
COSMOPOLIS

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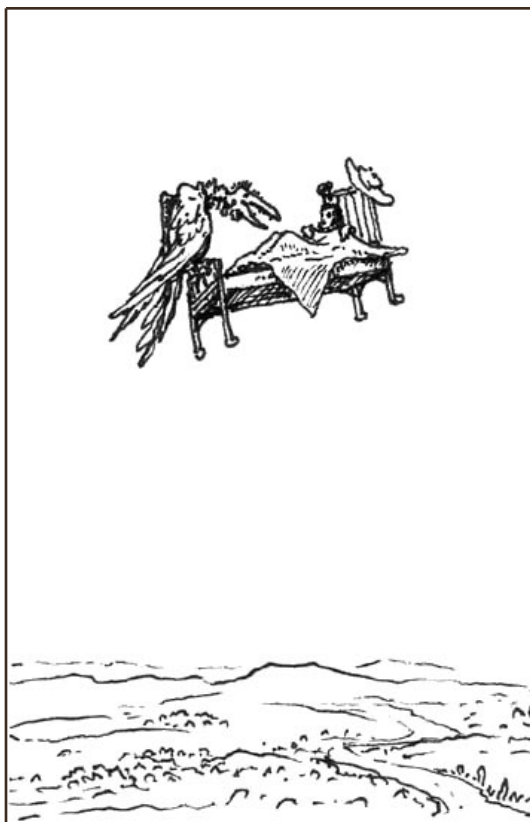
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VIE NEWS

AS OF APRIL 26

JOEL RIEDESEL reports that only two texts remain in TI. We are at the brink of a major milestone. See the Master Tracking Chart on the VIE site for information about which texts remain to be composed and Proofed. Among these texts, and currently in Post-Proofing, is *Clang*, an un-published film SF scenario from 1981, which will appear in Volume 44.

In news from the Composition team, JOEL ANDERSON, composer of Volume 35: *Cugel: The Skybreak Spatterlight*, has requested vignettes for the six section title pages. See sample on this page.

TEXTPORT proceeds apace, with PATRICK DUSOULIER recently announcing a series of completions of Wave Two texts, including:

<i>Cugel the Clever</i>	<i>The Narrow Land</i>	<i>Wannek</i>
<i>The Man in the Cage</i>	<i>The Houses of Iszm</i>	<i>Dirdir</i>
<i>The Deadly Isles</i>	<i>The Gift of Çab</i>	<i>Pnume</i>
<i>Nopalgarth</i>	<i>Chasch</i>	

As all will remember, Textport is the process whereby our text-files are updated with any textual changes included during the post-TI Compositional—Post-Proofing stages. Such issues are usually the result of Composition Review, or Post-Proofing comments. They include everything from typos to full-up TI issues.

REGARDING VOLUME 44: RICHARD CHANDLER is at work collating textual-note comments from the Wallahs. This document will be completed by ALUN HUGHES and provide basic information about VIE texts, our correction processes and sources.

SUAN YONG reports that the VIE has picked up a dozen NEW SUBSCRIBERS in March and April. Among them is a new subscriber, and new volunteer, MICHAEL RATHBUN, who writes: '...I'm devouring all the back issues of *Cosmopolis*. I can't imagine why I never heard about this project until just now (saw it written up in *New Scientist*).' Michael Rathbun kindly provided the reference: "...page 53 of the US edition of 10th April 2004 is a paragraph which reads: 'Astounding labour of love: fans of Californian writer Jack Vance have volunteered to put everything he has written in print. And Vance is a prolific writer with more than 150 novels novellas and stories to his name. Described by a reviewer as "one of the glories of our literature", Vance is best known for his science fiction—a categorisation he loathes. His writing is rich, Rabelasian, comic and intelligent, a proper mirror to our times. Worth checking out at www.vanceintegral.com.'"

VOLUME POST-PROOFING (VPP)

After the usual scuffle surrounding the introduction of a new procedure, JOEL RIEDESEL has launched 'volume post-proofing' work. This is his own brain-child, whereby 'idle project resources' (willing volunteers with no work to do) are used to check 'booked' VIE 'volumes'. A 'volume' is different than a 'text' in that it has 'front matter' (title page, table of contents, etc.) and all the text included in that particular volume. Though the texts and the front matter have already been proofed, 'booking' can introduce, or reveal, errors, such as page numbering problems. Also, you never know, previous proofings may have missed something. Volume post-proofing will smooth the way of both GM3 and GM4, and assure higher quality final output.

April 25 was a red-letter day for Volume Post-Proofing because the first volume post-proofing job was completed. It was for Volume 14 (*The Man in the Cage* and *The Deadly Isles*). Joel is creating ad-hoc teams for each volume. The Volume 14 workers were:

JOEL RIEDESEL	BILL SHERMAN
DEREK BENSON	BOB MOODY
AXEL ROSCHINSKI	MARK SHOULDER
PETER IKIN	

For Volume Post-Proofing the Nuncers are PATRICK DUSOULIER and STEVE SHERMAN. Once 'nunced' the volume will be recycled through Composition and Composition Review Verification. The term 'Nuncers', invented at GM2, designates high-level TI authorities who rule on errata. The origin of the term is that the most frequent ruling turns out to be 'nunc' (for 'nuncupatory'), which does not mean that some of the issues are not live. In fact Patrick Dusoulier, chief Nuncer for Volume 14, reports that VPP made some good finds. Other volumes in VPP include: 15 (*Cugel the Clever*), 33 (*Maske: Thaery*) and 41 (*Throy*). For each job Joel creates ad-hoc teams from a reserve of volunteers. Should you care participate in VPP work, contact Joel Riedesel. In addition to those mentioned above, volunteers currently doing VPP include:

ALEX CROWTHER	ERRICO RESCIGNO
HANS VAN DER VEEKE	MARK BRADFORD
FRED ZOETEMEYER	YANNICK GOUR
GABRIEL STEIN	TONY GRAHAM
SCOTT BENENATI	KARL KELLAR
JOE KEYSER	

Though a last-minute process, SUAN YONG and HANS VAN DER VEEKE are bending over backwards to get VPP credits in the Volume 44 detailed list.

Not to mention the two months of effort necessary to get VPP launched, to suggest some of the difficulties involved to get a new procedure working, here are some

comments from Nuncer PATRICK relative to the VPP job for Volume 41:

'Two very valid points were made, requiring correction (wrong hyphen on one of the two 'Floreste-Clattuc' occurrences, and the incorrect page numbering on the final blank page). A third one, on which Steve and I agree, could still be discussed with the TI team, but I think it is not necessary: it is really a clear-cut case (ten-thousand-sol binder).'

Some further guidelines to the VPPers:

a) Please indicate, and enforce, WHICH PAGE NUMBERING SYSTEM is to be used! Sometimes they use pdf file numbering, sometimes Volume page numbering... This would not be too bad if only point b/ below were also enforced:

b) Although this may seem redundant with Page/Line reference, it'd be absolutely perfect if a small excerpt of the text were given: 3-4 words are enough.

c) Some basic COMP information should be given to the VPPers (I leave it to COMP to write that out...) about the so-called "irregular" right margins and left margins, for instance! You'll see there are many remarks on that (the good news is that not ALL instances were mentioned, otherwise the bis file would have been as long as the text itself!). As to the textual issues, I don't think we can do much. I expect further remarks such as "Jack has used 'Hmf' previously, and now he writes 'Hmhf': has this been checked?" or "I see 'Ah hah', but I would have expected 'Ah ah' as before..." I know these remarks are made in a good spirit, they are meant to help, but really... !'

And, speaking of Credits, concerning Volume 33 VVP Patrick writes: '... a very good BINGO from Hans van der Veeke. This was missed by a whole bunch of people including me. This alone was definitely worth the trouble.'

Here is the note in question, from 'ie33-fin-v1-bis-vpp-pd.doc':
408) Pg. 248: There is no blank line between 'Three Djan' and 'Four Djan'.

PD(II): BINGO! Hans saves the day! This is a very good spot. The place is Page 240 (volume page number), lines 35:

Three Djan create a disequilibrium; they work with agitation and resentful energy.

Four Djan form a stable system. They respond equably to...
INSERT a blank line after 'energy'.

VOLUNTEERS: NOTA BENE!

Volunteers take note: end-note structure and formalities are critical. If they are not respected they lead to confusion as we have to harmonize the work of several hundreds of people across several continents and across the months and years. There is a 'free' aspect of end-notes, namely that you can, preferably without forgetting the guidelines governing your particular work, make any comment you think apropos. However, proper form should always be followed. The essence of this form is:

A SIGN-ON that makes clear who you are, what job you are doing, the date you are doing it on, and which file or files you are working with. The SAVE marker should

indicate date and the name of the file you have generated. Your comments should include a clear personal indicator (usually your volunteer number, but any indication is acceptable), and an exposition of the issue in question. This exposition, apart from anything else, must make clear to what place in the text it refers. PATRICK DUSOULIER, working on Textport for *The Dirdir*, came across this note, which I reproduce here, with names removed to protect the guilty:

p 4/19-20 [volunteer] Formatting/TI, Questionable text break. There is a break here but no passage of time or change of scene.

NOTE: see also 108/7-8, 179/2 -3.

[REVIEW 1]: This break is present in Daw as well as cor-bf without comment. However, I agree with [volunteer]; the break makes no sense at all. Did it exist in the MS? [Wallah] seems to have made no note of it. This must be an error. TI can review after PP.

[REVIEW 2] [volunteer]; FIX: 4/19-20 [blank line]/[no blank line] [remove blank line]

[REVIEW 3] [volunteer]; Agree.

COMP [volunteer] - fixed

CVT [volunteer]: fixed

PATRICK, with the usual collection of smileys that assure his correspondents of his good humor, comments: 'OK. *There was a break. Good. And now there's no break. Fine... So WHERE THE BLOODY HELL WAS THAT BREAK ??? Blank line/no blank line...remove blank line... Perfectly clear, as mud is perfect. Perhaps this burst of anger from me will lead to some improvement for what remains to be reviewed ?*



SOME NEWS FROM THE FRENCH PUBLISHING FRONT.

PATRICK DUSOULIER has provided the following update. *Folio SF has just published Madouc, with an excellent translation, revised and completed by PIERRE-PAUL DURASTANTI. When I say "completed", it is because the previous (and only) publication made in France had been severely abridged, to the point that the new editor asked me if there had possibly existed a shorter version of the text in the USA. . . Due credit has been given to the VIE contribution (and extravagant credit to yours truly!).*

This is a text I provided back in summer 2003. Publishing takes time, especially when translation work is involved, but not only because of that, a thing we know all too well in VIE. I also provided several texts last year, and they're all going to come out at the same time, truly a Vancean Avalanche upon the French fans. Manna from Heaven! The texts will come out in two very large "omnibus" volumes, 1000-pagers each, and will be:

The Dragon Masters

Languages of Pao

Domains of Koryphon

Maske: Thaery

Clarges [will retain the existing title "Une Vie Eternelle"]

Emphyrio

The Complete Magnus Ridolph [for the first time France]

Next year, I hope (I provided the texts in March this year), we will see the three Durdane novels published in one omnibus volume too.

They're also planning to publish a collection of Jack's short stories, but this is a longer-term project, should be for 2006-2007.



Work Tsar Status Report

AS OF APRIL 25, 2004

There are only 2 texts remaining in TI: *Lurulu* and *The Star King*.

6 texts are being Implemented, and one text is in Security Check.

6 texts are in initial composition and five texts in stages of composition review (CRT and composition updating).

There are 2 texts in Post Proof and five texts in Post Proof, Composition Updating and Review.

3 volumes are ready for final volume composition and four volumes are undergoing a volume proof step.

Last month:

- + In-TI: 5 texts (6.1%)
- + Post-TI: 20 texts (24.39%)
- + Volume Ready: 57 texts (69.51%)
- + Volumes Ready: 7 (31.82%)

This month:

- + In-TI: 2 texts (2.44%)
- + Post-TI: 23 texts (28.05%)
- + Volume Ready: 57 texts (69.51%)
- + Volumes Ready: 7 (31.82%)

JOEL RIEDESEL



THE END OF TI

It gives me the greatest of pleasure and satisfaction to announce that the Textual Integrity team has completed its task. We have successfully answered a charge first assigned in late 2001, at the First TI Conference in Chinnon, and reiterated at the Second TI Conference in Oakland in early 2002. We in management offer our heartfelt thanks to all who have given their valuable time to this effort. They will be named in an honor roll in the next COSMOPOLIS.

There is an aura of glamour attached to TI, arising from an esprit de corps among TI workers who—unlike many other volunteers—have become personally acquainted through attendance at one or both of the TI Conferences. Further, no other VIE work carries the textual responsibility of TI work. Having said that, I hasten to add that, by the manner in which project work is organized, non-TI workers have made numerous contributions to the TI effort. The simple fact that any volunteer working on a particular text may at any time enter a COMMENT endnote means that TI issues can be and have been raised by Proofreaders, Implementors or Composition Reviewers. Not infrequently this results in TI revisiting an issue and produces changes in the text.

