



## JACK VANCE'S LOST WORLDS AND ANCIENT FUTURES

by David B. Williams

In COSMOPOLIS 49, I wrote about the dire beasts and ghostly fiends that populate many of Jack Vance's fantasy and SF works. These aren't the only recurring signatures in Vance's writing. One need only consider his perfect addiction to heroines of petit, even boyish figure, his preference for calling periodicals "journals" instead of magazines, and his habitual use of the nautical term "saloon". But these are trifles. Other, possibly more substantial motifs have engaged my attention: Vance's predilection for edges and voids in his galactic cosmography, the related topic of lost or isolated worlds, and his practice of setting stories in what I call the "ancient future".

### EDGES AND VOIDS

You will seldom find Jack Vance or his imagined worlds in the middle of a cozy crowd. Vance is attracted to edges and empty places. Indeed, he often manages to combine both edges and voids:

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Halfway along the Perseid Arm a capricious swirl of galactic gravitation has caught up ten thousand stars and sent them streaming away at an angle, with a curl and a flourish at the end. This is Mircea's Wisp. To the side of the curl, at seeming risk of wandering away into the void, is the Purple Rose System.

*Araminta Station*

The Alastor Cluster also is near an edge and surrounded by a void:

Out toward the rim of the galaxy hangs Alastor Cluster, a whorl of 30,000 live stars in an irregular volume twenty to thirty light years in diameter. The surrounding region is dark and, except for a few hermit stars, unoccupied.

*Trullion, Alastor 2262*

But even in the star-spangled volume of Alastor Cluster, you can rely on Vance to situate his planet of interest at an edge:

Chamber 2262 along the Ring of the Worlds pertains to Trullion, the lone planet of a small white star, one spark in a spray curling out toward the Cluster's edge.

*Trullion, Alastor 2262*

Like Big Planet, one void has received a brutally descriptive name:

The eastern fringe of the Gaeon Reach is bounded by a remarkable pocket of emptiness: the Great Hole. The region is virtually untraveled: spacemen find no inducement to enter, while beyond hangs Zangwill Reef, a flowing band of stars with a baleful reputation. The Great Hole, therefore, is a lonely place. At the very center of the Great Hole hangs the star Mora.

*Maske: Thaery*

Then there is the ultimate edge and the greatest void of all:

The Distilcord, leaving Yellow Rose astern, set a course away from the glimmer of the galaxy and out into the void. Far ahead glittered Night Lamp, a vagabond star which had broken free of galactic gravity to wander alone, without orbit or destination."

*Night Lamp*

It's probably no accident that Vance has resided for 90 years within a few miles of the California coast, at the edge of the vast American continent. It is impossible to imagine him living at ease in Nebraska, or Ohio.

## LOST WORLDS

There is another kind of edge or void—the edge of knowledge, the void of the forgotten—and here Vance has located his many lost or isolated worlds. Thamber, for example, is known only through fairy tales and nursery rhymes and (no surprise) is also found at an edge:

"It's a fact," said Gersen. "We're at the edge of the galaxy: the 'verge extreme.' Somewhere, dead ahead, should be 'Thamber's gleam.'"

*The Killing Machine*

Sharing Thamber's edginess, another isolated world is at least recorded in the standard reference works:

According to the authoritative Handbook of the Planets, Nilo-May had been located originally by the legendary Wilbur Wailey. The star Yellow Rose, along with Nilo-May, wandered across an empty gulf near the edge of the galaxy, in a region almost forgotten by the rest of the Reach.

*Night Lamp*

Isolation is, of course, often a symmetrical condition, and the inhabitants of lost worlds may not be aware that they are forgotten:

The world Durdane lies beyond that shimmering wall of stars known as the Schiafarilla Cluster. The inhabitants of Durdane have long lost contact with the Earth worlds and are only dimly aware that other human places exist.

*The Brave Free Men, synopsis of part one, F&SF, August 1972*

Sometimes history, rather than time and neglect, has isolated remote planets:

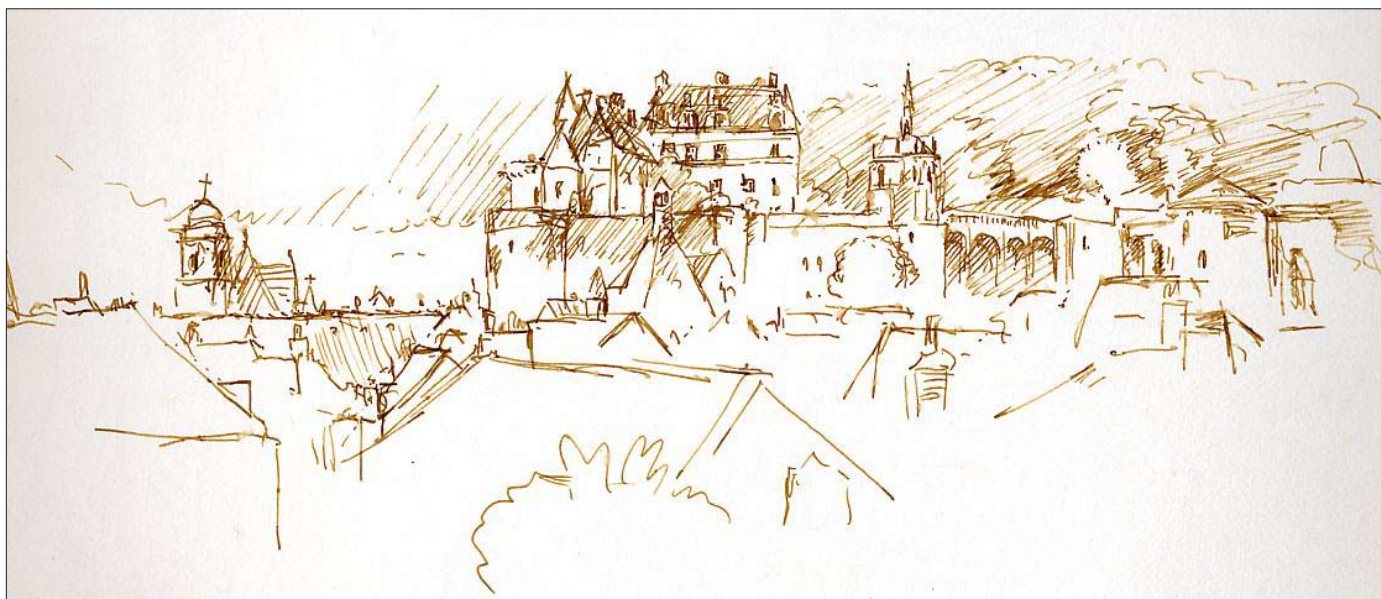
"Sixteen hundred years before, with war raging through space, a group of space captains, their home bases destroyed, had taken refuge on Pangborn. To protect themselves against vengeful enemies, they built great forts armed with weapons from the dismantled spaceships."

*The Miracle Workers*

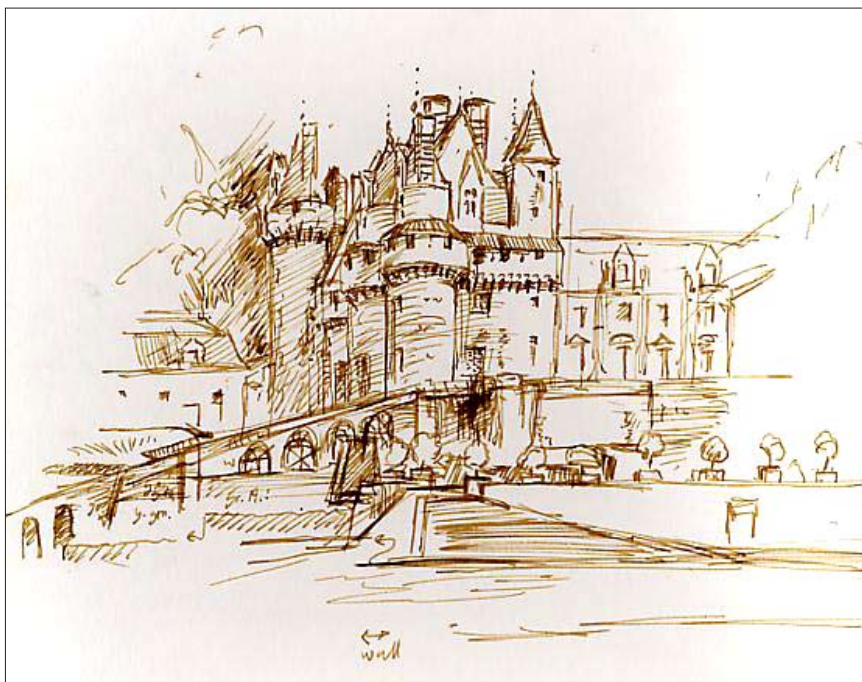
*The Miracle Workers*, published in 1958, is the first of three eerily similar stories, which clearly reflect a mode of isolation that appealed to Vance. In *The Dragon Masters* (1962) interstellar war again casts a remnant human population onto an isolated, rugged planet:

"You know the legends as well as I, perhaps better. Our people came to Aerlith as exiles during the War of the Ten Stars. The Nightmare Coalition apparently had defeated the Old Rule, but how the war ended"—he threw up his hands—"who can say?"

*Ervis Carcolo to Joaz Banbeck: The Dragon Masters*







In *The Last Castle* (1966), Vance converts Earth itself into a lost world. The gentlemen of Castle Hagedorn speak of their spaceships as “our link with the Home Worlds.” The spaceships are maintained but never used, so this link is notional only.

“Looking down, Xanten reflected that though the human stock was native to this soil, and though his immediate ancestors had maintained their holdings for seven hundred years, Earth still seemed an alien world. The reason of course was by no means mysterious or rooted in paradox. After the Six-Star War, Earth had lain fallow for three thousand years, unpopulated save for a handful of anguished wretches who somehow had survived the cataclysm and who had become semibarbaric Nomads. Then seven hundred years ago certain rich lords of Altair, motivated to some extent by political disaffection, but no less by caprice, had decided to return to Earth.”

*The Last Castle*

In the vast Gaeen Reach, some worlds are lost through mere carelessness, some are isolated by choice—the Mandate of Isolation enforced by the Thariots of Maske, or the similar doctrine of the Roum on Fader:

“In three words: we want to insulate Romarth from the Gaeen Reach. Our ancestors traveled as far as they could, out of the galaxy, across the void to the star Night Lamp. Isolation was the guiding principle then, at the dawn of our history, as it is now in the sad glory of our sunset.”

*Bariano to Maihac: Night Lamp*

Vance’s penchant for planets isolated in space or time may be ascribable to his psychic makeup. It has been observed that no man is an island, but Vance is in some ways an insular man, “a friendly but not public person” as Jack Rawlins described him. He has acquired many friends over the years, he enjoys and has often hosted social gatherings. But he admits that he is not group-minded by nature. And as a writer he stands apart, he does not care to be connected to the mainland of SF.

## ANCIENT FUTURES

Unlike many SF authors, Jack Vance doesn’t write about first contacts, pioneer societies, the discovery and colonization of new worlds. He favors worlds with long histories of human occupancy. Among Jack Vance’s chosen settings, Araminta Station on Cadwal is a raw frontier settlement, its history stretching back a mere thousand years. Vance chooses to set his stories in an ancient future.

The *Demon Prince* novels, begun in the early 1960s, are set in the Oikumene, a mere 1,500 years in the future, when new planets are being discovered and the vocation of locator is a common calling. But, judging by later works, Vance found this time span too cramped for the kinds of human evolution, physical and especially social, he wished to examine.

In the *Demon Prince* novels he fondly notes the thousand-year-old structures of the Old Quarter of Patris on Krokinole and New Wexford on Aloysius, but these buildings thrust their foundations into virgin soil. It strains the reader’s credulity to think that the Krokinole Imps or the vegetarians of New Concept, Marhab Six, could have evolved so far from the human mainstream in only a dozen centuries.

In the *Tschai* novels, composed in the late 1960s, Vance allowed himself more temporal scope. Adam Reith boasts to Traz that human history on Earth goes back 10,000 years. But Traz laughs: “Once, before I carried Onmale, the tribe entered the ruins of old Carcegeus and there captured a Pnumekin. The magicians tortured him to gain knowledge, but he spoke only to curse each minute of the fifty-two thousand years that men had lived on Tschai . . . Fifty-two thousand years against your ten thousand years. It is all very strange.”

In the ancient future of Tschai, the human servants of the several alien species have partially evolved to approximate the physical types of their masters. The feral humans have spread across the planet and developed a wide variety of distinctive races and cultures.

Beginning in 1973, Vance set his SF novels in the Gaeen Reach, perhaps 30,000 years in the Oikumene’s future. There do not seem to have been any dramatic technical developments in the intervening millennia, but the elapsed time provides Vance with many more opportunities for lost worlds and divergent cultural, and even genetic, evolution.

As already noted, we learn in *Night Lamp* that the legendary locator Wilbur Wailey discovered the planet Nilo-May. Legendary indeed, for we are told in a footnote that Wailey was active some 5,000 years before Tawn Maihac and Gaing Neitzbeck visit Nilo-May. It’s easy to lose track of a planet over a span of five millennia.

Being a seaman at heart, Vance often speaks of human expansion into the galaxy in terms of waves, surges, and tides. These fluid phenomena are cyclical, allowing planets to be settled and, when the tide turns, forgotten.

"In *Handbook to the Inhabited Worlds* Glawen learned that Nion had first been explored in the remote past, during the first great surge of men across space. The human tide had slackened and then receded, notably from the far side of the Jingles, leaving Nion in near-isolation for thousands of years."

#### *Ecce and Old Earth*

Later surges of settlement encounter worlds long inhabited, with highly variegated cultures, creating situations ripe with story potential.

"No one knows how many waves of human migration have crossed the Great Hole to Mora; perhaps no more than two. The most recent arrivals, a fourteen-ship contingent of Credential Renunciators from the world Diosophede, discovered upon Maske and Skay a population of great antiquity, human but considerably diverged from Homo gaea: the Saidanese, of a species which became known as Homo mora."

#### *Maske: Thaery*

When the human refugees in *The Dragon Masters* arrived on Aerlith, they discovered a human population, the Sacerdotes, already long established. The planet Koryphon also experienced previous waves of human and even nonhuman settlement, a key element in the novel.

By setting his stories in a long-established society, Vance also avoids having to detail the remarkable events that must have occurred to create his incredible social and political arrangements—the torque system of Durdane, for example, or the human hide hunters at Sholo on the planet Terce who supply a flourishing art market.

*The Dying Earth*, of course, is the most ancient future of all. What could be nearer the edge of history than the 21st Aeon, when the sun is red and blotchy and totters down the sky like a sick animal?

In this remote future, magic has long since replaced technology, but the golden age of Grand Motholam is so far removed that even the fundamentals of magic are nearly forgotten. The magicians rely on a few surviving manuals, which they utilize by rote without profound understanding of the underlying principles.

Again, all is loss—lost aeons, lost knowledge. *The Dying Earth* stories were Vance's earliest successful fictions. A beginning writer has an unlimited choice of subjects and settings. It may be indicative, then, that Vance chose to place his first tales in a setting at the remote edge of human history, when everything except human passions is wearing away and fading from memory.

In this regard, Vance's psyche may again play a role. "I have a strong sense of loss," he confesses. He enshrined one aspect of this sentiment in his famous phrase, "the sweet fugacity of life."

Vance exercised this sense of loss in high ironic form in the *Lyonesse* sequence: all the adventures, all the triumphs and tragedies are futile in an ultimate sense, because the reader knows that, regardless of Murgan's striving, the Elder Isles are doomed to sink into the Atlantic Ocean, perhaps in the surviving characters' lifetimes. All the loves and hates, all the magic will be lost, to be recalled only faintly in myth.

It's no surprise that, of the several alien races on the planet Tschai, Vance seems most sympathetic to the Pnume, compilers of a five-million year history of their planet. The Pnume savor the past and carefully preserve its tokens in the dim silence of Foreverness.

Like the Pnume, Jack Vance savors that which is gone, the unremembered aeons, the forgotten lore, the lost planets. For six decades his attraction to the edges of space and time, his piquant sense of the transitory nature of single lives and vast civilizations, has inspired Vance to write stories of forgotten worlds and ancient futures.





# POP SCI-FI GOES POSTMODERN AND RELATED REFLECTIONS

by Paul Rhoads

## BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Though domiciled in the hinterland of a developing country, thanks to satellite we get the French version of the Sci-fi channel. This has permitted—within the restrictions of my tolerance levels—sampling of the state of contemporary pop Sci-fi. My reactions are not universally negative. Let us begin, however, by hauling out the trash.

I refuse to even sample such shows as *Regeneris*, *Sea Quest*, *Night Angels* or the various Star Trek spin-offs and wannabes; routine escapism concocted of formulaic techno/exo-geewizzery, dosed with the usual flattery and paranoia, and smothered in political correctitude like Chinese goulash in MSG. In my self-appointed roll as cultural critic I have forced myself to sit through part of one episode of *Sliders* and even *Code Quantum*—post-modern kiddy shows rife with cultural relativism and nostalgia.

Of such impossible trash there is little to be said. But a few of the shows are not simply unadulterated schlock—and I have even found two I like. *Tripping the Rift* and *The Third Planet After the Sun* are pure post-modernism. *Third Planet* is also a traditional sitcom—the roots of which genre go back though radio soaps to vaudeville, itself a cross between the circus and French 'boulevard theater' (Labiche, Feydeau, etc.)—behind all of which lurks *comedia de l'arte*. The essence of this tradition is casual and improvised entertainment, short on poetry and drama but long on gags and impertinent social commentary; not a source of post-modernism, but at least a prelude.

*Tripping the Rift* is a snazzy computer animation cartoon, but the best aspects are the script and voice actors. It is so relentlessly post-modern that if it did not fling its net so wide it would actually be parody—of, say, Star Trek. It's

only weakness is the sexual emphasis—not that many of the sex jokes aren't funny; it is their humorless relentlessness which fatigues. *Third Planet* also has trouble resisting abuse of this now tired subject.

The sci-fi aspect of *Third Planet* is merely a perch from which to peer down on the human scene (to better study the human race a group of aliens is incarnated as an American family.) If its post-modernism is full bore (one episode even uses an Ira Gershwin lyric is used as dialogue: "The way you use your knife", "The way you drink your tea,"), the success of *Third Planet* owes nothing essential to that style.

For post-modernism, like all other artistic isms, is a style not a substance.\* It's like ketchup, not a meal in itself. I don't want my *Third Planet sans*-post-modernism any more than I want my fried fish without tartar sauce, but just as fish is a

basic food, so *Third Planet* is the same material cooked up by Bob and Ray, Dick van Dyke, Bob Hartman and Sienfeld, each in its own sauce. It is a probe—alert and wacky, but tender and even maudlin—into American society.

Serious Sci-fi fans, however, may feel that *Farscape* and *Battlestar Galactica* are more like it†—but before I get on to what I have to say about them I



\* What is post-modernism? Take the example of painting. First cubism broke up image (narration), then abstraction eliminated it, then minimalism reduced the formal (decorative) aspect to almost nothing, and finally conceptualism limited even that—to zero. These isms were generated by History, chugging ineluctably down the iron road of Progress, ultimately leaving artists bereft. By the 1990s, therefore, the modernist movement (in art, as opposed to modernism itself) had fizzled. But artists, like other species, have a nature which cannot be denied. Naturally they lack the intellectual courage to do what the ideology of Progress designates as 'going back', so they found a way to 'go back' without 'going back'. Holding their noses and cracking jokes, and making other brave signs of irreverence, they rummaged in the trash bin of history and used the garbage as raw material. Post-modernism is a recycling program. It takes many forms. In descending order of acceptability they are: irony, pastiche, nostalgia. At its best post-modernism is ironic—allied to the cynicism and nihilism which

characterized the end of non-post-modernism. Post-modernism looks to the past—because it can do nothing else, but it does it with a jaundiced and snotty attitude. Its most vital mode is irreverence, inconsequentiality and, therefore and ultimately, it has found its greatest outlet in a comic style of impish non-hierarchical or magpieish 'referentialism'—to coin a word. This mode is not well suited to painting—where post-modernism first emerged—but works well for TV.

† I will not discuss the various Star Trek versions and imitations, which at best are less edgy, and at worst even more politically correct than *Farscape*. What shows am I unaware of? as a good post-modernist might say: frankly, my dear. . .



must expel some bile.

*Farscape* seems to be written by people who think that a troop of oversexed pre-adolescents (or warped idea of same) masquerading as mature aliens will charm anyone, and the writers of both shows have dutifully learned their lesson—in some literary 101 class—that characters must be burdened with Freudian baggage. The writers are also prisoners of that particularly obnoxious, and correspondingly ineluctable, correctitude which demands that the meanest hombres be pretty girls—i.e. *Galactica*'s 'Starbuck' and *Farscape*'s 'Aeryn Sun'. The latter, however, is played by the rather special Claudia Black who, along with the puppet characters, raises the tone of the show from 'simply embarrassing' to 'watchable in a pinch'. Why shouldn't an shortish anorexic 30-something pack a right that floors any creature thrice her weight? It's only TV!

