COSMOPOLIS

Contents

VIE SUBSCRIPTION SHARING

The VIE can only sell complete sets, not individual books. As a result some people can't afford to subscribe. For these people we are now proposing 4 Special Collections: *The Missing Mysteries*, *SF Hard Core*, *The Gaean Reach*, *Fantasies and Sagas*. Special Collections are also a good way to acquire VIE books to give a gifts.

To be confirmed, we must collate Special Collection subscribers into whole set groups. Inform Suan Yong [suan@cs.wisc.edu] of your intent to subscribe. He will confirm the subscription when your order has been grouped into a set. You may then reserve the order with payment. Contact me [prhoads@club-internet.fr] with any questions.

The Missing Mysteries

Including the most unavailable texts—the mysteries and unpublished works—plus the stories most touched by the mystery vein of his work, this Special Collection will fill those gaps in your Vance library:

vol. 6: Golden Girl, and Other Stories
vol. 10: The Flesh Mask, Strange People, Queer Notions, Bird Island
vol. 11: The House on Lily Street, The View from Chickweed's Window
vol. 12: Bad Ronald, The Dark Ocean
vol. 13: The Fox Valley Murders, The Pleasant Grove Murders, 60 page Joe Bane novel outline.
vol. 14: The Man in the Cage, The Deadly Isles
vol. 17: The Moon Moth, and Other Stories
vol. 18: Space Opera
vol. 19: The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River, Lune XXIII South, Big Planet
vol. 32: The Dogtown Tourist Agency and Frietzke's Turn
vol. 44: Wild Thyme and Violets and Other Unpublished Works

SF Hard Core

For the Science Fiction aficionado! In addition to all the early SF works, in often dramatically corrected VIE versions, get the super-volumes *Tschai* and *Durdane*. Both feature new maps, including the never before published maps of Shant and the world Durdane, with details of the vastness of Caraz:

vol. 2:   The World Thinker and Other Stories
vol. 3:   Gadget Stories
vol. 4:   The Rapparaee, Big Planet, Vandals of the
           Void
vol. 5:   Son of the Tree, and Other Stories
vol. 7:   Gold and Iron, Clarges, The Languages of Pao
vol. 8:   The Houses of Iszm, and Other Stories.
vol. 9:   The Miracle Workers, The Dragon Masters,
           The Last Castle
vol. 16:   The Blue World
vol. 20:   Emphyrio
vol. 21:   Tschai (all 4 books in one volume)
vol. 27:   Durdane (all 3 books in 1 volume)

The Gaean Reach

All the Demon Prince and Alastor books, plus other beloved stories set in and around the Gaean Reach; 'basic Vance':

vol. 22:   The Star King
vol. 23   The Killing Machine
vol. 24:   The Palace of Love
vol. 25:   The Face
vol. 26:   The Book of Dreams
vol. 28:   The Domains of Koryphon
vol. 29:   Trullion: Alastor 2262
vol. 30:   Marune: Alastor 933
vol. 31   Wyst: Alastor 1716
vol. 33:   Maske:Thaery
vol. 42:   Night Lamp

Fantasies and Sagas

Cugel, *Lyonesse*, *Cadwal*, plus the greatest saga of them all: *Ports of Call* and *Lurulu*.

vol. 1:   Mazirian the Magician
vol. 15:   Cugel the Clever
vol. 34:   Rhialto the Marvellous
vol. 35:   Cugel: The Skybreak Spatterlight
vol. 36:   Suldrun's Garden

vol. 37:   The Green Pearl
vol. 38:   Madouc
vol. 39:   Araminta Station
vol. 40:   Ecce and Old Earth
vol. 41:   Throy
vol. 43:   Ports of Call, Lurulu

These special sets will be priced approximately in relation to the cost of the total set and may reflect the increased costs associated with the effect of the rising Euro on the VIE's printing costs. Pricing should be available in the near future and wil be published then, and pricing will of course also accompany Suan's confirmation.

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Work Tsar Status Report as of December 28, 2003 Wave 2

PROGRESS OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS
Bars represent total number of Wave-2 texts (1mm=2%)

DECEMBER, 2003

SEPTEMBER

JUNE
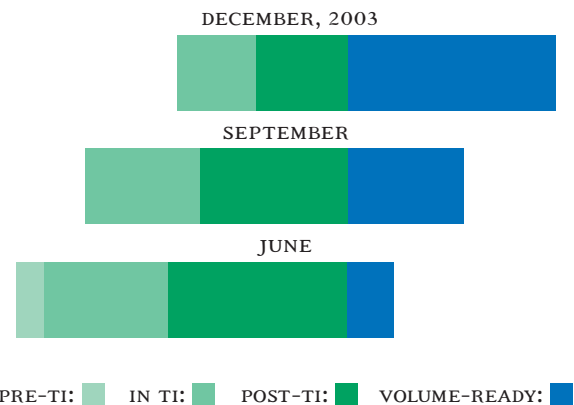
PRE-TI: ▪   IN TI: ▪   POST-TI: ▪   VOLUME-READY: ▪

There are 17 texts assigned and active in TI.

No texts are being Implemented, but one text is in Security Check.

2 texts are in initial composition while 5 texts are in stages of composition review (CRT and composition updating).

There are 3 texts in Post Proof and 9 texts in Post Proof composition updating and review (including a special pass on the *Durdane* texts to check against the associated map).

There are now 45 texts that are volume ready and 4 volumes that are ready for volume composition (there was a miscue last month and a text had to undergo an update causing a volume to no longer be ready).

Last month:
+ In-TI: 17 texts (20.73%)
+ Post-TI: 21 texts (25.61%)
+ Volume Ready: 44 texts (53.66%)
+ Volumes Ready: 5 (22.73%)

This month:
+ In-TI: 17 texts (20.73%) (includes *Lurulu* tracking)
+ Post-TI: 20 texts (24.39%)
+ Volume Ready: 45 texts (54.88%)
+ Volumes Ready: 4 (18.18%)

At this time last year, on December 29, 2002, Wave 1 was in the process of being printed. We were still scheduling and planning the Wave 1 packing and shipping. Wave 2 was in this state:
+ Pre-TI: 21 texts (25.61%)
+ TI: 47 texts (57.32%)
+ Post-TI: 14 texts (17.07%)
No texts were volume ready.

We've made significant process in the last year: Wave 1 is printed and delivered. Wave 2 is more than half way completed. Wave 2 printing draws closer.

Joel Riedesel

● —— ◦ ✦ ◦ —— ●

You have done it!

VIE work Credits

Compiled by Hans van der Veeke

Here we are again with the credits of the past month. Only one erratum reported last month, involving 'King Kragen's Exemplary Corps'; it has been repaired.

Please verify these new credits! If your name is misspelled or missing; let me know at hans@vie.tmfweb.nl.

The credits of all finished (Wave 2) texts can also be found on www.vie.tmfweb.nl

This month I would like to put another special VIE volunteer in the spotlight. You won't find his name on many credit lists, but he does an enormous amount of behind-the-scenes work. He is the inventor of 'Totality', or the VDAE (Vance Dictionary Analysis Engine) which helps us winkle out all kinds of information, and errors, in any text. Totality generates special files to help not only with proofing, but with TextPort, RTF-Diff and other special jobs.

Ladies and gentlemen, please raise your hats to 'The Laughing Mathematician'! (also known as Koen Vyverman). Koen: in addition to this ceremonial honour, it is my pleasure to confer another, perhaps more real, advantage upon you: access to the Nympharium's 'special section'!

