brick wall of reality with their eyes closed, but there it is! As for dinner, perhaps we can do it in October when I should be passing through the City of Brotherly Love.

Paul Rhoads

p.s.:

*Reading stories by the score
Turning pages merrily,
I thought to publish forty-four
But Tom S. Merda juggled me.*

*Tom S. Merda, Tom S. Merda,
I didn't ever guess
That such a feisty pamphleteer
Would criticize my swell carrier,
And get me in a mess.*

*A band of friends, against the trends
Of literary history,
Searched the texts to make amends,
But Tom S. Merda hobbled me.*

*Tom S. Merda, Tom S. Merda,
He's Big Brother's maw.
He tells me what is right to do,
And also how I failed to
Obey his moral law.*

*An alphabet of ghostly lead
To honor prose and poetry!
No sooner had I carved a 'zed'
Than Tom S. Merda yobbled me.*

*Tom S. Merda, Tom S. Merda,
His words are sharp and stern.
His diatribes, but even more,
His Letters to the Editor,
Make my earlobes burn.*

*Some illustrations etched in ink
Would make a pretty frontispee,
But oh! the clamor and the stink
When Tom S. Merda roggled me.
In spite of all, the books were packed,
And shipped abroad from Italy,
But when one page was found out cracked,
Why, Tom S. Merda boggled me!*

*Tom S. Merda, Tom S. Merda,
He's got me in a race.
He minds my 'p's, he minds my 'q's,
He dogs me till I sing the blues,
While he plays double base.*

- ❁ -

To the Editor,

Re. Jack Vance—Le Pen—Paul Rhoads. Who is the odd man out?

I love Jack Vance and so does X. Does this imply that X and I should, can and will only talk about Vance? I fail to see Bruce Yurgil's problem.

But, speaking of the rest of his letter:

Sometimes, I see something that, to my great chagrin, makes me long for censorship and, I am afraid, his letter is one. I did not read it nor do I intend to as I only skimmed it and it was enough. And that is why, after all, censorship can be dispensed with: if it bothers you, just don't read it. But, *Poor* Mr. Yurgi!

By the way, the one and *only* one reason that I am against censorship is of course that the odds that I would be the censor are strictly equal to zero. On the other hand, and to paraphrase I forget whom, I will gladly let anyone share my opinions.

Regards,

Alain Schremmer

P.S. Please let Till Noever know that my pile of CLS is now on my pile-of-things-to-read. He should hear from me, oh, say within a couple of years.

- ❁ -

Editor, *Cosmopolis*:

My first inclination, upon reading Bruce Yurgil's letter in *Cosmopolis* 42, was to label it 'rodomontade and piffle' and have done with it. After further consideration, I feel called upon to respond to some of his arguments.

Reasonable people can differ on the font, of course, but I personally consider it to be a success. At this stage

of my life—approaching 60—the first consideration for me is simply: can I read it for hours at a time without eyestrain? The answer is emphatically affirmative. I can't say that about every book I pick up these days.

It is worth noting, too, that while much of the public discussion of the font was vitriolic and *ad hominem*, concentrated mainly on Paul Rhoads' alleged lack of qualification to design a font and his temerity in proposing to do so, there was also useful constructive criticism, which contributed significantly to the evolution of Amiante. I think anyone looking at the font as it first appeared in *Cosmopolis* and as it is realized in the *VIE* itself, will see considerable improvement. I fancy that I do, and I don't know the first thing about fonts.

I suppose reasonable people can also differ in their responses to the question of whether Paul's expression of his personal views in *Cosmopolis* somehow reflects on either the *VIE* in particular or the work of Jack Vance in general. I *have* to suppose it, as either that is the case or everybody who disagrees with me is unreasonable. My own opinion, for whatever it might be worth: Of course it doesn't. Why would anybody think otherwise? And whatever on earth do his personal views have to do with his qualification to serve as Editor-in-Chief?

The policy, oft stated, is to preserve *Cosmopolis* as an open forum. The very fact that Yurgil's letter was published is a testimony to that. And I have to say that Yurgil's letter contains the seed of far more potential harm to the *VIE* than anything Rhoads has written.

Of course, the strongest argument against Yurgil's call for Rhoads to resign are the hundreds of sets of the *VIE* First Wave in the hands of subscribers and the dozens in libraries all around the world. The project has accomplished what it has so far and what it yet will against incalculable odds. I have been a volunteer since the second month of the project's existence and a member of management since early in 2000. I'm prepared to assert—and I doubt anyone in management will contradict me—that none of it would have happened without the crucial role played by Rhoads, not only in coming up with the idea in the first place but in guiding the project during its first two formative years. To call for his resignation as we are this close to realizing our final goal is to display utter and complete ignorance of—and perhaps contempt for—that role.

And make no mistake: Yurgil is in fact utterly and completely ignorant of what has been going on within the project. He is not a volunteer. His contribution to the *VIE* is exactly that of any other subscriber who is not a volun-

teer. Like all subscribers, he has helped to make the *VIE* possible by taking the chance of sending us money before we could send him books. He has not lifted so much as a finger to help us produce them.