Claudia Black's 'Aeryn Sun' is cold and violent yet retains feminine dignity, which does great things for the show. Political correctitude—to flatter an audience segment—is served, but the rest of the audience is not punished. Katie Sackhoff's cigar chomping Starbuck, on the other hand, is a super-warrior who combines the least unappealing aspects of teenage insolence and exacerbated machismo.\*

*Farscape* is a costume and puppet extravaganza, and therefore doesn't take itself too seriously—except when it comes to sex. The hero perpetually makes post-modern cracks, referencing *Star Wars* and other pop, which his alien comrades can't understand but which—we can hear the writers think—delight the target audience of theoretical half-wit pre-teens. *Galactica*, by contrast, is a nicely constructed saga of tragic dimensions, which drags itself along at the snail pace of high-class soap-opera. It's abysmal script is held together by the acting, particularly that of Edward James Olmos, though the director has an incurable weakness for seeing him mutter and mumble in the wobbly close-ups; they seem to think of this as their 'style'. Of *Galactica*'s many annoying aspects the strangest is president Laura Roslin, played by Mary McDonnell as if she were a psychopath.†

\* And what a post-modern gaff! Melville's Starbuck—because the reference can't be to the coffee chain, can it?—is a mature and wise man of low-key loyalty and humble strength.

† The Sci-Fi channel website touts McDonnell in these terms: "...she brings to the role a naturalistic depth, strength and compassion few other performers could reach." With strength and compassion like that, who needs Charles Manson?

One last point; I propose a law against using the phrase "Do it . . . now!" more than 10 times per show, or the word "fuck" (including its 27<sup>th</sup> century equivalent, "frak") more than once every two lines; and I would be gratified to see the writers of *Farscape* and *Galactica* get the comeuppance such an intelligent and useful piece of legislation proscribed.

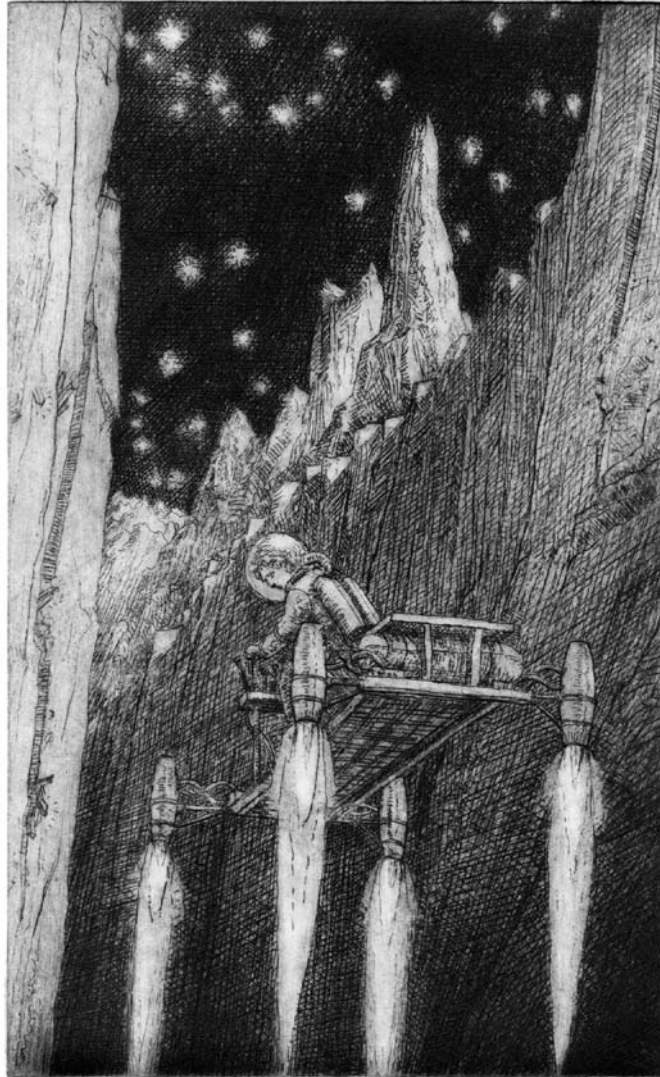
However, if one can get past these things—and unless I'm a little drowsy or drunk it ain't so easy (thank heaven for zappage!)—these two shows, if they often fail to be entertaining, never fail to be interestingly symptomatic of science fiction's post-modern situation.

*Farscape* and *Galactica* are loaded with enough technological gee-wizzage to kill a ox. Much more than Buck Rogers or 'classic' *Star Trek*. The old science fiction was rife with

techno-excitement. That excitement might have been silly but it was genuine. The technology was the glittering and fascinating object in the foreground. But just as Western youth is shying away from the study of science, so the science in the new science fiction is no longer optimistic or wondrous. Technology has become a background loom, while the foreground is crowded with psychology and metaphysics.

*Farscape*'s specialty is the former. The refugees abroad Moya (A 'space-ship' that is half whale) are locked in intimate relations of rivalry and erotic impulses, motivated by personal trauma. The dark secret of Zhaan—blue skinned priestess of love and peace—is her discovery that, at the base of her soul, she is a murderer. Ka D'Argo—warrior alien with cranial tentacles—suffers acute sentimentality, thanks to a dead wife and lost son. This sort of thing totally overshadows the ultra-techno environment. Even the ship experiences post-partum

angst when it gives birth to a baby ship; poor Moya needs the crew's understanding, help and compassion. In another episode a worm-hole super-weapon is about to destroy much of the known universe, including Moya's heterogeneous crew. This would have been excitement enough for James T. Kirk, but in its midst Ayren Sun gives birth to the hero's child (an inter-species half-breed destined to help us further develop our multicultural tolerance, already hyper-atrophied to an alarming extent) while—hang on—the ship is flooded with water and assaulted by armored aliens. Despite all, the new parents engage in therapeutic dialogue, between taking pot-shots at their hulking assailants. It's a tangle of biblical



narratives (Armageddon, Jonah/Noah, the Nativity) staged in grimaces of ultimate frustration and yoops of ultimate triumph, the personal hurts of each character illuminating the lurid scene with vari-colored lights.

It's immature and silly; granted. It's post-modern; yes. But is it 'science fiction'?

The *Galactica* story is driven by metaphysical queries such as: do robots have souls? Executive producer Ron Moore, explaining why the Cylon robots seek to destroy humanity, their creators, gives reasons of nihilistic political correctness and neo-Freudianism: a) if humanity were allowed to escape, being intrinsically evil and self-destructive, it would return seeking vengeance; and b) as "children of humanity [the Cylons can't] achieve their full potential while their 'parents' are still alive". This sort of thing has been around since Asimov, and it ought to be clear by now that scientific progress which leads to human-like robots does not open up 'technological' perspectives, but metaphysical ones. It may be metaphysics of a chintzy sort, but it's still metaphysics—by which I mean the deep and permanent questions

which have always subtended literature: where do we come from, what are we, where are we going? Sophomoric speculations about robots or, even worse, denouncing racism though the depiction of paranoid anti-Cylon hysteria,\* has nothing to do with science, and has little in common with the science based fantasy adventure which is the heart of science fiction. But my point is not a complaint that post-modernist Sci-fi trappings betray science fiction—there was plenty of smarm in the 'classic' *Star Trek*—or even, though more pertinently, that such trapping interfere with drama;† it is curiosity about how post-modernism has contributed to science fiction's move into metaphysics, or pushed it more resolutely than ever into an

\* On the other hand, the vengful sadism, murderousness and torture mongering aimed of the colonists, intended to highlight the 'tolerance' theme, and though a banality in the context of contemporary pop entertainment, has, in the context of *Galactica*, a refreshingly and probably unintentional effect of anti-correctitude. This, however, also adds to the show's incoherence.

† The Matrix is a perfect example of this dilemma; the drama in this high-concept movie series—into which, yet again, a maximum of Christianity has been injected in the post-modernist manner—for could not Neo save humanity without being 'the chosen one' and so on?—is the traditional struggle between the good guys and the bad guys, which any decent western—or any Homeric epic for that matter—delivers. But the struggle of good against evil is not a fundamentally technological or material problem. It is a problem of ideals and moral fiber. That humans, 'in reality' are being farmed, and lulled into unawareness like chickens manipulated by electric lights and hormones into growing muscle mass and laying eggs at unnatural speed, fails to explain the animosity of the Matrix. If a chicken escapes from a farmer, who is not a psychopath, the farmer may chase it around the field to get it back in the barn, but he won't stike arrogant postures, make sinister declarations or fall into murderous rages.

overwhelming preoccupation with psychology and culture.

The post-modernism of *Galactica* does not consist of clever references to Gershwin or Yoda; in harmony with its tragic character it has scavenged astrology, Greek mythology and Christian theology. Its use of these is post-modernist; they are not simply influences or references, in the traditional manner, because the referentialism is so arbitrary and meaninglessly heterogeneous. *Dune* retells the story of Islam, skewed by the 60s drug revolution and set on far planets. The concept may be strange and distasteful—or the opposite, depending on your tastes—but it takes it's themes seriously and weaves a coherent synthesis. But why do the *Galactica* colonists worship the ancient Greek gods? How did the Cylons get onto monotheism? Why and how did pre-colonial earth culture fall back into paganism?

If these elements are somehow coherent *Galactica*'s message would be that contemporary irreligiousness is leading us to a pagan renewal, but that cyber-culture (since humans and Cylons are set on a course of ultimate reconciliation—thesis and anti-thesis, leading to a new synthesis) will renew



Christianity.\* If *Galactica* is not merely a post-modernist farrago, this is the only reading.

How has happened that a popular science fiction show is peddling cultural renewal though Christianity? But is *Galactica* really posing coherent metaphysical questions, or is it, after all, just a post-modern farrago?

Perhaps both, but the metaphysic—the idea that humanity will renew itself and continue its physical and cultural evolution, thanks to cybernetics—seems incoherent, at least in the mind of the producers, though I would be happy to be proved wrong.

\* The Cylons are monotheist, not 'Christian'. But the show's non-postmodernist message is Christian because, for example, the murderousness is not religious—as would be the case, as in *Dune*, if the monotheism were Islamic. In *Galactica* the murderousness is stated to be a Freudian patricidal obsession; this value, the show's values, including the Cylon values, are life values; those proposed by Christianity, including post-Christianity. To my anti-Christian friends I would point out that, like it or not, and despite various historical anomalies for which the pope has apologized, Christianity is not about conversion by the sword. It is about freedom. St. Paul wrote: "Everything is permitted, but not everything is good." Per Genesis, Man is free to sin, and also free to turn away from God—and thus towards himself, the ultimate idolatry. The penalty for renouncing Allah, by contrast, is the sword.



## THE CONVERSION OF JOHN C. WRIGHT

Some light is cast on this matter in a statement made by a young science fiction author, John C. Wright, in recent a interview with the VIE's own Nick Gevers, for the Sci-fi channel web-site.\* Wright, of all things, has converted to Christianity, and his reply to Gevers on the subject is worth quoting at length:

GEVERS: At some point after your first three epics were completed, you converted to Christianity, having been a resolute humanist before. How did this come about?

WRIGHT: [ . . . ] Humanist is too weak a word. I was an atheist, zealous and absolute, one who held that the nonexistence of God was a fact as easily proved as the inequality of five and twice two. However, my disbelief began to erode as fatherhood and war pressed upon me the realities of the world. I was a Stoic, a disciple of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, Cicero and Seneca, who say the ground of morality is duty; but I was also a liberal of the classical Enlightenment, which says toleration is the ground of morals. Both these strands in my philosophy were naïve: Humans cannot live by the strictness of the Stoics; humans ought not live by the laxness of the liberals, libertarians or libertines. The two strands did not match. Modern philosophy, which is based on self-interest or utilitarianism, is unsuited both for war and for fatherhood. Growing aware of the defects in my system, I sought something with more experience and wisdom.

Where is wisdom found? I read the deep thoughts of the most highly regarded thinkers of the modern age, and found them vain and shallow. The insights of Nietzsche, Freud, Sartre, Marx, Wittgenstein and other luminaries of the modern world contained simple errors in logic a schoolboy can dismiss with a laugh. Each in his own way asserted that man was irrational, and the truth unknowable: But if so, how did they prove this unreason? Using reason, or otherwise? And how exactly did they come to know the truth that truth was unknowable?

In popular culture, the books influencing the morals and values of the current age, such as *Stranger in a Strange Land* or *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, read like they were written by a Man from Mars, or a mental patient. They know nothing of real life.

The salient characteristic of modern philosophy is a speculative disconnection from reality. Michael the Martian and Karl Marx expect the super-humans to live together without jealousy or scarcity of resources. Money will simply overflow the collection plate, and anyone can take as much or as little as he likes. But what if someone is dishonest or selfish, comrade? Ah, but the theory does not allow for that. In contrast, the writings of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, G.K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, all read like things written by mature men. The ancients, Aristotle, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, Cicero, Aquinas and even Augustine, solidly prepared the ground from which a sane, mighty and just civilization could be grown.

I reached a point in my life where on all divisive questions of morals and manners, I agreed with no one other than my hated enemies, the Christians. I knew in my cool atheist heart they must be wrong in theory; I could not explain how they were correct in practice. I began to read history. The modernists are right to fear it. Once a man knows the context and origins of the ideas of modern times, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain faith in them. It becomes impossible to condemn Western civilization for shortcomings that fall short only of

ideals unique to Western civilization. It becomes impossible not to notice Western civilization is nothing other than Christendom.\*

The conclusion pressed on me was that modern thought is a parasite on Christianity, and has no intellectual life outside her. The basic motif of the modern intellectual, one endlessly repeated, is of a man sawing off the branch on which he sits. The moderns delight in assertions that, if taken seriously, would disprove the axiom used to make the assertion. The profoundly unserious nature of modern thought astonished me, and still does. I stump my secular friends by asking them to explain to me why cannibalism is wrong. Their humanist doctrines are insufficient to give a reason for humane humanity.

History told me that everything I admired about the noble and great-souled pagans still survived in Christianity: Aristotle was still alive in Aquinas, and nowhere else. The cool rationality of Athens had been preserved by Rome. Everything in paganism from which the civilized mind recoils,

\* Discussion of this interview took place on the VanceBS, haunt of several 'zealous and absolute' atheists, and others less so.

JOJO LAPIN (Alexander Feh't's soul-brother) wrote: "Christianity caused the decline of the Roman Empire into barbarism, ushering in the many religion-dominated centuries now known as the Dark Ages. Only with the Enlightenment in the 18th century did Western values manage to again struggle to the surface."

MATT HUGHES (published science fiction author, but older than Wright) wrote: "Western civilization as we know it today, with its respect for individual rights and the essential dignity of the human being, is not a creation of Christianity. Leave aside Gibbons's glib blaming of Christianity for the fall of the western Roman empire—although he wasn't totally wrong—and it is still clear that the institutions we value today, such as the rule of man-made law and democracy, are nowhere to be found in the Christianity that was handed down from the collapse of the Romano-Hellenic world. Had it not been for the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, the first making possible the second, do you really think that medieval Christendom would have evolved into democracy? Or would we still be hearing about the divine right of kings? The Bible has Christ telling us to render unto Caesar, not to elect him."

DAVID B. WILLIAMS wrote: "Well, actually, the Arabs didn't come along until after A.D. 700 and later. They got their Greek and Roman texts from the Christians too. And I count the Eastern church as part of Christendom. There were lots of Greek and Roman texts preserved and copied at Constantinople and other Byzantine sites where no barbarians managed to intrude, and these passed directly to the Arabs when they overran Byzantine territory (and, I believe, when a few Greek learned men moved to Muslim centers)."

MARTIN READ wrote: "In a number of ways Christian, and indeed Orthodox, theology inherited a strong metaphysical aspect from Classical philosophy. This is unlike the theology of Islam, excepting mystical Sufism, which was and is largely 'juridical' in nature." Islamic culture did preserve parts of the legacy of the Ancient World, but its contribution is sometimes exaggerated. The Reconquista, or the earlier conquest of Saracen Sicily, didn't produce anything like the Renaissance of the 15th century. However, the dismantling and destruction of the Greek societies of the eastern Mediterranean from 1350 to 1460 led to an exodus of scholars, manuscripts and artists which played a pivotal role in the inception of the Italian Renaissance. The vital role of the Irish and British in the preservation of "Latin Civilisation" in the Dark Ages is often overlooked. It is no accident that the finest Latin writer between Boethius and the Renaissance was the historian Bede in his monastery on the fringes of the known world, or that the mastermind behind the Carolingian Renaissance was Alcuin of York.

ED WINSKILL wrote: I quite agree, Martin. Orthodox theology through the council period, and most especially with regard to Nicea itself, was strongly influenced by Greek philosophical ways of thought. As for the "Byzantine" contributions to the West in the period you mention, it just happens that I am in the middle of a book by Jaroslav Pelikan which discusses this very point, the contributions of scholars fleeing the collapse in Asia Minor, followed by that of Constantinople, to the rediscovery of Greek learning and texts in the West, both biblical and classical. Dante had Virgil but he didn't have Homer at all, other than a few translated excerpts. Erasmus had Homer, complete and in the Greek. The extent of the mutual cultural isolation between Catholic West and Orthodox East from late (Western) empire times until the 15th century is remarkable, especially in light of the commercial, political, and military contacts which did occur over the centuries. Knowledge of Greek in the West did not just decline, nor was it just restricted: it was effectively lost. The same was true in the East for Latin, but Latin was never the universal Mediterranean language that Greek had been, and its loss there is not as surprising. Therefore the Latin classics were available but the Greek classics in a very large part were not. The flight of many Greek scholars to the West coincided (in the very broadest possible sense of the term) with the explosion in the study of the Bible in Hebrew and Greek, something which Erasmus exemplified and which was accelerated by the Reformation.

\* Thanks to David B. Williams for bringing this interview to our attention.



as slavery, infanticide, polygamy, sodomy, had been defeated by Christianity, and made a recurrence only when and where Christianity retreats. I reached a point in my studies of history where I was forced to grit my teeth and conclude that the progress and enlightenment of Europe was due to Christianity, not despite it; and that when Europe departed from Christian roots, barbarism and darkness unique to the ideologies of the modern age descended. The crowning achievement of the rejection of Christian norms in modern times was communism: Its crowning achievement was death in such large numbers that only astronomers can grasp them. I knew the Christians were evil in theory; I could not explain how so much unique good came from them.

Greatly daring, I attempted an experiment in prayer, addressing a Supreme Being I knew with deep certainty did not and could not exist. My prayer was quickly and awfully answered. A miracle occurred. I suffered a supernatural experience and found all the foundations of my carefully examined and rigidly logical philosophy swept away as if by a tidal wave of blazing and supernal light. A great and powerful spirit visited me. The whole thing was as simple and astonishing, as easy to explain and as hard to explain, as falling in love.

I am one of those rare creatures whose belief in the supernatural is due to empirical considerations. My mysticism is entirely scientific. Alas, the second step in the experiment, when the miracle occurs, cannot be reproduced before the eyes of skeptics. Worse yet, the experiment was like toying with radium: I was mutated and changed by the exposure. . . My integrity as a philosopher, not to mention my pride as a man, will not allow me the evasion of a return to my former beliefs, much as I might respect them. The world is far odder than I would have believed. The oddest thing of all is joy.

## ALDOUS HUXLEY LOOKING BACK AND FORTH

Are we seeing the abandonment of modernism? Has the atheism of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Western elites, which seems to have triumphed, passed the top of its curve? Is Christendom, target of the 21<sup>st</sup> century jihad, re-establishing itself in the West?

In the preface to the 1946 edition of *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley subjected his famous work to critical hindsight. ". . . The Savage is offered only two alternatives," he complains in the 3d paragraph; "an insane life in Utopia, or the life of a primitive in an Indian village, a life more human in some respects, but in others hardly less queer and abnormal." The preface continues as follows:

At the time the book was written this idea, that human beings are given free will in order to choose between insanity on the one hand and lunacy on the other, was one that I found amusing and regarded as quite possibly true.

In other words a situation where the only real choices are between a Rousseauian return to the alleged state of ultimate joy offered by primitivism—an idea recycled by Thoreau and certain strains of 20<sup>th</sup> century anti-establishmentarianism—or a sanitary and rationalized 'final state of progress' (i.e. communism, etc.) also allegedly the source of ultimate joy. Huxley goes on to condemn his previous cynicism as well as, among the ruins of the second world war, the persistence of the cynicism he used to share:

Today I feel no wish to demonstrate that sanity is impossible. On the contrary, though I remain no less sadly certain than in the past

that sanity is a rather rare phenomenon, I am convinced that it can be achieved and would like to see more of it. For having said so in several recent books [. . .] I have been told by an eminent academic critic that I am a sad symptom of the failure of an intellectual class in time of crisis [. . .]

Huxley goes on to describes what he should have written, or how he might revise his text (an act he excludes), to avoid the flaws he now finds:

If I were now to rewrite the book, I would offer the Savage a third alternative. Between the utopian and the primitive horns of his dilemma would lie the possibility of sanity. . . the Savage (in this hypothetical new version of the book) would not be transported to Utopia until he had had an opportunity of learning something at first hand about the nature of a society composed of freely co-operating individuals devoted to the pursuit of sanity. Thus altered, *Brave New World* would possess an artistic and (if it is permissible to use so large a word in connection with a work of fiction) a philosophical completeness, which in its present form it evidently lacks.

What is this 'sanity', and how is it to be pursued? Huxley, ignoring such questions, broadens his discussion toward the problem of fiction about science.

But [. . .] a book about the future can interest us only if its prophecies look as though they might conceivably come true. From our present vantage point, fifteen years further down the inclined plane of modern history, how plausible do its prognostications seem? What has happened in the painful interval to confirm or invalidate the forecasts of 1931?

One vast and obvious failure of foresight is immediately apparent. *Brave New World* contains no reference to nuclear fission. That it does not is actually rather odd; for the possibilities of atomic energy had been a popular topic of conversation for years before the book was written [. . .] So it seems [. . .] very odd that the rockets and helicopters of the seventh century of Our Ford should not have been powered by disintegrating nuclei.