THE WANNEK

Finished 10 November 2003

Digitizer
Joel Hedlund

Pre-proofers
Arjan Bokx
Edward Gray
Jeffrey Ruszczyk

DD-Scanners
Olivier Allais
Jon Guppy
Jurriaan Kalkman

DD-Jockey
Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey
David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer
David Gorbet

TI
Linnéa Anglemark
Rob Friefeld
Steve Sherman

Implementation
David Reitsema
Hans van der Veeke

Composition
Andreas Irle

RTF-diffing
Patrick Dusoulier
Charles King
Bill Schaub

Composition Review
Mark Adams
Brian Gharst
Karl Kellar

Correction Validation
Bob Luckin
Robert Melson

Post-proofing
"Clam Muffins"
Karl Kellar (team manager)
Patrick Dusoulier
Ed Gooding
Marc Herant
David A. Kennedy
Joe Keyser
Bob Luckin
Robert Melson
Jim Pattison
Linda Petersen
Joel Riedesel

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THE VISITORS

Finished 12 November 2003

Digitizer
John A. Schwab
Suan Hsi Yong

Pre-proofers
Sean Butcher
Stéphane Leibovitsch

DD-Scanners
Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey
Joel Hedlund

DD-Monkey
David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer
Joel Riedesel

TI
Rob Friefeld
David A. Kennedy
Tim Stretton

Implementation
Joel Hedlund
Hans van der Veeke

Composition
Joel Anderson

RTF-diffing
Patrick Dusoulier
Bill Schaub

Composition Review
Christian J. Corley
Charles King
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation
Bob Luckin

Post-proofing
"Spellers of Forlorn Encystment"
Till Noever (team manager)
Malcolm Bowers
Patrick Dusoulier
Harry Erwin
John Foley
Rob Gerrand
Peter Ikin
Bob Moody
Axel Roschinski
Bill Sherman
Dave Worden

THE DOGTOWN TOURIST AGENCY AND FREITZKE'S TURN

Finished 13 November 2003

Digitizer
Per Sundfeldt

Special reformatting
Suan Hsi Yong

Pre-proofers
Mike Barrett
Till Noever
Suan Hsi Yong

DD-Scanners
Damien G. Jones
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey
Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey
Suan Hsi Yong

Technoproofer
Patrick Dusoulier

TI
Patrick Dusoulier
Paul Rhoads
Thomas Rydbeck

Implementation
Joel Hedlund
Hans van der Veeke

Composition
Andreas Irle

RTF-diffing
Patrick Dusoulier
Bill Schaub

Composition Review
Marcel van Genderen
Charles King
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation
Bob Luckin
Robert Melson

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

CHATEAU D'IF

Finished 22 November 2003

Digitizer
Chris Reid

Pre-proofers
Erik Arendse
Arjan Bokx
Joel Hedlund

DD-Scanners
Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Axel Roschinski

DD-Jockey
David Reitsema

DD-Monkey
David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer
Fred Zoetemeyer

TI
John A. Schwab
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

Implementation
Mike Dennison
Hans van der Veeke

Composition
John A. Schwab

RTF-diffing
Patrick Dusoulier
Errico Rescigno

Composition Review
Marcel van Genderen
Karl L. Kellar
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation
Bob Luckin

Post-proofing
"Sandestins"
Jeffrey Ruszczyk (team manager)
Christian J. Corley
Patrick Dusoulier
Michael Duncan
Frank Dalton
John Foley
Sue Manning
Mike Nolan
Glenn Raye

D.P.

Finished 22 November 2003
Digitizer
Mike Dennison

Pre-proofers
Arjan Bokx
Andrew Edlin
Per Sundfeldt

DD-Scanners
Joel Hedlund
Charles King
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey
Hans van der Veeke

DD-Monkey
David A. Kennedy

Technoproofer
Joel Riedesel

TI
Rob Friefeld
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

Implementation
David Reitsema
Hans van der Veeke

Composition
John A. Schwab

RTF-diffing
Charles King

Composition Review
Chris Corley
Marcel van Genderen
Karl Kellar
Charles King

Correction Validation
Bob Luckin

Post-proofing
"Dragon Masters"
Erik Arendse (team manager)
Scott Benenati
Angus Campbell-Cann
Patrick Dusoulier
John Foley
Marcel van Genderen
Yannick Gour
Erec Grim
Evert Jan de Groot
Willem Timmer
Hans van der Veeke
Dirk Jan Verlinde

THE MAN IN THE CAGE

Finished 22 November 2003

Digitizer
Richard Chandler

Pre-proofers
Erik Arendse
Rob Gerrand
David A. Kennedy
David White
DD-Scanners
Mark Adams
Richard White
Dave Worden

DD-Jockey
Hans van der Veeke

DD-Monkey
Suan Hsi Yong

Technoproofer
Suan Hsi Yong

Special tasks
Steve Sherman

TI
Patrick Dusoulier
Paul Rhoads
Tim Stretton
Suan Hsi Yong

Implementation
Derek W. Benson
Hans van der Veeke

Composition
John A. Schwab

RTF-diffing
Patrick Dusoulier
Charles King

Composition Review
Marcel van Genderen
Charles King
Bob Luckin

Correction Validation
Bob Luckin

38's Crucible

Wave 1 Textport Complete!

Work started on 25 April 2003, completed on 3 January 2004.

Chuck King : 11 Volumes, 30 texts, 1.2 million words.

Suan Yong : 8 Volumes, 14 texts, 791 thousand words

Patrick Dusoulier : 2 Volumes, 5 texts, 264 thousand words.

Josh Geller : 1 Volume, 1 text, 52 thousand words.

TEXTPORT SECURITY CHECKS:

Patrick Dusoulier : 22 Volumes, 50 texts, 2.4 million words.

The Textport team up-dates text files with corrections brought to our typeset pdf files by PostProofing and Composition Review and other post composition procedures. On 1st January 2004, Patrick Dusoulier, head of the Textport team, reported that *The House on Lily Street* had been textported.

Patrick wrote: "Last of the 22 Wave I volumes. Chuck called this 'The Last Hurrah'. Yes, the Last Hurrah of the Textport Horde, although it feels rather like the Last Gasp. In fact, not quite gasped out yet, since I still need to do the final Security Check, as soon as Herc and Koen can do the necessary technical stuff. By the way, they are distinguished members of the Textport Horde too; kudos to them and their magnificent labour throughout. And kudos to Chuck and Suan; many many thanks, guys."

Steve Sherman wrote: "Congratulations are in order. This seems to me to be another significant milestone for the project. We now are in a position to offer authentic texts to publishers for a good half of the vancean oeuvre. Indeed, given that the errata have back-propagated to the textport phase, it is at least possible for a publisher to produce an edition of a Vance work that is superior to the VIE's. Of course, given some of what we've seen, this may not always be the case. Nonetheless, the project has performed exceptionally well, as it seems to me. All we can do is create that potential for complete authenticity. It is up to other—equally fallible—human beings to take advantage.

"What a lesson this project has been in the ambitions which we humans are capable of striving towards and the fallibilities that prevent us from achieving our goals. Take a look at the errata pages on the website. A healthy percentage of the citations are nuncupatory, but what remains must be humbling to every one of us. Honestly, I would have been embarrassed by one-fourth of the number of legitimate

errata. I hope we will do better in the second wave, but I don't see that we have procedures in place to guarantee — or even encourage — that.

"Thus the Textport subproject assumes dimensions of cosmic importance. It will produce the texts that are made available to commercial publishers. The VIE's presence in libraries will assure the long-term presence of Jack Vance in the literary universe, but the Textport work will define the middle term. The significance of this work for the impact of the vancean oeuvre is, unpredicted by me, right up there with anything we have done for libraries.

"Congratulations and praise to those who have created this body of work."

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Lurulu

The long awaited *Lurulu* is done at last. Some final pre-publication proofing is being done, with the aid of a select group including VIE personnel — of which I am a privileged member. It will surprise no one to hear that the long wait has been worth every minute; *Lurulu* is Vance at his most distilled and potent, each word and phrase to be savored like a rare wine. The book begins with an amazing resume of *Ports of Call;* a masterpiece all by itself of surprising originality. The adventures of the crew and passengers of the *Glicca* then resumes in full force. If his work were not so vast and varied I would have no trouble opining that *Ports of Call*‒*Lurulu* is the greatest achievement of Jack Vance.

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VIE Text Based Commercial Publications

For several decades publishing houses have been staying 'up with the times' and 'ahead of the competition' by demanding digitized texts from authors, and insisting the latter do their own proofreading — with the help of Spell Checkers. While these methods have probably kept down the price of books another result has been a notorious slippage of publishing standards.

