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DAVID REITSEMA, MIKE SCHILLING, JOHN A. SCHWAB, STEVE SHERMAN, TIM STRETTON, HANS VAN DER VEEKE (the Legendary Locator), and BOB LUCKIN himself at his old CRV stand sending PAUL RHOADS back to InDesign, again and again and again, with a seemingly endless series of amazing finds.

That's all, folks.

VIE NEWS

Bob Luckin writes:

All,

I recently received my EQ volumes, each in their individual packages. The books were well packed, arrived in fine condition, and are certainly up to the physical standards of the main sets.

I'd like to express my thanks to everyone involved in producing the volumes; I know that this took some extra dedication due to the drop off in interest on the part of quite a few volunteers once the main waves were complete. Without their efforts I might never have read Jack's EQ stories, let alone have my own copy of them.

I must include the printers, packers and shippers. I'm not sure who ended up doing the packing and shipping from Milan, but since Bob Lacovara's address was on the packages I assume he was at least involved in transshipping to the US subscribers once the books made it across the pond. . .

I must also include Jack, for writing the stories in the first place !

I'd be grateful if you would be kind enough to forward my thanks on to the appropriate people. Cheers, Bob (Luckin)

Bob is right to think of STEFANIA ZACCO and SR. BIFFI, who handled the Milan end of the EQ volume alone, and very well.

And BOB LACOVARA is again to be specially thanked for his indefatigable transshipments of all non-European volumes — with the help of SUAN YONG and his VIE data base. Please remember that all the uncounted hours these men have contributed to bringing you your EQ volume are unpaid.

As to those who made the final push, against all odds, to complete EQ volume work, this group of old hands deserve special thank-yous from all. They include: DONNA ADAMS, MARK ADAMS, MICHEL BAZIN, MARK BRADFORD, RICHARD CHANDLER, DEBORAH COHEN, CHRISTIAN J. CORLEY, MIKE DENNISON, ANDREW EDLIN, ROB FRIEFELD, MARCEL VAN GENDEREN, BRIAN GHARST, TONY GRAHAM, JOEL HEDLUND, CHARLES KING, ROBERT MELSON,



EDITION ANDREAS IRLE

The three ANDREAS IRLE *Lyonesse* paperbacks have been delivered to their subscribers. These are facsimiles of the VIE volumes except for the covers and the front matter. These, however, use Amiante. The 2 VIE maps, plus the dynastic tree, are not endpapers but two-page spreads after the half-title. Unlike the VIE volumes all three are included in each of the books. The front covers, like the Readers volumes, use the Lyonesse 'lakit'. The back covers feature a textual extract. VIE Master Composer JOEL ANDERSEN did this work. Andreas was also aided by ROB FRIEFELD and (no surprise when it comes to *Lyonesse*!) STEVE SHERMAN. There is a page of VIE work credits, plus a special section of EDITION ANDREAS IRLE acknowledgements, both between the maps and the title page. The volumes are sturdy

and handsome, in that same EDITION ANDREAS IRLE style which inspired the VIE.

See the following page for further images of these new books, which we hope are only the first in an unending series which will help keep all of Vance's work in print — a basic VIE goal.

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A VISIT WITH THE VANCES

(This account was written in 1995, when my wife and I went to California for our honeymoon. We visited friends in Los Angeles, and drove up the coast. . .)

Before going to San Francisco I had written to the Vances at least once to let them know the dates, and that we would be staying with my cousin Hester in Berkeley. When Genevieve and I got to Hester's it turned out Jack had called several times, and we were all invited to dinner. Hester didn't know what to make of Jack; she even seemed a little suspicious. I was gratified by the attention and returned the call as soon as possible. Norma answered and we spoke briefly; she passed the phone to Jack and his first words, in a tone of idyl curiosity were; 'Well . . . what have you got to say for yourself?'"*

He asked me how long I would be in San Francisco, was displeased to learn it would be a short visit on account of all there was to do, and began advising me what I should see, and planning to take me to several places outside town. At last we arranged for dinner the next day; he said to come around six, but then said to come earlier, say 4:30 or 5, but then decided that we should come any time after three.

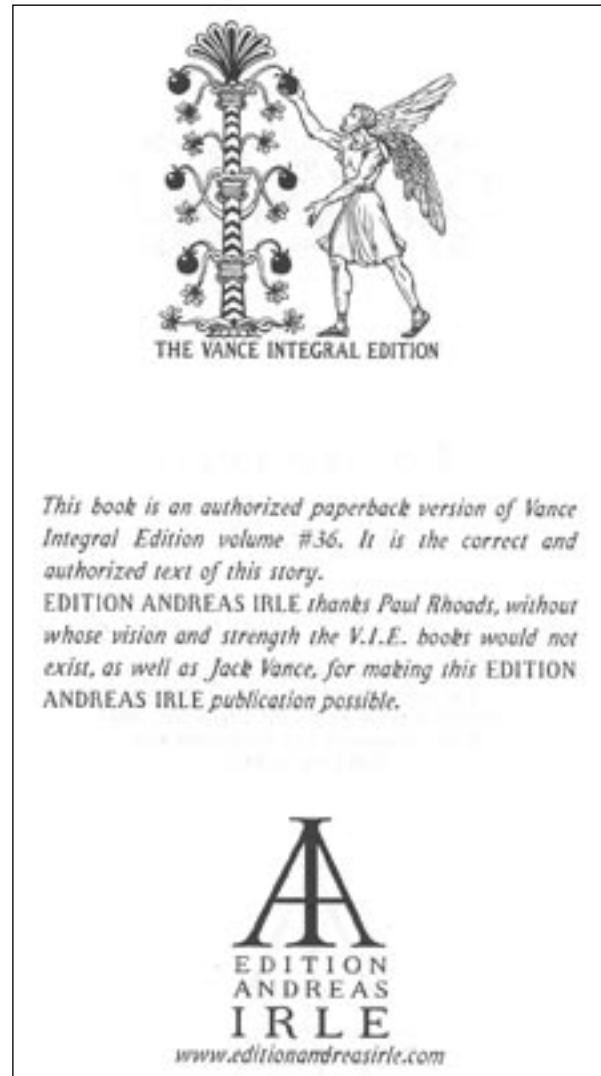
The next day Genevieve and I showed up at three. Jack had given exact directions which, carefully followed, took us though a dauntingly complicated labyrinth of streets, highways and roads. Finally we wound up a steep drive perched in defile between precipitous and friable slopes covered with eucalyptus trees. The Vance house, at the end of a precarious driveway clinging to the flank of a hill, presents a blank facade obscured by eucalyptus, an irregular wall of wooden slats, stained dark brown, which seems dug into the hill to the left, and to the right is perched out into leafy spaces on slender concrete pillars. An enormous old Lincoln was parked in the driveway.

I knocked on an unprepossessing door and a voice called out to come in. We entered a long, narrow flight of stairs, and at the top we found ourselves in a large space, limited on one side by a wall of glass, with a deck beyond, projecting out over leafy spaces with views of the narrow tree-choked valley; the most notable features were a few giant eucalyptuses dominating the rest, swaying ponderously in a wind (still fueling several majors fires up and down the coast†) like stalks of hyper-atrophied grass.

We met Norma, their son John—busy at carpentry—and John's new wife, Tammy, busy with house work. Norma is smiling, bustling and tautly tubby. Tammy is very thin, blond, very polite and discreet. Jack was sitting with his back to us, in a dining alcove by the kitchen which terminates the space in one of its extensions. I did not approach him; in any case we were talking with Norma, and John who explained his carpentry project—redoing book shelves and making a display case—the books themselves were in dozens of

* When my father (George Rhoads) visited the Vances in 2003 or so, he was greeted at the door by Norma, who called out: "Jack; George is here!" Jack yelled back from his office; "Did you check him for concealed weapons?" See COSMOPOLIS 61 for Charles Platt's account of another such greeting.

† A serious fire had broken out in Santa Monica while we were there; we had had to leap into our car and escape an advancing tower of black smoke.



boxes, completely filling a part of the place. There were framed cover illustrations at the head of the stairs. I took an interest in these, and the resultant conversation provoked the unexpectedly strange experience of hearing names I know so well—'Suldrun' or 'Rhalto'—coming from the mouths of strangers, names I had never heard spoken in 20 years of intimate familiarity, except by two other people.* Something surprising quickly became clear, confirmed in later conversations with Jack: generally speaking I am more familiar with the Vance oeuvre than anyone 'chez Vance'. Having read everything again and again, having the stories fresh in my mind, it is, after all, not amazing that my memories should be more complete and accurate.†

At last Jack ponderously advanced. He boasts a 'paunch of noble proportions' and moves without assurance. His face, which is striking at first sight for its weather-beaten aspect, used an engaging and benign expression.

Norma said; "Jack; Paul is right there in front of you."

Jack responded peevishly; "I can see him, Norma!" but instead of shaking hands he did something totally

* My father, and John Foley—head of the VIE composition team.

† When the VIE project began, and I met dozens of people as familiar as myself with Vance's work, there was a delightful sensation of a shared culture which quickly wore down the novelty and isolation of my until-then private vancian culture. As for Jack's memories of his work, it turns out to be keen and complete in some points, and much less so in others; hardly surprising given the quantity of it and his preference to concentrate on present work.

unexpected; he reached out with his left and patted my belly in a companionable way, and offered me something to drink. There followed a colloquy about where the drinking party should install itself (porch? kitchen table? dining room?). This was carried out in peevish exchanges. Jack used an attitude of bored annoyance, while Norma seemed a long-suffering and nervous caretaker of an unreasonable child.

In the first instants of our visit these four strangers had revealed themselves as extremely friendly, welcoming and generous, but I could see that 'chez Vance', as Jack had called his house while giving me directions, the good would have to be taken with the bad.

At last we were seated around the table in the alcove.



Here were more windows giving upon the shaggy views of eucalyptus. When I commented upon them, Jack bruskiy wished them all cut down, as if they were over-grown weeds. The alcove is paneled in some exotic wood. Tower-like, it rises two stories, and in the space hangs a wrought iron fixture of six green lamps. A balcony with a wrought iron rail affords a glimpse into a room above, painted blue.

This all sounds quite vancian, but the actual impact is not vancian at all. It is a curious effect; described in words the house is like something out of one of Jack's stories, a veritable catalogue of vancian decorative notions. The dining-room, for example, has one wall of river stone, rustically built, with a fire place. Opposite is a sumptuous bar, with tight ranks of bottles on shelves in front of a mirror, with colored lights above and a fancy beer dispenser. To one side hangs a grotesque mask made in ceramic. The wooden ceiling was carved in Kashmere by a wood carver Jack met while living there for three months in a house boat. The table is massive. A large case against the back wall displays hundreds of crystal objects. The opposite wall is made of many glazed doors of small panes, with a clerestory of stained glass, purple and green. Hanging outside, a tavern sign; *The Laughing Sun and the Crying Moon*.^{*} Per the description we should feel like we are robbing Pergolo, or patronizing the inn of Blue Lamps, but in actual experience, these elements adds up to no more than a cramped though quite pleasant dining room. The vivid atmosphere of vancian poetry is absent.

The actual effect, though wholly agreeable, having so little in common with the atmosphere of the stories, I only slowly

^{*} An inadequate glimpse of this room is afforded by a photo in *Cosmopolis #1*, on page 2.

realized how surrounded I was by vancian things. Jack and John built the house over a period of forty years.*

One of the first things Jack said to me was how much he enjoys my letters, that they are the favorites of all the letters he receives, and he apologized for responding so seldom. This was gratifying to hear, but especially so because of the intense nature of my feeling about Jack's work. His stories are a consolation, even a remedy for me, not only for the ills of life in general, but—it seems to me—in particular for the specific malaise of someone like myself in the kind of world in which we live. Being an over-heated sort of person, I could not restrain myself from communicating with Jack, and some of my letters must have been fairly maudlin. But he responded, always warmly, though briefly and rarely, and though I worried I might be a pest, his long-standing invitation to visit was always renewed.

Once installed in the dining alcove we had to be served. This, again, was complicated. Genevieve had tomato juice. I had a beer and Jack a more elaborate drink, made by John at the bar, while Jack repeated the injunction that it should contain something besides water. Our presence was an excuse for some legitimate drinking but an effort was made to contain the situation. The bustle and bickering attending all this was uncongenial to conversation, but Genevieve, oblivious to things which have such strong effects upon me, launched in and announced to Jack, in her strange English, that his books are my "bible". Jack responded in his mild voice that he is modest about his work; he is "just like anyone else", but "has a knack for the thing". I said something about how I knew his work so well that, though I had only just met him, I felt familiar with at least some aspect of his inner self, and that artists can't help but reveal themselves. Jack smiled and said; "But that's the name of the game, isn't it?"

Jack wondered where Hester and Ignacio were—I explained they would come later. Norma began to prepare dinner with Tammy's help. There were various things going on, and coherent conversation was not easy. Genevieve seemed ill at ease and interrupted with her usual inapropos comments born of inattentiveness, failure to understand English properly, and indifference to her husband's sensitivities! And Jack is both dreamy, and one of these people who at times has trouble in any role but source-of-conversation. In this confusion and difficulty, I found myself in the more orderly and congenial situation of getting a tour of the house from John. Jack chatted with Genevieve and played the banjo. He did the latter with a modest skill, singing a folk song about a train wreck with relish. I dutifully applauded his performance but he accused me of insincerity, and teased me. This was more than I was prepared for; in a strange gesture of self defence

* I know another such house, built by Aaron Kurzen, my painting professor, over a similar period. Procuring an army-surplus quanset hut, Aaron perched it on 6 foot walls to create a high space, which he traversed by a two story rectangular structure, creating two halls, with a lower middle section below a loft, all finished rustically (like much of the Vance house) in raw wood. Another such house is that of Brony Lefnekowski, a famous house-builder of Martha's Vineyard, who, like my painting teacher, was also a student of Hans Hoffman. Brony made his house from an abandoned wooden water tank, which he turned up-side down to create a three story tower, and added a wedged shaped wing for the kitchen and dining room. Described, these houses seem interesting, if perhaps less exotic, but both, as experienced, are drenched with a unitary and almost vancian atmosphere, which the Vance house, for all its own charm and rustic comforts, fails to have.

I offered to play the piano for *him*, but he said no, I would “probably play some religious music”.

John explained the interesting evolution of the house, but also, in the accommodating role of guide-to-Vance-fan, showed me photos of his father in younger days. Impossible to recognize the sympathetic but almost ravaged face of today in the somewhat inscrutable and sober face of the past. John hinted at hard times Jack had known as a youth, and showed me an unclear photo of Norma as a young woman, assuring me, to make up for the quality of the photo, that she had been very beautiful.* I alluded to the bickering—which made me very uncomfortable; John was sympathetic.†

Thinking about the photos and studying Jack’s face, I was finally able to make sense of it—though again, like the house, it was a matter whose clarification required translation into language; here is the vancian face we meet in his books: the ‘pelt’ of black hair, the ‘long sensitive nose’, the ‘wide mouth drooping at the corners’ with ‘cheeks slanting down to a small, neat chin’. And yet Jack, and his face, remind me neither of Gersen, nor Cugel. If anything he impressed me as a Rundel Detteras, but the bluntness, the heartiness, the expansiveness is soon discovered to be a glaze only, a wash of color, a would-be style, a wish. On the one hand Jack is sweet natured and sensitive, to an almost painful degree. On the other he is introverted, retreating into silence or becoming unexpectedly truculent, a truculence, when Norma is not its object, usually blunted or maneuvered around with humor. Just as often he is swept off by capricious imaginings erupting in jubilantly recounted scenarios.

There were many of these, inventions suddenly told, about the people present in person or subject of the conversation. One such flight concerned Robert Palmer, a famous rock star (unknown to me) and Vance fan, an Englishman who lives on lake Como. Jack was discussing Robert’s music, then reported a speech—which at first seemed an actual account but, as it became clear, was an improvised story—where he explained to Robert that he did not like his music, and advised him to start singing like a jazz singer of the 20s, which Robert did, and as a result went quickly from millionaire to pauper. These scenarios usually wound up at some such punch-line. They are a glimpse, I think, of Jack ‘at work’, of his faculty of invention and delight in narration.