But glamour aside: a lot of TI is pure drudgery: poring through whatever sources are available, be they manuscripts, first published versions, competing paperbacks, or whatever, and determining which is what Jack Vance actually wrote. Then the findings must be entered into the Word document—often this means creating hundreds of endnotes (the record is something over 1500 for a single text), detailing the evidence and proposing the appropriate restoration. This is time-consuming, to say the least, and not exactly light entertainment. Then comes the dialogue with the 'TI Second', in which opinions are rethought and minds often changed: the most common remark by the Seconds has proven to be, "Which version is likely to be the work of an editor and which the work of Jack Vance?" As TI gained experience with the actual manuscripts—where they exist—or comparing different published versions, this query has turned out to be far easier to answer than we feared initially. I do not deny that editors serve a useful purpose: any manuscript of tens of thousands of words will have its errors and these do need correction. But when editors go beyond this—and in the case of Vance's work, they have, all too frequently—they leave fingerprints. For example, editors adhere to style manuals. They insist on the lowest common denominator of vocabulary or phrasing. They insist on plodding explanation and abhor repetition. Jack Vance,

on the other hand, is a poet. He invents new ways to use words and punctuation marks. He is extremely nuanced in his uses of allusion, rhythm and even sound itself. In the absence of clear 'stemma' evidence, spotting editorial fiddling has become a TI specialty. Over the years we have even developed a specialized vocabulary for each style of editorial change, the most famous, 'vassarization' (replacing an inhabitual phrase with a common one) comes from Jack Vance's own complaint about 'Vassar graduates' hired as copy editors by commercial publishers.

What has TI accomplished? No less than the restoration, to the greatest extent humanly possible, of Jack Vance's voice to his own work. Much of this achievement is already in your hands, in the form of the 22 Wave I volumes. Those of you of a scholarly bent can compare the commercial texts with the VIE version. Numerically speaking the greatest number of restorations involve punctuation. There was a time when I thought of punctuation as a secondary, or somewhat mechanical aspect of writing. But my experience in TI has shown me that a great writer uses punctuation as an important element of his overall artistic approach. Comparison of the VIE with commercial texts makes this clear. In particular it becomes evident that Vance knows exactly how he wants to pace every sentence and phrase. To borrow a metaphor used by Vance to discuss his approach to punctuation, his phrases are as finely tuned as the engine of a Formula I racing car. Tone-deaf editors have often fouled this tuning, so that the motor runs with coughs and growls.

Of course the most important restorations involve words, phrases, paragraphs and even chapters. I will, I hope, be forgiven for believing that one of my own contributions, the establishment of the correct order of Chapters 25 and 26 of *Suldrun's Garden*, is not the least significant. Numerous other examples might be cited and have been discussed in various other issues of this journal, and it is not my purpose to rehash them here. The addenda volume of the VIE will contain an exposition by Alun Hughes, who as Team Head developed the principles that guided the TI team from start to finish, in which the crucial discoveries that led to the restoration of the majority of texts will be detailed.

But I can't resist teasing you with one significant restoration, the result of TI Wallah* Ken Roberts' work with the manuscript of *The House Lords*, then still called *A Domestic Tragedy* (consultation with Oakland confirmed the more recent title). The original magazine publication in *Saturn*, October 1957, was severely edited, presumably for length

* From WordNet: (India) usually in combination: person in charge of or employed at a particular thing: "a kitchen wallah"; "the book wallah"

(subsequent appearances seem to be based on the *Saturn* version). Among the many passages excised was this, very near the beginning of the story:

Sarvis the cat returned through its special door and sat quietly while Caffridge and Emerson considered their problem.

In the context of the story, this is a crucial omission, as trivial as it may appear when presented here baldly. When you have Wave II in your hands, you will (I hope) see what I mean.

And did you ever wonder what happened to Genarro, whom you last encountered in this situation:

Across the clearing came the sound of Genarro's voice, full of threat and passion.

You'll find out. I had always regarded *The House Lords* as minor Vance, because it seemed incoherent. Restoration has raised its stature in my estimation to perhaps the second rank of the short stories. It is no *Moon Moth*—what is?—but it is no longer on the level of *Sabotage on Sulfur Planet*.

Some TI decisions have been controversial. Jack Vance is not only a great writer, he is—if I may be permitted to put it this way—an eccentric writer. He has a style that is very much his own and, as indicated earlier, that style supersedes the style manuals and sometimes even the dictionaries. He will use 'lay' where 'lie' is standard or 'raise' where the editors insist on 'rise'. He uses 'which' where the style manuals insist on 'that'.^{*} He uses the comma splice to pace a sentence in a way achievable by no other punctuation.^{**} He'll use two colons in a sentence without compunction,^{***} and editors will almost invariably find an alternative for at least one of them—in this instance, they not only replaced the first colon but also the semicolon with an emdash—but Vance's punctuation enforces a pacing that no other can. I could cite numerous other 'transgressions', including usages of <who> and <whom> that grate on my own sensibilities.

The guiding principle by which the TI team—the Seconds and Reviewers in particular—dealt with these issues was formulated by Alun Hughes (who else?): 'authentic, but not painfully authentic'. Jack—or Norma—to cite only one of

^{*} from a footnote in Madouc, my greatest TI labor of love: *In years to come Cairbra an Meadhan would serve as model for the 'Round Table' which graced King Arthur's court at Camelot.*

^{**} also from Madouc: *Duchess Pargot turned a sidelong glance toward King Casmir, whom she disliked. "Still they are already shopping her about, I find it quite premature."*

^{***} Patrick Dusoulier calls them 'Russian doll colons'. From *The Palace of Love*: *The other picture was that of Jheral Tinzy: a delightfully pretty girl: her black hair glossy; her mouth pursed as if she were restraining a mischievous secret.*

the characteristic errors to which we all are prone, almost always spells 'accommodate' with a single 'm': to retain that spelling would surely be painful authenticity. Seconds and Reviewers, via exposure to a fairly large number of Vance manuscripts through the life of the TI exercise, found that our threshold of pain rose with experience. In the end we corrected only such things as are unambiguously in need of correction. It is therefore no surprise that some *VIE* readers find aspects of corrected—restored—Vance incorrect: you need only check the Errata Database at http://www.vanceintegral.com/home_editors.htm (click on Errata Database) to see the feedback. There are indeed errata in Wave One, but probably 80% of what has been entered into the database appears to be a discomfort with features of unadulterated Vance. TI management does not apologize for using the true vancean voice; rather it considers that it has done its job. Jack Vance is not immune to typographical errors, which we have attempted to identify and correct, but he damn well knows what he is doing. The *VIE* is Vance as he really is. A full appreciation of his style is now possible, for each reader, for the first time.

The Honor Roll will identify those workers who have made the most significant contributions to restoring the integrity of Jack Vance's texts. But others have played important roles. I do not refer to the Seconds and Reviewers, whose dialogues among themselves and with the wallahs have probably been the most invigorating aspect of TI work, and whose names I am not listing here (a full listing is available on the website: <http://www.vanceintegral.com/>: click on Editors Only, then Assignment Tracking, then Textual Integrity). Rather, I refer to those whose contributions have been to maximize the evidence available to TI. Chris Ryan and—especially—John Rick have digitized original pulp appearances of Vance stories, which we have found, in the absence of ms evidence, to be a very helpful guide to Jack's original intent. Indeed, where we have had both pulp and ms evidence, we have been able to confirm in most cases that the pulp is more faithful to the author's original than any subsequent publication. The hours spent by Chris and John in scanning these magazines have contributed significantly to the authenticity of the *VIE*. John and Tammy Vance also spent many hours photocopying or scanning manuscripts or pulp tearsheets or other evidence, and then mailing the material to volunteers.

And then there is the Mugar.

A fair amount of ms material is still in the hands of the Vances. But some years ago—I'm not certain exactly when—Jack turned over a mass of matter to the Department of Special Collections of the Mugar Memorial Library at Boston University. It includes not only manuscripts but correspondence between Jack and his

editors and agents, letters of acceptance, rejection slips (especially for very early items, e.g., from the thirties and early forties) and the like. One envelope containing such items is accompanied by a cover letter to the Director of Special Collections reading:

Dear Mr. Gottlieb: Herewith a collection of ancient correspondence, rejection slips, etc., a compendium of a thousand little tragedies and small triumphs, that make me feel rather sad going through them.

Jack Vance.

The texts that have been corrected—that is, restored to Vance’s intent—from materials at the Mugar include *The Killing Machine*, *The Fox Valley Murders*, *The Pleasant Grove Murders*, *The Kragen*, *The Blue World*, *Emphyrio*, *The Magnificent Showboats of the Lower Vissel River*, *Lune XXIII South*, *Big Planet*, *Nopalgarth*, *The Absent-minded Professor*, *The House Lords*, all of the texts in *Eight Fantasms and Magics* (including the revision of Gyal of Sferé, which will appear in the addenda volume), and numerous others (see the complete list at <http://www.vietexts.btinternet.co.uk/muglist.html>).

After looking at that list, you may be tempted to show up in Boston and have a ball digging through the materials. Sorry: it doesn’t work that way. The Department of Special Collections is a resource for scholarly research. We are fortunate that Alun Hughes, himself a professional librarian, made the first contact with the Mugar and convinced its management that the VIE qualified as such (of course, the endorsement of the Vances didn’t exactly hurt our cause). If you want to work with the Mugar’s collections, you must first establish your bona fides. Alun or I could do that. We would introduce you—via email—to the Assistant Director, Sean Noël, and request a specific date for your visit to do your research. You would also have to specify just which boxes the material you wished to investigate is contained in, that they might be retrieved from the depths of the archives.

These formalities having been performed, I cannot say enough about the professionalism and helpfulness of the Mugar staff. I worked most often with the archivist JC Johnson, whose eagerness to make my researches as painless as possible was exemplary. The other VIE researchers—Alun Hughes, Suan Hsi Yong and Chuck King—who may have worked with other archivists, seem to have had similarly gratifying experiences. It ought to go without saying that a library and its staff will bend over backwards to enable research using its material. Those of us who have made similar efforts at other libraries will attest that it does not. The sober acknowledgement of the Mugar Library in each VIE volume seems to me inadequate to

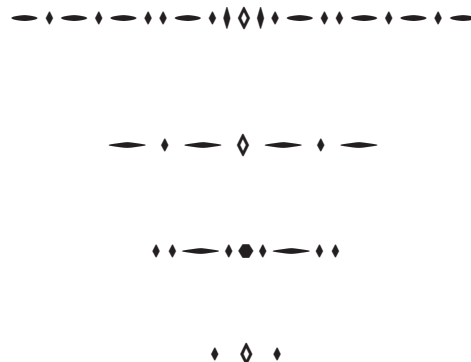
express our gratitude to the Library’s staff. It’s one thing to have the material; it’s entirely another to desire to do everything possible to make that material available. Special Collections is what a library should be.

Most impressive is that they have found the perfect middle way between enabling researchers and protecting the materials. We are not permitted, for example, to bring any writing instruments into the reading room (for me, a fanatical fountain pen user, a major adjustment). Pencils are provided for making whatever notes are necessary. We may, however, bring a computer, which Alun Hughes took advantage of, making all of his notes about editorial changes to *Emphyrio* and *The Magnificent Showboats* directly in the electronic text. Further, we are supplied with cloth gloves, so that our handling of the ms material does not result in its contamination with body oils. And to ensure that catalogued material is not mislocated, you may open only one box at a time (which can be a problem: Boxes 3 and 10 each contain a *Nopalgarth* ms or carbon, each with—not always identical—holographic changes).

When necessary—for example because a researcher is unable to appear at the Mugar in person—photocopying services are offered at 25 cents per page. A fair amount of TI work was done using Mugar photocopies, paid for of course by the VIE. I hope you will agree that this was a most effective utilization of a few hundred of your subscriber dollars.

So then: TI is done. There were guidelines and procedures. There was a plethora of manuscripts and published editions. But TI is, above all, a group of volunteers who have been hard at work for more than three years. Future readers of Jack Vance owe them a debt of gratitude.

Steve Sherman: TI Assignment Administration



MYTH AND A VANCIAN ANATOMY OF THE NEW CULTURE*

MYTHEOPEA

At the dawn of 21st century Tolkien is being taken seriously at last. His books have always been at the top of the long-term best seller list—surpassed only by the Bible—to the ongoing exasperation of the literary establishment. Critical appraisals, until now, have been notable for their sneers. Edmund Wilson himself stooped to label Tolkien's work 'trash'. While this judgment is certainly too harsh, it is undeniable that *The Lord of the Rings* has been an influence in the spread of 'neo-gothic' phenomena, including the plethora of genre literature, games, and a general surge of neo-pagan excitement of a northern flavor. That said, Tolkien is hardly the first or even the most famous influence in a Norse, neo-pagan revival, Richard Wagner being his most illustrious predecessor.

I have seen only the first Jackson movie—on TV, dubbed into French—and while Jackson's heart is clearly in the right place, I was underwhelmed. Jackson's Aragorn, rather than the gaunt, middle aged, saturnine man of my imagination, is a teen-age heart-throb who failed to be more than grimly earnest. The mystery, frustration and suppressed exultation which, to my mind, characterize 'Strider', were absent. Also unsatisfactory was Jackson's treatment of the elves, and the decor in general. This is because his art directors failed to liberate themselves from the degraded iconography generated by Tolkien's bastard child: 'sword and sorcery'. Too bad they did not take some visual inspiration from Tolkien's own drawings, or related sources such as the art-nouveau illustrations of Sime (the Dunsany illustrator) or the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch (1863-1944) or the English poet-painter William Blake. To have done so might have given the film an aura of faery, which is to say a sense of integration of myth with reality—or of elemental, or natural, forces with our poetic sense of the world—which is the root of Tolkien's inspiration. Instead we get something—spectacular and beautifully done on its own terms—that is familiar and even pedestrian; what might be called the 'Frank Frazetta aesthetic'. This neo-medieval look—bulky helms cut out against blasted skies, horse-manes wriggling in the wind, paraphernalia of thick leather and crude iron—contrasts with Tolkien's delicate and homely aesthetic. Like Sime, Munch or Blake, Tolkien the painter used an aesthetic of 'rainbow undulations' suggestive of magical or spiritual

forces underlying the world of appearances.