But who cares how vehicles are powered so long as they move? A world in which cars have gas engines, and a world in which they have atomic engines, Huxley is contending, are fundamentally different, not because of different driving experiences but because control of the leviathan power of the atom radically alters the human situation. Now that both civil and military nuclear power has spread to many countries we are in a position to test this prediction, and as a matter of fact the nature of the sociological and historical processes does not seem to be affected. Globalization, which might be considered a revolution, was not forced on the world. It is, at least partly, a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet empire, but that collapse was not effected by the 'power of the atom'. Countries which wish to remain closed to globalization are allowed to do so by the 'unique hyper power', and this power is not seeking to become the unique controller of the atom.

Huxley then introduces another issues related to science fiction.

The theme of *Brave New World* is not the advancement of science as such; it is the advancement of science as it affects human individuals [. . .] The only scientific advances to be specifically described [in *Brave New World*] are those involving the application to human beings of the results of future research in biology,

physiology and psychology. [...] The sciences of matter can be applied in such away that they will destroy life or make the living of it impossibly complex and uncomfortable; but, unless used as instruments by the biologists and psychologists, they can do nothing to modify the natural forms and expressions of life itself. The release of atomic energy marks a great revolution in human history, but not (unless we blow ourselves to bits and so put an end to history) the final and most searching revolution.

This really revolutionary revolution is to be achieved, not in the external world, but in the souls and flesh of human beings [...] Sade was a lunatic and the more or less conscious goal of his revolution was universal chaos and destruction. The people who govern the Brave New World may not be sane (in what may be called the absolute sense of that word); but they are not mad men, and their aim is not anarchy but social stability. It is in order to achieve stability that they carry out, by scientific means, the ultimate, personal, really revolutionary revolution.

Huxley believes the 'really revolutionary' revolution will come through science, but was pessimistic about the revolution. His limited optimism regarding science, however, has proved partly justified; the biologists have provided 'comforts'. Huxley's fears are based on a preoccupation with nationalism. This used to be the bogey-ism of Western elites. They blamed it for the first World War, and Huxley is among those who blame it also for the second.

Anti-nationalism has evolved into anti-Fascism—which is seen, even today, as its natural heir. The 'extreme right', with its anti-immigration xenophobia, is supposed to prolong the me/us nationalistic mentality—an intellectual fetal position. Anti-nationalism was a factor important in driving Western elites towards Communism—the alleged universalism supposed opposite to nationalistic particularisms. Huxley would not agree. He condemns 'nationalistic radicals' across the spectrum, blaming them for: *Bolshevism, Fascism, inflation, depression, Hitler, the Second World War, the ruin of Europe and all but universal famine*. He seems to have regarded Communist universalism as a fraud in the service of Russian hegemony. The same might be said for the other communist imperialists (China, North Korea and North Vietnam, as well as the various South American and African leaders who, under cover of this universalist rhetoric, have consistently proved to be traditional tyrants).

But there is a deeper reason to suspect the left. Fascism, to the extent it is nationalistic, is about renewal of tribal identity. But it is hard to see how the neo-Rousseauist celebration of primitive life and being close-to-nature can, in practical terms, mean anything but return to tribalism. Neo-rousseauism (Boddissy's philosophy) is an important ingredient in such leftward tendencies as multi-culturalism, 'black pride' and homosexual rights or other particularisms, and the new Luddite eco-hysteria.\* If we fall back into subsistence farming and hunting how can we remain in communication with the rest of the world's cultures? Where will we find time to study language and travel? Doctors will be replaced by shamans. Technocrats will be replaced by hetmen. The left claims to be the champion of Progress, but as it inexorably loses influence it has become a conservative force. It is George W. Bush's 'right' which wants to fight for universal freedom.

I think the obsession with nationalism was facile but

\* Leo Strauss places Fascism in what he calls the 'third wave' of Modernism. Communism is a feature of the 'second wave'. Fascism is fundamentally 'progressive'.

Huxley's concern with what he sees as its consequences, and his unwillingness to exempt the left from implication in them, is correct.

In the preface Huxley then goes on to make a fuss about atomic power which, 'harnessed to industrial uses', will result in:

[...] economic and social changes unprecedented in rapidity and completeness. All the existing patterns of human life will be disrupted and new patterns will have to be improvised to conform with the nonhuman fact of atomic Power.

Procrustes in modern dress, the nuclear scientist will prepare the bed on which mankind must lie; and if mankind doesn't fit—well, that will be just too bad for mankind. There will have to be some stretchings and a bit of amputation—the same sort of stretchings and amputations as have been going on ever since applied science really got into its stride, only this time they will be a good deal more drastic than in the past. These far from painless operations will be directed by highly centralized totalitarian governments. Inevitably so; for the immediate future is likely to resemble the immediate past, and in the immediate past rapid technological changes, taking place in a mass-producing economy and among a population predominantly propertyless, have always tended to produce economic and social confusion. To deal with confusion, power has been centralized and government control increased. It is probable that all the world's governments will be more or less completely totalitarian even before the harnessing of atomic energy; that they will be totalitarian during and after the harnessing seems almost certain. Only a large-scale popular movement towards decentralization and self-help can arrest the present tendency towards statism. At present there is no sign that such a movement will take place.

Again, these fears have proved groundless. While such contemporary examples as Korea, Iran or Saddam's Iraq bear out an aspect of these predictions, these states began with totalitarianism and then moved on towards atomic energy, not the other way. More generally, however, and despite the powerful Communist influence in post-war Europe, liberty (what Huxley calls 'decentralization and self-help') has prevailed. Europe did not topple into totalitarianism, instead the east was freed and the totalitarians were pressured into collapse—though their own inefficiency and Western pressures. Furthermore, it is largely thanks to a 'centralized' power, the United States, that the totalitarians have suffered so many set backs. The anti-Americans who today regard the United States as the great danger to freedom are frantically prolonging Huxley's error; the USA is a centralized power that protects decentralization and self-help, while the 'alter-mondialist' demand an increase in 'centralized and government control'.

Huxley, however, is not unaware of the internal weaknesses of totalitarian systems:

[...] Government by clubs and firing squads, by artificial famine, mass imprisonment and mass deportation, is not merely inhumane (nobody cares much about that nowadays); it is demonstrably inefficient — and in an age of advanced technology, inefficiency is the sin against the Holy Ghost. A really efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive of political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude. To make them love it is the task assigned, in present-day totalitarian states, to ministries of propaganda, newspaper editors and schoolteachers. But their methods are still crude and unscientific. The old Jesuits' boast that, if they were given the schooling of the child, they



could answer for the man's religious opinions, was a product of wishful thinking. And the modern pedagogue is probably rather less efficient at conditioning his pupils' reflexes than were the reverend fathers who educated Voltaire. The greatest triumphs of propaganda have been accomplished, not by doing something, but by refraining from doing. Great is the truth, but still greater, from a practical point of view, is silence about truth. By simply not mentioning certain subjects, by lowering what Mr. Churchill calls an 'iron curtain' between the masses and such facts or arguments as the local political bosses regard as undesirable, totalitarian propagandists have influenced opinion much more effectively than they could have done by the most eloquent denunciation, the most compelling of logical rebuttals. But silence is not enough. If persecution, liquidation and other symptoms of social friction are to be avoided, the positive sides of propaganda must be made as effective as the negative. The most important Manhattan Projects of the future will be vast government-sponsored inquiries into what the politicians and the participating scientists will call 'the problem of happiness' in other words, the problem of making people love their servitude.

Huxley then gets specific about how the 'life sciences' can create the 'really revolutionary' revolution; though now he discusses it only in negative terms. He describes a situation not only close to the *Brave New World*, but his predictions parallel, on the one hand, the sort of denunciations currently made by the anti-Americans of all stripes—including such leftist groups as Le Pen's Front National and the French Communists—as well as the 'traditional values' right. These objections include the idea that Western society only appears to be free, because people are manipulated by multi-national corporations and lulled into quiescence by entertainment, propaganda, drugs and government social programs, so that traditional social structures are broken down:

Without economic security, the love of servitude cannot possibly come into existence; for the sake of brevity, I assume that the all-powerful executive and its managers will succeed in solving the problem of permanent security. But security tends very quickly to be taken for granted. Its achievement is merely a superficial, external revolution. The love of servitude cannot be established except as the result of a deep, personal revolution in human minds and bodies. To bring about that revolution we require, among others, the following discoveries and inventions. First, a greatly improved technique of suggestion—through infant conditioning and, later, with the aid of drugs, such as scopolamine. Second, a fully developed science of human differences, enabling government managers to assign any given individual to his or her proper place in the social and economic hierarchy. (Round pegs in square holes tend to have dangerous thoughts about the social system and to infect others with their discontents.) Third (since reality, however utopian, is something from which people feel the need of taking pretty frequent holidays), a substitute for alcohol and the other narcotics, something at once less harmful and more pleasure-giving than gin or heroin. And fourth (but this would be a long-term project, which would take generations of totalitarian control to bring to a successful conclusion), a foolproof system of eugenics, designed to standardize the human product and so to facilitate the task of the managers. In *Brave New World* this standardization of the human product has been pushed to fantastic, though not perhaps impossible, extremes. Technically and ideologically we are still a long way from bottled babies and Bokanovsky groups of semi-morons. But by A.F. 600, who knows what may not be happening? Meanwhile the other characteristic features of that happier and more stable world—the equivalents of soma and hypnopædia and the scientific caste system—are probably not

more than three or four generations away. Nor does the sexual promiscuity of *Brave New World* seem so very distant. There are already certain American cities in which the number of divorces is equal to the number of marriages. In a few years, no doubt, marriage licences will be sold like dog licences, good for a period of twelve months, with no law against changing dogs or keeping more than one animal at a time. As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase. And the dictator (unless he needs cannon fodder and families with which to colonize empty conquered territories) will do well to encourage that freedom. In conjunction with the freedom to daydream under the influence of dope and movies and the radio, it will help to reconcile his subjects to the servitude which is their fate.

All things considered, it looks as though Utopia were far closer to us than anyone, only fifteen years ago, could have imagined. Then, I projected it six hundred years into the future. Today it seems quite possible that the horror may be upon us within a single century. That is, if we refrain from blowing ourselves to smithereens in the interval.

Huxley's predictions seem most justified on the side of the traditionalist fears. He then offers his prescription for a solution, and the twin horrors which will occur if we fail:

[...] unless we choose to decentralize and to use applied science, not as the end to which human beings are to be made the means, but as the means to producing a race of free individuals, we have only two alternatives to choose from: either a number of national, militarized totalitarianisms, having as their root the terror of the atomic bomb and as their consequence the destruction of civilization (or, if the warfare is limited, the perpetuation of militarism); or else one supra-national totalitarianism, called into existence by the social chaos resulting from rapid technological progress in general and the atom revolution in particular, and developing, under the need for efficiency and stability, into the welfare-tyranny of Utopia [...]

Three possibilities: a multi-polar world of antagonistic totalitarian terror, a uni-polar world of totalitarian terror, or 'decentralization' and use of 'science' to 'produce' a 'race' of 'free individuals'—or as he put it previously: 'a large-scale popular movement towards decentralization and self-help [to stop the] tendency towards statism.'

Huxley's menu of horrors and his prescription, however, does not seem to cover the actual present situation, where the intellectual collapse of modernism—the materialistic metaphysic which is the ground of Huxley's own thinking—is engendering a resurgence of a Christian doctrine of freedom. This freedom, the freedom Bush pretends is God's gift to mankind and which underlies his commitment of American arms in the heart of the zombie of the Muslim empire, may be contrasted with Huxley's science-generated freedom, the substance of which I am unable to identify. Is it greater bodily strength, longer life, tranquilizers to help us affront anxiety-provoking reality, hormones to increase brain efficiency? Such advantages do not offer freedom, they merely give power. Power is a kind of freedom, but physical freedom is not the kind that counts. Moral freedom is what counts.

The taste Huxley developed for sanity could not carry him out of the dilemma in which his materialistic perspective left him. What can 'sanity' be when the only kind of 'knowledge' is of the scientific type, which can lead only to ever greater material power?

## SAVING HYBRAS

The following dialogue was in prepared for COSMOPOLIS 44 but never published. Steve Sherman and Suan Yong, contributing to a discussion about Christianity then proceeding in and around the VIE project, reacted to an analysis in which Christianity was identified as a viable component of the *Lyonesse* situation. Steve wrote:

[...] in a world created by Jack Vance neither Christianity nor any other religion with pretensions to universalism is going to be portrayed in that kind of light. If in some sequel to *Lyonesse Hybras* were to be rescued from its fate of sinking into the sea, the force that saved it would not be seen to be a universal religion but at best a local one (*Spirifiume*, for example)—or more likely the forces of magic itself, to which Vance manifestly and undeniably attributes greater virtue than to universal religion.

To this I replied:

The issue is not an opinion about 'Jack's creation', but a textual analysis. Here are the elements I am looking at:

1) The text states that Hybras is supported upon submarine pillars; is it unreasonable to think that other places are also so supported—Ireland for example? If not, why not? In this case, might not the 'old gods' have also menaced these places? Magic and the old gods were notoriously powerful all through Europe in the 'golden age'.

2) The menace to Hybras is explicitly stated to be 'old' and 'dying' gods. Regarding this, in a passage neither of us will forget, Jack offers the following hint; the under chamberlain replies to Madouc: "Perhaps when gods are no longer venerated, they fade, or dissipate . . ." So the old god menacing Hybras would seem to be dying because they are losing worshipers. This would be in accord with the premise of *Parapsyche* whereby spiritual reality is a function of celebrity. Since Christianity has little success on Hybras and since, as you point out, Vance's gods are so often local rather than universal, we can assume that Christianity is not the cause of this decline. So why are the old gods dying? Either they are being replaced by new local gods, such a *Spirifiumi*, or by nothing at all which, to use the technical name, would be 'atheism', or 'without god'. On Hybras Christianity succeeded in neither displacing the old gods nor weakening magic. But where do we see an advance of atheism?

3) Though it occurs after the end of the story, it seems fair to assume that the part of Hybras not destroyed by Tamurillo's partial awakening of Joald was later destroyed by the old dying gods (presumably by a fuller awakening of Joald). Murgan's partial success was only temporary.

4) The basic fault comes from Xabistee, an apparently extraterrestrial realm which would seem to be the seat of power of the 'old', 'dying' gods mentioned by Murgan. Emanations from Xabistee are 'green', and as Shimrod states: 'the green comes from demonland'. So Xabistee is a demon realm; it is therefore 'demonic' forces who seek to destroy Hybras. Reporting on the destruction of Desmei and Tamurillo, the efferent reports: ". . . neither jot, atom,

breath, thought nor tittle remain. The pits of Myrdal burn hot." While clearly not Christian, this is suggestive of Christian spiritual economy, with its demons and fiery sink of evil. Though both, like Myrdal, are characterized by pits, the 'Hades' of classical religion is a simple realm of the dead, very different from 'Hell' which is a sink of evil. Hades is also not notable for its fire, while both Myrdal and Hell are.

Given these points, and given that Christianity was famously successful in other places at chasing away old gods and magic, might not Hybras, had Christianity fared better there, been saved, where Murgan failed?

Murgan's power resides in his control of creatures like sandestins (a class of fairy) and efferents. In the preamble to *Rhialto the Marvellous* we learn: 'The most pliable and cooperative of these creatures range from the lowly and frail elementals, through the sandestins. More fractious entities are known by the Temuchin as "daihak," which include "demons" and "gods." A magician's power derives from the abilities of the entities he is able to control.' At the time of the *Lyonesse* story, according to Tamurello, we learn that: ". . . Sandestins are no longer innocent nor plentiful nor accommodating . . ." Like the old gods reigning in Xabiste, the sandistins of the forest of Tantrevailles retain a certain malevolent vivacity. The last dramatic manifestation of their vitality would seem to have been the utter destruction of Hybras. Meanwhile Christianity, as we learn from the stories of Dunsany, among others, chased magic and the old gods from Ireland, Britain, France and Spain.

So; why did Christianity fair so poorly in Hybras? I think the answer is to be found in the forest of Tantravalles. This forest was so dense, so charged with magic, that it was the worlds final refuge of magic and the gods. Had it not been so filled with mischievous fairies and dryads, lustful anthrophagious trolls, dangerous homosexual magicians and objects of weird and awful power like Twitten's post, Christianity might have prospered in Hybras as it did elsewhere. It then might have intervened in time to quell the masters of Joald before the final act of their malevolent existences.

Steve replied as follows:

Why did Christianity fair poorly in Hybras? I think the answer is obvious: Hybras is the creation of Jack Vance, whose lack of sympathy for Christianity is well documented.

Paul, I have no fault to find with your textual analysis. Indeed I find it immensely clever and well thought through. In particular the notion that the Forest of Tantrevailles is the center of resistance to Christianity—one might also say to modernity—seems right. We know that the Forest is a very powerful and crucial part of Jack's conception.

But that's the whole point. Your analysis reads like it is being directed at historical texts rather than a work of fiction. In the latter, the author gets to determine how it will all come out, and Christianity was no more going to come out of the *Lyonesse* trilogy the victor than Hugh Bronny was going to defeat Don Berwick. I've been trying to think of any other of Jack's works where Christianity is a factor. Apart from the passing reference in the case of the dates used in the world of *The Demon Princes*, I could only think of one: *The Pleasant Grove Murders*. If you have not read that yet, stop here, because I'm going to give away some crucial information in the next paragraph.

It is crucial to the character of the perpetrator of the murders



of the title that said perpetrator is Catholic: perp is unwilling to countenance an abortion, but quite happy to kill three people. It rather reminds one of modern-day clinic bombers.

I responded:

. . . your objection depends on speculative reference to possible opinions of Jack Vance in real life. I do not contest this, but I am looking exclusively at the internal logic of the text itself [. . .] I then pose questions which, if they might be unusual or even provocative, are not without pertinence to that inner logic.

Hybras was destroyed. This destruction, it is fair to assume, occurred though the agency of 'old' 'dying' gods. A central theme of *Lyonesse* is Murgén's struggle to ward off this disaster which, by the end of the story, he only partly succeeds in doing.

Meanwhile the story is set against the background of the 'golden age' retreat of magic and the old gods, which is universally understood to have occurred because of the advance of Christianity. *Lyonesse* is filled with references to this situation, notably the Arthurian legends, and the holy grail. Various efforts of Christian missionaries in Hybras are recounted; one, that of father Umphred, is even presented in detail. These efforts are unsuccessful. However, within the logic of the world presented, there is no structural reason why they might not have been the opposite. Vance is telling us a story in a world where magic and the old gods are in retreat, though in a place where the retreat, though already felt, is less advanced than in other places. The reason for the setting of the story in a Hybras that is a sort of final stronghold against Christianity may be due, as you suggest, to an authorial hostility to Christianity, though I find this view strained, or even needlessly polemical. To me it seems clear that the 'dying world' atmosphere of Hybras was what appealed to Vance—he even told me he had always, since boyhood, wanted to write a story about the Forest of Tantravalles. He did not say that he was looking for a way to bash Christianity, and if he were looking for an anti-Christian there are surely better choices. However this may be, the inner logic of the *Lyonesse* world presented by Vance is in any case surely a mixture of historical references and authorial needs and caprices; whatever the source, it is in fact a world in which Christianity tried to exert an influence but mostly failed. The reasons for this failure, as far as I can see from an examination of the text, rather than being structural, is merely circumstantial, and I see no internal evidence pointing to this as a sign of authorial anti-Christianism. Hybras was destroyed by the 'old gods'. Is this an argument against Christianity?

Meanwhile Hybras' imperviousness to Christianity is not an absolute. Casmir's father, Phristan, was more accommodating to missionaries (see Madouc, chapter 1). Casimir, rather than a cold-blooded and power-hungry person, might have been a different type of man, a more Oriante type or, even if cold and mean-spirited, might have been born with a dash of his wife's credulity. Not all kings in Hybras are like Casmir. Imagine that, rather than the detestable Umphred, Casmir had had to do with, say, Qualls the 'runaway Irish monk', or one of the other more sympathetic priests mentioned in the story. There is scope in *Lyonesse* for Christian success.

There are even limited examples of it. That it does not occur is not because it cannot, it is simply because it so happens that it does not. That the atmosphere and events of the story call for Christian non-success does not mean that Christian success is excluded structurally. In fact, were to have occurred, or were it to have been impossible, could Vance have generated the bitter-sweet, tragical-farsical atmosphere he so wonderfully does? If a great saint were to have come to dominate Hybras, and Murgén and Joald together faded away, what would be left but a prosaic advance into modern times, in step with the rest of Europe, with its materialism and dogmatic skepticism? A precarious Christian failure seems even to be one of the elements that generates that tragic cast which gives *Lyonesse* its lovely middle tones and nuances.

Regarding the possibility of Christianity succeeding, there are various examples. The power of Christianity against magic and the old gods is explicitly evoked more than once. For example Orlo's suggestion to Tristano:

"...the holy rites of a Christian burial must effectively stifle the evil force of the pearl. The priests are uttering benedictions by the score and Christian virtue hangs thick in the air. The pearl must surely be confounded, absolutely and forever, when surrounded by such a power."

The scheme was ill conceived and failed but the principal remains sound, namely that Christianity is a power which can be used against other powers. Christianity, even in the context of *Lyonesse*, though it fails to chase away magic and old gods, is not equivalent to disenchantment and materialist rationality. There are 'rationalists' and 'skeptics' in *Lyonesse* but they are not hostile to religion as such, merely uncomprehending of it. Sir Tristano is an example. He states: "The concepts of religion baffle me." Orlo, a lapsed priest, is not thereby a convert to atheism. He is in disagreement with the Church on certain doctrinal questions—as he understands or misunderstands them—but his faith in the supernatural power of Christianity continues, as his suggestion to Tristano shows.