John hinted that his father had been an extremely gifted boy, for whom the backward rural surroundings in which he grown up had been painful—indeed, the theme of the sensitive, intelligent child growing up among surroundings which do not correspond to their elaborate and gorgeous hopes and dreams is a major vancian theme. John also said that Norma claims Howard Alan Treesong is Jack’s alter ego.

One of the first things we talked about—thanks to Genevieve, since I never would have brought it up—was the new book, *Night Lamp*. But Jack was happy to talk about it, and even more so to mention he was well along with another

* In later visits I saw other photos; Norma is quite handsome even today, but her youthful beauty was extreme.

† It has been suggested that their son is the reason there has been no divorce. Knowing the Vances better today, and though in no position to speculate upon such questions, I tend to discount this thesis. The Vance couple, whatever its qualities, seems to have profound if in habitual bonds.

book, which he felt was his best. The title is *Ports of Call*, which he is also pleased with. In a far-away voice he recounted how it involves a ship which goes from port to port.*

Later he was discussing the evolutionary precedents of homo-sapiens, according to a book he was reading (in fact listening to on tape, because it turns out he is almost totally blind and walks into walls if not guided) and his own theory about the Neanderthals, when John broke in teasingly to warn me that his father was a fountain of information, but with all the made up words in his books I had better be careful what I believed. So I mentioned how I had long thought those words were invented, until, but by bit, I had come across many of them, and that I knew of no writer who used so extensive a vocabulary. Jack smiled though all this, and claimed that, indeed, he did not make up too many words. I mentioned ‘nuncupatory’, but before I could make my point Jack said he had invented that one, to which I pointed out that it existed, and is to be found in the OED though its definition does not correspond exactly. We then settled on the vancian meaning (irrelevant).†

Jack spoke of his travels, which have been extensive, including a three year trip around the world. I asked if he had been in Triest, which he describes so convincingly in *Ecce and Old Earth*. He said no, but that it must be something like how he describes it.‡ I asked about Rolingshaven and Maastricht; again, he had never visited them but stressed they must be more or less as he describes them.

He described his ceramics project with John, which seemed to have been quite an enterprise, and called for John bring up samples. John returned with a modest stack of unfired and bisque plates and bowls, made by some kind of stamping process for which they had made the forms but which, they explained, had never worked well. They had built a kiln but, according to John, it also had not worked properly, because of uneven heat. Jack was particularly proud of one of the plates, and pronounced the form perfect. He had me inspect it, and then held it himself, feeling its proportions between his hands, as if lost in an ecstatic dream. I got the impression from John’s hints that the venture had never gotten far. Jack enthusiastically described a computer program which permitted experimentation with glazes; one enters proportions of glaze ingredients and the computer shows the resultant color. Another dream!

Before dinner I was alone with Jack and John in the dining room. Jack said my voice reminded him of a certain friend, and asked John if I looked like him. John described me; my appearance is opposite the friend’s, who is short and stout. But Jack said that I seemed to be a good person, like this friend.

* He did not say ‘space ship’, and for several years I assumed it was a book about a boat, perhaps on an ocean of Big Planet. His description gave no hint that the story used a science fiction setting.

† In *Cosmopolis* 61 (page 10) Charles Platt recounts: *Jack was rather shocked when I informed him that ‘nuncupatory’ is in Webster’s Third New International Dictionary.* This occurred in 1981, 14 years previously.

‡ As a result I, who have also never been to Triest, tried to make the VIE frontispiece illustration for *Ecce and Old Earth* on the same basis, and in fact several people, who know nothing about Jack Vance, were able to identify the location correctly, thanks to Venetian style architecture with the dolomites in the background.

In the dining room there is a framed black and white photo of a sloop. Jack had bought it in the hope of taking a long cruise in the Pacific with John, but could never get enough money together to do more than maintain it, and the boat was eventually sold; another evanescent, half-realized wish. Jack said to John that, when he made his first million, he would buy him a boat. John, a marine engineer who designs scientific submarines, would like to go off to sea, but Tammy, a nurse in an infant intensive care unit, is dubious.

Jack said; "As you can tell, I am a romantic", and admired my going off to France to live in chateaus and so on. He was curious about the chateaus, and interested to learn there are so many. He quizzed me about the French aristocracy. He said Oakland was a good place to live, and much as he loved travel was glad to know it was there to come back to. He wondered if I planned to stay in France forever, and said that Oakland and France, and a few other places, are probably the best places to live. He was sad to learn about the unhappy state of French society. Clearly he is not left-leaning in his politics, and Norma even less so. At one point she railed against the Democrats.

The dinner with Hester and Ignacio came off well. Jack questioned Ignacio about his teaching,* but eventually dozed off and slept though much of the evening. Norma made a spectacularly delicious piece of pork, with a bowl of mashed potatoes in three colors; white, orange and green, the tints provided by the addition of other vegetables. This bowl of potatoes was the most 'vancian' object of the visit. Norma had been inspired by a picture in a magazine, but it had actually shown three different vegetables of the same texture; in Norma's dish the three colors all tasted the same, which vitiated the vancianness since, beyond the visual effect, they lacked the penetrating aspect of taste.

After dinner we made vague plans to get together again; I said I would call the next day. Jack wanted to take us to a town called Locke, a "ghost town" with a "saloon" he favored.

I called the following evening, and Jack made a date for the next day, at 10 A.M. Ill at ease, I said how gratified I was to meet him and get to know him, but that I didn't want to take up his precious time. He replied most touchingly that, in fact, he lives a lonely life with little intellectual stimulation; he sees few people, except occasionally some old friends who, he hinted, offer few new insights.

Genevieve was feeling under the weather and preferred staying at Hester's. Besides, she added, she couldn't understand English well enough to participate properly, and I should be alone with Jack. She added that she was exasperated by watching Norma who, with Tammy, went about their culinary preparations at a maddeningly slow pace. "I could have done the same thing in two minutes!" she complained, referring to an *hor d'œuvres* which had taken an hour to prepare. (Genevieve's nickname in her own family is 'the rocket'.)

So I went alone, and before long was being driven to Locke by Norma, in the enormous Lincoln, with Jack in the

back seat. John warned me about his mother's driving, and indeed it was a little precarious, but we got home in one piece. On the way, in spite of blindness, Jack explained the sights. Inspecting the map I was amused to notice that we were driving across what looked like a map of the Fens of 'Trullion'. Here was where Jack had grown up, along the "sloughs" and islands of the Sacramento river delta.† The grand trees of Trullion were usually lacking, but otherwise it was the Fens!

Jack had grown up near the town of Oakley. He talked about old sand mines he had explored as a child, before they had been boarded up, and described the pleasant feel of the cool sand underfoot. He recounted picnics in cemeteries with his school friends, and how once they had tried to scare a superstitious boy by having his brother dress in a sheet and run down the hill. But the brother had stumbled over the sheet and the effect was spoiled—a real-life event with a vancian twist.

I asked Jack about his early life. He told me about his wealthy grandfather, whose death seemed to have left his family unprotected and even homeless. The family was dispersed and Jack wandered around, working at this and that. Finally, during the war, he went into the merchant marine where he wrote his first book (*Mazirian the Magician*); a hard and unhappy time, as John had suggested.*

Talk of Trullion led to hussade. It seems that students at some university had requested exact rules. I said I thought the rules were fully detailed in the book; Jack said the only hard part would be the traditions, the denuding of the sheirl, the music and so on. I pointed out that each world had its own traditions, that they were flexible and could be depended upon to take care of themselves, to which Jack agreed. I mentioned that even if hussade turned out to be unplayable it could be convincingly portrayed cinematically, which led Jack and Norma to tell me how movie 'options' had been taken on various books but that nothing had ever come of it. Jack would like his books made into movies and thinks they would make good ones. We spoke of the movie success of Frank Herbert, and other writer friends of theirs who became rich. I said I had suspected to find them fabulously wealthy, and was surprised they were not. Norma insisted they were "comfortable". After describing the success and wealth of his writer friends, Jack added; "but they're dead and we're not!"

We arrived in Locke, a row of decaying frame houses perched along a dike and leaning against each other as if they were about to collapse. The main and only street is a narrow way flanked by wooden buildings, many in disrepair, all lacking new paint. The sidewalks are wooden, roofed over in a continuous porch. It was drizzling. Jack put his hand on my shoulder to be led. He was curious what I thought of the place, and it was indeed picturesque in a satisfyingly vancian way. There are Chinese signs everywhere and a

† Also featured in the Joe Bane books.

* Later I learned more about Jack's youth. I have recounted the best anecdotes elsewhere. Jack claims that his grandfather, his mother's father, owned much of Oakland, and belonged to fancy clubs. His mother married a ne'er-do-well who, after various unsuccessful ventures, including a farm in Mexico, disappeared. Mrs. Vance and her children were maneuvered, by her siblings, out of a nice apartment in San Francisco, and ended up in Oakley. Their situation seems to have occasionally been desperate.

* My cousin Hester grew up in Indiana. She has a degree in French literature and in 1995 was teaching school. She married the son of Cuban refugees, both architects; Ignacio had grown up in New York. He is a Petrarch specialist, a professor in Spanish literature at UC at Berkeley.

ubiquitous odor of steak.† Near the end of the street a door unexpectedly leads into the saloon. One enters a big dark room, quite high; the first thing I noticed was the ceiling, which was the strangest I'd have even seen. It was decorated, or simply covered, with crumpled dollar bills which seemed to have gotten there by being thrown (with some sort of adhesive). There was nothing orderly about their distribution. Along the left side was a bar running the length of the room, completely occupied by hefty men on stools. Behind the bar the wall was filled with all manner of decorations, the most impressive being a giant moose head, and other large stuffed animals.

The first project was bathroom. I guided Jack into the cramped lavatory, and thought I had him properly positioned when I realized he was about to pee on the floor, so I hustled him forward. In resigned tones he explained that such things were one of the worst aspects of blindness.

The dining room was at the back, was under a low ceiling with better light, the better to see the picturesque filth. Jack had advertised it as a restaurant without menu; you came in and got served, and that's how it was. There was a little bowl of salad with Russian dressing, a truly wonderful steak, and mushy garlic bread, well seasoned. Jack asked the cook where the steak was from, and was not surprised it came from the mid-west. He said California beef was inferior. He put plenty of salt on his steak, which reminded me of the Piri Tam episode in *Ecce and Old Earth*. I mentioned this, and Norma thought I was referring to the health faddist planet* visited by Glawen and Chilke. We laughed about both episodes.

Jack was keen I try *Sierra Nevada* beer, of which he thinks highly.

Jack is blind, seems in poor health, is distinctly overweight and eighty years old, but often gives the impression of a being a bright child.

We talked about art; Jack said it was a question of natural ability. I agreed to some extent but insisted there were things which could and should be taught, things most amateurs never get past. Jack was dubious but interested and wanted examples, which I gave and which intrigued him. It was a characteristic exchange. Jack's curiosity is of a sort that seeks to boil things down to specifics which can be known by being figuratively touched and felt. This seems to me one of many in some ways child-like qualities he has—Norma has child-like qualities also—but nothing is more indicative of this delicious curiosity than this kind of probing, as well as how Jack receives the answers; not as something to argue about but as a possibly wonderful vista. He is by no means indiscriminating, but he often enjoys putting his own opinions and attitudes to the test. It seems like a developed delight in, or a talent for discovery and self-discovery, as if phenomena, and one's reactions to them, are

† I visited Locke on another occasion with my father, and we visited the 'museum', which is the old gambling house, where we learned the history of the town, a residence of Chinese immigrants, and how they were stripped of their salaries by their passion for gambling.

* . . . "Ah, Obadah! There you are, at last! Where did you lunch?"
"I tried the Old Common, which is four miles out along the Way of the Underwood."
"A bit too far for lunch, perhaps, although I have heard great things of their glutens!"

ECCE AND OLD EARTH, chapter 4.

all marvels to be contemplated, tasted and wondered at.

Also regarding art; when I told Jack we intended to go to the museum he said; oh, how could we want to go see more paintings! And when I reported we had already done so he exclaimed how tiresome it would be, and wondered why we bothered. He complained about the dreariness of religious subject matter. But added that he liked Giotto, which surprised me because this is one of the most sober and restrained of all painters artists, who treats only religious subjects, uses muted colors and quiet forms, and to the unsophisticated would tend to seem formulaic and dull.* Jack also expressed the opinion that watercolors is a greater medium than oil.**

On our first visit there had been conversation about beauty, and Jack took the relativist position. There is an amusing conversation in *Night Lamp* on the subject, and I was familiar with the nuances of his position. Specifically we were discussing different art forms and their rank, particularly jazz. I later wondered if Jack, like so many people, does not take such positions from a feeling of 'cultural inferiority', in his case perhaps a defensive reaction against the status of science fiction;† he thinks of himself as a 'si-fi writer'. When discussing Vance with others I always insist he is not, because, to the extent he is, the work has an inevitably lower rank.‡ However this may be, and despite his bluff 'regular

* Oswald Spengler, Jack's *maître à penser*, lists Giotto as a pinnacle of Gothic art, of which, in an original of many vancian echoes, he enthuses: 'The Gothic gripped life in its entirety, penetrated its most hidden corners.' THE DECLINE OF THE WEST, chapter 6; Music and Plastic: the arts of form.

** This opinion is frequently encountered among people who know little about painting, the idea being that since the watercolorist can't make changes, can't erase or over-paint—as they think, but which is not true of all watercolor techniques, or even absolutely—achievement is particularly admirable. In fact, by this measure fresco would be the 'greatest' medium. But such a measure is silly. Oil is traditionally considered the greatest medium because its technical advantages (darker darks thanks to oil and varnish, brushing effects from violent to suave, the possibility to convincingly work in all formats—large and small—the possible use of more pigments than in fresco, the possibility of overpainting—by contrast with watercolor—or underpainting, glazing, scumbling, etc., and thus offers a larger range of expressive or poetic possibilities.

† Among other things. In 1942, as a 26 year old 'callow youth'? Vance wrote for his college paper such things as: *To all those who believe that civilization is at its highest peak in culture and intellectual advancement, we suggest a visit to the next meeting of the Hot Music Society. If that doesn't convince them that human nature is as primitive here, in the very midst of an educational institution, as it is in the wildest jungles of Borneo or the remote wastes of Tibet, they are more optimistic . . . or moronic . . . than we are. And: A six-man combination jamming produces music of greater drive, intensity, and complexity than a hundred-piece symphony orchestra.*

Even taking into account youthful high-spirits, these colorful but unoriginal efforts to upset traditional hierarchy seem motivated by a secret desire to salve feelings of inferiority. The appeal to primitivism is a bid at the Spenglerian (actually neo-Rousseauian) zenith of cultural vitality (a job later assigned to Baron Bodissy, who carried it out in a mellower fashion, but which we also see, in *Gold and Iran*), while the jab at symphony orchestras is calculated boorishness.

Let there be no mistake about my own attitude; I do not pretend to understand the ultimate springs of anyone's soul—though I make good-will efforts to do so—and my attitude towards these aspects of Jack Vance's adventure of 'life in the world', is only sympathetic.

I publish these extracts, copied off the Gaean Reach, with a certain reluctance. Vance forbid B. Yurgil to publish his college articles, but in 2003, when Yurgil published them anyway, and even though the fact was brought to Vance's attention, no objection was raised. I had supported Yurgil's efforts to collect the articles and hoped they could be published, perhaps even in the VIE.

As for the splenetic defence of science fiction we often see from certain fans, it is a more blatant lashing out at a perceived personal slight which, calling into question their special love, is tantamount to a personal attack.

‡ Today I do not recall Jack labeling himself this way in 1995, though in later [see next page...]

guy' act, Jack cannot said to be 'low class' if for no other reason than his rare natural finesse, of which his writing, as well as the suave aspect of his personality, is so full. He perhaps cannot be called 'highly cultivated', even though he is well traveled, well informed, and well read. He can speak several languages to some degree, and spoke some French with Genevieve, taking delight in doing so. But he does not know painting, as can be told from his books—though discusses it often enough. The protagonist of *Wyst* is a painter, or would-be painter.* The description of Jantiff's inspiration even seems like the most personal and revealing thing Jack has ever written about his own artistic feelings and ambitions.† In this conversation about art Jack said he thought he would have been a good painter, and described the painting he would like to do, which are sometimes mentioned in his stories.‡ His feeling about art seems linked to painting, not so much because his work is 'visual' in some way—in fact he is economic in his descriptions—but because it is so vivid, so striking to all the senses, and yet so quiet, so pungent, yet so without apparent literary 'effects', as painting delivers its message soundlessly and instantly.