The worst aspect of the film is the nervous cinematography. Jackson's camera is in perpetual and pointless motion, and he has snipped his footage into such tiny segments that the film is visually exhausting.

I make these remarks not to pan the film but to explain my surprise at its extremely favorable reception. The subsequent films are said to be even better. Doubting they truly deserve such indulgence, I am tempted to attribute the overwhelming quality of the success to Tolkien's work itself.

The new interest in Tolkien has provoked interest in his Catholicism. Tolkien, we learn, went to mass every day and made confession weekly. He was, of course, a close friend of C.S. Lewis, a famous Christian proselytizer. Tolkien wrote:

The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like "religion", to cults and practices [. . .] the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism.

An excellent essay has just been published, *The Secret Fire** by Stratford Caldicott, which treats this matter. Tolkien was a philologist specializing in Anglo-Saxon and other ancient northern languages, and the medieval and pre-Christian mythological literature which incarnates them. Like Lord Dunsany, he fought in the trenches of WWI. Alarmed at the effect of steel and coal, both men abhorred the crassness of industrialism and commercialism, the rape of the English countryside, the sweeping away of traditional, homely rural ways of life.

Caldicott sees Tolkien's 'environmentalism' not as nature worship of a neo-druidic type, but as an artistic translation of alarm at the rape of beauty—or, as Dunsany might have put it, the modern world's ban on fairy magic. The theme of novels like *Pan* and *The Curse of the Wise Woman*, where pagan gods or magic erupt into the present from a violated past.

Dunsany, who spent most of his life bird hunting on the Irish moors, was particularly incensed by commercialism. One of his little-known plays, *Cheezo*, is about mercantilists making a fortune on a product that does not exist. When he visited America in the 1960s his hostess was alarmed by his apoplectic outrage at roadside billboards.

Indignation at advertising, still common in the 1960s, has now disappeared. And commercialism has evolved. It is no longer crass. The emergence of its stylish new aesthetic can be traced in such films as *Blade Runner*, where floating video billboards of gigantic faces heighten the

*This essay is conceptually prior to 'Sinister Old Men in Institute Black' of *Cosmopolis* 38.

*Dalton, Longman and Todd Ltd.

eerie seductiveness of a suavely apocalyptic megalopolis. Exploring this logic, Matthew Paris' novel *The Holy City* (1970?) has shopping center-temples where love and death are merchandised as consumable robot duplicates of all human beings, a triumph of consumerism over the sacred not as a rape of the earth but as an apotheosis of orgy and murder. A pre-industrial aesthetic of trees, butterflies and fresh mown hay is now mostly submerged in the rising tide of voluptuous global consumerism. The greens of today are not back-to-the-land Luddites but clean-technology technocrats, and their global warming scare is the most extreme environmentalism ever; we are about to destroy ourselves by our own fault. The world continues to be menaced from the primal source: human sin.

Caldicott describes Tolkien's artistic approach as a process of imaginative reconstitution of the primal human reaction to the world. He shows how Tolkien did not seek to 'create a mythology' but to recreate a mytheopoetic understanding of the world. In the crucible of his imagination he recovered this primeval point of view through meditation upon the words of ancient languages. Tolkien's mythology is therefore no mere fabrication, no mere arabesque, or fantasia, or hodge-podge of historic elements. Its most important source is reality itself—reality as interpreted by the human spirit from a primal place. Tolkien's mythological fresco is no two-dimensional affair perched on a cardboard pedestal of capricious metaphysics such as the post-Tolkien fantasy writers routinely fabricate.

The same may be said of Dunsany's playful pantheon, *The Gods of Pagana*. Dunsany's gods create and rule the world, but looming behind them is Moona Yood Sushai, dreaming a dream in which, so it is suspected, the Gods themselves are but figments. Meanwhile, beside Mona Yood Sushai is the drummer Skarl and if Skarl were to cease his drumming, and Mona Yood Sushai consequently to wake, what next? But the dunsanian cosmos is simultaneously structured by another dynamic: the game between Fate and Chance. It is not clear how the game relates to the dream of Mona Yood Sushai. Does it occur within the dream, or is the dream a consequence of the game?

This amusing fantasy translates a set of thoughts and feelings: where do we come from? What maintains the existence of the universe? Is there intelligent causality? Is our will a metaphysical counterforce (like the will of the gods), or an illusion (the dream of Moona Yood Sushai), or are we like specks of foam gilding the waves of dark matter swirling to the dictates of a mindless force? To put this another way: behind the dream of Moona Yood Sushai, and the game between Fate and Chance, looms a confrontation between what might be called the Buddhist and the scientific view. On the one hand life is illusion,

a dream within a dream. On the other hand universal forces are at work, the processes of a cosmic mechanism embroiled in a fabulous complexity apparently regulated by purely mechanical forces. These two visions have nothing in common—save the drummer Skarl.

Is this pulse the fundamental wave pattern of cosmic nature? Is 'cosmic nature' foreordained 'Fate', or unprogrammed 'Chance'? What happens when it stops? Will this occur at Skarl's whim, or is his eventual silence also pre-ordained and, if so, by whom? Moona Yood Suchai? And what of Moona Yood Sushai's awakening; is this 'beginning' really The End?

Such questions are notoriously impenetrable for which reason Dunsany, being Dunsany, presents his fable in a light-hearted guise. It is none-the-less compelling because built on a serious psychological and metaphysical feeling. By contrast 'Frazetta mythology', with cloddish deus ex machina bogies interfering in human affairs—aping Zeus and Hera in scenarios without any shred of archetypal underpinning—have but a single virtue: the questionable charm of the grotesque.

I will attempt no proper précis of Tolkien's *Silmarilion*. Suffice it to mention that an original being, Ilúvatar, through a great song, creates lesser beings, the Ainur, who, by participating in the song, create the world, elves, and men. But

... it came into the heart of Melkor to interweave matters of his own imagining that were not in accord with the theme of Ilúvatar; for he sought therein to increase the power and glory of the part assigned to himself'.

Melkor introduces the principle of destruction into the substance of the world, into matter itself. But, occurring at the atomic level, this infection does not yet manifest itself as moral evil. Sauron, a being intermediate between men and Ainur, sluices destruction and evil into the world on a human scale.

Man is a created creature, part material, part spiritual. Though he has free will—the essence of his spiritual part—this freedom is basically limited to speech; man may say 'yea' or 'nay'. He may accept or reject 'God's gifts'—or 'reality' if you prefer. His freedom does not extend to actions—at least not beyond his paltry powers—and certainly not to self-creation or control over the nature of the universe. To put this another way, man does not define his own happiness. He cannot, for example, specify the parameters of his happiness with regard, say, to its physical aspects such as comfort respecting temperature. He cannot ordain that the temperature range within which he will feel at ease will be -150 to +150 degrees Fahrenheit. For better or worse it is ordained—by God or by Nature—that the range 50 to 90 degrees is the human

comfort zone. The temperature-related happiness of other creatures—polar bears or rattle snakes—has been ordained otherwise, ‘each according to its kind’. ‘Turning away from God’ is symbolic language which describes how the spiritual part of man (the soul, the mind), by cutting itself off from its source of happiness (‘God’ or ‘what is’), condemns itself to suffer the fate of its created status, or the collapse of the spiritual horizon into the ineluctable subjection which is our material fate: excitement, gratification, fatigue, pain, decay, death.

When Melkor tries to increase his glory by weaving his own themes into the music of Ilúvatar, the latter rebukes him:

‘...no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me, nor can any alter the music in my despite. For he that attempteth this shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined’.

This is Tolkien’s equivalent of the mystical prayer: ‘oh happy fault . . .’, which expresses wonder that, thanks to original sin, Jesus came as our savior—a situation so marvelous that its regrettable cause cannot be regretted in the ordinary sense.

As for Tolkien’s story itself, evil embodied in the ring is finally destroyed by the force of spirit when the humble hobbits, though tracked by the vicious Gollum, cast it into the fires of Mordor. To accomplish this heroic act many sacrifices must be made and many temptations resisted. One temptation is to use the ring for personal power. The noble Boromir succumbs to this—but then redeems himself at the cost of his life by saving the hobbits from the orcs. Aragorn, unlike Boromir, is the true heir to the throne; his grasp for power would be legitimate. But, strong in modesty, Aragorn wisely chooses not to expose himself to the ring. Caldicott explains how forgiveness is also an aspect of the hobbits’ success; if Sam Gamgee’s heart had not softened toward the repulsive Gollum so that he spared his life their mission would have failed, since Gollum, culminating his own destruction in his lust for the ring, is the final agent of triumph over Sauron.

Tolkien’s story and mythology have many parallels with Christian mythology. There is a creator God and a hierarchy of created creatures, each with powers corresponding to their nature. Evil is introduced by the rebellion of a higher creature, condemning the world to decay—a mystical fate which will culminate in ultimate salvation. But there are also important differences; in Christianity matter is created by God. Morally neutral, it can be abused by man but, in itself, is merely a theater. In Tolkien the musical interpolation of Melkor, a creative force, has the perverse effect of degrading matter into

the vector of evil. Evil, in consequence, arises from the heart of matter, from its ‘nature’, or ‘from Nature’. By the same token this gives matter a spiritual aspect it lacks in Christianity. Fairies or elves are un-Christian elements from northern mythology. They are linked to the earth. They are tree, flower or fountain spirits, and so on. In Tolkien, because matter is exalted by a spiritual aspect, the elves are also exalted. Tolkien’s elves are incarnations of the beauty and poetry of the natural world. They live with the beauty of the world, or the poetry of nature, and die with its death. Their nostalgia for the past, their progressive abandonment of Middle Earth for ‘The West’, are ways in which Tolkien inscribes his environmental concerns at the deepest level of his story.

These sketchy remarks on aspects of *The Silmarillion*—the ‘infinite backdrop’ against which Tolkien’s story plays out—do not touch on dwarfs, orcs, magicians, nazgul, ents, or the tortured history of the dynasties and fairy-tainted genealogies of man, equally important threads in the mythical tapestry.

The point which can only be suggested is that Tolkien’s mythology—as stated above—is not simply cobbled together from disparate elements, as a crutch, or an appendage of his tale but, like his tale itself, is the sum of his knowledge, molten in the crucible of his mind by the fire of his artistic passion, and re-cast in forms discovered during an imaginative voyage to the dawn of time where man stood, pure and new, face to face with the cosmos.

REALITY AND MYTH

Vance’s artistic attitude, compared to Tolkien, can be described as ‘philosophical’ rather than ‘mythological’. The philosophical attitude is not, fundamentally, anti-religious. As Vance would say: ‘what is, is’. Whatever is true, is true. If God exists, then atheists and libertines will blaspheme and sacrilege to no ultimate avail. Likewise if the universe is a mere bloated wrist-watch, prophets and theologies can hallucinate and moralize; it is vapor. When the first man became aware of himself, prophets and theologians, and their counterparts—atheists and libertines—had not yet been spawned. But reality was already itself. Whatever the first man saw is what we see today.

Tolkien’s mythology is original and unnostalgic. He recovered a primal view by following the trace of human thought—through contemplation of the fundamental symbols, words—back to the primal view. Vance, by contrast, is down to earth. His view of mythology, to say nothing of religion, rarely quits a narrow zone between indulgent cynicism and amused curiosity. In the manner of a philosopher he seeks to understand through his own powers.

Art is a view, or an understanding, of reality. It is not an understanding in the sense of being information; it is about how things look and feel. The real can be known but, for us humans, it is above all an experience. True art does not resolve intellectual questions but helps us integrate our minds with the feeling of reality. Degraded art is a flattering or falsely exhilarating view of reality. The pleasure it gives is the pleasure a drug addict seeks: dreams and gratifications which are anti-life because in contradiction with reality. High art gives true reality—or thrills and pleasures which are true. Because they are true, they are good. They cannot corrupt because ‘what is, is’.

Compared to Tolkien Vance begins his search for reality from a place closer to man’s primal situation. Born on the American frontier he was a sailor and carpenter by trade. His parents were business people. Though an avid reader and dreamer, the culture in which he was raised emphasized hands-on work—knowing the world through direct experience. Vance did not labor in penumbral reading rooms in venerable cloisters, but in the sunlight of California—newly conquered frontier territory—and on the untamable seas. Though raised in a Christian culture he quickly converted to modern views—so fashionable between the wars.

I am not saying that Vance—or Americans—are primitives, but that Vance’s artistic search for the “real”, by contrast with Tolkien’s, occurs in an atmosphere closer to original innocence. The fashionable opinions of his youth are sophisticated in their own way; a put-together of Darwinism, Positivism, vulgarized German philosophy, they may be designated by the term ‘modernism’. Modernism, however, at its most basic level, is an avatar of the primal view, or the basic philosophical attitude, the urge to understand.

