

THE INNER DARKNESS OF THE WINGED BEING

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THE INNER DARKNESS OF THE WINGED BEING

PREFATORY

At long last I have read Vance's Ellery Queen novels. How, you will ask, is it possible that I, of all people, have not done so before? Strange, or even bad, as this may be, at least it is not like the years I resisted reading "The Planet of Adventure"—victim of the very anti-trash prejudice I pretend to deplore—because in this case Jack himself discouraged me, insisting the books had been wrecked by editors. As it turns out only one of them really was, and that's been fixed.

Not only 'prime Vance', not only great in themselves, these stories are significant pieces in a literary puzzle nagging at me these last 7 years. I do not mean to suggest that Vance's work is a problem to which there is a solution, but the EQ novels, in particular, clarify certain pertinent matters—matters recently evoked by David B. Williams who publicly wondered if his own idea about why *Ports of Call* is a 'new sort' of story was the same as the author's own, the latter having declared it was different from anything he had done before.

And let us not forget that Vance has claimed he would rather have been a mystery author.

The reflections which follow are yet another scrambling, redundant and allusive attempt to see the invisible and palp the impalpable. Specifically I wish to explore my suspicion that Vance's sort of mystery novel, as opposed to the classic form of the genre, not only carries the germ of great literature but may shed light on the special nature of *Ports of Call*, and reflect light on Vance's work as a whole.

STRANGE SHE HASN'T WRITTEN

Vance, we say, wrote 14 'mystery' novels, but many qualify poorly. The Joe Bain stories, of course, are murder mysteries, with a murder and a detective. But *Bird Island* is an atmospheric idyl. There is no killing, no detective, no puzzle. *The Man in the Cage*, *The Dark Ocean*, *The Flesh Mask*, *Bad Ronald*, and *The Telephone was Ringing in the Dark*, to say nothing of *Strange People Queer Notions* and *The View from Chickweed's Window*, have elements of the mystery genre. None, however, has a detective. *Bad Ronald* even lacks a mystery (for the reader), while the murder in *Chickweed* could be eliminated without changing the plot. These books are less mysteries than tales of childhood pain, dramas of illusions and dreams, vistas of life's magical richness.

Of the three Ellery Queen mysteries one, *Strange She Hasn't Written* (*The Four Johns*), falls into the 'no detective' category.* The protagonist, Mervyn Gray, is a direct descendent of Robert Struve (*Flesh Mask*), Ronald Wilby (*Bad Ronald*) and Paul Gunther (*The House on Lily Street*). Like many Vance mystery protagonists he is a non-detective who plays the detectives' roll. Protagonists of this type post-dating the EQ stories include Lulu Enright (*Chickweed*), Betty Haverhill (*Dark Ocean*) and Luke Royce (*The Deadly Isles*). Wilby and Gunther, but more interestingly Struve (*Flesh Mask*), Marsh (*Telephone*), and even in a certain way Lulu Enright (*Chickweed*), have another characteristic; they are what might be called 'protagonist villains'. The EQ's Mervyn Gray falls into both these categories: he is a non-detective protagonist who plays the detective, and is not just flawed, like Betty Haverhill, but actually somewhat criminal.

The writing dates of *The House on Lily Street* and *Bad Ronald* are unsure. A finished early draft (now lost) of *Bad Ronald* (then called *Something Awful*) existed in 1955, and no proper documentation exists for *House on Lily Street*.† These books, and certainly *The Flesh Mask* (1948), are early texts. Their protagonists (Gunther, Wilby, Struve) are variations on a basic type, the root type of a crucial vancian gambit. Struve, behind his mask of flesh, is the archetypal elevated vancian conscience, potentially free of the constraints of persona‡ but just as potentially subject to its influence. Vance introduces this explicit dynamic as early as 1944, in the character Ettar (*T'sais*), condemned to wear a hideous demon face—Like Struve from 1948. Mervyn Gray, of *Strange She Hasn't Written*, has Ettar's and Struve's problem, but in reverse:

He went into the bathroom, showered, shaved, ran a comb through his hair, regarded himself in the mirror with sardonic disapproval. He was just too damn handsome, a Mexican matinee idol. His skin was a clear olive, eyes hazel and long-lashed, hair a dense black

* The same is true of the 100 page outline, *The Telephone was Ringing in the Dark*, a compelling narrative despite the sections merely outlined. This story features a twist on the *Bad Ronald* idea.

† As far as I know.

‡ 'Persona' is the Greek word for mask. In English it has come to mean the personality, personality being a mask of the true self.

pelt. He wore unobtrusive clothes, having long since cultivated a sartorial reserve. But the dark grays and blues accentuated his coloring; the reserve was variously interpreted as arrogance, narcissism, cruelty, plain stupidity. So Mervyn had taken refuge in the twelfth century, where he could refresh himself with the chansons and gestes, the rondels and virelais of the Provençal jongleurs.

VIE volume 14bis, page 28

All of us live behind a flesh mask, imprisoned in a persona we did not chose, and all are confronted with the same elemental paradox. While our persona, or at least its affect, is defined by the world, we own a true or inner-self. We may be trapped in our persona but the search for our true selves is as arduous and painful as coping with reactions to that unchosen and shifting mask. As for the true-self, is it also something outside our will and choice or, like a persona under certain conditions, is it subject to sculpting?

Paul Gunther resolves this problem by redefining it. He has no interest in his true-self. But he knows what he wants, and decrees his will to get it to be his true-self. Gunther then 'knows himself', and knowledge is power. This self has not been discovered. It is not a natural given. It is a fabrication. It might be argued that Gunther's will is only a reflection of his desires, which are givens, he is not troubled by such reflections. Liberating himself from conscience, from any identity larger than personal desire, he can concentrate on a narrow goal—gratification. Thus Gunther becomes strong, just as Robert Struve's hideous face, with which he ends up identifying, makes him strong though the revulsion and fear it inspires. Gunther and Struve are therefore not unwilling to be violent. They are at peace with themselves not because they have decided to submit to society but, to the contrary, that societies's strictures do not apply to them. They do not angrily flaunt the rules, as if offended by restriction; they coldly maneuver around them. They are perfectly ready to break the rules because they are placed beyond the rules, beyond good and evil. But, ultimately, lack of real self-knowledge, failure to be in touch with what one truly is, is a moral weakness. Obeying convention though fear may not be strength but violating it in the name of triumphant selfishness is not strength either.

Robert Struve is has several excuses: he has been seriously mistreated, he is truly unfortunate, and he is a child. Gunther, by contrast, is an adult who has suffered nothing out of the ordinary. Ronald Wilby is a more realistic and nuanced Gunther. He is a child who is spoiled rather than victimized, but like Gunther he is carried, or carries himself—thanks to an exceptional imagination—into a private world which empowers him to sanction behaviors forbidden in the real one. Howard Alan Treesong, by the same process, creates a battery of inner-selves, each a special tool of manipulation.

These are by no means the only vancian characters faced with the problem of their persona, or who gain power by molding their inner selves. The most obvious are the other demon prices. Lens Larque, obsessed with Methlen reaction to his face, seeks to humiliate them by imposing it upon them. Viole Falush changes his appearance and refines his personality in a convoluted reaction to the erotic impulse. Kokor Hekkus lives multiple lives as multiple and contrasting

characters, even fashioning a planetary theater of cultures and centuries of history to assuage a hyper-atrophied lust for life. The demon princes, like Gunther and Wilby, represent the Neitchien aspect: man as superman, creator of self, source of culture, molder of reality.

But there are more subtly and powerfully heideggerian examples. The persona of Pardero-Efriam of *Marune* has been torn from him. He then reawakes into consciousness though culture. In a recapitulation of Heidegger's great teaching Vance makes Efriam re-becomes 'himself' by recovering his persona. This is heideggerian because, here, culture is not merely identity, not even just consciousness, but actual existence; as Pardero becomes Efriam, Pardero ceases to exist. In *Trullion* Vance tracks this process at the level of culture itself, in the form of competing modes of consciences and existence. In the end innovative Fanscheriad loses to traditional Trill ways. But the victory is precarious; one day Fancheriad may win. The struggle is an ontological drama, and which culture wins is ultimately a matter of indifference to the heideggerian theater. Culture, whichever or whatever or it is, determines being, and is not stable.

Persona themes abound in Vance's work. In *Lyonesse* Melanthe is an aspect of Desmei, an avatar of her mission of hate. Shimrod is a scion of Murgan. Kul is a projection of Aillas. At a less obvious level Suldren and Madouc struggle to realize their true selves despite the trap of persona which destines them as tools of state. Through search for his true self Aillas' illusory obsession with Tatzel gives way to awareness of how he is moving in an environment of protagonists whose personae have hallucinogenic power of which he must free himself if he wishes to come to grips with the world.

Often the persona theme overlaps with the heideggerian theme of culture as existence. What would have become of Glawen Clattuc, that paladin of Araminta Station whose dedication is so absolute to the cause of his birth home—the justice of which is not obviously clear—if his Status Index, like Smonny's, were to have risen into the upper twenties? Would he have become a hired gun, a force without a cause, or would he have allied himself to another cause, possibly just as parochial? And what does this reveal about his true self? Jaro Fath was faced with layers of identity problems; torn between adoptive and biological parents, pressured by an over-heated social hierarchy and haunted by a brother whose tragic pain was expressed as Jaro's own conscience. Who, to Jaro himself, was Jaro? Destined to become a fratricide and to love a woman who rejected her triumphant Clam-Muffin status in search of a life dictated by the shape of her true-self (a winged being), he learns to maintain distance from his conflicting impulses, a basic step towards self-awareness.

As for Myron Tany, the protagonist of *Ports of Call*—whose nature impinges directly on David B. William's question—we will come to him later.

Let us now return to Mervyn Gray. But here I must make a confession. In chapter 11 of the original published Ellery Queen text, appears this line:

Mervyn stood there in the dark, his own darkness, feeling a great aching need to reach out and touch the glow from Susie's windows. And suddenly the darkness was insupportable. And he was very hungry.

The evidence that this text had been seriously deformed by an editorial hand is clear and abundant, but not in all cases absolute. For example, though there is no manuscript evidence for this passage, we are sure, for several reasons, that the And-And structure is editorial. The passage was certainly tampered with. Though I was otherwise not involved in the EQ correction process I do recall being informally consulted on a few issues, including this one. I had not read the whole text so I should have disqualified myself. However, I recall agreeing that the phrase “his own darkness” should be struck. The VIE text, therefore, is this:

Mervyn stood there in the dark, feeling a great aching need to reach out and touch the glow from Susie’s windows. Suddenly the darkness was insupportable. Mervyn realized that he was very hungry.

But now, having read the whole book, I see that those three words are not only genuine but actually crucial because they are the peek of the crescendo of the drama’s exposé, without which the story becomes harder to understand. During the coda, after the mystery has been cleared up, a passage occurs on the second to last page; without realizing it Mervyn has been struggling against Susie, who, under a misapprehension, had been persecuting him. Though Mervyn had killed no one, he was not, however, absolutely guiltless. He had committed a foolish and cowardly act for a shameful reason. This was ‘his darkness’. In chapter 14, therefore, we read:

He told her about the find in the south of France, and the handsome research grant. “It would mean living in France for a year or two. Perhaps at Castel Poldiche itself, where the manuscripts were discovered.”

“Sounds like fun! Oh, Mervyn, I’m so glad for you.”

Mervyn said abruptly, “Will you come with me, Susie?”

She sat for a moment or two looking off down a slope of lawn.

“It wouldn’t work, Mervyn. There’s too much darkness between us. Whenever I looked at you I’d see Mary, and the river, and I’d hear the ghastly splash. And when you looked at me—”

Mervyn said, “Susie. It wouldn’t have to be that way—”

But Susie shook her head. “Maybe not for you, Mervyn. But I’m a female.”

The personal darkness Mervyn feels in chapter 11 is part of the darkness overdose between Susie and himself.

Luckily Chuck King exposed this edit in the preface, so alert readers can make the correction as they read, and nothing essential is lost.

In any case this darkness, Mervyn’s personal darkness, is typically vancian. The non-detective protagonists of his mysteries must all cope with such darkness. They have not murdered, they play the detective, but they are also not absolutely innocent.

This darkness theme is evolved with a twist in *The Deadly Isles*. Luke Royce is the intended victim of a murderer. Luke allows the murderer believe he has succeeded, then trails him from Tahiti to the Tuamotus, onto his cousin’s yacht *Dorado*, where the cousin is murdered. The *Dorado* then cruises back to Tahiti, a tense voyage for Luke among the guests of his murdered cousin. The guests include Kelsey McClure. Back in Tahiti, with the mystery cleared up and Luke now

the captain of the *Dorado*, Kelsey convinces him to take her on a cruise. They go out to dinner and the final passage of the book is this:

Candles flickered to the airs drifting in from hibiscus bushes.

Looking across the table, Luke thought, I wonder what I’m getting into? Whatever it is, it can’t be all bad.

Kelsey spoke. “Luke.”

“Yes.”

“You’re thinking of something.”

“I realize that.”

“And I know what it is. Never, never, never, would I marry you.”

“‘Never’ is a long time,” said Luke.

“Never, never, never is even longer. Do you know why I wouldn’t?”

“First of all, I haven’t asked you.”

“No. It’s nothing like that. It’s because of this. Right now you’re in a stage of nervous reaction. After a while, you’d start thinking. You never could trust me. Not really. You’d never forget how I acted when you were all alone and everyone was against you. Would you?” She searched his face.

Luke reviewed a dozen answers, found pitfalls everywhere. He said at last, “People are dead. Others are miserable. Don Peppergold is angry. But for me, and perhaps for you—everything is pleasant. So why should I complain?”

Kelsey smiled and looked into the candles. “You didn’t answer my question.”

“No.”

“Perhaps it’s just as well.”

The darkness between Luke and Kelsey is not extreme. She did not, like Susie, send him anonymous orders to ‘confess’* or death threats.† The question of its exact weight is left open, but the darkness is fully evoked.

THE VIEW FROM CHICKWEED’S WINDOW

The date of this book is not clear. It might be 1959; it might be much earlier. In some ways it resembles *Bird Island* where a pair of young and tentative love-birds frolic through a series of problems they have set themselves to resolve, barriers to personal happiness they have set their hearts upon crossing. These goals have nothing obligatory. They might choose others, so there is already something deep here; in life—unless we are going to sit there like a lump—we must do something, and it is nobler, more beautiful, to do something by choice than obligation. To this extent people truly do make their own destinies, without violating reality or their true selves. But *The View from Chickweed’s Window* is not, like *Bird Island*, just a gay idyll; it is the most through-going vengeance story in all of Vance! It is also a most poignant and terrifying account of persecution and moral disorder.

The story has two parts. In the first half, orphaned and eight years old, Lulu Enright is taken into the house of her uncle and aunt, and their two sons. This house-hold quickly reveals itself to be dubious. First Lulu is robbed of her Sung vase, and Vance builds from this in a relentless crescendo.

* A personal note: reading *Strange She Hasn’t Written*, punctuated by these laconic orders to ‘confess’, I could not help recalling Alexander Feh’t’s similarly insistent summations to ‘resign’—I think he also ordered ‘confess’. My memory was haunted as I read this book by a chattering hulk; a sinister John Boce or Rundle Detteras.

† These endings cast light on the problem of the changed end of *Gold and Iron*, about which see: VIE DOCUMENTS.

I have just read this story for the second time, and I cannot understand why I was not more impressed the first. These horrible events, though obviously fictional, seem the most biographically influenced in all Vance's work. The setting is such a house and such a milieu as Vance surely knew as a child, and the terrifying aunt Flora might well be modeled on his mother's almost criminally avaricious sister. The turpitude of uncle Maurice, though not his bluff persona, is perhaps an inflated reflection of certain qualities of Vance's father, a man who seems to have been weak and duplicitous, and was perhaps perverse. The rawly desolate, scandalous and dark episode of Lulu's persecution proceeds as inexorably as Greek tragedy, and leaves the reader gasping.

Then begins the second part, itself divided into two sections. Lulu, having been brought up by state institutions, is feeling her way through college, where eventually she meets the rather mysterious Robert Malloy. Malloy's story, though less tragic, is just as dramatic as Lulu's. It is told by Robert himself:

"You really want to know the truth about me?" Robert licked his lips, watching her intently.