He probably knows little music as well—aside from early jazz—though *Space Opera* shows he is not simply unfamiliar with it. Of course he is highly sensitive to music as such, as the stories strikingly demonstrate. Here again, just as he can imagine how Triest must be, so too he feels his way into painting, now a world lost to him.

Still, I was surprised to find Jack a less cultivated sort of man than I expected. An aspect of this impression was his pronunciation, or my reaction to it. This reaction now seems irrational and not apropos, but it contributed to my impression. It turns out that *The Dying Earth* is not Jack's title; he calls the book *Mazirian the Magician*. When he was telling me about this, at first I didn't understand what he was talking about, partly because he speaks softly but what threw me off most was how he pronounced Mazirian; not 'mah-ZEER-ri-an' but 'MI-zur-rin', and he pronounces 'Ecce' 'EH-kee' not 'EH-KAY'. The pronunciation is always "simple", he said. Norma said the main pronunciation error is 'Tchai', pronounced 'chay', not rhyming with 'why' as I had always done. The baron is UN-speek buh-DIS-y rather than 'UN-

visits I saw him resist the label, occasionally with force. Sometimes, however, he acquiesces to the definition when pressed by interlocutors who favor science fiction, of which there is rarely a dearth among his visitors. It is not a matter I would ever bring up with him one way or the other, and it is a question which seems to exasperate him because, as I interpret his attitude, it is both ultimately irrelevant yet pregnant with status implications. The real source of the exasperation is the nature of worldly status itself, at once as ultimately irrelevant as writing or not writing 'science fiction', and yet oh so important in human affairs. It seems clear to me today that Jack has picked his way with distaste though this swamp all his life, never finding a satisfactory escape route, particularly given the pro-science fiction 'pressure' his friend and visitors often lay upon him.

* The protagonist of *WILD THYME AND VIOLETS* is also a painter.

† *WYST*, page 25

‡ *CUGEL: THE SKYBREAK SPATTERLIGHT:*

The clouds drifted across the sun, darkening the already wan light, and the landscape took on the semblance of an ancient sepia painting, with flat perspectives and the pungent trees superimposed like scratchings of black ink.

THROY:

The balustrade and a pair of ironwood posts, to right and left, framed the view to the south, so that it seemed a landscape executed by a genius artificer in scratchings of black ink and sepia wash.

[These passages thanks to TOTALITY]

spik BAH-dissy', though Jack said it's fine for people to use whatever pronunciation they like.††

Norma and I were in the middle of a discussion when Jack announced that perhaps we should head back. At this Norma flared up and said whenever she was talking "that didn't matter!". When we got settled back in the car Jack impishly but good-humoredly said she could now "talk her head off". They decided to take me sight-seeing along the sloughs to where they had kept the houseboat—built by Jack and owned in partnership with Poul Andersen and Frank Herbert. Jack was glad to answer my questions about the boat, and I saw many another that must have resembled it moored in the sloughs. We drove along dykes in the rain, and came to their old mooring, and were turning around to go back when there was a most terrible argument about whether to go right or left. Jack had the facts on his side, as I could see, having the map on my lap, but Norma argued with a strange violence. She accused Jack of being "stupid", of not knowing how to behave, and she using some strong language. Jack's language was strong as well, but he lost interest in the contest first, at which point Norma immediately muttered that he was probably right, and turned as he had indicated. There were similar such incidents, though none quite as notable; one involving a puddle we had driven through. They seem dependant upon, but almost permanently on edge with each other. I had thought, after our first visit, that much of Norma's peevishness was justified, to the extent that she seemed a bit pestered by her family, but Genevieve noted a hard side. Jack picks her up on all kinds of things he could with no prejudice let go, but Norma has a streak of bitter reaction that is painful to see. On the other hand she is attentive, sweet, alert and sharp, and interesting and fun to talk to.*

On the way back Jack dozed off and I asked Norma about herself, and also her part in Jack's writing. It seems Jack works more on his manuscripts than Norma approves, but when at last he is done he hands her a pile of paper, printed out of his computer, and, she says, never looks at it again. These manuscripts, she says, are a terrible mess; words half written, margins ragged, confusion everywhere—a result of Jack's blindness. It is Norma's job to make order. Jack uses a computer with a program called "Accent", which reads back to him what he has written. Norma decides the

†† In *Cosmopolis* 39 (page 3) David B. Williams' account of pronunciation differs: *Unspiek, Baron Bodissey, is pronounced UN-speek, BAH-di-see. . . Jack pronounces Tschai as 'shay' but accepts 'chy' as a reasonable choice.*

I do not know how to account for all this. Perhaps Jack's blindness has something to do with the 'Mazirian' difference; perhaps he has forgotten the spelling, while the sound has evolved in his imagination, so that in 1995 he would have spelled it 'Mizerin'? I have no speculation about the Bodissy and Tschai differences, unless David, or I, made a transcription error, and I'm flummoxed by David's 'shay' and 'chy'.

* I should add that my personal relations with Norma have since developed greatly, much more than with Jack who, though capable of disarming intimacy, is also capricious, in a certain sense self-involved, and in the final analysis difficult to approach. I suppose he might fairly be called 'selfish', but I see him in a more indulgent light. I have known many artists, some famous, and some great, so I can state that the 'sensitivity' popularly associated with artists is a myth. Jack, however, fits the idea, though I do not think his inspiration is the source of his sensitivity, or visa versa. In any case it is my view that he is a man of extreme sensitivity whose various strategies of self-protection can make his behavior, even over the course of a few hours, seem inexplicable or even in a certain sense chaotic. He is Howard Alan Treesong, as Norma claims—of course without any plans to take over the universe, or even to impose in any egregious way upon his entourage. He is not an ordinary person.

paragraphing, and when she feels Jack has indulged too freely in alliteration she corrects this—a revelation which shocked me. Still, she disclaims any creative contribution and calls her job ‘dog-work’†

Expressions like ‘dog-work’ are strikingly vancian, and Jack and Norma’s spoken language bears much resemblance to Jack’s prose. For example, when giving me directions to his house the first time, he often used the word ‘proceed’, much to my amusement. But he and Norma talk this way with such simplicity, so normally, that the vancianness of it is sometimes imperceptible. The vancian voice is therefore, to a certain extent, a product of his California roots.

We got on the subject of some of their friends, and Norma expressed affection for them, but complained in certain cases about ‘sycophantic’ behavior. This gave me pause; I did not want to fall into the error! Jack’s company can be great fun, but the *rapport de force* is not equal, and it is hard not to be subject to the situation.

By now the sun had come out and the Fens had taken on a



whole different aspect. We stopped for gas and bathroom. Norma took Jack in while I pumped the gas. Then I helped Jack out while Norma paid for the gas. Jack settled into the car, muttering affectionate things to me such as; “you’re a fine fellow, my boy!” Then he said, referring to the natural act he had just committed; “now there is one of the great unsung pleasures of life!” I suggested if anyone could sing

† I have since learned much more about Norma’s part in Jack’s work, and the different forms it has taken over the years. It has been absolutely crucial. I recently came across an example of the very alliteration Norma would have been dealing with at the time, in *TOTALITY: Maloof chuckled. “We also pursue glorious goals, such as profit, survival, and the sheer joy of wringing revenue from parsimonious passengers.”*

those pleasures it would be Navarth. Chuckling, Jack said he would poke around in the ‘annals of Navarth’ to find such a poem. I said how much Navarth delighted me. Jack laughed and said he particularly liked Navarth, and thought of him as somewhat of an alter ego, the character in his work he felt closest to.

Back on the road Norma complained about publishers; money delays, poor typography, bad cover art. She had been obliged to go over *Night Lamp* six separate times, and even then the text was published with errors. She explained how, with the part computers play in publishing now, the editors do no editing.

Back at the house they invited me to dinner. I again bought up the subject of cover illustrations, and offered to do something for *Ports of Call*. They like Christiansen’s work, and he is the only one who seems to read the books and try to capture their spirit. They don’t seem to be aware of Christiansen’s shortcomings, but I didn’t go into that; he is certainly the best cover illustrator they have. They have a framed full size photo of one. It is about 2’ x 3’, showing the goblin fair from *Lyonnesse*, with many of the main characters. But Christiansen verges on cartoony. His figures are on the clumsy, with silly, shallow expressions. The cover of *Suldren’s Garden* is the best thing of his which I know.

They have an original by another artist, a cover for *The Anome* done in gouache with celluloid overlays for repaintings; an unattractive object. Jack was not enthusiastic about my doing a cover for logistical reasons, but finally it was decided that they would send me a chapter of the new book, in disk form, with indications of what they would like—it is always the publishers who handles this, so whatever I might do would be shown to them, to take or leave.*

Norma made BLTs. Their kitchen was recently completed. It has a polished marble all-around counter, a gigantic restaurant stove and mammoth refrigerator. The ceiling is divided into casements, the panels decorated with colored flowers, designed by Jack and painted in by a friend, a drunken Englishman.

Jack spoke much about food. He told me about the best pork he had ever eaten, cooked in Kashmere over a bundle of vine cuttings.

During dinner Robert Palmer called. He had gotten an

* Nothing ever came of this. But, thanks to Norma, who put me in touch with Arthur Cunningham, I did do a cover for JACK VANCE, *CRITICAL APPRECIATIONS AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY*, the subject of which was suggested by Arthur—a ‘vancian image, with a mansion and a park’. The original is in Arthur’s possession.



early copy of *Night Lamp* and was thrilled to find a star named for him. Jack spent most of the conversation joshing him; he told him I was there, that I was a great rock singer, that Robert with have trouble with me.

I took the opportunity to sketch Jack. He sits often with his head thrown way back. At first his eyes are open, but eventually he closes them. Sometimes he bows his head forward, or rocks gently. While we had been with him two days earlier he had fussed with a tiny pile of crumbs under his finders on the table cloth, with great delicacy separating them out then gathering them together, eyes closed, head back, his words soft and dreamy.† While Norma talked with Robert and his wife, Jack told me about them. They were drunk, calling from Como at 4 in the morning. A party seemed to be in progress at their mansion. Robert is apparently a sort of mystic, full of vague fantastical ideas which he likes to “ramble on about”. After these unflattering but not unfriendly remarks, Jack added that he was a “very decent fellow”, and that he had “never known him to do any unkind or thoughtless thing to anyone”.* Jack spoke softly



† One of these sketches in the basis of my volume 44 etched portrait of Jack. See following page. The phone was not drawn in this case, but the high line of the right shoulder is a reminder of the raised arm.

* I later heard Jack make similar declairations. He likes to tease or make fun of

and seriously, and at that moment, more than any other, I felt in the presence of that deep and concealed sub-strata of Jack's books, his preoccupation, behind the confused and problematic aspects of life, with kindness.

Jack announced he was going off to work, and I rose to say goodbye. Jack shuffled away and disappeared down a stairway to a room John had decided not to show me because it was such a “disgraceful mess”. I was going to leave when Norma made a mournful and even bitter complaint that Jack was the only attraction, that no one stayed to see *her*, so I abruptly sat down, and we had a very long, and very pleasant conversation. As we talked the sound of the mechanical voice reading Jack's prose back to him, came indistinctly up though the floor. I tried to catch some of the words but they escaped me, like the sea voices in *Wyst*, and I was left with a strange impression of that monotone, masculine, robotic voice.

When I was finally leaving Norma asked my opinion of another illustration hanging by the stairs. She said it showed the scene of Calanctus and the Murthe from *Rhialto*. (She had

to search for the these names, in a book published 15 years previously, which I found more easily.) The picture did not correspond to the book; I complained about that, and Norma was surprised to learn that *Rhialto* is one of my favorite books, and then remembered the essay about *Rhialto* I had sent.‡

I forgot to mention that in the first hour of our first visit John brought out two copies of *Night Lamp*, one for me and one for my father (who they knew about, as another fan, from my letters). They often mentioned my father and hoped he would visit. They treated me like a dear old friend.

This was not a mere mannerism. A few years later I underwent a serious surgical operation and the Vances invited me to convalesce in Oakland, where I spent several weeks. Later they stayed with us in France and, with my father, we made a voyage to the south in search of the original cassoulet of Castelnaudary.



people (in their presence as well as absence), but then pulls himself up short, and tries to show another side, or at least make such a blanket good-will declairation.

‡ I have no memory of this essay.

JACK KIRBY ILLUSTRATES VANCE?

MIKE BERRO, in his never ending quest for things vancian, turned up this Kirby drawing, for sale on the Internet as an illustration of Vance, and linked to it from the VanceBBS. None of the wanhkrs had ever heard anything about Kirby illustrating Vance, and there was speculation about the story involved. 'Vermoulian' wrote:

I doubt this is actually an illustration of a Vance story, but if it is it should be fairly simple to figure out which one. The line of people boarding the space ship would seem to limit it. My first thought is the Mount Pleasant raid, although I can't imagine how Kirby could have ended up illustrating a Demon Princes story. The robot could be artistic license, I suppose. I'm trying to think of other stories with those kind of embarkation scenes, but I'm drawing a blank. A search of Totality finds no story featuring a humanoid robot.

My own reading of the figure in the lower left is not 'robot' but 'armored soldier', the artistic licence speculation, however, would cover the robot. Another odd element is the fiery sun, which to me at first suggested STARK; obviously wrong for several reasons. The heap of booty under the feet of the 'demon prince' also supports Vermolian's speculation. An intriguing matter!

Jack Kirby, with Herriman, Winsor McKay, and Hergé, seems to me one of the crucial comic book artists. His perfection of the post-war 'comic book' inspired the American style, and was unique for originality, verve of execution and drama of spacial conception—all beautifully adapted to the comic book format.

Much depends, in this sort of work, on the inking. I think Kerby, at least in the later work, either did much of his own or carefully instructed his collaborators. This particular drawing shows typical Kirby style inking which creates bold decorative patterns, sometimes to an extent which confuses the volumetric directions of the forms. Here the foreground pair are not given this treatment, which seems to isolate and emotionally reinforce the lachrymose metal-headed slaver, whose expression is interestingly ambiguous; is he/it moved with pity, or are were merely confronted with the static configuration of a steel face?

Was a certain color treatment reserved for this section? Does the signature indicate the drawing was finished as is; or is it an after-thought to expedite conversion of a dead-end project to cash?

What if this were a Vance illustration? As interesting an example of Kirby's work as it may be, I would not be enthusiastic. Kirby's art is the acme of post WW2 era 'Homeric Pop-grandiloquence' (to coin a phrase), the zenith of which is found, I believe, in *Mr. Miracle* and *The New Gods*, but any Vance story is so much subtler and richer that Kirby's efficacious graphic short-hand is out of its element. The 1940's style face of the unconscious girl, just right for



a female such as Big Barda, would not fit even Jane Parlier, much less a typical victim of the Mount Pleasant raid—though the pensive regard of Mr. Metal Head is a step in the right direction.

A pulp illustration by 'Emsh' of the same scene, which lacks Kirby's artistic force, is a proper 'illustration'. An Ideal illustration, particularly of Vance, would combine the qualities of both these images.



(NOTE: I learned in February 2008, from David Russell, that this is an illustration for *Tschai*, showing Naga Goho and his Gnashers, though this seems equally odd.)



Image from the site of Jacques Garin, illustration by Emsh in *GALEXIE*, 1965, retouched by EXTANT to remove scan-shadows.

THE SYMBOLISM OF COLORS:

FROM SPENGLER TO VANCE

The following text is an extract of *The Decline of the West*, by Oswald Spengler. This is a book Jack Vance has recommended to me more often and more warmly than any other, and it is certainly a key to his thinking. Spengler's book was written in the first decade of the 20th century, and first published in English in 1923. My copy is the 1959 Modern Library abridged version of Helmut Werner, though even this is wordy to an almost painful extent. The extract is taken from chapter 6: *Music and Plastic: The Arts of Form*, and includes passages from the sections *Symbolism of the Colors*, and *Gold Backgrounds and Studio-Brown*. I have taken the liberty of making further cuts, mostly to Spengler's frequent and recondite references to a great cast of painters and composers. I have also simplified certain passages, as Helmut Werner has already done, though he marks the abridgements with italics. I have not bothered with this, and have even Americanized some of the spelling since my goal is not to serve Spengler but the very limited one of offering a small taste of something extremely important to Vance's intellectual life, in a domain—color—whose significance will be readily apparent to Vancians.

