
COSMOPOLIS

Number 53

September, 2004

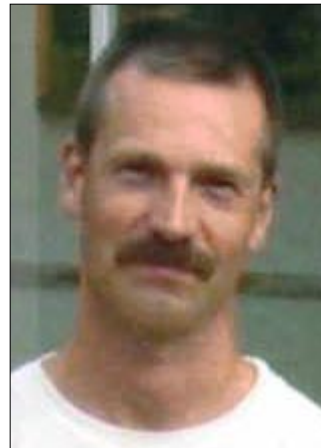
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Volunteer Spotlight

Hans van der Veeke



HANS VAN DER VEEKE

Hans van der Veeke, VIE volunteer coordinator and credit verifier, has made a habit of highlighting an outstanding volunteer each month. This is another initiative he has taken in pursuance of his self-created VIE post of Volunteer Coordinator. Now it is Hans' turn.

Hans volunteered many months after the project was underway but, after a wait of weeks or months, he had received no response from the project. We had noted that this sort of thing was a problem: we were not properly tracking volunteers. So when Hans got in touch with me personally about his situation, emphasizing his eagerness to contribute, he ended up becoming Volunteer Ombudsman, a sort of personnel manager. The problem of volunteers 'dropping through the cracks' came to an end.

Hans took his job to heart. Not only did he make sure each volunteer was integrated in a team, but took over administration of the VIE 'Who We Are' page and, eventually, on his own initiative, created the 'You Have Done It' *Cosmopolis* feature. 'You Have Done It' is not a simple stat-grab from the tracking charts. Hans collects, collates and double checks work credits from several sources, and resolves credit problems prior to *Cosmopolis* publication as much as possible, in cooperation with other managers. The 'You Have Done It' *Cosmopolis* credit lists are thus the most up-to-date and accurate credit information. As modified by *Cosmopolis* reader input, which Hans carefully documents each month, it then becomes the input for composition of volume credit pages. Typical of Hans' attitude are his strong feelings about the credits; as he says they are the only payment the volunteers get and should be as

accurate as possible. In this sense Hans is the conscience of the project.

Hans is the sort of dynamic, generous and creative person that makes the VIE function.

In addition to his important management work, Hans has also done *over 100* jobs, including Proofing (pre and post), Scanning, Technoproofing, Jockeying, Implementation and RTF-diff.

Hans, a Dutchman, lives in Holland and works for the gas company on European gas transportation via pipeline. It was a pleasure to receive a visit from Hans and his family this summer, in France, the first occasion I have had to meet him personally, after several years of VIE work together.



A Plea From CRV:

In *cugelx-fin-v2-ti-ppv.doc* we find this plaint from Bob Luckin, which deserves our earnest attention:

Reminder to all reviewers: please include some contextual text when logging problems, so the location can be determined more easily after the item has been adjusted.



Work Tsar Status Report as of August 29, 2004

There are only two texts remaining in TI: *Lurulu* and *The Star King*. [continued on page 3]

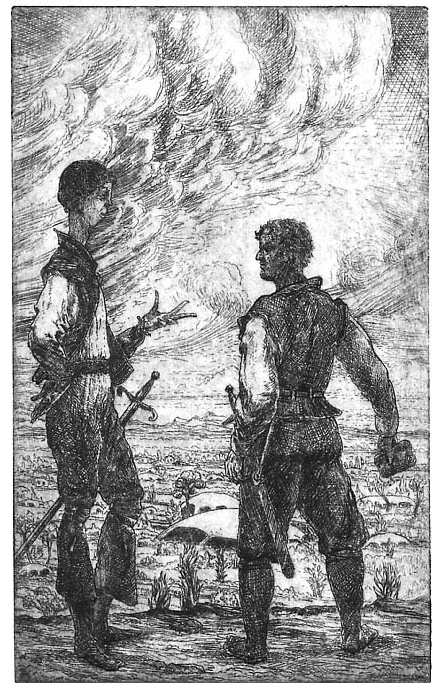
Frontispiece Notice



CUGEL THE CLEVER



THE PALACE OF LOVE



TSCHAI

The 22 etchings for the Wave 2 volumes are laboriously taking shape. I have submitted some samples for reproduction in *Cosmopolis* this month. For those interested in the technical aspects of engraving, these are done on copper, 25% larger than the VIE book frontispiece reproduced size. For bite nitric acid and vinegar have been used, followed by a mixed and exploratory technique of burins and further needle work. An attempt to recover the old techniques is no simple matter and fraught with frustration. Hours upon hours of work are dissolved by a spoiled bite or poorly adjusted press. The details of crucial manipulations at critical stages, as practiced by the Dürers and Hogarths, remain obscure. One can only try one's best and pray that the results may not be radically unworthy of their high function.

Two texts are in composition review.

There are three texts in Post Proof and nine texts in Post Proof composition updating and review.

We will be reviewing the last 11 volumes before the end of September, one way or another. Completion of the 44 volumes of the VIE looks to be on target for spring of 2005.

Last month:

- + In-TI: 2 texts (2.44%)
- + Post-TI: 16 texts (19.51%)
- + Volume Ready: 64 texts (78.05%)
- + Volumes Ready: 0 (0%)
- + Volumes Completed: 11 (50%)

This month:

- + In-TI: 2 texts (2.44%)
- + Post-TI: 14 texts (17.07%)
- + Volume Ready: 66 texts (80.49%)
- + Volumes Ready: 0 (0%)
- + Volumes Completed: 11 (50%)

Joel Riedesel



You have done it!

VIE work Credits

Compiled by Hans van der Veeke

Only 2 texts have reached the Golden Master stage during the holidays. This is not much but at least there is some progress. Only a few more texts to go; you can read the full status report from the Work Tsar to get detailed information.

This time I would like to put the spotlight on the volunteer who went even so far as to get special number plates for his car to show his dedication for the Vance Integral Edition.

I photographed him (or her) when I was riding my motorcycle in the area known as the Eiffel, in Germany. During my stay there I noticed that a lot of Germans are fond of the VIE because I saw lots of these plates. Maybe we could put in on our own merchandising list?

Please check the credits below. If your name is misspelled or missing; let me know at hans@vie.tmfweb.nl. The credits of all finished (Wave 2) texts can also be found on the VIE site:

- a. go to www.vanceintegral.com
- b. click on Editors only
- c. click on Volunteer Credits (second link from top)
- d. Or go to the page directly: www.vie-tracking.com/www/credits/



THE SECRET

Finished 17 August 2004

Digitizer

Gan Uesli Starling

Pre-proofers

Wayne Henry
John McDonough
Joe Ormond

DD-Scanners

Joel Hedlund
Sean Rainey
Peter Strickland

DD-Jockey

Damien G. Jones

DD-Monkey

Charles King

Technoproofer

Bob Moody

TI

Alun Hughes
Steve Sherman
Tim Stretton

Implementation

Joel Hedlund
Damien G. Jones

Composition

John Schwab

RTF-diffing

Deborah Cohen
Charles King

Composition Review

Mark Adams
Christian J. Corley
Marcel van Genderen

Correction Validation

Bob Luckin

Post-proofing

"Sandestins"

Jeffrey Rusczyk (team manager)
Charles Ashford
Deborah Cohen
Michael Duncan
Patrick Dusoulier
S.A. Manning
Eric Petersen
Glenn Raye
Mark Straka
Anthony Thompson

GUYAL OF SFERE

Finished 12 August 2004

Digitizer

Tim Stretton



Jack Vance as Artist



DD-Scanners

Richard Chandler

DD-Monkey

Suan Hsi Yong

Technoproofer

Joel Riedesel

Special tasks

David A. Kennedy

TI

Rob Friefeld

Steve Sherman

Tim Stretton

Implementation

Mike Dennison

Hans van der Veeke

Composition

Joel Anderson

RTF-diffing

Mark Bradford

Bill Schaub

Composition Review

Christian J. Corley

Marcel van Genderen

Charles King

Correction Validation

Bob Luckin

Post-proofing

"King Kragen's Exemplary Corps"

Robert Melson (team manager)

Neil Anderson

Karl Barrus

Michel Bazin

Mark Bradford

Patrick Dusoulier

Joost van der Eijk

Erec Grim

Jason Kauffeld

Mike Myers

Eric Newsom

Simon Read



The VIE volunteers at G2 in Chinon attempted, while sampling various single-malt brews and Chinon vintages, to discern the common thread in Jack Vance's works which bound them, the volunteers, together. All agreed that they thoroughly enjoyed reading Vance's works. But why? Various explanations were attempted, and none seemed satisfactory. The crux of the matter clearly lies in the art of Jack Vance.

A recent op-ed piece by Paul Rhoads ('Form and Desire', *Cosmopolis* 50, p.13), attempts to equate Vance's writings with 'genuine art'. In that article, genuine art was defined in rather conclusory fashion as based in 'an erotic thrill' expressing the artist's 'desire', without any attempt to describe what was 'erotic' about Vance's writings. This surprising assertion needs to be addressed. While it can be conceded that art can be erotic, it certainly cannot reasonably be argued that all great art is rooted in erotic desire. And to quibble over the meaning of erotic is pedantic at best as the Greek root word *eros* is well enough known to convey the meaning. An artist can be full of desire and yet never be a great artist.