A VANCIAN MYTHOLOGY ?

There are flickers of a vancian mythology; pallid reflections of inter-war fads and enthusiasms. Young men of all eras gravitate to such ideas in all eras. Vance is marked by this passage, but not formed. Fundamentally he is a spokesman for the basic, American, values he was raised to: direct contact with nature, rugged independence, skepticism. If it is not too much to say that he finds them salvific, he is also not uncritical of them. Elsewhere I have detailed his interest in sources of information beyond man’s powers—spiritual, ‘psionic’ or intuitive. Vance’s obvious interest in society—its establishment, organization and health—is not compatible with a one dimensional ethic of rugged independence. As for sophistication, no less a character than Navarth makes this declaration:

“Within this bottle is the wisdom of the ages, tincture of

Earth-gold. Nowhere is tippie to equal this; it is unique to old Earth. Mad old Earth, like mad old Navarth, yields its best in its serene maturity.”

This is not glorification of sophistication and accumulated knowledge for its own sake, but we are closer to Tolkien’s attitude.

Can we find mythology in Vance’s fantasies? The powers of Tolkien’s magicians are linked to the powers of the Ainur, as Christian prophets are conduits of the power of God. Vance’s magicians are like folks with transistor radios; masters of strange powers of which their understanding is pragmatic only. Vancian magic parallels the situation of modern technology—control of forces which are fundamentally not understood. Tolkien’s elves are incarnations of the sacred and fragile beauty of the natural world. Vance’s fairies are incarnations of human caprice. They are fickle, selfish but not deliberately so, innocently vicious, flippantly tender. Vance has no Tolkienian program for his sandistins, erbs and pelgranes. They are ghosts and animals with speech to express their reality, which is to say, the essential banality of their natures. Rodion may be King of the Fairies, but when it comes to Glyneth his eagerness to explore beneath her ‘brave doublet’ plunges us into the universal constant of masculine fatuity.

HEIDEGGER

Martin Heidegger is often called the most important thinker of the 20th century. Heidegger made a bold, or frank, proclamation that ‘Christian mythology’ and ‘Christian culture’ are no longer operative. Following the horror of the first world war this is comprehensible; what sort of ‘Christian culture’ engages in wholesale slaughter? Philosophy, from Machiavelli and Spinoza to Kant and Marx, has been flirting with atheism for centuries, but Heidegger’s announcement is not atheistic in orientation because he is not preoccupied with the existence or non-existence of God, as such. Kant, by contrast, was keen to reconstruct morality on a non-religious basis—replacing divine fiat with non-divine fiat, the famous ‘categorical imperative’. Heidegger was not a moralist. He was not interested in such fundamentally religious questions as the nature of good and evil, but in the apparently deeper question of the nature of reality, or existence. This is why his philosophy is called ‘existential’. In announcing the end of ‘Christian mythology’ he was not evoking a matter related to the existence of God as this question is normally understood. Thunderous as such a proclamation may seem, for Heidegger it was merely an aspect of a background truth which, until then, had gone undiscovered.

To describe Heidegger’s insight we first need to understand what he means by ‘Christian mythology and culture’.

Christianity, as it understands itself, is divided by Heidegger into two parts: the underlying beliefs—which he calls ‘mythology’—and the resultant practices and modes of life—or ‘culture’. For Heidegger a culture is based on a mythology, and a mythology generates a culture.

It is easy to understand how God can be rejected in our scientific age. We think we know how the universe works, or at least what sort of things can and cannot occur; consequently we are incredulous of miracles. We therefore feel sure that Christian mythology is false: the dead do not rise, children are not born without a human father, water cannot be walked upon, turned into wine, or spurt out of human veins, three loaves cannot be transformed into thousands of loaves, folks do not float up into the sky. Christian myths, like Egyptian, Greek and Nordic myths, are, therefore, basically false.

Since, according to Heidegger, a culture is based on a mythology, each culture is unique because each mythology has distinctive aspects. For example, pagan culture is characterized by the ‘tragic outlook’ (the gods are fickle and at death people go to the dreary realm of Pluto). But pagan mythology became inoperative and was replaced by Christian mythology. Christian culture is characterized by a hopeful outlook (God loves people and offers them salvation and eternal joy). But, according to Heidegger, both pagan and Christian mythology are dead, or inoperative. Do we therefore live in a situation which is ‘beyond myth’ and thus ‘beyond culture’? No. According to Heidegger man is man because of culture.

What is culture? We think of primitive cultures as being characterized by taboos. Transgression triggers social opprobrium and punishment, or cures and ritual reparations, all as convoluted and absurd as the taboos themselves. The more primitive the culture the more its members—like the citizens of Smolod whose special eyecups allow them to see the Over-World—live in a world invisible to non-members, a labyrinth of tribal laws and traditions. According to this view ‘culture’ serves only to cloud our vision of reality. We modern Westerners live, or think we live, in a state of unprecedented freedom from invisible worlds—or taboos. For example, in primitive cultures sexual deviation of even the mildest sort is often regarded as a diabolical transgression while, in the West, what used to be called ‘perversions’ are now called ‘choices’, and those who make them are even regarded as heroes. For example, ‘coming out of the closet’ is a heroic act because, through defiance of an irrational and cruel taboo, the Outer exerts a humanizing influence on society.*

So is culture just a collection of taboos? And as a corol-

* The West is currently busy transcending the most traditionally resistant taboos. Even incest, until recently an absolute of moral horror, has started to become fashionable. The murder taboo is also rusty around the edges. At first

lary, do we modern Westerners live in a post-cultural, or tabooless, society where each individual chooses a tragic or a hopeful outlook, or no outlook at all, as he likes?

But if old taboos are being phased out, new taboos are being created just as fast. For example, in Christian culture there is a taboo against pre-marital sex; in the new culture there is a taboo against intolerance. Taboos cannot be eliminated, they can only be shuffled around. Take pre-marital sex; there seem to be three possible positions: ‘for’, ‘against’ (or intolerance) and ‘tolerance’. The latter would seem to mean that, even if one was not ‘for’ pre-marital sex, one would tolerate that other people might be. But what about the mother of a 14-year old girl? Is there a taboo against this mother being ‘against’ her daughter’s teenage male friends being ‘for’? Once the fog of indifference and fuzzy thinking is blown off, everyone is either for or against pre-marital sex; ‘tolerance’ equals ‘for’ in a mood of morally flaccid stupidity or indifference.

In any case, for Heidegger, culture is not defined by taboos but by mythology. In Christianity Jesus is sacrificed on the cross for our sins; this is a ‘Christian myth’. It generates cultural elements though the mechanism of people believing that it is true. Such generated elements might be an injunction to practice forgiveness. But even if we belong to a Christian culture—by believing in the Christian myths—this is not the only influence on our behavior. For example, though we may ‘know’ (in fact we would merely believe) that anger and vengeance are sinful, we still might feel angry or vengeful. Culture does not make us into automatons. Cultural imperatives do not change our fundamental nature. But if the cultural injunction did not exist, how could we even be aware of what we were feeling or that a choice existed? Heidegger, perhaps writing at the same time Vance wrote *The Languages of Pao*, said: “Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man.” Without the word ‘anger’, and in particular the culture which explicates the word, how do we know that we are angry? We might realize in a dim and vague way that we are experiencing something, but such awareness would be akin to animal awareness. We would be incapable of anticipating our anger, of reflecting upon it or, above all, of regretting it.

ULTIMATE SILENCE

Gerald Bruns, speaking of Heidegger’s *The Origin of the*

it might seem absurd to pretend that the prejudice against murder is a taboo but, like any other cultural limit, it can be talked around. A murderer’s conscience only bothers him because he has been taught that it ought to; a soldier fighting for a ‘just cause’ does not feel bad about killing enemy soldiers; hitmen don’t feel bad about killing anybody; for terrorists murder is a virtue—and with the current hedging with regard to the Palestinian ‘cause’ and the war in Iraq, we are dosing ourselves with daily pro-murder advocacy.

Work of Art (1933–34), explains that for Heidegger the function of a:

"... work of art, its truth, is to open up a world, a human dwelling place. The work is no longer reducible to a product of subjective expression or the object of aesthetic contemplation. It is... an event that sets us free from what is merely timeless and fixed [read 'reality']. It inserts us into history, situates us together in an ongoing world... [it establishes] a world, but the work [of art] does not belong to the world it establishes, [it] belongs to the earth [the 'ground of our being' or 'reality'], which constitutes something like the absolute horizon of the world, the limit that determines the world's historicity and finitude. The [art] work opens a clearing in the density of the forest [reality]; it lightens a place within the darkness..."

In other words art generates culture. This somewhat *recherché* idea has passed into the popular, not to say 'vulgar', consciousness where it is nicely illustrated in the statements of a certain internet commentator in his discussions of Jack Vance:

Jack Vance's books... propose a mode of existence that resolves the most urgent problem of modern man, that of morality without religion. It is a way of the future; many of us today find it too difficult to follow, emotionally as well as intellectually. Jack Vance doesn't give us answers to all our questions, he tells us that we must find them ourselves, depending on our local circumstances and individual goals. This is fine with me but totally unacceptable to a weakling seeking all-encompassing external salvation.

So, the new Heideggerian culture (the new 'mode of existence') would be characterized by the 'resolution of the problem' of 'morality without religion', and it is a writer—an 'artist', a 'creator' (Jack Vance)—who shows the way. Vance, therefore, must have generated a mythology out of which a new culture is arising. John Paul II and George Bush, devoutly religious men, are among those whom the commentator would stigmatize as finding this 'way of the future', this 'new mode' 'too difficult to follow'*

Prior to Heidegger, Nietzsche proposed the idea of the superman, the man 'beyond good and evil'. In tra-

ditional terms anyone 'beyond good' is a criminal. With the triumph of Modern philosophy the criminal becomes a hero. The criminal is heroic because he embodies the highest human value in the modernist dispensation: self-actualization. Internally liberated from cultural taboos, he destabilizes society and destroys mythology. He has joined himself to Ultimate Truth, the cosmic emptiness that is the background of mythology and, like a soulless animal, tears life out of other creatures and devours them without qualm. Another type of superman is the artist, who does not destroy but creates. The true artist, such as Homer, actually create mythology, and are therefore responsible for culture. But new mythologies cannot be created before the old ones are destroyed. Thus the Modernist emphasis on both transgression and art, and the emergence of the criminal-artist-prophet. Following the internet commentator, Vance, in this sense, is a god. Vance's stories are to us what the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were to the Greeks. Vance is the Homer of the post-Christian culture.

This idea, in its fully Heideggerian form, is expressed in a speech by Viole Falushe:

"I am perhaps the supreme artist of history. My subject is Life; my medium is Experience; tools are Pleasure, Passion, Pungence, Pain. I arrange the total environment, in order to suffuse the total entity."

People (entities) are 'suffused' by culture (an arrangement of the total environment) because culture is the mode of human existence. In other words there is no 'existence' without culture—if the word 'human' is to have any meaning beyond a philological category. Heidegger was a philosopher—which is to say, a lover of the quest for wisdom. He was neither promoter nor cheerleader. He neither approved nor disapproved 'the end of Christianity'. He was announcing our situation. Our situation is this: what we call 'reality' is generated by myth, for myth is the stuff of which cultures are born and die. It is vulgarly supposed that modern man is free of mythology, or that science has liberated us into the light of 'reality'. But Heidegger's idea is far more radical.

Vance flirts with Heideggerianism in *The Languages of Pao*. Palafox, in his College of Comparative Culture, studies 'the races of the universe, their similarities and differences, their languages and basic urges, the specific symbols by which you can influence them' and, as Fanchiel explains to Beran:

Judaism, Islam... Egyptian sacred texts, Greek and Roman mysteries...'. The Social Darwinism and proto-genocidal tendencies of this thinking reflect a Nazi aspect; other aspects include a marxian faith in progress leavened by a degree of dimly understood heideggerian cultural ontology. Although extremist, even alarming, these lines express beliefs more widely held than generally supposed.

*The commentator in question, referring to 'the murk of primitive Christian egalitarianism', claims that 'partial emancipation' [from Christian mythology] 'produced such an explosion of scientific and technological progress that there is simply no way back: the very few bright minds won the battle with millions of bipedal vegetables.' This has given rise to a situation where 'the vegetables have no other choice but to evolve, to grow, to reach higher and wider—or to die. Some of them, unfortunately, are incapable of evolving. Muslim terrorists and... Christians... are such throwback vegetables, mental dinosaurs... A few more centuries, and our descendants won't be able to understand what it all was about—Christianity,

'Each language is a special tool, with a particular capability.

It is more than a means of communication, it is a system of thought . . . Think of a language as the contour of a watershed, stopping flow in certain directions, channeling it into others. Language controls the mechanism of your mind. When people speak different languages, their minds work differently and they act differently.'

But Vance is only flirting, because, even if Palafox uses a higher perspective from which he comprehends the contours of the watershed, his perspective does not transcend the horizon of culture itself, it does not go beyond language. Palafox understands a given watershed in terms of other watersheds. He is the member of a 'super culture'; his mastery of language encompasses all languages. How could he manipulate people through language if he were 'beyond' it? Science has revealed that the ultimate background is a silent cosmos, empty of gods. Heidegger sees that the silent cosmos cannot be the source of our humanity, or our awareness of ourselves. How could it?