Thanks in part to the VIE, commercial publishers are starting to put Jack Vance back in print. All new Vance publications use VIE texts. Not counting new French publications, with translations corrected from VIE texts, these include *Lyonesse*, *Dragon Masters* (published with *The Last Castle*) and *Maske:Thaery*, with *Domains of Koryphon* and *Clarges* soon to appear. There may be others. People who have seen some of these books, including Nick Lowe and Joel Hedlund, have informed us that some of these books,

both electronic and traditional, are marred by typesetting errors.

An electronic text, no matter how accurate, cannot simply be fed directly into whatever software and hardware out-puts the book. For example; footnotes — a frequent feature of Vance's texts — which are provisionally inserted in the text flow, are given special markers to call them to the attention of typesetters. They then 'set' the footnote at the bottom of whatever the book page turns out to be. Occasional neglect of such traditional niceties in contemporary publications, particularly when the texts benefit from uncounted hours of volunteer work, is regrettable. We have asked publishers using our texts, the fruit of uncounted hours of our work, to mention the VIE project. As a result we may be held responsible for such errors, which are in fact beyond our control. As we will continue to work with commercial publishers we will try to augment our vigilance.

The VIE project does not own any texts. What the project owns is the work it accomplishes. The project controls this work, but offers its results to the Vance estate for the benefit of Vance's work. Thus the VIE project does not deal directly with publishers (except by special arrangement for editorial work such as performed by Patrick Dusoulier to help correct French versions or for things like formatting VIE maps). All legal matters, publication rights, fees and the rest, have nothing to do the with the VIE and are handled by the Vance estate through their regular literary agents. The VIE has a contract with the Vance estate giving us rights to create and publish the VIE edition according to a set of conditions. This contract was negotiated at the beginning of the project. Two members of the Vance family serve on the VIE board of directors but the project is an independent entity, not a sort of arm of the Vance estate. In particular the VIE project is not an agent for Vance's work. VIE texts may be thought of as versions of Vance texts. They are more faithful, correct and complete than any other versions. The VIE hopes that its texts (its versions of Vance's stories) will be made available to all future publishers, and this hope is being realized, to our satisfaction! Everyone involved in the VIE is contributing to bringing better versions of Jack Vance's work to more people, and may consider themselves, in an intimate sense, permanently associated with Vance's work.

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VIE Data Tracking

VIE work processes were designed by John Foley 4 years ago (see The Master Plan, available on the VIE web-site). In recent months, alerted by certain anomalies, John Foley undertook a review of our current data control and tracking dispositions which, like everything else in the project, is constantly evolving. His study was interrupted by other demands on his time, and I completed the work. It was a task both complicated and rewarding. The VIE project has become vast and far flung and, last September, John confirmed that the project's data-control anatomy had become something of a mystery. In many cases we did not know who tracked which data, or how to access certain informations.

As it turns out no dramatic adjustments are required to our current operational modes. But we now have a clear picture of who is doing what and how our various data reserves and control nodes are related. A few ameliorations have been proposed and instituted. These are aimed at making work easier for the managers upon whom data tracking falls most heavily, at rationalizing relations between the archives of various categories of data and their back-up systems, and insuring good access and control of vital project data.

Making a statement in the course of this work, John Foley wrote:

> One of the most important reasons I originally specified, and have now opened up a mission to centralize the control of data and texts is to ensure that we pass a very high standard of auditing. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately if you prefer), auditing and control have become extraordinarily important issues for corporations in this country as a result of the Enron debacle. We now have Senators Sarbanes and Oxley to thank for legislation requiring absolute end-to-end proof of controls in financial processes. Our file management and traces of all actions (such as requiring propositions for all changes and repeated verification of such changes) is so completely in harmony with these requirements that were we ever inspected, our operations would pass at nearly the highest level short of Military Secrecy requirements.
>
> It is therefore urgent that we complete the initiative to store all versions of documents and especially all versions of the 'bis' files under central control and ensure that reportage from all teams is mandatorily uniform for 'inputs' and 'outputs'. The basic structure of the teams now ensures sufficient process controls. The documentation of our processes as published in Cosmopolis should be scrupulously followed. I believe it is. The suggestion is that we must do so without variation or shortcut.

One result of this work, for me, is a new appreciation of work being done by Suan Yong, John Schwab, Hans van der Veeke and Joel Riedesel. To say nothing of internal tracking, the VIE has a most impressive on-line data presence. The Master Tracking Chart details who has done or is doing which job at each step of the work process, from text-entry to final correction. The Composition Tracking Chart shows which composers have done or are doing which phase of setting or correction, from initial composition to print-ready out-put, as well as Composition support work such as the Composition Review Team of Marcel van Genderen, or the Composition Team Verification process managed by Bob Luckin (both originally created by Robin Rouch). The Master Tracking and Composition Tracking pages were designed by John Schwab. The former is now maintained by Suan Yong. Suan also tracks all work on an internal data base, much of which can be accessed publicly and interactively. On his Assignment Tracking Page, for example, it is possible to access work data by text, volunteer or job-type, including dates and file names. The limpid, orderly and efficient presentation of this crucial data helps us in many ways:

1– *Work on each text is tracked in detail.*
With so much work being done to so many texts by so many people, we would quickly lose track of what we are doing were it not for this level of tracking.
2– *The contributions of each volunteer are accounted for.*
Unpaid VIE volunteers receive public and official acknowledgement of the text related work they accomplish.
3– *The world may judge the seriousness and efficacy of the project.*
This has certainly contributed to our strong and growing subscription base.

Suan's Errata Page should also be mentioned here. It is beautifully presented. It is possible for anyone not only to report errata but to review all errata contributed by others, text by text. Some 150 errata for 41 texts have so far been contributed (as of November 2003). Please note that the errata page is a simple repository, without official standing. Many of the contributed errata are in fact not

errors. A number of true errors, however, have indeed been signaled and subscribers will eventually receive an official errata list for Wave 1 volumes. Suan's errata page will be one basic resource from which TI prepares the official errata list.

But work directly related to VIE volumes is not the only class of information that must be controlled. Just as important are subscriber contact information and related records. I want to mention in particular the meticulous work of Hans van der Veeke. Hans makes sure that correct credit is given in the published books. His 'You Have Done It' *Cosmopolis* feature is only the most visible aspect of an ongoing and painstaking process of checks and counter checks the daunting extent of which I had been unaware.

Giving a hint of the difficulties involved in discovering what everyone is doing and whom they were doing it with, is this explanation from The Laughing Mathematician (Koen Vyverman) concerning his 'VCR' out-puts:

VCR stands for . . . eh . . . the Checklist Report I build when a text has entered the cor-bf stage and goes into Comp. It lists all manner of anomalies in the Word document that may cause trouble when the text is composed. Like paragraphs with a leading space causing uneven indentation, en-dashes posing as hyphens, double spacing, quotes pointing the wrong way . . . All that kind of stuff! I send them to Herc, who then (I suppose) forwards them to whoever will compose the story in InDesign. I've never received any feedback on these from Comp. Perhaps I should ask around to see whether people find these reports useful . . .

One of several glitches turned up by the study was that, indeed, there has been no record of whether or not Composers have taken advantage of VCRs. This, among other matters, has now been set right.

Many people have been associated with this study and the consequent adjustments. Thanks to all for your patience and cooperation!

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South Park Revisited

As recounted in a recent issue of Cosmopolis, I discovered South Park on French satellite TV. Recently I had the chance to see some episodes in English. I also saw the movie (in French). Not altogether to my surprise the French language versions turn out to be superior. Not only is the original English dialogue blurred to the point of incomprehensibility, but both French voice-acting and dialogue itself are superior. This is true in general; unwatchable American trash, dubbed into French becomes, if not good, at least less revolting. On the other hand really good stuff, Jimmy Stewart movies, or TV shows like *Colombo* and *Kojak*, are something else. The French do a brave job of approximating the special charm of these actors like Peter Falk or Telly Savalas, but such things cannot really be imitated.