Blue and green are the colors of the heavens, the sea, the fruitful plain, the shadow of the Southern noon, the evening, the remote mountains. They are essentially atmospheric and not substantial. They are cold; they disembody and evoke impressions of expanse, distance and boundlessness. An atmospheric blue-green is the space-creating element throughout the history of perspective oil-painting, the basic and supremely important tone which supports the ensemble of the intended color-effect, as the basso continuo supports the orchestra, an indefinite blue-green of a thousand nuances, into white and grey and brown; something deeply musical.

Blue and green are the colors of the heavens, the sea, the fruitful plain, the shadow of the Southern noon, the evening, the remote mountains. They are essentially atmospheric and not substantial. They are cold; they disembody; they evoke impressions of expanse and distance and boundlessness. Blue and green are transcendent, spiritual, non-sensuous colors. Yellow and red are the colors of the material, the near, the full-blooded. Red is the characteristic color of sexuality.

Yellow and red are the popular colors, the colors of the crowd, children, women and savages. Amongst the Venetians and the Spaniards high personages affected a splendid black or blue, with an unconscious sense of the aloofness in-

herent in these colors; while red and yellow, the Apollinian, Euclidean-polytheistic colors, belong to the foreground even in respect of social life; the noisy hearty market-days. But blue and green—the Faustian, monotheistic colors—are colors of loneliness, of care, of a present that is related to a past and a future, of destiny as the dispensation dwelling in the uni-verse.

The most significant use of dusky green as the color of destiny is Grünewald's. The indescribable power of space in his nights is equaled only by Rembrandt's—is it possible to say that his bluish-green, the color in which the interior of a great cathedral is so often clothed, is the Catholic color? (it being understood that we mean . . . Faustian Christianity, with the Eucharist as its center, founded in the Lateran Council of 1215 and fulfilled in the Council of Trent). This color, with its silent grandeur, is as remote from the resplendent gold-ground of early Christian-Byzantine pictures as it is from the gay, loquacious "pagan" colors of the painted Hellenic temples and statues. The gold background, in the iconography of the Western Church, has an explicit dogmatic significance; it asserts the existence and activity of the divine spirit. When "natural" backgrounds, with their blue-green heavens and far horizons, began to appear in early Gothic, they had at first the appearance of something profane and worldly.

The Venetians discovered, and introduced into oil-painting as a space-forming and quasi-musical motive, the handwriting of the visible brush-stroke. It is only in the brush-work, which re-mains permanently visible and, perennially fresh, that the historical feeling comes out. The individual brush-strokes—first met with as a new form-language in the later work of Titian—are accents of a personal temperament, characteristic in the orchestra-colors of Monteverdi, melodically flowing as a madrigal; streaks and dabs entangle one another to bring unending movement into the color. The physiognomy of this script of the brush—an ornamentation that is entirely new, infinitely rich, personal and peculiar to the Western Culture—is purely and simply musical; henceforward the notion of tempo is introduced into painting. The aery web of brush-strokes dissolves surfaces. Contours melt into chiaroscuro.

At the same time there appeared in Western painting another symbol of the highest significance: Atelierbraun ("studio-brown"). This brown does not repudiate its descent from the atmospheric greens but it possesses a mightier power over things, and carries the battle of Space against Matter to a decisive close. Its discovery marks the zenith of the Western style. As contrasted with



the preceding green, this color has a Protestant quality. The atmosphere of 'Lear' and 'Macbeth' are akin to it. The contemporary striving of instrumental music towards ever freer chromatics corresponds with the new tendency of oil-painting to create pictorial chromatics out of pure colors (impressionism and abstraction) which envelops and renders not the human being as a shape but the soul unconfined. This atmospheric brown is the unrealest color of all. It is the one major color absent from the rainbow. A pure brown light is outside the possibilities of the Nature we know. All the greenish-brown, silvery moist brown and deep-gold tones that appear in their splendid variety with Giorgione, and grow bolder in the great Dutch painters to lose themselves towards the end of the eighteenth century, strip Nature of her tangible actuality. They contain, therefore, what is almost a religious profession of faith, and with Constable—who is the founder of the painting of Civilization—it is a different will that seeks expression. The brown he learnt from the Dutch meant to him something different than it had meant to them, not Destiny, God, and the meaning of life, but simply romance, sensibility, a yearning for some-thing that gone, a memorial of the great past of the dying art, a romantic retrospect, an epilogue. The brown tones appear as a precious heirloom.

It was the masters who were inwardly greatest—Rembrandt above all—who best understood this color. It is the enigmatic brown of his most telling work; its origin is in the deep lights of Gothic church-windows and the twilight of the high-vaulted Gothic nave.

Brown, then, became the characteristic color of the soul, and more particularly of a historically disposed soul. Nietzsche has spoken of the "brown" music of Bizet, but the adjective is far more appropriate to the music which Beethoven wrote for strings, or the orchestration of late Bruckner which fills space with a brown-golden expanse of tone. All other colors are relegated to ancillary functions—thus the bright yellow and vermilion of Vermeer intrude into space as though from another world, with an emphasis that is metaphysical, while the yellow-green and blood-red lights of Rembrandt seem at most to play with the symbolism of space.

The strings in the Orchestra represent, as a class, the colors of the distance. The bluish-green of Watteau is found already in the Neapolitan bel canto and Mozart, the brown of the Dutch in Handel and Beethoven. The woodwinds call up illumined distances, while yellow and red are the colors of nearness, the popular colors associated with the brass timbre, the effect of which is corporeal often to the point of vulgarity. The tone of an old fiddle is entirely bodiless. The horn is an exception to the brass generally. Its place is with the woodwinds, and its colors are those of distance.

Vance readers are familiar with his use of color. The following passages are selected—with the invaluable help of TOTALITY*—not to illustrate the scope and manner of this use—a massive undertaking, in which the question of vancian sun-sets alone would require a major section unto itself—but, narrowly, to suggest some of the ways Spenglerian thinking is a vancian source.

The second extract from *The Book of Dreams* will be unfamiliar to no one, but it is so apropos it could not be omitted. The passage from *Wyst* might not seem apropos but that truth and justness should result from gloriousness seems to me a vancian echo of, or reaction to, both Spengler's poetic elan and his relativism, as if the light of Dwan illuminated its scene in so fundamental a way that something beyond the special, unique and incompatible ways of Thinking and Being, so dear to Spengler, and with which Vance makes so much play, here give way to something quivering upon true objectivity; is Vance offering a hint of extreme subtlety?

I do not propose passages relative to music, so intimately related to color in Spengler's conception, but Vance readers can surely fill out this aspect of the picture from their memories.



THE BOOK OF DREAMS

"Go your way. You are destructively beautiful; you have brought dissent among the colors of my soul. Red lusts; Blue feels a melancholy longing, while Green would cause you pain. But nothing will be done; I have taken injury and I suffer."

Raise your eyes, stranger, to that age-worn rampart which confronts all else: there stand the paladins, stern, grave, serene. Each is one, each is all.

At the center is Immir of the graces. He controls certain sleights of magic; he is master of ploys and plots and awful surprises. He is Immir the unpredictable and claims no single color.

At Immir's right hand stands Jeha Rais, who is tall in majesty and whose color is black. He is sagacious and always first to notice a far event, for which he construes eventualities. Then he points his finger, to direct the gaze of the other paladins. He is without qualm and advocates decisiveness. Sometimes he is known as "Jeha the Inexorable." He wears a black garment, supple and close as his skin, a black cape and a black morion, fixed at the crest with an orb of crystal in a silver star-blaze.

At Immir's left hand stands Loris Hohenger, whose color is the red of new blood. He is the feroce, impulsive and reckless, and ever reluctant to leave the slaying grounds,

* *Koen Vyverman recently posted on the VanceBBS:* The TOTALITY database was built. . .by yours truly as an instrument for making the VIE as good as possible. A number of applications and reports. . .ran off the data, one of them being the *Incredible String Retriever* used aplenty during the Textual Integrity phase of the VIE. This ISR was quite the hit with a number of people involved in the VIE work, but the problem was: only I could pull its strings. Oops, an involuntary pun, that. Paul Rhoads realised the attraction of having a tool like the ISR available to the online community of Vance fans, and kept pestering me for quite a while to make it happen. I am still the Master of TOTALITY, but if it weren't for Paul's insistence, none of us would now have the online version of the ISR at our fingertips.

I set out to look for a partner in crime to realise the idea, and chanced upon Ridolph [MENNO VAN DER LEYDEN], a true Magister in the Order of the LAMP. Ridolph configured a LAMP, filled a MySQL database with extracts from TOTALITY, and built all the look-up and reporting functionality. We proceeded to buy an apt domain name, and there you are...

though of all the paladins he can be most generous. He lusts after fair women and they deny him at great risk to their dignities. Should they make complaint or give chiding, his redress is even more fulsome. When finally he leaves the bed their voices are still and they look longingly after him.

Green Mewness stands beside Loris Hohenger. Expert in skills is Mewness. He can fling a bridge or topple a tower; he is patient, cunning and if the road is closed to right and left, he finds a way between. His memory is exact; he never forgets a face or a name, and he knows the ways of a hundred worlds. Soft men of wealth think him ingenuous in his dealings, to their ultimate consternation.

Yellow Spangleway is wry, astonishing, and ignores every precedent. He is antic and droll, and able in the acting of roles. All the paladins, save only one, laugh to see his capers; when the time is appropriate all—save only one—dance to his musics, for Spangleway can elicit sweet sounds from a dangling pig, should he so choose to turn his skills. Never think to match Spangleway jape for jape, since his knife is even keener than his wit. In battle, the enemy cries out: "Where is the laggard Spangleway?" or: "Aha! The

Beside blue Rhune, and a little apart, stands eery white Eia Panice, whose hair, eyes, long teeth and skin are white. He wears a full casque of white metal and little of his face can be seen: a high-bridged hooked nose, a harsh chin, gleaming eyes. In the counsels he speaks, for the most part, either "Yea" or "Nay," but more often than not his word decides the issue, for he seems to know the ways of Destiny. Alone among the paladins he is unmoved by the droll contrivances of Spangleway. Indeed, on those occasions when his grim smile is seen, then is the time for all who can to depart and never look back lest they discover the limpid gaze of Eia Panice fixed into their own.

So then, stranger, go your way. When at last you make your homecoming, wherever it may be among the sparkling worlds, bring report of those who stand brooding yonder.

THE NEW PRIME

So the competition went, round after round of spectacles, some sweet as cannel honey, others as violent as the storms which circle the poles. Color strove with color, patterns evolved and changed, sometimes in glorious cadence, sometimes in the bitter discord necessary to the strength of the image.

And Daksat built dream after dream, while his tension vanished, and he forgot all save the racing pictures in his mind and on the screen and his images became as complex and subtle as those of the masters.

"One more passage," said the big man behind Daksat, and now the imagists brought forth the master-dreams: Pulakt Havjorska, the growth and decay of a beautiful city; Tol Morabaít, a quiet composition of green and white interrupted by a marching army of insects who left a dirty wake, and who were joined in battle by men in painted leather armor and tall hats, armed with short swords and flails. The insects were

destroyed and chased off the screen; the corpses became bones and faded to twinkling blue dust. Ghisel Ghang created three fire-bursts simultaneously, each different, a gorgeous display.

THE MIRACLE WORKERS

When I visited the camp I watched everywhere for powerful symbols. Undoubtedly there were many at hand, but I could not discern them. However, I remembered a circumstance from the battle at the planting: when the creatures were attacked, threatened with fire and about to die, they spewed foam of dull purple color. Evidently this purple foam is associated with death. My hoodoo will be based upon this symbol."



coward Spangleway takes to his heels!" only to have him on their necks from a new direction, or in some shocking guise.

Beside Jaha Rais stands gentle Rhune Fader the Blue. In battle, though he is dauntless and first to succor a hard-pressed paladin, he is also first to urge mercy and forbearance. He is slim, tall, clear of feature, and handsome as the summer sunrise; he is skilled in the arts and graces, and sensitive to beauty in all things, especially the beauty of shy maidens upon whom he casts a glamour. Alas, in the battle counsels the voice of Rhune Fader carries little weight.

ECCE AND OLD EARTH

"Cadwal sunsets are unpredictable," said Wayness. "The colors seem to explode from behind the clouds and are often garish, though the effect is always cheerful. Earth sunsets are different. They are sometimes grand, or even inspiring, but then they wane quietly and sadly into the blue dusk and create a melancholy mood."

BAD RONALD

The girls discussed colors and interior decorating. Ellen had painted her room white, with pale green and lavender trim. Althea had used gray, pale blue and dark blue with accents of white. Barbara had ranged the length and breadth of the sample chip rack in the paint store, to achieve what she called 'drama'. "I want lots of excitement in my room!" she declared, and Ronald muttered under his breath, "I'll give you excitement in your room, no fear of that!" Barbara, the youngest of the girls, impressed Ronald as the sexiest, because of her provocative antics, her flirtatious pouts and poses. He had never seen anyone so boy-crazy! Barbara had painted her room white, yellow, chalky blue and pistachio green, with accents of firehouse red and dark blue, and somehow, after arranging her possessions and hanging her posters, she achieved exactly that atmosphere of exuberant frivolity she intended.

THE GOLDEN GIRL

"I was an artist of a sort unknown to you here on Earth." She spoke softly, her eyes still out on the darkening sky. "We conceive in the brain color, motion, sound, space, sensation, mood, all moving, shifting, evolving. When the conceiver is prepared, he imagines the whole sequence of his creation, as vividly as possible and this is picked up by a psychic recorder and preserved. To enjoy or experience the creation, a person inserts a record into an apparatus, and this plants the same images into his mind. Thus he sees the motion, the color pattern, the flows and fluxes of space, the fantasies in the artist's mind, together with the sights, the sounds, and most important, the varying moods of the piece

THE CHASCH

How dilute now, how tenuous, was the terrestrial essence! Emmink had become a man of Tschai, his soul conditioned by the Tschai landscape, the amber sunlight, the gunmetal sky, the quiet rich colors. Reith cared to trust the loyalty of Emmink no farther than the length of his arm, if as far.

SULWIN'S PLANET

Clambering down through the torn hull with his dome-light on he found himself in a marvelous environment of shapes and colors which could only be characterized, if tritely, by the word 'weird'*

*In Drewe's book *Sulwin's Planet* he remarked: "Color is color and shape is shape; it would seem incorrect to speak of human shape and human color, and Wasp shape and Wasp color; but somehow, by some means, the distinction exists. Call me a mystic if you like..."

THE PALACE OF LOVE

Erdenfreude: a mysterious and intimate emotion which dilates blood vessels, slides chills along the subcutaneous nerves, arouses qualms of apprehension and excitement like those infecting a girl at her first ball. Erdenfreude typically attacks the outworld man approaching Earth for the first time. Only the dull, the insensitive, are immune. The excitable have been known to suffer near-fatal palpitations.

The cause is the subject of learned dispute. Neurologists describe the condition as anticipatory adjustment of the organism to absolute normality of all the sensory modes: color recognition, sonic perception, coriolis force and gravitational equilibrium. The psychologists differ; Erdenfreude, they state, is the flux of a hundred thousand racial memories boiling up almost to the level of consciousness. Geneticists speak of RNA; metaphysicians refer to the soul; parapsychologists make the possibly irrelevant observation that haunted houses are to be found on Earth alone.

WYST

There is one world where sun and atmosphere cooperate to produce an absolutely glorious light, where every surface quivers with its true and just color.



CYBER FOLLIES

A PATHETIC FARCE, IN A PROLOGUE AND 6 ACTS



PROLOGUE

In which a shameful past is quickly resumed.

Until the Foreverness website was created the VIE project was ending on a sour note, thanks to poisons accumulated over the years. What happened?

Dan Gunter, well known to EXTANT readers, is not a VIE volunteer. He has been Administrator (i.e. moderator-in-chief) of the Jack Vance Message Board ("VanceBBS") since the summer of 2003. This site, as originally created by MIKE BERRO, is a patch of that cyber-space where the VIE project first took root and, as the most active English-Language Vance site on the net, has continued to be a forum of informal communication for VIE volunteers, subscribers and outsiders interested in the VIE.