Art has certain identifiable elements including the artist's imagination and the resulting image wrought by the artist in whatever medium is chosen to communicate it. Rhoads identifies these elements as 'conceptualization' and 'realization'. But to be 'great' and not just 'genuine', art must also possess the power to communicate the artist's message which produces a response in the reader. And the response may not be purely intellectual because many things besides art provoke varying mental responses. The artist's power must touch a person's soul. Perhaps this is what Rhoads intended by the term 'genuine' in requiring that the artist incorporate 'desire' into his art, but he comes at it from the wrong direction. The artist's desire is not what makes the art great, it is the viewer's response to that art which makes it great.

The word 'power' in this context means the ability of the artist to view something (whether it is an object, an experience, an idea), to internalize and to assimilate it, and then to communicate ('create' and 'image') it in such a way as to empower the viewer to identify the artist's handiwork with something in the reader's own experience. In other words, the viewer has a surge of internal comprehension by which he understands some aspect of his life experience more fully and responds with some variation of 'Ah Ha!'. (Eroticism in its crudest but powerful form leads the viewer to respond more along the lines of 'Ya Ha!').

Art without power, in this sense, is either simple entertainment, or at its worst is a type of word-magic, both of which lead the audience into a dream world devoid of experiential reality. It manifests itself in all mediums, from the sterile and cynical painting of a soup can label to violent movies such as 'The Terminator'. One can call these 'art' and perhaps even 'genuine' art, but these are not and can never be *great* art. There is little or nothing in these creative images which leads anyone to better understand their own life experience.

To illustrate, consider a wonderfully entertaining passage from *The Face*, a work cited by Rhoads. Two persons including the hero of the story, upon entering an unusual restaurant serving Darsh provender, are accosted by the barmaid and the following ensues:

The woman behind the bar called out: "Why do you stand like hypnotized fish? Did you come to drink beer or to eat food?"

"Be patient," said Gerson. "We are making our decision."

The remark annoyed the woman. Her voice took on a coarse edge. "Be patient, you say? All night I pour beer for crapulous men; isn't that patience enough? Come over here, backwards; I'll put this spigot somewhere amazing, at full gush, and then we'll discover who calls for patience!"

This passage is creative enough to build a mental image, but the power experienced by the reader is simply humorous entertainment. It is artistic to that extent, but does nothing to augment a reader's understanding of his own life experience.

We can agree that Jack Vance has a creative imagination from simply reading his works, and we can agree that those works are the resulting image conveyed to us by his words. Jack Vance as a writer is a great craftsman of story plots displaying a vast vocabulary which he employs to illuminate the accoutrements of his plots.

The issue in evaluating Vance's 'art' is not how to identify the degree of erotic desire evident therein, but rather, to what extent a reader, upon experiencing one of his works, is aware of some element of the work that enabled the reader to more fully understand and experience life. Of course, this type of 'art' enables a reader to express more fully his own experience of life, and become a greater artist himself. It is on this basis that the true measure of Jack Vance as a great artist can be gauged.

David Reitsema. Centennial, Colorado, USA



38's Crucible



50 Winks

From *Cosmopolis* 51, on page 3, readers will recall VIE discovery of a problem in the published editions: apparently wrong wink transcription. This issue is now resolved beyond cavil, though, per usual, after being squeezed through the fine screens of healthy VIE skepticism and benefit-of-doubtage.

From the 'bis' file:

Reviewer 1: The winks seem to be wrong. fin-v1 follows Dell, but, if we read the lamp positions as:

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

And white is 'color'+5, and Red is 'color'+1, 3, and

Pink is 'color'+1, 3, 5, then Black and Dark red should be, either:

Black: 'color'+7

Dark Red: 'color'+1, 3, 7

or

Black: 'color'+9

Dark Red: 'color'+1, 3, 9

For various reasons I think we should correct to the 9 version.

[*Cosmopolis*: Reviewer 1 failed to notice that the 'white designator was at '4' rather than '5', but:]

Reviewer 2: The asterisk has been fixed, and black shifted to position 9. But, white is currently 4, not 5. This would suggest that pink should be 1,3,4 —or white should be 5; if we correct black or dark-red then we should correct here as well. But I'm not at all sure about playing with these dots. It seems possible to me that JV *might* have intended what we see—for example perhaps when mixing black and white with other colours he wanted to use the positions of black and white to indicate the amount of each being added, thus red is 1,3, darker red is 1,3,7, even darker red is 1,3,8 and darkest red is 1,3,9. Similarly, if white is 4, medium pink is 1,3,5, while 1,3,4 and 1,3,6 are paler and darker shades of pink... This is complete speculation of course. I'm wondering if trying to force any extra logic into the positions at all is a good idea; perhaps we should leave them unchanged. After all, there are plenty of more obvious instances where his arithmetic doesn't add up but has been deliberately left alone. I respectfully suggest a TI-REVIEW, the results of which would presumably apply equally to *The Kragen*.

Reviewer 3: ...wrong placement for white.

Using

123

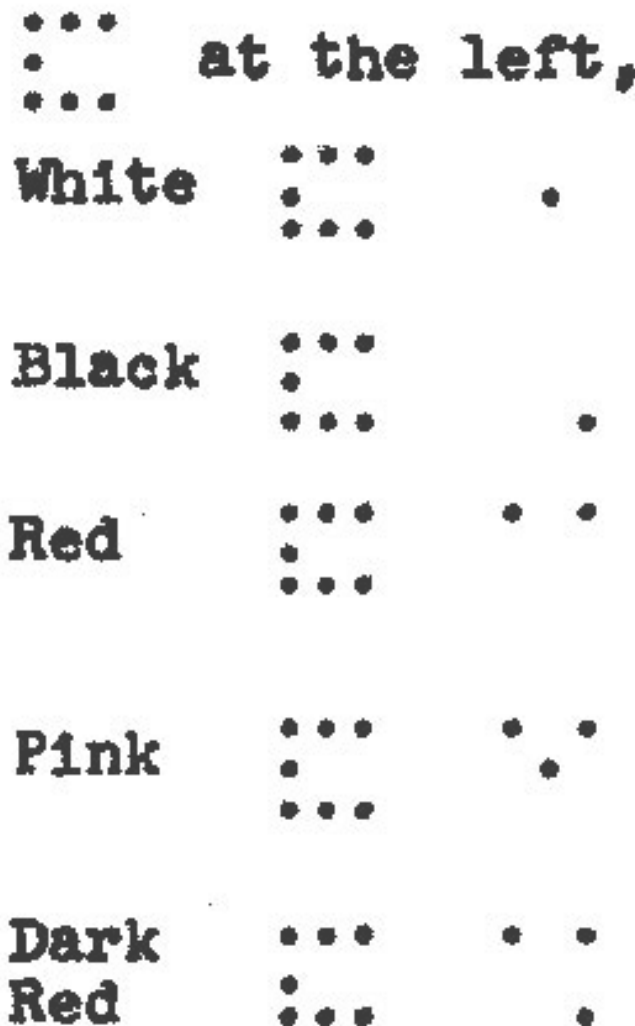
456

789

to indicate placement in the 3x3 array, white should be the 'color' symbol followed by a lone 5 (not the lone 4). This is very clear in the Mugar Typescript. Interestingly, there is included in the typescript 3 pages of aborted efforts at typing this orthography, all very strongly marked out by Jack(?). I think we can conclude he knew what he wanted.

Black is 'color' followed by a lone '9', red is 'color' followed by '1 3', pink is 'color' followed by '1 3 5' (i.e., 'red' + 'white'), and 'dark red' is 'color' followed by '1 3 9' (i.e., 'red' + 'black').

I will include a scan of the orthography footnote from the Mugar typescript. Originally, this was split between two pages; I have merged them into one picture:



In a related issue we have been concerned about wink punctuation. In the published texts ellipses separate all words except those ending in periods, exclamation points or question marks, the only punctuation marks used in the winks. We have felt this violates the spirit of the wink transcription and have recommended using an ellipsis in addition to any punctuation, an attitude which has now been confirmed by the manuscript. According to Blue World wallah Richard Chandler: 'Concerning the ellipses

on the winked passages on p. 209 in the .pdf file: In the first passage in the Mugar typescript originally there was a single dot following the word 'force'. Jack changed it (holographically) to an exclamation point followed by 3 dots. After the word 'barge' originally there was a single dot. Jack added 3 more (holographically) although the leftmost of the three is very close to the original typed dot. In the second passage the Mugar typescript has three typed dots following the word 'west'. Following 'Tranque' there is one typed dot; Jack added two or possibly three more. It is difficult to tell, but if I had to guess, I'd say 2 more. I would recommend consistency: 3 dots following any punctuation.'

- o -

More VIE Work Notes

MAGNIFICENT SHOWBOATS

Among finds of a compositional nature (wrong paragraph indentations, non-vancian comma-quotation relation, & etc.) ERIK ARENDESE's Dragon Masters caught 2 hot typos: 'Uuniversal' and 'dividinghis'.* The Dragon Master's Team includes: SCOTT BENENATI, PATRICK DUSOULIER, MARCEL VAN GENDEREN, EVERT JAN DE GROOT, CHRIS LAHATTE, JOHN HAWES, JURRIAN KALKMAN, GABRIEL LANDON, MICHAEL RATHBUN, WILLEM TIMMER. *Bravi*.