I think it is fair to say that Vance allows a taste of modern skeptical atheism to peek into the story at a few points, but beyond this hint he respects the 'historical reality' of the golden-age, equivalent his underlying concept of the world of *Lyonesse*, where a materialist/atheist view was either unthinkable or as esoteric as possible.

However this may be, one thing is sure: skepticism is given no scope in *Lyonesse*. If we are not stumbling around in Irely, we are combating Xabiste or rushing around in Tangecterly. The invisible world is resurgently visible: Joald menaces the pillars holding up Hybras; Melancthe has no soul; Madouc's mother is a fairy.

Suan Yong contributed these comment:

[. . .] Paul, your analysis presupposes the "real" power of Christianity—but I don't think this power was demonstrated anywhere in the text. You mentioned Orlo's observation [regarding] Christian burial in *The Green Pearl*, but did not the pearl resurrect itself upon Tristano's body that night? Essentially, Orlo's explanation appears to be lore rather than reality.

You also mentioned that The power of Christianity against magic

and the old gods is explicitly evoked more than once. I do not recall any such circumstance: can you cite specific examples?

Contrary to your thesis, I contend that Lyonesse was described in such a way as to be more amenable to "scientific" explanation. Magic was a force that had to be learned, mastered, controlled, just as "scientific" forces are today. There is much that is difficult to understand, but through "experimentation" much can be learned.

And there is even a "scientific" explanation of the decline of fairy magic: like (for analogy) radioactive material, the earth "started" with a finite amount of them, and they have been decaying every since, so that one day there would be no more (until Man figured out how to create them). Likewise, the "fairy stuff" is finite, and during the Lyonesse era they too appear to be on the decline, with the Forest of Tantrevalles a final refuge of high concentration.\*

I replied:

As I mentioned, Orlo, a lapsed Christian, retains his confidence in the efficacy of the Christian rite against magic. This is what I mean by an 'explicit evocation'. You ask for actual instances where Christian power is shown to be effective, in the way fairy or sandistin magic is; for example the touch of a saint's garment curing a boil. Such examples are hard to come by because the story is not concerned with Christian power against magic but magic against itself in a situation where Christianity does not dominate. However there are many suggestive passages, such as:

The bishops strove mightily against the olden gods, halflings and magicians alike, but few dared enter the Forest of Tantrevalles. Aspergillums, thuribles and curses proved futile against such as Dankvin the giant, Taudry the Weasoning, the fairies of Pithpenny Shee.

Here the implication is that, though futile in many cases and ultimately ineffective, Christian strivings were not altogether vain. Likewise when Tristano reports the goings-on in Godelia, he says:

Despite the Christian churches which are now appearing everywhere, the druids still hold power.

Here again the implication is that, though not yet

triumphant, Christian power is real and growing. These strivings and powers—as in the Arthurian legends, certain fairy tails, Dunsany, and etc.—present the spiritual force of heaven defeating the ancient demons. Such hints cannot escape the cultured reader.

Father Umphred himself explains Christian doctrine in these terms:

Each new Christian may properly atone for his years of sin by dedicating his wealth and his labor to the construction of a great temple; thus will be eased his way into Paradise.

This is not exactly correct doctrine, perverted as it is by

Umphred's worldliness, but, making allowances for the distortions, the Christian paradise, like Xabiste, exists, and there is a divine economy of sin, atonement and forgiveness. Umphred's evocation corresponds to something 'real', something which effectuates. The narrative may not confirm the reality of paradise or the economy of sin, but neither does it demonstrate its untruth.

If anything Lyonesse is fertile ground for Christian faith since in the story's context, and in strong contrast to contemporary atheistic attitudes, non-terrestrial realms exist. They are home to demons and gods. They are places like Mydal with its 'fiery pits' capable of 'expunging evil'. There are also real benefits to be gained from religion, such as the wine given to Aillas by Spirifumi.

Regarding your contention that Vance structured Hybras to be 'amenable to "scientific" explanation'; indeed,

vancian magic is an 'art', a technique. But there is more in Lyonesse than the art of magic. Xabiste is not a technique, it is a place, which emanates an 'evil destiny'. Like heaven Xabiste has a real existence, even if it is outside the our normal operational dimensions. Heaven is also a sort of 'demonland'. Furthermore, in *Lyonesse* there is no question about evil not being real. Speaking of Malancthe's flowers Shimrod states: '... they represented the aspects of evil: the many flavors of purulence...' The text continues in a dialogue between Shimrod and Malancthe:



\* From Glossary I of *Suldrun's Garden*: Fairies, like the other halflings, are functionally hybrids, with varying proportions of earth-stuff. With the passage of time the proportion of earth-stuff increases, if only through the ingestion of air and water, though occasional coition of man and halfling hastens the process. As the halfling becomes 'heavy' with earth-stuff it converges toward humanity and loses some or all of its magic.



"As a matter of interest, do you know the meaning of the word 'evil'?"

"It seems to mean what you intend it to mean."

"The word is general. Do you know the difference between, let us say, kindness and cruelty?"

"I have never thought to notice. Why do you ask?"

"Because, for a fact, I have come to study your character."

"Again? For what reason?"

"I am curious to discover whether you are 'good' or 'bad'."

For Shimrod, which is to say, for Murgan, the difference between 'good' and 'evil' is neither relative nor arbitrary but as definite and real, as for Christianity. The precise definition may, or may not, be different in detail. My point is this; Lyonesse is a world in which evil is a reality, not a relativistic nothing, as it is in the materialist scientific dispensation. Here good and evil, at best, are 'values', which may, as such, be revoked or changed. And magic; for the most part it is evil:

In the Forest of Tantrevalles halflings, trolls, ogres and others less easily defined, bestirred themselves and performed evil deeds which no one dared punish; magicians no longer troubled to mask their identities, and were solicited by rulers for aid in the conduct of temporal policy.

The magicians devoted ever more time to sly struggles and baneful intrigue, to the effect that a goodly number had already been expunged.

In this passage we see the soulless aspect of technique, the materialist reduction of 'evil' to a value. Magicians are technicians—just like our scientists, engineers and technocrats of today—whose power, as such, brings them no wisdom but simply increases their power, their capacity for action, whether 'evil' or 'good'. Murgan is the only magician who seems concerned with the collective good. At any rate he is the only one who neglects his own well-being and personal advantage for the sake of something else, a greater good:

Murgan made a startling discovery, which caused him such vast consternation that for days he sat immobile, staring into space. By degrees his resolution returned and at last he set himself to a program which, if successful, would slow and finally halt the momentum of an evil destiny.

The goal of Christianity, as even the hypocritical self-seeker Umphred suggests in spite of himself, is not to make people powerful but to make them happy by making them good, and thus to stave off an evil destiny.

Regarding your objection about a "scientific" explanation of the decline of fairy magic, Lyonesse is set in the 'golden age' context of progressing Christianity and retreating magic and old gods. It is not impossible that the references to the Arthurian legends and Irish monks not be accompanied by a full awareness of this. Such awareness is underlined by the historically accurate presentation of this situation—in particular of Christian methods. It was the old gods, the druids and the trolls, who were blood-thirsty and horrific. Christianity was spread by persuasion. It pushed away the fairies and the magic across all Europe. Magic may, or may not, have been waning for other reasons; that changes nothing.



## THE RETURN OF THE KING

*by Greg Hansen*

The Delegates were assembled when Jik slid into the room, and waiting like gray-green anthills in their holes. They leaned forward to greet him, showing their fangs politely and gargling a joyous welcome song. But Jik could tell from the odor and oiliness of their hides that none had good news for him today.

Except for one. Jik almost closed his mouths when he saw the little one on the end, covered with garish yellow excitement-spots, his belly flesh glistening with saliva. Disgraceful, showing such emotions at a meeting like this! The little one trembled, quivered, sent bubbles of spittle floating across the room. Jik was tempted to drop him for rocket fuel but rolled his eye and settled into his hole instead. Time for that later.

"Greetings, Delegates!" Like glassware in a clothes dryer the sound of Jik's voice crashed over them and the welcome gargle faded. "I will hear your report of the blue planet now!"

The Delegates held very still, looked at the fat one two places below center. With a start the fat one spoke: "Mighty one," he said, his words sounding like a boxful of test tubes dropped to the floor. "Our lurk at the blue planet is complete and was most successful!" Jik worked his jaws in exaggerated approval as the others grinned uncomfortably. Except the little one, who beamed and fidgeted at the foot of the table.

"Wonderful," jangled Jik. "And?"

"The . . . the aliens were most co-operative, only a few landings proved necessary after the initial reconnaissance. Eavesdropping was incredibly easy: they communicate by beaming coded electromagnetic signals into space!" The fat one laughed at this, a nervous, shrill laugh, like scrap glass pouring into an empty steel dumpster.

Jik slowly blinked his eye and the fat one ended his

outburst with an unconvincing cough. The Delegates on either side of him seemed to draw back a bit.

"The planet is ripe for development," the fat one continued, his voice meek like cubes of broken safety glass under a hard-soled shoe. "The aliens have used most of the oil but have hardly tapped the methane. And conditions on much of the planet are ideal for insect production. If we quadruple the size of the indigenous cockroach the world could still support *one million* times its current roach population!—ah, roaches are considered vermin there," the fat one remarked, to a sudden, jagged babble of outrage. Even Jik's passions inflamed at the thought. Vermin indeed!

"Then there'll be no mercy this time!" Jik crackled. "When does the invasion begin?" The Delegates shrank, looked at the ground. Ah, thought Jik, the bad news.

"M . . . mighty one, that's just it. We, ah," the fat one looked hopefully at his neighbors, who had definitely slid away from him, at least a foot. "We're not sure that invading the blue planet is the best course of action," he finished quietly, his words fading like tiny crystal shards tinkling on carpet.

Jik trained his eye at the fat one, looked at the others. "And why not?" he cracked, dangerously.

The fat one hunched in his hole and leaned forward, talking fast now. "Technology," he said. "These aliens are more advanced than any of the others have been. Their weapons are crude but can hurt us. They are bipeds and they're quite agile, and they're smart."

Jik flatulated his frustration, setting off a smelly, sympathetic chorus. "So they can walk and feed themselves!" he roared, like a fluorescent bulb exploding on a hardware store floor. "They'll make better slaves!"

The fat one was jet fuel and he knew it so he looked Jik in the eye and held his ground. "It isn't worth it," he said in even tones, like a diamond-tipped blade testing bulletproof glass. "There are other planets with less advanced populations. These aliens are mixed-up, unpredictable! They speak different languages and have different forms of government, and infighting is common. But when threatened they pull together. Their archives depict them combining to destroy alien invaders!" A few of the delegates shuddered, one made the long, sad sound of a starship exploding.

"Other documents suggest light-speed travel capacity," the fat one bravely continued, "though there's no indication they have discovered *our* systems," he added quickly when Jik raised his eyelid.

Jik glared at the fat one, then leveled his laser beam stare at the others. He saw the same sick fear and defeat in each of them. What cowards! All shrinking in their holes, cowering from a bunch of sickly, skinny, roach-hating aliens. All, that is, but the little one.

Jik looked at him tiredly. The little one's excitement-spots were blistering and he leaned forward, eager, oblivious to Jik's ire. Might as well listen to him, thought Jik. "I suppose you have something to say?"

"Oh yes Mighty One a brilliant plan!"

"An idea of great potential success!"

"A stratagem worthy of your Mighty consideration!"

Jik closed his eye and ground his teeth, a great shudder sent waves oscillating through his backflesh. He fought the urge to whisk them all to the fuel smelter without further

comment. Mastering his impatience he issued an order to the little one: "*One . . . mouth . . . at . . . a . . . time!*" , his voice like glass bricks at the business end of a swinging sledgehammer.

"Your pardon Mighty One," said the small one with little in the way of contrition. "Blargo is right, these aliens are often at odds with each other. They even believe in numerous different gods. But many of them worship a god named Jesus, who left their world in a pillar of fire and vowed to return someday in like manner." He grinned, waiting for approval.

"So close to death and you choose to give me a HISTORY LESSON?" Jik trembled with rage; a few of the other delegates blew tentative sounds of disapproval. The little one looked puzzled for a moment before continuing.

"But Mighty One, there are millions of aliens waiting and watching for the god Jesus to come. I thought that if we arranged to *be* the returning Jesus, we would be welcomed and . . ."

. . . we'd be able to bypass and disengage their planetary defenses, Jik thought, drawing his own conclusion. Hm. "So you think these aliens are foolish enough to believe one of us is their returning hero," he said bitingly.

"Oh no!" the little one replied. "Not one of us. We can send one of the prisoners! In fact I believe prisoner 314B is well suited. He already has great status among the aliens."

Jik glowered. It was preposterous, insane! But it was better than nothing. And if it didn't work he'd be out one prisoner, an antiquated rocket lander and a couple of lousy Delegates. He made his decision.

"You!" he said, glaring at the fat one who cringed as if struck. "You're in charge. You're stupid but at least you have backbone. Well not really but you know what I mean. And you!" to the little one, "you're pathetic and disgusting but its your idea and you'll help plan the operation. The rest of you will now see the fuel smelter from the inside."

The other delegates had a moment to look surprised before the floors of their holes disappeared, followed by themselves. "You'll need a lot of fuel to make a decent pillar of fire," Jik growled at the remaining two. "Now get to work!"

Things had not gone well for the King since stumbling out of his Las Vegas hotel room, seeing a bright light and waking up on a starship twenty five years ago. He was eighty pounds lighter—a diet of oatmeal and vitamin supplements will do that to a man—his once jet-black hair was mostly gray, and his face had gone to wrinkles. Though not having a mirror in his cell he had no way of knowing this.

His clothing had long ago fallen to tatters but he'd saved the sequins and kept them in a small, lidded container. Which he shook like a castanet when he sang the old songs and the many, many new ones.

He stood slowly when the door dissolved and revealed two of the slugs lying in the hallway. Their multi-mouthed grins and rows of needle-sharp teeth still made him uneasy, even after all this time. One was covered with yellow welts and the other was larger than average.

*I'll co-operate this time*, he vowed to himself suddenly. *Anything they want. Anything to get out of this cell for a few hours, or even just one hour! Anything.*

"Greetings, Prezlee!" croaked the smaller of the two. "We have a job for you!"





# VIE DOCUMENT ARCHIVE

## COUP DE GRACE: THE COR-B1 END-NOTES

Reproduced below are 48 of the 98 end-notes—plus related discussions—from a text typical of those for which we lacked a manuscript but which got an early start in the work process, showing evolving methods and standards. Only partway though the correction process this text was used for the Gift Volume, and provisionally finalized for that purpose, so that the GV version itself later became evidence—particularly as the Vances participated in the GV corrections.

These samples come from v-text 'coupd2-cor-b1.doc', which was not the final text. The most interesting notes are included, as well as a sampling of less interesting ones, such those treating commas. As with almost all early VIE work there was much concern about formatting based on the various published editions. By 2001 this nucupatory concern had been quelched, and only the comments in Note 1 on this issue have been retained. I have reduced Note 1, the 'sign-in', to a dejargonized resume, and deleted many of the comments.

The text samples are taken from cor-b1; in other words they are only a somewhat modified version of the Dobson edition, not the final VIE version. Proposed TI changes are to this text.

I have pared down many of the notes, and made minor adjustments to some.

'stet' = 'retain as is', 'imp' = 'implement change', TI = Textual integrity (non-board review expert), BR = board review.

### NOTE 1

Initially digitization: The many worlds of Magnus Ridolph, Dobson, 1977 by Alun Hughes (Triton), 20, September 1999. Comment:

The Dobson edition used rather than the "preferred" Ace edition because it is a larger, clearer photographic reproduction of the Ace text, and therefore easier to scan

March 2001: Preproofed by Peter Ikin, Thomas Lindren, Steve Sherman, David Reitsema.  
February 9, 2002: Joel Riedesel (523). Read against "Worlds of Origin" (published in Super-Science Fiction in Feb. 1958). [Various formatting differences noted.]  
May 2001: Paul Rhoads: text inspection for Gift Edition.  
Feb 2002: Rob Gerrand (336), TI.  
March 2002: Tim Stretton (45), TI-Second  
March 2002: Paul (William) Rhoads (38), Board Review.  
Comment:

I have become convinced that Jack never revised this text. Some of the editorial corrections seem very good, or even necessary. But the others are best swept away. These include the pervasive changes of commas to semi-colon and dash, but discussion with the TI-Second has changed my mind about a number of issues.

TI DEBATE 336; Remove section numberings [retaining section breaks].

COMMENT 336; Did Jack insert the numberings for later reprint edition(s)? We have no evidence for this.

TEXT-QUERY 523; In SSF, there are NO chapter numbers. In fact, as I read the SSF version I note that the 'breaking' up of the text into sections (or later, chapters by someone else?) seems somewhat arbitrary. Does this text really have chapter numbers?

PWR; Kokod, from the same period seems to have these too, and none of the other, much earlier, Ridolf stories do. Still, if SSF does not have them, where do they come from? They are a bit pretentious. If removed, as might be best, should they also be removed from Kokod? Meanwhile, a cautious stet.

### NOTE 2

TI DEBATE 336; unclear whether Vance or editor introduced hyphen in <glamor-island> in later editions.

TEXT-QUERY 523; glamor-island/glamor island, SSF doesn't have the hyphen.

TS; I can't see an editor doing this. Looks like JV to me.

TI; stet

PWR: This does not bother me, but I bet an editor did it. stet?

TS; stet

### NOTE 3

TI DEBATE 336; should double quotes be changed to single?

TS; yes, you can do this and then delete the endnote in all such cases.

TI-IMPed

PWR; But it seems that Jack wrote "cottages". In this case it evokes what is said. Not a big issue, but no reason to impose this usage if there is no ambiguity. Tim? (see further down for a missed "cottage")

TS; I thought the VIE standard was for single quotes in such cases. This is aesthetic rather than artistic, I think.

PWR; No big deal. But There is both a >'< and a >"< key on the typewriter, and Jack knew where they were. To me our guidelines are for when the evidence is not clear. Why not restore?

BR-PROPOSITION; 'cottages'/'cottages"

### NOTE 4

COMMENT 38; this correction is from the horses mouth, made when I read the passage aloud to him. He called out in shock when I read the word 'salon'. A 'saloon', Jack explained, is the dining room on a ship.

COMMENT 523; SSF uses salon

COMMENT 336; Typo carried forward in subsequent editions.

TI PROPOSITION 336; salon/saloon [thoughtout]

TI-IMPed [thoughtout. pwr; other notes removed]

## NOTE 5

TI DEBATE 336; intrusion, but/intrusion—but  
TEXT-QUERY 523; intrusion, but/intrusion—but, SSF uses an m-dash instead of comma here.  
COMMENT 336; Difficult to know whether change from em rule to comma was made by Jack or later editor.  
TS; SSF looks editorial to me. Jack tends not to use m-dashes this way.  
TI; stet  
PWR; Here is a case where the dash has not made it into the v-text. Odd. Stet.  
TS; stet

## NOTE 6

COMMENT 38; GIFT EDITION, ¶indent suppressed.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; leave new paragraph indent.  
TI; stet  
PWR; Don't understand note. Does it mean: 'leave old paragraph indent? 'The paragraph suppression does not appear in the v-text. Does 'TI-stet' mean leave v-text as as, with paragraph? This does not seem to be consistent with how note 10 (below) is handled.  
PWR; Stet.

## NOTE 7

TEXT-QUERY 523; paleolithic/palaeolithic SSF uses palaeolithic, an old spelling, throughout.  
COMMENT 336; no reason to change Jack's original [British] spelling  
TS; yes, this is probably Vassarisation. Unlikely that an editor will look for a more recherché spelling.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; paleolithic/palaeolithic [throughout]  
TI-IMPed

## NOTE 8

Bonfils himself was a large fair man with thick blond hair, heavy and vaguely flabby.

TI DEBATE 336; delete 'large'  
COMMENT 336; 'heavy and vaguely flabby' seems to imply 'large'.  
TEXT-QUERY 523; the word 'large' is not in the SSF text.  
TS; I am by no means convinced of SSF's bona fides. Arguably 'large' helps the rhythm here.  
TI-stet  
PWR; The opposite is also arguable. Note the structure of ajectives:  
v-text: Bonfils was a X Y man with A B hair, C and D flabby.  
SFF: Bonfils was a Y man with A B hair, C and D flabby.  
v-text, rather heavily, repeats form (x y=A B), while SFF always varies (X - A B - C and D). 'fair, thick blond hair, heavy and vaguely flabby' seems like enough and more than enough description. Why large? Where did it come from? 'A large fair man with thick blond hair' is something of a mouthful. A few sentences before Bonfils sits 'heavily' down. I'm not sure about this, but I suspect that word.  
TS; stet

Extant 19

## NOTE 9

He should have exhaled easy good-fellowship, but he was withdrawn and diffident.

TI PROPOSITION 336; withdrawn and diffident/withdrawn, and diffident  
COMMENT 336; insert comma  
TEXT-QUERY 523; withdrawn and diffident/withdrawn, and diffident; SSF has a comma after withdrawn.  
TS; this comma is definitely spurious!

## NOTE 10

The stars glinted on the whites of his eyes; his skin shone the color of cheese.