Lulu laughed nervously. "I might as well know the worst."

"Very well, listen. First of all, when I was—oh about fourteen I imagine, I took my father's car out one night. I had a couple drinks and got wild. I was doing about fifty miles an hour and ran into an old colored lady—couldn't see her in the dark—and kept on going. Hit and run. They never caught up with me. But my conscience hurt me. I argued for awhile: what difference did it make? She was dead, why stop and get in trouble? But I'd done wrong and I knew it. Murder. I was bad, and I knew it. Rotten clear through. This was just the start. I decided that since I was bad I might as well be really bad.

VIE volume 11 p352

Robert goes on to describe other crimes: he robbed the city garage where his father worked, selling stolen parts. He got married on a whim, creating all sorts of problems for the girl. He conned and blackmailed his grandmother out of several thousand dollars. Robert sums up:

"Murder, theft, bigamy, extortion." Did I know I was doing wrong? Certainly."

Lulu was silent a moment. Then she said, "You're quite a case, Robert."

"Quite a case."

"I don't really know what to say. I'm a murderer myself, of course."

"True."

"Still—you're making yourself out much worse than you are."

"I haven't made myself out bad enough."

"Juvenile delinquency, adolescent vapors, sensitivity, guilt psychosis. . ."

"Not to mention plain ordinary worthlessness."

In fact Lulu is not a murderess, but she does not know that yet. Robert's sense of shame turns out to be the source of his reluctance towards Lulu. He puts it this way:

". . .you deserve much better of life than me. I've got this guilt thing under control, more or less; it doesn't force me to keep on proving I'm evil. If I married you—I couldn't live with myself."

This is subtle; Robert has sinned, and now he feels

repentant. Not being a Catholic, lacking recourse to the sacrament of reconciliation (confession), he can 'control' the 'guilt thing' but he cannot wash himself clean, or not clean enough to feel his proximity won't pollute Lulu. Today, not unlike yesterday, it is fashionable to scoff at such a moral dilemma. Not only is confession blown-off as a cheap way to deal with guilt,* but guilt itself is dismissed as a psycho-social aberration—something even Lulu half-seriously does in the passage above. In the person of Robert Malloy, however, Vance takes this problem seriously. Malloy has been bad but he has had an awakening, and now he feels bad about himself. He does not know how to cope with this. Robert Malloy is an anti-Paul Gunther. He has not turned his capacity for evil (which we all share, but which he has experimented extensively) into a personally liberating indifference to the humanity of others. Instead he has learned something about his true self. His true self abhors evil, and cannot live with the evil he has done. He had tried to live with the evil, to tame it by making it habitual. Having committed one act of cowardice (driving off after running over an old woman) he tested his moral capacity make indifference and selfishness reign in his heart. It was a dangerous path which led to destructive results, but it was, in a way, an honest effort. Malloy was not undertaking an apprenticeship of crime, he was testing the shape of his soul. Eventually the results were in; he had to recognize that his evil was ugly. He rejected it, but he could not unburden himself of his acts, because such an experiment is not made in a laboratory, it must be made in real life, when each effect has real moral results. Now that he loved beauty, he could not foul Lulu with his ugliness.

The second section begins at this point. Lulu learns that her aunt and uncle received \$12,000 of her money when she arrived in San Francisco, and also proof that she was the true owner of the Sung vase. And when one of her bad cousins informs her that she had shot her uncle in the back of the head she becomes suspicious because she knows that, at worst, she shot him in the stomach. When the extent of the iniquity inflicted upon her by her aunt and cousins becomes clear, Lulu resolves upon vengeance :

Tears came to her eyes. "All those terrible years. . .for nothing!"

Robert made a movement as if to take her hand, restrained himself.

"And now," said Lulu, "they refuse to give me what my father left me. They knew who shot Uncle Maurice; they were happy that the blame fell on me. And now they won't give me my vase, or my money."

Robert nodded slowly, thoughtfully. "Are you going to the police?"

"What good would that do?" asked Lulu.

"Probably none whatever."

"Exactly."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"I don't know. But I'll get what they owe me." Lulu's voice quivered passionately. "One way or another I'll get it. I don't care what I have to do, I don't care if it takes the rest of my life." She laughed without humor. "I've never felt this way before; it's not

* Which it is for non-serious, dishonest and hypocritical Catholics, of which there are plenty—but I would like to hear an honest man talk that way, and become a serious Catholic, and keep doing so. The misuse of confession does not nullify it any more than the misuse of hammers or guns nullifies them.

pleasant. I want to hurt somebody—as much as they’ve hurt me. . . I suppose you think I’m wicked.”

The rest of the book, except for episode where we plunge into the past to read Chickweed’s Book of Dreams* and the sharp confrontation with the villains towards the end, is a cheerful, rollicking account, as light in tone as *Bird Island*, of how Lulu and Robert, with cleverly elaborate tactics, recover Lulu’s money and vase, (plus compound interest and costs) while exchanging joyfully arch repartee. There is no hate or vindictiveness—in fact they do them no actual harm. Lulu even seems to feel sorry for them but their persistent vindictiveness preclude the mercy she seems ready to extend. Through this process the burden of Robert’s guilt is slowly lifted, and on the last page this resolution occurs:

“Do you really want me for a husband?” Robert asked, “A cheat, a swindler?”

“I’m no better,” said Lulu. “And anyway, we’ll never cheat or swindle again, unless it becomes necessary.”

Robert laughed. “Very well, Lulu. You’ve talked me into it.”

In fact Lulu and Robert, for all their clever chatter about swindling, have only worked a restrained justice. In other words Robert has, if you will, paid for his sins with brave and selfless acts. Thanks to giving himself to Lulu—at first by agreeing to help her correct the crimes that had been committed against her—he has risen above the self-referential mire of his sin, and the apparently crippling recognition of that sin, which is also the first step towards moral health. Lulu’s love, calling at him to love her back, and to be worthy of her, has lifted him out of himself. His adventure with Lulu functions as a healing sacrament.

Lulu’s attraction to Robert is related to this. Vance describes her encounters with other boys; all are blindly selfish goons. Robert is not selfish; he would like to have Lulu but he dares not even touch her because of his sense of unworthiness. This is self knowledge which the other boy’s lack. Robert’s self knowledge makes him go against himself, against selfishness in the direction of truth and beauty. Going against oneself, to go towards beauty, is the essence of life because it is the essence of awareness. When Lulu meets Robert she recognizes this in him, if only dimly, and loves him for it.

Such an elaborately theological analysis of what appears to be no more than a second or third tier genre novel justly ignored even by most Vance readers, may seem disproportionate, but a wonder of Vance is the massive foundations he lays, upon which to erect palaces of froth. In this he is like the painters Wateau or Fragonard, great and profound masters too often dismissed as fabricators of eye-candy. Lulu does not have Mervyn’s Gray’s sort of darkness, but she thinks she does. Until she is grown up she believes she has killed her uncle—not intentionally of course, but a terrible act none-the-less, for in the heat of the act (the shot itself was accidental, but the gesture with the gun was one

of instinctive self-defence) she ‘hated’ her uncle —no wonder of course; he was subjecting her innocent helplessness to unspeakable desolation. But hate, even in an eight year old, even surrounded by justifications of the most popular sort, is still ugly and disfiguring, and Vance intimates most beautifully how that ‘darkness’, however small a patch of shadow, effects poor Lulu, how it confuses and muffles her spirit. It is only when, almost by chance, she becomes persuaded of her own innocence that her soul becomes clear.

THE ARCH OF CHARACTER

It is often claimed that there is no character development in Vance. This, as has just been demonstrated, is by no means true, so why is it such a frequent claim? Vance does things in new ways, unfamiliar to those trained up in literary criticism, and particularly to those who, with a few undergrad courses to their credit, are as confused as they believe themselves to be enlightened. A typical symptom is middle-brow use of terms like ‘arch of character’.

Shakespeare’s Angelo, in *Measure for Measure*, is a classic ‘character’. Angelo is put in charge of the city by the duke, and charged with correcting its loose morals. Now Claudio loves Juliet (they wish to marry) but has jumped the gun, and Angelo, true to his mandate, condemns him to death. Isabella, Claudio’s sister, after whom Angelo lusts, with the connivance of the duke in disguise, and Mariana, who loves Angelo and whom he ought to have married, then trick Angelo into committing the same crime (with Isabella Angelo thinks, but in fact with Mariana). In the grip of this contradiction, but prior to his guilty night with Mariana, Angelo moans:

*Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary
And pitch our evils there? O fie, fie, fie!
What does thou? Or what art thou, Angelo?
Does thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good? O, let her brother live:
Thieves for their robbery have authority
When judges steal themselves. . .*

Angelo’s private passions contradict his social duty. His id combats his super-ego. He advances deeper and deeper into this mess until, in the play’s dénouement, all is set right by the duke. Angelo’s last exchange is with Escalus, the duke’s old counselor:

*Escalus
I am sorry, one so learned and so wise
As you, lord Angelo, have appeared,
Should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood
And lack of tempered judgement afterward.*

*Angelo
I am sorry that such a sorrow I procure,
And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart
That I crave death more willingly than mercy;
’Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it.*

The ‘arch of character’, then, is as follows:

- Angelo, super-ego, protector of society,
- confronted by a contradictory id-impulse,
- mires himself in a hypocritical conflict, and

* Does this ‘Book of Dreams’ predate Ronald Wilby’s ‘Book of Dreams’? It is hard to say, but I am inclined to believe it does. It is less developed but essentially the same. Treesong’s book is on the same model—an heroic fairy story integrating aspects of it’s writer’s real life—except that he adds the company of paladins.

d) when the truth out collapses into repentance.

In the end Angelo repents with knobs on, but he was repentant from the first; horrified at himself even before he became actually guilty, just for feeling tempted. In other words 'arch of character' is perhaps not an ideal term here because what constitutes the before and after in Angelo's situation? Event progress, yes, but Angelo does not change. He is a certain type of man with a specific weakness: an ardent champion of the law, but subject to lawless passions. It is the situation which changes around him; first he is thrust into power, which he is glad to exercise severely, then he is tempted by conniving plotters, succumbs to temptation and is exposed. All during the play he reports on his inner state, in the changing lights of his evolving situation. The circumstances map his character like a 3D scanner passing over a target object, but the target does not change. Lulu Enright, by contrast, does change. Why should this be so hard to see? I think it is because we have lost the habit of studying moral architecture.

On the other hand there are Vance characters who, like Angelo, do not change. Take Glawen Clattuc. Glawen's character flows out of his agency status. It is defined by dedication to the Charter of Araminta Station. This is significant; it explains why Vance makes so much, in the opening segments of *Araminta Station*, of young Glawen's struggles to gain agency status. Glawen gains them, and then, as in *Measure for Measure*, the situation evolves around him; Araminta station comes under pressures, internal and external, ever more intense. Glawen, unlike Angelo, does not soliloquize upon his inner conflict—he appears to have none—but he cannot escape being afflicted by them. These, however, are not contradictions in his soul, as with Angelo, but stresses in the persona of the Bureau B operative. For example, Bodwyn Wook, head of Bureau B and the man most responsible for defending Araminta Station, disastrously forces Glawen to work with his nephew Kirdy Wook out of nepotism. Nepotism is exactly one of the problems which has brought Araminta Station to crisis. Vance does not expand upon this, he just quietly present it. Glawen must endure this blemish on his idol while dedicating himself to its cause. There is also Glawen's involvements with Floreste, who is both an important part of the identity of Araminta Station and an insidious force against it. The cause of Araminta Station demands a more and more complex and firm dedication if it is not to flounder on the rocks of the higher and higher moral price it demands. Vance does not paint this as an inner struggle. It is the outer events which he dramatizes. One might say, generally, that Vance—in books like this—rather than making characters evolve, makes situations evolve. But before discussing that we must return to the mysteries.

DETECTIVES AND PUZZLES

A mystery is a story at whose center is a puzzle about a murder. But many good mysteries, it will be objected, are about more than a murder puzzle. Dorothy Sayers is valued for her style. P.D. James* is valued for the richness of her settings and characters. Other examples could be cited. Still,

a proper mystery is none-the-less centrally characterized by a murder and its solution, by which I mean the whole thing turns around the puzzle. A 'good' mystery, as such, need be good in no other way, however otherwise good it may be. Mystery is a 'genre', which is to say, a lower order art-form. Lower than what? The so-called 'psychological novel'. The pre-determined and purely formal, and therefore mechanical constraints of genre literature take up space and energy where higher things might otherwise be.† This does not mean that a given 'mystery' might not be better than a given 'psychological novel'. Limitation, including the pre-determined and mechanical, is a spur to creativity. Still, in the absolute, the genre modes suffer this handicap, and thus their lower status is justified—even if many genre works are not only more entertaining but deeper and more beautiful than many 20th century 'psychological novels'. In the case of the mystery genre, however, the imposed theme touches the core of the human soul; uncontrolled passions and the elemental fear of mortality. Non-genre literary masterworks often involve murder for this reason—though they never turn it into a puzzle game. The mystery genre is a crude but highly serviceable platform for human drama. This explains its success.

A few of Vance's mysteries are close to the classic type: *The House on Lily Street*, the Ellery Queen novels and the two Joe Bain novels. These books are centered on a murder; the principal 'protagonist' (if the term is stretched to fit Vance's characterization) is a detective (with the exception of *Strange She Hasn't Written (The Four Johns)*) and the action centers on outing the facts. These stories belong together because Police inspectors George Shaw (*Lily Street*), Thomas Tarr (*Death of a Solitary Chess Player (A Room to Die In)*) and Omar Collins (*The Man Who Walks Behind (The Madman Theory)*) are precursors of Joe Bain. All are mildly eccentric. All are dogged, of detached and broad perspective. They are also—slipping into the roll of ordinary protagonist—quite subject to human impulses. Shaw is highly responsive to Gally. Tarr falls in love at first sight with the victim's daughter—the actual protagonist of the story—a passion he handles in a light-handed vancian manner, and Collins has an amusingly flawed personal life and working relationships with his superiors and inferiors. Joe Bain is the fully realized version of this type. George Shaw, Vance's first attempt, is extremely self-effacing, almost reduced to a foil, a sensitive screen against which the spectacle of the story is projected. Bain, like Shaw, reflects the story, the 'mystery', but with Bain the story is overshadowed by his own character—his troubles, his manner, the feel of his life.

Magnus Ridolf, by contrast, is Sherlock Holmes in haliquinade. Sherlock Holmes is a colorful eccentric but the reader's central interest is not him or his life; it is the spectacle of how he applies his special genius to an amazing problem. Vance does not make stories that way. In the classic mystery the situation, the characters and the setting

* With respect to P.D. James I state this on the authority of others, having made only a superficial sample, and finding her unreadable. I don't say she is no good, just that I won't wade around to find the nuggets alleged to lie about—though that they do I both cannot and do not wish to deny.

† Arthur Upfield jokes about this. In 'The Winds of Evil', for example, he make Bony say: "I like crimes to be committed. A cleverly executed crime is ever a delight to a man having my brains to solve it." Puzzles, however entertaining, have nothing to do with humanity or poetry.

are about the puzzle. Vance reverses this: the puzzle is about the setting, the characters and the situation. What does this mean?

One cannot often enough recall Vance's explanation of his writing method. First he conceives an atmosphere. Out of the atmosphere come characters, and out of the characters comes plot (story). This is counter-intuitive. The classic mystery writers operate as one would expect; they start with a puzzle, which generates a situation (story) which in turn generates characters and setting. The classic detective functions as a probe, a periscope into this fabrication. Simon's Maigret and Upfield's Bony, penetrate the situation and come to know the personalities of the actors of the drama. Such a method may be rich and true in all sorts of ways—the characters can be recognizable and convincing, the settings vivid, the plot exciting—but, at one level or another, it remains a fabrication, an instrumentalization of some observed situation for the sake of a puzzle. If *The House on Lily Street* were not so original in other ways it could, mistakenly, be understood along these lines, because Shaw's passions are painted in such discreet strokes he can seem a mere periscopic device. Bain is unquestionably no device. Recalling the Bain books we do not recall the murders but we can't forget the dusty drives, Bain's plan to own a hotel, his visits to the girl from the planet Arthemisia.