The silent cosmos is the page upon which 'the gods' inscribe the story of what 'we are' — a story without which 'we are not'. Whoever the gods may be, and whatever the medium of their creative genius, it is not the silent cosmos which generates love and hate, desire and revulsion. The cosmos, or 'ultimate reality', is not merely silent, it is silence. Our desires, emotions and attitudes are gifts of the gods. Without them the cosmic silence would invade our consciousness. We would fall into silence, and would drift into non-being.

THE NEW CULTURE

Let us look again at the vulgar view. The internet commentator could easily have said: 'Jack Vance's books reveal the truth.' Instead he says something very different: *Jack Vance's books . . . propose a mode of existence.* So, according to the commentator, Vance does not 'describe reality', he 'proposes' a 'mode'. What is this 'mode'? What are the new thoughts we think and the new feelings we feel in the new culture allegedly proposed by Vance? Our Internet commentator offers a suggestion:

Jack Vance doesn't offer a system applicable to everybody under any circumstances, he doesn't offer a set of absolute rules absolving you of your sins — most importantly, he doesn't forgive.

So the culture of 'morality without religion' is not totally different from Christian culture. There are points of similarity, such as sin. Morality also seems to persist though in variable form (i.e. not 'applicable to everybody under any circumstances' or 'depending on local circum-

stances and individual goals'). Forgiveness, however, is abolished. But how can we avoid sin if morality shifts? And once we have sinned what happens if there is no forgiveness? It is not surprising that such a culture would be unacceptable to 'weaklings'. It would also be unacceptable to anyone intolerant of self-contradiction. It can only be welcomed by strong folk, uninterested in clear thought, who hate failure, weakness or error. Since anyone, even 'the strong', might fail, or prove weak, or commit error, the measure of virtue in the new culture is success. This, in essence, is fascism; the culture of the strong.

So much for vulgarity. What of Heidegger himself? Heidegger's most famous act was joining the Nazi party in 1933 — while it was still seeking power — and leaving it in 1945 — after it had failed. This would seem to carry us straight back to the vulgar attitude, to a culture of success and strength. But the analysis must go further.

Christianity was dead; nobody really believed that Jesus was the son of God. But the Nazis were dynamic. No matter how 'mythical' the Nazi notions, many people believed that superior races should rule the sub-races.* The proof that people believed Nazi mythology is that they actually organized their existence around it. What if the Aryans, rather than losing the war, had managed to succeed in dominating on the 'sub-races'? How, then, could Nazi mythology be proved wrong? If it were not defeated its 'truth' — that success equals virtue — would be unrefutable, and thus 'real'. It may be that Heidegger was repulsed by Nazi nastiness, even at the beginning, and he may not have admired Hitler's success as such — which he seems to have predicted. But the nature of his philosophy made him incapable of resisting, if not Nazi success, Nazi vitality.

THE MUSIC OF CULTURE

The famous void, which religious weaklings can't face up to, is like a big drafty house. It's a bit spooky at first but it can be fixed up; lace curtains, a refrigerator, one way and another life can be arranged pretty comfortably. The cosmos may be silent but it leaves us alone; we may make of life what we will. To a Heideggerian this sort of thinking is beneath contempt. The vulgarian, preoccupied with petty self-congratulation, is blind to the truly terrifying heideggerian insight.

Culture is a music, a surge of living myth coursing though the fabric of our being. It makes us what we are. The surge itself, apart from its content, is the primal stuff of our humanity. We do not generate this music and we cannot change it. It is not like pretty sounds coming from a radio whose stations we can change at whim. It is like the blood which flows in our veins. It is god-ordained;

*There are, of course, many other elements in Nazi ideology. I mention this one merely as a convenient example.

to stop it is to drain our spiritual body of its vitality, to nullify our humanity. There is only one exit from our culture: collapse into a non-human state. By raising his consciousness beyond the cultural horizon man becomes inhuman. This does not mean he becomes a crass or 'evil' barbarian; it is not metaphorical language but means, exactly, that man would shrivel into sub-humanity,* into a the state of unconscious worm or phantomatic zombie, a dumb beast in the form of a man, monstrous to the extent he is like man but not man.

Mythology is ineluctable. Were it not for the myth-makers we would be vague outlines on the backdrop of the cosmic void, mute silhouettes without thought or feeling. Our lives would pass mindlessly, a semi-conscious and lackadaisical pursuit of physical survival. Like animals we would be born without hope, live without enthusiasm, die without regret. This is the key to the mystery of Heidegger's Nazism; fear of that nothingness which a true man must fear; a heart that is cold and a brain that is still: living death.

Humanity's essential representative—the law-giver, the myth maker, the criminal-artist-prophet—like Orpheus bringing life to the dead with love and song—driven by the deepest urge within the human race—the urge to become itself—colors the canvas of inhuman nothingness, works the cosmic silence into the song of Orpheus. This is why art, for Modernity, is the ultimate human phenomenon. It generates the situation animates the theater of life, without which the drama of humanness fails to occur.

This insight had the effect of depriving Heidegger of the capacity for revolt. Whatever his instincts or personal feelings, with the Christian context gone, Nazi mythology was generating the new reality. Culture is either alive in us, as music singing in our soul, or it is a foolish wish, a dry unreality. To use the jargon in which such terrible thoughts ought to be cloaked, 'the problem of culture is existential'. In the 1930s, with Christianity in decline, Nazi culture—bubbling out of a soup of Darwinism, Scientism and Nordic Nostalgia, seemed to Heidegger to be the music singing in the souls of the European peoples. Pullulating in the wreckage of the first world war, to the obligato of eternal youthful lust for power and impatience with old ways, it was a new and vital music.

Was Heidegger wrong? The new mythology was real in hearts and minds, and the culture it was spawning was

carrying away the world. Nazi culture was the 'new mode', the 'way of the future'.

For Heidegger, humanity—that is, humanness itself—was the highest value. So, strange as it may be, it was in defence of humanness that he became a Nazi. But in the end could not stomach it. He fell back. Did he fall back into something still singing in his soul, or did he prefer spiritual non-being to owning a humanity orchestrated by Nazi myth? I think he revolted against all the murder, and thus to have taken a stand for life. However, as he refused to make a clear statement, this remains a matter for logic and speculation.

A VANCIAN PERSPECTIVE

Beyond the Pao flirtation, what does Vance tell us about the 'Heideggerian problem', or Existentialism, or the relation of existence (reality) to myth and culture, or the relation of God—or the gods—to Art and the artists or, to put it yet another way, the relation of individual will to morality? Five characters, dating from 1955 to 1980, trace the evolution of vancian reflection on this matter: Paul Gunther, in *The House on Lily Street*, Ronald Wilby, in *Bad Ronald*, Kokor Hekkus, in *The Killing Machine*, Viole Falushe, in *The Palace of Love*, and Howard Alan Treesong, in *The Book of Dreams*.

These characters all create moralities or mythologies which augment their personal power. In each case there is an important sexual aspect in their creative impulse which goes to the heart of their criminal psychology. In the following commentaries I minimize this to concentrate on the philosophical side.

PAUL GUNTHER

In his Creed or Testament of Faith, Paul Gunther postulates a mythology from which he draws a morality. He begins by a metaphysical equation of equality between himself and the universe:

"I am alone in the universe. . . this is primitive reality. I am Individuality, an intensity which requires an entire universe for containment. The universe which surrounds me is mine, but outside my control. I control I. Destiny controls the universe."

Life is not a gift from God for which we should be grateful and which has been extended in equal measure to others. Paul Gunther does not reflect in the direction of treating others as he would be treated himself, which is to say: seeking to be pleasing to God, or to anyone else. Life is a struggle between his 'I' and 'Destiny'.

How can victory be gained over Destiny? Gunther asks *"Am I the same threat to Destiny that Destiny is to me?"* He then demotes Destiny, or 'the universe' to 'shadow-shapes not truly real' and proclaims: *"I can do as I will with this world."* It is

* Julian Young writes that Heidegger: "...thinks of every human being as born in to a very fundamental, 'transcendental' horizon of disclosure—[...] the horizon of all one's horizons—[which] he calls 'world'. . . These historical worlds are defined and distinguished by different horizons of disclosure. They are embodied in what Heidegger calls 'language'. Hence his frequently repeated remark that 'language is the house of being. . .'. 'world' is the background'. . . understanding which determines for the members of an historical culture what, for them, fundamentally, there is."

an equal struggle: *"If I act boldly, I overcome Destiny. If I retreat, I succumb"*. Given this stark situation Gunther will be *'courageous, swift, relentless'*.

Despite this line of reasoning Gunther does not totally lose his lucidity. He wonders if *"...this sequence of thought is a trick of Destiny to plunge me into ludicrous tragedy?"* The 'ludicrous tragedy', obviously, would be that 'Destiny' is setting Gunther up for a fall. But he rejects this doubt as a manifestation of personal weakness: *"I shall not shrink back from direct deeds. I shall fear nothing; nothing can affect me, nothing can influence me. I can only die once"*.

Gunther now draws out the consequences of the one-on-one struggle against Destiny. First, all other persons, which he calls *"numberless faces and personalities"*, have no real existence except as they are elements in the universe. To state this another way, other people are merely part of the back-drop that is the universe, a theater in which the only real actor is himself. The ideas, feelings, desires or:

"...protests of these presences are unreal, of no more weight to me than an oil-film to the ocean".

Again, Gunther does not lose all lucidity; he applies to himself some of the same analysis he applies to others:

"My own person, as distinct from my brain, is no less real or unreal than the shadow-shapes".

But this only leads to greater megalomania, namely the conclusion that *"Physical pain is an illusion"*. Gunther, despising everything except the essence of his own being (his thoughts, his personal consciousness), is now ready to explicitly destroy morality:

"Virtues are rules in the game of life, designed to impede me. I must be careful contravening them and do so only when I am in a position of vantage over Destiny".

Compassion and charity are explicitly excluded:

"To inconvenience myself for someone else's benefit is to deplete my potentiality. Destiny will tempt me to sympathy and irrational generosity".

He has reduced life to something that can be controlled by thought and will:

"Destiny will confront me with various emergencies. This is the Great Game. If I act I win, if I react, I lose".

By 'acting' Gunther means taking the initiative, however criminal, to get what he wants.

RONALD WILBY

Paul Gunther uses a philosophical approach. He may be 'beyond good and evil' but it is Ronald Wilby who is Vance's first criminal-artist-prophet.

Ronald, unlike Gunther, is still a boy. In him Vance traces the awakening of erotic desire, a classic source of temptation to revolt. Ronald's mother feels that:

"Sports were vulgar, pointless and dangerous; how could people waste money at a football game when there was so much misery and devastation in the world crying out for attention? Ronald had come to share this point of view. Still, he could see that athletes enjoyed some very real advantages. There was a certain Laurel Hansen, for instance, who doted both on football and football players, but who evaded all Ronald's advances".

Rather than respecting the football players as fellow human beings with an existential status equal to his own, Ronald chooses to regard them as *"intellectually limited prognathous louts"*. His mother, by demeaning athletes, has set a poor example. That Laurel Hansen is on good terms with them *"gnawed at Ronald's self-esteem"*.

Ronald sees himself as *"a natural aristocrat, a gallant figure after the Byronic tradition, driven by a wild and tempestuous imagination. He had written several poems, among them 'Ode to Dawn', 'The Gardens of My Mind' and 'The World's an Illusion'"*. Studying himself in the mirror, rather than search for the truth of what he is, he eagerly imagines a *"dashing cavalier with a long noble nose and a dreamer's forehead, whom no girl could conceivably resist"*.

Ronald *"had contrived a wonderful land which lay behind the Mountain of the Seven Ghouls and across the Acriline Sea: Atranta"*. He thinks that if only he could get Laurel alone he could *"enchant her with the splendor of his visions"*. Ronald is creating a mythology out of which he draws personal power.

A devotee of fantasy fiction, Ronald is an artist. 'The Magic Land of Atranta' is not just a dream but an actual illustrated history. Consider the essence of Ronald's myth:

"... six domains: Kastifax, Hangkill, Fognor, Dismark, Plume, and Chult are dominated by wizard dukes, each living in a grand castle, with turrets, towers, and barbicans above and evil dungeons below. At the center of Atranta is Zulamber, the City of Blue-green Pearls, ruled by Fansetta, a beautiful pearl and gold princess. The wizard dukes war against each other, and when not so occupied plotted against Princess Fansetta. Meanwhile a legend prophesies that the man to win Fansetta's love would rule all Atranta; for this reason Fansetta's chastity, life and very soul were in constant danger. Into Atranta comes

the prince Norbert, a fugitive from the tyrant of Vordling. Norbert, by dint of craft and daring defeats Urken, Wizard Duke of Kastifax, and takes over his magic castle and all his wizardly spells. Fansetta sees Norbert in her magic lens and falls in love with him, but suspects he is Urken.'

In Ronald's mythological world Paul Gunther's 'I', or 'Individuality', is replaced by Norbert. Norbert has suffered injustice but, through craft and daring, will defeat destiny (the seven Wizard Dukes) and, winning the love of Fansetta, will achieve glory and happiness. One link between this private mythology and the real world is revealed in the scene where Ronald inspects one of his victim's rooms:

"On the walls hung Art Nouveau posters, and the shelves supported books [including] several volumes of fantasy and others of science fiction. Of the three girls, only Althea's perceptivity even remotely matched his own. She'd be enthralled to know that here, in this very same house, the Atranta sagas had been formulated".