With regard to South Park the most notable amelioration is the voice of Cartman. The French voice-actor uses a cooing snottyness that is just perfect. As for South Park's famous curse words, like 'oh damn' and 'the bastards!', they are improved in French with the more staccato and trenchant '*ah putain*' and '*les enfoirés*!', to say nothing of the superiority of '*merde*' over the irredeemable 'shit'. *Putain*, pronounced 'pu-tan', with a swallowed 'n', means 'whore' but is an all-purpose expletive. *Enfoirés* is used to replace such English vulgarities as 'fucker', but the level of verbal violence so easy to achieve in English does not exist in French. *Les enfoirés*, though considered low-class, in fact only means something like 'drunken guttersnipes' or 'rowdy vulgarians'.*

As for the South Park movie, its failure is not surprising. It is even gratifying, in its way, to watch the South Park artists diving into the big money, to bury themselves and their postmodernist inspiration. Postmodernism, hollow at the core, can't maintain itself in any format but the 'snippet'. Of course there were some good snippets in the film. Notable among them; the chorus of the fart-dance in the otherwise tedious 'uncle fucker' song, or when Saddam Hussein, in bed with the devil, after waggling a 'frontal member' into view, reveals it is only a dildo, and then waggles out a second, which also turns out to be a fake. I'm not quite sure why that worked so well. Perhaps the first waggle-out was such a shock, and its dildoish dénouement such a relief, and our expectation of South Parkian over-the-top naughtiness so entrenched, that the second round seemed to signal a truly heinous transgression. The anti-climax thus came as 'cathartic relief'. South Park may be corrupting the youth, but even they have their limits, as we see here. If these limits were imposed by Time Warner, or whomever, the artistic result was still . . . successful, so to speak. But the occasional golden

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* South Park aficionados will want to know that 'Mm-kay?' is translated 'tu vois' [you see?] pronounced 'teuh vwAHH?'

moments were all, like Iraqi war journalists, embedded in sequences of killing length. Saddam's love affair with the devil, in which the latter feels sexually exploited and emotionally undernourished, is great postmodernism, on the condition it be introduced, worked for all its worth, and sent packing in 18 seconds. Spun out to 10 minutes it is worse than bathetic. But the nadir of the film — for me, an unforgivable artistic goof — was the 'Transfiguration of Kenny' scene. Unhooding Kenny, to reveal a face of angelic cuteness and universal benevolence, framed in light brown curls, was so cloying a moment that it has just about turned me against South Park altogether.

The thing about the South Park artists — it's something they have in common with all post-modernists — is that while their antic and irreverent cynicism allows them often to hit the nail on the head, it is on condition they keep it small and fast. Underneath their cynical post-modernist exteriors they are a bunch of soft-headed left-ists. It does not take the movie to reveal this, it is clear enough from the TV show; Kenny, who suffers injustice, torture and death in each episode, is not only the poor kid, he is the only character in the whole show who is intelligent or virtuous. Another egregious example of this underlying flaw would be how, in the movie, the children are depressed and discouraged at the prospect of war (forsooth!), when what gives South Park its edge is the true observation that children are monsters. Boo!

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Masters and Dragons

The Dragon Masters game, active in 'phase 1' form, is being up-graded by the maestro of Small Talk: Vlad Degen. The 'Phase 2' version ought to be playable in a few months. The new game will feature a totally interactive game interface with full-up point-and-click play system, on-line tactical battle, and animated strategic map. Among the work Vlad has assigned to your servant is creation of play icons, representing companies of dragons and knights. These will be in full color. Cosmopolis readers may enjoy inspecting the black and white icon sketches, evolutions of the images published in VIE volume 9. Vance readers, and Last World Game players, will recognize Jugger, Fiend, Blue Horror, Long Horned and Striding Murderers, Termagant, and knights — some mounted on Spiders. The full array of weapons will be reflected in the icons: Cutlass, Ax, Mace, Lance, Tail Ball, Blunderbuss, Pistol. Contact 'Last World Games'; soon you will be raiding caravans in Maudlin Pass or decimating your enemy on Starbreak Fells.

VIE Social Notes

Last October I finally had the pleasure of accepting the often proffered (right here in *Cosmopolis*!) hospitality of Alain Schremmer. Alain turns out to be an extremely handsome man of middle years. He lives with his charming wife in a rambling house of vancian aspect, transformed over the years according to Alain's fantasies. The visitor must pass a small metal portal in a low, thick stone wall, and traverse a jungle-like garden of narrow winding paths. The front door opens directly upon a vast room; two grand pianos fill the near end, with books crowding vast shelves in the woodworked walls. Beyond the pianos is a fantastical clutter of furniture, all comfortable, followed by a dining area centered on a massive table of dark wood. The adjacent kitchen is an enclosed porch, notable for decorative tile work and counters cleverly adjusted to the porch columns. Alain's generosity and graciousness were unforgettable, and the meal first class. It was thoughtfully designed around good things unavailable to
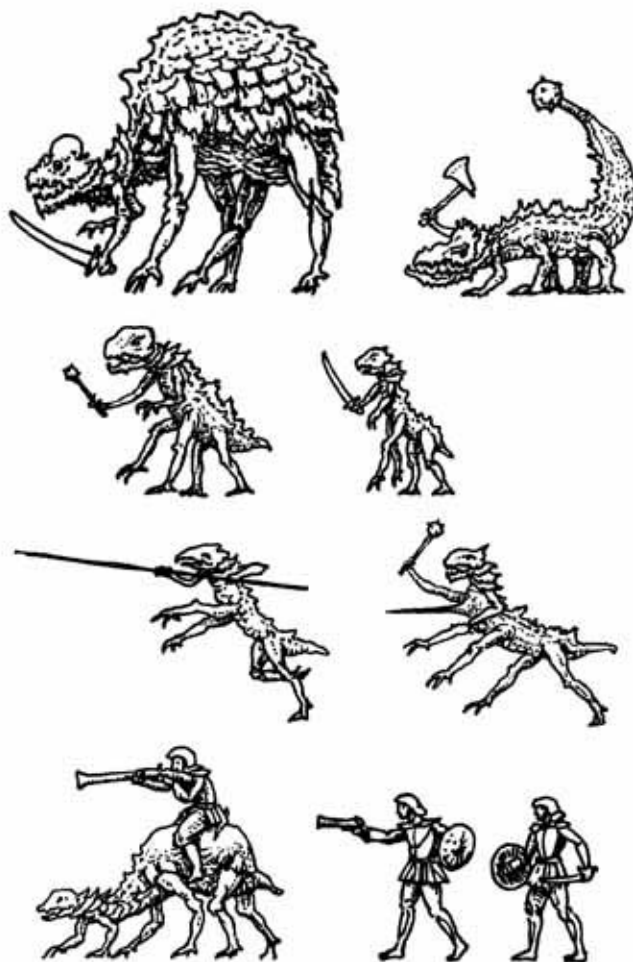
people living in France, such as giant scallops—better than any I've ever had. As for the conversation, it also was in the vancian vein, with fellowship out-flanking clever logic at each sally. The issues boiled down to a critique of the viability of anarchy as a real-world system of government. Alain is more hopeful on this score than I tend to be, even though discussion lasted deep into the night. I look forward to our next meeting, when this thorny question, which has plagued humanity for a period of centuries, may be settled at last!

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The Truth About the Mind

PLATO'S BODY GUARDIAN

As Leo Strauss has pointed out, the cast of mind encouraged by the violent, sentimental and mechanistic modes of modernism make it difficult for us to appreciate Plato. 'The Republic', for example, is not the utopian blue print for an Ideal Society it is vulgarly supposed to be; it is a story, about how Socrates copes with a group of young brilliant and ambitious Athenian aristocrats. To temper their passions for worldly power and glory, to, in other words, decrease the danger they pose to the public, Socrates displays to them the terrible gap separating the real world and the world that exists in speech—or, as we misleadingly put it today, the 'ideal world'. Athens was a real place, a democracy, and consequently prey to the personal ambitions of such wild demagogues as Alcibiades or Cleon, whose names, even after 25 centuries, still make democrates tremble.