TI DEBATE 336; keep semi-colon  
COMMENT 336; a comma is not grammatically right; suspect Vance picked it up before subsequent publication  
TEXT-QUERY 523; eyes; his/eyes, his; SSF uses a comma instead of a semi-colon.  
TS – pulps could be expected to simplify the punctuation. I feel sure the semi-colon was Jack's intent.  
TI-stet  
PWR; But I think this is a magazine editor correcting Jack's 'evil' 'comma splice'...  
TS; I'm not convinced. I can't imagine the pulps inserting a semi-colon; they'd be more likely to use a period. Pulps were less Vassarish about punctuation and probably wouldn't have worried about a comma splice if Jack had written one.  
PWR; Stet.

## NOTE 11

"I can give you some rather general advice," said Magnus Ridolph.  
"It is this: Have nothing more to do with this woman."

TI PROPOSITION 336; Have/have  
TEXT-QUERY 162; Have/have  
COMMENT 161; The cap after a colon is common in Vance.  
COMMENT 523; SSF uses lower case here.  
COMMENT 336; suggest follow earliest usage  
TS – vtext is characteristically Vancian.  
PWR; perhaps, but then all the words should be capitalized like a slogan. This does not seem right.  
BR-PROPOSITION; Have nothing/have nothing  
TI-stet

## NOTE 12

Magnus Ridolph sighed, and, after a moment or two, departed the dining saloon.

TI DEBATE 336; leave comma after <and>  
COMMENT 336; SSF edition does not have comma, but it makes sense to have it there, and presumably Jack inserted it, given his sensitive ear  
TEXT-QUERY 523; and, after/and after; SSF does not have this comma.  
TS; both this and the subsequent comma look suspect to me.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; and, after a moment or two, departed/and after a moment or two departed



## NOTE 13

The next morning the Hub vibrated with talk, because Lester Bonfils lay dead in his cottage, with the three palaeolithics stamping restlessly in their cages.

TEXT-QUERY 523; with the three/with three; SSF does not have the word 'the'.

COMMENT 336; missing 'the' in the SSF version would be a typo, as we already know there are three palaeolithics.

TI PROPOSITION 336; retain 'the'

TS; 'the' is clearly necessary.

COMMENT 162; in Chapter II, there is just a single, shared cage, consisting of electrified splines. I suggest the above 'cages' is changed to 'cage'.

COMMENT 38; Gift Edition; cage

COMMENT 523; SSF uses cages

TI PROPOSITION 336; cages/cage

PWR; Maybe sometimes they are kept in cages and sometimes put in one cage? These cages seems compactable.

## NOTE 14

"That's what I'm seeing you about!" Pascoglu threw himself into a chair. "The Hub's outside all jurisdiction. I'm my own law—within certain limits, of course. That is to say, if I were harboring criminals, or running vice, someone would interfere. But there's nothing like that here. A drunk, a fight, a swindle—we take care of such things quietly. We've never had a killing. It's got to be cleaned up!"

TEXT-QUERY 523; were/was; SSF uses was.

COMMENT 336; Jack typically uses the subjunctive; suspect pulp editor changed 'were' to 'was'. 'Was' sounds illiterate.

TI PROPOSITION 336; keep 'were'

PWR; Wait! This is the boorish Pan Pascoglu speaking! SFF's 'was' must be right.

TS; Pascoglu may indeed be boorish, but this is not always accompanied by grammatical laxity. The evidence of Jack's extreme reliance on the subjunctive in this context makes me disinclined to move away from it without better evidence.

PWR; Yes, but 'was' is not wrong in context: 'if I was'. It is a more robustly American way of talking, like a business man, and I think Jack is sensitive to this.\*

BR-PROPOSITION; I were/I was

## NOTE 15

"The doctor looked him over. I came directly to you."  
"Good! Let us go to Bonfils' cottage."

COMMENT 161; The joc file ['jocky file': merged double digitation file] has period rather than exclamation point.

Further, the joc file lacks the blank line following this one.

COMMENT 523; The latter is used in SSF (Good.). There is no blank line following in SSF.

COMMENT 336; SSF, DAW and Ace editions have the period, not the exclamation mark.

PWR; Magnus Ridolf, cool and collected.

TI PROPOSITION 336; Good!/Good.

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\* Here we see the 'One Yank' TI rule in action.

## NOTE 16

The body lay on the floor beside a white chaise-longue—lumpy, pathetic, grotesque.

TEXT-QUERY 523; longue — lumpy/longue, lumpy; SSF uses a comma and not an m-dash.

COMMENT 336; an em rule reads better; suspect Jack made the change when preparing story for reprint.

TI PROPOSITION 336; leave em rule

PWR; This looks like enditorial fussing to me. There were lots of dashes added in Big Planet for example. Still, does the comma allows a certain confusion?

The body lay on the floor beside a white chaise-longue, lumpy, pathetic, grotesque.

. . . no.

BR-PROPOSITION; longue — lumpy/longue, lumpy\*

## NOTE 17

Magnus gingerly crossed the room, looked down at the body.

COMMENT 523; SSF uses Magnus Ridolph (the full name).

TEXT-QUERY 20; 4.2 Magnus/Magnus Ridolph

COMMENT 20; "Magnus Ridolph" occurs 103 times in the text, "Magnus" only on this occasion; there appears to be no reason why it should; suspect an error.

COMMENT 38; Gift Edition uses: 'Magnus Ridolph'

TI PROPOSITION 336; Magnus/Magnus Ridolph

## NOTE 18

He turned abruptly, rejoined Pascoglu and the doctor, who waited by the door.

TI DEBATE 336; leave comma

COMMENT 336; SSF version doesn't have the comma, other published versions do. Removing the comma gives a different – and odd – meaning to the sentence, not just a different way of pausing.

TEXT-QUERY 523; doctor, who/doctor who; SSF does not have a comma here.

TS – not convinced that the comma is Jack's

TI PRPOSITION 336; doctor, who/doctor who [delete comma]

## NOTE 19

"The criminal in all likelihood had had some sort of association with Bonfils."

TEXT-QUERY 523; had had/has had; SSF uses the word 'has'. I can be convinced either way. Good luck figuring this one out TI!

COMMENT 336; In the context, the original spelling—in SSF—reads better: the criminal has had some connection.

While it is possible to say the criminal had had some connection, this stretches credibility, for there is no indication Ridolph was trying to say the connection was in the completed past, but was, rather, continuing.

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\* VIE text reads: *The body lay on the floor beside a white chaise-longue, lumpy, pathetic, grotesque.* 'Longue' is French.

TS – I can imagine a pulp editor disliking the repetition of ‘had had’ and arbitrarily amending. . .  
PWR; Agreed. But this is word editing, not just presentational editing, therefore more likely a book change.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; had had/has had

#### NOTE 20

Magnus Ridolph returned along the tube to the main lobby, where he found Pascoglu at the desk.  
Pascoglu thrust forth a paper. “This is what you asked for.”

COMMENT 38; GIFT EDITION, ¶ indent suppressed  
COMMENT 336; para occurs in SSF, DAW and Ace editions  
TI PROPOSITION 336; retain para indent.  
TI; stet

#### NOTE 21

“You will then cooperate with me, to the fullest extent, with no further protest or impatient ejaculations.”

TEXT-QUERY 523; protest/protests; SSF uses plural here (which could be Vancian?)  
COMMENT 336; plural ‘protests’ matches plural ‘ejaculations’ three words later.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; protest/protests\*

#### NOTE 22

“Possibly, but not necessarily. It might be me, or it might be you. Both of us have had recent contact with Bonfils.”

TEXT-QUERY 523; me/I; SSF uses ‘I’  
COMMENT 336; ‘I’ is ungrammatical, as ‘me’ is the object here, not the subject.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; retain <me>

#### NOTE 23

Pascoglu grinned sourly. “If it were you, please confess now and save me the expense of your fee.”

TEXT-QUERY 523; were/was; SSF uses was.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; keep <were> [see Note 29]  
BR-PROPOSITION; it were/it was†

#### NOTE 24

He marched furiously into the library, to find Magnus Ridolph gazing into space, tapping the table with a pencil.

TI DEBATE 336; leave comma  
TEXT-QUERY 523; library, to/library to; SSF has no comma here.  
COMMENT 336; deleting the comma makes the sentence read clumsily; suspect Jack put it back in. But could be what he meant originally.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; leave comma

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\* A mistake? It now seems clear that SSF was ‘vasserized’, as the following note attests.

† We were not caught sleeping here.

TS; comma appears necessary to the meaning.  
PWR; I don’t see this; meanwhile the absent comma helps speed of the furious march, as well as augmenting the slow-down of the tapping pencil. Also, SSF evidence convincing in this case.  
BR-PROPOSITION; library, to/library to

#### NOTE 25

They say that Bonfils spoke at length only to three people. They are myself, you and that moon-faced bonze in the red robes.”

COMMENT 38; Gift Edition: myself, you, and that  
COMMENT 523; SSF uses: myself, you and that—no comma after ‘you’—Paul, are you editing?!?  
PWR; I can’t remember! I certainly did discuss this text much with Norma. This comma is ‘portentious’, or in this case ironically so. But the non-comma vesion has a casual charm to recommend it.  
COMMENT 336; there should be no comma—there’s none in the SSF, Daw and Ace editions.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; stet –no comma after ‘myself, you’

#### NOTE 26

“What?” cried Pascoglu. “You knew all this time?”

TEXT-QUERY 523; “What?”/“What!”; SSF uses an exclamation here, which I agree with—it reads much better.  
COMMENT 336; Either option works—both equally valid for me; maybe the question mark s little more so.  
TI DEBATE 336; “What?”/“What!”  
TS; the added freshness of the exclamation mark makes me think it’s Jack’s.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; “What?”/“What!”

#### NOTE 27

The door opened, and into the library, as if brought by some telepathic urge, came the bonze himself.

COMMENT 523; SSF uses the word ‘telepathetic’ here. I’m sure that must be wrong, but it’s humorous and does lead one to wonder just perhaps a little. . .  
COMMENT 336; telepathetic is clearly a misprint—puns are not something Jack commonly indulges in.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; leave ‘telepathic’ as is.  
PWR; ‘Telepathetic’ is not a pun, and the word is not humorous. ‘Telepathy’ means transmission of thought; ‘telepathetic’ would mean transmission of emotion, which is more appropriate. This is a case of vasserizing sci-fification.\*  
BR-PROPOSITION; telepathic/telepathetic

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\* Rob Gerand and Derek Benson questioned my position on this issue. Some of the exchanges are:

RG: Pathetic in English does not clearly refer to emotion—that would be empathy. Pathetic means either pityingly sad [eg on seeing a starving child, “what a pathetic sight”], or (more recently) stupid, inadequate [eg, on seeing stupid behaviour, “you’re pathetic”] (see page 21)



PWR: 'pathetic', from the greek 'pathos', has a wider meaning than this. It refers to emotion in general, as in the term 'pathetic fallacy' (attributing human emotions or characteristics to non-human things). Thus one could say 'It was pathetic' to mean 'It was full of emotion', not only to mean 'it was pitiable'. That few do so use it does not change the fact.

GR: The Bonze, however, appeared as Ridolph and Pascoglu were discussing him—surely a case of telepathy! (It's irrelevant what the Bonze does; the "telepathy" refers to his apposite appearance, not his philosophy—and we don't know at that stage in the story the full import of the Bonze's philosophy: because that would undermine the narrative.)

PWR: Indeed. Jack writes: "as if brought by some telepathic urge". The question of the reality of such an urge is not taken up.

DB: Don't you see the problem with this "word" telepathetic? Tele pathetic. What does pathetic mean? Here's one dictionary definition: 'arousing pity or sadness; miserably inadequate.' So how can this "word" possibly mean transmission of emotion, as you suggest? Transmission of sadness, of feelings of inadequacy, and the Bonze has received these feelings from Ridolph and Pascoglu? Ridiculous on the face of it. The bonze steps into the library by some telepathic urge right at the moment they are speaking about him: they are speaking and talking about him, he seems to know this and appears at that instant because he has received a "telepathic" urge, he has read their thoughts almost, knows what they are talking about right at that moment.

PWR: as noted above, he enters at an apropos moment, 'AS IF BROUGHT BY SOME TELEPATHETIC URGE'. 'Pathetic', again, refers to emotion as a category, just as 'thought', apart from any specific idea, is a category. In this case the emotion would be Pascoglu's distress.

DB: Here is also one dictionary definition of telepathy: 'communication between minds other than by the known senses.' This communication could include not only transmission of thought, but also emotions or feelings.

PWR: Why forbid Jack to alter the word to telepathetic, so apropos, and ingenious (at least to some of us) in context?

DB: Even if the one published instance of "telepathetic" is actually not a typo, it's a totally impossible word to use because of the meaning of the "pathetic" part of the word. Requires sympathetic editing, i.e. changing to a word with the correct meaning so that readers will be able to understand the text.

PWR: I can only repeat what I have said above. You guys don't seem to know this word in its full sense.

GR to DB: This is my view, too. It just doesn't ring true that Jack would make up a spurious word like telepathetic, which jars rather than amuses the reader. The story appeared in 1958, 44 years ago when Jack would have been around 40. I know of no other instance in his writing when he has invented a word, apart from those when they describe something he has invented.

PWR: Why is 'telepathetic' 'spurious'? Just because it isn't in the dictionary? Because it combines and alters 'normal' words? Jack would have a great guffaw at that. As for not inventing such words, of course he does! What about 'hyperaesthetic' 'minichronics' or 'overvaluation' from Trullion? Or from The Face: 'Dulcidrome', 'Justiciary' 'Carcery' or 'triskoid', and etc. and etc.

GR: Norma and Jack would quickly lay this to rest.

PWR: As mentioned in a previous letter; perhaps, but perhaps not. In any case, we know from experience, and in consideration of the higher interests of the project, we are not even going to try. However, I think those who find this word to be 'wrong' fail to consider how likely editors would be to make the very change suggested, and how unlikely it is that either Jack, or a non-interventionist publisher in 1958, would make such an error. To me this is clearly a deliberate neologism, which later editors would not sit still for.

## NOTE 28

The bonze smiled faintly. "My friend, I am dedicated to serious programs of thought. We have been trained to divide our brains left lobe from right, so that we may think with two separate minds."

Pascoglu was about to bark an impatient question, but Magnus Ridolph interceded. "The bonze is telling you that only a fool could resolve Lester Bonfils' troubles with a word."

"That expresses something of my meaning," said the bonze.

Pascoglu stared from one to the other in puzzlement, then threw up his hands in disgust. "I merely want to find who burnt the hole in Bonfils' head. Can you help me, yes or no?"

The bonze smiled faintly. "My friend, I am dedicated to wonder if you have considered the source of your impulses? Are you not motivated by an archaic quirk?"

TEXT-QUERY 523; This paragraph is fairly different in SSF:

The bonze smiled. "I will be glad to help you, but I wonder if you have considered the source of your impulses? Are you not motivated by an archaic quirk?"

COMMENT 336; this looks like a case of Jack revising the text; I don't imagine an editor would have done so, when putting the story in the collection—he/she would be looking for typos and maintaining house styles, and not have either time or interest in re-writing. However, Jack did rewrite many of his early stories when they were collected, and the later version is, I submit, an improvement.

TI PROPOSITION 336; leave as is.

PWR; This is tricky. The phrase: 'The bonze smiled faintly. "My friend, I am dedicated to' is lifted directly from the Bonze's second speech above. In the first instance the 'faintness' of the smile can be understood as modesty about himself, but the second one could only imply contempt, or slyness. I say this is a clever editor's too clever improvement, both redundant and clumsy. Or perhaps it is transcription error of automatism?

BR-PROPOSITION;

smiled faintly. "My friend, I am dedicated to wonder /

smiled. "I will be glad to help you, but I wonder

## NOTE 29

TEXT-QUERY 523; I take it, then, that/I take it then that; SSF has no commas here.

COMMENT 336; delete commas (having them doesn't add anything, which makes it unlikely that Jack added them)

TI PROPOSITION 336; it, then, that/it then that

## NOTE 30

"Ah! Then you admit you killed him!"

TEXT QUERY 90; Daw text has "Ah! Then' but I just noticed that Word automatically "corrected" to 'Then' and I had to change it back manually.

COMMENT 38; v-text still 'Then'. UM; 'then'; Ace, 'Then'. Gift Edition: 'then'.

COMMENT 523; SSF has: Ah! Then, with capital letters here.

COMMENT 336; SSF has capital T, as does Ace. The fact

that Daw and UM have lower case 't' suggest that Jack changed it, as it is unlikely that an editor would change a capital T for lowercase (but would do the reverse)  
TI PROPOSITION 336; "Ah! Then/"Ah! then  
PWR; Since SSF doesn't have it, I'm wondering, particularly after Emphyrio . . . Stet?  
TS; stet

#### NOTE 31

"No, no," she cried indignantly. "With a fire gun? You insult me! You are as bad as Bonfils. Better be careful, I kill you."

TEXT-QUERY 523; are as bad as/are so bad as; SSF uses the word 'so'.

COMMENT 336; Fiamella does not have excellent English. It is possible, even likely, that Jack had her say 'so', and that a later editor "corrected" her to 'as'. Admittedly, Jack may have had second thoughts, for it does bring you up with a jerk when you read it, and corrected it himself.

TI DEBATE 336; as/so

TS; I suspect simple incompetence on SSF's part.

IMP: as/so

#### NOTE 32

"Enter, if you please," said Pascoglu. "I am conducting an inquiry into the death of Lester Bonfils. It is possible that you help us."

TEXT QUERY 90; Pascoglu talks in "normal" English everywhere else—he should say ". . . you may be able to help us." Or ". . . you could help us."

COMMENT 523; SSF uses the construction: "Is is possible that you may help us." SSF has the 'may' after 'you'.

COMMENT 336; the word 'may' seems to have been accidentally deleted in later editions. (Note: the Gift edition inserts 'can'.)

PWR; Still, Pascoglu could fall into pidgin English when talking to aliens; this would be in character.

TI PROPOSITION 336; you help/you may help

#### NOTE 33

Magnus Ridolph interjected a suggestion: "For the sake of argument, let us assume that Mr. Bonfils had flung white paint on the front of your house."

TEXT-QUERY 523; suggestion/question; SSF uses 'question'. But, I think suggestion works better!

TS; the remark is not a question

PWR; It is not a suggestion either! It is an 'assumption', but it is closer to being a question than a suggestion; replace 'let us assume' with 'what would you do if', and voila. Certainly editorial.

TI PROPOSITION 336; keep 'suggestion'

BR-PROPOSITION; suggestion/question

#### NOTE 34

As you know, Mr. Pascoglu, I spent a certain period this morning in research. I chanced on a description of the Camgian sacrificial rites.

COMMENT 90; The planet is Cambyeses and the god Camb—I'm not sure how that becomes Camgian but I suppose there are worse anomalies in English like Scotch for example.

COMMENT 38; From Norma:

"I spoke to Jack about this and we agree that this was probably a typesetting error; or the adjective may have been Cambigian and the 'bi' was dropped. Or could it have been 'by': Cambygian? So—here you have three choices, take your pick, since we don't mind which."

I have used 'Cambygian' for the Gift Edition. I would favor Cambigian for the VIE.

COMMENT 523; for what it's worth, SSF uses: Camgian

COMMENT 336; Following Norma's and Paul's comments below, I suggest Cambygian—with a 'y', as in the Gift edition, because the planet is Cambyeses, also with a 'y'.

TS; 'Cambygian' would be my choice

TI PROPOSITION 336; Camgian/Cambygian

#### NOTE 35

"You need ask but a single question," said Magnus Ridolph.  
"What clothes was he wearing at midnight last night?"  
"Well?" asked Pascoglu. "What clothes were you wearing?"

TEXT-QUERY 523; SSF has an additional sentence here: "What exact clothes?"

COMMENT 336; suspect Jack deleted the extra sentence, because Ridolph says, "You need but ask a 'single' question" and for Ridolph then to suggest a variation to the question weakens his point.

PWR; The note is not perfectly clear. Was SSF:

"You need ask but a single question," said Magnus Ridolph.  
"What

clothes was he wearing at midnight last night? What exact clothes?"

I think an editor changed this...But I guess it is really better without...

TI PROPOSITION 336; keep as is

#### NOTE 36

Thorn 199 departed, and Pascoglu examined his list with a dispirited attitude.

COMMENT 336; the original publication had 'and', as did the following Ace collection. The Daw edition (1980) has the typo 'as', which was carried into the UM edition. So, what Jack originally had was:

'Thorn 199 departed, and Pascoglu examined his list with a dispirited attitude.'

Norma, below, unaware of the SSF original, suspects Jack did in fact type 'and', but offers a semi-colon instead of the comma, with no 'and' or 'as'.

I propose we stick with Jack's original intent, rather than go with the [acceptable] semi-colon used in the Gift edition.



COMMENT 38; UM; 'as', Ace; 'and'. Both make sense. Another possibility is: Thorn 199 departed. Pascoglu examined his list with a dispirited attitude.  
 COMMENT NV: I think Jack may have typed the word 'and', but not 'as', in order to avoid the short paragraph: 'Thorn 199 departed.' However, he may have changed the comma to a semicolon, making it unnecessary to use 'and'; I would prefer the semicolon.  
 COMMENT 523; SSF uses 'and'.  
 TI PROPOSITION 336; keep 'and'

## NOTE 37

Pascoglu rose from the chair into which he had sunk.

TEXT-QUERY 523; sunk/sank; SSF uses sank here (I think sunk is better).  
 COMMENT 336; suspect 'sank' was a typo—it is not the right tense. 'Sunk' is the past participle: he sinks, he sank, he has or had sunk.  
 TI PROPOSITION 336; keep 'sunk',  
 PWR; ??? There is nothing wrong with 'sank'. This is a regional preference or prejudice.  
 BR-PROPOSITION; sunk/sank

## NOTE 38

"I only wish to clarify the situation," said Magnus Ridolph.  
 "So you clarify me out of all my suspects," snapped Pascoglu.