Ronald's imaginary world is more than picturesque. It is a translation of the dynamic of self-awareness and temptation that accompanies each human life, and shows how such a mythology can empower its creator, or adherent.

Having explicated this 'archetypal situation', Vance both debunks it, by confronting it with reality, and shows how it impinges physically on reality. Ronald, morally auto-empowered, captures Barbara, who struggles to avoid his lust. But Atranta is now the defining reality, even for her. It is the 'cultural space', and if Barbara cannot fit into it, too bad:

"How long are we going to stay in here?"

Ronald chuckled. "Don't you like it?"

"It's a little cramped."

"It doesn't seem cramped to me. Look at those pictures and the map: right away you're in Atranta. I'm Norbert and you're Fansetta. In the Great History she sent out a troop of black-and-yellow trolls, and they trapped him with a song that doesn't have any end. When you start singing it you can't find the place to stop. They carried him along this path here," Ronald reached over to touch the map, "around the Three Craggs to Glimmis. That's a castle here on Misty Moor. When he wouldn't marry her she chained him to an old statue of black copper and lashed him with a whip woven of scorpion tails."

"I don't want to be Fansetta then, because I wouldn't do a thing like that. Isn't there someone nicer I could be?"

Ronald deliberated. "Mersilde is a cloud-witch. She's cruel but very beautiful. Then there's Darrue, a girl half-fairy and half-ghowan. . ."

"What's a 'ghowan'?"

"It's a kind of a cave-elf, very pale and mysteriously beautiful. A ghowan has hair like white silk, his eyes are like glass balls

with little glinting stars in them. Darrue loves Norbert, but she doesn't dare show herself to him, because when a ghowan kisses a mortal, it takes a fever and dies, and Darrue doesn't know whether she's mostly fairy or mostly ghowan."

"I'd just as soon be someone beautiful who doesn't need to worry so much."

Poor Barbara, 'a face with no real existence' except as a potential element in Ronald's culture. Her failure to participate is her death warrant. These events are heideggerian because mythology becomes an 'existential' matter for Barbara. Ronald may be living a dream but this dream—his personal culture—motivates and empowers him to concrete acts which impinge on the reality of others.

KOKOR HEKKUS

In *The Killing Machine* Kokor Hekkus not only invents a culture, but makes it real on a planetary scale. Thamber is, specifically, a world of myth. Alusz Iphigenia recounts its history:

"Draszane in Gentilly, was a principality on the western shore. To the east was Vadrus, ruled by Sion Trumble, and beyond, the Land of Misk. . . Between Misk and Vadrus there was intermittent strife, with Gentilly usually allied with Vadrus. Sion Trumble was a man of heroic valor, but he never had been able to overcome the Brown Bersaglers. In a tremendous battle, he had repelled the barbarians of the Skar Sakau, who had thereupon turned their full fury to the south, upon the Land of Misk, where they had been raiding villages, destroying outposts, and spreading devastation. . . Two hundred years ago the great heroes lived. Tyler Trumble conquered Vadrus and built the city Carrai where Sion Trumble now rules. Jadask Dousko found Misk a land of herdsmen and Aglabat a fishing village. In ten years he had created the first Brown Corps, and there has been war ever since." She sighed. "In Draszane life is relatively calm; we have four ancient colleges, hundreds of bibliothèques. Gentilly is a peaceful old country, but Misk and Vadrus somehow are different. Sion Trumble wants me for his queen — but would there ever be peace and happiness? Or would he always be fighting Skodolaks or the Tadousko-Oi or the Sea-Helms? And always Kokor Hekkus, who now will be implacable."

Kokor Hekkus does more than relish his mythological milieu; as 'Kokkor Hekkus' he controls Aglabat, and as 'Sion Tumble' he controls Vadrus. He is not only the architect of the romance he lives, he plays all the principal roles himself. He is a novelist who lives the lives of the characters he imagines in the setting he has invented. But Kokor Hekkus' assault on destiny goes farther still; he has defeated time. As a hormagaunt it is Kokor Hekkus himself who has set the history of Thamber into motion,

as both Tyler Trumble and Jadask Dousko.

Atranta exists as an unfinished drawing on a wall and the tangled thoughts in the mind of a perverted boy. Thamber is the real-life history of hundreds of thousands of human beings over centuries. Despite these differences Barbara is as trapped in the web of Atranta as Alusz Iphigenia is trapped in the web of Thamber. Is myth reality? Alusz Iphigenia does not think so. "Your life" she says to Gersen, "is real. My life—all of Thamber—none of it is real. It is animated myth, archaic scenes from a diorama. It stifles me." Does the imposition of a mythology upon a world make Kokor Hekkus' guntherian morality true? Gersen does not think so. Before he executes Kokor Hekkus for his "crimes" he tells him: "You have lived the most evil of lives."

VIOLÉ FALUSHE

Viola Falushe is another artist. Neither a child awakening to self-consciousness and temptation like Ronald, nor a frantically megalomaniac thrill-seeker like Paul Gunther or Kokor Hekkus. Mature and self-aware, he discusses his art in these terms:

The pursuit of beauty is . . . a major psychological drive. In its various guises—the urge to perfection, the yearning to merge with the eternal, the explorer's restlessness, the realization of an Absolute created by ourselves, yet larger than our totality—it is perhaps the most single important human thrust. I am tormented by this thrust; I strive, I build; yet, paradoxically, I suffer from the conviction that should I ever achieve my peculiar goals, I might find the results dissatisfying. In this case, the contest is worth more than the victory.*

For Viola Falushe the experience of his own life is the ultimate prize. Whatever crimes he may commit do not weigh in the balance against the exploration of his urges, the satisfaction of his impulses, the restless exercise of his creative genius.

Evil is a vector quality, operative only in the direction of the vector, and often the acts which incur the most censure do singularly small harm, and often benefit, to the people concerned.

This is a subtle criticism. Human life is beset with incoherencies of which anti-moralists always take advantage. As Paul Gunther seeks to justify his selfishness Viola Falushe seeks to justify his solipsism.

But again, after giving us a taste of the Viola Falushe's exultation, Vance debunks it. The visitors to the Palace of Love are described in such terms as: "a middle-aged woman from Earth who had won first prize in a television contest: her 'heart's desire' . . . had chosen a visit to Viola Falushe's Palace

of Love". Or Torrace da Nossa, who visits the Palace of Love "preparatory to composing an opera entitled 'The Palace of Love'". Each private mythology is ground up in the private mythopaedic impulse of every other individual.

A more direct critique is pronounced by Navarth:

"There is no poetry here. It is as I have always set forth: joy comes of its own free will; it cannot be belabored. Look—a great palace, a magnificent garden with live nymphs and heroes. But where is the dreaming, the myth? Only simple-minded folk find joy here." Does this only mean that Viola Falushe's myth is not Navarth's myth? Navarth's words must be understood poetically. Navarth respects the reality of reality; joy comes of its own free will. You cannot force reality, you listen to its song and feel its beauty.

Viola Falushe defines his credo as "the augmentation of awareness". Navarth comments: "[he] distorted my doctrines beyond recognition. I preach augmented existence; [he] wanted me to approve his solipsistic ruthlessness". Navarth's 'augmentation' is sharpened capacity to listen and feel, not the power to control and shape being itself. Even if this were possible it would be 'belabored', for joy must come of its own. In Christian culture this is the 'gift of God'.

HOWARD ALAN TREESONG

Like Ronald Wilby, as a boy Howard Alan Treesong creates a mythological world, which, like Atranta, remains unfinished juvenilia. Gersen reads 'The Book of Dreams': ". . . a sympathetic ear might find much that was vivid and compelling, whereas a cynical spirit would hear only callow bombast but . . . final judgment could only rest upon how closely achievement matched youthful fantasy. In this light the term "callow bombast" must be discarded. "Feeble understatement," thought Gersen, "was a more appropriate phrase."

Like Gunther, Treesong accords himself a primary place in the universe and legitimates a criminal attitude: "I am a thing sublime. I believe, I surge, and it is done. . . With my ardent urge I outstrip time and think the unthinkable. What is power? It is the means to realize wants and wishes. To me, power has become a necessity; in itself it is a virtue." His program to accumulate power is identical to Gunther's: "Emancipation. . . is first: from Teaching, from duty, from softer emotions, which loosen the power of decision". But Treesong, integrating guntherian methodology with his personal mythology, does something new. His mythology is fundamentally different from Ronald Wilby's and Kokor Hekkus's, and surpasses Viola Falushe's 'artistic vision'. He does not create a story to live in, like Ronald and Kokor Hekkus, nor does he strive to establish a local mood or condition to satisfy solipsistic personal urges, like Viola Falushe. His mythology, the band of paladins each with special qualities, is a tool of multi-dimensional personal empower-

* This is a clear example of Vance exploring the modern concept of artist as essential human type, the human par excellence, or the most fully realized human state, or the struggle for self-realization.

ment. The story is Treesong's real life; the goal is actual, direct and total control of the universe.

After reading the Book of Dreams Alice Wroke comments: *"Almost always he is Immir. But I've met Jeha Rais and Mewness and Spangleway, and I've had a glimpse or two of Rhune Fader, who paid me no heed. I'm happy that Loris Hohenger was otherwise occupied."*

Note the progression: Ronald Wilby's mythology is an invented story. Kokor Hekkus mythology is likewise an invented story, but it is invented in action—it is, one might say, written in blood, geography and time. The same might be said of Nazi mythology. Viole Falushe's art is directly inspired and structured by his personal trauma—rejection by Jheral Tinsey, and the Palace of Love, like Thamber, involves the deliberate instrumentalization of thousands of people. But rather than plunging a whole planet into an adventure story, Viole Falushe instrumentalizes different groups according to specific personal needs, fabricating cultures adapted to each. For example, the folk of Atar worship Arocin (one of Viole Falushe's guises) and pay a prostitution tax. The resultant off-spring go to the account of Arocin with the unsuitable sold to the Mahrab and the satisfactory serving at the Palace of Love. The latter are divided into two groups: *"The first are servants. They are pleased to obey every wish of my guests, every whim or caprice. The second class, the happy people who inhabit the palace, are as independent in their friendships as I myself"*. The 'happy people', according to Gersen's observations, were: *"innocent and willful as children. Some were cordial, some were perverse and impudent; all were unpredictable. It seemed as if their sole ambition was to evoke love, to tantalize, to fill the mind with longing, and they became depressed only when guests found the underservants preferable to themselves. They showed no awareness of the worlds of the universe, and only small curiosity, though their minds were active and their moods mercurial. They thought only of love, and the various aspects of fulfillment"*.

The Jheral Tinzy clones are also processed in various cultures. This array approach is aimed at one thing: furthering Viole Falushe's exploration of his own personality. Though originally driven by frustrated desire for Jheral Tinzy, he is now involved in an open-ended quest for self-fulfillment.

When Gersen interviews Viole Falushe, the following exchange occurs:

"Hm. What do you think of the Palace then?"

"It is remarkably pleasant."

"You have a reservation?"

"Something is lacking. Perhaps the flaw lies in your servants. They lack depth; they do not seem real."

"I recognize this," said Viole Falushe. "They have no traditions. The only remedy is time."

"They are also without responsibility. After all, they are

* This is their mythology, their culture, their reality.

slaves."

"Not quite, for they do not realize it. They consider themselves the Fortunate Folk, and such they are. It is precisely this unreality, this sense of faerie, that I have been at pains to develop."*

"And when they age, what then? What becomes of the Fortunate Folk?"

"Some work the farms surrounding the gardens. Some are sent elsewhere."

"To the real world?" "They are sold as slaves?"

"All of us are slaves in some wise."

"How are you a slave?"

"I am victim to a terrible obsession. I was a sensitive boy, cruelly thwarted. Rather than submit, I was forced, by my sense of justice, to seek compensation—which I am still seeking."

This sort of thing—the sense of being unjustly thwarted and a consequent obsessive quest for 'compensation', is not infrequently encountered in real life. What is most important about Viole Falushe is not his exaggerated reaction to his hurts feelings but his radical inwardness. Kokor Hekkus is an adventurer in the cosmos. Viole Falushe is an adventurer in his own soul. For both the world is raw matter, other people exist only as instruments; but Kokor Hekkus is more like a traditional artist. For him the zest is as much in the creative act as in the result. Viole Falushe's creations have specific personal psychological intentions. He involves others only to the extent they contribute to his personal quest. Navarth, for example, as both punishment (or 'ease' of Viole Falushe's soul) and as an aspect of the Tinzy project, is commanded to educate one of the Tinzy clones. The progression from Kokor Hekkus to Viole Falushe is from exteriority to interiority.

Treesong is the apotheosis of these variations. He is even more globalizing than Kokor Hekkus because he is even more inward than Viole Falushe. Gunther's philosophy, by contrast, is mere rationalization of immorality. Unlike Ronald Wilby, Treesong does not seek to seduce or co-opt others into a personal mythology but, by mythologizing himself, becomes a superman, a god-like being of total flexibility; the guntherian equal confrontation with destiny is achieved.

This is the vancian comment on the relation of myth, or culture, to reality. It is also explored in *Ports of Call*, via the aging Dame Hester. Dame Hester, like Treesong, uses a personal mythology, according to which she is, not a band of paladins but a splendid creature—alluring, mysterious, vibrant. Her desire is so strong, her will so firm, her disinterest in reality such, that her dream empowers her in a quest to dominate and transform her world. Her

* The criminal-artist-prophet at work.