But Bain and his predecessors have no darkness in them, unlike Vance's detective-playing protagonists whose hands are not clean. They have flaws, but these are divorced from the situation of the mystery in ways that the flaws of Robert Struve, Mervyn Gray or even Lulu Enright are not. In other words, in a classic mystery a detective functions as a way into a situation which is exterior to him. He inspects it as if it were curious object. He is like the reader, who is invited to look over his shoulder and enjoy the thrill of the puzzle and the intrinsic interest of the world. Vance's tendency, from the beginning, was to implicate the 'detective' in the drama. This is not unprecedented. There are Maigret stories that tend to do this—where Maigret's past, or his social instincts, both help and hinder his investigation. Upfield's Inspector Bony not merely tries to become friends with the characters, he really cares about them—and at times his aboriginal blood precipitates him into actions affecting the situation. But these considerations do not change the basic distinction. Inspecting a world through a periscope-like detective is against Vance's grain. His dramas are 'wholistic'. There is nothing outside them. This quality is an important aspect of his charm.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOVEL

What is the precedent of the mystery?

The 'psychological novel'—a term which must be indulged for lack of a better—might be said to cover 19th and twentieth novels, those which are neither 'historical' nor fall into some other genre (romance, mystery, western, sci-fi) and might be defined as a story where the protagonist lives a destiny, perhaps even making self-discoveries. Balzac, certainly one of the most important sources of the modern novel, is not, however, properly covered by this definition.

His books are teeming with memorable characters but the stories, in a certain way like Vance, tend to be as much, or more, about society than personal destinies—or the personal destinies serve to reveal the society. Balzac's attitude towards his characters seem to be, not coldly indifferent but archly removed. He gave an over-all title to his work: *The Human Comedy*. It is a theater of contemporary life in which endless varied dramas occur but where the theater itself is the main object. The work of Dickens is similar in scope and social concern, though that author seems to have been, unlike Balzac, an activist. Jane Austen, on the other hand, who predates Balzac, falls nicely into the definition, concentrating as she does so much on what today would be called individual psychology or, to put it more adequately, the moral development of the individual. Moral development, however, takes place in the context of society. Lulu Enright's development is like that—implicated strongly in her environment—but unlike Lizzy Bennet or Emma Wodehouse her situation, rather than being normal, is weird and extreme. Lizzy and Emma are not drastically misused like Lulu. This difference is typical of the difference between 'classical' and 'modern' art, though Austen cannot be said to have neglected extreme situations all together since Fanny (*Mansfield Park*) is given a fairly rough time, and various secondary characters as well.

The classics, however, were much less interested in extreme situations, less interested in the grotesque and bizarre—modern preoccupations which prompt half-educated people eager to establish their modernist bone-fides to enthuse about painters like Bosch, Archemboldo and Soutine, while they don't care for Fra Angelico, Veronese or Renoir. Of course interest in the grotesque always existed. One might mention, with our half-educated friends, such names as Gesualdo and Rabelais—to cover the other two major arts—but these are the famous exceptions which prove the rule. The classical approach to the extreme is fundamentally different from the modern. In the old view there was a hierarchy of values. The Moderns have thrown this out so that 'normalcy' has taken on a new meaning. We now live in a world where the fundamental is 'culture', or one of an unlimited number of 'cultures', each totally alien to the others such that it is forbidden to understand them in any relation but a meaninglessly horizontal one. The articulation of humanity into cultural groups is a separation into incompatible and mutually opaque universes. Psychology has even become a sort of culture in this sense—each individual an artist, a creator, a generator of his own reality. The concept 'normal' has lost all meaning, unless it equals 'bizarre'.

One might say, then, that the novel begins with moral concerns (Jane Austen), passes to social concerns (Balzac) and then to psychological ones (James, Flaubert, Hardy). Psychology is different from Morality because it does not include the problem of good and evil. To make his distinction in another way we can say the novel evolves from concern for the individual as a free agent within society, to concern with society as such, to concern with the individual as a product of society. This development culminates in a decadent period of ever more pessimistic visions of

individuals thrashing hopelessly in the grip of forces beyond their comprehension (Mauriac, Sallanger, Auster), a decline which corresponds to the rise of the genres which, despite their truncated and hobbled forms, offer a way out of the progressive impasse, back towards a more classical or normal background, in which hierarchical values are more or less shamelessly, if silently, indulged. Vance escapes this tragic pattern. It is a fact all the more remarkable because, in his quiet way, he seems, at first glance and to the contrary, to be totally mired in it.

To catch a glimpse of what I am trying to get at, allow me to describe a book by François Mauriac I recently read. This book is an interesting example because Mauriac, as a famously devout catholic, would seem to be armed to escape the modernist impasse—which to a degree he does. His novel *Galigai* is about seventeen year old nubile fool, Marie, daughter of a sexually repressed mother obsessed with petty snobbery. The mother punishes Marie for turning her head in church to look at Gilles, with whom she is infatuated. Gilles is the son of doctor Salone, who Marie's mother refuses to consult, out of both snobbery and because the vaginal examination which might have saved her life is unthinkable.

Marie is fascinated by Gilles. So is Nicolas, his childhood friend, but Gilles is a common sort of fellow. Nicolas is less handsome but Agathe, Marie's tutor, is desperately in love with him anyway. Gilles and Nicolas call Agathe 'Galigai' because that is the name of a servant of Marie de Medici who manipulated her mistress in favor of a love affair, for Gilles gets Nicolas to manipulate Agathe in order to gain access to Marie. Galigai, ugly and flat chested, is the daughter of a ruined aristocrat. She had a fortune but lost it when she married a scoundrel who disappeared with the gardener's son and all the money. But she is so profoundly proud and willful that she does not mind being a tutor, and all she wants is to marry Nicolas, no matter what the conditions. To make a long story short, and to leave out most of the sordid details, Gilles wants Nicolas, who despises Galigai, to pretend to want to marry her. Nicolas refuses, but when Gilles is furious, he agrees to do it, but for real; he will sacrifice himself for his friend by doing the honorable thing by Galigai. Galigai makes the most of this, and Nicolas becomes more and more hopelessly miserable. It turns out, however, that the tactic was pointless, since Gilles and Marie get along by a simpler route. In the end Nicolas breaks his promise to Galigai, and in the midst of his moral crisis—which would be invisible to the current mentality—the reader is allowed to suspect he might transform his idolatry of the worthless Gilles to love of God.

Mauriac was a French literary luminary up into the 1950s. A great friend of Andre Gide, Mauriac's failed attempt to convert that famous atheist is often evoked. Reading *Galigai* I was reminded both of Balzac and Simenon. Simenon is the most famous of the French mystery writers. His books are quite Balzacian in that they are always pictures of society, but Simenon's are less wide of view, mired in incestuous relations of class and sex. The celebrated inspector Maigret wades delicately into these bogs and, by getting to know everyone (as opposed to discovering clues like Sherlock

Holmes or Colombo), elucidates the crime. Simenon is like Balzac except that where the former digs ditches the later builds cathedrals. Both reveal society but where one learns something from Balzac—of history, geography, social development, human types—with Simenon all one gets, beyond some fine entertainment and a bit of local color, is a sense of decadence, foolishness and brutishness. Mauriac also paints a picture of French life in which the characters embody perverse and mindless obsessions. But, after dragging his characters in the gutter, he suggests a glimmer of hope; at least someone might crawl out of the deplorable mess and aspire to larger and higher things. If Mauriac's book lacks the broad perspectives of Balzac, at least he offers an occasional vista, and if he is even darker and more sordid than Simenon, he is also more contrasted.

INNER DARKNESS

Mauriac's Nicolas is a person who is blinded by passions and consequently wrongs others and deforms himself. But in the end the reader is allowed to hope he might escape this state—like Lulu and Robert in Chickweed's Window. Other non-detective protagonists in Vance's mysteries, hampered by their 'darkness', sometimes also win free of the traps they have dug for themselves, sometimes not.

Vance's main characters, as I have mentioned, rarely function as traditional protagonists. Vance can treat all the characters in a story as if each were the principal or as if none were. This is an aspect of what might be called his coldness, a clear, steady, indulgent yet pitiless treatment of his characters.* But, leaving aside fables such as *Ulward's Retreat*, is there a relation between Vance's more famous protagonists and these proto-protagonists from the mysteries? Some early SF heros, such as Claude Glystra (*Big Planet*), or even Reith and Gersen, seem to be modeled on the cowboy, a basically uncomplicated personification of certain masculine virtues. Others, like as Joe Smith (*Son of the Tree*) or Barch (*Gold and Iron*) undergo dramatic revelations. They live though their stories handicapped by ignorance of their actual situations, and even their own motivations. Both nourish unrealistic romantic illusions similar to Aillas's infatuation with Tatzel. But they don't have inner darkness. Nice discriminations might be made about certain middle-period heros, but the inner darkness theme returns in force in the late work, with Glawen, Jaro and Myron.

As suggested above, Glawen's inner darkness is implicit. Vance never presents it as such, but to the extent Araminta's cause is unjust, to just such an extent its absolutist champion is also. It is notable that the result for Glawen is total and tranquil success and happiness. Since his happiness depends on Wayness, and since Wayness is also a Chartist, and since the Chartists win, this is perhaps no more than a lightly sardonic hint to the effect that nothing succeeds like success.

*A nice example would be Farr, of *The Houses of Iszm*. He is neither sympathetic nor the opposite. He is on stage more than any other character but does not seem more important, per se, than Oman Bosht, K. Pench or the Thord. He is a vehicle into a situation not an object of vessel of experience. This cold treatment is closer to classical literature than to contemporary genre, the latter often leaning on vicarious gratification. Recall also how the warm-hearted Norma Vance rescued Akady the Mentor (*Trullion*) from hanging, the fate reserved for him in her husband's early drafts.

Jaro is not like Glawen. Vance dilates to an unusual extent upon his inner life, which is rife with contradictions and unusual pressures, eventually leading to Jaro becoming a fratricide—in spite of himself of course, and his situation is somewhat similar to Lulu Enright's.

Myron Tany is a different case again. He seems neither mired in a clear-cut yet compromising situation, like Glawen, nor does Vance dilate upon his inner life. He is presented as laconically as Glawen, and his destiny seems even less imbricated in the life of society than Jaro's, who begins as a nimp (a person choosing not to take part in the life of society) and whose adventures are strictly personal, unlike Glawen's which are tied to the destiny of a planet. Myron's story includes no culminating and liberating adventure, such as Jaro lives on Fader. His story seems to be a disconnected series of trivial events in which he is a bland and often reluctant participant.

But the popular idea *Ports of Call* lacks a structure is a wonderful artistic deception. Myron, in fact—and this is the point that needs making here—is the ultimate version of Vance's *ur* character, the protagonist fraught with inner darkness. Myron's darkness has several facets. I will not trace arguments I have made before,* except the one which demonstrates the point most clearly.

The inner darkness of Vance's early characters has the characteristic consequence of wreaking, or almost wreaking, their romantic success. Myron's romantic life is wreaked not once but twice. Like everything else in *Ports of Call* this is presented so lightly that it is hard to even sense it on first reading.

The two events in question are complementary. In the first case Myron goes farther into horror than any other Vance hero, when he deliberately murders not a random person, but his potential soul mate. This is not only horrific but truly tragic because it is, in a certain sense, inevitable. Myron's inner darkness is not a momentary self-indulgent weakness as it was for Mervyn Gray, not an illusion like Lulu's, not something he is aware of but fights against as did Robert Malloy, not something thrust upon an unformed child like Robert Struve, not a frank choice as for Paul Gunther. If anything Myron is most like Robert Struve, but he has suffered nothing terrible, and though young is not a child. The tragedy of Myron's case, its inevitability, is because Myron is not good, though he might have been. Indeed, he should have been. Myron was healthy, loved, well cared for. His selfishness, his narrow perspective, is the root of evil in its pure form: Adam biting the apple. Myron is Paul Gunther without criminal aspirations; his 'evil' is banal. It is the sin the wage of which is death—in this case the death of the girl in the Glad Song Tavern.

To put this another way, Myron is a young Winged Being; he wants to taste life but is not awake to what life is. He is therefore blind to the reality of other people, how they, like himself, are, at least initially, Elders of the Hub, each placed at the nexus of a private infinity. I mean that for each person the adventure of consciousness begins as a point in the center of a mysterious cosmic spectacle. But in reality there are no private infinities. Maturity is the realization

that the cosmic spectacle is the sum of an infinite number of individual dramas, which interact in real, not imaginary or illusory ways. We all live in the same world; despite the secret rooms in our souls, we impinge upon one another.

The young Winged Being arrives on the terrible planet Terce, a symbol of the ultimate degradation of man by man. There he meets, and destroys, his soul mate. I insist that the girl at the Glad Song tavern is Myron's soul mate because she is a his exact female counterpart, and the project of their parting together is explicitly evoked. Myron, however, as Schwatzenale affirms, is a cynic and so, unfortunately, is the girl—though she is more 'prematurely disillusioned' than properly cynical. Both, however—particularly the girl—have aspirations which would carry them out of cynicism, and much farther, as Myron eventually begins to be carried.

Myron's second wreaked romance involves Tibbet. It begins at the port of call immediately following Terce, and its denouement is achieved at the last port of call, just before the return to Myron's home planet at the end of the story. Just as in the first case Myron does not realize he had met his soul mate, with Tibbet he does not realize he has not. He kids himself pathetically about a girl who has none of Tatzel's appealing elan, flickers of which illuminated the soul of the girl of the Glad Song Tavern. Tibbet, to the contrary, is a pampered and self-absorbed little hoyden, as Vance makes clear at each point. Myron misses this altogether—as does the reader, so powerfully does Vance present the illusion of the appetizing female. At port of call after port of call Myron gather's presents for Tibbet, and the failure of the romance is all the more pathetic—in spite of it's high-comedy treatment—in contrast to the profound tragedy of the first.*

When Myron returns to the *Çlicca* in the last lines of the story, he is a changed man. He is now a true Winged Being. He has somewhere to go and a reason to go there, even if he does not clearly know where and how, or even if the quest is ultimately hopeless. The goal of the Winged Being, we may say, is lurulu, that which makes and calls us on to our destiny.



* The reader should not suppose me to mean that the Glad Song/Tibbet structure is the structure of 'Ports of Call'. It is only one aspect of a marvellous structural articulation.



* I have detailed this matter in COSMOPOLIS #57: *How to Praise Lurulu*, page 8.

UP WITH UPFIELD!*

Comparison is odious, but Arthur Upfield has been more often compared to Jack Vance than any other writer. Vance himself urges us to read him. "Run" he advises, "do not walk, to your nearest library!" Vance also claims that reading Upfield is the best way to learn about Australia.

Of these things I have heard for years. It was, however, only the generosity of VIE subscriber Richard Heaps which actually got me reading Upfield. How? Richard did more than recommend him; he offered to give away his supernumerary volumes, and I accepted.

To quote Richard:

Upfield was born an Englishman, in 1888. Having failed his exams, in 1910 his father packed him off to Australia, commenting that he would never make enough money to get back. Upfield became a swagman, working as boundary rider, stockman and dog-stiffener. He also served at Gallipoli. As a camel rider working a rabbit fence in Western Australia Upfield discussed a novel he was writing, "The Sands of Windee", with a stockman named Snowy Rowles. It involved a foolproof method for destroying a body. Snowy was so impressed he put the method to the test, by murdering three men. Unfortunately the method was not as foolproof as he thought, and Snowy was hanged. The publicity made Upfield a household word, and he was able to move to the city and write full time.

Upfield wrote 29 mysteries featuring Detective Inspector Napoleon Bonaparte (Bony to his friends), a half-aboriginal detective. The stories are set in Australia, from the 1930s through the 1960s. Bony's tracking skills and aboriginal knowledge allow him to 'finalize' all his investigations.

In Australia Bony is as famous as Sherlock Holmes.†

How is Upfield like Vance? He achieves much atmospheric vividness, and his narrative has a compelling quality—but the two authors are hardly alone in such qualities, rare though they may be, particularly for readers hampered by what have been called my 'imposing standards'. Though the important similarities are elsewhere, let us nonetheless begin at the surface. Upfield, for example, has a Vance-like feeling for landscape and light, and one occasionally comes across descriptions which might have been penned by the latter:

[. . .] the sky swiftly being painted with bars of red, green and indigo blue.