As EXTANT readers are aware, one of Dan's first acts as VanceBBS Moderator was to ban the VIE Editor-in-Chief

from posting. * Last summer, in statements defending this move, Dan volunteered inaccurate information.† The following November Dan unbanned me—on condition I make public apologies to JOHN VANCE and MIKE BERRO, though he refused to say why I owed this apology. I apologized anyway, and was unbanned for some hours until I used the word ‘sourpuss’. ‘Axo’ qualified this as a ‘personel and derogatory remark’, and rebanned me, to Dan’s approval.‡

This episode seemed to cast a pall upon the VanceBBS, and in April, while the ‘wankhers’** were lamenting†† their languishing board, THOMAS RYDBECK wrote:

I have followed—with decreasing interest—the “development” of the Vance BBS...Paul’s participation might have livened things up, but I must say I’m surprised that so few, if any, have stood up for him...Equaling PR with the trolls is trolling.

In reaction to this, and one or two similar posts—all quickly deleted—Dan complained about the VIE project and justified banning me:

[the VIE] cannot excuse the fact that Rhoads made a host of defamatory and homophobic statements about Feht and Bruce Y. . . [I initially banned Rhoads because he was contributing posts on the Gaeen Reach in which he accused Alex Feht. . . of beating his wife.] I would not have permitted Rhoads—or anyone else—to post such comments on this board. . . To do so would place an implicit imprimatur on that conduct. . . the fact that the VIE board failed to curb Rhoads speaks more about the VIE than about the propriety of Rhoads’s conduct. It appears obvious to me that the members of the VIE board turned a blind eye on inexcusable conduct to ensure that the VIE was completed.

But Dan could not possibly have banned me in 2003 for these reasons, because the ‘accusations’ to which he refers, and

* Dan took command of the VanceBBS in the midst of a project crisis involving my concern that dangerous lies about the project and its volunteers were being allowed to proliferate even though its administrator, Mike Berro, was a member of the VIE board. (See: COSMOPOLIS 40, p7, *The VIE Crisis*.)

Dan’s other implication in VIE affairs came a year later when he accepted a post in the ‘Green Legion’, an informal shadow management group created against the eventuality the editor-in-chief would drop out. The Green Legion’s only act was participation in a flame war on Bruce Yurgil’s ‘Gaeen Reach’. This war was celebrated in a verse: *The Rout of the Ten Cent Trolls*. The Green Legion was not formally disbanded—as I urged—but, like old soldiers, just faded away, and has not been heard of since.

† See EXTANT 1, p4; *An Open Letter to Steve Sherman*

‡ See EXTANT 9, p 8 ; *Frolitz Banned*.

** *Wanker*: term used by VanceBBS regulars to refer to themselves—derived from the pre-VIE title of the book now entitled ‘The Wannek’, famous for its salacious connotations in British slang. Some of these self-styled ‘wankhers’ have complained about the scatology of non-wankhers, such as the VIE E-in-C, while their fellows listen in silence.

†† On April 16, in a post entitled A LAMENT, Ed Winskill wrote:

I can’t be the only one who notices that for a long time now, there has been rather limited posting on the board. Even members of the small group of regulars seem to lurk but not post much. There are others who lurk and never post. There are many oldtimers. . . who post with great infrequency. Haven’t heard from Martin Read since forever.

A thread or topic will get started, but will catch little interest. . . If not for axo, Dan, me, Matt, David W., and a couple of others, there’d be no regular postings at all. Pretty small gang.

Maybe after all these years there are few new ideas in our group. . .

Among reactors to Ed, was ‘Vermolian’, who entitled his post: THE VIE: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD:

The world of Vance fandom has undergone a fundamental change in recent years due to the preparation and then publication of the VIE, which resulted in many people becoming much more familiar with much more of Vance’s work than they had been before. One would think that the result would be MORE discussion of that work. . .

whose nature he distorts, are embodied in rhymes which post-date the ban. But even if Dan’s claim is granted, we must then wonder why he had been willing to unban me four months earlier if I apologized to MIKE BERRO and JOHN VANCE; how did this atone for defaming Alexander Feht and Bruce Yurgil? Would Dan not thereby have placed his own *implicit imprimatur* upon my ‘conduct’? In EXTANT 13, then in preparation, I made these points.

Dan’s attitude towards the VIE board is also peculiar, since this board includes his fellow ‘wankhers’ MIKE BERRO and ED WINSKILL; after complaining about their *implicit imprimatur* of my *conduct* he continues to cordially interact with them. We may note that Dan’s indignation englobes the VIE board’s other members*, NORMA VANCE and JOHN VANCE—qualified by Alexander Feht, in a statement posted on the VanceBBS to no objection from Dan, as the *sub-standard milieu* from which Jack Vance allegedly suffers (see EXTANT #1).



ACT 1

In which Dan Gunter relinquishes the VanceBBS.

Meanwhile the VanceBBS’s status as an anti-Rhoads platform was further advanced when Dan published a special rule:

I’m tired of people complaining that Paul Rhoads has been banned from this board.

When such a post comes up, I have three options: (1) ignore it, leaving false information un rebutted; (2) respond, which requires me to say more about Rhoads; or (3) delete the post.

I have previously explained why Rhoads was banned. The other moderators of this board agree with his banning. The topic is closed. Further discussion is nuncupatory.

Henceforth, I will summarily delete all posts complaining about Rhoads’s banning. I will also summarily delete all posts complaining about Rhoads’s conduct. And I will summarily delete all posts complaining about this new policy.

I will also ban anyone who continues to post (a) complaints about Rhoads’s banning; (b) complaints about Rhoads; or (c) complaints about this policy.

One gets the impression from this almost vancian legalese that Dan had been harrassed by complaint and clamorous demands for explanation based on various false informations. But no one had complained. No information, true or false, had been advanced. No requests, of any kind, had ever been made.

One of Dan’s allies, seeking to justify Dan’s attitude to a group of concerned VIE managers, claimed that: *no dedicated*

David B. Williams reacted to ‘Vermolian’:

I believe you have defined the situation perfectly. I was willing to expend considerable effort to prepare essays on Vance for Cosmopolis, which reached hundreds more Vanceans and was a more formal and enduring venue. But I can’t invest the time to prepare similar treatises here, in response to passing comments or off-hand observations. . .

* Bob Lacovara was elected to the VIE board, but this election turned out to be counter the rules of the VIE not-for-profit corporation, so that, strictly speaking, Bob is not a board member, to say nothing of how the board, for many years, has failed to meet its obligations to renew personnel though regular elections. In any case Bor recently resigned from the board, disgusted by recent developments.

Paul-bashing took place. But what of the implication I should apologize to MIKE BERRO and JOHN VANCE? What of the unspecified *inexcusable conduct** to which Dan claims the VIE board turned a blind eye? And what of the implication of the anti-Rhoads rule? All these, we are to presume, are perfectly legitimate and justified. As for the rule, the ally qualified it as a "*Gordian knot*" *solution, that will at least prevent anyone from badmouthing Paul*—one of the nicest bits of rhetorical logic since Bill Clinton's philology of the word 'is', but even as a pious hope it has been disappointed.

The ally went on to repeat Dan's self-justification: *Paul became mentioned again* [not 'bashed', of course] *when "pleas" for his reinstatement were made* [and Dan] *was asked to give some kind of justification.* But, again, there had been no pleas! There had been no requests! THOMAS RYDBECK had offered his opinion that the VanceBBS might have been more interesting were I unbanned. BOB LACOVARA offered his opinion that Dan is an "intellectual coward"—to which Dan responded by deleting Bob's post and challenging him to hand-to-hand combat in Seattle.

But whatever the case, it was too much for Dan. He handed Administratorship of the VanceBBS back to MIKE BERRO. And it was then, and only then, that certain questions were raised, but only in e-mails among VIE managers. HANS VAN DER VEEKE, the Legendary Locator, wondered, now that MIKE BERRO, a famous friend of 'free speech', was again chief of the VanceBBS, why I had not be unbanned. And STEVE SHERMAN complained:

Dan posted plenty of unfavorable remarks about Paul, to which neither Paul nor anybody else was permitted to reply. I'm sorry, but I find that indefensible.

I would really like to hear why Paul has not been unbanned, now that Dan is no longer the owner of the Board.†

Mike, however, had agreed to maintain Dan's rule.‡ Here a stasis might have occurred, but Dan was only getting started.



* This 'conduct' cannot be defined as 'defaming Feht and baiting Bruce' without falling into the problems exposed in EXTANT 13. Previous to this business of defamation and homophobia the 2003 banning was justified in vague hints at scatological doggerel included in an adamant defence against attacks on the VIE. Dan's actual motivation for this ban is exposed in EXTANT #1.

† In mid-May, as these queries were being made, it was suggested that my alleged aggressiveness was a good reason to keep me banned. Bob Lacovara took it upon himself to adress this:

One might ask, why does one not move to instate A. Feht, if one returns Paul? Indeed, there are people who would be so inclined. The reason is straightforward. Whatever one thinks about Paul's writing, and his attacks on other people, I would like to see anyone produce a single instance in which Paul was the source of the personal attacks. That is, I submit that Paul's greatest flights of verbiage are responses to provocation.

One might argue, at best, that the discussions became acrimonious by stages, but I do not have an example where the arguments became personal at Paul's instigation. The individuals who are completely incapable of civilized disagreement can be banned without a second thought, to my mind. Paul isn't one of these. Having strong or unpopular beliefs or opinions isn't a "banning" offence, about the worst that can be laid at Paul's feet in the area of "instigation".

‡ Dan has discussed this matter on his personal blog, LOVELY MALICE (see page 24, below): "I passed the JVMB back to Mike Berro, on the condition that he maintain the bans in place."

ACT 2

In which Mike Berro and Paul Rhoads, who together built the VIE site, work together to destroy it.

ROB FRIEFELD, until the summer of 2005, had been hosting the VIE website on a commercial server at his own expense. With the project winding down ROB relinquished this task and expense, and the site was hosted, once again, by MIKE BERRO—apparently on his employer's server.

The EXTANT page, as some will remember, was not a part of the VIE site proper; it was dressed up in VIE colors but accessed from the 'Links' page as if it were an outside source. When Mike took over the site I asked him if he would continue to post EXTANT. He graciously agreed, and published new issues as they appeared.

A few days after publication of EXTANT 13—the issue in which the impossibility of Dan's claim to have banned me in 2003 for defaming Feht and Yurgil was exposed—the whole EXTANT page disappeared. We soon learned that Dan had warned Mike that, by hosting EXTANT, Mike exposed his employer to law-suits from Yurgil and Feht because, Dan claimed, it contained 'libelous' and 'actionable' material* regarding them. This 'material', whatever its status, was exclusively in EXTANT 13, but all issues were deleted. Simultaneously the ROBLES, a forum of the VanceBBS which held most of the 'Paul bashing', was wiped away. It would seem my accusers wished to avoid the appearance of hypocrisy, but I believe it was more fundamentally a preparation for Dan's next move, which will be discussed further on.

At this point, just as Dan had had enough of being VanceBBS Moderator, I had now had enough of being VIE E-in-C. Long ago I had resigned from the VIE board. Now, even though the 'Ellery Queen' volume was still in preparation, I resigned my post. To my colleagues I wrote:

...I tried to have Cosmopolis extended, but did not succeed. I have been trying to persist with Extant. . .now it has been remotely banned by Dan Gunter. This is ironic in that Dan's pressure, exerted on poor Mike, was as swiftly successful as my pressure on poor Mike 3 years ago was painfully slow.† I am truly sorry Mike always finds himself in the middle of these messes. . .There are. . .several months of VIE work left, including sending the books from Milan, following-up deliveries, replacing damaged books, handling queries; I was

* (See EXTANT 13.) This, of course, is absurd. To say nothing of this matter being 3 years old, even if anything I had posted on the Gaeen Reach were indeed homophobic, Bruce Yurgil, alleged victim of the alleged phobia, as Administrator of the 'Gaeen Reach' board, could, and even should, have deleted it, but chose not to. In any case I deleted it myself, as I routinely delete almost all my post on that board. Meanwhile, despite their relentless public and private accusations against me, some of which were even made in letters to COSMOPOLIS, neither Yurgil nor Feht has ever mentioned these alleged defamations. As for Feht, his non-alleged slanders of me are a public monument. For example; he has declared as fact that I have changed Vance's texts at the direction of a 'Vatican handler', that my marriage and religious convictions are mercenary, that I control the VIE project through bribes and threats; to say nothing of a constellation of slurs upon my person. Most recently he accused me of responsibility for an alleged delay in the publication of "Lurulu".

Certain lawyers in Washington State, namely Dan Gunter and Ed Winskill, who pretend to be defenders of the VIE project, have suddenly shown much concern to protect Alexander Feht, but have never shown any concern for these matters.

† See COSMOPOLIS 40, p7, *The VIE Crisis*.

slated to travel to Italy to check and pack the books. Under the current conditions of isolation, defamation and blocked communications, I'm out. I hope someone will take over‡ as E-in-C. . .

There was a period of panic, which I observed with rueful satisfaction—but, though I did not go to Italy, I continued to work with Stefania, and the books are now delivered, trans-shipped to non-European subscribers by BOB LACOVARA from New Jersey. Meanwhile, unwilling to be both vilified and exploited, I told Mike that if he was going to delete EXTANT he could delete COSMOPOLIS too, since almost all the issues contained my stuff. And what about the images which decorated the site? They were my work. And I had written most of the site-texts. I no longer wished to share these efforts.

So, piece by piece, the site was dismantled. Then one day it disappeared altogether. When it reappeared, several weeks later, it was reduced to a single page; but still it sported titles constructed with my fonts, decorative elements of my fabrication, and referred to me as codeveloper of the VIE fonts.* I indicated these problems, and expressed the wish that if I was to be mentioned only in such a way I'd rather not be mentioned at all. Mike made final adjustments—in the same cooperative spirit in which our work together has always proceeded—and VIE site is now an inert stump.



ACT 3

Which introduces Foreverness and Mrs. Gunter.

Meanwhile, as related in EXTANT 14, under an impulsion from GREG HANSEN, the LEGENDARY LOCATOR began building FOREVERNESS. The goal was to celebrate the VIE legacy, in a form appropriate to the post project situation, and in a manner as lucid and inclusive as possible. FOREVERNESS went live in July—shortly after the revised VIE page reappeared—and we approached the VIE board in the naive belief they would gladly link to the new site. This was refused in the following terms:

The VIE. . . is a corporation and. . . decisions are taken with [its] interests foremost. The VIE project is over—books are shipped and the coffers are empty. The Board has zero control over Foreverness but stands to be pulled in if a lawsuit came up. . . Sorry but we can't link.†

We were stunned by this response. When Hans had announced FOREVERNESS on the VanceBBS, the reaction included this post from 'windidiot':

‡ Were Dan and the Green Legion standing by? No.

* Joel Andersen volunteered this reaction: *For the record, I did of course work on the fonts, but only in a mechanical way. The designs are Paul's, he was the architect. 'Developed by' overstates my work and is far too pale to describe Paul's.*

† My response to this message included: ". . . If this reaction. . . has any relation to any reality remotely proportional to the dimensions [this reaction lends it], it would seem that the VIE board now judges that the enemies of the VIE are as active and dangerous as I have always claimed."

Extremely nice!

I had been wondering what happened to all those Cosmopolis back issues; there were a lot of great pieces particularly the JV interviews and various biographics, that are well worth preserving.

Many other goodies as well, great work all!

David B. Williams enthused:

Definitely the right move!

Hans then announced publication of EXTANT 14, on the VanceBBS, in these words:

At 'Foreverness', host to VIE newsletters Cosmopolis and Extant (see the marvellous 'index Major'), you can download the current issue of Extant, #14, which includes, among other things, the following:

- VIE project up-date (Ellery Queen volume news)
- About Foreverness
- Textport and French publications news.
- 'The Gaean Reach Setting' (a reaction to David B. Williams)
- 'A Vance Treasury' (a discussion of the Strahan-Dowling project, with comments from Tim Stretton and Chuck King.)
- 'The Domains of Koryphon' (a study in perceiving Vance aesthetically and ideologically, featuring a map of Koryphon).
- 'The Dog of the North' (a chapter from Tim Stretton's new book)

Dan Gunter reacted to this as follows:

I consider linking to a site that hosts Extant to be publication of defamatory statements about me and my wife.*

If anyone has a problem with my approach, you can contact me directly† and explain to me why you think it's all right to slander me and my wife.