THE KRAGEN

CRT and Post-Proofing are continually generating valuable errata of all kinds, including 'TI' issues. Thanks to NIEL ANDERSON the VIE is fixing some errors which should have been caught by the original editors of *The Kragen*. See *Cosmopolis* 51, page 3, for details. These errata have now been approved, including in Oakland, and implemented.

THE KILLING MACHINE

In addition to wrong quotation marks and such, the Pen-wipers winkled out three typos: a 'that' which should be 'than', 'apace' which should be 'a pace', and an 'out' which should be 'our'. Such errors, invisible to spell checkers, can only be coped with by sharp-eyed sharp-witted homosapiens. I would like to commend Composition, the Composition Review Team and Post Proofing for their excellent work on this text.

This text generated some interesting and entertaining

* Pronounced: 'di-vi-DING-gis'.

discussion on some colorful issues, which *Cosmopolis* readers might also enjoy:

Even the Brown Bersaglers of Kokor Hekkus carried only voulgues and daggers, while the knights of Misk were armed with swords and crossbows.

Reviewer 1:

I've only ever come across this pole weapon spelt as 'voulge', although when I checked my Chambers it gave both this and the alternate 'vouge'. However, I can't find a reference work which spells it 'voulgue', so I suspect this could be a typo which made its way into prior publications (my Orbit copy of the first three Demon Princes volumes also has this misspelling).

Reviewer 2:

Guys, we are talking 25 centuries into the future. At that time the weapon 'voulgue' will exist. Its plural will be 'voulgues'. This weapon may resemble a voulge or vouge or even a vougier, but it may also resemble a faux, a fauchart, a guisarme, a corseque, a roncone, or possibly a hallebarde.

Reviewer 3:

Could it resemble a Bohemian Ear-Spoon?

Reviewer 1:

The foregoing argument might be valid if the paragraph did not begin, "Technology and the ways of modern living were unknown on Thamber." The whole point of this paragraph is to show that the Thamberians do NOT use the weaponry of "25 centuries into the future", but the weaponry of several centuries into the pre-industrial past. To suggest that JV here is referring to some heretofore-nonexistent weapon that coincidentally sounds like the pre-industrial voulge makes the reference meaningless. If voulgue is simply a misspelling of voulge (as seems highly, highly likely) then its use here makes sense. If, however, it is some weapon of the far future — by the foregoing logic it could just as likely resemble a laser rifle, a bowel disruptor, a freeze ray, a teleporter, a tube that projects blue concentrate, etc. etc. — then the illustration of the nature of military encounters on Thamber is undercut. It is glaringly obvious that JV meant to show that on Thamber, time stands still at a point coinciding with Earth's Middle Ages. If the Thamberians use voulges, it succeeds; if they use some mysterious yet-to-be-invented weapon, it fails. I agree with the reviewer that this is a simple misspelling, which we should fix.

Reviewer 2:

The weapons of Thamber may be ancient. They are, none-the-less, weapons proper to this lost world, which is not earth, and the colonization of which takes place, at the very minimum, 2 millennia after anyone used a voulge in anger. Nor I do not follow the other aspect of Reviewer 1's argument; why could this weapon not 'be' a 'voulge' but be called, and spelled 'voulgue', on Thamber? The point

of mentioning such weapons as the vouge, vougier, faux, guisarme, corseque, roncone and hallebarde is that they, also, 'are' voulges.

Reviewer 4:

This is an odd one, admittedly. There is no reference to such a word in OED, and Patrick Dusoulier cannot find it in any French language reference either. However, a Google search on 'voulgue' leads to 6 page hits, one of which is genealogical in nature; a search for 'voulge' results in almost 900 hits. In particular, the information at this page (http://www.geocities.com/wolfram_von_taus/Research_Voulge.htm) provides some extensive information about this type of weapon and it cites several references for the research. I doubt this guy got it wrong.

The preponderance of evidence is in favor of 'voulge'. I think it's just a misspelling. . . Ach; now I see that this was addressed in CRT; I still maintain that it's a misspelling.

The webpage in question is an article, entitled 'Polearms: The Swiss Voulge', by Wolfram von Taus, a self-defined 'mediaeval Germanic tradesman in the Society of Creative Anachronisms'. It details his fabrication of a 'voulge' for participation in the functions of the Society. Among his commentaries the following may be gleaned:

'Voulge' is the term for a specific type of polearm used by infantry in the 14th century. . . . During the middle ages, hundreds of specialized polearms were developed, each with its individual function. . . . [the 'voulge' is sometimes referred to as] 'Guisarme-voulge' [or] 'early halberd'. Indeed several conflicting categorizations can be simultaneously correct. . . . Despite its name and designation as a poleaxe, the 'Lochaber axe' actually more resembles the "single long, curving blade" of the Glaive. . . . there is most often a hook on the blade backing or the tip of the blade, but when a spike is added to the "traditional" voulge, it is sometimes referred to as a 'Guisarme-voulge'. The 'Halberd' is considered a poleaxe despite possessing the traits of the Guisarme-voulge itself. Another form of polearm, 'Bills', are multi-function weapons that include a cutting surface, a dagger or spear-like spike, and hooks or curved blades on the back for dismounting riders. . . .

Voulges are characterized by their broad cleaver-like blade with a spike protrusion at the top. . . . [many] authors have labeled the voulge. . . 'poleaxe', and just as many have disagreed. . . . I have used George Cameron Stone and the grouping method he uses in "A Glossary of the Construction, Decoration and Use of Arms and Armor in All Countries and in All Times Together with Some Closely Related Subjects". . . . a strict interpretation. . . . would narrow the category to. . . weapons [with] an axe head, be it single or double bitted, backed by a spike or topped by a point. . . . maintaining a heft attributed to a true axe. The 'voulge' does not do this. If one were to remove the end point and back spike the remaining instrument would resemble a meat cleaver more than an axe. Although

related to the axe family, it truly belongs . . . under the 'pole cleaver' family.

Few weapons of the Middle Ages . . . were not derived from . . . agricultural or hunting origins . . . these simple tools evolved into instruments whose sole use was the killing of men. There are three main theories of how the voulge originated. The first is that it came from a plowshare-type tool, the second from the pruning-bill . . . or [simply] fastening a meat cleaver to pole or staff . . . There is also debate as to whether the voulge evolved into the Lochaber axe (Hammer of Kai) or if they evolved simultaneously. [However] these weapons came to be, the concept of development was the same: to deliver a powerful cleaving blow [with] secondary function to dismount enemies or keep infantry at a distance . . .

Taus, however, cannot be considered reliable. Better is Violet le Duc, whose *Encyclopedia of Mediaeval Furniture and Implements*, covers the subject definitively. Many weapons, indeed, were developed from agricultural instruments, and the halberd, with its predecessors and variants, is one of them. Its origin is that amazing tool, the scythe (and its arboreal cousin, the pruning hook) which, even today, is retained as a weapon in its primitive form by that most famous slayer of men; 'Death'. The dizzying variety of halberd-like weapons resulted both from regional specificities, evolution, and cross-fertilizations of the various forms. Contrary to Taus these weapons did not each have an 'individual function'. Starting as farm implements they were first used in an unorganized manner, each man bringing whatever he could lay hands on to join the melee. They evolved into weapon-forms according to local notions. In whatever form, the halberd weapon class is a doggerel potpourri of blade, spear, 'pointed hammer' and hook, clustered at the end of a stout shaft of medium length. Whatever their regional style or stage of development, according to Violet le Duc, as soon as their users were organized into disciplined formations these weapons were always and only a footman's arm against a mounted knight—in the image of the peasant farmer confronted with the robber baron. According to the rules of mid-level tactics, halberdiers were stationed on the interior of squares, behind the pikemen, archers, arbalesters and musketeers, to cope with cavalry penetrating the square or to rush out upon stalled cavalry formations. Unlike the prickly ranks of eighteen foot long pikes, or the projectile class of weapons, halberds had no 'defensive' quality; they would not keep any other arm class at bay. They were a weapon uniquely of attack against the mounted man. The halberd was too short to stave off the lance, to awkward to fend away the powerful downward hack of the knight's

battle axe, flail, mace or sword. But, surrounded by several halberdiers who whacked with heavy blades, poked with points and, above all, grappled with hooks, riders were in danger. Halberdiers were also armed with a 'misericord' to meet the situation as ideally transformed by his main weapon: a heavily armored man prone on the ground.

The most interesting variations of the halberd include the various treatments of its spear function—most colorfully a prolongation of the upper extremity of a scythe like blade.

THE KILLING MACHINE

Lubby unenthusiastically set to work. Çersen watched closely, giving advice and stressing the need for absolute accuracy. Then, borrowing Lubby's slide-rule, he calculated the square root of the first eleven prime numbers: values ranging from 1 to 4.79. Lubby meanwhile had cut out three pins, making a single small mistake. Çersen complained aggrievedly. Lubby put down the scissors. "This is extremely interesting, but I fear I must look to other matters."

Reviewer A:

'1' is not a prime number. The 11th prime is 31, the square root of which is 5.57. Even if we accept the common misconception that '1' is the first prime, the 11th prime is then 29, the square root of which is 5.39. Suggest we use that number. See also Cosmopolis No. 47, 'The Mathematical Vance', by Richard Chandler. To quote:

"So mathematicians have chosen not to allow 1 to be prime. However, this restriction may not be known to the average layman (or even the significantly above-average layman). So we can excuse this lapse of Jack's. But what about the other end (4.79) of the range? For this to be even close to correct, Çersen's eleventh prime would have to be 23 (23 = 4.79583. . . , more properly rounded to 4.80). However, even allowing 1 to be prime, the eleventh "prime" would then be 29: {1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29}. The correct set of the first eleven primes is {2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31}. Thus the correct range for Çersen should have been 1.41 to 5.57 (= 2 to 31)."