The Bone is Pointed, Scribner, p177

Or, if they do not evoke Vance's style, they recall his antic metaphors, such as sun as sick animal:

The sun was a rusty cannon-ball embedded in the western celestial wall.

Venom House, Collier, p190

[. . .] the bluebush plain surrounding Carie wore a dress of orange and purple, for the setting sun had drawn before its face a mantle of

smoky crimson bordered along its topmost edge with ribbons of gold and pale green.

Winds of Evil, Hinkler books, p108

Upfield also has a penchant for certain colorful and less common but distinctly vancian words or phrases:

"You go in the front of the River Hotel, and I'll snaffle him when he comes out by the back."

Bony and the Black Virgin, Pan, p10

Bonapart was walking with a loping spring. . .

Bony and the Kelly Gang, Collier, p8

Having given the customary salutation, Bony asked his fellow toper how his day had gone.

Sinister Stones, Scribner, p127

A great day eventuated for everyone, excepting Mrs Jones who watched her provender and liqueur being distributed in a grand party. . .

Bony and the Kelly Gang, Collier, p176

Upfield also uses certain common words in a vancian manner:

"Now for a nice slice of turkey, flanked by a slice of Cork Valley ham?"

Ibid, p165

[. . .] put him down in the 'Back of Beyond', and he would die. . .

Ibid, p8

Like Vance, Upfield's dialogue is an important and successful aspect of his work. It is often wry vancian:

"...Boss, what are going to do?"

"Read a love romance on the verandah, and take an occasional sip of canned beer," replied the Manager, and Young Col appealed to his fellow slave.

"What d'you know?"

"Between tending the pump engine and mending the saddles, I'll turn the pages for him and help him bend his elbow."

"You do that. We mustn't let him overtax his strength."

The Will of the Tribe, Scribner, p63

Bony, like so many Vance characters, uses high speech, and can make surprisingly vancian statements such as this refusal of an offer of company from officer Mawson in *Venom House* (page 200):

"The solemnity of the occasion dictates solitude. . ."

Some of his jokes, to say nothing of his use of exclamation points for question marks, are even eerily Vance's:

"[. . .] Are you a native of these parts?"

"What, me!" Bisker exploded. "Me a native of this miserable, fog-cramped, frost-deadened country! Why, I come from west of Cobar where people are civilized [. . .]"

The Devil's Steps, Scribner, p60

Many of the stories feature animal characters; dogs, but more often cats, birds and, in the case of *The Will of the Tribe*, a ram trained to butt people into doorways. Here is a particularly vancian turn of phrase from a scene in which the aborigine ranch-hand, 'Captain', who taught "Mister Lamb"

* This article is dedicated to Richard Heaps, who, to my surprise and chagrin, died on September 23, 2007

† These remarks, which I have excerpted and slightly edited, were posted by Richard Heaps on the Vance posting board in August 2006.

his tricks but now seeks to escape the results:

[Captain dodged into the safety of an interior] knowing that Mister Lamb, after repeated expulsions, dare not enter. Mister Lamb, however, was smelling victory, and was blind to edict.

Ibid, p162

Such parallels seem to indicate a stylistic affinity. But, for all the parallels mentioned, Upfield's style is as personal and distinct as Vance's. The similarities stem not from some common practice but from something more profound: a community of attitude. Arthur Upfield, one cannot help feeling, was an amiable and kindly person. Vance also is amiable, perhaps in a manner more masked or convolute. Folly moves them irresistibly to laughter but never to disgust, censure or despair. Upfield, an observer of human frailty, has, though in a less obvious way, something of Vance's famous 'cynicism'—take Bony's apparent indifference to the shocking and cold-blooded murder of officer Rice in *The Devil's Steps*. This combination of warm and cool generates, for example in the above extract, the impulse to swap out a word like 'training'—a non-verbal process which imprints behaviors on an irrational animal—in favor of 'edict'—a law spoken out to humans. This is warm in its anthropomorphizing but also cold, because edicts are neither easy nor charming. It is not a matter of style but of stance, or attitude.

Upfield and Vance are animal lovers. The coolly tranquil quality of the following observation is baffled by a surprising capacity for empathy characteristic of Vance:

Joe nodded and blew cigar smoke at the cats. They objected, and one jumped lightly to Bony's shoulder where it settled and purred.

The Mystery of Swordfish Reef, Scribner, p204

'Objection', on the one hand, as if it were a matter of argument or anger, and a 'light' jump and purring on the other, so nicely illustrating that it is neither. This is the sort of delight to which Vance constantly treats his readers.

Our authors also love children; the following passage, though not in Vance's voice, is exceedingly vancian:

* Compare *The View from Chickweed's Window*:

Lulu approached the kitten on hands and knees, stroked the soft black back. The kitten paraded back and forth, carrying its tail like a battle standard. . . . From the corner of her eye, Lulu glimpsed motion, a flicker of dark blue and green.

Professor Chickweed had come from the house. He crossed the yard and tentatively approached the fence, limping as he walked.

"Hello," said Lulu primly.

"Hi." He chirruped to the kitten. "Come here, you fool cat."

The kitten paid him no heed. Lulu lifted him and carried him to the fence.

Professor Chickweed seemed even thinner and paler at close range. "What's his name?"

"Purr." He took the cat. "Stupid animal. You're not supposed to go in that yard, do you hear?"

"Cats don't mind very well," said Lulu. "I had a big tabby cat, but I couldn't bring it here. It had quarantines."

Professor Chickweed glanced at her sideways. "It had what?"

"Quarantines. It's some kind of—something. I couldn't bring it here on account of it."

"I never heard of it."

"I never did before either. Rip seemed very healthy too."

Professor Chickweed gave Lulu a swift and careful scrutiny. "Who are you?"

It has a complexity and depth absent from Upfield, but the enthusiasm for the small doings of little beings is alike.

[Bony] met Mister Lamb the following morning [. . .] he was made aware of this animal by being bunted gently against his leg. Little Hilda then informed him that Mister Lamb requested a cigarette, and she was enumerating Mister Lamb's virtues and vices when she was called to the schoolroom by her mother.*

The Will of the Tribe, Scribner, p30

A man 'made aware' of an animal who 'requests', a child who 'enumerates' 'virtues and vices'; this sort of vocabulary has inspired commentators on Vance to call his language 'archaic', 'baroque' or 'formal'. But such usage is not a matter of style at all. It is the expression of an attitude, at once analytical and tender.

Upfield also has a soft spot for debonair folly; here is a passage surprisingly vancian in its concerns and even its tone:

Johnno was from Java. For several seasons he had worked underwater as a number-one diver, and when paralyses torn into him one afternoon, he decided to quit diving and run a car service. The service consisted of one old car, but in transporting people to and from the aerodrome, and the stores, he prospered surprisingly. His specialty was conveying gentlemen to Dampier's Hotel.

Precisely at seven, he appeared at the post office to pick up Mr. Dickenson and Napoleon Bonapart. He stopped with complaining tyres, agilely alighted and opened the door for his passengers, smiling as though they were his dearest friends. He was small and electrical, and he wore khaki drill shirt and shorts with an air of naïve grandeur.

"There is no need for abnormal speed, Johnno," remarked Mr. Dickenson as he took his seat. His worn clothes were less conspicuous against the upholstery of the car, but given a top-hat to crown his head he would have been the President of France. The car swept into high speed, and Johnno lounged over the back of the front seat to converse with his passengers and steer with one hand.

"As long as the wheels stay on we may arrive," remarked Bony.

"Arrive!" echoed Johnno. "I always arrive. Peoples say; Johnno you arrive at nine o'clock, two o'clock, any ole time, and I arrive. Peoples like to arrive. I like to arrive. We all arrive."

"Then keep on the road," Advised Mr. Dickenson.

The off-side wheels were gouging into the soft earth off the narrow strip of macadamized roadway, and Johnno brought the car to the path prepared for it, and laughed. Sweeping past the southern boundary of the airport, with its control tower and hangars and white boundary markers, they were running over a natural earth road of the North-West. The road skirted the dry tidal flats of Dampier Creek, the surface almost white and powdered with the dust which rose like belching smoke behind the car. When the track turned suddenly into the scrub and the ground was sandy and red, the "smoke" was rising high about the trees so that anyone in Broom chancing to look out would know that Johnno would presently arrive, barring accidents.

It was quite a good road for the North-West, and safe at ten miles an hour. All Johnno had to do was to keep the wheels in the twin ruts made by motor traffic, but at thirty miles an hour this was somewhat difficult. Kangaroos leisurely hopped across in front of the car. Bush turkeys ran, then stopped to look their astonishment, and the several species of cockatoos shrieked their defiance at Johnno and his car.

By the time they reached the big red gums bordering Cuvier Creek, Mr. Dickenson was grim, Bony was inclined to keep his eyes shut, and Johnno was still laughing.

The Widows of Broom, Scribner, p57

Upfield gets as much mileage out of this particular theme as Vance. In *Venom House* an equally jubilant sample graces the first chapter:

The one point in favor of the service car was that it did have four wheels. It must have come from somewhere, and could expected to go, if only for a yard or two.

Venom House, Collier, p1

Mike Falla, the driver, is a different sort of menace than Johnno. On page 3 we get:

...Speed increased. Each successive bend was taken by the complaining tyres, and at each bend Bony anticipated disaster. "One day you will meet an oncoming vehicle," he remarked.

At the end of the run, on page 5, the car, which has no brakes, is brought to a halt, in another scene which might have been imagined by Vance:

...the car was finally stopped by being run mid-way up a steep bank. There it was held by a block of wood thrust behind the rear wheel by a small girl.

On page 198 Bony wonders if the Mike Falla has repaired his brakes. Mike replies:

"Come off it, Inspector. A bloke's not a real driver if he has to use brakes. . ."

This sort of humor—the contrast of imminent 'disaster' and 'remarking', a careening car and a small girl—and the jubilation of Falla's attitudes, is vancian. Upfield and Vance are often humorists in the same vein. Take another sample of the by-play between Bony and Mike Falla; this time Bony is driving, and they are hindered by a heard of cattle which has strayed onto the road:

...A large bull appeared, tawny and disinclined to a siesta. Seeing the car, it began to paw the earth high over its back.

"Nine hundred pounds dressed," estimated Mike. "He's going to spring a leak in the radiator if he gets going. . ."

Ibid, p 114

Both authors squeeze surprising and even contradictory things out of situations, relishing cool attitudes and colorful phrases. To things often considered banal, trivial or absurd they give much play, treating the reader to a diversity of microscopic dramas, sometimes for the sheer joy of it—like this aside to Mawson, who is "thinking of listening to his favorite radio session", on page 200 of *Venom House*:

"I do hope it is not entertainment by morons for morons, Mawson. I shall spend my evening in pursuits more elevating." "Such as. . ."

"Communing with the stars. Meditating upon the weakness of man and the wiles of woman [. . .]"

These similarities are already much, but there is another as great. Bony occasionally qualifies himself as an 'amateur anthropologist'. Upfield's 'anthropology' is mostly confined to the Australian scene—an admittedly promising venue—but Vance's anthropological exploitation of the entire earth, plus a galaxy of planets, would seem broader. Upfield's anthropology, however, has a bent and color surprisingly Vance-like, and Vance's, like Upfield's, is fundamentally

conditioned by his own national history.

Here might be mentioned what are surely Australian influences on Vance; the 'churinga stones' of the aborigines as models for the 'Ioun stones' of *Rhialto the Marvellous*, and the aboriginal treasure houses as models for the 'kachembas' of *The Domain of Koryphon*. * But beyond such perhaps fortuitously common bits of anthropological exotica, these authors share a community of interest in cultures which clash, or intersect in interestingly ill-fitting ways. In Upfield's work this is characteristically, but not exclusively, expressed in the contrast of 'wild aborigines', 'semi-civilized' aborigines, half-castes and whites—particularly the 'squatters' who raise livestock on the 'stations' (another term Vance certainly gleaned from the Australian vocabulary). Take this heideggerian† passage:

The loss of the their tribe's treasure was devastating. Minus their magic stones, their precious heirlooms of human hair, their ancient dilly-bags, and the all-powerful-with-magic pointing bones, they were divested of family, of tribe, of origin, almost of being. As Bony had said, without command of their treasure they were as nothing. There sat the whitefeller law. Death looked at each from that pistol, and now all protection from the white and the black law was withdrawn from them. They were naked, defenseless against their enemies that had been kept at bay by generations of forebears with and by that hoarded treasure.

It was a body blow that Bony hated to deliver, and not for an instant would he have done so, had it not been for Linda Bell. Those shuttered eyes, the stubborn minds, were barriers not to be surmounted by bribes, threats, persuasion, argument, or even physical punishment.

"I have other pointing bones," snarled Murtee. "I kill you. Short time, long time, I kill you."

Bony puffed cigarette smoke, lifted his upper lip in a magnificent sneer.

"Wind, Murtee. Strong-feller wind. Pointing bones I took, more powerful than your other pointing bones. I point the bones back at you. You die slow time, long time. Then you-all die."

The Bushman Who Came Back, Collier, p134

Such plays on alleged cultural imperatives might be nothing more than plot points but Upfield carries them beyond cultural attributes, into and through the realm of race, to a place where they becomes hauntingly vancian.

His mother's blood was tingling in his neck and the roots of his hair; his father's blood was flowing strongly through his heart. The aboriginal half of him was urging him to flee from the unseen terror; the white half of him was holding him to that corner, controlling his limbs and his mind.

The Devil's Steps, Scribners, p210

When Bony, "man of two races", goes duck hunting with a friend, the conversations turns to the charm of the Australian bush. His friend sees the aboriginal point of view, which Bony qualifies:

"I don't wonder that the abos would rather starve than go and live in a government settlement and fatten on plenty"

* One might also mention the particular qualities of the relationships of Land Barons to the domain uldras, and retent to domain tribes, which, if not actually based on the Australian scene, are certainly vastly more similar to it than anything from the American or Algerian scene, so often, and erroneously, evoked.

† Heideggerian because it equates culture with being.

"Although they have lived in Australia, they have never possessed it; Australia has ever possessed them. All my life I have had to offer stern resistance, and my father was white. There are times when I sweat, fighting against the siren voice of this land we call Australia.

Bony and the Black Virgin, Pan, p136

Upfield's Australia is like those planets in Vance (most explicitly in *The Rapparee*) which re-make the men who colonize them. This might be no more than an amusing, or at best a poetic notion; but in Vance it is the portal to a labyrinth of interactions among men, culture, geography and history, leading towards a mystery of consciousness and identity—Efriam merging back into his Rune identity, or Schaine Madduc discovering her deep alliance to her birth home though the carapace of a cosmopolitan education. Upfield does not develop this as extensively, but express the same thing:

... "Nine years ago a child sought your protection. She was never initiated; she was adopted by you. Today she is almost fully assimilated. Her dress sense is excellent. Her poise is very good. Her conversation is intelligent and lucid. And she would just run off with the Tribe when told? Her explanation, please."

"Well, it wasn't exactly like that. When I taxed her about it, she wouldn't say anything. Then she said she didn't know why. Eventually she confessed that the lubras* beckoned and she had felt something inside compelling her to run after them. . .

The Will of the Tribe, Scribner, p32

Bony's aboriginal blood provides sensitivities and capacities a white man does not enjoy. In exchange he must never fail in an investigation because his pride, which is crucial to the half-breed—ever apt to fall back into the bush—maintains him in the white man's world through transcendent success upon the white man's terms. Should he fail he would 'lose himself'. Occasionally Bony does give in to the primitive impulse, tearing off his clothes and attacking an enemies with his fingernails. He then feels a special shame which can be understood only by other half-breeds.

Upfield handles this sort of thing adeptly, but fundamentally it is mechanical, and might remain an essentially sterile plot lever, perhaps a tantalizing notion, were it not an avenue beyond itself—a way to articulate the experience of pride, fear, ambition, courage. It does not contain, though it does point to, the inspired nucleus which illuminates the stories from within, as in Vance an invisible world where quasi-mystical forces—geography, race, history, culture—interact with the ordinary world in ways which quiver on the edge of metaphor.