** Gersen, like Viole Falushe, recognizes a reality beyond that generated by the criminal-artist-prophet, unlike Treesong to whom the entire universe, as for Paul Gunther, is like an item of personal property.

motivations and goals may be petty compared to Treesong's but that changes nothing. The dynamic is the same. Dame Hester is 'tall and gaunt' but will be 'slim'. She has energy and wealth, and uses it to impose her truth. She succeeds in doing so, if only to the extent of hearing flattering things from flatterers. But, in this realistic treatment of the Treesong theme, weath and the hearing of flattery suffices to maintain the vigor of a private mythology. As one result Myron is put off the Glodwyn on Tanjee. It is not hard to predict what awaits Dame Hester. But the question is this: will she regret her foolishness? Will she look reality in the face? And, if so, will it augment her self understanding, her understanding of others, and—in the pre-heideggerian sense of the word—her humanity? Upon this question depends the ultimate nature of the vancian view.

EPILOGUE: FASCISM

According to Robert O. Paxton, the relation of fascism to truth was 'whatever permitted the new fascist man . . . to dominate others, and whatever made the chosen people triumph.' He explains that fascism rests 'not upon the truth of its doctrine but upon the leader's mythical union with the historic destiny of his people', which is to say; 'national historic flowering . . . of individual artistic or spiritual genius.' The Nazi relationship to art is explained by Paxton as follows: 'The fascist leader wanted to bring his people into a higher realm of politics that they would experience sensually, . . . Fascism's deliberate replacement of reasoned debate with immediate sensual experience transformed politics . . . into aesthetics.' [The Anatomy of Fascism, Knopf, 2004, p16-17]

Regarding the racial or tribal aspect of fascism, Paxton insists that fascism rejects 'any universal values, other than the success of chosen peoples in a Darwinian struggle for primacy. The community comes before humankind in fascist values', so that it proved 'impossible to make any fascist "international" work.' This is because 'each individual national fascist movement gives full expression to its own cultural particularism.' [ibid. p20]. Translated to the level of the individual, the same dynamic is as work with Treesong or, on a more mundane level, with Dame Hester.

If 'identity politics' should not be labeled 'fascist', they do have a clear heideggerian link to fascism. 'Black pride', 'gay pride' or 'woman's liberation', tend to shade, from what most would consider legitimate grievances into 'us against them' power struggles rationalized with shifting, even surreal, arguments. Fascism, Paxton notes; 'does not rest explicitly upon an elaborated philosophical system, but rather upon popular feelings about master races, their unjust lot, and their rightful predominance over inferior peoples.' So, for example, while the feminism of the 1970s

complained that the masculine race exploited women as household servants and sex-objects, in the 1980s this is escalated to demands for equality so shrill that girls are allowed into military combat roles. In the 1990s radical feminists even postulated a theory of feminine moral superiority according to which war and evil are a function of masculine turpitude. As a result—among the avant-guard countries like France—there are now laws guaranteeing numerical sexual equality among elected officials. In the same vein we might note the growing number of countries where homosexual marriage has become legal. This innovation, to quote Calanctus, breaks: "the Great Law, which ordains that man shall be man and woman shall be woman".



Don't Look Now:

JACK VANCE'S DIRE BEASTS AND GHASTLY FIENDS

"By night he surrounded himself and his horse in his magical habiliment, the Expansible Egg – a membrane impermeable to thew, claw, ensorcelment, pressure, sound and chill – and so rested at ease despite the efforts of the avid creatures of the dark."

Gugel of Sfere

Jack Vance has a penchant for enlivening his fictive environments with predatory and misanthropic creatures, a motif in his works for half a century. He began as he meant to go on. The tales of *The Dying Earth* (1950) are replete with deodands, pelgranes, erbs, and gids. These and a plethora of other menaces, from ghoul-bears to vampire-weed, stimulate each moment of human life with the potential for sudden horror and extinction.

The ghastly denizens of the Dying Earth continue to lurk throughout the misadventures of Gugel the Clever (*Eyes of the Overworld* 1966, *Gugel's Saga* 1983). Gugel is vexed not only by Lucounu the Laughing Magician but must battle or elude a throng of anthropophagous creatures. Some, such as the already noted deodands and pelgranes, hunt by day, others stalk the night.

In *Cil*, Gugel narrowly escapes the clutches of a ghoul on the steps to the palace. In *The Mountains of Magnatz*, he is hunted by deodands. In *The Pilgrims*, the wizard Voynod must erect a magic barricade around the camp each night,

" . . . for beyond the bars, barely visible by the rays of the fire, were creatures anxious to join the company . . . "

And so it goes. But Vance isn't writing conventional horror stories. He uses his distanced manner and wry humor to excellent effect, and Joe Schwab's observation is worth recalling:

"The baleful creatures of Vance's fantasies share in common the refined speech that is so recognizable in his dialogues. . . . These dignified conversations lend the exotic creatures of these tales a distinctive presence and allure."

Approaching the Mountains of Magnatz, Cugel discovers that he is being stalked by a deodand. He sets an ambush, drops a heavy stone upon the creature, and draws his sword to finish it off.

The deodand hisses in horror at the sight of Cugel's naked blade. *"Hold your stroke,"* it says:

*"You gain nothing by my death."
"Only the satisfaction of killing one who planned to devour me."
"A sterile pleasure!"*

On the Plain of Standing Stones, Cugel whirls around to discover an asm of eight fangs preparing to spring upon him. He raises a pebble on which he has scratched a protective sign. *"Away with you. I carry a sacred object and I do not care to be molested!"*

The asm speaks in a soft blurred voice.

"Wrong! You carry an ordinary pebble. I watched and you scamped the rite. Flee if you wish! I need the exercise."

Deodands and asms, visps and leucomorphs—these sinister demonic hybrids and extraterrestrial transplants suit the eerie gloom of Earth's last days. But Vance has not confined his baneful creatures to the ruby-tinted vistas of the 21st Aeon. They also prowl the pages of his science fiction.

In *The Moon Moth* (1961), the felicitous environment of the planet Sirene allows the Sirenese to indulge in the intricate rituals of masks and musical expression. But each evening, the depredations of the Night-men force the populace to move offshore on their houseboats.

With the exception of Thamber's dnadz, creatures of dread are largely absent from the Demon Princes series until the very end; perhaps the human monsters are frightful enough. But on the planet Tschai, the three alien races who dominate the planet and harry the feral human population aren't bad enough; Mankind, Chasch, Wankh, and Dirdir must all contend with the terrifying and capricious Phung (Neanderthal cousins of Tschai's ancient custodians, the Pnume) while Night-hounds course

the starlit steppes.

Trullion: Alastor 2262 (1973) is another Sirene. Life is easy. Sex, drugs, star-watching, and hussade occupy the focus of human concerns, while malevolent merlings lurk beneath the placid waters, anxious to seize any humans who tip from boats or stand too near a shoreline. Glinnes Hulden has lost a sister, father, and, he assumes, a brother to the amphibious indigenes. When the Drossets mug Glinnes, he regains consciousness to discover that a merling has grasped his ankle and is dragging him toward the water.

In the *Durdane* trilogy (1973-74), we can discount the Roguskhoi, a biological weapon created by the Ka. But the inhabitants of Shant's 62 diverse cantons also must co-exist with the quasi-bipedal, semi-intelligent ahulphs, a native species with both wild and partially domesticated varieties. These *"spider-dogs"* detect scent with organs in their feet and are used for tracking. Their partnership with humans is undependable, and given the opportunity they will feed on human flesh. Chumpas are larger and solitary relatives of the gregarious ahulphs and common in Caraz, where travelers are advised to sleep in trees.

In *The Gray Prince* (1975) the morphotes are described as *"malicious, perverse, and unpredictable"*. Morphotes, like the fiends of the Dying Earth, can converse with (or perhaps project telepathic remarks to) humans. A sign at a morphote-viewing site declares:

CAUTION !

Morphotes Are Dangerous And Cunning!
Consider **NONE** Of Their Proffers;
Accept **NONE** Of Their Gifts!
Morphotes Come To This Fence
With A Single Purpose In Mind:
To Mutilate, Insult, Or Frighten
Those Gaeans Who Come To View Them.

The erjins are equally dire. A wild erjin has deprived Kelse Madduc of an arm and a leg. Domesticated erjins, as it turns out, are just as dangerous to the inhabitants of Olanje, who have employed them as house servants, and to the erjin-riding Uldras of the Alouan.

In *Maske: Thaery* (1976) some of the monsters have a human face. Jubal Droad goes on Yellow, hiking the country roads of Thaery but sleeping in inns for fear of slanes. According to a footnote, *"the mild and placid Djan"* (*Homo mora*, descended from the first wave of human settlement),

"if kept in solitude, is apt to erupt in berserk fury upon trivial provocation. If thereafter he escapes into the wilderness he becomes a cunning and sadistic beast — a 'slane' committing atrocity after atrocity until he is destroyed."

Jubal informs an innkeeper: *"At Faneel a slane killed two women with an axe. He escaped into Djanad, not half an hour before I came along the trail."* On land, Thariot hikers also must be wary of poisonous imps; at sea, swimming is discouraged by grinder-fish and ships are imperiled by the gigantic fortress fish.

The Dogtown Tourist Agency (1976) takes Miro Hetzel, effectuator, to the planet Maz. An investigative foray into the outback exposes Miro and his guide, Janika, receptionist at the eponymous agency, as potential prey to the sentient Gomaz warriors and the local wildlife: square-winged gargoyles and ixxen, the blind foxes of Maz, hunting in packs of two or three hundred. Also, *"at night the lalu come out,"* Janika warns, without elaboration.

One night, something huge and manlike stands nearby in the moonlight, twenty feet high with the bony white head and carapace of a Gomaz. It utters a chattering whinny and lumbers away. *"An ogre!"* Janika whispers. *"I've heard of them; I never thought I'd see one. They're supposed to be ferocious."*

In *Freitzke's Turn* (1977) a sea scrag, *"somewhat like a 15-foot scorpion, with pincers at each end"*, dismembers the Arsh fisherman Sabin Cru, providing Dr. Faurence Dacre with the chassis for his surgical triumphs. The waters around the Torpeltines are purulent with savage life, and few of the islands are inhabited because of the sea scrag, war eel, shatterbone and antler fish. Sword flies and corkscrew ticks infest the beaches (the reader tries to guess where on his world travels Vance wrote this passage).

In *The Book of Dreams* (1981) Vance expands the menace of dire creatures from individual species to whole ecosystems lethal to human intrusion. Gersen baits a trap and lures Howard Alan Treesong to Bethune Preserve, a planet whose human population is dedicated to protecting the indigenous wildlife.

Treesong's two henchmen are handily eliminated by introducing them to the local fauna. *"A twenty-foot balt-ape, with head half bear, half insect, lurched forward at a shambling trot."* The balt-ape pulverizes Umps. Schahar, who has climbed a tree, *"attracted the attention of a spider-like reptile which inhabited the upper branches."* Schahar leaps to the ground and escapes while the balt-ape and spider-reptile battle each other. The tumult alerts a band of scavengers. *"Noticing Schahar, they circled him, yelling, jumping, biting, and Schahar presently was pulled down to disappear under a seethe of animals."*

The concept of Bethune Preserve clearly captured Vance's fancy. He developed it further in the Cadwal Chronicles (*Araminta Station* 1989, *Ecce and Old Earth* 1991, *Throy* 1992), in which the conservancy of a superlatively hostile planetary ecosystem becomes the foundational notion of the tale. Note that on both Bethune Preserve and Cadwal, it isn't the exotic beauty of the wildlife that

attracts admiration and protection so much as its majestic ferocity.

The conservationists choose to respect, guard, and nurture these biological symphonies of horror. Ma Chilke expresses a more conventional attitude when Glawen and Wayness explain the Cadwal Conservancy to her: *"Keep your savage beasts and welcome to them! I have trouble enough with gophers."*

The dire beasts of Bethune Preserve and Cadwal are not so much malevolent as simply ferocious. But in *Throy* Vance gleefully returns to the more sinister form of alien threat. Glawen consults *The Handbook to the Planets* and learns that the flora and fauna of Rosalia are not hostile to the Gaeen presence, with the notable exception of the tree-waifs, water-waifs, and wind-waifs.

"All were notorious for their mysterious habits. Their activities seemed motivated by a caprice mingled with a weird logic, so that their antics were a constant source of horrified fascination."

The tree-waifs of the high foliage are *"furiously obnoxious"* and pelt intruders with stink-balls, the wind-waifs of the desert are

"... went to produce illusions and awful images formed of smoke in order to terrify the tourists and steal their garments."

But the water-waifs are deadly in their animosity. When Glawen and Chilke rescue the wounded Barduys, they must fight off a swarm of water-waifs.

"Never, for so long as he lived, would Glawen forget the feel of that sinewy dank body and its groping limbs. He kicked and fought . . . Glawen tore off the creature which wanted to cling to him and nuzzle his neck with one of its organs."