Reviewer B:

*. . . Jack's vision of prime numbers does not correspond to orthodox mathematics, but while the adjustments required to achieve orthodoxy would be trivial, I would resign my [VIE] role and launch an Internet campaign to defame the VIE if it were decided to implement them. The Internet being as it is and communication via e-mail being ambiguous, I feel it necessary to add the obligatory—and simultaneously nuncupatory—caveat that, while I stand by my assertions, I do not condition my further participation upon them. Barring a takeover of the VIE by Al Qaida, I am here for the duration.**

* This comment was satirical.

Reviewer C (trembling):

STET

So it goes behind the scenes in the VIE cyberspaces.



The Development of Vancian Cosmological Sociology

The standard SF cosmos, like the Islamist view of the world, is a 'house of war', infested with expansionist alien empires. The nearest vancian approaches to this vision are in early works such as *Phalid's Fate* (1945) and in *Gold and Iron* (1952). In the latter, aliens from technically and industrially advanced Magarak menace Earthlings with enslavement. But the Earthlings lift themselves to a Lekthwanian technological level as quickly as America lifted itself to the German level in the 1940s, and parry the menace before it proves more than a minor nuisance. In *Durdane* (1970) the asutra menace is tentative, and touches only a neglected outpost of the human Reach. In any case, as Ifness with homosapian *superbe* puts it:

The Earth-worlds cannot tolerate human enslavement by alien races; this is fundamental policy.

So how is the asutra menace to be dealt with? Regarding the galactic situation, and with reference to the Historical Institute, he states:

The Coordinating Board is a conservative group; the worlds are absorbed in their own affairs. The Pan-Humanic League is no longer influential, if ever it was. Durdane is far away and forgotten; the Schiafarilla intervenes. The Coordination might make a representation, depending upon a report from the Historical Institute, which enjoys prestige.

In the end the human space navy intervenes, dealing easily with the asutra.

Ridding Durdane of the asutra menace was like disinfecting Afghanistan of the Taliban. The world, dozing in its post World War III* Clintonian stupor, was only spurred into action by catastrophe.

Later vancian alien empires, such as those with frontier outposts on Tschai and Maz (the Chasch, Dirdir, Wannek, Liss and Olifract races), though potentially expansionist, are in a state of quiescence or decadence. But before the somnolent Gaeian Reach becomes the typical scene of his mature works there is a transitional vancian cosmic sociological conception, which is exemplified in *The*

* i.e. the cold war.

Houses of Iszm. When Farr returns from Iszm there is this description of Earth:

the navel of the universe, the depot, terminal, clearing-house, which the outer races visited as provincials.

This cosmos is full of alien races but a xenophobic menace does not exist. Humanity tranquilly dominates the universe. What is the nature and status of the 'outer races'?

Iszic and Earther — evolved from different stock to the same humanoid approximation: simian, amphibian — there would never be a rapport or sympathy between the races.

There are many Iszic-like 'men-men' in early Vance, some mutated from human stock, others alien.* But Vance's, shall we say, 'non-celebratory celebration' of 'racial diversity', as exemplified in the above extract — a species of the SF doctrine of 'alienness' — leaves Vance in an awkward situation, to say nothing of all other SF authors. Their problem, the problem of Vance in particular, is not that he might be accused of racism by Thought Vigilantes, but a peculiarly science-fictionish literary conundrum; if alien 'intelligence' has nothing to do with human intelligence, whither drama? Since non-human stock is not supposed to have 'human' intelligence, and thus will not have 'human' reactions, Vance must write:

Omon Bozhd stood in the gap. [. . .] His face was austere, placid, full of the strength that was human but not Earth-human.

Or else he makes Zade Patasz say:

"Iszic rationale is of course different to that of the Earther; we nevertheless share certain instincts, such as reverence for vitality and the impulse to aid our acquaintances."

In fact, since Vance sees no way to avoid making his aliens 'human', he out-flanks the problem with humor:

"The Iszics seem to have small understanding of intellectual curiosity," observed Farr.

"To compensate, we have a large understanding of rapacity, largeness, brain-picking and exploitation."

With a few exceptions as time goes by Vance gets out of this game, progressively abandoning aliens until only animal or quasi-animal and plant forms remain. In *Durdane* the alien problem works better because the aliens (not counting the Ka) are crab-spiders. Still, Ifness reports:

* Even in the late works they make a cameo appearance, like the Loklar of *Night Lamp*, the final example of vancian alien 'men-men' barbarians and evidence of the persistence of the Burroughs influence on his imagination.

we [. . .] enforced a peace, which was hard but fair. The Ka were required to surrender all their asutra, and to repatriate all their human slaves. The asutra abandoned their attempt to dominate Kahei, and also agreed to return all human hosts to Durdane. The solution to a highly complicated problem was elegantly simple, and within a common zone of comprehension.

So the little beasties are 'human' after all, at least 'within a zone'.

Now, what about the aliens: how do they feel about the humans? There is a nice example in *Dogtown*:

[. . .] the Ubaikh crouched in surly silence. Suddenly it hissed forth a set of emphatic polysyllables. Hetzel looked at the translator printout, which read: "Since alien creatures came to Maz, events go topsy-turvy. In the old days, conditions were better."

Previously Hetzel cowed the Kzyk and Ubaikh armies by claiming to be a 'Gaeen overlord', a pretension emphasized with blasts of his ray gun. The Iszic are in the same relation to the humans. But in their 'human but not Earth-human' acquisitiveness, they are glad to do commerce with Earth. As a result 'The Treaty of Access' enforces tourism upon them, but:

[. . .] the Iszic authorities discouraged tourism to the maximum degree allowed them by the Treaty of Access.

Unlike the barbarian Gomaz, the Iszic have a sophisticated view. By contrast with the Ubaikh's crude griping Omon Bozhd fingers human turpitude more neatly:

"[. . .] On Earth there is a surplus of wealth [. . .] so great that vast projects are generated by the impounded energy. This wealth could solve the problem of deficient housing in the twinkling of an eye — if those who controlled the wealth so desired. Since you understand this course of events to be unlikely, you turn your eye speculatively upon us relatively poor Iszics, hoping that we will prove less obdurate than the men of your own planet."

The Izsics know who they are, they have their pride but they understand their relative inferiority, 'us relatively poor Iszics', in the fundamental respect.

The Treaty is enforced by a 'District Treaty Administrator' in the light-handed manner of the IPCC presence on obscure planets, as in *Cadwal*, *Night Lamp* and *Ports of Call*. This situation, in its Iszic phase, is a riff on the early 20th century situation of trading companies and imperial garrisons, governors and bureaucracies.

One might say that the development of vancian cosmological sociology reflects the progression from such things as the Dutch East India Company, through Theodore Roosevelt and Kipling, to Woodrow Wilson, and then

Eisenhower and Reagan, and finally to the G8.



Very Topical Thoughts on Durdane

The Asutra as Interpretive Tool of Bush-hate

Reading the exchanges between Sajarano of Sershan and Etwane put me in mind of the dialogue between the 'Bush's-war-on-Terror' ostriches and Bush:

Sajarano, the Anome, speaks: *"I am a man of peace; I refuse to bring the horrors of war to Shant."*

Etwane replies: *"Worry no longer; the Roguskhoi have done the job for you."*

There are constants in political life. When war threatens, as we have seen again and again in the last 100 years, two basic positions emerge: those who, in Churchillian manner, face the situation with courage and resolve, and the ostriches. The latter use a protean gamut of reality obscuring tactics, from pretending that the threat is non-existent to urging capitulation ('better red than dead'). While a craven morality explains some ostrich behaviors, other ostriches are persons of courage and integrity. Marshal Petain, who facilitated French capitulation after the battle of France in 1940, was also the 'victor of Verdun', a man of tremendous prestige worldwide. So I am not saying that anyone who is not a hawk is an ostrich. There are all kinds of doves. It is neither dishonorable, nor necessarily wrong, to argue that participation in a given war is wrong, unnecessary, or whatever. But any argument that fails to keep in touch with reality is not only worthless, it provokes rational folk to wonder about its actual motivation.

Under the influence of the asutra Sajarano cannot think clearly. When confronted with a direct question of detail he can supply no answer; when Etwane asks: *"Why do you not order soldiers against the Roguskhoi?"* Sajarano replies: *"I don't know."* Despite this, Sajarano remains capable of rationalizing a policy he can't explain, by invoking 'peace' and the 'horrors of war'—a familiar tactic. When Etwane, in a Bush-like declaration, insists on the gravity of the situation (*"The Roguskhoi must be destroyed"*) Sajarano persists in orotund rationalizations out of touch with reality: *"You do not know what you are saying. In Shant we enjoy peace and good fortune; we must maintain it. Why risk chaos and militarism for the sake of a few barbarians?"* Here we have a precise parallel to one of the main lines of argument against 'Bush's War on Terror'. On the other side, the foundational strata of Bush's pro-war argument is spoken by Etwane: *"Peace and good fortune are not the natural bounties of nature [. . .] If you*

believe this, I will send you to Caraz where you can learn for yourself." A trip to the Sudan today would provide similar insights. Becoming ever more emotional Sajarano responds with another phrase worthy of the anti-Iraq war position: *'You cannot wish to bring turmoil to Shant'*; Etzwane, in a further sample of Bush-like lucidity, insists: *'I wish to repel a clear and present danger'*.