This is a typical example:

Bony heard a door close beyond the passage to the kitchen, and assumed that Mrs. Leeper had gone to bed. The clock on the dining-room mantel softly ticked away Time which he ignored. Not at once, but slowly, the house became itself, a personality freed now that the humans beings had retired. And slowly that personality grew in power, slowly made itself felt by the alert Napoleon Bonapart.

Venom House, Collier, p232

This sort of mysticism, as in Vance, permeates the work.

* lubra: female aborigine

The 'Spirit of the Land', evoked below, is called a 'Being'. But it is not meant as an actual demiurge, nor yet is it mere metaphor:

"Call me a primitive, and I shall not mind. I believe in the Being which rules this Land, who watches from behind every tree and every sandhill. Respect it, and one lives to grow old. Ignore it, flout it, and it will first send you mad and then slay you. Every aborigine knows and respects it.

"This Spirit of the Land is subject to many moods. It can be benign, jealous, vengeful, and it has a sense of humour. It assisted the murderers of Dickson and Brandt by giving them plenty of time before the first body was discovered, and more time before the second lay exposed. Doubtless it has been sniggering at the efforts of every hurrying policeman, and of every white man who is alien to itself, although familiar with the physical contours of the Land it rules [. . .] It will not snigger at me, but it will try my patience, because I am with it and of it though my material forebears."

Bony and the Black Virgin, Pan, p61

Bony takes it for granted that the aboriginal techniques of telepathy and bone-pointing are matters of fact. But Upfield's treatment of such things is neither mundane, nor polemical, nor yet perfervid. He strikes the right note, that note so often struck by Vance, which fills the real world with a tone intimating an infinite and mysterious Cosmos. Upfield, then, can write a murky passage, such as the following, which, though superficially nothing like Vance, has a similarly compelling essence:

"Strong or weak, the human mind cannot shut out extraneous influences, many of which are inherited from our prehistoric ancestors. Fear of the unknown—the dark. Fear of nakedness—the light. For illustration, supposing I took up that pressure lamp and held it close to our eyes and read all your little secrets, would you not fear the light?"

Ibid, p52

One is reminded of *Domains of Koryphon*, when Kurgech mesmerizes Moffamides on the palga, using uldra magic. But that is only an obvious parallel. A more profound parallel is the 'inner darkness' of the mystery protagonist. Both authors create protagonists in which darkness lurks.

Here it might be as well to comment on how Upfield handles the question of racial prejudice. Again and again Bony insists upon the folly of regarding aborigines as foolish or unsophisticated. This is counterbalanced by Upfield's respectful, even admiring, but not blinkered attitude towards aboriginal culture, or how it is doomed by the white man's culture. This complex of attitudes, though better than multiculturalism, is not alien to it. More interesting therefore is Bony's attitude towards prejudiced directed at himself. Always elegant and amiable, Napoleon Bonapart is indulgent towards bigotry. For him it is never a question of how foul prejudice is in others, but how important it is for him, not to overcome his own reaction (through indifference, pride, reason), but to overcome bigoted reaction in others though the force of his soul—his charm, his intelligence, his strength.

To make a white man or woman forget his social status and the stain of this skin was always to him a wonderful triumph. It was the eternal eagerness to be regarded with equality which had produced in him the exception of the rule that all who have the

aborigines' blood in their veins must in the end go back to the life and conditions of the bush nomads.

The Winds of Evil, Hinkler Books, p210

Bony is not working to correct the fault of the bigoted—and thus help them—but to help himself, to give himself a personal satisfaction and maintain his own self-esteem—not as reflected in the eyes of others but in his own.

One might object that Upfield, a white man, has merely concocted a Australian uncle Tomism which disregards the true power and evil of race prejudice. Upfield, however, has it right; no matter how powerful and effective in the world prejudice may be, resentment and confrontation—the strategy of the wind—are simply not as effective as the strategy of the sun: warm good-will, and a true and healthy pride based on real virtue and accomplishment.

There is a third similarity, of a different sort but no less profound. I have not come across the vancian term 'urbanite', in Upfield but surely he would endorse it:

"The rabbit'll beat any germ, any man, anything," Bony said with conviction. "What the people in the cities and towns cannot grasp is the immensity of this land mass called Australia, and another thing they cannot grasp is that the Australian rabbit has been fighting droughts, sun, eagles and foxes, poison baits, and George Barbys for a hundred years, and still winning."
"Too right they have," Barby agreed, earnestly. . . "Let 'em multiply, I says."

Death of a Lake, Scribners, p56

Like Vance Upfield favors rugged individualism:

They were true men and women who came out of Ireland and Scotland and England to conquer a new world with little except tireless energy and unfaltering courage. They were generous to their own and rebels against Caesar. What they won, they held or, losing, won again. They gave to their children their all—their possessions and their spiritual attributes—and left an example of independence today either ignored or scorned by those desiring to lean on the state from the cradle to the grave.

Sinister Stones, Scribner, p172

Like Vance Upfield relishes the manly camaraderie of hard drinking—witness the last lines of *The Devil's Steps*, where three men set off to do some sport fishing:

Bagshott broke into delighted laughter. The car rushed into unlawful speed down the fog-masked highway.
"This is going to be a real buck's party," he shouted. "Do we stop at the first pub?"

Both are 'curmudgeons', given to fustigating faddish folly and fatuousness, and regretting the virtues of yore:

The steps were of stone, and the door, like the front and all the room doors, had been made when craftsmen built real houses.

Venom House, Collier, p227

The Hundred year-old American clock, infinitely more reliable than the modern product, whirred and bonged the midnight hour.

Madman's Bend, Pan, p10

In Upfield there is repeated complaint about taxes and free-loading politicians. As Vance worked many years as seaman and carpenter, so Upfield put in his time as ranch hand. Both, therefore, are uncompromising towards what are today called 'bleeding heart liberals'—ideologically conditioned intellectuals unused to the shape of the real world though hands-on experience. These dangerous maniacs sometimes inspire Upfield to sardonic excess:

Poor Marvin Rhudder! Poor sick Marvin! Marvin Rhudder so needful of tact and understanding. The poor man, always hunted by the police, always hounded into court and then into prison, as they hounded those poor desperate convicts sent out from England only because they stole a rabbit to save themselves from starving to death. Vote for the Government that won't hang! Vote for the Mercy Party!

Bony and the White Savage, Angus & Robertson, p176

Bony himself, though apolitical and somewhat effete, exemplifies many of these characteristics. His millennial techniques—tracking, patience, cordiality—trump the technocratic methods of the crass, brutal urban policeman, with his fingerprinting kit. As for individualism:

". . . I shall succeed because I have no respect for rules and regulation, and, when engaged on a murder hunt, I have no scruples and no ethics."

Sinister Stones, Scribner, p135

No scruples or ethics, but he never neglects to gain the eager cooperation of all men of good will. The passages continues thus:

"You're telling me," growled Irwin.
"I am reminding you," Bony said blandly. "Tired of gallivanting over the scenery with me, Irwin?"
"No, I'm liking it."

Upfield expresses analogous sentiments, at that level which falls between the historical and the personal, namely the political:

"It is known that the Indonesians claim Dutch New Guinea as part of their Empire, and it is also known that subversion and infiltration has been going on in that part of New Guinea.

"These Asians are confident they will eventually gain Dutch New Guinea though the Western Nations' passion for compromise or appeasement, which of course is always accepted as weakness, and that having joined this territory, they will proceed to work for the other half of the island governed by Australia. Following success there, they will demand, with grounds for hope, that the northern half of Australia will be surrendered to them. These are the views set down by Captain, who has as much right to record his opinions as any one of us.

"This time last year the Asians sent emissaries into this quarter of Australia to make contact with the aborigine tribes to prepare the way for an important agent. Their job was to promise liberation by driving the white man out of throwing open the white man's stores. Thought by the great majority of aborigines to contain unlimited supplies of food and tobacco [. . .]"

The Will of the Tribe, Scribner, p207

One might be surprised how apropos these attitudes, expressed in 1962, sound today, were real artists not keyed

into the Eternal. Upfield, like Vance, is no multiculturalist and no relativist—two isms going out of style as fast as a ravening reality is overtaking us in 2007. For Upfield, aboriginal culture is at once innocent and evil, happy and stifling. The aborigines live in ‘paradise’, at the price of savage customs, oppressive to the individual—though not the chiefs, who always have a bevy of lubras to tickle their toes. But Upfield, like Vance, is also critical of ‘civilization’. The indictment in *The Bone is Pointed* is even harsh. The aborigines are non-the-less stopped from pointing bones, maiming lubras caught in adultery, or buying and selling them. Such white interdiction of black mischief contributes strongly to the happy endings, suggesting to the alert reader that the doom of black culture is perhaps not a tragedy.

I’ll mention a final parallel. Upfield shares with Vance a penchant for the extravagant and melodramatic, for disguises and Victorian spookiness. Upfield particularly delighting in spooky scenes where characters search for each other in dark houses, or creep about silently in the forest at night. In *The Widows of Broom*, which is almost more of a horror story than a murder mystery, ex-circus performers play horrific and inexplicable tricks amid scenes of hysterical madness. In a different manifestation of this taste for the extravagant, in *The Bushman Who Came Back* Upfield paints desert mirages and a sky raining falling stars to create a landscape almost as confounding as the locale of *The Men Return*.

Such exaggeration, or dramatic fantasia, is latent even in the mundane scenes, however, for Upfield’s picture of life is bigger than life. His stories are like plays where colorfully costumed players cry out and make large gestures to ensure the drama reaches all the way up to the peanut gallery, where his readers are sitting. This is an artistic practice and wisdom common to a older time, gone today, and of which Vance is another practitioner.

This dark side indicated, it must be stressed that, above all, Upfield’s books radiate warmth, good humor and even love. One feels oneself in delicious company.

So much for similarities. Among the difference is the similarity of one Upfield novel to the next. Bony is always the hero. Australia is always the setting. Murder is always the crux. Often the plot and characters are confoundingly similar, and certain types appear regularly: the no-more-than-competent but good-natured bush policeman; the big, hard-drinking, hard smoking rough-neck with a heart of gold (the ‘hard doer’)—there are also females of this type; the used up swagman; the young and lovely semi-civilized lubra.

No complaint! as Upfield might write. It is always so beautifully handled. I join my own unreserved recommendation to the recommendations of Jack Vance and Richard Heaps. But I can’t give you my books. They are already in the hands of other friends.



A TRIBUTE TO RICHARD HEAPS BY HIS SISTER

Richard was a man who pursued his passions and lived a rich life as his own tastes directed. He not only enjoyed reading, but also loved to travel. His passports are filled with entries but Australia was where his heart was. He was able to go there on eleven separate trips, the Northern Territory and the Great Barrier Reef were his favorite. He had never been to the cities except to arrive and depart. He would rent a car and drive hundreds of miles to “the roads *never* traveled” with his camping gear, beer and smokes.

On many occasions Richard would hire a plane or boat and be dropped off on a deserted island with his “gear” to explore for over a week or more, until an arranged pick up time, spending an hour to get the perfect picture of a flower or hiking up cliffs to find the right angle of a waterfall and end up spending the night with whatever he had in his backpack because he discovered a paradise he couldn’t leave.

He wouldn’t just travel to the country, he had to have a reason to go, like discovering the worlds largest bar (somewhere in Australia, I think) and going there to become a card carrying member, and of course meeting a few more life long friends who he would run into again on future trips.



Once while going to school and living in Mexico he was taking a trip through a jungle, exploring on his

way, to meet up with his ride back. He said he stayed three days enjoying a monkey colony, taking pictures and watching interactions with each “family” and the hierarchy of the monkey city. This was when he was young, back from Viet Nam, and just starting his photographic experiences.

He has friends all over the world and I fear I will not be able to find them all to share his passing.

He worked for the Bureau of Reclamation for 28 years. In October 2006 he called me to say he had just decided on a retirement date of March 1, 2007 at age 55. He was so happy he was giggly. . . then, on Nov 12th, he called and said he had just been diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer. His plans to explore more of the world didn’t work out. We were both happy to be able to spend a year together at the end of his life. I had no idea how bad grief is, preparing myself for it all year. . . and discovering it really doesn’t soften the blow much. I am proud to be Richard’s sister and wish more of the world could have met him.

Carole Barnes

A GLIMMER OF MURIEL SPARK

I have just read *Loitering with Intent*, a novel from 1981. It is the only book by this authoress, celebrated for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brody*, which I have ever sampled. She is of the same generation as Vance, having been born in 1918.

Spark, similar in certain ways to Paul Auster, is infinitely superior—or rather Auster, apparently a Spark wannabe, is hopelessly inferior to his model. *Loitering with Intent* is a first person autobiographical account, ostensibly written thirty years later, of Fleur Talbot, an aspiring novelist. Fleur is grabbing for the gusto and relishing every minute of her life on the “literary fringe”, loving being “a woman and an artist” in London in 1949. The story itself is a giddy mixture of Aldous Huxley’s *Point Counter Point*, and Oscar Wilde’s *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*. Superficially a romp, rife with that ‘wicked wit’ so favored by the English, its pretensions to profundity constantly break the frothy surface in menacing shoals of papier-mâché rock. Fleur Talbot is a fictional avatar of Spark herself, a point the author drives home in much discussion of how her fiction is based on reality (it is, she explains, but not in any recognizable way).

Fleur’s first novel, which she is busy writing, is plagiarized by her employer, a man who turns out to have an uncanny resemblance to her fictional character. Fleur observes her employer to help write the book, while he tries to destroy it. In the end he suffers the same fate as the character (death by car accident). There is also much question of the biographies of Cardinal Newman and Benvenuto Cellini.

All of this—the kaleidoscopically recycled literary forms, the vortex of self-centeredness, the mish-mash of cultural reference—make of *Loitering With Intent* a post-modernist work. Spark’s real gift for ‘wicked wit’—which, however, wore thin for me a pretty quick—plays into this because nothing graces post-modernism like cynicism, and ‘wicked wit’ is its most palatable form.

The reason I discuss Spark in *Extant* is to compare her to Vance and, in that regard, at least as far as *Loitering* is concerned, she comes in a long second. This, it will be objected, is neither here nor there in the greater scheme of things, except that, once again, we are faced with a celebrated author (that’s *Dame* Muriel Spark to you, you insignificant plebeian you) who, compared to Vance, hardly deserves the label ‘writer’. Spark is certainly an artist, of a lower order—though not so utterly abysmal and offensive as Paul Auster—but this book is sophisticated trash, an object to be read, whose purpose is not to entertain but to reinforce the reader’s precious sense of belonging to the Clam Muffinish progressive cultural elite.

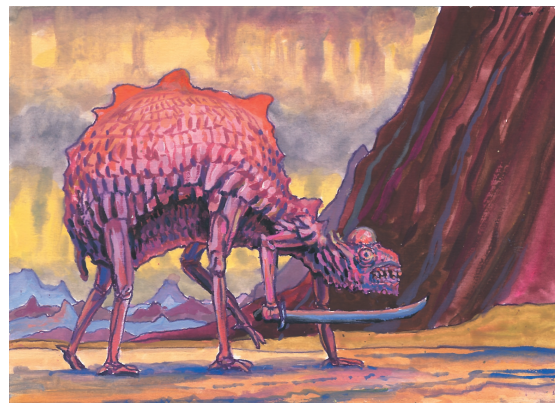
There is so much self-indulgent silliness in every aspect of *Loitering With Intent* that I despair of even discussing it. Spark can ‘write’ but she wasted her talent. She has a couple of insights into life but they are adolescent. The whole thing is like a puppet circus of mechanical dolls doing a ‘performance piece’. At the beginning Fleur seems to be a proud flauter of all common values—this is where the ‘wicked wit’ comes in. But by the end she seems as mired in foolishness as the rest of the characters. Why hang around

with the likes of Dottie and Wally? It can only be because her ‘story’ would not ‘advance’ unless she does; meanwhile the insidious pretence to some sort of limpidly obvious superiority subsists. The only character who gets her good housekeeping seal of approval, apart from the incontinent, screaming nonagenarian Edweena, is the obese Solly; but he does whatever Fleur wants (like helping her commit robbery) without asking questions, and never oversteps her special etiquette. At the end of the book, thirty years later, she moans her pain at his disappearance. That ‘cry of pain’ is about the only apparently heartfelt statement Fleur ever makes, but is she really pining? ‘Solly’ is apparently someone Spark knew in 1949, whose identity could be calculated by progressive Clam Muffins, and doing so would provide just that Clam Muffinish rush which the book is all about providing. Spark is ghoulish; feeding her old friends to her readers like a drug, but that is what the progressive elite is all about: cannibalism. They consume thier fellow men in contempt to bloat thier precious sense of superiority.