David B. Williams elegantly begged to differ with this astonishing contention:

This fussing over a link to Foreverness because of some content in Extant will, of course, send many visitors in search of those passages when they would otherwise have remained completely ignorant of their existence.

I applaud this increase in traffic, because it will bring more pairs of eyes to the listing of my own insightful and often amusing essays about Jack Vance from Cosmopolis; being separately and individually indexed, this is a great improvement over the old Cosmopolis archive. Now my future fans can find me!

I hope that visitors in search of libelous or slanderous passages in Extant won't be too disappointed; these are few and not very entertaining. On the other hand, I'd like to point out that Extant 14, though bereft of such passages, does contain a lengthy essay by Paul Rhoads explaining why the viewpoint in Domains of Koryphon wanders so alarmingly through the course of the novel. After a quick read I am not sure that I am convinced, but it is a reasoned argument explaining why the viewpoint changes and why Jack Vance would choose to adopt such a structure to tell this particular story. If you are seriously interested in Jack Vance's work, you should take a look at this.

* Dan Gunter simultaneously menaced the VIE, in an email to the Legendary Locator and members of the VIE board: "Mr. [John] Vance should be on notice that, based on Rhoads's on [sic] assertions, I consider Rhoads's defamatory statements regarding me and my wife to have been made in Rhoads's official capacity as Editor-in-Chief of the Vance Integral Edition." Is Dan Gunter's target 'Paul Rhoads' or the VIE?

† Anyone, not including myself, with whom Dan refused to communicate.

ED WINSKILL, VIE board member and wankher emeritus, rebuked David for this civilized post, as if David were a 'moral leper'‡:

Those who, with their families, are not subject to these kinds of statements can afford a cavalier attitude. The fact remains that the statements are highly improper, and over and above all, that they have absolutely no place whatsoever in anything associated with Jack Vance and his work.

MIKE BERRO also chimed in, not to second Ed but to endorse one of Alexander Feht's themes, denouncing EXTANT 14 as an example of my egregious personal ambition:

Examples from Vance and history demonstrate what people are willing to do in order to become "immortal." Sad, really. Vance's work has always spoken for itself; even Jack eschews analysis.

It stops being a tribute when the contributors are looking for self-aggrandizement. . . *

Amazed at this development, I resolutely sought to contact Dan—he has blocked my e-mail since 2003, and of course I am banned on the VanceBBS. I wrote to Mike Berro (who had replied to none of my mails since the EXTANT deletion) and 'wankher' PATRICK DUSOULIER:

Dear Mike and Patrick,
in the name of our 6 years of work together, would you please ask Dan to identify where in 'Extant' he has a problem, so that this matter may be dealt with in a rational and civilized manner?

I am somewhat perplexed, given his current attitude, that he did not complain to me at the time I allegedly told lies about him or his family. I am also puzzled why he does not do so now rather than seeking to exclude 'Extant' in totality. . . I have searched though the 14 issues but remain unable to locate any such thing. It would be a simple matter to make adjustments on whatever page in whichever issue is in question. I have no desire to tell lies, and if I have done so I am

‡ *Krasmark* threw up his arms. "Gentlemen, be reasonable! The matter is essentially trivial. Agreed: *Cugel* should not make signals and greet his friends at the urinal. Master Chernitz might be more generous in his assumptions. I suggest that Master Chernitz retract the term 'moral leper' and *Cugel* his 'tree-weasel', and there let the matter rest." CUGEL: THE STARBREAK SPATERLIGHT.

* David B. Williams, very good naturedly, responded to Mike in a new thread entitled: *In favor of urbanite subjectivity*:

"True, Jack declines to analyze his work; probably an aspect of his disdain for "urbanite subjectivity", critics criticizing criticism, etc. (see "Assault on a City" and elsewhere), and perhaps another example of the common writerly reluctance to subject their methods and motives to analysis for fear that such self-knowledge (or even changing typewriters) might dissipate the magic. However, for the rest of us, critical analysis can sometimes resolve puzzles and relieve qualms. "The Domains of Koryphon [Gray Prince]" is a prominent example. I have always been dismayed by the startling changes of viewpoint character in this novel, to the point of asking myself, "Who is the protagonist in this tale?" As the late Adolph Hitler liked to say, "There are only two possibilities":

1. Jack Vance is a bad writer.

2. Jack Vance knows what he is doing and adopted this irregularity approach to achieve something he thought was important for the story he was telling. Since possibility 1 is unthinkable, I employ an extraordinary mental process and adduce that possibility 2 is limpid truth. But, sadly, my ability to generate acute literary insights seems to be rather modest, so I welcome analytical assistance wherever I can find it. Paul Rhoads' analysis of Domains in Extant 14 offers a reasoned argument to explain why Vance chose to change viewpoint in such a dramatic way. I don't know whether his analysis is valid. Jack Vance, if he chose, might offer an entirely different explanation. And even if it is valid, I might argue that this experiment was not fully successful. Whatever, at least my qualms are relieved – there is a credible explanation. Urban abstraction triumphs! . . .

eager to make corrections, and whatever amends are deemed appropriate.

Very sincerely. . .

Patrick responded, making reference to Yurgil and Feht (. . . *even if Dan were to be satisfied, there remains the question of other potentially objectionable material concerning other individuals*) but I had dealt with this Yurgil-Feht business in EXTANT 13, so I replied regarding Dan's new allegation:

. . . there is no question of Dan being 'satisfied'. Dan has made it his business to exclude 'Extant' not on the basis of hurt feelings but alleged libelous statements about himself and his wife. Dan has not influenced Mike and the VIE board to exclude Extant because he 'finds objectionable' this or that, and if he had, such an attitude ought to be intolerable to all.

Why has Dan so far refused to identify the alleged libelous material, and explain the basis of its libelousness? Libelous material has an exact definition—there is no need for prolonged discussions!* It is positive statements of alleged 'fact' (not opinions, jokes and hypotheses expressly identified as such) which are a) false and b) damaging. I am fully aware of this, and I object to it strongly no matter who practices it (including myself).

STEVE SHERMAN, a VIE manager since 1999, who had led several teams and was also pillar of textual restoration work, addressed the VIE managers privy to this exchange:

On the one hand I am sick to death of this whole controversy. Dammit, the VIE is finished, including the surprising coda, the EQ volume. There is much to be proud of, especially considering the poisonous atmosphere in which it was accomplished.

On the other, I fully believe that Paul has been treated badly, both by the Board and by the JVMB. Whether the reason is his Catholicism, his political views, his personality or the stink of his feet is neither here nor there. The Board declined to come to his defense when he was under attack on the JVMB, The Gaeon Reach, the pages of Cosmopolis or various emails (some of which I received, notably from Feht).†

* Patrick had raised the specter of such 'prolonged discussions', which he claims to abhor.

† The worst of these lies is on message boards, blogs and private mails, but COSMOPOLIS contains many examples:

COSMOPOLIS 37:

. . . an extensive apologia for the views and activities of the far right wing French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen. (*Martin Read*)

COSMOPOLIS 40:

At present there is a resurgence of extreme nationalism and extreme right-wing politics in Europe. . . it easy for those of Fascistic views to work on the dissatisfaction and unhappiness of people, particularly the less well educated, which they channel against outsiders. . . Those who manipulate people towards hatred are of two main types: those who believe in the lies and half-truths they peddle for whatever (usually personal) reasons, and those who are merely cynical and power hungry. Whatever the motivation of these people their extreme rhetoric is dangerous, it creates the environment where Turkish families can be burned alive in their own houses in Germany or where a youth can be stabbed at a bus stop in London simply for being black. My reason for writing these lines now is not that I have a personal grudge against Paul Rhoads. . . the reason for me writing is that Mr. Rhoads' opinions, as expressed in Cosmopolis, can be construed as part of a dangerous continuum, the 'thin end of the wedge'. . . (*Martin Read*)

COSMOPOLIS 42:

Are Paul's crimes limited to just his articles in Cosmopolis? No, the entire project [see next page]

It has not reacted evenhandedly to the attacks of which he is allegedly guilty. He was advised to put himself above the fray when he was slandered, but his alleged slanders, which I am unable to find, have received no such tolerance.

As it happens, I share neither his Catholicism nor his political views. He is not unique among my friends in being occasionally abrasive. I have never had an occasion to notice whether his feet extrude a chife. If one of these categories is a problem for any recipient—OK, you've a right to your opinion. My friendship for Paul is uncompromised.

But what it really boils down to is this: Foreverness is the legitimate successor to the VIE website. It celebrates two things: 1) the lifework of Jack Vance, and 2) what was accomplished to bring that lifework to the world. It needs to be publicized to the existing Vance community.

And then there is the matter of simple courtesy. Paul deserves a response from the Board and from the JVMB. If he has slandered anybody, as he has been slandered, he has expressed an eagerness—not just a willingness—to provide redress. None of his attackers has done anything similar. He deserves that opportunity. He deserves the courtesy of a simple reply.

Eventually Patrick reported that Dan declined dialogue. He mentioned a letter Dan had sent to Hans, entitled "Your exposure to defamation", in which Dan warned Hans there was "defamatory material" in some EXTANT issues, so that Hans, as "publisher", risked "possible consequences". Dan, said Patrick, wanted a reply from Hans.

Patrick also seemed to be trying to help Dan target the creators of FOREVERNESS, asking: *is Hans actually the Webmaster of Foreverness, by the way?*

Regarding libel/slander laws, Patrick wrote: *It is quite possible that libel/slander is limited to plain statements that could be proved false, said statements being proved "malicious" in nature. I do not know if snide personal remarks qualify. I do not know if rhetorical questions. . . . qualify. In short, I have no idea whether what Dan complains about can qualify. That would be up to him to argue should he decide to escalate the issue.*

has been subject to his dictatorial manner, and his actions are those of a fascist wannabe who has no respect for the opinions of others. I will now present a brief history outlining some of these crimes, and why it has now come to the point of demanding Paul's removal from further involvement with the VIE, and especially his banning from Cosmopolis. . . . If you share the concern of those who believe Paul Rhoads to be harmful to the image and reputation of Jack Vance, don't remain silent. Write to Cosmopolis and let your voices be heard.

Have I said all I have to say regarding Paul Rhoads? I've only just begun. My next letter to Cosmopolis will begin to examine his articles of hate and prejudice that have appeared here, and why they are unsuitable for this forum, and why they stand to do the greatest harm to Jack's name. I wish Paul would. . . do the only honorable thing, resign. (*Bruce Yurgil*)

COSMOPOLIS 30:

. . . his incessant self-aggrandizement, his shameless using of the VIE project in general (and of Cosmopolis in particular) as a personal propaganda vehicle, his cowardly habit to evade lucid questions by distorting the opponent's words and changing the subject: a born-again flat-earther, he is far beyond reason. Virulent, obsessed with conspiracy theories, spitting out ambiguous insults resembling Saddam Hussein's speeches, this unemployed dictatorillustrator threatens to excommunicate himself from the VIE project if the size or the content of his infantile stultiloquence should be limited in any way. Proud 'high-level volunteers' are trembling in cold sweat. I, for one, would be relieved: Vance's books would be safe from the Vatican's 'editing'. Leave, Mr. Rhoads, by all means!

How did it come to this? Who is responsible? Not Mr. Rhoads, for he doesn't know what responsibility is. The grown-ups who fail to discipline him? The successive editors of Cosmopolis? Definitely! . . . hard-core pornography cannot insult an innocent nun more than Mr. Rhoads' religious blague insults my intelligence. (*Alexander Fehf*)

I thanked Patrick for his efforts, and replied:

If Dan has a problem with Hans, that is a between them. It has nothing to do with the problem at hand.

What I am concerned about is Dan's public insistence. . . with Mike's, and particularly Ed's adamant support. . . that I have slandered him. Based on this allegation Dan has managed to impose a ban on a link from the VIE site or the JVMB to Foreverness (a feat being reproduced on the Jack Vance wikipedia page by what seem to be the same people, including Alexander Fehf), as he previously prevailed upon Mike to delete Extant from the VIE site. . . In other words Dan, with Ed's collusion, is imposing his will, or seeking to impose his will, on the VIE project and various independent individuals, based on an allegation he refuses to reveal! Dan is now seeking to expand his intimidations to Hans. . . Dan's on-going failure to reveal how I have allegedly slandered him is suspicious, and his unwillingness to speak to me is. . . suggestive of a delaying tactic. . . Dan should start by limiting his intimidation to the issue or issues of Extant where the alleged slander has occurred, rather than stigmatizing Extant as a whole.

Regarding slander, it is indeed statements which are false and malicious. Snarkery† of any and all kinds is not slander; i.e. if Dan's feelings are hurt, that is his private problem—though he is welcome to complain about it in Extant if that would make him feel better—I know it helps some of us.

. . . Dan's offensive of intimidation is harming the legacy of the VIE project, including the unpaid efforts of 300 volunteers over 6 years, based on vague and unsubstantiated accusations.

To repeat: I am eager to remove any slander from Extant, and to make public apology for any such mistake on my part. I am not being ironic. Dan has earned many punishments, and he has received them—and he may receive more yet—but even the worst criminal should not be lied about.

After much search I finally found a reference to the mysterious Mrs. Gunter. It was in EXTANT 12. Highlighting the *snappy word-play* Dan introduced into a VanceBBS posts, I quoted him:

I think that the Lewinsky scandal was—ahem—blown all out of proportion.

I commented: *'Ahem' indeed! But take note, this is no vulgar punnery for its own-sake; Dan is serious about his politics*—and to demonstrate this I quoted him again:

I'm a deep-dyed Democrat. Heck, the Democrats are usually too conservative for me.*

I then went on to SUPPOSE that this *explains* [Dan's] *libertine indulgence for Clinton's peccadilli*, and then to WONDER *how Mrs. Gunter feels about her husband's dandyish indifference to. . . adultery*, and then to POINT OUT THAT IF Mr. and Mrs. Gunter *swing my* curiosity, for obvious reasons, would be moot.

As for swinging; obviously it is a private option which I would no more dare stigmatize than celibacy or chicken fucking (assuming mutual consent), or homosexuality

† 'Snark', a term from the vocabulary of Dan Gunter himself, as assiduous Extant readers will know.

* There has been constant complaint, including from certain 'wankers', that I misuse 'Vance dedicated forums' to expose my politics. Whether or not this is true, and even whether or the not the complaint is based on any rational or sensible principle, why is no one else ever held to this wonderful standard?

or even— though I am a religiously inclined person— heterosexuality. In any case, I was in no way suggesting the Gunter's swing; I was indicating that that, if they did, my curiosity regarding the eventual attitude of a hypothetical Mrs. Gunter concerning the case in point would be nuncupatory.

Finally, I remind a fascinated world that: *Dan's domestic situation is none of my business.*

So, here is the famous 'defamation' which inspired ED WINSKILL, a Washington State lawyer like Mr. Dan Gunter, to excoriate David B. Williams for 'affording' a cavalier attitude, given that David and his family *are not subject to these kinds of statements*. Where had Ed Winskill been, all those years, while Alexander Feht was asserting I had married for money?

I have devoted careful study to EXTANT 12, and remain incapable of understanding how it is defamatory. Dan *is* "dandyishly indifferent to presidential adultery", at least in my opinion—do I have a right to that opinion?—and, in particular, he *does*, it seems clear to me, use a 'libertine indulgence for Clinton's peccadilli'. If Dan wants to keep these aspects of his personality under wraps he ought to watch his tongue. Dan also appears to be worried about his wife. Will he consider it defamatory if I reveal that I am too?

Now, let me make the chronology clear:

1 - When EXTANT 13 (which contained a discussion of Dan's allegation that he had banned me in 2003 because of defamation of Feht and Yurgil) was published, the whole EXTANT page was deleted from the VIE page by Mike; since, according to Dan Gunter, EXTANT 13 rendered Mike's employer liable to be sued by defenders of Feht and Yurgil.