Anti-Iraq war positions run the gamut. The extreme leftists and crypto-pro-islamists deny that any terror problem exists or, if it does, that the West, the Jews and Christians, are at fault so that military reactions are counter-productive. This position is exemplified by the Dean wing of the Democratic Party. At the other end of the spectrum, exemplified by John Kerry, there is recognition that a reaction is necessary but insistence that Bush-style prophylactics are wrong or, if right, are being wrongly applied. The Anome's position on the Roguskhoi menace covers the middle of the spectrum; regarding what he qualifies as *'Roguskhoi bandits in the Wildlands of the Hwan'* he counsels a *'calm mien'*. *'These disgusting creatures'*, he says, *'will never dare to venture down from the wilderness; their depredations are not likely to molest folk who make it their business to avoid reckless exposure of themselves and their properties.'* This is the position of the Spanish socialist; there is a menace but it will not harm those who take care not to be provocative. The Anome further insists: *'the Roguskhoi are a nuisance, a tribe of disreputable folk already on the decline'*. I have not heard anyone, except Bush, claim that Al Qaida is on the decline, but it seems reasonable to assume that those with a complaisant attitude toward the myriad Islamo-fascistic massacres of the past 20 years, must believe, or want to believe, something along these lines.

Eventually we learn the ultimate source of these weak, contradictory and self-defeating positions; an alien infection. The asutra are non-human, indifferent to human prosperity and aspirations. They are without respect for human persons. The 'intelligence' of the asutra is equivalent to the instincts of crabs or ants but of much larger scope; they are, therefore, not 'evil', for morality does not apply to animals. What, then, do the asutra represent? With respect to human beings the asutra are an anti-life force. This same force, I say, is behind that exact parallel to asutra-induced thinking we are seeing in our contemporary affairs — and throughout history. It is a motive, unarticulated, only partly conscious, which infects the mind. The mind then struggles to give it form and justification. Since this is ultimately impossible there is a progressive slip into fanaticism, or the replacement of thought by passion.

The aim of the asutra is their own prosperity. This

prosperity is not bad in itself but, with regard to the Roguskhoi and other human-directed activities, it is inimical to human prosperity and thus anti-human. In Durdane the asutra, and their aim, is ultimately stopped in a language even insects can 'understand': force. Western crypto-pro-Islamists and John Kerry, so different in their analysis of our situation, share a goal: defeat Bush. To the Islamists Bush represents human liberty, which they cannot abide. Human liberty is 'deconstructed' in the first chapter of the Bible where we learn that there is a contradiction, or a permanent tension, between 'the gift of God to all humanity' as Bush has characterized it, and that human freedom is the open door to error. This is a fundamental biblical insight. It is not by denying the dangers inherent in liberty that it is defended but by understanding them. Islamist culture attempts to solve the problem by eliminating it. Rather than nurturing and protecting freedom by studying its limits, they quash it, subjecting everyone to an antediluvian law which rigidifies society into a Bronze Age state. This situation breeds fanaticism, because you cannot deny reality — in this case the reality of 'God's gift to humanity: freedom' — and remain sane and tranquil.

The Democratic Party is inimical to Bush. Many Democrats 'hate' Bush. But just as it is impossible for Sajarano to explain why he has not sent soldiers against the Roguskhoi, this hate is impossible for Democrats to articulate. Naturally, like Sajarano struggling to explain his undefendable policy, they produce all sorts of rationalization to justify their animus, but these fall as flat as Sajarano's rationalizations. They are either demonstrable falsehoods (Bush is stupid, Bush lies, Bush is the figurehead in an international cabal of oil company cronies), matters of personal taste (Bush swaggers, Bush is a hawk, has bad hair), or absurd and formless (Bush is a redneck, Bush is an extremist, Bush is a Christian.*). What anti-Bushies might legitimately have against Bush is disapproval of his policies. Bush may play T-ball on the white house lawn but he does not eat the kids after the game! He may not be everyone's cup of tea; his opinions and policies may be wrong; but he is a human being, and his policies are supported by a significant portion of the American citizenry. He cannot be *hated* without dehumanizing and stigmatizing millions of people.

But, in my opinion, the pilots of Bush hate don't really

* In regard to the Christian rationalization, Bush hatred is formulated as a 'fear'; Bush 'scares' people because of his 'outspoken' faith. Kerry, of course, 'is' a Catholic. This does not scare anybody because Kerry is not outspoken. What he is not outspoken about, however, is the heart of the matter, namely abortion, etc.

hate Bush; they hate his policies, they hate that he defeated someone who favors their policies in the 2000 election. The policies in question cannot be promoted conveniently through democratic processes such as legislation by elected representatives. They must be implemented by other methods: judicial orders and street activism. Such tactics are compromised when a President who will appoint sympathetic judges is not in office. Furthermore these policies are fundamentally anti-Western in character, or inimical to Western civilization. This may seem like a bold statement; I will back it up with a few remarks only. The Sharia on the one hand, and on the other a society structured around a bouquet of 'rights' to such things as divorce, abortion, euthanasia, gay marriage, extremes of socialism such as socialized medicine and PC-style restrictions such as punishments for saying certain words, interdictions on religious manifestations or possession of weapons, may seem to be polar opposites but they have a great deal in common. Both are careless of what have traditionally been regarded as fundamental human liberties, including respect for life* and both take an extremist position on sex. Libertinism is not liberty. Islamism reduces all other religions to secondary or illegal status; non-muslims, for example, are not permitted to enter Mecca. PC activists, likewise, would ban all religions but their own. Western civilization has traditionally been regarded as being founded on Classical Greek and Roman civilization and Christianity. Modernist thought, of which PC attitudes are a narrow and vulgar expression, rejects both to a very large extent. By no means all who intend to vote against Bush, and thus for a Democratic Party candidate, condone the gamut of policies dear to the hard-core anti-Bushies, but support of these policies, or frustration at Bush blockage upon them, is, I say, the cause of Bush hatred. In other words Bush hatred is less a thing in itself than a strategy of anti-Bushism.

But such an explanation does not touch the heart of the matter.

Beating an incumbent President is never easy. Probably the most important factor in such elections is economic, and the margin of political maneuvers available to an opposition party candidate, or even to an incumbent, is limited. Given this consideration, and were I an anti-Bush partisan, I would wish to present a candidate of demonstrable capacity who would take sensible positions on all

* It is one thing to favor abortion and euthanasia, but arguing that destroying fetuses or assisted suicide have nothing to do with murder is something else. A serious defense of these practices must come to grips with their murder-aspect. Murder, after all, or at least killing, is not impossible to justify, even if it eventually implies a metaphysical position which, like any other, has delicate points.

issues susceptible to appeal to my party's electorate. Such a candidate could approve the War on Terror, even in its fully Bushian form, and pledge to pursue it with as much energy as Bush. This could gain him no votes on this front, for such an approach eliminates the possibility to claim superior policy in this area. But, except among the radical fringe, there is no electoral mileage in any other policy, and the advantage of such an approach is not electorally neutral, because non-pacifist anti-Bush electors could vote for such a candidate with tranquility or enthusiasm, depending on their attitude to the war. Meanwhile there are many areas where our dream candidate could distinguish himself from Bush. For example, Bush is anti-abortion, anti-homosexual marriage and pro-regularization of illegal aliens. An opposition candidate could declare himself pro-abortion, pro-homosexual marriage and anti-illegal aliens. These areas, to say the least, may not be the best areas for a Democratic presidential candidate to differentiate himself from Bush, but there are dozens of others. Even if no points of policy difference existed, assuming that anti-Bushism is a wide-spread phenomenon, simply presenting an candidate of good character and address would seem to be a winning strategy. Presenting Bush as totally craven, accusing him of promoting a war to enrich his petroleum industry pals, of running a fanatical Christian crusade, of running rough-shod over the world, given that these are demonstrable untruths is a reckless tactic! Since many Americans, including the Democratic Party leadership, seem to be asutra-infected, the tactic may work—or, given the preponderant structural influences upon elections, may not derail a Kerry victory. But it seems imprudent. The effort to instrumentalize ugly passions rather than putting faith in human rationality and decency puts the perps at risk of exposure as mendacious and nasty-minded. But, like the asutra's strange purposes, the real springs of Bush-hatred are obscure, and go beyond frustration at Bush's blockage of the leftist agenda.