I make this point because some might get a different impression from his discussion of the mailing lists that were used as a means of interproject communication during the early days. At least that's what I assume he's talking about when he writes that 'in the beginning, all emails were made publicly available so that subscribers could follow the progress of the *VIE* with an insider's look.' These lists were available to—at least—all volunteers (I don't know if subscribers also could join, but I don't remember anyone participating who was not a volunteer). Their main function, in the early days, was simply to get us all on the same page, to make sure we understood how the project was going to operate and—crucially—what exactly was the goal of the Textual Integrity aspect. It is also true that Paul posted a lengthy message explaining why he believed achieving a larger readership for Jack Vance would halt the decline of Western Civilization. Naturally this provoked a variety of responses and numerous emails crossed the luminiferous aether but—unlike what happened when trolls started to poison the atmosphere of the Jack Vance Message Board—the discussion was *never* anything other than collegial. Furthermore that discussion was a month in the past when the lists were closed. To state that they were closed because Rhoads 'was being blasted on all sides' is simply false.

The closing of the lists happened for two reasons. First, the discussions had accomplished what they were intended to accomplish and, while the continuing exchanges were amusing and entertaining, as well as occasionally edifying, they were no longer furthering the progress of the project. Second, membership was voluntary, so the message that needed to get out wasn't reaching all the volunteers. A different medium was required and thus *Cosmopolis* was born.

Why then is Yurgil uttering these falsehoods? I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt on this and refrain from calling him a liar (which from my experience of him on the JV Message Board I do not consider him to be). After all, he has no first hand knowledge of the situation, so far as I know: neither his name nor his email address show up in the copy of the lists I have saved (as a 3.7 megabyte Word document). My best guess is that he has been told these lies by someone who did participate and, given his willingness to believe any slander of Paul Rhoads that he hears, he has swallowed them hook line and sinker. If I'm right, I'd advise him to consider just

how much he should trust that source in the future. If I'm right, he is not a liar but a dupe.

Steve Sherman



Dear Sir,

I have never previously written a letter to *Cosmopolis*, but Bruce Yurgil's ill-informed splenetic in the last issue must call forth rebuttal.

Bruce presents himself as the voice of humanity and reason, standing up to a Fascist dictator. Who could fail to be impressed? Well, anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with the facts, for a start... The picture of Paul Rhoads, perverting the *VIE* with militant Christian and anti-Semitic diatribes, rooting out opposition to his every whim with foaming rage, is a bizarre and possibly libelous travesty. Most of the senior *VIE* managers have been involved with the project -- and hence Paul -- from the very outset. It seems unlikely that they would devote a not insignificant proportion of their lives to a project tyrannized by the charlatan Bruce depicts. This person simply does not exist.

Paul has his own political and religious views. He is by no means alone in this, and indeed probably shares this quality with the rest of us. His detractors argue that by some intangible osmosis, these views contaminate Jack Vance's work, despite the fact that not a word is published in the *VIE* without having been through a textual integrity process involving at least two other people (one of them, by definition, an expert on the text). This theory of contamination is too absurd to merit the compliment of rational argument.

I should also observe that in my own experience — which I suspect is greater than any of his detractors — Paul has never shown the slightest tints of fascism, anti-Semitism, or attempted to convert this particular agnostic to any form of religious belief.

Bruce's facts are confused in a number of places, as one might expect from a self-professed expert on the workings of the *VIE* who has never undertaken a single volunteer task for it. To give one example, the emails within the *VIE* were never 'publicly available'. How could emails between, say, Steve Sherman and me on *Suldrun's Garden*, which exist only on his PC and mine, ever form part of the public record? Certain email groups existed in which all emails were available to group members only, but this is hardly the same thing. These groups have tended to be task-specific and disbanded once their purpose was achieved.

Those who argue that the *VIE* has been hijacked by a 'scoundrel' have to reckon with the fact that 22 volumes of Vance's work have been published without damage to the author's reputation; indeed, in their textual fidelity, they have presented the world -- and future publishers -- with the best editions yet seen. To the best of my knowledge Fascism has not sneaked in between the covers to emerge like some djinn when the volumes are opened.

Bruce's mischievous rabble-raising would be a concern to everyone who wants to see a completed *VIE*, were it not for the minor detail that there is no rabble to rouse. *VIE* subscribers are by and large delighted with their volumes, as witnessed by the deluge of testimonials received. His observations call forth nods of sagacious approval from possibly as many as half a dozen like-minded folk, one or more of whom may even be *VIE* subscribers. These paladins pat each other on the back, congratulate themselves on their defence of 'Freedom of Speech' and the rout of Fascism, and sink into a fitful doze until awoken again by some mental dyspepsia or eructation.

Regards,

Tim Stretton

A *VIE* Manager since 1999



To the Editor,

Bruce Yurgil's letter in *Cosmopolis* 42 reminded me of one of those marvelous old words that make Jack's prose so delightful. This single word expresses my opinion with such absolute precision that it is not merely necessary by means of a reply, moreover it is sufficient: piffle!

Kind regards,

Koen Vyverman



Closing Words

Thanks to proofreaders Steve Sherman, Rob Friefeld, and Jim Pattison

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