2 - When Hans announced, on the VanceBBS, that EXTANT 14 was published at FOREVERNESS (to which he provided a link) FOREVERNESS was condemned by Ed Winskill, on the VanceBBS, in the name of the VIE board, for alleged defamation of Dan Gunter in EXTANT 12.*



ACT 4

Invective, Explanations and Indignation.

Under these pressures the link which Hans has posted to FOREVERNESS on the VanceBBS was removed. MIKE BERRO, as VanceBBS Moderator-in-Chief, replying to the objections to this, made a post entitled *No Links to Inflammatory Sites*:

Messages containing links to "Foreverness" will be edited

* *In a discussion with Dan Gunter, which he allowed for a few days in late August on his personal posting board, Dan, when I asked why he had refused for so long to indicate where I had allegedly defamed his wife, addressed me in these words (note Dan's confusion of the issues and chronology):*

I didn't contact you about it because I find you despicable. Instead, when Ed Winskill pointed it out to me, he assured me that he would take steps to separate the Vance Integral Edition from you. He told me that the situation with you had become intolerable. And he apologized for having allowed it to go as far as it had.

I asked that Extant not be posted on the VIE site. I wasn't going to negotiate with you because, frankly, I don't believe in negotiating with someone who is, in my mind, the moral equivalent of a terrorist. Instead, I was content so long as the VIE was not associated with your comments.

I was offended when Foreverness was created. It gives every evidence of being an official VIE site, and it includes Extant. I was going to ignore that, but when Hans van der Veeke linked to it from the JVMB, I decided that I could no longer do so.

or deleted. Certain issues of "Extant" contain libelous and defamatory personal attacks, and I do not wish to support (and become potentially liable for) such statements. Free speech is well and good, but free advertising for such scurrilous nonsense is not. If Extant (a non-VIE publication) was removed, I would rescind this injunction.

If you wish to lodge a protest, please send me a private message or email. . .It's certainly unfortunate that such a valuable resource chooses to also host inflammatory attacks.

If only Mike had taken such a vigorous position in 2003! He was seconded by ED WINSKILL:

I, too, wish to point out that Extant is not a VIE publication. I further would point out that the VIE project has been completed. The Vance Integral Edition, a California non-profit corporation, is not connected with Foreverness, nor any site other than its own.

Crouched in the lonely damp of the GAEAN REACH, Bruce Yurgil watched all this with somber glee. In an rare post on that moribund slander-board, he wrote:

Perhaps it's my ego, but I feel I deserve an apology from John Vance, on down. That includes "into the foxhole" Winskill and Mike Berro. I know Alex [Feht] deserves one. A public press release and a mailing to the VIE address list wouldn't even things, but it's the least they could do.

Shocked by the qualifications of Extant coming off the VanceBBS, I explained to a large group of VIE managers that the 14 issues of EXTANT included many VIE or Vance related items not even authored by me, and pointed out that EXTANT had picked up the torch where COSMOPOLIS had laid it down:

EXTANT 7 published Robin Rouch's end-of-project salute—which had not made it into COSMOPOLIS 63, and Michael Parsons' thoughtful essay on TCHAI.

EXTANT 8 has Rob Friefield's discussion of 'Ellery Queen' editorial work.

EXTANT 9 includes a discussion by of CLARGES by Richard Chandler, and a discussion by Till Noever of his new book SELADIENNA.

EXTANT 11 has a piece by Koen Vyverman paving the way for 'Totality'.

EXTANT 13 has a discussion of 'Ellery Queen' restoration work by Chuck King, and a chapter from Tim Stretton's new book: DOG OF NORTH.

Other issues include letters by GEORGE RHOADS, JOHN EDWARDS, MATTY PARIS, CHRIS CORLEY, FRANS LANGELAAN and MICHAEL RATHBUN. My own articles include Vance related essays on the American literary tradition, pulp sci-fi, and Spengler, with discussions of *Alfred's Ark*, *Lyonesse*, *Blue World*, *Cadwal* and *The Domains of Koryphon*—to say nothing of VIE work reports in post-COSMOPOLIS issues.

The first issue of EXTANT appeared after the publication of COSMOPOLIS 59, when COSMOPOLIS was already targeted for discontinuation (against my recommendation, though with my full support of whatever decision the editors thought best). The last issue of COSMOPOLIS was 63, published in June 05; at that time there were still subscribers who had not received their VIE sets. EXTANT 5 was published in July 05, but even when EXTANT 14 was published (in June 06),

not all EQ volumes had yet been delivered, to say nothing of replacing defective volumes, or dealing with extra sets and volumes the VIE still holds.

I also pointed out that COSMOPOLIS was not a 'VIE publication' because it had been created, or even formally sanctioned, by the VIE board, that, like every other aspect of the project, it was the fruit of a personal initiative—in this case BOB LACOVARA'S. And now, after non-reaction to attacks on me (and, as I claim, upon the project) on the VanceBBS, the Gaean Reach, in COSMOPOLIS and emails, the VIE board, under pressure from an outsider, was taking the positive step of proclaiming EXTANT a 'non-VIE publication'!

I therefore asked the fellow VIE managers I was addressing if they agreed with two propositions—noting that such agreement was not intended to sanction slander (the passage in Extant 12 had not yet be localized or studied) which is to be excluded in all cases, including EXTANT:

- 1) *Extant is the successor to Cosmopolis.*
- 2) *Foreverness is the legitimate successor to the VIE website.*

These propositions were quickly endorsed by JOEL ANDERSON (VIE Master Composer), TIM STRETTON (VIE Proofing and TI team leader), TILL NOEVER and BRIAN GHARST. RUSS WILCOX, head of VIE publicity, wrote:

The VIE website should impartially link to Foreverness as well as any other memorial websites that its volunteers wish to erect. . .the Foreverness site is a high-quality remembrance and celebration of the project and the VIE reputation certainly is enhanced by it.

Regarding Cosmopolis, we were all told several months ago in an email from Suan that "Cosmopolis is no longer being published." Therefore, it would be a helpful service to the VIE community now to inform them that a group of former Cosmopolis contributors has decided to keep the flame alive with Extant and to offer a pointer toward the. . .page. . . In short, publicizing websites that celebrate Jack Vance and the VIE is well within the VIE's goals.*

ANDREAS IRLE, of the VIE composition team, wrote:

I endorse that "Extant is the successor to Cosmopolis". I found the publication of "Cosmopolis" important; it published many interesting articles. Publication of it's successor "Extant" will contribute to the discussion of the work of Jack Vance. To discuss this work is to keep it alive! For the same reason I consider that "Foreverness is the legitimate successor to the VIE website."

BOB LACOVARA stated:

Extant is a publication related to the writings of Jack Vance among other topics, and is protected, at least in the legal bounds of the US, by the First Amendment. Anyone who alleges a criminal action on the part of Extant's publication must, at the very least, show the statements of alleged criminality. Otherwise, that person is merely harassing an otherwise innocuous publication.

* Russ also pointed out that, if there were real concerns, a disclaimer could be used such as Google's, stating that sites may have 'content some people find objectionable, inaccurate or offensive', and assumes no responsibility for the content. Would anyone, Russ asked, think of suing Google for linking to Foreverness?

Foreverness is a fine Vance website, linked to a wonderful search engine, and also exhibiting Extant. Anyone who objects to Foreverness would be better off complaining about porn sites.

One of the most important VIE volunteers, CHRIS CORLEY, pioneer of Techno-Proofing, and head of the massive Post-Proofing team, wrote:

It is such a shame that people with an axe to grind can cause such mischief. What possible influence do they think they can wield over a citizen of the Netherlands? It boggles the mind, especially since it is over something so petty and imaginary. I checked the vanceintegral.com web site and found that it is a dead-end page, with no links to anything, not even a contact e-mail. It seems self-defeating. What if someone wants to order a set of VIE volumes? What if librarians and researchers want to learn more about the VIE and Vance's work?

Incidentally, this is no idle question. I visited with an archivist at Texas A&M University this summer who is the curator of their "Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Collection" (their name, not mine), and who is well-connected in the academic circles that study this type of literature. They possess a set of VIE volumes, and he asked me about web resources available for the VIE. I gave him www.vanceintegral.com, knowing that it is currently of minimal value but in hopes that it may be revived at some time in the future. Of course I also gave him www.integralarchive.org.



ACT 5

Wackypedian verbal bulimia and a few Terse Statements.

Meanwhile, on the wikipedia Vance page, after some truly scandalous texts, the VIE was at long last favored with a "neutral" "article" (actually 2 lines), posted by a certain Hayford Pierce. The VIE was described as: *an integral edition of all of Vance's speculative works which preportedly [sic] presents the original manuscripts as Vance first submitted them for publication.*

I pointed out to Hayford Pierce and the other wikipedia 'editors':

- 1) That not all Vance's work can be qualified as 'speculative' and the VIE presents these as well.
- 2) That *the VIE does not present 'original manuscripts as Vance first submitted them for publication', but the texts Vance wanted us to use (first edition or not), including versions revised by himself, as well as his revisions exclusive to the VIE.*
- 3) that the VIE includes a *public record of what was done, available at Foreverness, a link to which is being blocked.*

Hayford Pierce informed me that these objections were "meaningless", and complained I was making "petty distinctions without a difference". He excoriated me so roundly, told me where to get off in so plenipotentiary a manner, that I cannot resist reproducing his broadside *in extensio*:

Paul, let me put it to you so that perhaps you can finally understand it. I am a professional writer. People actually pay me money to write words for them. I am also a highly experienced copy-editor of my own work and that of others. Moreover, I love correct word usage and English styling and grammar. In short, I know a LOT about words and how to use them. I also have NO feeling about the VIE one way or another, as I have tried to tell you over and over. I have rewritten the VIE in the most neutral, objective, NPOV [Neutral Point of View] manner that is possible to do so [sic]. R. Letson is ALSO a professional writer who shares the same skills and mindsets as me. He has vetted my copy and found it acceptable. You, Paul, however, based on everything I have seen that you have written, have difficulties both in communicating in simple, correct English AND in presenting a NPOV about this VIE. For this reason, I think that the current version of the VIE will have to stand. It is both factual and NPOV. If you want to add NPOV new material that is relevant to the article, please do so. It will be copy-edited to bring it up to correct usage. . .If, on the other hand, it is more POV, self-publicizing polemicism, then it will be ruthlessly edited. I am sorry to have to write to you in such terms, but you have become extremely tiresome to everyone else in this particular sphere of interest with your obsessive ramblings. Would you PLEASE either learn the elements of NPOV or just leave the article alone. I am still trying hard to be completely neutral about this section but it is increasingly difficult. I, RLetson, and others have never participated in ANY of the controversy that apparently attends the VIE—all we want to do is create an objective, interesting, well-written Vance article that is also NPOV and factually correct. As [sic] some point all the info that is needed to provide this will have been put into the article, edited, polished, vetted, and generally agreed upon by the contributors. You are certainly not helping this process.

Meanwhile the imprudent statements of Mike and Ed had given our old friends a nice talking point. A conclave of Hayford's fellow wikipedians was in progress regarding a link to FOREVERNESS; note how apparently reasonable persons so easily allow themselves to be seduced to the dark side:

BAPHOMET V:

. . .As Foreverness is primarily a repository for Paul Rhoads's extensive writings on politics and religion, is not officially associated with either the VIE or Jack Vance himself, and contains potentially actionable libelous material, I suggest this link should be removed. Also note that the official policy on the Jack Vance Message Board is not to allow links to Foreverness, on legal grounds. See [the VanceBBS] and note particularly the statement of Ed Winskill, the VIE treasurer.

R. LETSON:

Will this nonsense ever die down? I'm not a particular fan of Mr. Rhoads's editorializing, but to call Foreverness "primarily" dedicated to it is more than a bit of an exaggeration—even Mike Berro (of the JVMB) seems only really upset at the contents of Extant. I don't know (yet) exactly what the objectionable material is, but it sure would be nice to be able to point to the Cosmopolis archive, which includes, along with more Rhoads opinion pieces than most folk would probably care to ingest, some useful and even unique Vanceana. But if the questionable can't be disentangled from the useful, I suppose we have to go without the whole site. Drat.

JOHN S:

. . .if you genuinely want this nonsense to die down, don't impose it on Wikipedia readers: many of us would rather spend the rest of our lives without any "useful and even unique Vanceana" allegedly found on Rhoads-controlled sites, given a blissful opportunity not to see or hear, ever again, anything remotely reminding us of Rhoads, his odious persona, and his cockamamie writings. Away with your nonsense, away with any links to Rhoads.

ARVIN SLOAN:

Gentlemen: Could we, please, wrap up this distasteful subject? Friends of that mentally disturbed individual are cordially invited to create a Wikipedia page dedicated to him, complete with all the links to his multiple blogs. Leave the VIE description as is; otherwise, keep the Jack Vance page clean.

MIKE CHRISTIE:

. . .I believe the link should be included because the VIE is a notable fact about Vance and should be referenced for verifiability.

BAPHOMET V:

To repeat, the Foreverness site. . .is not the VIE site. . .it is not associated with the official VIE site. . .the VIE organization has explicitly made known (see the message board link above) that it does not wish to be associated with it.

MIKE CHRISTIE:

OK, I misunderstood—it's the official VIE site I thought was being linked to. . .I agree that there is no reason to provide a general link to the whole site. Thanks for the clarification.

Poor Mike Christie still seems confused.

Then a certain 'Peter1968' foolishly reverted the link from the 'official' VIE site to FOREVERNESS, sparking further confabulation:

TETRAGRUPPASM:

. . .There is already a link to the official VIE page in this small VIE section, isn't that sufficient? Why also link to this other, dubious, site? The site is dubious for various reasons. For one thing, it's conspicuously not linked to from the official VIE site. Secondly. . .if you visit Foreverness you'll find an entire section dedicated to Andreas Irle Publication with a big fat link to this commercial venture. That is both sneaky and dubious. Thirdly, Foreverness mainly consists of an archive of the fanzines Cosmopolis and Extant that, apart from containing articles relating to the glorious VIE project and on Jack Vance of various qualities, also contains endless tirades about Islam, modern art, French politics and a host of other topics with precious little bearing on Vance's sci-fi. Dubious in the true sense of the word.

PETER1968:

Fair enough, I'm happy with that. At the time, I reverted it as it appeared nothing more than a frivolous change. Understandably, there seems to be many axes to grind over the VIE and Vance's Wikipedia article needs to be kept free of them obviously. But, as I said, I'm happy with your explanation. . .

I then put in an appearance:

I will make a 'terse statement', as the also much maligned Lehuster prefaced his remarks to the conclave at Boumergarth:

There is nothing "controversial" about the VIE that has not been cooked up by a handful of internet trolls, some of whom, like certain ensqualmed magicians, strangely resemble the wikipedia 'editors' here present. The reason the so called "official" VIE site, now emasculated as a vancian resource, does not link to Foreverness is because a certain Dan Gunter, ex "moderator" of the VanceBBS, has threatened to sue the VIE if it does, on the grounds I have defamed his wife in "Extant". Since I didn't even know he was married I have been begging him for several month to reveal the issue and page with the defamation, but he prefers to condemn "Extant" as a whole. Several people have reviewed all the issues of "Extant" and remain unable to locate the alleged slander. As for the rest of the "controversy", it consists of claims such as that the Vatican piloted re-writes of Vance's texts though the VIE editor-in-chief—but if you know even fact 1 about the VIE, and you think there might be something to such a charge, you are either incredibly stupid, or crazy, or evil, or some combination of the above. And the same mind which cooked up that bit of slander cooked up the rest.

As for the following allegations:

1) *Foreverness includes an entire section dedicated to Andreas Irle Publication with a big fat link to this commercial venture.*

This "commercial venture" is the work of two VIE volunteers (Andreas Irle, Rob Friefeld) and the Vance family. Its eventual aim is to make all of Vance's work, which is not currently published by regular publishing houses, available. So far, Editions Andreas Irle has published 3 volumes for subscribers (the Lyonesse books, nowhere else available). Discussion of this effort on Foreverness is neither "sneaky" nor "dubious", but a prolongation of the VIE goals, which Foreverness naturally seeks to support.