Abortion and homosexual marriage may be winning policies for the post of borough president of Manhattan or mayor of San Francisco; they are not policies upon which to build an American national presidential electorate. The same may be said of the War on Terror, the necessity of which is recognized (rightly or wrongly) by most Americans. The moderate Democratic Party platform reflects this reality, and the ideal approach suggested above seems to have been exactly what the Democratic electorate had in mind during the primaries; in a move of calculated anti-Bushism they pushed aside the extremist

Dean, pricking his Internet-bubble jump-start, in favor of a man perceived to be more moderate, more presentable, not anti-war; a man to 'beat Bush'. But even if watching the American political process bring new faces to the fore was refreshing to this observer in France where the political personnel are the same for dreary decade after dreary decade, it must now be sadly recognized that, however sensible their intentions, the Democratic electorate made a poor choice. In retrospect someone such as Lieberman would have been a better bet; a man of firm liberal principles and staunchly pro-war. The Democratic Party is now stuck with a candidate not only unprincipled but actually unlikable. Here we see the down-side of the American populist political machinery, in this case to the detriment of the Democrats in 2004. The Democrats may hate Bush; they forget that Bush's supporters like him, and will vote for him. If the Democratic Party leadership, with its moderate platform, seems to be waking up to the necessity of a sober non-asutra approach, they are waking up to a bad dream. Struggling to reorient the campaign around low-key emphasis that Kerry is electable in order to mobilize their natural electorate, they keep shooting themselves in the feet. First they saddled themselves with bumptious young Edwards for veep. Rather than giving some weight to the ticket they dashed around appeasing their left wing. In a similar move they starred the Moore-Dean 'wacko-hate fringe' at their convention.

Now they hunger to position their man in the center and to let the anti-Bush vote float them into the White House; it may be too late for such sage policy. From now on it will be 'damage control' all the way. To say nothing of other Democratic strategic errors and consequent Swiftie beaching of Kerry, Bush-hate has been the essence of leftist opposition for too long. The reflexes of eight years of Clintonian spinnocracy are ingrained. Anti-Bush kneejerkage has displaced brain activity. The Bush-hate discourse is the only discourse. It was wrong to go to war in Iraq; yet Kerry voted for it. It was wrong to go to war 'without allies'; yet there were 60 members of the 'coalition of the willing'. We should have gotten the UN ok; yet UN votes are subject to the whims of tyrant regimes and their appeasers. Bush did not support the troops; yet Kerry voted against the \$87 billion. The war was badly run; yet it was won. The Peace planning was bad; yet there is now a sovereign Iraqi government recognized by the UN. There is chaos in Iraq; yet the great majority of Iraqis declare themselves better off now than before the war. I present these contrasts not in support of Bush's policy (which I support with enthusiasm) but as

a demonstration of my conviction that, whatever the true truth of the Iraqi situation and the War on Terror, there is just no political mileage in the Democratic Bush-hate 'anti-war' posture in 2004.

We are beyond clever political calculation. We are beyond manipulation of mass emotion by spin doctors. An asutra-like motivation, an influence obscure, devious, illogical, is piloting the Democrats.* To say nothing of true opinions or reasonable action on the world stage, they can't seem to attain a normal degree of pragmatic tactical cunning.

As pointed out, above, the margin of maneuver left to political parties by circumstances beyond human control, in an American presidential election, is not wide, so, while Kerry may win the election, whatever this margin might have afforded the Democrats seems to have been sacrificed to an asutra-like allegiance. In Etwane's first interview with Sajarano at Sershan Palace Sajarano attempts to drug him. When confronted by Etwane about this:

Sajarano only shook his head. He had totally lost his poise; he pounded his forehead as if to subdue his thoughts.

Etwane shook his shoulder. "What do you gain by drugging me? My friends would kill you!"

Sajarano mumbled, "I act as my inner soul dictates."

Sajarano, as Etwane later thinks:

seemed not a villain, but a figure of doom. Why could he not have expressed himself frankly? Why could they not have worked together?

The reason becomes clear: the asutra have purposes alien to any that Etwane might have.

In a play by Matthew Paris, *Young Communists of Antarctica*, the chief Young Communist, an idealist who has frozen a cadre of communists for revival in an era favorable to the establishment of the communist paradise, says: 'I dream of a world where the cheese is full of diamonds!' The dreams of the ever more radicalized Democratic Party are likewise phantasmagoric, a world cleansed of 'Western values' to make way for a perpetual 'love parade'.

The deepest aspect of this matter is suggested when, after Ifness separates him from his asutra mentor, Hozman

* This is not the only time Vance explores this sort of mind manipulation. Those familiar with *The Houses of Iszm* will recall the influence of the Thord: *Farr walked down the ramp, planted his foot on the ground. He was back on Earth. The impact seemed to jar an idea into his head. Of course, he thought, with a feeling of relief: the natural thing to do, the obvious man to see: R. Penche. [. . .] It was urgent. He must see Penche [. . .] he planned out his day. First, of course, Penche . . . Farr frowned, paused in the buckling of his sandals. What should he tell Penche? Come to think of it, why would Penche worry about his troubles? What could Penche do? [. . .] perhaps it might be a good idea to see Penche . . . No! said Farr stubbornly. He had made the decision; no irrational compulsion was going to make him change his mind!*

the slave-taker explains how he communicated with it:

"It is a condition impossible to describe. When I first discovered the creature I went crazy with revulsion — but only for a moment! It performed what I call a pleasure-trick, and I became flooded with joy. The dreary Balch swamp seemed to swim with delightful odors, and I was a man transformed."

Though now free of the revolting thing Hozman has been perverted; rather than cooperate with Ifness he hesitates, and eventually attempts treason. Ifness warns him:

"Never again will you carry the asutra which brought such bliss to your brain. You are now one with the rest of us [. . .]"

Here is the deep secret: nothing is sweeter than the sense of superiority. Allied with the asutra Hozman was a superman. He was no longer 'one with the rest of us'. But even now, without his asutra 'secret soul' Hozman cannot bear human solidarity, and plays the traitor. In the same manner the asutra-like mentors of the Hozman-like Bush-haters are instructed by their 'secret souls' in contempt for the 'red-neck', the 'capitalist', the 'Christian fundamentalist', the 'no-brain' Bush and his 'no-brain' electorate. What is such contempt of one man for another? It is the radical absence of justice, the enchantment which opens the door to horror. And yet — given the evidence of our astounded eyes, we are forced to admit — how sweet the effluvia of that *transcendental osmosis* by which the *diminished status* of some *augments the status* of others!*

The idea is made explicit in chapter 3 of *The Anome*:

Geacles worked on the principle that what was bad for others was good for himself and hoped to gain advantage of some unspecified sort by spying.

But where is any advantage to Geacles in Mur's discomfiture? Win or lose the 2004 election, the Bush-haters are prolonging a delectable dream. Their basic goal, which is existential, is being achieved; they are living in accord with their 'secret soul', tasting the sweet effluvia of the *transcendental osmosis*. This must be the 'advantage of some unspecified sort' that they are gaining. In all this, like Sarajano and Hozman, they lose themselves.

Equality and Generosity

Regarding the now regretted, in some quarters, Socialist paradise, there is a pointed comment in *The Brave Free Men*. Finnerack, made bitter by his ill use at Camp Three, seethes with vengeance. When Etwane reveals his plans for a post-Anome government for Shant, Finnerack protests :

* *Throy*, chapter 3, section 2.

"You overlook one matter: at large and living in Shant are the magnates who won their ease through the pain of others. Should not the concept of indemnification be codified into the new system?"

"This is more properly a matter for adjudication," said Etwane.

Finnerack warmed to his subject. "Further, why should some toil for a mouthful of bread while long-fingered sybarites partake of Forty-Five Dishes? The good things should be divided; we should start the new system on a basis of equality."

Mialambre responded: "Your sentiments are generous and do you credit. All I can say is that such drastic redistributions have previously been attempted, always to result in chaos, and cruel tyranny of one sort or another. This is the lesson of history, which we must now heed."

Mialambre's comment is an echo of the famous adage to the effect that non-leftist youth is as morally suspect as non-conservative age. This notion has always seemed dubious to me, and indeed, there is platonic tension in the passage; Mialambre may say so, but Finnerack is neither generous nor do his sentiments do him credit. When Etwane seeks to recruit Finnerack to help him defeat the Roguskhoi and shape the new Shant, he asks him if he has:

. . . the will to serve Shant?"

"Shant has done me nothing but harm," said Finnerack. "I must live for myself alone."

Etwane grew impatient. "Your bitterness is understandable, but should you not focus it more carefully? Working with me, you could help other victims. If you won't do this you become no better than Hillen [the Camp Three Commandant], and far worse than the ordinary people whom you despise so much. Who here in Maschein, for instance, knew of Camp Three? No one."

Finnerack shrugged

Later, when Finnerack agrees to participate in the government, he does so in these terms:

"I will join you and for this reason: the better to further my own ends."

"Before we go further, what are these ends?"

"You already must know. In Ğarwiy and elsewhere through Shant rich men live in palaces. They gained their wealth by robbing me, and others like me, of our lives. They must make restitution. It will cost them dear but pay they shall, before I die."

Etwane said in a voice without accent: "Your goals are understandable. For the present they must be put aside, lest they interfere with larger matters."

"The Roguskhoi are the imminent enemies," said Finnerack. "We shall drive them back to Palasedra, and then wreak an equal justice upon the magnates."

"I promise nothing so wide as this," said Etwane. "Fair restitution, yes. Cessation of abuses, yes. Revenge — no."

"The past cannot be erased," said Finnerack woodenly.

Mialambre's comment is, therefore, either a misreading of Finnerack or an attempt to dampen Finnerack's passions and warp them into a positive form. In the latter case I judge Mialambre's tactic risky; by redefining revenge as generosity the latter is not transformed, even to a degree; it is afforded a disguise. The only transformation Finnerack's character and thinking undergoes from this point until his death is an opening up in exultation at the freedom of flight, a fulfillment of his youthful yearning for movement and sensation. Finnerack remains bitter and vindictive.