Glaucon, Socrates' principal interlocutor, is torn between his better nature and his suspicion that the delights of power can be his, if only he will ignore this better nature. Glaucon is led by Socrates to want to learn why virtue is better than vice, or whether there is any good reason to reject, or even moderate, his more or less unbounded ambitions. With the help of Socrates Glaucon puts the question in its most uncompromising form: is it better to be evil if, in consequence, one will be rich, happy, honored and live a long life; or is it better to be good even if, in consequence, one will be miserable, dishonored, tortured and killed? But 'good' and 'evil' cannot be discussed before they are defined. Discussion reveals that they are matters of 'justice'. But 'justice', being a function of human interactions, cannot, it its turn, be understood or defined except by defining a just society—or 'culture' as we might put it today. A just society does not exist. All real societies are unjust, and for this reason

evil, rather than good, predominates. Socrates, therefore, must construct a just society, in speech. With this tactic Socrates manages to suggest to Glaucon that justice, or the expression of his better nature (of which he is also becoming aware), is not compatible with the delights of power and prestige he so strongly desires.

In the real world rulers tend to be more or less foolish and evil. Their motivations are not necessarily pure concern with wisdom. They must struggle to get power, and struggle to keep it. For this reason power and goodness (or wisdom) fail to be strongly associated in the real world. Socrates' Republic is a construction, in speech, of a 'just society', whose organization and institutions are in harmony with the 'demands of justice'. Despite its absurd, grotesque or even repulsive aspects, it is organized in such a way that power and wisdom are not separated—thus the tranquil rule of 'philosopher kings' for the impartial benefit of all. Creating this condition requires such policies as excluding artists, rigidly controlling education, military-style regimentation of each minute of the day, eradication of family, and reduction of sex, that greatest of all troublemakers, to its lowest common denominator; state organized procreative orgies. In a 'just society' everything we feel makes life worth living—personal liberty and the pursuit of more or less innocent personal plans—are swept aside. Justice is not compatible with personal ambition or the fantasies of personal desire.*

As for understanding the human mind, it may be wondered if, despite the lengthening catalogue of 'ologies' and 'isms' cobbled up from Greek and Latin roots, anything really significant has been contributed since Plato. Many examples could be given of Plato's grasp of this subject, but the 'myth of the cave' is the most famous. According to this Platonic story the human mind is like a prisoner chained in a dark cave so that his field of vision is limited to a craggy wall. Behind, paraded before a flickering fire, are statues (artificial copies of real things). Shadows of the statues are cast on the wall by the fire. This is all the prisoners know of reality: distorted flickering shadows of copies; such is the natural condition of the human mind. If a prisoner manages to escape his chains and turn around, his situation is much improved; but still, all he can do now is peer directly at copies in a dim and flickering light. If he actually manages to escape the cave and climb out into

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* This consequence deflects Glaucon's questioning into deeper areas and results in the Socratic tale of reincarnation, which has given rise to dubious assertions regarding Plato's personal beliefs.

the world of real things, the sunlight is so bright he is dazzled and confused. If he manages to adjust his sight and perceive the real, directly in the steady and true light of the sun, and if then he goes back down into the cave and tries to explain the situation to the prisoners, the barrier of comprehension is so great that there is no hope of understanding. The escapee must content himself with offering a few hints graspable within the context of the prisoners' extremely limited experience.*

Vance offers a similar explanation:

> "One dark midnight a student entered the Baron's chamber and awoke the Baron from his sleep. The student cried out, 'Sir, I am distraught with anxiety! Tell me once and for all: what is Truth?'
>
> "The Baron groaned and cursed and finally raised his head. He roared, 'Why do you bother me with such trivia?'
>
> "The student gave a faltering response. 'Because I am ignorant and you are wise!'
>
> "'Very well, then! I can reveal to you that Truth is a rope with one end!'"
>
> "The student persisted. 'All very well, sir! But what of the far end which is never found?'
>
> "'Idiot!' stormed the Baron. 'That is the end to which I refer!' And the Baron once more composed himself to sleep."
>
>   — *Ports of Call*

The Greeks had a much surer grasp than we of the territory extending between Truth and Illusion. They had, for example, the category 'true opinion'.

THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX AND THE APPLE

In Freud's last unfinished book he speculated that the time might come when medicine would replace psychoanalysis. Mere treatment of neurotic symptoms was not what he meant. He specified actual alteration and correction of the human psyche by chemical means. Freud was prophetic: today such means have names — like 'Prozac'.

Freud was doubtlessly a great humanist. Like many 19th century Viennese he was a man of vast culture and, though not religious himself, was by no means a flat-footed atheist in today's popular style. He was intimately familiar with the bible. He wrote extensively about the prophets. An important part of his reflections were devoted to his 'Jewish identity'. Despite his Viennese breadth of mind, the medical speculation mentioned above indicates that, with regard to the great water-shed separating materialists

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* In the mode of fantasy, both *The Matrix* and *The Eyes of the Underworld*, trace their ancestry to Plato.

from their opposites, and though Freud spent most of his time walking this high ridge to peer out over the misty distances on the latter side, he lived on the former.

Freud's basic ideas, despite their now quaint packaging of pseudo-scientific 19th century jargon, are by no means stupid. The Id, the Ego and the Super Ego, the Oedipal complex, Narcissism, and development from the Oral to the Genital stage via the Anal, nicely articulate how impulsive desire, revulsion, fear, calculation, reflection and social pressure affect the progressive accommodation of 'ourselves' to the developing shapes and functions of our bodies and our place in society which, particularly during the first 20 years of life, can be a traumatic process. Still, what does such terminology, or its associated tight focus on such matters as weaning, toilet training and formation of what we now call 'sexual identity', teach us about being human, and about the human mind in particular, *that we did not know before?* The ancient image — of a snake offering an apple to a naked woman while, from a passing cloud, a bearded face peers down in disapproval — is a matrix of information in which the 'Freudian insights' rattle around like three peanut in a 50 gallon drum. It is even evident that Freud, famously fascinated with myth and 'culture', did nothing more than translate aspects of this picture into pseudo-scientific terms. The translation is neither complete nor literal. Freud's whole enterprise was oriented in the wrong direction. Thus the demise of psychoanalysis, which today it is a basically extinct epiphenomenon, per Freud's own prediction.

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND THE FROWNING MAN

Are the most important scientific advances of the Grand Motholam which is our Modern Technological Age, imputable to the vaunted 'scientific method'? If hypothesis based on *observation of phenomena*, and *repeatable experimentation* could have invented telecommunications, discovered antibiotics or divined the relativity of matter and energy, why did humanity have to depend on the clumsiness of Alexander Graham Bell, the messiness of Louis Pasteur, or the reveries of the mathematically inept Albert Einstein to enjoy the advantages, and disadvantages, of these interesting things? I do not contest that plodding observation and meticulous notation, processes modeled on the unheroic virtue of the clerk, is a powerful tool in its way. But insisting, for example, that material reality is everything is 'hypothesis' at best, and hypothesis, let alone prejudice, is not 'science'. In any case, hypothesis owes nothing to 'scientific method'.

That the mass of grey mush which fills the human

cranium can today be mapped with scanning techniques, or that excitation by electrodes or probes can stimulate 'physio-psychological' reaction, does not move us one step closer to the mystery of why the calculating murderer moves his arm so that the knife clasped in his fingers penetrates his victim's body, or why the hero spontaneously throws himself on the grenade to save his comrades. The picture of the frowning man peering from a cloud does explain these things. It is one thing to reject this explanation. It is one thing to hypothesize a fundamentally different basis for an eventual allegedly more adequate explanation. There is nothing fundamentally illegitimate about either. But, on the basis of such rejection and hypothesis—and particularly in the absence of any positive result what-so-ever—to pretend to superior understanding of the supremely important matters in question is something else.

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Empire, Colonialization, Globalization and the Gaean Reach

In the early 19th century European colonists crossed the Alleghenies, drove back the red man, and settled the great American west. In 1836 the Mexican army clashed with Texans at the Alamo and in 1845 Texas joined the Union. The next year, 1846, saw California, also Mexican territory, become a state. In this same year the northwestern border of the continental United states was set, by negotiation with England, and the state of Oregon came into being. In 1865, nine years later, Abraham Lincoln cleansed the American United States of the crime and shame of slavery, redeeming the delayed promise of the Constitution. In 1916, fifty-one years later, a time when living Civil War veterans were still numerous, Jack Vance was born in San Francisco.