COMMENT NV: Jack meant this sentence to be as he typed it, though an exclamation point after the word 'suspects' would make Pascoglu's irritation more emphatic. This is another example of the simple, or quick, way of speaking; also it shows a bit of sarcasm in a way that 'can clarify' or 'are clarifying' does not.  
 COMMENT 523; SSF has it as shown here in the v-text as well.

## NOTE 39

"Send in Mr..." He frowned. "Send in the Hecatean"

TEXT-QUERY 523; Send in the Hecatean/Send in the Hecatean to us now; SSF adds 'to us now' to this sentence.  
 COMMENT 336; can't imagine an editor cutting 'to us now'; would have been Jack. (It's much stronger.)  
 TI PROPOSITION 336; retain <"Send in the Hecatean.">  
 PWR; This looks like an editor cleaning house. But Pascoglu is all confused. I don't think Jack revised this story at all...  
 BR-PROPOSITION; Hecatean/Send in the Hecatean to us now

## NOTE 40

The Hecatean was the sole non-human of the group, although outwardly he showed great organic similarity to true man.

TEXT-QUERY 523; outwardly he/outwardly, he; SSF uses a comma here.  
 COMMENT 336; an editor would tend to insert a comma, not remove one; assume this was Jack improving it.  
 TI PROPOSITION 336; do not insert comma  
 TS; I'd be inclined to stet [ . . . ] Having the comma after outwardly puts a curious stress on the sentence. There are numerous cases in The Deadly Isles where editors have shifted the position of the comma in a sentence in exactly this way.

## NOTE 41

"But you have called here to question me about the man labeled Bonfils.

COMMENT 336; "me" is in the first published edition, SSF. Clearly a typo when it was omitted.  
 TEXT CHANGE 90; Daw text has "called me here". That makes more sense.  
 COMMENT 38; I assume this [should have 'me']  
 COMMENT NV: I agree. The 'me' should be added.  
 COMMENT 523; SSF also has the 'me' word.  
 TI PROPOSITION 336; called/called me\*

## NOTE 42

Pascoglu made a mark on the list. "What of Thorn 199?"

TEXT-QUERY 523; Pascoglu made a mark on the list. "What of Thorn 199?" "Hymph. What of Thorn 199?"; SSF uses 'Hymph' as part of Pascoglu's remark and doesn't have that first sentence about making a mark.  
 COMMENT 336; an editor or typesetting mistake might accidentally remove copy, but not add it in; the replacement of 'Hymph' with 'Pascoglu made a mark on the list.' reads like Jack's editorial improvement.  
 TS; 'made a mark', has to be Jack!  
 PWR; I have become convinced that Jack never touched this text after he wrote it. There is lots of business with the list, and this bit is weak compared to the others. This is a case of an editor wanting to do better than 'Hymph'  
 BR-PROPOSITION;  
 Pascoglu made a mark on the list. "What  
 /  
 "Hymph. What

## NOTE 43

"Well, there is you, there is me and there is—"  
 The door slid back; the bonze in the red cloak looked into the room.

TEXT-QUERY 523; me/I; SSF uses I.  
 COMMENT 336; 'me' is objective case, not subjective case, therefore 'I' is incorrect. Suspect Jack originally wrote 'me' but SSF messed it up and used 'I', and Jack then corrected it

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\* The evidence favors 'me', but perhaps Hecateans eschew not only names by pronouns as well?

for later publications  
PWR; I think Jack wrote 'I', but this is Magnus Ridolf speaking.  
TI PROPOSITION 336; use 'me'

#### NOTE 44

The door slid back; the bonze in the red cloak looked into the room.

TEXT-QUERY 523; slid back; the/slid back, the; SSF uses a comma instead of semi-colon.

COMMENT 336; semi-colon makes sense; comma does not.

TI PROPOSITION 336; retain semi-colon

BR-PROPOSITION; back; the/back, the

TS; I like the semi-colon here – it's a stinger, paving the way for the arrival of the bonze.

PWR; Stet.

#### NOTE 45

"What?" cried Pascoglu, staring at the bonze, who made a deprecatory gesture.

TEXT-QUERY 523; What?/What!; SSF uses exclamation (which I like!).

COMMENT 336; Hard to imagine an editor changing the exclamation mark to a question mark, particularly as we know Jack revised the text before book publication.

TI PROPOSITION 336; keep question mark

PWR; '!<'clearly better, and Jack's.

BR-PROPOSITION; What?/What!

#### NOTE 46

"By all means. Come, Mr. Pascoglu; we are inconsiderate, keeping the worthy bonze from his meditations."

TEXT-QUERY 523; Pascoglu; we/Pascoglu, we; SSF uses comma instead of semi-colon.

COMMENT 336; as above, semi-colon makes better sense and is more Vancian.

TI PROPOSITION 336; retain semi-colon

PWR; vasserian fussyness.

BR-PROPOSITION; Pascoglu; we/Pascoglu, we

TS; here the semi-colon again provides the structure for a stinger. The sense is 'Let's go.'

[expected]; 'we are keeping the killer from his reading.'

[unexpected]

PWR; Stet.

#### NOTE 47

Then Magnus Ridolph said, "Essentially, you wish to protect your clientele from further application of misplaced philanthropy."

TEXT-QUERY 523; application/applications; SSF has plural here.

COMMENT 336; plural makes better sense, and is earliest form.

TI PROPOSITION 336; application/applications\*

#### NOTE 48

The door slid quietly aside; the bonze peered in, a half-smile on his benign face.

TEXT-QUERY 523; aside; the/aside, the; SSF uses comma instead of semi-colon.

COMMENT 336; semi-colon is more Vancian, as before

TS; I think we need a nice heavy piece of punctuation here.

This is the payoff line for the whole story: Pascoglu has just realised that his confidences to the bonze have been most unwise—and who's this at the door! Such a telling line—a stinger of stingers—would not be bundled together with successive commas like a sack of potatoes. The first piece of punctuation has to be heavier than the first to stop the reader cantering through the sentence and missing the payoff.

PWR; Stet. (bravo Tim!)



\* Today I don't like this call.



# CYBER FOLLIES

## A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

*The following letter was recently sent to the President of the VIE board, John Vance, by Chris Corley.*

Dear Mr. Vance:

The Vance Integral Edition (VIE) web site, [www.vanceintegral.com](http://www.vanceintegral.com), is the most visible link for those seeking information about the VIE. For years the site served as a nexus for project information, from the kaleidoscopic opinions and commentaries in *Cosmopolis* to the project news page and volunteer bios. However, the *vanceintegral* site has been reduced to a one-page placeholder, providing a bare minimum of project details and comprising a virtual 'dead end' for those who would learn more about it.

Given the cultural significance of the VIE project to the literary world and on-line Vance fan communities, and the goal of the VIE to further the literary recognition of Vance as a major 20<sup>th</sup> century author, the substantial and continuing benefits of the project—along with its rich history—should be highlighted on the VIE site, not ignored. The *vanceintegral* site can and should provide prominent links to other sites that promote Vance, his work, and the VIE, including but not limited to *Foreverness* ([www.integralarchive.org](http://www.integralarchive.org)) and Edition Andreas Irle ([www.editionandreasirle.de](http://www.editionandreasirle.de)).

Two of the primary goals of the Vance Integral Edition were to create a definitive and archival edition of his work and to disseminate Vance's oeuvre world-wide. The first of these goals was achieved, and commercial versions of several Vance texts are currently available which acknowledge their indebtedness to the Vance Integral Edition project. The second goal has also been accomplished, if in a limited and preliminary way: something over 600 sets of the 44 VIE volumes are in the hands of private owners, and public and university libraries in several countries. Both of these goals, however, will be only short-term successes if new readers are not introduced to and captivated by Vance's prose and stories.

How can a prospective reader find out about Jack Vance? Certainly through bookstore shelves, although the number of titles available at any one time is typically small and most stores stock only one or two copies of any one text. As measured by shelf space, Vance's presence is small even in stores that carry his titles.

The other most likely vehicle by which a reader might learn about Jack Vance is the Internet. A newcomer to Vance's work would most likely type "Jack Vance" as a search string in Google or another search engine. The first 20 search results consist of: ten sites created by individual fans (bibliographies, reviews and other information), four links to "science fiction and fantasy" on-line periodical articles, two pages created by university employees, two links to purchase products, a link to a Wikipedia article, and a link to the Vance Integral Edition page (which is fourth in the list of search results).

In addition to the direct link to the VIE page, the Wikipedia article and a couple of other pages mentioned above provide links to VIE site. It is therefore likely that a

newcomer to Vance doing even a modicum of research on the web will learn about the existence of the VIE. The VIE site provides very little information on the processes and methods used to realize the goals of the VIE: something sure to be of interest to the casual fan and the researcher alike.

The VIE was completed by over 300 volunteers working together for over six years. Their efforts are well documented on *Foreverness*, on specially conceived web pages, and in its archive of VIE newsletters, both *Cosmopolis* and *Extant*. At the moment *Foreverness* is difficult to find for anyone who does not already know about it, a situation which compromises the longer term aims of the VIE.

The Vance Integral Edition site provides only one link of any kind (Edition Andreas Irle) to any other site or information regarding how to obtain a set of VIE volumes, or any other volumes of Vance's work. At a minimum, links of the following types would be useful in furthering the stated goals of the VIE: a link to *Foreverness: the VIE Resource Site*; links additional sites that offer Vance books for sale; and links to other sites of scholarly interest for those doing research on Vance and his work, such as the TOTALITY engine at [www.pharesm.org](http://www.pharesm.org).

It is with gratitude to Jack Vance for his magnificent body of work that we respectfully request these changes to the Vance Integral Edition web site.

Sincerely,

*Christian J. Corley*

on behalf of the following VIE volunteers:

DONNA ADAMS	BOB LACOVARA
JOEL ANDERSON	ROBERT MELSON
MICHEL BAZIN	JIM PATTISON
DEBORAH COHEN	GLENN RAYE
ANDREW EDLIN	PAUL RHOADS
MARCEL VAN GENDEREN	STEVE SHERMAN
BRIAN GHARST	TIM STRETTON
YANNICK GOUR	HANS VAN DER VEEKE
GREG HANSEN	RUSS WILCOX
PETER IKIN	

This letter was circulated to a group of VIE volunteers, a small minority of which chose not to sign.

On the occasion of its delivery some personal reactions were circulated. Deborah Cohen wrote: "Hear, hear! Reason lives!"

Steve Sherman wrote:

While I agree with the contents of the letter, I also observe that the VIE site's link to Andreas' site creates a (minimal, admittedly) chain that Google or other engines can follow to *Foreverness*. Now, Google rates sites in part based on the number of citations by other sites, so a reference at the VIE site, cited many times, would definitely raise the visibility of *Foreverness*. We also need to encourage any other active Vance sites to link to *Foreverness*.

Let's be blunt: the one explicitly cited objectionable passage in *Extant* (which I do not so rate) has been removed. There is no legal or moral reason to deny linking to a site that includes *Extant*. The descriptions of the Feht-Yurgill-Rhoads exchanges, no matter how vitriolic, are purely factual.

Let's be even blunter: the Board of Directors has become

disillusioned with the Editor-in-Chief. But is his reaction to the attacks upon him—upon his character, his marriage, his integrity—not understandable, especially given the lack of moral support offered to him in the face of those attacks? The E-in-C has far more reason to be disillusioned about the BoD.

John V, I know your life has been (gross understatement) complicated of late and I have nothing but sympathy--and indeed I have shed tears. But you are in effect your father's literary executor, even during his lifetime, and the VIE is finally his greatest legacy, as no other author has inspired such a degree of devotion from his admirers. In all of history, I know of only one other such project: that which attempts to recapture the original work of Jane Austen. Pretty good company, eh?

Yes, it's finished and out there. But the aftermath should matter. And it is my opinion that you should be a part of shaping that aftermath.

Tim Stretton seconded Steve's letter with the following remark:

It is hard to imagine Steve's comments could be improved on either in the sentiments they express or the power and elegance of their articulation.

The VIE board currently has only three active members: John Vance, Ed Winkill and Mike Berro. The VIE board President responded promptly to Chris' letter, with the news that the VIE corporation is in the course of being liquidated, at which point he would have no objection to an internet configuration more favorable to the pro-VIE group, currently headed by Hans van der Veeke, the man who did so much during the project to insure that each volunteer got full credit for thier work, in COSMOPOLIS, in each VIE volume, and in the volume 44 credit lists—and now on *Foreverness*. The VIE, however, is much more than the sum of individual contributions, as Chris' letter makes clear.

## SCRAPING THE SLUDGE OFF THE BOTTOM TALKING WITH DAN GUNTER AND ED WINKILL

Last August, at the height of the strains which eventually resulted in the VanceBS censoring itself—I refer to the removal, probably by Patrick Dusoulir,\* of posts by Ed Winkill and Mike Berro; abysmal attacks against FOREVERNESS (Han's VIE website) in foolish support of Dan Gunter. These instantly resulted in a serious degradation on the Wikipedia Vance page (spearheaded by Alexander Fehrt) which resulted in total exclusion of Foreverness—which by then was the sole source of VIE information—by reason of association with EXTANT. The removal of Ed and Mike's posts, as explained in previous Cyber Follies, allowed the situation on Wikipedia to be stabilized.

Meanwhile I was attempting dialogue with Dan Gunter on his personal posting board. After a lengthy but totally fruitless exchange Dan banned me from this board—making it the third time he has offered himself this little pleasure. The conversation with Dan was part of a larger interaction, which included a protest to Patrick on the occasion of Dan and Mike violating their 'anti-Paul Rhoads' rule—which Patrick had taken upon himself to guarantee. Copying the

letter to a large group of VIE volunteers, I wrote:\*

Patrick,

When Steve protested about the VanceBBS anti-Paul rule, you defended it as a "'Gordian knot' solution, that will at least prevent anyone from badmouthing Paul". When Dan gave the VanceBBS back to Mike, Mike promised to uphold the rule. And now what are they doing?

For years my ears have been filled with whispers and screams that I should be ashamed of myself. . .

Paul

To this letter I added a long postscriptum. Knowing that my current exchanges with Dan were being followed, it consisted of the reply I had just prepared for Dan's board, but was prevented from posting by reason of banage:

p.s. Then there is Dan's blog, LOVELY MALICE ("I shall crouch here, spider-like, and spin webs of gorgeous malice: each thread tainted with sweet poison.") <http://lovelymalice.blogspot.com/>, and his message board (Chicago Blue: <http://p208.ezboard.com/bchicagoblues>), both filled with vituperation, insult and slander the like of which I challenge anyone to find in 'Extant'.

At Chicago Blue (see: 'Poster's Choice': The Shame of the VIE) I have been struggling to make peace with Dan, but he banned me today. I was going to post this message:

Dan, you refuse to negotiate with me because you claim I am:

*" . . . a liar who has — in my years of experience — shown no aptitude to learn."*

But perhaps I have changed? 'Where there is life there is hope!' Will you not offer a second chance?

*" . . . your outlandish statements about me . . . "*

Look; from my point of view these were defenses of the VIE. You will not deny that you are part of vocal minority who insists I am someone the project should have been ashamed of and should have chased out. I do not demonize you for this, but you can certainly understand that I might disagree! If your position had become the majority position I would have been chased out. But I thought I was the best person to lead the project, which was my initiative to begin with, so I fought to retain the good opinion of the majority. I succeeded in doing that, and the project was indeed completed with success. Part of my struggle involved presentation and analysis (in Cosmopolis and Extant) of what you, and others, were doing and saying against me. This sometimes took the form of humorous verse. Call it 'outlandish' if you like. I could plaster adjectives all over the things you did and said against me too, but I won't. Name calling is perhaps appropriate for public brawling, but out of place in a serious exchange. You also, in ways you felt would be the most effective (which sometimes also included mockery), did and do your best to influence a maximum of people.

*"When I wrote you about your embarrassing posts on the Gaean Reach, you refused to cooperate with me. Instead, you sought to dictate terms to me."*

You proposed to me your opinion about what I should do re the GR.† Well and good. But I disagreed. I did not 'refuse to cooperate'; it was my opinion that your suggestion (which you were not the

\* This is a speculation, based on various factors, including a congenital incapacity to rate the wonderful Patrick Dusoulir, whom I cannot bring myself not to think of as a friend, per certain events.

\* I have made a few minor and trivial changes to the letters and posts reproduced below. None alter any meaning or tone. They are, however, sometimes needed for clarity given the passage of time and the fragmentary nature of the material.

† The Gaean Reach: Yurgil's anti-VIE slander message board.



first to make) was not a tactic that would work. When I did not follow your suggestion it was intolerable to you! So who was 'dictating terms'? I had to follow your dictate or be banned. I, by contrast, can accept that someone does not agree with me, that they might not follow my advice; I remain willing to work with them and be friends with them.

*"When I refused to agree to them, you did not try to patch things up between us. Instead, you attacked me in the pages of Extant."*

You did not like what I was doing on the GR, so you banned me on the VanceBBS. Did I complain? Did I say word 1 about it, anywhere, at any time—until you starting snarking at me from the VanceBBS, where I could not reply? Why did you not let things alone, as I was doing?

*". . . it appears to me that I must be causing you some discomfort in some other realm, and you're seeking to quiet my complaints."*

Complain all you like! If you even want to publish your complaints in 'Extant' I would be glad to publish them! I am not trying to 'control' anyone. I am simply one of the people who wants the VIE project to be celebrated and honored. Some people, like you, disagree and are working against that. I believe that your effort, if successful, will also harm the work of Jack Vance (my opinion!) but I do not therefor seek to control you, or silence you. I seek to expose your arguments and motivations, as I understand them, and show why I think they are wrong and destructive.

*". . . I have nothing to gain from patching things up with you."*

It is always profitable to convert an enemy into a friend. If you and I come to a rapprochement, you will be honored by people who honor honorable things. War is bad and peace is good. Blessed be the peace makers.

*"Let me add that you have once more shown an amazing inability to understand other people and their motivations. If you could understand anything about other people, you would understand (a) that I despise you; (b) that I believe that you're fundamentally dishonest; (c) that I have no interest in reaching any rapprochement with you; and (d) that you are not going to be able to persuade me otherwise."*

Look Dan, I may be a complete idiot and a fundamentally bad person, but I can only do my best with my god given talents. My own opinion of you, though not as harsh as yours of me, is nothing so great either, but I don't carry things to extremes or write people off. I try to remember that other people are human beings like myself, that hatred is bad, that making peace is good, and that understanding is something that can be, and therefore should be, built.

*"But I don't think that you're being at all serious here. I believe that you're writing these posts so that you can write, in Extant, that you tried to work with me to get past our problems, but that I stubbornly refused."*

You just wait and see if I do that, and then we'll see how well you understand me!\* I am glad, however, that you read Extant. I have always carefully followed everything you write. It is a link between us upon which perhaps we can build.

*"I am not ethically obligated to be your friend, or even to forgive you, simply because you ask to be my friend or ask forgiveness."*

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\* Editor's Note: Dan may now attempt to cry "I told you so!" My statement, however, which never reached Dan's posting board (by reason of his ban), indicates neither intention or non-intention, and unless Ed shared the letter with his fellow lawyer EXTANT 19 is his first chance to see it. His suspicion he was making a fool of himself is a rare example of lucidity.

Who said you were? Not I! I am not trying to impose any rules on you. I am standing up, and making a good faith effort to end the war going on between us. You think I started it, and I think you started it. But I don't really care who started it. I want it to end. I want to work with you to end it. There are probably many things about which we will have to agree to disagree, but even that is a kind of agreement.

I then added a final note to the readers of the letter:

NB: I am not saying that there is a "war" between Dan and me because it is so. The situation this; on one side a 'raving maniac' (Dan) was doing anything he could think he could get away with to hurt me; on the other side a reasonable person (myself) was trying to get something done (the VIE project). I call it a "war" to save Dan's face and get him talking. I failed, but I tried, and I'll keep trying if I get another chance.

Ed Winskill, copied on the exchanges leading up to this letter, now entered the conversation:

*I will reply only to you with regard to your recent mailings, out of a last element of respect, which in the case of the Extant comments in question is not deserved. I do not want to be part of these mailing lists.*

*When I came across those comments my reaction was of great anger, and that is still the case. I took the lead in the board action several months ago to de-link Extant from the VIE site immediately, and the board immediately concurred when they saw the material.*

*The comments in question are mendacious and deeply dishonorable. They were not a "joke", because it is understood among men that comments of such a nature about a man's wife can never be a joking matter.*

*The only remotely possible cure for such offense is unconditional apology and expungement. Be it understood that I state this as a fact, not as a suggestion or prescription, of which I proffer none.*

*I write only because by my addition to these mailing lists I see that I too may continue to be the recipient of futile and neverending "explanations" and justifications. I do not care to hear them, either personally or as part of any group.*

*Ed Winskill*

I refused to be maneuvered into a private conversation:

Ed,

Your 'great anger' might impress me if there had been anything like it when, on the VanceBBS in 2003, Feht was asserting I had married for money, and many similar accusations involving my marriage, my profession and my person, and generally seeking to demolish me and separate me from the VIE. Feht's goal, seconded by a small group of non-VIE loud-mouths, is now VanceBBS policy. This is the same BBS you have used to make official type 'VIE board' statements.