The more I look into the matter, the more my view of leftism and leftists becomes negative. General de Gaulle was extremely severe in this regard: 'Leftists [. . .] are demagogues who work with the opinions of the moment. When leftists are good—or not too bad, because they are never good—it's because they perceive the limits of their demagoguery; that's when they consider themselves 'statesmen'. [. . .] They are utopists, out-of-sync, without fixed ideas [. . .], irresponsible. To them society is always guilty; the incompetents and competents, the lazy and industrious are equal. [. . .] Through congenital demagoguery they waste state resources with no real benefit to anyone.' And that is the least of it, but de Gaulle's anti-leftism was not a 'rightist' reaction, because he was equally critical of them: they 'rarely see beyond the immediate'. They say: 'No disorder! This is in everyone's interests that we may enrich ourselves with work and saving'. Opportunist 'they can very well vote on the left, depending on the mood or the impression of the moment'.* These views support the contention that there is not a 'political spectrum' divided into a 'right' and 'left' at the respective extremes of which are 'fascism' and 'communism', but a central point or zone of what can best be termed 'normality' from which radiate outward, or 'leftward in all directions', zones of ever more unrealistic positions until, at the edge of 'beyond', they culminate in absolutes of inanity, incontinence and horror. Leftism is, above all, anti-reality. But reality imposes itself, more or less, on every mind. Therefore each aspect of leftism is eager to hide in a disguise such as Mialambre offers Finnerack. The examples are endless; 'Abortion' or legalized murder of infants, as well as a protean panoply of grotesque eroticisms, is covered by 'liberty'; income redistributions, or theft, is covered by 'fraternity'. A striking example of leftist 'double think' is the recent

tactic to rehabilitate Communism with the claim that it was 'perverted' but remains 'essentially good', above all it remains better than 'selfish' 'capitalism'. This sort of involute demagoguery degrades society but its ultimate effect is to diminish the very ideals supposedly being promoted. Vance offers a bitter-sweet commentary on this problem at the end of chapter 1 of *The Anome*. His mother explains to Mur that:

The Faceless Man merely enforces the laws of the folk of Shant: those they have made for themselves."

"I suppose this is so," said Mur. "Still, if I were the Faceless Man, I would abolish fear and hardship, and you would never work at the tannery."

Eathre stroked his head. "Yes, dear Mur, I know. You would force men to be kind and good and cause a great disaster. Go to sleep now; the world will be much the same tomorrow."

In a similar spirit Mialambre-Octagon makes the following statement:

If the study of human interactions could become a science, I suspect that an inviolate axiom might be discovered to this effect: Every social disposition creates a disparity of advantages. Further: Every innovation designed to correct the disparities, no matter how altruistic in concept, works only to create a new and different set of disparities.

Inequality is fundamental. No matter what you do, it will remain. While this is certainly true, Mialambre's attitude would seem too pessimistic; some sets of disparities must be more palatable than others. Mialambre is 'astute, exacting, a person relating each fact of existence to every other fact by a system based on the ethos of Wale'. But if this ethos means radical acceptance of local truth, and thus indifference to flagrant injustice, Mialambre would not have accepted his mission to 'range Shant and correct the worst flaws: the Camp Threes, the Temple Bashons, the indenture brokers, the indenture system itself'. Mialambre comments:

Critical minds will discover flaws in the system. Justice, a human invention, is as protean as the race itself, and varies from canton to canton; the traveler must be wary lest he contravene some unfamiliar local ordinance. I cite those unfortunate wayfarers through Canton Haviosq who, when passing a Yasu Krish shrine, have neglected the sign of sky, stomach and soil, to their dismay; likewise the virgins careless enough to enter Canton Shalloran without certificates. The indenture system has shortcomings; the notorious vices of Canton Çlirris are inherently wrong.

Any man who can call something 'inherently wrong' is no radical relativist.

* *De Gaulle Mon Père*, Plon 2004, volume 2, chapter 3. Translation by PWR.

The Free Will of the Joyful Individual

In *The Brave Free Men* there is a useful statement of the traditional view of Culture:

Dystar said: "Without my torc I would be mad with joy."

Mialambre seemed astounded both by the concept and by Dystar's response. "How can this be? The torc is your representation, the signal of your responsibility to society."

"I recognize no such responsibility," said Dystar. "Responsibility is the debt of people who take. I do not take, I give. Thereafter my responsibility is gone."

"Not so," exclaimed Mialambre. "This is an egotistical fallacy! Every man alive owes a vast debt to millions — to the folk around him who provide a human ambience, to the dead heroes who gave him his thoughts, his language, his music; to the technists who built the space-ships which brought him to Durdane. The past is a precious tapestry; each man is a new thread in the continuing weave; a thread by itself is without meaning or worth."

Dystar gave generous acquiescence. "What you say is truth. I am at fault. Nonetheless, my torc is unwelcome; it coerces me to the life I would prefer to live by my own free will."

This statement is 'platonian' which means that it is to be understood not in itself but in the dynamics of dialogue. 'Culture' is neither 'a tapestry' on the one hand, nor 'free will' on the other. It is a 'continuing weave' but the continuity is generated not by the persistence, or repetition, of an established pattern. What comes after necessarily has reference to what has come before, but this, including any repetitions or logical processions, occurs through the free will of the joyful individual. This is the fundamental source of Western dynamism, and its obverse explains the comparative rigid immobility of all other cultures, or societies. The dynamism emerging today in the East results from globalization, or the acceptance of Western influence. To the extent that societies become 'Westernized' they become dynamic. The Meiji era in Japan is a notable example. In the 19th century, as a matter of deliberate policy, Japan took on certain Western ways, and quickly became one of the foremost industrial powers. These Western elements have become permanent parts of Japanese society and guarantee its continued dynamism. Japan however remains notable for its absence of 'creativity'. This is not to say that the Japanese people are not creative. There are, for example, many great Japanese artists in all areas. Still, it is notorious that the Japanese are best at development and perfection. They harness their traditional capacity for discipline, a remnant of the old slave culture, as well as their native ingenuity liberated by the Meiji reform, to out-perform the West. Japan is not

yet fully Westernized. Japanese society continues to be infected with a certain ant-like mentality which absorbs people's energies in conformity and dampens the free will of joyful individuals. In recent decades other Asian societies have followed Japan's Westernizing example, with predictable results.

'Western culture' is not indigenous to a place. It is not a 'society'. 'Western culture' includes all kinds of societies in all kinds of places and times, so that the term 'Western culture' is misleading. In fact it is a stage in the maturing process of humanity, a turn of mind, a disposition of the heart, an attitude wise and profound, but fundamentally welcoming and celebratory of the individual person because it is conscious of the fundamental situation of human liberty. The most notable exemplars of this attitude are Socrates and Jesus. A comparison of these two with exemplars of other cultures, Confucius, Mohammed or Chaka, tell the tale. Confucius is not a philosopher, or searcher for truth, in the Western manner, but a sage paterfamilias preaching meekness. His precepts are meant to insure order and stability. The hidden price for these bourgeois advantages is the legitimization of slavery or suppression of what the West regards as legitimate individual aspirations. Socrates, by contrast, provides no precepts; he awakens minds.

Societies, or cultures, are set in a pattern by circumstances, often cataclysmic, and heroic individuals. But if they lack, or if they lose, the 'Western' attitude, they stagnate. Communism stifled human freedom across half the Western world and the result was immobility. Under pressure from 'the West', Communism was broken and dynamism, life, has returned. Ancient Egypt and China are notable examples of immobility. These societies, despite persistence for thousands of years, exhibit a minimum of evolution. New insights and forms do not arise. With regard to artistic forms, for example, Ming and Tang art for all their differences are fundamentally similar, just as 18th Dynasty art is fundamentally similar to 5th Dynasty art. Even non-experts can see that 18th and 5th Dynasties arts are 'Egyptian'; only the connoisseur can distinguish between them, and yet they are centuries, or even millennia, apart. If the 'West' were like these societies Western art would still resemble the Greek 'archaic' style. With the emergence of the 'Western' spirit in the 5th century BC the 'classical' style developed in Greece, and under the Romans progressed further into the 'realist' manner. With the collapse of Rome, and consequent eclipse of the 'Western spirit', Western art descended into primitivism. After several centuries of stagnation, where personal

initiative did not flourish, Christianity finally rescued the West from its immobilism, restored its spirit and liberated again the creative power of individuals. As a result, with artists like Duccio and Cimabue showing the way, the 'West', including societies from Spain to Germany, was soon in the midst of the High Renaissance. These cultural phenomena were not restricted to Mediterranean areas where they originated, but took root wherever their spirit was embraced, and fell away wherever it was rejected—notably in Greece and Palestine themselves where the stifling influence of Islam effectively snuffed out the free will of the joyful individual.

Islamic culture provides notable counter demonstration. From Morocco to Iran societies thrust into the Islamic mode by the prophet's crusading jihadi armies of conquest are still, thirteen centuries later, living as they did in the dark age they helped promote. Nothing has changed. The free will of the joyful individual is not allowed to emerge.* Mohammed, a brigand chief, created a typically vancian religion. It serves not to liberate individuals but to generate loyalty among thieves, to establish solidarity among brutes, to justify murder, theft, enslavement, polygamy. The Chilites function according to exactly the same fundamental dynamic as Islam, even if Chilitism does not begin with brigandage but with a typically masculine frustration:

. . . the Great System was initiated by Hakcil, who was prompted to the use of galga by an overbearing and malodorous spouse.