What’s in that for me, or any true reader? It is not only humanly but artistically repulsive.

The nice thing in *Loitering with Intent* is Spark’s *joie-de-vivre*, but that can’t take the place of a story, and even it won’t do, for the greatest source of Fleur’s gladness is being ‘a woman and an artist’ in 1949, as she repeats about four times. Why this is so wonderful is never explained but there is no need. It is the basic point of the book. Read: “how wonderful to be a Clam Muffin”.

When will we get our priorities in order? When we do, Spark will be an amusing little vale of pretentious wit in the history of 20th century literature, tucked in the shadow of a towering mountain: Jack Vance.



VIE DOCUMENT ARCHIVE

THE ENDING OF GOLD AND IRON

The issue arose in 1999 when, discussing writing and the handling of characters in stories, Jack Vance mentioned that the characters in *Gold and Iron* do not get married at the end. This was not as I recalled it, so we got out the book and checked; Jack was scandalized, and dealing with this issue become one of the first editorial problems slated for VIE correction—prior to any formal existence of the project.

Though I only recall Jack referring to the absurdity of this marriage because of cultural incompatibility, having read the EQ novels I now think that the 'darkness' factor may have played a roll in his thinking as well.

During the 'Oakland Work Festival' John Schwab discussed the question with Jack and they decided that the whole last chapter had been added by editors, so that that the solution was simply to cut that off. The book would then end with chapter 26, where Barch and his allies, escaping Magarak in their homemade ship, glimpse other ships:

"Those weren't Klau ships," said Barch thoughtfully.
"No, I guess not."
"I thought I saw some kind of emblem on the first one."
Tim hesitated. "I did too. But I think I was wrong. It couldn't be what I thought it was."
"United Nations emblem?"
"But it couldn't be."
"No. It couldn't be...Of course we were building space-ships, but—it's impossible."

Despite various possible objections such an ending is not absolutely implausible, but Alun Hughes (head of Textual Integrity) became convinced that Jack, for whatever reason, had written chapter 27, perhaps forced by a check waving publisher, and then he drove the whole foolish business from his mind. In the later part of 2001 we attacked the problem formally; it was resolved with certain slight alterations of chapter 27 and a cut at the end. The discussions have been saved in various documents, out of which I have constructed the document presented below.

We were trying to discover if it was Jack himself, or an editor, who had written the final section, what Jack originally had had in mind, and any indications of how or where he might have made changes to suit an editor, or where an editor himself might have made changes.

The published ending was this:

He returned to the terrace. Komeitk Lelianr still stood leaning back with her elbows on the balustrade. She was looking at him; she radiated an attraction, a new-physical force that impelled him towards her. He took a short step forward, halted. She looked at him with a curious expression neither inviting nor forbidding. Barch took a deep breath.

"Good-bye, Ellen."

"Good-bye, Roy."

He ran to the helicopter, jumped in. The pilot was reading a magazine.

"Let's go," said Barch.

The pilot stretched languidly. "Finish so soon?"

"Finish?" muttered Barch. "What do you mean 'finish?' There's

nothing in life that has a finish."

"You're beyond me there, mister."

"Let's go," said Barch shortly.

The pilot looked down the terrace. "That young lady is coming down this way."

Barch slowly stepped out of the cab. He saw that she was breathing very hard. Her mouth was firm, pale, tight. "Well?"

"I don't want you to leave."

"But—"

"Roy—it's taking a chance. I'm willing if you are."

He made no pretence of misunderstanding. "A big chance. You'll be cut off from your people."

"Perhaps, perhaps not. . .Are you afraid?"

Barch looked at her long seconds. Something warm broke inside him.

"No. I'm not afraid."

The following is my commentary on the last two thirds of chapter 27. Specific text commented is in italics, as is the commentary:

The helicopter landed on the terrace of dark blue glass. Barch jumped out. "I won't be too long," he told the pilot.

The pilot lit a cigarette. "Take your time; you're paying for it."

Barch walked slowly around the terrace. To his right was the rococo balustrade of blue and white striped glass; to the left rose the crystal walls apparently so transparent, so confusing to the eye. It was very familiar; but it looked small, like a scene remembered from childhood, and a little dreary.

He passed by the alcove which had housed Markel's air-boat. There was the boat, shining and glistening as if Barch and Claude Darran had only just finished polishing it.

He went on. There—on that very spot Claude Darran's body had lain. And there—he looked up. Approaching was a young Lekthwan, gold skin splendid in the sunlight. He wore black trousers, a soft black cloak and cap. Many times Barch had seen Markel in the same garb; it gave him a curious pang of timelessness.

The Lekthwan halted in front of Barch. "Why are you here?" he asked courteously.

Barch said, "I might ask the same of you." Same insufferable Lekthwan superiority, he thought. Somehow it had lost the power to do more than irritate him.

Here Barch is fully in character: belligerently patriotic, galled at his sense of inferiority.

The Lekthwan bowed slightly. "I am Acting Commissioner for Sector Commerce."

"Who is Commissioner?"

"There has been no full Commissioner since Tkz Maerkl-Elaksd."

Barch said slowly, "I came up for two reasons. I left some belongings here five years ago."

The Lekthwan frowned. "Incomprehensible...Five years ago Tkz Maerkl-Elaksd was in residence."

"That's correct, but it doesn't matter. The second reason is coming up now."

The Lekthwan turned. "The ship from home," he murmured. "Please excuse me; can you come some other day?"

"No," said Barch. He went to lean on the balustrade. . .Five years ago he had stood here watching a great vivid ball come rushing up to the terrace. *And just so had the ball locked to the landing stage, just so had a child run forth, just so had Romeitk Lelianr stepped out on the dark blue glass.*

Artful mirror of the opening scene of the book; surely Jack's. This final scene of confrontation was therefore intended in the original, non-marriage, conception?

There were changes. The child was a boy, and his skin was a pale clear gold. Komeitk Lelianr was quieter, thoughtful, though she looked little older. And Barch's heart had not been pounding then as it was now.

She saw Barch immediately; *indeed her eyes swept the terrace as if she were seeking him.*

This suggests that, since Komeitk wishes to repay her debt to Barch, she seeks him. She is prepared even to offer marriage, which accounts for her tension, but see next comment:

She stopped in mid-stride. Her mouth tightened; Barch saw her eyebrows and eyelashes move in a quick series of characterizations. She hesitated only an instant, then walked over to the balustrade. "I had not expected to see you here, Roy."

This phrase contradicts the above. Perhaps she is lying, or only means that though she looked for him, she did not expect to see him. Or she is being coy. Or it is a vestige of changing the text.

"I suppose not."

"You look very well...How long have you been home?"

"About two weeks. How about you?"

She spoke in a careful voice. "We made a fast voyage; eight months. The Lenape were able to work out a space-drive."

"We had no Lenape. We were all Earthmen."

"Oh? Then how did you find your way home?"

"By a very simple means. Perhaps it may strike you as primitive. After we left Magarak we searched the sky. In one direction, in only one direction could we expect to find familiar constellations: in the direction diametrically across the Sun from Magarak. We found Orion, very small, very faint. We started in that direction, and kept on going."

Vance all the way, suggesting that this is indeed part of an original ending.

"That's very ingenious...I was sure you would get home."

Barch smiled grimly. "I was never quite so sure."

She looked out into the warm air, hazy with afternoon vapor. "I feel I must explain to you—"

"Forget it," said Barch. "I know all about it. It wasn't your idea. The Lenape said, 'The crazy man is gone; now is a good time, we'll escape him and his mad ideas as well as the Klau,' and everybody thought it was a good idea."

"No," she said. "Not I."

"No. You kept your mouth shut. It was none of your concern, you told yourself. But you did have qualms. You hesitated. And they said, 'Hurry, are you coming or not?' And you went."

This also is a particularly vancian section; an expose of Komeitk's ambiguous feelings.

Her eyes were still searching the hazy distances. The little boy came up to her; absently she stroked his hair. "That's very close...I realized that I owed you my life, but on Magarak my life was worth nothing to me; and I owed you nothing. I realize now that I owe you my freedom, and now my life and freedom are very precious." She turned, met his eyes. Barch fascinatedly watched the shift of her eyebrows. "And I will pay, in whatever way I can."

Barch smiled. "What's the name of this characterization?"

Her mouth set angrily. "I mean it."

Here the by-play about characterizations is fairly convincing, but her turning to meet his eyes is less, so. We are being softened up for the plunge into marriage. But without the marriage it reads as determination to pay

her debt, and the coldness of 'Barch fascinatedly watched the shift of her eyebrows' comes out in full.

Barch shook his head. "You owe me nothing. My motives in protecting you, in trying to leave Magarak were completely selfish." "Nevertheless—I profited, and you lost. I must make adjustment."

"Adjustment?" He eyed her speculatively. "Exactly how do you mean, adjustment?"

"I can give you money."

Barch nodded. "I suppose you could."

She looked to where the young Acting Commissioner conferred with a tall majestic Lekthwan in a claret-red cloak.

Who is this tall majestic Lekthwan? Her guardian? Friend? Family member? Financé? That he is mentioned just before this offer suggest that the offer is made in spite of him.

"If you cared to come to Lekthwa—to study, or for curiosity—you would be the guest of myself and of my people for as long as you liked."

"No, thanks. I've had enough space-travel. I'm glad to be home."

Her skin coppered with blood. "This obligation weighs me down; I must rid myself of it!"

"Well, what's next on the list?"

She looked up full into his eyes. "If you want me, I will be your mate, your wife." The words seemed to push themselves through her lips.

I think that the original version contained this offer of marriage, but rather than it being presented as a secret wish, it was presented as a noble, though distasteful, sacrifice. Both these currents seem active here. The pro-marriage current is perhaps present in the exclamation point ('I must rid myself of it!') though this may just be vehemence, and the phrase itself seems anti-marriage. The vehemence may be linked to her making the offer despite Lekthwan cultural and social constraints; in her forcing herself to this act of conscience. 'She looked up full into his eyes' is pro-marriage, while 'The words seemed to push themselves through her lips' is anti-marriage. The original phrase therefore, was perhaps:

Her skin coppered with blood. "This obligation weighs me down; I must rid myself of it!"

"Well, what's next on the list?"

"If you want me, I will be your mate, your wife." The words seemed to push themselves through her lips.

But there may have been another introductory phrase to her offer, such as 'She looked up' or something with more color and suggestiveness such as: 'She looked up furtively'.

Barch grunted. "No thanks. Five years ago I learned the hard way. I sure did."

"That was Magarak, when I had no choice."

"What's the difference? If I wanted to marry, I'd want a wife, not a white elephant. We'd never be happy together. We don't think alike. You're contemptuous of my race. Here on Earth, we're learning to beat prejudice; you've got that still ahead of you."

To me (despite the apparent triteness) this is Vancian philosophy, and not text written by an editor. It is in line with the message of pro-Americanism that I spoke about in the Cunningham book. The Lekthwans are to American (or Western) whites, as whites are to African blacks. But Lekthwan superiority is a mixture of imaginary technological

advance over western technology (putting whites in the place of Africans, technologically) but it is also borrowed from aspects of Asian culture, which here are presented as superiority. Supporting this is Lekthuan yellow skin (carried to the point of gold) but the essence is Lekthuan hyper aestheticism — taken from the Japanese — and most particularly cultural immobility, a more general Asian characteristic. This is the basis of this line, and why it is so Vancian.

How would I feel married to a woman who's ashamed to introduce me to my own son?"

Komeitk Lelianr very deliberately turned to the little boy, spoke in Lekthwan. He turned, looked at Barch with a new look of wonder and awe. Barch patted his head. "Poor kid, there's no point dragging him into this mess. . . There's no mess anyway. Even on the improbable assumption that I loved and respected you, we have nothing in common. Our people have nothing in common. You've gained your plateau, you live beautiful lives. We're still working. I hope we never hit this plateau; I hope there's always enough tribulation and grief and confusion to keep us sweating and cursing each other."

This section is all anti-marriage.

He looked down at the little boy. "What's your name, young fellow?"

Komeitk Lelianr said hurriedly, "He doesn't understand English." "I suppose you're fitting him out with a hundred different personalities."

Komeitk Lelianr's jaw set. "I am teaching him to be a Lekthwan."

This section is also anti-marriage (I do not suggest that because it is anti-marriage it shows that there was originally no marriage, I am just pointing it out).

Barch grinned. "Don't worry. You've suffered for him, he's yours. . . Well, enough of this. I'll pack up my gear and move on."

She looked up at him intently. "You've changed a great deal, Roy."

"I suppose I have."

"But in some ways you remain the same."

"How so?"

"When we first met, you didn't like the Lekthwans."

"No." Barch looked back along the avenues of the past. "I had a sneaking hunch that they might be right when they claimed to be superior, and it hurt my vanity. Now I know better. I don't have any personal feeling either for or against Lekthwans. We're all humans [. . .]

This section is not fully consistent with other statement. Barch thinks that Lekthuan culture is deplorably static. He is at least 'irked' by the Lekthuan assumption of superiority. 5 lines down he contradicts himself. This sort of thing surely cannot be editorial.

...Oh, I've changed all right."

"Perhaps I've changed too."

These two sections marked in yellow, this conversation about having changed, is suspect because it prepares the change to pro-marriage agreement between Barch and Komeitk. At the same time, the ur-ending, unless Jack is crazy, seems to have been an evocation of marriage (proposed by Komeitk as a debt payment) and its ultimate rejection.

"But you're still a Lekthwan and I'm an Earther."

"You seem a great deal more conscious of the fact than I."

Barch started to protest, then caught himself up short. Perhaps he had not changed so much in five years as he had thought. "Human minds are just too damn complex," he said inconsequentially.

Komeitk Lelianr shrugged; she seemed to have lost interest in the conversation.

Barch asked stiffly, "How long do you stay on Earth?"

"Only a day or so. I came for my father's belongings."

"And then?"

"And then—I will go back to Lekthwa." She spoke listlessly.

"It is not the home I remembered. . . Somewhere I have caught a strange uneasiness. I have been excited talking to you." She looked thoughtfully up into his face.

Pro-marriage preparation? It is suspect in particular because it sets up the idea that the world is colorless without Barch. In particular, the following is suspect: 'I have been excited talking to you.'. This line might even have been added by an editor. It is not particularly in character, it goes well beyond "catching" a "strange uneasiness" and does not fit with her looking up "thoughtfully".

He turned away. "I'll pick up my gear and be off."

She said nothing. He took a step away. "Good-by."

"Good-by, Roy."

He walked swiftly to the little room he had shared with Claude Darran. It was quite empty. Nothing I wanted anyway, thought Barch.

He returned to the terrace. Komeitk Lelianr still stood leaning back with her elbows on the balustrade. She was looking at him; she radiated an attraction, a near-physical force that impelled him toward her. He took a short step forward, halted. She looked at him with a curious expression neither inviting nor forbidding. Barch took a deep breath.

"neither inviting nor forbidding", and "Barch took a deep breath" are both conceivable in a non-marriage ending. The message is not "Love Triumphs Over All", but in a "cynical" or subtle and truer vancian mode: "Love, Though Strong, Is Rarely Stronger Than Deep Cultural Difference". This message may be deplorable, but it is certainly far truer than the saccharine lie of the marriage ending.

"Good-by, Ellen."

"Good-by, Roy."

He ran to the helicopter, jumped in. The pilot was reading a magazine.

"Let's go," said Barch.

The pilot stretched languidly. "Finish so soon?"

"Finish?" muttered Barch. "What do you mean 'finish?' There's nothing in life that has a finish."

"You're beyond me there, mister."

"Let's go," said Barch shortly.

The pilot looked down the terrace. "That young lady is coming down this way."

Barch slowly stepped out of the cab. He saw that she was breathing very hard. Her mouth was firm, pale, tight. "Well?"

"I don't want you to leave."

"But—"

"Roy—it's taking a chance. I'm willing if you are."

He made no pretense of misunderstanding. "A big chance. You'll be cut off from your people."