Regarding the 'VIE board's' refusal to link the VIE site to Foreveress, you are re-writing history à la Gunter. The reason the link from the VIE site to Foreveress was refused was not horror at Extant but fear of lawsuits, threatened by Dan Gunter on behalf of Feht and Bruce for alleged 'defamation' of them in Extant 13. These ridiculous threats were a pretext, which you apparently seized upon with eagerness, and without regard for consequences to the VIE. The consequences soon became apparent, and prompted acts of damage control.\* Defamation of Dan's wife was only brought in later, to justify his opposition to a link from the VanceBBS to Foreveress. I instantly tried to contact Dan requesting that he identify the defamation and offering to remove it, but Dan refused to talk to me or identify the location, in 14 stigmatized issues of Extant, of the alleged defamation. When Hans finally squeezed

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\* Editor's note: I was referring to removal of remarks by Ed and Mike on the VanceBS supporting Dan's accusations against EXTANT, which had led to the Wikipaedia trouble.

the information out of him (and even though I find his accusation absurd) I was glad to remove it, and did so without delay. Dan's horror of this defamation, which no longer occurs in Extant, is so great that he has published it, repeatedly, on his personal BBS.

As for Extant, why do so many important VIE managers, to say nothing of outsiders like David B. Williams, recognize it as a valuable 'VIE publication', and fail to be 'angered' by anything in it? Are they stupidly insensitive to my mendacious and deeply dishonorable statements? Are they, like me, not 'men'? . . . Or is another Washington State lawyer protesting too much?

Your present silence at Dan's yelps of 'hypocrisy', 'unethicalness' and 'lies'—while he and Mike maintain their precious anti-Paul rule—prolongs the hostile attitude you have had towards me for years, and I predict it bodes poorly for the VanceBBS, which I would rather see return to health, but which will never do so until a normal attitude prevails.

I am not amazed you don't want to receive my mails, or that you are unwilling to discuss these matters in public.

Paul

In a final communication (dated Tuesday, 22 August, 2006) which included neither salutation nor signature, Ed replied:

*I saw the remarks about Dan and his wife in Extant. I brought them to Dan's attention; he had not seen them before then. I brought them immediately to the Board and the de-linking decision was made, at my initiation. I know because I was there. No threats of his had been made before this decision. You don't know because you weren't there.*

*You wrote me. I've never written you, except just today because you have put me on your mailing list and have been sending me your pretexts. Take me off your list.*

I replied:

Ed,

As far as I am concerned this is even worse.

Why did you not contact *me* about Extant 12 and try to get me to make a change, rather than seeking to stigmatize Foreveness itself—and why have you not, now that the alleged offensive phrase is removed, changed your attitude towards Extant as a whole? The Extant 12 remark is not even a joke, it is a conditional explanation about a hypothesis. Based on his public declaration that reactions to Clinton's adultery is 'over-blown', in other words that Dan thinks people take adultery too seriously, I wondered how Dan's wife would feel about this attitude; I then point out that, if the Gunter's swing, the question is nupatory.

Furthermore, why did you have no reaction like this when Feht was accusing me, not playing with logic based on my public statements, and not in some 'non-VIE publication' (as you define Extant) but on the VanceBBC itself, of having married for money?

And how do you explain the difference between your characterization of 4 words in Extant 12 as "mendacious and deeply dishonorable" "not a joke", and showing that I fail to be a "man" because such things are "understood among men", and the very different attitude of so many people who are even willing to say so publicly; are they all "moral lepers"? I think any impartial person will see in your humorousness attitude, and in the history of your attitudes towards me, personal hostility. You maintain a respectable facade that such as Feht and Dan are incapable of maintaining, but what are people to think?

Paul

It is not with pleasure that I make these communications public. I could have published them long ago. I hoped that things would adjust themselves quietly, but Ed Winskill's dastardliness has persisted too long. With Mike Berro's cowardly cooperation he is taking advantage of his lawyer status to hold the VIE project legacy hostage to his personal animosities.

As I have hinted, and as Dan Gunter's present silence certifies, this status is not invulnerable—even if Ed Winskill is a better tactician and smoother rhetorician than his fellow licensee of the Washington State Bar Association; and I do not forget the endless hours of VIE work I accomplished in tandem with Mike Berro. It is none-the-less, and therefore, with a certain repugnance that I find myself in a public struggle against people with whom I served on the VIE board.

But what—besides offering an ultimately useless facade of legal bulk—did Ed Winskill ever do for the VIE? During the ill-fated 'Oakland work festival' of January 2000, and without consulting the person who had organized that meeting and had led the project up to that point (an omission which led to several near-catastrophic events), Ed worked with others to create the 'VIE not for profit corporation' and VIE board, of which I was then offered the vice-presidency. These were perhaps necessary structures, but at that point they were just talk. The actual work had to be done by Bob Nelson, since Ed Winskill is a Washington State, not a California lawyer. As a board member Ed was useless. He did zero VIE work, while the other members were all work-champions. At one point he mentioned that we were not fulfilling our statutory obligations of holding meetings and elections at proper intervals but, despite my repeated urgings, this was never rectified. One election did occur, at my instigation, but I later learned it was not statutory. This never bothered Ed. While the board was functioning in this irregular manner—which might have gotten us into real trouble had the famous law-suit (A. Feht & co. v. VIE)

everyone pretended to fear, and provided the excuse for inaction—Ed systematically blocked initiatives to cope with severe problems. This so compromised the project that I eventually quit the board. The project was achieved in cooperation with people dedicated to our goal, and the board's meaninglessness was clearly revealed; it could hardly refuse to allocate funds to the printer or for volunteer travel, as designated by the project's vital forces. And now that the project is over Ed is taking advantage of his unearned post, like a dog in a manger, to promote a personal animosity which happens to run athwart the VIE legacy—not as I see it, but as the signatories to Chris' letter, a quorum of VIE veterans, attest.

Ed Winskill deserves, let us say—given his wonderful condemnatory gravitas—to be tarred and feathered and run out of town on a pole. He has now been subjected to the first operation. The eventual fusion—in whatever form—of the 'official' VIE site, and *Foreveness*, will be the pole ride that gives us the definitive view of his back. We can then, in tranquillity, get on with our innocent business.





## PATAPHYSICAL SPAM

by *Matty Paris*

### ROBOT MARRIAGE, BY TOSHIKO ABE

Pulitzer Prize winning author Toshiko Abe begins his best-selling account of the new frontier of rights and equality with a touching and heartfelt story of how the first Japanese robots were wedded at a pious Shinto ceremony in Osaka.

Abe predicts that the right to marriage will be extended to machines like toasters, vacuum cleaners and bombs. That dizzy perspective, however, is hardly the point of this uneasy volume.

Young normal heterosexual people are not getting married. Many married couples are being divorced. Young people, of all erotic persuasions, colors, origins and metaphysical notions, are abandoning marriage, just as they have already abandoned child rearing. This leaves nobody to marry and reproduce but robots, pets, and domestic animals like chicken and cows. But beasts are being slaughtered by masterly humans all the time, so that the domestic life of fowls and bovines, such as it is, tends to be pathetically short-lived. As a result our whole institution of marriage, and the jobs it gives to hack city officials, mediocre priestesses, sleepy justices of the peace and assorted peddlers selling hot dogs outside empty marriage parlors, are forced to take other jobs as bicycle messengers, shopping mall technicians, and hamburger cooks, endangering the livelihood of our vast Mexican population.

When the last marriage-making holy chamber closes down in America we shall regard marriage as a Jurassic institution worthy only of robots, and worse than robots.

In the last chapter of 'Robot Marriage' Abe predicts flight, by the robots themselves, from any franchise offered by our species, not merely marriage. Eventually, Abe predicts, the robots, like the humans, will be on their own; their law will be their strength, furtiveness and cunning.

Abe himself is a robot. His principal readers are other robots. 'Robot Marriage' is clearly a niche market product. Among franchises most contemporary humans have given up, Abe notes, is the right to literacy.

## UBETSU: PRIVATE LANGUAGES

Mycroft Systems brings you Ubetsu Platinum, a private language, computer generated to suit your original personality, and Ubetsu Silver, a cunningly forgettable and unassuming tongue conspicuously having no character at all.

Nobody talks, or can even know a single word in either of these languages except yourself! Nobody can understand you: a transparent boon if there is nothing within you to comprehend. But Ubetsu isn't gobbledygook; each word means something, if only to you.

The learning curves of Ubetsu Platinum and Silver are

necessarily steep; a whole language, after all, cannot be mastered in a week. But once you are fluent in Ubetsu Platinum you will intrigue strangers at parties with a strange musical tongue whose mysterious music speaks for your rich and fecund inner life, while as a Ubetsu Silver speaker you will blend into a crowd like a slender ectoplasmic wraith, unremarkable as an impalpable mote of air.

Our original product, Ubetsu Gold, is no longer for sale. Ubetsu Gold was a vast repository of an almost infinite varieties of languages, all of them spoken by nobody at all, not even their inventors. Ubetsu Gold can now only be experienced by infiltrating our underground Taiwanese factory and pirating copies of the dense and glottal Ubetsu Gold programs.

To whom, you ask, could you speak Ubetsu? We include a fake cell phone in our package; speil away into infinite emptiness! As you mutter, lisp, drawl or bellow

remarks, imprecations, love-calls and complaints which have nothing to distinguish them in sonics or strangeness of inflection, you can seem, in Ubetsu Platinum, like a divine protagonist in an unseen cosmic drama, or, in Ubetsu Silver, like the ultimate stranger.



### QUANTITATIVE JUSTICE NOW! BY ACHILLE LAVASH

This best selling and controversial book, bible of progressive justice for the past five years, was penned by the late Achille Lavash, celebrated Family Court defense attorney, Bronx prosecutor for the stars and expert

contributor to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Lavash recounts his improbable start as an intellectual savant in a divorce case involving bibulous beefcake hunk Brett Pith and sometimes blonde silicon-bosomed Dolores Misere. Faced with irrefutable evidence, Lavash pointed out that, nearly all the time, Pith and Misere did not rape or murder their servants, have affairs with poodles, and gobble down green human feces in a curry sauce. They were being tried, he pointed out, for what they did on only a few bad days. Lavash argued that they ought to be assessed on how they acted in general, during their lives as a whole.

Nobody should be jailed for a few peccadilloes if they lead basically quiet lives, even if they are not totally decent. Nobody should be punished for what they do only once. Lavash complains that we are punishing people for their crimes, but never honoring them for their virtues.

Now that Lavash's judicial standard are in force nearly all prisoners have been released from jail. The Progressives have recently applied Lavash's Quantitative Justice to love affairs, politics and religion. The monumental granite heads have been effaced from Mount Rushmore; most of the time George Washington was *not* president. Lenin is no longer regarded as a tyrant; under Lavash's influence historians have realized that this soviet leader spent most of his time drinking coffee and putting cow dung on his head to slow encroaching male pattern baldness. The pope has desanctified his entire retinue of saints, and even demoted God; how many miracles did Jesus do? What was he doing most of the time? Probably taking a snooze in the sun. What's God doing these days? What's George W. Bush up to? Lavash wonders about that, and much more, in this tempestuously compelling book.

After Lavash was stoned by enraged residents of Ossining, Plattsburgh, Elmira and Syracuse—America's traditional prison cities, whose sole income came from incarcerating the vast army of our nation's felons from other cities—he penned this book, while recovering at sumptuous Club Med Hospital. 'Quantitative Justice Now!' is about rewarding people for their virtues by sending them to these same prisons, now posh five-star hotels. Thank God, our traditional prisons cities are back in business; everybody is a winner!

Lavash is working on a new book: 'Welfare For the Dead'. He believes the innumerable perished no longer among us should be rewarded for doing nothing. It has a one word forward by the late Gerald Ford.

## KANGAROO TRACK

The prestigious Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and its Slurping Marsupial Evangelical Chorus brings you Kangaroo-Track, the internal music of the soul broadcast from a miniature implant on your brain enriching your life with all the music you need in America to live a modern life.

We have been selling Kangaroo Track to prisons and nut houses all over the world; but there is a vast market among those who haven't been locked up but who need Tasmanian Marsupial Music just as much as the incarcerated and insane.

We assume you are injurious and crazy, and we have sonics for every gory and ghastly spasm of slaughterhouse lunacy such a fiendish maniac as yourself can take up in his daily life. No criminal or lunatic can be without these snazzy little Kangaroo Track implants and still be fashionable in whatever ward you are locked in, whatever wall you are chained to, or even outside on the loose, with a gun, a bomb, poison, howling, drooling, shrieking or laughing crazily as you stagger down the streets.

Our latest hits include:

**The Paranoid Symphony:** You are one of a crew of swinish, melancholy, choleric, overweight spirits living on a rank planet of poor, desperate bomb throwing Gnostics. Your job: drop your hamburger, easy on the pickles. Kill them all.

**The Catatonic Symphony:** You are living inside a sealed ten dimensional envelope, unaware, in your fashionable stupor, of any other life. Your job: please don't break out. Who knows who or what's out there? Maybe nothing.

**The Hebephrenic Symphony:** You're locked in with zillions of laugh track ghosts who will not stop guffawing at a deafening pitch no matter what you do. Your job? Strangle them all. Stop the damned laughter.

**The Serial Killer Symphony:** You are living in a world of prey. You are a seven foot tall slavering Colonel Sanders. They are turkeys. This is Thanksgiving, and they must all die. Your job; deep fry the fluffy bastards forever.

**Being Black and Male Symphony:** You are arrested for nothing. The cops say apologetically they have to make ten arrests a day. You are told to plea bargain and do a few months of easy time in a free government hotel. Your job: walk.

## THE OXFORD MANUAL: HOW TO MARRY YOURSELF, BY HARRY K. PYLE

Doctor Pyle's latest self-help manual, obviously done in haste after the success of his excellent and all too well





known 'Oxford Of Manual of How to Kill Yourself', is hardly as persuasive as its treacly yet well received Oxford Press sequel: 'Give Birth To Thyself'.

This new, sumptuously illustrated volume with four color woodcuts by Vinny Franzetta, a Forward by Aram Kevorkian and a fawning Afterward-Appreciation by Fritz von Weissenegger, is the last word, one must say, in easy nuptials.

If one follows Pyle's pellucid directions one can marry oneself any time and anywhere: while asleep, on an alien planet, in a pig abattoir, even after death. In Pyle's awesome and baroque ceremonies one is all at once groom, bride, minister, caterer, choir, snippety bathroom attendant, the smiling and unctuous florist.

The most controversial section of the book is Pyle's trashing of the new American fashion of multiple marriage. Pyle claims that marriage of more than seven people, or any mix with dogs, cats, lizards or mice, is a vapid fad, like the Edsel.

Most intriguing is the last chapter: 'How to Divorce Yourself'. All alone one can be the teams of tigerish lawyers, the legions of snarling judges, the imbecile courtroom guards, the sleeping clerks, the drowsy rats lurking under the chairs, the insects crawling on the benches, as well as be both of the irate and bellowing litigants.

There is a certain resonance of Tiajuana and Juarez in Doctor Pyle's descriptions of his projected self-marrying chambers, immense and rococo, for those who want a candied cathedral worthy of their pledges to be faithful and love no one else, their immortal and enduring love for themselves. Pyle speaks with barely concealed awe of the echoes in these empty and desolate temples, as the beloved, alone in the vast herculean holy place, says, in a smoky and passionate whisper: "I do."



## ECHOES IN THE ETHER

### VIE GRAPHICS

Initiatives on the FOREVERNESS discussion board are promoting a VIE graphics album, concieved by Hans van der Veeke. Hans writes:

[...] I am a fan of the etchings in the VIE and I like to look at them, but you have to leaf through all the books to see them. I would also like to have larger versions of them, preferably the size of the original prints and with more details visible.

The book would be approximately 20cm x 30cm and printed on nice paper. It would have the look and feel of the VIE but it would not be a VIE publication!!

The contents would include the following:

- \* The 44 Frontispiece Etchings (original size, perhaps with remarks, details, alternate versions and preparatory drawings)



- \* The Dragon Master Illustrations (the published ones, but there are also unpublished ones)

- \* The Cugel Skybreak Vignettes

- \* The Gift volume and SF volume frontispieces, and other miscellaneous graphics, sprinkled though the edition.

- \* Reader cover themes, the so called 'lacits', the VIE Logo and its various precursor versions, the deluxe stamping graphics.

- \* The original drawings for the VIE Font, with other font related stuff.

- \* The Maps (including various related images, such as speculative maps that have appeared in Cosmopolis)

This project is going forward, in cooperation with the ever-faithful Stefania Zacco.

### BOUND COSMOPOLIS

Meanwhile, also on Foreverness, THE SILENT CRITIC has been giving momentum to the project of bound volumes of COSMOPOLIS. There is consensus that these volumes should have the same format as the VIE graphics book, but less about whether the COSMOPOLIS should be reformatted, and/or whittled down, and this the discussion turns very much on technical considerations. THE SILENT CRITIC has cast a light on this question in the form of a chart, which is also of interest for the overview it gives of Cosmopolis generally. All the stats are not yet in, and the chart is too large to display on a single EXTANT page. The stats missing from the chart are provided below, and the chart itself is on the following page:

#### FONTS

ABOBE GARAMOND: ISSUES 1-8, 10

AMIANTE: 9, 11-63

#### PAGE SIZE

A4: 23-24, 26-28

8.5X11: 1-22, 25, 29-63

#### JUSTIFICATION

NON-JUSTIFIED TEXT: 1-12, 50

JUSTIFIED TEXT: 13-49, 51-63



# COSMOPOLIS STYLE AND INFORMATION CHART

Issue #	Date	Number of pages	Heading style	Running footer content and style	Editor	Composer	Composition tool
1	Jan 2000	5	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Bob Lacovara	Bob Lacovara	Word
2	Feb 2000	10	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Bob Lacovara	Bob Lacovara	Word
3	Mar 2000	13	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Bob Lacovara	Bob Lacovara	Word
4	Apr 2000	14	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Bob Lacovara	Bob Lacovara	Word
5	May 2000	19	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Bob Lacovara	Bob Lacovara	Word
6	Jun 2000	22	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Bob Lacovara	Bob Lacovara	Word
7	Jul 2000	15	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Bob Lacovara	Bob Lacovara	Word
8	Aug 2000	32	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Bob Lacovara	Bob Lacovara	Word
9	Sep 2000	13	Old Blue	Cosmopolis * Page #	Deborah Cohen	Joel Anderson & Deborah Cohen	Word?
10	Oct 2000	7	Old Purple	Cosmopolis Page #	Deborah Cohen	Deborah Cohen	Word?
11	Nov 2000	16	Amiante Style 1	Page #	Paul Rhoads	Paul Rhoads	InDesign 2.0 ?
12	Dec 2000	16	Amiante Style 1	C-12 on left, Page # (centered)	Paul Rhoads	John Schwab	PageMaker 6.52
13	Jan - Feb 2001	9	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Deborah Cohen	Joel Anderson	?
14	Feb - Mar 2001	19	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Deborah Cohen	Joel Anderson & Deborah Cohen	?
15	Apr - May 2001	23	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Deborah Cohen?	Joel Anderson	?
16	Jun - Jul 2001	12	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Jeremy Cavaterra	?
17	Aug 2001	22	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Joel Anderson	?
18	Sep 2001	15	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Joel Anderson	?
19	Oct 2001	13	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	E.J. de Groot	?
20	Nov 2001	15	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	E.J. de Groot	?
21	Dec 2001	13	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Joel Anderson & E.J. de Groot	InDesign 2.0
22	Jan 2002	24	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Joel Anderson & E.J. de Groot	?
23	Feb 2002	22	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Andreas Bjorklind	QuarkExpress Passport 4.03
24	Mar 2002	21	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Andreas Bjorklind	QuarkExpress Passport 4.03
25	Apr 2002	34	Amiante Variation	Page #, Cosmopolis 25, April 2002	Derek Benson	Suan Yong	?
26	May 2002	31	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Andreas Bjorklind	QuarkExpress Passport 4.03
27	Jun 2002	31	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Andreas Bjorklind	QuarkExpress Passport 4.03
28	Jul 2002	35	Amiante Style 2	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Andreas Bjorklind	QuarkExpress Passport 4.03
29	Aug 2002	29	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
30	Sep 2002	30	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
31	Oct 2002	15	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
32	Nov 2002	23	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
33	Dec 2002	16	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
34	Jan 2003	34	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
35	Feb 2003	15	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
36	Mar 2003	13	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
37	Apr 2003	28	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
38	May 2003	28	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
39	Jun 2003	28	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
40	Jul 2003	33	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
41	Aug 2003	39	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
42	Sep 2003	47	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Derek Benson	Derek Benson?	?
43	Oct 2003	41	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Bob Lacovara	Paul Rhoads	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
44	Nov 2003	27	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Bob Lacovara	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
45	Dec 2003	19	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
46	Jan 2004	16	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
47	Feb 2004	27	Amiante Style 3	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
48	Mar 2004	20	Amiante Variation	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
49	May 2004	25	Amiante Variation	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Paul Rhoads	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
50	Jun 2004	22	Amiante Variation	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Paul Rhoads	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
51	Jul 2004	17	Amiante Variation	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Paul Rhoads	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
52	Aug 2004	18	Amiante Variation	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
53	Sep 2004	19	Amiante Variation	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
54	Oct 2004	30	Amiante Variation	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
55	Nov 2004	42	Amiante Variation	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
56	Dec 2004	10	Amiante Style 4	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
57	Jan 2005	29	Amiante Style 4	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
58	Feb 2005	20	Amiante Style 4	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
59	Mar 2005	23	Amiante Style 4	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign 2.0.1
60	Apr 2005	34	Amiante Style 4	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign CS (3.0)
61	May 2005	39	Amiante Style 4	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign CS (3.0)
62	Jun 2005	12	Amiante Style 4	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign CS (3.0)
63	Jul 2005	10	Amiante Style 4	Cosmopolis Issue # * Page #	Dave Reitsema	Joel Anderson	Adobe InDesign CS (3.0)

## VANCE IN LULU

A certain 'RAPHAEL ALYSIOUS' is anxious to see VIE texts published on Lulu, and willing to volunteer his efforts to make it happen. After much discussion on the FOREVERNESS board regarding the technical problems, Raphael is now in discussion with ANDREAS IRLE to resolve the more even more difficult ones of rights and remunerations. The result, we hope, may be some Lulu availability of certain Vance books.\*

## GREG HANSEN, VANCIAN RECRUITER

GREG HANSEN described a recent effort to recruit new Vance readers:

[. . .] last night I decided to read Jack Vance to my children for the first time. A momentous occasion! After some deliberation I decided on one of the Magnus Ridolph stories. Not Jack's best work perhaps, but the stories are concise and I hoped the kids would stay engaged. Two paragraphs into *The Howling Bounders* my 9-year old raised his hand and said, grimacing: "Dad, there's a lot of weird words in this story." Not time yet, apparently!