The territories of Texas and California, prior to feeble Mexican sovereignty, had been part of a far-flung Spanish empire, just as the 13 original American colonies had been part of the British. Elsewhere around the globe other Imperial and colonial adventures had been taking place. As a port of call to the Dutch Indies, Holland had settled Cape Town on the southern tip of Africa. In the 19th century the English adventurer Cecil Rhodes encouraged a large British presence and Holland, exhausted by the Napoleonic wars, gave way to triumphant England. In 1830 English efforts to Anglicize the African Dutch exasperated them, and they undertook the *Great Trek*, a mass migration east and north into lands emptied by the terrible *Mfecane*, 'the crushing', a vast massacre of native peoples by the Zulu emperor Chaka. Meanwhile gold rich Australia, penal colony and sheep farming paradise, was settled in a series of adventures which had also begun in the 17th century.

Terms and names from these fabulous times, the Sooners and Boomers of the American west, the Squatters and Diggers of Australia where towns and provinces bear names like Port Jackson and Van Deiman's Land, will have a familiar ring to Vance readers.

New Zealand is an especially vancian case. The early colonizers were followers of a colonial theorist, a mercantile rationalist named Gibbon Wakefield; but the numerous, organized and warlike Maori had other ideas. Furthermore, in 1814, one year after Napoleon's demise at Waterloo, they were Christianized by one Samuel Marsden. Wakefield's commercial minded colonials wanted to push the 'naked savages' aside, but Christians, supported by the British Colonial Office, asserted native rights. The 'Maori wars' intervened and the colonials were triumphant. Just as slavery in America, abolished 150 years ago, continues to weigh upon the national life of the USA, so in New Zealand these ancient adventures continue to unfold in contemporary times. Again and again Vance refers to such forces and influences.

Having crossed the Atlantic, probably in the 18th and 19th centuries, Vance's ancestors, mostly English and Dutch, now crossed the continent and built their own commercial empire in the boom towns of San Francisco and Oakland. But during the Great Depression the family fortune declined. Jack Vance, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, grew up in poverty. As a young man he took to the sea. As if driven by genetic urge he continued his family's westward migration into the vastness of the Pacific. In Hawaii he discovered a mix of exotic Pacific and hardworking Asian folk, or in Tahiti the French bureaucracy succumbing to lazy Polynesians' ways. In 1942, when America became active in the greatest war that has ever shaken mankind, Vance was at sea as a merchant sailor, in submarine infested waters and under skies menaced by Japanese war planes. Hundreds and thousands of merchant ships were sunk, along with their crews of American seamen. Meanwhile war raged in China and Burma, in Syria, Egypt and Morocco, in Greece, Italy, France, Russia, Poland and Germany, while desperate diplomatic maneuvers in the South American republics sought to counter Nazi agitation, and terrible ideologies prepared to fasten upon the bodies and minds of half the world's population.

American ingenuity, celebrated by Mark Twain, now took a leading role; the world entered the Technological Era. The crowning achievement: in 1969 Americans crossed the frontier of outer space to walk the surface of the moon. Jack Vance was then 54 years old; he had lived longer than the time between the Civil War and his own birth, and he had traveled the whole world.

Who has sung these adventures, the saga of our times? Who are the bards of the grand movements and struggles? Walter Scott chanted the middle ages, Cooper the romance of the American frontier, Conrad the adventure of primitive contact, and Kipling the charm of empire. Of adventure, or private life, in various places and milieus, there is no lack of brilliant *conteurs*. But Vance, I say, unlike any other artist, has encompassed the whole of the modern world-covering adventure. If we are what we have done and where we are from, Vance's work is the 'song of himself'. Not the solipsistic crooning of a Walt Whitman, the narrowly ideological and sentimental pleadings of a Dickens, the moral passions of a Tolstoy, but a great song of the human life-force in exhilarating, tragic and joyful strophe; this is the music of Jack Vance. An unprecedented work, Vance transcribes his story into the key of his imagination. His work is fiction the better to be universal, fantasy the better to be true.

Even in the Stone Age there was world-wide commerce; silex tools from the quarries of France have been unearthed in Asia and Africa. Problems of balance of trade, tariffs, or international variance in labor costs have been known for centuries, and the colonial adventures of the 16th to the 20th centuries were driven by commercial interest. But wars in the old style, wars of pride and dominion, were still fought. That era, so it may be, ended with the defeat of Hitler. America, or at least that part of it expressed by the idealistic president Wilson—has, for 2 centuries, been a champion of free trade, and the post World War 2 American ascendancy marks the true beginning of 'globalization'. Technology, particularly in transportation and communication, is now such that events halfway round the world, in the space not of centuries or decades, but weeks, days or minutes, can affect the everyday lives of thousands of folk. The most dramatic example is the intercontinental ballistic missile, but a car factory springing up in Korea can have similar effect in a space of time that is also alarmingly short.

Wars of pride between tribes or nations linger in backward corners of the globe. In the vast open areas called 'developed', they seem outmoded. Our 'wars' are now with primitive exalted thugs lurking in the interstices of the civilized world, Visbhumian apprentice sorcerers clutching stolen bags of thaumaturgical tricks, blowing blue-concentrate at innocent passersby. This view, despite its shadows, may be too hopeful; a war of pride between nations may yet shake the Western world; but commerce, tourism, peaceable exchanges bringing unprecedented prosperity in an atmosphere of rational co-existence, such is the mental backdrop of contemporary life. It is the back-drop of the Gaeaen Reach.

At the fringes of the Reach is the menace of the Beyond. The demon princes, solipsistic embodiments of 'evil', are images of tyrants and fanatic terrorists; the Maos, Qaddafis, Arafats, Bin Ladens and their epigones. The IPPC, a supra-planetary organization, holds back incursion and crime, while the Institute watches over moral and physical well-being, guarding man against himself. The UN, the IMF, the G7, Al Qaeda, the WTC, Greenpeace, NATO, Interpol, the EU; already we are in world of Non Govermental Organizations, whose grasp for global power has become a significant force. We live in the Gaean Reach. Our computers and airbuses are Redball packets and Flitterwings. The multi-cultural smorgasbord of the vancian pageant is our contemporary 'cultural playground'. Vance has traced our past and mapped our present. His song, hawked as trash for the vulgar, is not only History but prophecy. Not Thalia alone but Clio and Melpomene have graced him with their smile.
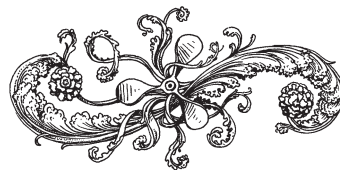
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Art Is Fantasy

It is often said that talk about Art is pointless. You can talk about an apple. But those who have never seen, touched, smelled or eaten one, what can it mean to them? And to someone who has eaten apples; what can you say about them, in words, that will add to their experience?

Art is not a sort of effluvium, oozing out of 'artists' like drool running from the gaping mouths of imbeciles. In important ways Art is science, or 'techne' as the Greeks put it. You must see it to know what Art is but for the easily derailed human mind, aspects of it require discussion—if only to keep us looking in the right direction. And the great question remains: 'what is Art?' Art, I say, is fantasy. Fantasy is vapor rising from the dew that is human thought as, laying on the meadows and the rocks of the world, it is warmed by the sun of consciousness. Fantasy begins with what we know, and then recreates it within the crucible of the mind—a place, or a power, woefully limited in some respects, but infinite in others.

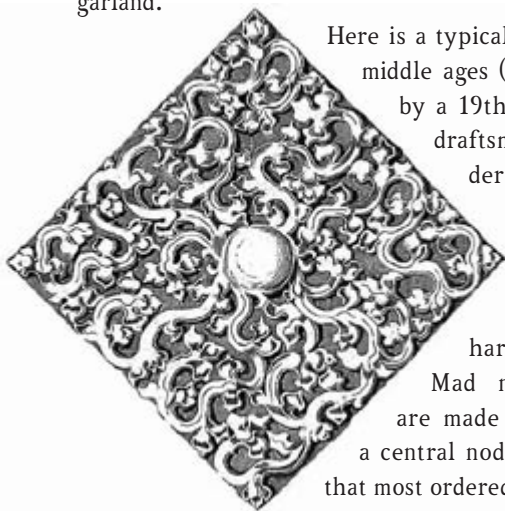The most primitive art-form is therefore the garland, or the arabesque.