2) *Foreverness mainly consists of an archive of the fanzines Cosmopolis and Extant that, apart from containing articles relating to the glorious VIE project and on Jack Vance of various qualities, also contains endless tirades about Islam, modern art, French politics and a host of other topics with precious little bearing on Vance's sci-fi.*

There are 63 issues of Cosmopolis, and 14 issues of Extant. These electronic periodicals were aspects of the VIE project and, as such, contain material which relates to the VIE project itself (as opposed to Vance or his work) including features whose intent was project animation. Contributions by dozens and dozens of people make them up, and Cosmopolis and Extant were not designed with wikipedia or anything else in mind but the progress and success of the VIE project. However, they just so happen to contain a horde of valuable Vance related materials such as can be found nowhere else. For a resource concerning Vance, ruling them out as an object of interest is like cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. Finally, any alleged tirades in Cosmopolis or Extant, given the undeniable extent and variety of content, can hardly be qualified as "endless", and some of the articles which do not bear on "Vance's sci-fi" do bear on his mysteries and fantasies. Furthermore, there are many other features on Foreverness, such as the page of first chapters.

Baphomet V, who, if not Alexander Feht is his clone, brushed these points aside, like Zanzel Malancthones crying "Balderdash, flagrant and wild!":

Is this not becoming somewhat tiresome already? It is unlikely that the other editors will ever agree that this Wikipedia article should be turned into a tool for your self-promotion. And when Dan Gunter (a lawyer) and Ed Winkill, the VIE legal advisor (also a lawyer), warn against linking to the Foreverness site, it seems safest not to link to the Foreverness site. There is little "valuable Vance-related material" in either Cosmopolis or Extant; practically all of the text is written by you, and while Vance is occasionally the official excuse, it is really concerned with "Paul Rhoads, the misunderstood genius." Much like all that you have written here is concerned with impressing us with your own importance, not with saying anything useful about Jack Vance, his work, or how the article might be improved.

I quote all this because it is so nice an illustration of how things get out of hand. Though my view is not shared by everyone, I believe that what is at stake, not just here, but in cyber-space generally, is the legacy of the VIE, and a debt some of us feel is owed to 300 people who did 6 years of volunteer work, at a call initially made by me. This historical accomplishment must not be allowed to fall victim to those so eager to discredit it. If care is not taken we may suddenly wake up one morning to discover that a generalized doubt about the project, including the quality of the texts, is 'common knowledge', so that commercial publishers won't touch them, even at the urging of the Vance estate. This, would have consequences for Vance's work itself, breaking an elan in its favor I believe has been engendered.

The LEGENDARY LOCATOR, in an effort to sooth passions and bring about friendly relations, after a series of exchanges in which he brought Dan Gunter, at long last, to identify where in EXTANT he thinks he is defamed, made him a reasonable offer:

I can understand very well why you might feel offended by the line 'do the Gunter's swing?' This is a rhetorical question, so it is not defamation; therefore I would be very happy to remove it but not under the shadow of an unjustified accusation. Would you post a retraction of your accusation of defamation on the JVMB, and leave in place? We should make a friendly exchange, and hostile feelings should be calmed.

Dan's rejected Hans' friendly gesture in a long and violent letter. I quote a small portion, near the end, which treats matters not evoked by Hans:

The fact that others—whoever they may be—are using my concerns in support of their own agenda is not my problem. You are in entire control of the problem, Mr. van der Veeke. You can take care of this problem by distancing the VIE from Rhoads. So long as you align the VIE with Rhoads, you are opening yourself and the VIE to criticism that I believe to be fair and cogent. . . You apparently have no problem with the immense quantity of absurd criticism that Paul Rhoads heaped on the JVMB in general and me in particular. Nevertheless, you

expect me to silence myself and not to criticize either Rhoads or the VIE, which gave him a forum for those comments. So long as you continue to support Rhoads's attacks on me and the JVMB, then I see no need to spike any guns—mine or others—that might be aimed at Rhoads or the VIE. . . I am not going to go out of my way even a millimeter to help an organization (i.e., the VIE) that has supported multiple attacks on me. . . If you want to promote the VIE, then you need to distance the VIE from Rhoads. And you need to do that publicly. You need to announce that Rhoads is no longer editor-in-chief of the VIE. You need to take a hard look at "Extant" and remove all of the offensive material from that publication. And you need to apologize for publication of that material. If you do the right thing, then I will once more support the VIE—reluctantly, in light of the history of almost complete moral failure of the VIE on this point.*

I do not hesitate to recognize that certain important VIE volunteers, who would even count themselves, I think, among my friends, feel I am an impulsive flame warrior using EXTANT to run a personal vendetta against Dan Gunter, and that an effort to promote EXTANT as an aspect of the VIE project, as on FOREVERNESS, is, as Dan suggests, an effort to hijack the VIE in favor of a *parochial and self-interested concern*.

To this view I can, first of all, point to those many VIE volunteers who do not agree. I can then reiterate my unwavering contention that my personal feelings are not involved and that, with the project at stake, while certain anti-VIE actions can be ignored, others cannot. I can then indicate—a point open to verification—that when I deal with such matters, in COSMOPOLIS or EXTANT, I follow some self-imposed rules:

-Except in a rare and extreme cases (in fact only once) when it has been necessary to unveil the rank mendaciousness of bitter enemies, I ask permission to use non-public statements.

-I present the position of VIE enemies fairly.

-I may kid my adversaries a bit, but I did not use COSMOPOLIS, and I do not use EXTANT as a platform to launch efforts to seriously humiliate—a Churchillian aspect of flame-warring of which economy cannot always be made—and I certainly never slander (or wrongfully accuse), which is a thing I abhor, though my understanding of slander is not elastic and self-serving, as with Dan Gunter who has filled several websites with his vitriolic personal attacks. I sometimes report ridicule which has occurred in public areas, including that aimed at myself, when I feel it is a useful aspect of a demonstration or historical record.

-When rebuking a friend I take a serious tone, but when dealing with self-proclaimed enemies, the harsher their aggression the lighter my tone.

I believe a fair-minded review of relevant issues of COSMOPOLIS and EXTANT will confirm these assertions, though I recognize that some of my friends may continue to doubt the project was ever in danger, or even if it were that they will continue to disapprove my methods—though no one ever offered to take on the job of VIE Editor-in-Chief.

This statement is intended for certain persons I consider

* Dan has published his exchanges with Hans on his private message board, Chicago Blue. Dan's publication of e-mails from Hans would seem to violate a prime directive of netiquet, but no one has sputtered any indignation. Meanwhile, as soon as we learned about it, the line: 'or do the Gunter's swing' was removed from EXTANT 12. Dan, however, has expressed no thanks, or even relief. Instead he has reproduced the allegedly offending remark several times on Chicago Blues.

my friends, in an effort to show that I am neither deaf to their criticisms nor blind to what they consider the consequences of my actions. It is certainly true that what I regard as necessary defences of the VIE project have sometimes provoked, or appeared to provoke, further trouble. It is my view, however, that the consequences of inaction in these cases would have been worse. I have also always sought to defend the project in the best way possible, which would have ideally required that cooperation from the VIE board I was never able to inspire. Not allowed the best way, I did as best I could given my limited means. It cannot be claimed that I destroyed the VIE, which has been successfully accomplished under my watch, and I contend that, absent a robust defence against implacable enemies, the VIE would have failed.

Now, what are my terrible policies? To understand them the situation of the Internet must first of all be understood. The internet is a place where people who do not in fact know each other, who are not required to actually live together, interact on an essentially anonymous basis, and where anyone, no matter how malicious, is clothed in the same cyber persona as any other. For these reasons a false equality reigns and people need not take responsibility for their statements and actions. In these conditions the bond which must unite people who must cooperate closely for long periods of time is extremely precarious. Given these conditions I used four principles:

1 - Insisting on the hierarchical procedures, embodied in the Master Plan, no matter how great any public outcry.

2 - Cheerfully tolerating a wide latitude of discussion or even criticism, but using sever intolerance for absurd and malicious lies *on forums connected with the project*.

3 - Allowing no potentially disturbing or confusing accusations, no matter on what forum they originated, to go un-answered, so that no one connected with the project need ever reproach those who involved them in a titanic work absorbing so many hours of so many years, to have allowed them to suffer attacks in silence or, by other silences, allowing to develop any suspicion they might be associated with unsavory people or intentions.

4 - When dealing with persons adamantly determined to harm, I did not hesitate to avail myself of the full panoply of techniques in order to either drive them out of our cyber space, or at least discourage and discredit them to the greatest extent possible.

◇ ◇ ◇

ACT 6

Lovely Malice, or the unlovely kind?

While Hans was negotiating with Dan, a thread entitled 'Foreverness', on the VanceBBS, from which I have quoted posts from Mike and Ed, was deleted. This action was

certainly related to Dan's talk of 'guns' aimed at the VIE, of 'others' using his 'concerns' to 'further their own agenda'. It is gratifying to see this sign that certain people have at last seen the need to protect the VIE from Dan Gunter.*

Meanwhile, in response to Hans' overtures, Dan directed him to a personal blog, called LOVELY MALICE, at:

LOVELYMALICE.BLOGSPOT.COM/

Dan uses as sobriquet on this blog: *Malefic Being*, signing his posts *The Malefic One*, and "admits" he "just feels like raising some dust". *The Malefic One* defines his blog in the familiar 'poetic' Gunter style:

*I shall crouch here, spider-like,
and spin webs of gorgeous malice:
each thread tainted with sweet poison.*

Since I can't recommend visiting this blog, I'll provide a resume, sufficient to all reasonable purposes:

Besides a short section on the writer *Prather's Shell Scott* (whom the *Malefic Being* calls a *right wing sexist pig*, but approves him even so) the blog consists of diatribes against VIE volunteer TILL NOEVER (a '*lousy, stinkin' hypocrite*'), whom *The Malefic Being* disapproves because he has defended the VIE E-in-C, (a '*nasty self-proclaimed liar*'), with other anti-VIE blusterings, sly but sloppy reactions to EXTANT, and even complaints that I ignore him! Given the *Malific Being's* undeniable star-status in EXTANT, is this ironic, or just pathetic?



VANCE'S WORK: AN OVERVIEW

As a coda to the above, here is the original version of my replacement of an enthusiastic, rambling, idiosyncratic and inaccurate discussion of Vance's oeuvre, which I published on wikipedia. It has since been progressively degenerated by TETRAGRUPPASM and co.

Since his first published story, *The World-Thinker*, (Thrilling Wonder Stories) in 1945, Vance has written over sixty books. His work is regarded as falling into three categories: science fiction, fantasy and mystery. Vance himself deplors these labels, and, indeed, his work fits them inexactly.

Vance tried hard to become a mystery writer. He wrote fourteen, during about 20 years from the 1940s to the

* In a VanceBBS post of August 18, reacting to one of Dan Gunter's diatribes, against the VIE, Foreverness and Extant, Mike Berro himself wrote:

'I . . . hope this discussion does not continue in public; it is a very unfortunate situation.'

Mike also wrote: 'I would still be ashamed of some of things written in Extant, but my opinion is not relevant.' There certainly are shameful things in EXTANT; this issues alone is loaded with them. As for the relevance of Mike's opinion, I can hardly agree. I have always regarded it as particularly important.

1960s, which were published irregularly from the mid-1950s to the 1980s. Three were written for 'Ellery Queen'. Three others are explicitly based on Vance's frequent world travels (*Strange People*, *Queen Notions* based on his stay in Positano, Italy; *The Man in the Cage*, based on a trip to Morocco; *The Dark Ocean*, based on a stay in Hawaii). Many others are set in and around his native San Francisco. The "Joe Bain" stories (*The Fox Valley Murders*, *The Pleasant Grove Murders*, and an unfinished outline published by the VIE), are set in an imaginary northern California county; these are the nearest to the classical mystery form, with a rural policeman as protagonist. *Bird Island*, by contrast, is not a mystery at all, but a Wodehousian idyll (also set near San Francisco), while *The Flesh Mask* or *Strange People* . . . emphasize psychological drama. The theme of both *The House on Lily Street* and *Bad Ronald* is solipsistic megalomania, taken up again in the five volume science fiction *Demon Prince* cycle.

Much more celebrated are the 'fantasy' stories. These include a set of stories, written while Vance served in the Merchant Marine during the war, under the title *Mazirian the Magician*, though published as "The Dying Earth". In a similar vein Vance wrote two sets of picaresque adventures of the ner-do-well *Cugel the Clever* (the first set from around 1960, the second from around 1980), as well as three stories about a haughty magician: *Rhialto the Marvellous* (1970-1980). All these stories are set in a distant future where the sun is going dark, despite which they are antic comedies. The *Lyonesse* series (*Suldren's Garden*, *The Green Pearl*, *Madouc*) is not principally humorous. It recounts events on the Elder Isles, an Atlantis-like archipelago in the Armorican gulf, dynastic and magical doings are set in the early middle ages. *Lyonesse*, with Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, is considered by many to be the great fantasy work of the 20th century. Vance's fantasy stories are a primary source of the "dungeons and dragons" roll-playing games themselves an important source of much computer gaming.

The 'science fiction' runs the gamut of stories written for pulps in the 1940s to multi-volume tales set in the space age. With a few exceptions most of Vance's 'science fiction' is set in a near, far, or very far future, which sees man embark into space and colonize planets, to create a geographic and socio-cultural situation which, in the 1960s, he begins to call the Gaeen Reach. In its early phases this expanding, loose and peaceable agglomerate has an aura of colonial adventure, commerce and exoticism. In its more established phases it becomes stolidly middle class. In its later phases centripetal force causes Earth itself to become mythical, or even forgotten.

Vance's stories almost never concern wars. Sometimes at the far ends of the Reach, or in the lawless Beyond, a planet is menaced or craftily exploited by an alien culture. The conflicts are rarely direct. Humans become inadvertently enmeshed in low-intensity conflicts between alien cultures; this is the case in *Emphyrio*, the *Tschai* series, the *Durdane* series, or the comic stories featuring Miro Hetzel (a later version of Magnus Ridolph, a mystery solving elder man of fastidious tastes and gentile habits). Most of the science fiction stories, however, do not feature aliens, or even the humanoid E.G. Bourghes type 'savages' occurring in the early

work who take the place of colonial exotics. Cultural, social or political conflicts are the central concerns. This is most particularly the case in the *Cadwal* series, though it is equally characteristic of the three *Alastor* books, *Maske:Thaery*, and, one way and another, most of the 'science fiction' novels.

His last book (*Ports of Call — Lurulu*) is a tranquil and picaresque voyage through a far sector of the aging Reach.



ECHOES IN THE ETHER

I read your piece in E-14 on Koryphon. I might flatter myself by saying your points about the mechanics and purpose of the various points of view had been lurking in the back of my head, but this brought them to light. Nice work, and I think you should move on a collection of these essays.

My 14-bis got here today, looks great!

Joel Andersen



"The Houses of Iszm" is remarkably realistic in the sense that prefabricated, not to say pre-gestated, houses are a sort of El Dorado in the field of architecture.

Housing of that nature would be a commodity worth fighting for!

The ideal has never been achieved. Furthermore, the notion of responsiveness is another current theme, partly allied with "green architecture" and partly with feminism. (The field of design, like many others, currently has more women in training than men.)

Btw, influenced by your frontispiece, I imagined at first that the houses being sought were female by "shape", and not by their biological capacity to reproduce.

Why does Jack Vance return the story to L.A? Was he himself a refugee to Oakland from Los Angeles, I wonder?

David Stuart (Architectural historian, discovering Vance)



ACQUIRED TASTE

www.dragonchaser.net

"Acquired Taste" is the website of Tim Stretton, a writer whose works will be familiar to readers of Extant and its forerunner the *Cosmopolis Literary Supplement*. Though he qualifies his site as "essentially immodest", it is a vice he freely acknowledges, and one which will make little difference, if any, to the alert surfer. Tim offers his various novels for sale, with excerpts to tempt those unwilling to buy a pig in a poke, but also publishes some short stories, excerpts from his current work, and a wonderful set of links which should delight amateur philologists.

As for *The Dog of the North*, Tim's current work in progress, new excerpts are now available, as well as a map of Mondia, where both this story and *Dragonchaser* are set, and which Extant has obtained permission to reproduce.



MONDIA

LAST AND LEAST

This issue of Extant was originally intended for publication in August, but is obeying an inevitable force of delay as the VIE project recedes into the past.

Thanks for help with this issue from Hans van der Veeke and Greg Hansen.



Paul Rhoads

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