## VANCE NAMES STARTING WITH J AND SHIFTING VIEW POINTS

On the VanceBS 'HALSEY' provoked a long and amusing conversation over his claim that Vance favors names beginning with 'J'. After a great deal of serious statistical analysis HALSEY comes to the following conclusions:

---

\* A few months ago, when these discussions started, DAN GUNTER, on his personal posting board in a thread intitled "More calls for wider publication of Vance texts", wrote: "On the Jack Vance Message Board and the Foreverness site, other people are asking the simple question: Why the heck can't these texts be published through Lulu or some similar outfit?"

There isn't a good answer to this question. It would be a relatively simple matter to get the out-of-print Vance works published through Lulu—and they would look better and be far less expensive than the ANDREAS IRLE EDITIONS."

Study of the discussion of Foreverness will demonstrate to rational persons that this is no simple matter. Wankher 'PECOOPER' does not disagree with Dan: "I don't disagree with you Dan," he writes. 'pecooper' seem unaware of the non-trivial technical hurdles, but vaguely aware of commercial difficulties, even if he has no idea what they actually are: "...the other side does have a point. If the books are in print at Lulu or in one of the eBooks sites, the traditional print publishers will tend to shy away from them. . ."

DAN GUNTER brushes this non-issue aside: "...the fact is that many of Vance's works have been out of print for decades through traditional print publishers or were never published by traditional print publishers. Think about it: When was the last time that a 'traditional print publisher' published a Vance mystery. . . And what has been the response of 'traditional print publishers' to the VIE? How many 'traditional print publishers' have picked up any of the mysteries since the VIE publication? And do we really know that 'traditional print publishers' would refuse to pick up a book that was being published through POD?"

Good questions Dan; why not talk to Vances and their literary agent, who control the work and deal with the publishers, rather than sounding off so bravely in your little corner—or are you really interested in something else than Vance on Lulu, like any excuse to take a pot-shot at your bug-bears? DAN GUNTER continues: "I would recommend publishing only the titles the publishers are not seeking—and I think that the mysteries are a good example of such works. Frankly, I think that the argument 'from the other side' is a rationalization: it provides a convenient, but completely unproven excuse for continuing on the path that PAUL RHOADS has blessed."

And just what, pray, is that argument, or that path? Foreverness is overloaded with discussions—in which PAUL RHOADS is an active participant—working towards Lulu publication of Vance. It even seems to have been PAUL RHOADS himself who suggested the strategy currently being explored by the parties actually willing to do something about this, rather than snipe from the sidelines. Visit FOREVERNESS for details.

Among Vancean Protagonists, J is in runaway first place, followed by R, with G close behind in 3rd place; the other letters are all in single digit percents.

R's second place position looks much less impressive when you look at the actual names [. . .] The only well-known ones are Rhialto and [Bad] Ronald Wilby. The G's, on the other hand, boast such luminaries as Gastel Etzwane, Gavin Waylock (Graven Warlock), Gerd Jemasze, Ghyl Tarvoke, Glawen Clattuc, Glinnes Huldén, and Gual of Sfere. I theorize that this is why we are struck by the number of G names in Vance: An unusual letter with lots of famous exemplars.

G is a rare initial letter in the real world: 13th in both the random sample [names of people working at Halsey's company] and [a] list of baby names—another reason why it's use sticks out in Vance.

R is much more popular than G in both the control lists.

J is a different story: crushingly dominant in the Vance list (a preference for his own initial?), and also dominant in the random sample, but strangely timid in the list of baby names [. . .] It may be that J names stick out in Vance simply because there are so many of them (famous ones limited to Jantiff Ravensroke, Jaro Fath, Joaz Banbeck, Joe Bain, Joe Smith, and Jubal Droad).

For his sample Halsey had boldly selected a single protagonist for each Vance story. His choices were questioned, and the discussion broadened to the ambiguous nature of the vancian protagonists, and then to the Point of View problem—most famous in *Domains of Koryphon*. The ever alert David B. Williams opened this phase of the conversation with the following post:

Strictly speaking, the point of view should not change within a scene—the convention is to change PoV at the change of chapters or at least provide a page break, so the reader is alerted.

Vance, like his pal Frank Herbert and no doubt many other popular writers, fairly frequently drops the existing PoV for a mere paragraph or two, because he wants to get in a response or an insight that he can't present from the current PoV character. This is irregularity!

To cite just one recent example, in *Night Lamp*, chapter 5, section 1, Jaro sits on a bench outside the library, and Skirlet comes to question him. It's Jaro's PoV all the way, until well into the scene, when the PoV shifts to Skirlet for several paragraphs—we get her thoughts, her reactions. The average reader probably doesn't notice this shift, but I am not an average reader! I found it jolting, I was no longer absorbed in the story and was conscious that I was reading an artificial construct by a writer.

Vance is such a good writer in other respects, I find it annoying that he commits these careless fumbles. It may be that, like spelling and punctuation, he does not consider PoV and absolutely fixed constant in literary craftsmanship.

A certain Douka replied:

"[. . .] it is hard to understand why every professional author does not precisely conform to David Williams' notions of proper technique. [. . .] Should his] editors [have stood] over him with Strunk and White [to] demand adherence to style rule #14, "avoid fancy words"? What about rule #6,"do not overwrite" ("rich, ornate prose is hard to digest")? [. . .] We have no reason not to believe that his editors noticed the change in POV in that scene, and accepted it, just as editors have accepted similar shifts in POV in many other works of fiction."

David B. Williams replied:

"Actually, there is much to recommend in these rules. These precepts developed over centuries from consideration of what

worked and what didn't. Writers should ignore them at their peril.

In fact, Jack Vance agrees, to the extent that he rewrote *Guyal of Sfere*, eliminating fancy words and rich, ornate prose: "As I re-read it, I thought I'd better make a few changes. . . At the time, I thought I was eliminating over-exuberant expressions and extravagance."

## H. KALERVO OF FINLAND USES VIE RESOURCES

Kalervo wrote in various Amazon reviews:

Let me say a few words about the differences between this edition and the authorized and corrected texts produced by VIE (Tor could freely use these texts, and no doubt would if it weren't against their business principles to make new plates just to, uh, correct thousands of instances of detrimental editorial intervention).

Compare these from *Marune: Alastor 933* (with Jack Vance's manuscript, which was used to produce the VIE text):

MANUSCRIPT: Benbuphar Strang harbored hostility: no question as to this. He could expel his antagonists, but to what purpose?

THIS EDITION: Benbuphar Strang harbored antagonists, but to what purpose?

Yes. . . I won't even comment on that.

MANUSCRIPT: Lorcas laughed. "You may inform the Kraike that the (. . .)"

THIS EDITION: Lorcas laughed. "Please inform the Kraike that the (. . .)"

That change affects our perception of Lorcas's character, moving it towards the opposite direction of what Vance intended. The result is confusing.

In addition to these, literally thousands of corrections had to be made to produce the VIE texts of the *Alastor* trilogy. Most of them are of smaller importance than the two above, at least when considered in isolation. But together they change the feel of the text considerably.

Of the *The Demon Princes* Kalervo writes:

Compare these from *The Palace of Love* (with Jack Vance's manuscript, used to correct the Berkley edition):

MANUSCRIPT: On Earth remain the sickly, the depraved, [...] the pornoids and involutes.

BERKLEY: On Earth remain the sickly, the depraved, [...] the paranoids and involutes.

An evocative neologism turned into triteness...  
Or consider this:

MANUSCRIPT: putting her hands on the table she rose to her feet.  
BERKLEY: putting her hands on the table she rose.

An accurate description of action turned into a vague or downright incorrect one. She rose? Like into the air?

In addition to these, literally a thousand corrections had to be made to produce the VIE text of *The Palace of Love*. Most of them are of smaller importance than the two above, at least when considered in isolation. But together they change the feel of the text considerably [ . . . ] It's the same story with *The Star King* and *The Killing Machine*. All these three novels are masterpieces; it would be about time they received the treatment they deserve from their current publisher.

The Lyonesse trilogy [Fantasy Masterworks, Paperback], is engrossing and hilarious—laugh out loud and you will go back and reread sentences/scenes. I have not encountered another author

with Vance's style (and trust me I have tried; taking Amazon's recs based on people who like Vance has been a big waste of money and time) which is why his books are real treasures. Its good that they are starting to reissue much of his work and you can track down a lot of his books through resellers. . . trust me 90% of Vance's books are worthy of having a permanent place on your bookcase.

[ . . . ] this particular edition is badly corrupt: sentences, or even whole paragraphs have been changed or removed to the detriment of the work, the order of two chapters has been changed at one spot (to similar effect), and so on, and so forth (more detail can be found from the VIE newsletter, *Cosmopolis*, available for download at the Vance Integral Edition web site). Fortunately, there is now available a corrected edition, published by Edition Andreas Irle.

The same reviewer feels differently *The King of Elfland's Daughter* by Lord Dunsany, and writes:

This book is BORING! I finished it out of my own stubbornness but for the last half of the book I was just scanning through to see what happens. As stated by others Lord Dunsay writes good prose but he does little else. The story is stupid and the characters are one-dimensional. And the elegant prose can get irritating because much of it is just repeated over and over and over some more. For example, his description of Elfland is poetic—the first time you hear it! but every few chapters he has to repeat it (and it is a page long description). Anyone who says they enjoyed this book is just trying to be impressive and show that they can read 'high-level' fantasy. I am not sure if the other works of Dunsay will be any better but I suspect that his short stories might have a better chance since he would not run out of material and have to repeat himself.

Better books to read : Dark Tower series, Silmarillion, Lyonesse series by Jack Vance.

It was this book which hooked me on Dunsany; I still love it and I don't see Kalervo's objection. And I found the Silmarillion pretty hard going. There's no accounting for tastes; as for myself; I dig Kalervo's peppy style.



Sabine Bollack reading. Red chalk, 1993, Paris.



COMING SOON:

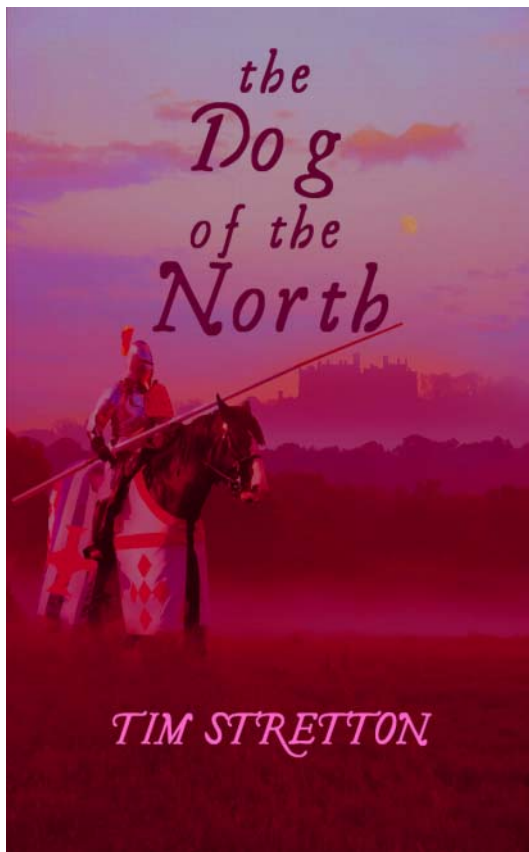
## THE DOG OF THE NORTH

WHEN LADY ISOLA OF SEY SETS OUT FOR CROAD TO CELEBRATE HER MARRIAGE, SHE DOES NOT EXPECT TO BE KIDNAPPED BY BEAUCERON, A RAIDER HATED AND FEARED ACROSS THE EMMENRULE. BUT BEAUCERON HAS LARGER SCHEMES. WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF HIS AMBITION? AND CAN HE STAY AHEAD OF HIS ENEMIES LONG ENOUGH TO LEAD HIS ARMY SOUTH?

A TALE OF LOVE, OBSESSION AND REVENGE, 'THE DOG OF THE NORTH' IS TOLD WITH TIM STRETTON'S CUSTOMARY WIT AND FLAIR.

Tim Stretton informs us:

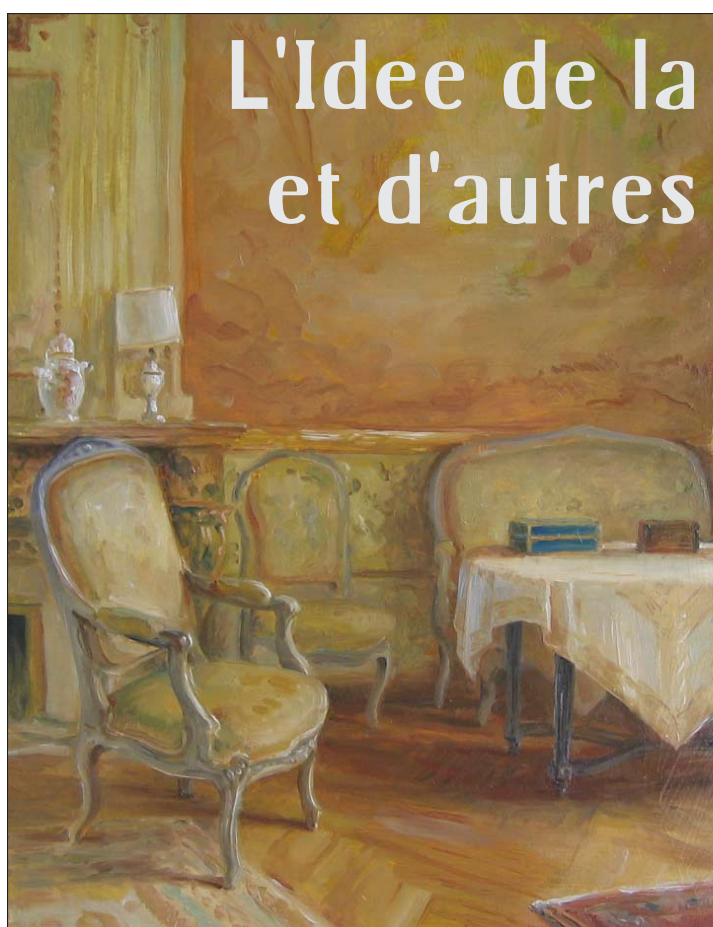
Regular readers of EXTANT will have noticed occasional progress reports on my latest novel *The Dog of the North*. Those with real fortitude may even have sampled the shamelessly self-publicising excerpts which an indulgent editor has presented to his readership. The Dog of the North is now complete, subject to various minor alterations, and should be available to buy in the next



couple of months. This will be a relief for those who have found the saga tedious, since there will be no more 'tasters' to skip; and also to the necessarily smaller group who have been eagerly awaiting publication, since the day is now close at hand.

In celebration—and also to defer starting work on future projects—I have updated the Acquired Taste website which now contains more detailed information on The Dog of the North ([www.dragonchaser.net/dotn.html](http://www.dragonchaser.net/dotn.html)) and some excerpts (OK, so there really is no escaping them). Readers who want to know what my next project will be are destined for disappointment, as I have not yet decided: but those who wish to explore this uncertainty at greater length are cordially invited to visit [www.dragonchaser.net/Work%20in%20Progress.html](http://www.dragonchaser.net/Work%20in%20Progress.html) to see some of the candidates.

A publication date for *The Dog of the North* will be announced in EXTANT once it has been finalised.



## L'Idee de la chaise et d'autres assemblages

L'Atelier 25  
présente

PAUL RHOADS

Du 6 avril au 6 mai 2007

Vernissage le Vendredi 6 avril à partir de 18 h

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Blanket sailing in the New Universe. Illustration by G. Rhoads for *The Lost Queen*.

## LAST AND LEAST

*The Lost Queen*, by George Rhoads, several chapters of which were published in EXTANT 18, is advancing towards publication. Steve Sherman has proofread the book and Joel Andersen is preparing a paperback Lulu version, while Stefania Zacco, producer of the VIE volumes, will make the hard-cover edition.

The author is providing about 30 illustrations.

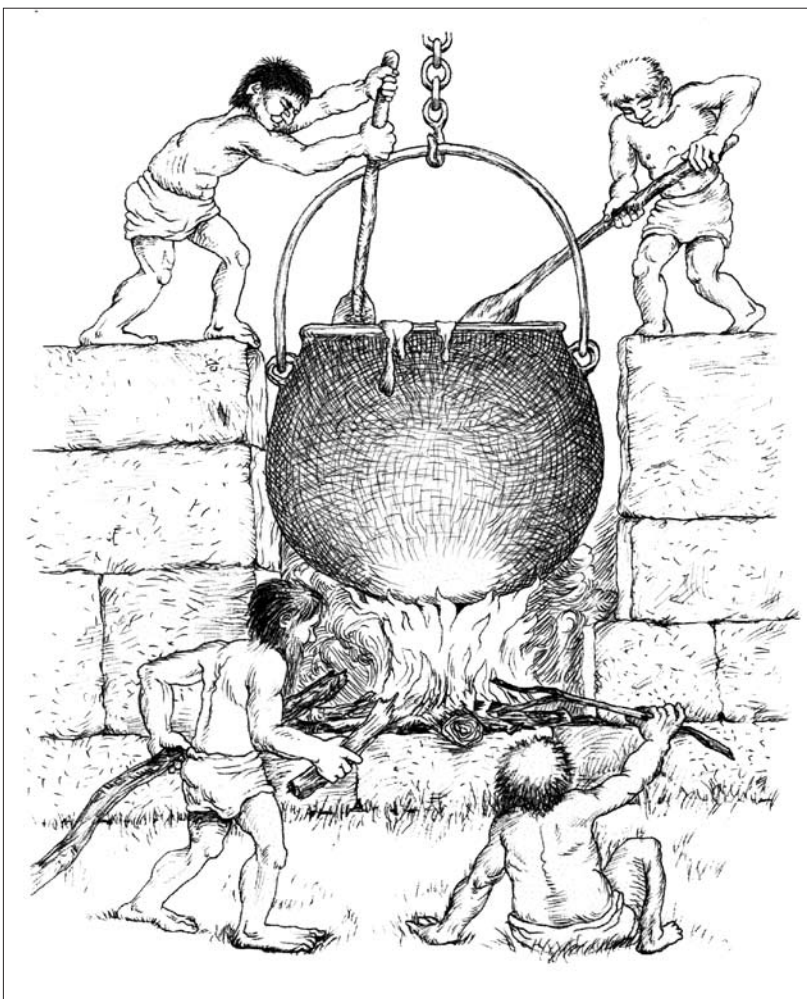
The images decorating this issue of EXTANT, per usual, are the work of EXTANT editor-in-chief, Paul Rhoads, with the exception of the beautiful *Dog of the North* cover, for which Tim Stretton is responsible, and the *Lost Queen* illustrations on this page.

The drawings on pages 1-5 show scenes around the Indre et Loire, France.

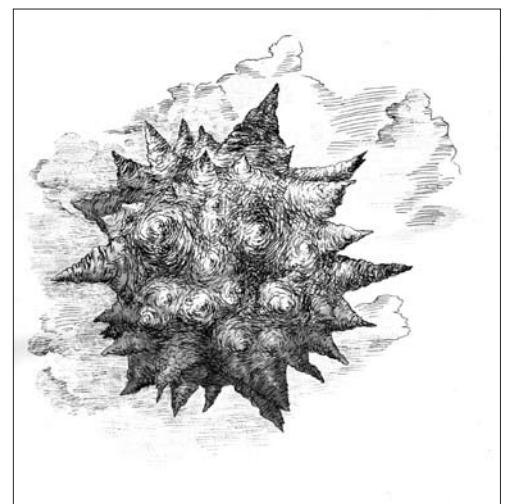
VIE etchings on pages 6-8 illustrate *The Unspeakable McInch*, *Vandals of the Void*, and *Marune*. On page 14 is the Goblin Fair at Twitten's corners, with Malanthe, and Zuck the florist. On page 15 is Zocco, the wefkin—he ink study on page 24 is after Francois Boucher; another forest scene.

I would like to thank Hans van der Veeke (the Legendary Locator) as well as Brian Gharst and Greg Hansen, for help with publishing EXTANT 19.

Contact EXTANT at: [prhoads@club-internet.fr](mailto:prhoads@club-internet.fr)



The Atridodes prepare a meal. Illustration by G. Rhoads for *The Lost Queen*.



Senkrad's secret planet.  
Illustration by G. Rhoads for *The Lost Queen*.