Chilite doctrine—like the social structures emanating from the Sharia—serves as an escape from mature confrontation with reality; in this case the particularly masculine tension between desire to use women as objects and frustration of this desire by the inconvenient fact of female personhood. The Chilites institutionalize their contempt for women through their misogynist reduction to the status of disgusting and disreputable beasts, to be used as slaves. Their eroticism is sated, and thus defused, with a special drug. As with Islam this boils down to nastiness cloaked in moral superiority and flattering fictions:

At the Sixth Order the Chilite is in a state of unconscious exaltation, and sublime Galexis Achiliadnid deals directly with the soul.

Islam not only reduces women to slavery, it places all non-muslims in a second or 'dhimmi' class. This eases the

ways to murder of infidels. Meanwhile the fanatic jihadi soldier is egged on with infantile Galexis-like promises of a houri-filled paradise. Women are reduced to the status of property, and eroticism itself is instrumentalized in favor of their repression.

Islamic practices, of course, are characterized by notable regional variation, because of the absence of a central authority and wide geographic distribution. This sometimes blurs the brigandish cast of the original doctrines. In some areas, for example, ancient matriarchical customs are still influential, resulting not in any advantage for women but in forced and incestuous marriages dictated by property interests. Islam today is a somewhat vague term covering a variety of more or less distasteful practices though, like any society, they have their virtues—most of which are masculine in character. Still, all share a common referent; the prophet Mohammed, a man who spent his life in the successful pursuit of pillage and erotic indulgence.

As a coda to above I will add this: I am fully aware that it will be objected that I am not only being provocative but that opposing Islam to the West in this way makes me as bad as the Islamists. I regard this objection as pusillanimous and unrealistic. If you forget who you are you are half-way down the path to non-existence. If you can't understand who your enemy is, you have gone the other half. Islam and the pan-Arabism that festers behind it is an ancient force, an ancient foe of the West. We owe our freedom from Muslim tyranny to Charles Martel and Andrea Doria, just as we owe our freedom from Hitler's tyranny to Churchill, and from Stalin's tyranny to American Presidents from Truman to Reagan, the latter in particular. Today's Islamism could fairly be called a 'new fascism' if it were not already an old fascism; today's Arab leaders are the direct heirs to Hitler's Arab allies. Islam, thankfully crippled and impoverished by its own immobilism, and despite the ever more rosy picture its apologists paint of it, is fundamentally aggressive, expansionist, intolerant, repressive, anti-woman, anti-Semitic, murderous and even genocidal. Leftist lust to ally itself to this tyrannical force would be ironic if it were not so in character. Like Hitlerism in Germany, and even if the jihadis, like the brown-shirts, remain a small group, Islamism is supported by too many folks on the so-called 'Arab street'. It is incumbent upon the good muslims, particularly those living in the Western countries, to clarify their allegiances. The West, in its unique open-mindedness, is listening. In France conferences with Arab scholars and thinkers are constantly organized. Does such debate go

* The free will of the joyful individual is not 'individualism'. Individualism is an extreme form, a hypertrophied development, of Western respect for persons. The 'eccentric' is a typically English phenomenon, the consequence, to some degree the abuse, of the exceptional English insistence on personal liberty.

on in Iran and Egypt? Muslims who are not our enemies will continue, in the Western spirit, to be welcomed in the West—an attitude conspicuously absent anywhere in the Islamic world where Western pressure fails to enforce a different attitude. But if they are enemies, and we fail to throw them out or otherwise deal with them, the consequences are predictable.

As soon as the battle of France went wrong no less a humanist than Churchill wrote, in an official note of May 18, 1940: 'Everything must be done to carry out the recommendations for the control of aliens put forward by the Committee [. . .] Action should also be taken against Communists and Fascists and a very considerable number of them should be put in protective or preventive internment, including the leaders. These measures must, of course, be brought before the Cabinet before action.'*

Barbarian Culture

The Arabs of Mohammed's time were vancian 'barbarians'. They roamed the open spaces in tribes and 'fetish' groups. They slept in tents. They raided and slaved. In Caraz Etwane and Ifness fall in with the Kash Blue-worms:

The evening passed without bloodshed. Ifness and Etwane sat to the side watching the burly figures lurch back and forth across the firelight. Etwane tried to define the way in which these roaring celebrants differed from the general population of Shant . . . Intensity, gusto, a focus of every faculty upon the immediate instant — such qualities characterized the folk of Caraz. Trivial acts induced exaggerated reactions. Laughter racked the ribs; rage came fierce and sudden; woe was so intense as to be intolerable. Upon every aspect of existence the clansmen fixed a keen and minute perception, allowing nothing to go unnoticed. Such raptures and transports of emotion left little time for meditation, Etwane mused. How could a Blue-worm Hulka become a musician when he suffered a congenital lack of patience? Wild dancing around the camp-fire, melées and murders — this was more the barbarian style. . .

In the slave ship with the Alula, Vance provides an even deeper insight into the barbarian ethos in a Christic episode. The Alula, initially brave and resolute, have become demoralized and listless. One night Etwane awakes with three barbarians hovering above him with a noose. Why do they want to kill him? Karazan explains:

"There is no particular reason. They want to kill someone and have selected you. It is a game of sorts."

Etwane, thinking into the situation, can go no farther than the following explanation, which is indeed the only final one:

They would play with him, try to break his nerve. Why? No reason. A game, the malicious sport of a barbarian tribe.

Again, the sweet effluvia of the transcendental osmosis, but this time the 'diminished status' is death by murder. To save himself Etwane takes drastic steps, holding Alula hostage without food or water against the deaths of the three thugs.

Why should you deny me water? I took no part in the baiting."

"You did nothing to control the three who did. Starve and thirst in their company — until they are dead."

"This is not fair! You do not reckon with our customs."

"To the contrary. It is now I who do the baiting. When Fairo the Handsome, Çanim Thornbranch and Black Hulanik are dead, you shall drink."

Such a procedure is unthinkable in civilized society. But Etwane is trapped in barbarism. He must operate according to its rules, or die. The Alula chief now awakens to the tragic character of the situation:

Karazan intoned: "It is an ill thing which has occurred."

"You might have stopped it," said Etwane. "You chose to do nothing."

Barbarian acceptance of malice! The door has been left open to horror. But now great-souled Karazan, in a Christic act of self-sacrificing expiation for the sins of other, rouses himself from torpor and takes a heroic step toward civilization. Pretending to attack Etwane, he allows himself to be killed.

[Etwane] stood looking down at the corpse, wondering what Karazan had intended, for Karazan carried no weapon. He had known Karazan as a large-souled man; simple, direct and benevolent. Karazan deserved better than his cramped despairing fate. He looked along the silent white faces. "The responsibility is yours. You tolerated malice and now you have lost your great leader."

The last chapter of the episode now plays out:

. . . there was slashing and hacking and the doing of grisly deeds; and in a moment all was finished. On the deck Fairo, Çanim Thornbranch, Black Hulanik wallowed in their own blood, and two other men as well.

Mindless hate produces pointless death. This is the wage of the primitive mentality. In the contemporary context it is celebrated as the spirit of 'rock 'n roll'; the life of impulse and instinct, perhaps even of intuition. Given the constantly growing preference for this approach many wonder if it is not the better way. The following passage may be Vance's comment on this question; when Gulshe and Srenka, the Sorukh barbarians, guide Ifness across the Plain of Blue Flowers, Ifness inquires the location of the Rogushkoi bones and receives this answer:

* *The Second World War*, Houghton Mifflin, volume 2, page 55.

"Not far distant: beyond the ridge. Can you not sense the presence of so much death?"

Ifness responded in a measured voice: "An intellect in full control of itself unfortunately must sacrifice that receptivity which distinguishes the primitive mentality. This is an evolutionary step I have, on the whole, been happy to make."

As a coda to this section, I will add that, having just reread *The Asutra*, I serendipitously drove past a large gypsy camp. All the vancian elements were there; the 'wagons', in this case camping cars, drawn up in a group; the older women, hardworking and stout, wearing skirts, and even sporting more facial hair than would be tolerated among non-barbarians; the young girls, in pants or colorful garments, 'swaggering about'. The little children, naked from the waist down, stand in the dust and mud with fingers up their noses, or scamper around without restraint. The men loaf in groups.

After fifteen years in the French provinces I have come to know the gypsies pretty well. They have their charms but, it's true what they say: with them to steal is to breathe. On the other hand, when they don't have theft, murder and fraud on their minds, they are friendly and generous with whatever they have. Spending time with gypsies, among the things that struck me most was the depth of their illiteracy. Some can read and count a bit, but those who cannot are not even capable of drawing a small straight line with a pencil, such as would be necessary to write an 'l' or an 'i'. Also, despite their profound lack of sophistication they are highly conscious of the advantages of their footloose out-door life style. They relish their freedom more than I would have thought, given that with their illiteracy and bad habits, they are essentially condemned to it. On the down side they are dangerously interbred, and almost no family is without its mutes. The town of Chinon in western central France has an active policy of gypsy sedentarization through state subsidy. The effect, so far, seems to be much like the effect of the reservation on the American Indian.



End Note

David Reitsema, Editor, Cosmopolis

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