"Perhaps, perhaps not...Are you afraid?"

Barch looked at her long seconds. Something warm broke inside him. "No. I'm not afraid."

I think all this should go. lines such as "nothing in life has a finish", "breathing hard", "It's taking a big change. I'm willing if you are", "are you

afraid?" and "Something warm broke inside him. 'No, I'm not afraid.'" are more embarrassing than anything else.

Based on this analysis I proposed the following ending. The bracketed text is the original which has been changed or removed, as well as the whole section beginning 'He ran to the helicopter':

She looked to where the young Acting Commissioner conferred with a tall majestic Lekthwan in a claret-red cloak. "If you cared to come to Lekthwa—to study, or for curiosity—you would be the guest of myself and of my people for as long as you liked."

"No, thanks. I've had enough space-travel. I'm glad to be home."

Her skin coppered with blood. "This obligation weighs me down; I must rid myself of it." [of it!]"

"Well, what's next on the list?"

[She looked up full into his eyes] ". . . If you want me, I will be your mate, your wife." The words seemed to push themselves through her lips.

Barch grunted. "No thanks. Five years ago I learned the hard way. I sure did."

"That was Magarak, when I had no choice."

"What's the difference? If I wanted to marry, I'd want a wife, not a white elephant. We'd never be happy together. We don't think alike. You're contemptuous of my race. Here on Earth, we're learning to beat prejudice; you've got that still ahead of you. How would I feel married to a woman who's ashamed to introduce me to my own son?"

Komeitk Lelianr very deliberately turned to the little boy, spoke in Lekthwan. He turned, looked at Barch with a new look of wonder and awe. Barch patted his head. "Poor kid, there's no point dragging him into this mess. . . . There's no mess anyway. Even on the improbable assumption that I loved and respected you, we have nothing in common. Our people have nothing in common. You've gained your plateau, you live beautiful lives. We're still working. I hope we never hit this plateau; I hope there's always enough tribulation and grief and confusion to keep us sweating and cursing each other." He looked down at the little boy. "What's your name, young fellow?"

Komeitk Lelianr said hurriedly, "He doesn't understand English."

"I suppose you're fitting him out with a hundred different personalities."

Komeitk Lelianr's jaw set. "I am teaching him to be a Lekthwan."

Barch grinned. "Don't worry. You've suffered for him, he's yours. . . . Well, enough of this. I'll pack up my gear and move on."

She looked up at him intently. "You've changed a great deal, Roy."

"I suppose I have."

"But in some ways you remain the same."

"How so?"

"When we first met, you didn't like the Lekthwans."

"No." Barch looked back along the avenues of the past. "I had a sneaking hunch that they might be right when they claimed to be superior, and it hurt my vanity. Now I know better. I don't have any personal feeling either for or against Lekthwans. We're all humans...Oh, I've changed all right."

"Perhaps I've changed too."

"But you're still a Lekthwan and I'm an Earther."

"You seem a great deal more conscious of the fact than I."

Barch started to protest, then caught himself up short. Perhaps he had not changed so much in five years as he had thought. "Human minds are just too damn complex," he said inconsequentially.

Komeitk Lelianr shrugged; she seemed to have lost interest in the conversation.

Barch asked stiffly, "How long do you stay on Earth?"

"Only a day or so. I came for my father's belongings."

"And then?"

"And then—I will go back to Lekthwa." She spoke listlessly. "It is not the home I remembered. . . . Somewhere I have caught a strange uneasiness." She looked thoughtfully up into his face. ["I have been excited talking to you.]

He turned away. "I'll pick up my gear and be off."

She said nothing. He took a step away. "Good-by."

"Good-by, Roy."

He walked swiftly to the little room he had shared with Claude Darran. It was quite empty. Nothing I wanted anyway, thought Barch.

He returned to the terrace. Komeitk Lelianr still stood leaning back with her elbows on the balustrade. She was looking at him; she radiated an attraction, a near-physical force that impelled him toward her. He took a short step forward, halted. She looked at him with a curious expression neither inviting nor forbidding. Barch took a deep breath.

". . . Good-by, Ellen." [ellipsis added]

"Good-by, Roy."

The following exchange then took place:

STEVE SHERMAN

I've been chewing on what Paul has done here for the better part of a day now, and I have to say I find it as plausible as anything else. I'm not so sure about most of the removals before the new ending: the exclamation point at: "I must rid myself of it!", is consistent with 'Her skin coppered with blood'; 'She looked up full into his eyes' is consistent with the effort she's making, and I disagree strongly with the addition of the ellipses, either here or before "Good-by, Ellen". There is perhaps something to be said for removing text that (we speculate) Jack wrote under duress; there is nothing to be said for adding something he manifestly did not write.

The removal of 'I have been excited talking to you' I can live with, as it is not consistent with her speaking 'listlessly'.

I understand Paul's desire to accommodate Jack's wishes, especially when he so emphatically denies having written it in the first place. But this is not the first time we have had an emphatic assertion that Jack didn't write something: remember "Tippet, Lord of all cowslips" in *Suldrun's Garden*, which Norma claimed was added by Berkley's editors. We have incontrovertible manuscript evidence that it comes from Jack's hand.

We've known from the beginning that we would have to confront this issue sooner or later, and I'd sure like to hear from the others. The prospect of losing Vance's words makes me very uneasy.

TIM STRETTON

We need to decide two things:

1. Do we have the right to make a change of this nature on circumstantial evidence?

2. If we do, is Paul's proposed fix the right one?

As far as 1 goes, it's something that makes me uncomfortable—as it should. I'm sure everyone feels at least mildly uneasy about it. But if we have reason to believe that the published ending is botched, then we have a duty to do something about it. Given Jack's vehemence on the subject, we can be relatively confident that the text as we have it does not accord with Jack's intent (even if he wrote parts of it that he now disowns). So I think we do have a responsibility to try and 'restore' the original emphasis although we must, as Paul says, have full agreement from

Oakland for any changes: otherwise we're as bad as the editors we deplore.

For 2: Paul's fix reads markedly better than the original. The worst excesses of sentimentality are extirpated, the tenor of the ending is more consistent with the themes of the novel. I agree with Steve that the triple adjective formulation indicates Jack's writing and I think we need to be explicit that if we drop this text, we're losing something that Jack wrote. The justification will have to be the 'duress' argument: Jack may have written it, but only because he was told to, so he produced a perfunctory response to comply with his instructions.

Like Steve, I'd leave out the final ellipsis. I don't think it works, and it could be argued that unvarnished 'good-bys' have the right weight of understatement as it is. Other than that, nothing I can't live with . . .

PATRICK DUSOULIER

I've taken some time out of my other current VIE tasks for this one, this is such a fascinating issue. A lot has been said already, I won't repeat all the details. I'll try to sum up my impressions, in the spirit of Paul's requirement for a "consensus about the best approach and solution".

a) Jack's reaction is so strong, so vehement, that I can't imagine any solution other than a "non-marriage" one. I take it we all agree on this?

b) The proposed ending at the second "Good-by, Roy" looks to me as being too abrupt, it conveys no prolonging echo in the reader's mind. I just kept looking at it, staring at the blank lines below and thinking: there's something missing, whatever that something is . . . The two characters sound like parrots, or a loop in video-tape, or a scratched record.

b.1) I don't think it's reasonable to try and write a specific text below the second "Good-by, Roy", not to ask Jack to do so.

b.2) Therefore, we have to use some material already published, even if considered "weak" by some, or of doubtful authorship, although I agree there's some good Vancean touches in what I've seen.

My proposal for an ending is below. It's not brilliant, I must confess . . . I just cut the text off a few lines below Paul's ending. With this ending, we still have Roy's last-minute hesitation, then his reason prevails, but I try to get a conclusive action, conveying some mental picture of the final parting scene in the reader's imagination (I can visualize what it would look like in a film . . .), and leaving a little food for thought: the romantic people may always imagine that Roy will come back sometime, the realists can be satisfied that Roy has remained rational about it.

She said nothing. He took a step away. "Good-by."

"Good-by, Roy."

He walked swiftly to the little room he had shared with Claude Darran. It was quite empty. Nothing I wanted anyway, thought Barch. He returned to the terrace. Komeitk Lelianr still stood leaning back with her elbows on the balustrade. She was looking at him; she radiated an attraction, a near-physical force that impelled him toward her. He took a short step forward, halted. She looked at him with a curious expression neither inviting nor forbidding. Barch took a deep breath.

"Good-by, Ellen."

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He ran to the helicopter, jumped in. The pilot was reading a magazine.

"Let's go," said Barch.

The pilot stretched languidly. "Finish so soon?"

"Finish?" muttered Barch. "What do you mean 'finish'? There's nothing in life that has a finish."

"You're beyond me there, mister."

"Let's go," said Barch shortly.

. . . and the helicopter takes off . . . Roy is looking pensively down at Ellen, standing with their son at her side, she's looking up at the helicopter with her enigmatic expression (no tears on her face, please!!!), the boy is tugging at her hand and obviously asking her something . . . The camera is revolving around those two dwindling characters on the ground . . . Music, credits. (some in the audience will be in tears, I bet! Not I . . .)

STEVE SHERMAN

Patrick's solution has the virtue of preserving "*Finish?*" *muttered Barch. "What do you mean 'finish'? There's nothing in life that has a finish."*, which I think is indisputably from Vance's hand (as indicated by the missing comma).

I agree emphatically that it is not reasonable to ask Jack to write a specific text below the second "Good-by, Roy"—he wouldn't do it. And while there will be a couple of cases where we attempt to reconstruct lost text (there's was one in *Charges*), it should be a method of last resort. Deleting text is already suspect enough in an Integral Edition; adding text where not absolutely necessary is very much like a betrayal of our subscribers.

TIM STRETTON:

It seems a sensible first principle that we should try to avoid writing text of our own if it can be avoided, which suggests that we need to decide where to crop the text. Of the two options presented, I think I prefer Paul's. The last dialogue should be between Roy and Ellen; we don't want the loutish pilot cluttering things up at this essential stage. I like Patrick's cinematic closure, but those stage directions aren't in the text, which would end with Roy grunting at the pilot; not a satisfactory resolution, I think.

I take Patrick's point about the abruptness of ending on the 'good-bys', but in some ways this unvarnished close, no rubbishy adverbs or authorialisation, is quite characteristic. Consider some other endings:

Mazirian the Magician:

Guyal, leaning back on the weathered pillar, looked up to the stars.
"Knowledge is ours, Shierl—all of knowing to our call. And what shall we do?"
Together they looked up to the white stars.
"What shall we do. . ."

The Dragon Masters:

The Banbeck folk had emerged from the deep tunnels. Phade the minstrel-maiden came to find him. "What a terrible day," she murmured.
"What awful events; what a great victory."
Joaz tossed the bit of yellow marble back into the rubble. "I feel much the same way. And where it all ends, no one knows less than I."

The Book of Dreams:

Alice put her hands on his shoulder. "And now, what of you?"
"What of me, how?"
"You're so quiet and subdued! You worry me. Are you well?"
"Quite well. Deflated, perhaps. I have been deserted by my enemies.
Treesong is dead. The affair is over. I am done."

Marune:

Efraim looked away down the valley. "We are not Rhunes of the clearest water, for a fact. So then? what shall we do?"
"I don't know."
"I don't know either."

These are all better endings, but then they conclude better novels. But they show a common interest in ending stories with an equivocal unadorned dialogue. This would lead me to suspect that the 'double good-by' ending for *Gold and Iron* is maybe the best that we'll do.

PATRICK DUSOULIER

Excellent idea to select those endings, Tim. They give some perspective. They are indeed extraordinary. . . . Rereading all this, I have a timid proposal to make: OK for Paul's ending, with just a slight removal, so that Ellen doesn't sound as if she were saying the same thing all over again like a scratched record, and with some subtle (?) under-currents:

So Ellen says "Good-by", very flat, very final, no emotion at all now, she sees it's all over, instead of the "Good-by, Roy". Notice it also has a symmetry with the initial "adieu" of the couple:

He took a step away. "Good-by."
"Good-by, Roy."

TIM STRETTON

I agree these changes are to the betterment of the text. The extirpation of the 'new-physical' phrase is for the best: all readings were equally unsatisfactory. . . .

I then proposed a new ending, involving further some further discussion, which occurred in the relevant end-note, presented below:

"And then—I will go back to Lekthwa." She spoke listlessly. "It is not the home I remembered. . . . Somewhere I have caught a strange uneasiness." She looked thoughtfully up into his face. He turned away. "I'll pick up my gear and be off." She said nothing. He took a step away. "Good-by."
"Good-by, Roy."
He walked swiftly to the little room he had shared with Claude Darran. It was quite empty. Nothing I wanted anyway, thought Barch. He returned to the terrace. Komeitk Lelianr still stood leaning back with her elbows on the balustrade. She was looking at him; she radiated an attraction, a near-physical force that impelled him toward her. He took a short step forward, halted. She looked at him with a curious expression neither inviting nor forbidding. Barch took a deep breath.
"Good-by, Ellen."
"Good-by."

TI-ISSUE 349; new-physical/now-physical; this term is very odd, but both SS and U-M use the former. I think that SS originated the error by incorrectly using "new" instead of "now".

TI-PROPOSITION 349; change to "now-physical".

TI-SECOND 161 [Steve Sherman]; Of course, this is text that Jack denies having written at all. I don't think 'now-physical' reads much better than 'new-physical', if at all.

TI-COMMENT 349; I'm guessing that the author is trying to say that there's an attraction between the two characters that's almost literally a physical force. How about "near-physical"?

TI-SECOND 161; I like that suggestion; quite possibly it reflects Vance's intention, mis-set by SS.

TS – OK, then, with some reservations!

IMP: near-physical

PWR: I do not find this argument convincing. "new-physical" seems perfectly ok; this is simply a NEW physical force that has come into play, why not? In fact, what is this force?

Obviously it is an editorial desire to end the book with smarm. After consideration, I therefore recommend deletion of the whole phrase: *"She was looking at him; she radiated an attraction, a near-physical force that impelled him toward her."*

The ending would now read:

"And then—I will go back to Lekthwa." She spoke listlessly. "It is not the home I remembered. . . . Somewhere I have caught a strange uneasiness." She looked thoughtfully up into his face. He turned away. "I'll pick up my gear and be off." She said nothing. He took a step away. "Good-by."
"Good-by, Roy."
He walked swiftly to the little room he had shared with Claude Darran. It was quite empty. Nothing I wanted anyway, thought Barch.
He returned to the terrace. Komeitk Lelianr still stood leaning back with her elbows on the balustrade. He took a short step forward, halted. She looked at him with a curious expression neither inviting nor forbidding. Barch took a deep breath.
"Good-by, Ellen."
"Good-by."

This seems uncontestable more vancian to me.

What a fascinating problem!

I tried to do the usual thing of analyzing this from first principles, i.e. trying to reconstruct what happened to the text from the modest evidence that we have.

It seems indubitable that the publishers wanted a changed, happy ending. They'll have asked Jack for this—it wouldn't be normal (though it would by no means be unknown) for such drastic changes to be made unilaterally and without consultation.

If Jack complied, I'd have expected him to have done so minimally. There's correspondence in the Mugar between Jack and the editor at Doubleday re Emphyrio, where the editor has asked for changes and Jack has complied, but the editor has expressed some surprise at how economically Jack has done so—i.e. he complied with as little effort, and as little change, as possible.

On the other hand, Jack may have declined to do it himself, and the changes may have been made editorially. In which case I would still expect the changes to be minimal, on the grounds that rewriting large chunks of Jack's text would be too much like hard work and in any case beyond the ability of most editors.

In either case I'd expect the changed ending to involve the addition of some text with minimal changes made earlier to try to make it seem at least halfway credible. The "restoration" of the text would involve the removal of the suspicious ending plus inserted material. I think therefore that the general approach proposed by Paul and refined by Patrick is entirely reasonable. I think Patrick's second proposal is the better.

PATRICK'S 2D PROPOSAL

She said nothing. He took a step away. "Good-by."

"Good-by, Roy."

He walked swiftly to the little room he had shared with Claude Darran. It was quite empty. Nothing I wanted anyway, thought Barch. He returned to the terrace. Komeitk Lelianr still stood leaning back with her elbows on the balustrade. She was looking at him; she radiated an attraction, a near-physical force that impelled him toward her. He took a short step forward, halted. She looked at him with a curious expression neither inviting nor forbidding. Barch took a deep breath.