It is hard for us Moderns to remember that art does not begin as it seem to do today. The first artist in history, or the first artistic steps taken by the young, are not leaps into pure arabesque, or 'abstraction' for its own sake. The first step is recreation or translation of the real. The inherent beauty of line or color are aspects of art that come to light at a later stage; incandescence in the mist struck by the rising sun. The Greeks, like any developed people, were well aware of this incandescence, what today we call 'abstraction', or which might be called 'decoration' or simply 'arabesque'. There is the famous Greek story of an artistic competition: a great painter drew a line so beautiful it was thought impossible to equal, but his rival drew a line next to it so wonderful that there appeared to be not 2 but 3 lines. The 'conceptual artist' of today is not fit to file the toe-nails of such painters. The posturing of 'contemporary artists' will soon, gratefully, be forgotten, while the celebrity of the Greeks will continue to persist.

All this to explain that the arabesque is not simply a wavy line, but that wavy lines are, first of all, twisting vines and waves in the sea. The arabesque is, first of all, a garland.

Here is a typical fantasy from the middle ages (persevered for us by a 19th century German draftsman, Karl Alexander von Heideloff). It is made of observation of writhing nature and human lust for harmonious order. Mad natural twistings are made to emanate from a central node and disposed in that most ordered of all spaces, the square. The square is then tipped on its edge; its solidity made to balance nervously on a point. Further glosses on the effect produced by this arabesque could be elaborated ad infinitum, but are resumed in the single word: 'fantasy'.

Arabesque is no lost art. For Volumes 32 and 33 of the VIE, the 'lacet' above will be used. A mechanical form is mimicked, or perhaps mocked, by plants, while the plants are mimicked by the mechanism. Such foolishness is akin to the compelling, if bizarre and pointless, insights of the

half-waking state. By such processes art begins.

For example, take the beard of Moses, as sculpted by Michelangelo. For centuries this garland of human hair has been the object of much commentary. Thanks to Michelangelo's fantasy these stone whiskers speak to us of the vitality, of the super-human attributes and adventures of the famous patriarch. And while the beard of Moses is obviously a garland, less obviously so are his nose, his eyebrows and all the rest of him. This 'nose of Moses' is a lump of stone shaped by human hands guided by a mind which . . . which what? Was dreaming? Yes, art is a sort of dream, as dreams are a sort of reality.

Art is fantasy; a dream. This detail of a painting by Fragonard makes it explicit. But if this particular painting is obviously 'dream like', fundamentally any painting is what this painting is; color disposed on a surface. The particular bits of color in this sample add up to Fragonard's account of moist air, grandiose dendrons, gay crowds, a lightsome melancholy, a vast, inviting and yet somewhat forbidding infinity of pungent mood. But a painting of anything else is no less a dream. A 'fantasy' is not always poetic and happy. It can be brutal, harsh, ugly or wicked. I invite my readers to transpose these ideas to a larger set of styles and subjects.

A detail from a work by Titian, the prince of painters, suggests how another style of art also arises from observation and fantasy, or how the arabesque remains the underlying 'artistic technique'. Note the undulating masses of hair, pillow, flesh; how the light and shadow gracefully and subtly weave and twist in arabesques of such power that the observer's eye is imprisoned in delight, like the feet of those who have the misfortune to hear fairy music and are condemned to dance. Any fool with a pot of color and a pig bristle brush can sit down and daub a 'head of a beautiful woman'; only a true artist can produce a fantasy to haunt the mind forever. It is not the head, or even its human beauty, that is the power in the art, it is the artist's fantasy. This idea is expressed in the famous formula: *Art is not about 'what', it is about 'how'*. What is fabulous about this Titian is not what he painted, but how he painted it.

And literature? It is not for nothing that the word 'Art' means, first of all, painting and sculpture. These are the first Arts, the artistic Arts par excellence. They, and painting in particular, combine to the fullest measure reality and fantasy, the basic elements of Art, without stint or intermediating elements. Music has the odd distinction of being an Art of pure arabesque. But even music begins in reality, for its deep beginning is speech (not rhythm!), and speech is meaning. Even the yips and yelps of primal 'expression' is 'speech' by its intent to communicate a meaning. If primitive music is always song, or words enhanced by 'frequency modulation' and rhythm (the realm of poetry), it is instantly apparent that the musical aspect can be made independent of meaning, of words, and from then on music becomes an exuberant if somewhat mathematical realm of pure fantasy, no matter how suggestive or 'programmatic'. Poetry, the link

between literature and music, is fantasy or arabesque in that it beautifies not things but ideas (words) by melding them into rhythm. Great prose writers always have a poet lurking within them because, in spite of Gertrude Stein's attempt to make words themselves into abstraction or naked arabesque, words, or rather their meanings, are the literary equivalent of the real. They are 'the world', grappled more directly by painters.

When confronted with a painting of an apple the observer does not need to say 'apple'; the apple is already there. But the subject of the painting is not 'apple', it is appleness; the painter, and his audience, are in direct, non-verbal, touch with the weight, texture, color, even the smell and taste, of a particular apple. There is no symbolic intermediary. The painting is a living symbol. A writer can only do something similar by indirect means. He is forced to use an intermediary screen of symbols, or words, the portents of which is only more or less agreed upon, let alone known, by each reader. To say *the apple sits on the table*, the writer laboriously performs an act the painter accomplishes with such ease that this aspect of his message is absorbed by the spectator without realizing it. To match the painter the writer must get on to such constructions as: *the apple is large with a shiny skin of red and light green*. But such vague and general suggestions ('table', 'apple', 'large', 'shiny', 'red' 'light green') leave a margin for error so wide that no two readers will understand the same thing. It has been truly said that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'; so prose finds a more effective outlet not describing things, but progressions. The richness of literature is not in any one 'tableau' but in their flow.

To put this another way: a painting is both reality and fantasy in the first degree while literature is 'a fantasy' of 'reality' in a less direct and less tangible form, for the reality is glimpsed only though a fog of symbols, and the arabesque, if any, is not a garland of vines but a spray of symbols, a flourish of meanings. The progressions that literature is best adapted to present are not even fully 'reality' for often enough the 'reality' in question is already a fantasy, because events are so often driven by human passions. For this reason the literary technique par excellence is dialogue. What people say, though merely swirls of often vague or impoverished symbols, is, in its way, a direct reality. Narration is at a remove; it describes or recounts; it is a technique of reproduction. The subject of narration may be people, places or events. In a painting the observer gets the people, places or events depicted, reproduced it is true, but directly. A reader gets something second hand, a symbolic picture. In dialogue

the writer shares the advantage of the painter; what he delivers is the thing itself, because the thing itself is words. Dialogue is itself. Take the following example from chapter 3 of *Ports of Call*:

"I don't quite understand," said Myron. "You seem to be telling me that it is a mistake to search too hard for knowledge."

"I suspect that this is what I mean," said Wingo. "Even if 'Reality', or 'Truth' – whatever it is called – were discovered, and scientifically codified, it might be something trivial and years might have been wasted in the search. I might well recommend mystics and zealots to caution, lest after decades of fasting and penitence they are allowed Truth, only to find it to be some miserable scrap of information, of no more account than mouse droppings in the sugar bowl."

This may be pure vapor, foolishness of no import. It may describe nothing and mean nothing. But, whatever it is worth, we get it whole: these are the words of Wingo and, like Myron, we can make of them what we will. In this sort of passage, given the subject of Wingo's reflections, Vance even carries us directly into the realm of words per se, into 'word reality'.* For this reason the 'reality' side of the reality/fantasy equation, naturally weak in the Art of literature, is reinforced to the maximum, allowing Vance to approach levels of artistic horsepower usually only available to the painter.