Night Lamp (1996) is one of Vance's darker novels, a tale propelled by horrid crimes and tragedies. Maihac describes ancient Romarth as *"perhaps the most beautiful city ever conceived by the Gaeen race."* Should the experienced Vance reader be surprised, then, that Romarth's abandoned palaces and decaying gardens are haunted by white house-ghouls? *"They infest the crypts beneath the palaces, and apparently they have dug a mesh of connecting tunnels,"* Bariano explains to Maihac. *"They are always at the back of our minds, and no one likes to walk alone by night."*

This, then, is a quick and far from complete census of Vance's *"avid creatures of the dark."* The motif is not universal in Vance's works. The Rhialto stories share the Dying Earth setting but the reader feels a sense of ease

as the characters contend with each other, unconcerned about frightful surprises. Quite a few SF novels (*To Live Forever*, *Languages of Pao*, *Emphyrio*, *Showboat World*, *Space Opera*, *Wyst*, *Ports of Call*) are largely free from inhuman hazard. The kragens of *The Blue World* (1966) are economically destructive but do not menace individual humans the way merlings and morphotes do. The Fwai-chi of *Marune: Alastor 933* (1975) are placid.

The Lyonesse trilogy is a special case, set in a pseudo-historical era of Europe. This somewhat limits Vance's scope to the traditional Euro-mythic catalog of ogres, goblins, and trolls. There certainly are eerie creatures in the Elder Isles—the shape-changing ghoul on the second level of the Cam Brakes, for example—but these are singular creatures of only passing menace. Aillas warns Tatzel that “odd creatures move about in the dark” but they camp each night without precautions. Step from Earth to Tanjecterly, however, and Glyneth is soon beset by Progressive Eels; the bipedal wolves of the Tang-Tang Steppe suck blood from Visbhum's chest through rasping orifices in their forepaws.

Yet, while not occurring in every work, the frequent recurrence of the “avid creature” motif is striking across the long arc of Vance's career; what is he telling us? That mankind needs the constant pressure of predation to avoid stagnation? That natural vitality is impervious to urban abstractions? That every rose has its thorn?

In the conservancy novels, the human population is self-constrained within fenced enclosures while the native life runs riot. Does Vance, with his deep desire for personal autonomy, identify with wild things? These novels seem to suggest that savage creatures should be left to pursue their lives as their natures require, however inconvenient for humanity.

Oddly, in Vance's SF the humans in nearly every case have adopted a *que sera* attitude toward their local monsters, accommodating themselves to the perpetual threat of sudden, grisly death and taking no forceful steps to abate the danger.

In *Trullion*, men and merlings have settled into a mutually accepted *modus vivendi*; merlings stay off the land, men stay out of the water. Man or merling is fair game and can be killed without reproach when either breaks the rules. This accommodation reaches its ultimate clarity on Cadwal, where official policy allows the native beasts to kill humans without retribution and the human Conservancy defends this entitlement.

It therefore is startling when, in *Night Lamp*, Maihac recommends that Gilfong Rute hire professional exterminators to eradicate the house-ghouls, an essential step in developing Romarth's tourist potential. Perhaps this atypical attitude is allowed because the house ghouls are not natural but the biological product of human folly.

At the morphote-viewing site in *The Gray Prince*, the cautionary sign concludes:

TAKE WARNING!
Morphotes have injured many persons;
they may kill *YOU*.
**NEVERTHELESS, WANTON MOLESTATION OF
THE MORPHOTES IS
ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN.**

Kelse informs Schaine:

“A month ago some tourists from Alcide came to view morphotes. While the mother and father joked with a beautiful red-ringed bottle-head at the fence, another tied a butterfly on a string and lured away the three-year-old child. When Mama and Daddy looked around, baby was gone.”

Appalled, Schaine declares that controls should be placed on morphote viewing, and Kelse informs her that the Mull is considering something along those lines. Note! No one is considering controlling (or even exterminating) the morphotes, only controlling the humans who might fall prey to them.

I possess neither the insight nor the impudence to delve into Vance's psychological predilections. Nor is he likely to explain himself, this being just the sort of introspective analysis of his work that he has always rigidly resisted. Jack Vance's dire beasts and ghastly fiends must remain an entrancing mystery, one of the inexplicable charms that make his fabulations so appealing to the receptive reader. So let us set aside speculation and join Kelse and Schaine Madduc at lunch in the submarine restaurant of the Seascope Hotel:

“Luminous blue-green space surrounded them; at their very elbows swam, grew or drifted the flora and fauna of the Persimmon Sea: white eels and electric blue scissor-fish darting through the thickets of water-weed; schools of blood-red spark-fish, green serpents, yellow twitters, twinkling and darting, the myriads occasionally sifting through each other in a pointillistic confusion, finally to emerge as before. On three occasions, purple and silver spangs, ten feet of prongs, barbs, hooks and fangs, came to grind against the crystal in an attempt to seize one of the folk who lunched in the half-light. . .”

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David B. Williams

David B. Williams began reading Jack Vance with *The Miracle Workers* in a year-old copy of the July 1958 *ASTOUNDING SF* and hasn't been able to stop. A recent inventory revealed that he currently owns 519 copies of Jack Vance books. Previous contributions to *COSMOPOLIS* include *How Jack Vance Crushed My Dreams* in No. 32 and *It Really Happened*, an account of Jack's appearance as Guest of Honor at Marcon 2003, in No. 39.

JACK VANCE ON . . .

Welcome to Part 4 of the column that exposes Jack's gift for aphorism and quotation. Please keep your suggestions coming in (email to me at gerrandr@bigpond.net.au) so we can keep this column going. This issue, thanks to PATRICK DUSOULIER and PAUL RHOADS for the following:

ANALOGIES, SIMILES AND OTHER PICTURESQUE FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS

That remains to be seen," as the cat said who voided into the sugar bowl.

Palace of Love — The symbologist to Marmaduke, in 'Avatar's Apprentice'

He's a tough one, for sure, touchy as a blastiff with boils.

The Face — A bailiff to the Chief Clerk

DEBATES AND DISCUSSIONS

The remarks of the sagacious [insert name of opponent] are persuasive, even though they fail to correspond to reality.

Maske: Thaery — Ramus Ymph to Myrus the Mneiodes

MEN AND WOMEN

If she bled you dry here she'll do it again elsewhere.

The Face — Gersen to Daswell Tippin

SEIZE THE MOMENT

When opportunity comes fleeting past, seize it by the heels before it seizes you!

Ports of Call — Navarth

THE VALUE OF CLOTHING

Wingo...wore a voluminous snuff-brown cloak, a brown planter's hat, soft leather boots. The costume, so Wingo felt, captured the romantic flavor of the bohemian life-style enjoyed by classical artists.

Ports of Call

FEMALE PSYCHOLOGY

They could have said "yes" or they could have said "no". Who knows? Next time it might be "yes". That's the theory behind a whole section in my book, entitled: "Go for it; what can you lose?"

Araminta Station — Arles

DETERMINISM

A girl looks down and can't see her feet by reason of an extraordinary bust, so she tells herself: "Oh my word! Everywhere I go I brandish these truly notable sex symbols! Whether I realize it or not, I must be a real five-star high-output performer! No other explanation is valid! So

why fight it?" The obverse situation, when the girl can see not only her feet, but her ankles and heels as well, exerts the negative influence.

Araminta Station — Ling Diffin

PERTINANT INTERROGATION

Must we amend Monomantics and risk a new sexuality?

Araminta Station — The Ordeen Zaa

RETORTS

You curdle the moral atmosphere.

Araminta Station — Shugart

FOOD

He had never known hunger and so had never enjoyed food.

The Languages of Pao

EMPATHY

If you can think as another man thinks, you cannot dislike him.

The Languages of Pao

Last time round we asked what famous quotation (by another writer) does the following Vancian version play on?

KNOWLEDGE

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing; a great deal of knowledge is disaster.

The answer — thanks to Stephen Anthony Trump — is:

A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring: there shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) — An Essay on Criticism

Note that Pope specified that danger lay in only having a little "learning", not "knowledge".

This will be the last column for the time being, unless you send in more quotation suggestions (to gerrandr@bigpond.net.au). I trust you have enjoyed them as much as I have. I propose that we include them in Volume 44.

Rob Gerrand



The Mathematical Vance

PART 7

You must have noticed by now how much of Jack's fiction is concerned with problem-solving. In the so-called "Demon Prince" series Kirth Gersen must solve problem after problem to accomplish his goal of expunging the five arch-fiends, Attel Malagata, Kokor Hekkus, Viole Falushe, Lens Larque, and Howard Alan Treesong. After rescuing himself and the inexpressibly beautiful Alusz Iphegenia Eperje-Tokay from the confines of Interchange and thereby becoming the "Bill Gates" of 1525 (To put perhaps too fine a point on it, all that money should have belonged to Alusz Iphegenia. So why didn't she end up with it?) he must then find Thamber, the planet of myth and mystery. The only clue is a 1000 year-old child's nursery rhyme:

*Set a course from the old Dog Star
A point to the north of Achernar;
Fare until, on the starboard beam,
Six red suns toward a blue sun stream.
Sleight your ship to where afar
A cluster hangs like a scimitar.
Under the hilt to the verge extreme
And dead ahead shines Thamber's gleam.*

When he explains to Alusz Iphegenia how they are to proceed the text gets a little garbled:

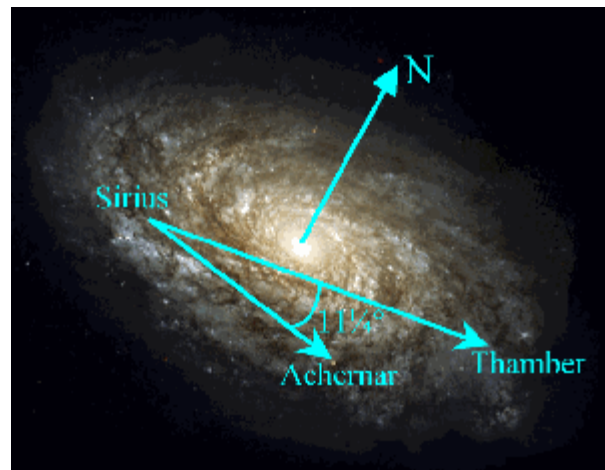
*Gersen pointed to Achernar, at the source of the river
Eridanus, "A point $11\frac{1}{4}^\circ$ north is the plane of galactic north
containing the Sirius-Achernar line.*

This doesn't make a whole lot of sense: "A point . . . is the plane . . ."? He straightens out the confusion (sort of) a little later in the paragraph:

But the rhyme must be a thousand years old, perhaps longer — so first we take ourselves to the position of Sirius a thousand years ago. Not too difficult. Then we calculate Achernar's apparent position of a thousand years ago — again not too difficult. Using these two new points, then we angle north $11\frac{1}{4}^\circ$ and hope for the best.

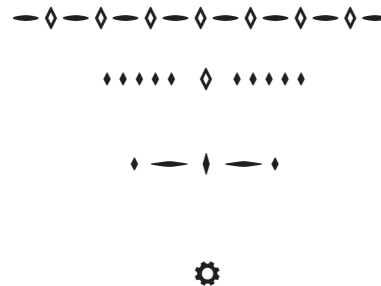
Now there are only two points of confusion left: what does north mean in space and why $11\frac{1}{4}^\circ$? North in space is defined to be the direction perpendicular to and above the galactic plane. (I think that "above" means relative to the way we would view it from Earth.) The reference to $11\frac{1}{4}^\circ$ comes from navigation terminology. Originally, the 360° directional circle was divided into 32 "points". Hence one point $= 360^\circ / 32 = 11\frac{1}{4}^\circ$. So what Gersen was

describing was the direction a point (i.e., $11\frac{1}{4}^\circ$) north (i.e., in the direction of the galactic north pole) from the line pointing from Sirius to Achernar:



(Photo of the Spiral Galaxy NGC 4414 courtesy of the Hubble Telescope: <http://hubblesite.org/gallery/showcase/galaxies/g3.shtml>.)

Richard Chandler



End Note

David Reitsema, Editor, Cosmopolis

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

COSMOPOLIS SUBMISSIONS: when preparing articles for Cosmopolis, please refrain from fancy formatting. Send raw text. For Cosmopolis 50, please submit articles and letters-to-the-editor to David Reitsema: Editor@vanceintegral.com. Deadline for submissions is May 31, 2004.



VIE Contacts

The *VIE* web page:

www.vanceintegral.com

For questions regarding subscription:

subscribe@vanceintegral.com

To volunteer on the project:

volun@vanceintegral.com

To report textual errors in Wave 1:

errata@vanceintegral.com

Paul Rhoads, VIE Editor-in-Chief:

prhoads@club-internet.fr

R.C. Lacovara, Business Manager:

Lacovara@vanceintegral.com

Suan Yong, Process Integrity:

suan@cs.wisc.edu

Joel Riedesel, Work Flow Commissar:

jriedesel@jnana.com

Damien Jones, Double-Digitizing:

damien.jones@shaw.ca

Ron Chernich, Techno-Proofing:

chernich@dstc.edu.au

Alun Hughes, Textual Editor-in-Chief:

alun.hughes@btinternet.com

Steve Sherman, Textual Integrity Administration:

steve.sherman@t-online.de

John Foley, Composition:

johnfoley79@optonline.net

Christian J. Corley, Post-Proofing:

cjc@io.com

John Schwab, Archivist:

jschwab@dslnorthwest.net

Hans van der Veeke, Volunteer Ombudsman:

hans@vie.tmfweb.nl