So what is the 'fantasy' element in literature? What is the literary equivalent of an arabesque? Of course there are the musical arabesques—literature's poetic element— but this is music, the garlands that can be woven of sound and rhythm. A true arabesque of 'words' would be an *arabesque of meaning*. Look at this passage from another of the 20th century's greatest writers, Winston Churchill, speaking of George IV:

George, as heir to the throne, had to have an English background; and in the circle of his more intimate friends, Charles James Fox, Richard Sheridan, and Beau Brummel, he soon acquired the attributes of the eighteenth-century English gentleman — the arts of acquiring debts, of wearing fine clothes, and making good conversation. His natural intelligence and good taste went undisciplined and his talent for self-expression was frequently squandered in melodramatic emotion. Self-indulgence warped his judgement and frivolity marred his bearing. When pleasure clashed with royal duty it was usually pleasure that won. The loneliness of his position, both as Regent and King, cast a harsh emphasis upon his not unamiable weaknesses.

In 1784 the Prince had fallen in love. His choice was unfortunate.

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* or the Realm of Purple Magic.

Maria Fitzherbert was not only a commoner of obscure family, but also a Roman Catholic. Her morals were impeccable and she would be content with nothing less than marriage. The Prince's Whig friends were alarmed when the heir to the most Protestant throne in Europe insisted on marrying a Roman Catholic widow who had already survived two husbands. Under the Royal Marriages Act the union was illegal, and George's behavior was neither creditable to himself nor to his position. The clandestine beginnings of this relationship and the volatile temperament of George did their work. Mrs. Fitzherbert, prim and quiet, was not the woman to hold him for long. The relationship slid back into the secrecy from which it had unwillingly emerged. It was finally broken off, but not until some years after George had contracted a second, legal, and dynastic marriage.

At the bidding of his parents in 1796 he was wedded to Caroline of Brunswick, a noisy, flighty, and unattractive German princess. George was so appalled at the sight of his bride that he was drunk for the first twenty-four hours of his married life.

[*The History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, Volume 4]

This amazing prose derives its verve and power from Churchill's voice. The manner of the passage is indeed narrative, and its matter is unpromising; a brief account of events concerning the British monarchy in the final decades of the 18th century. But Churchill's voice is so powerful, his art so consummate, that his narrative is elevated to dialogue; Churchill is not writing, he is 'speaking'. *The History of the English-Speaking Peoples* is a four volume work in which a single character gives a single speech. Note how Churchill misses no opportunity to leverage each foot-pound of meaning from each word by savant juxtapositions; such as:

Self-indulgence warped his judgement and frivolity marred his bearing.

It is not possible to imagine a phrase in which more meaning is squeezed from 4 nouns and 2 verbs. But not only does Churchill force each word to yield a maximum of sense, he seems to have a reckless indifference to normal rules of narration and tells his story in broad strokes to powerful and general effect, in which the details are almost incoherent:

Under the Royal Marriages Act the union was illegal, and George's behavior was neither creditable to himself nor to his position.

The meaning is more than clear but, even taking context into consideration, only the inspired dare forge phrases of such little apparent coherence. The literary art consists in

casting into the reader's mind wafts of sense, projecting arabesques of the meaning-essence locked up in words. Here is Vance, in Chapter 2 of *Ports of Call*, rustling up one of his choicest soufflés:

Sir Regis Glaxen appeared: a round-faced gentleman of middle-age, plump, pink and cheerful. He bent and kissed Dame Hester's cheek. "You'll find this very strange," he told her. "I could not see your face because that hyssop branch hung in the way. What I saw was a lovely yellow leg, and instantly I said to myself: 'Dear me! Surely I recognize that leg! It is the property of Hester Lajoie, the most ravishing of women!' The yellow leg told me all I needed to know. In my haste to join you, I tripped over a petunia, but suffered nothing and here I am."

"Ah, flattery!" cried Dame Hester. "I like to hear it, even when it's a transparent lie. I never want it to stop."

"This is an enchanted garden, where nothing begins and nothing ends," declared Sir Regis stoutly. "Eschatology is a dangerous lore!"

Dame Hester knit her brows. "I scarcely know how to spell the word, let alone comment upon its vagaries."

Sir Regis seated himself. "There is no past and no future; only the twinkling flicker of an instant which is the present. Tell me this, my dear Hester! Have you ever thought to measure the exact duration of that instant? I have tried, but I know less now than ever. Is it a tenth of a second? A full second? Or the hundredth part of a second? The more you ponder, the more confused you become. The idea is diaphanous, and cannot be grasped!"

"Yes, all very interesting. I will think about it, or perhaps I shall have Myron do a calculation."

It all means nothing . . . and yet! What makes it so intensely delightful is what makes Art artistic: fantasy. A yellow leg, tripping on a petunia and suffering nothing, the vagaries of the lore of Eschatology, the equivalence of 'the present instant' with a tenth of a second, calculations of diaphanous ideas; how unexpected and yet how gracious is each permutation of this ballet of gratuitous exploit and apparent ease. It is arabesque, or garlands of meaning like twisting rose branches or drapes of colored silk.

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Cosmopolis 44 Errata

In *Cosmopolis* 44 there was reference on page 19 to 'violent Mafia'. This should have been 'Violet Mafia', that nebula of homosexual priests who are alleged to have taken control of the American Catholic seminaries.

In the Section of the VANCIAN CAGE essay beginning on page 22 (The Vancian View) I argued that Vance concieves of a normal social order which, by some mechanism exerts pressure against extremes. I might have reinforced the point with the following Bodissian remark from page 16 of *The Book of Dreams*: *The ideal program by which each new society is shaped, by some as yet unenunciated law of conduct, begins to generate its own obverse, or opposite, impulse, which in due course overcomes the original scheme. Human perversity? The malice of Fate? Who can say? In any event, the examples are everywhere.*

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Repaired Deluxe
Volumes on eBay
by Suan Yong

Throughout January and February, I will be selling repaired Deluxe VIE volumes on eBay. These are books that originally contained pagination errors, and were repaired by the process described in *Cosmopolis* 41 (a process which I've perfected over the past few months, so that signs of repair are really not noticeable unless you know to look for them). Among the volumes that will be offered are:
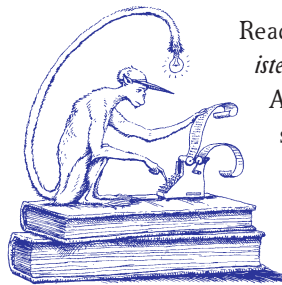
Volume 4: The Rapparee, Big Planet, Vandals of the Void
Volume 6: Golden Girl and Other Stories
Volume 12: Bad Ronald, The Dark Ocean
Volume 25: The Face
Volume 40: Ecce and Old Earth

Here's a rare opportunity to own a Deluxe VIE volume without dishing out $3000 for the full set.

Just go to ebay.com and search for "Vance Integral Edition".

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The Cosmopolis
Literary Supplement

Read the latest installments of *Finister* and *Dragonchaser* in CLS No. 27. Available now at the *VIE* download site! www.vanceintegral.com

End Note

David Reitsema, Editor, Cosmopolis

I was asked in early December to help the VIE with the editing of *Cosmopolis*. This was a bit of a surprise as I had never aspired to this position. I have edited periodicals previously and I am well aware of the issues and amount of work involved. But, and I could not get around this "But", I am committed to seeing the VIE successfully completed, and decided this was another way I could contribute to that goal.

My style is subdued and I intend to do nothing personally that will change the flavor of *Cosmopolis*. Indeed, *Cosmopolis* has demonstrated that it can and will change itself. From the excited, jovial and even flippant tone of the early issues has evolved more of a sense of urgency, seriousness and anticipation.

I believe this new focus reflects the attitude of the volunteers who have individually spent hundreds and thousands of hours working to complete the Vance Integral Edition. As a volunteer myself, I can hardly wait to see our final work product in print. What at the outset was exciting, challenging and even a little scary we are now recognizing as a very significant project.

My hope is that *Cosmopolis* reflects just how significant we feel our work is in contributing to the increasing awareness of and respect for Jack Vance. That is, after all, our common goal and bond.

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Thanks to proofreaders Steve Sherman, Rob Friefeld and Jim Pattison and to Joel Anderson for his composition work.

COSMOPOLIS SUBMISSIONS: when preparing articles for *Cosmopolis*, please refrain from fancy formatting, especially the use of 'soft-returns'. Send raw text. For *Cosmopolis* 46, please submit articles and letters-to-the-editor to David Reitsema: Editor@vanceintegral.com.

Deadline for submissions is January 26.

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