"Good-by, Ellen."

"Good-by."

So Ellen says "Good-by.", very flat, very final, no emotion at all now, she sees it's all over, instead of the "Good-by, Roy". Notice it also has a symmetry with the initial "adieux" of the couple :

He took a step away. "Good-by."

"Good-by, Roy."

TIM STRETTON

I agree these changes are to the betterment of the text. The extirpation of the 'new-physical' phrase is for the best: all readings were equally unsatisfactory.

LA FRANCE ETERNELLE

Already fifteen years ago, Nicholas Sarkozy was presidential material. This *jeune loup* (young wolf)—in a country where new political faces are rare—was the only politician of the 'non-extreme right' who dared affirm the values of the right.† Until the epoch contest between socialist Ségolene Royal and Sarkozy the right rarely offered more than tepid demurs to triumphant leftist ideology.

Analogies to American politics are no help to understanding this revolutionary election. Unlike America, which blithely and blindly profits from a profoundly democratic and egalitarian spirit, France, in all its long and excessively turbulent political history, has never managed to generate a real compromise between monarchy and anarchy. *La fronde*, which rocked the reign of young Louis XIV's, *la terreur*, which transformed the democratic movement of the revolution of 1789 into tyranny—paving the way for the Napoleonic dictatorship, and eventually the return of the bourbon kings—is a pattern which repeated though the 19th century. In the 20th century the 3^d and 4th Republics were failed democratic regimes, anarchic periods prior to the monarchic 5th Republic, instigated in 1958 by Charles de Gaulle.

In the 5th republic a president is elected for seven year terms, infinitely renewable. And elections do not a democracy make. The Mérovingien kings were elected. Like most French kings the president of the 5th Republic governs though a prime minister, whom he appoints. A 5th Republic president is less like an American president than like Louis XIII. Under this king France was run first by Concini and then Richelieu. It is a system which protects the king from popular fury at government unpopularity. The unpopular prime minister is swept away by the king, sometimes by assassination—Concini's fate—to the cheers of the crowd. François Mitterand, the 5th Republic's third president, revived assassination—disguised, in a clever 20th century variation, as suicide—to rid himself of several inconvenient ministers, including, so it is strongly suspected, prime minister Pierre Bérégovoy.

Majority rule by democratic processes depends not on the power of the majority but the willingness of the minority to accept defeat, and implies the magnanimity of the victor. This happens smoothly in America because majority victory is limited by a set of values—expressed in the constitution and the laws made under its aegis. These limits are the heart

* This article was written last spring, for American readers, in reaction to the appearance of various articles on the subject from authors I respect but which fell sorrowfully short of what I felt was wanted. Naturally, however, there was never a real hope of publication, and, though circulated among a few friends, got no farther, and was never even 'finished'. It remains un-finished, but is perhaps finished enough, because there is infinitely more to tell. It remains at least an proper introduction to the astonishing circus of French politics, and the 2007 election in particular.

† The French 'right' is not to be confounded with its American counterpart. It uses a limited approval for capitalistic mechanisms—on the condition state control remains overwhelming—while on foreign policy issues is frankly in step with the left wing of the Democratic party.

of a sub-political social order in which Americans recognize themselves more deeply than in their sociological or political allegiances. France, on the other hand, is still as it was in the middle ages; a feudal society of fiefs, where barons protect their loyal clients, and the latter constitute his private army. France is not a unified society, it is a society composed of armed camps.

The contemporary form of this baronial structure got its start in 1945 when General de Gaulle rejected the American plan to administer post-war France in a post-Vichy weaning period towards democracy—as with Japan and Germany, and today with Afghanistan and Iraq. To control France, de Gaulle was obliged to compromise with what was then the largest and by far the best organized force in the country: the Communist party. The result was a system whereby non-governmental groups, responsible only to themselves and recruitment of whose membership owes nothing to democratic processes, control important segments of the public life: transportation, health, education, public utilities, and much more. These groups, sometimes called ‘syndicates’, control no territory but they are nonetheless fiefs. Untrammelled by public oversight, they can bring the country to a halt, and every few years they do so. Many of these groups were more or less affiliated with the communists at the beginning, but essentially their interests are sectarian, so that governments, no matter what their political color, hesitate to attempt reform, however evidently necessary, for fear of being chased out of power by baronial uprisings, abusively termed ‘popular’.

France has structures called ‘political parties’ but they have nothing in common American political parties. They also are fiefs; private clubs, none-the-less funded, one way or another, by the ‘state’. They appoint candidates behind closed doors, and negotiate among themselves the division of power. The essence of French political life, therefore, is internal and personal maneuvers and, ultimately, the struggles of certain men to become, and remain, the favorite, or heir, of a baronial chieftain. This activity, therefore, is a major focus of the French media. It is a spectacle rife with drama, comic and tragic, totally opaque to the uninitiated. Since it all goes on in the salons and boudoirs of Paris, French politics is said to be ‘Parisian’.

SARKO CLAWS HIS WAY TO THE TOP

Nicholas Sarkozy began his ascent to the presidency in the 1980s. He was then the favorite of Jacques Chirac, opposition leader to a coalition government of Socialists and Communist, led by Mitterrand.

Just as the king must appoint a prime minister acceptable to his subjects, so the logic of the 5th republic implies, but does not stipulate, that the legislative majority be controlled by the party of the president. For the president appoints a prime minister who is a leader of the majority. But what if the president’s party is in the minority? Given the monarchic 5th Republic this is an absurd and impossible situation. De Gaulle, a great statesman—and the first president of his 5th republic—understood his own constitution; when his

partisans lost the legislature, he resigned. This should have set a Washington-like example. George Washington refused to serve more than 2 terms as president. His two-term-only tradition went unbroken for almost 150 years, when Franklin D. Roosevelt took 4 terms. Afterwards Washington’s example was made constitutional by constitutional amendment. De Gaulle’s example, to the contrary, was not followed by Mitterrand. Put in the minority he did not resign, but named a prime minister from among his political enemies; Jacques Chirac. And there was never any talk, to right or left, of making resignation constitutional in such a case.

The French are not concerned with limiting power. To the contrary; they dream of expanding it. The more powerful a baron the more he can do for his clients—and *tant pis* for the common weal. The structure of American government dampens this dynamic. The legislative and executive domains are separated. The ways they must interact are clear. Congress and the president may seek to shift powers at each other’s expense, and a legislative majority can oppose a president of the same party. Such tensions are alien to the French monarchical system where a president without a legislative majority is like a man with one leg.

In 1986 after the debacle of Mitterrand’s first four years of power, when he lost the legislature and appointed Chirac as prime minister, it was the first ‘cohabitation’. In this government Sarkozy had his first ministerial experience.

King Mitterrand reigned for 14 years (four years more than Dagobert and two years more than Louis XI), housing his mistresses and illegitimate children in chateaux at state expense, running sweet-heart oil deals (though friends and family) with ex-colonies in Africa and the Middle east, and covering up his participation in the collaborationist Vichy government. Chirac’s prime ministership was cut short by an electoral victory of the left in 1988, and later Mitterrand named one of his mistresses, Edith Cresson, as prime minister. This would have been unprecedented if there were not a long-standing tradition in France where wives, mothers and mistresses (Eleanor d’Aquitain, Catharine de Medici, Madame de Pompadour, etc.) come to power via the womb or the bed—another very Parisian phenomenon.

The Cresson government failed after eleven months, and the socialist again lost the legislature in 1992. Mitterrand, dying of cancer but hiding the fact with phony public medical reports, still had no intention of following De Gaulle’s example. He was king, and, like Louis XIV, he said: *l’état, c’est moi!* (I am the state). For a new prime minister the right proposed Edward Balladur, Chirac’s great ally, and a princely man—in the worst sense of the term. Balladur is not a bad person, but a man so grandly solemn, so haughtily condescending, so oleagenously technocratic, would get nowhere in American politics. But in France men like that are popular.

Balladur and Chirac had a ‘secret’ agreement—foreshadowing the secret agreement between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. They divided the spoils; Balladur would ‘enjoy’ the prime-ministership but, in the approaching presidential election (1995), he would take no advantage of this preeminence to seek the presidency, while Chirac, after his presumptive victory, would re-appoint Balladur as

prime minister. But, while most French governments fail ignominiously, the Balladur government was successful, and Balladur was all the rage. Sarkozy was his finance minister. When 1995 came round Balladur's supporters urged him to run. Among them Sarkozy was prominent.

Mitterand had exhausted the left; his heir, the closet Trotskyite Lionel Jospin, had no chance. The race was all on the 'right', between Balladur and Chirac. Balladur led in the polls, and Chirac's candidacy seem doomed. But when he promised economic liberties, what is called 'liberalism' in France, his poll numbers changed. The media fell in love with him, made him popular, and he cut Balladur out in the first round of the presidential election (where almost twenty candidates sought the two top slots), and went on to defeat Jospin in the head-to-head second round.

Chirac, king at last, now avenged himself upon the perfidious Sarkozy, who promptly disappeared into the doghouse for several years.

The disappearance was public only. Sarkozy was busy wheedling himself back into Chirac's good graces.

JACQUES CHIRAC:

THE ECSTASY AND THE AGONY

The story cannot be told without understanding the mysterious Chirac. In his youth—like apparently almost everyone else in France—he was a communist. Eventually weaned of socialist economics, he became a 'gaullist'. This term designates followers of de Gaulle, an important component of the French right—Chirac had been a minister in his government. More generally gaullism designates those who favor the independence and greatness of France. Gaullists oppose 'internationalists'—the communist and socialists—but also the 'Atlantists', who favor cooperation with England and America (*les Anglo Saxsons*). Chirac's gaullism, however, is so particular it has its own name, *chiraquism*, and it's adherents occupy a fief known as the *chiraquie*.

The saga of Chirac's voyage to the French presidency is described by the Parisian raconteurs as a series of 'murders'. The media nickname for Chirac is *le tueur* (the killer). His most notable assassination occurred in 1981; a secret call to vote for the candidate supported by a coalition of socialists and communists (Mitterand) against then president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, to prepare his own candidacy in the next election. Better 14 years of socialism—as it turned out—than any situation unfavorable to the *chiraquie* (such as opposition from the right). This betrayal has long been a matter of rumor but, right in the middle of the 2007 campaign (in the fall of 2006), Giscard published a volume of his tell-all memoir, which laid out the facts.

Chiraquism consists of loud anti-Americanism, quiet anti-Semitism and, most particularly, general anti-westernism. Chirac is a sort of internationalist, with the ideas that France will lead the international opposition to America. The only real accomplishment of chiraquism is to have successfully distracted French attention from French decline and the impossibility to reform in a country locked in feudalistic structures. In practice chiraquism consists of empty gestures

like vetoing American initiatives at the UN, siding with Arab dictators against Israel—while declaring Islam as foundational an aspect of western culture as Christianity—and founding the new *musée du quai Branly*, of 'primary arts' (a neologism for 'primitive art') in order to counter what Chirac calls "western cultural arrogance".

Such ideas are popular on the left bank of the Seine—at least that short segment of the river which passes through Paris. They are less popular on the other bank, or in all the rest of France. Chirac likes the European Union—on condition that it prolongs French prestige, so when several new EU countries expressed support for the Iraq war, Chirac did not say, as he might have done with perfect propriety, that their choice was misguided, he said they had "lost a good opportunity to remain silent". This was well received by Euro anti-Americans, but did nothing to consolidate the chaotically expanding, centripetal EU.

Meanwhile the average Frenchman sees the European Union as a menace to his national life and his basic values, a situation which explains the major defeat suffered by the *chiraquie* in 1997.

The elections of 1997 are saga in themselves, and ten years later still haunt the French political scene. After his 1995 triumph, Chirac had named the respected and popular Alain Juppé as prime minister. As Juppé bravely attempted Chirac's promised economic reforms, the barons raised the red flag of revolt. Train and road traffic was blocked for weeks, and then months. Nationalized Postal and electric workers disrupted the life of the country. Behind the walls of the *palais de l'Elysée*, as anarchy burgeoned, Chirac, slumped in his monarchical throne in silence. Beside him stood his aspiring heir, Sarkozy's replacement and rival, a man he was later to name prime minister, the tall and dashing poet/historian Dominique de Villepin. One imagines this sycophant dressed in the tight black clothing of a machiavellian courtier, elegantly bending to whisper in the sovereign ear; though the 1995 elections had given Chirac a strong legislative majority, why not call new elections, just to remind those *scocialo-anarchist syndicalists* what "France" really wanted?

This early legislative contest was scheduled for the same date as the European parliamentary elections. The dynamic Sarko was let out of the dog house and put in charge of the campaign. It was a fiasco. The left strolled off with the national assembly, and a newly created rightist party of hard-line gaullists walked away with the European deputy seats Chirac assumed would be his. This new party was soon dispersed by a barrage of obscure calumnies and law-suits aimed at its leaders, Charles Pasqua and Philippe de Villiers—all of which appear to have been purely abusive since none, even ten years later, have broken out into the open or resulted in any convictions, but still remain mired in the arcane toils of the obsolete French justice system.

Chirac is famous for such tricks. In the 1980s, as mayor of Paris, he ran a scheme whereby construction companies working on government contracts, provided kick-backs which were divided between his party, the socialists and the communists; the man eventually convicted for corruption, in 2004, was not Chirac but poor Alain Juppé.

Sarkozy, titularly responsible for the defeats of 1997, was

shooed back into his dog house while Chirac, faced with an opposition majority, rather than follow de Gaulle's example of resigning, followed Mitterand's example and named the leading socialist, Lionel Jospin, his presidential opponent of 1995, as prime minister.

The Jospin government lasted 5 long years, and Chirac got on with it very well. And why not? all his political values were on the left. His alleged economic 'liberalism' had been electoral bluff. Now positioning himself as world leader of anti-Bushism, he contradicted his previous economic stance in the 'anti-liberal'* rhetoric of *capitalism sauvage*, as the French qualify the economic system of what certain French allies call the 'Great Satan'.

Meanwhile unemployment was over 10%. Jospin (pussy whipped by the fire-plugish Martine Aubry, daughter of Euro super-technocrat and Socialist Jacques Delors) tried to divvy up the poverty by imposing a 35 hour work week. Strangling tight-wad bosses would force them to hire. He also signed on masses of new state employees, creating thousands of unproductive posts for France's growing population of skillless youth—monitoring high-school corridors and such.

Behind the scenes, however, Sarko was on the move. Thanks to the 1997 elections, he had made himself the titular president of Chirac's party, the RPR, and doggedly he began to transform this organization from a medieval fief into something like a modern political organization. By 2006 membership had been expanded from thousands to hundreds of thousands, and the new members were given real powers of nomination.

These new members intended to nominate Sarko. Already in 2002, when Chirac won his second term and the right regained the national assembly, Sarko had become ineluctable. Even so, Chirac daringly rejected him as prime minister. The new government, under an affable bulldog, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, gave him the number 2 post: minister of the Interior. Here, on the front line of the growing problem of French sociological violence, the *chiraquie* gleefully hoped Sarko would go down in flames.

The rise of Raffarin is typical of the non-democratic nature of French politics. Raffarin was president of the Poitou-Charente region, a sort of petty, technocratic governor. Though an important Chirac vassal, he was unknown on the national scene. In 2001 Raffarin began to appear in the media. Soon he was highly popular and, after the election, his nomination was greeted with cheers. The creation of Raffarin's 'national stature' and popularity, out of thin air, is a trick which can only be performed in a country where the politicians, the intellectuals and the media form a single clique.

Even such a clique, however, cannot control everything in a country with strong anarchic tendencies, and, try as they might, they simply could not spin Sarko's handling of the interior ministry into a disaster. The TV was clogged with pathetic footage of miserable illegal aliens, hand-cuffed or straight-jacketed, trundled into Africa-bound planes by uniformed officers, or angry 'youths' whining about police violence. The media never tired of expressing shock and

outrage at Sarko's reminder to the police in Bordeaux that their purpose was not to organize soccer games but to chase crooks, or how he used explicit language to qualify the gangsters terrorizing certain neighborhoods, or the methods by which he planned to deal with them.

Sarko's intransigence and energy, so annoying in Paris, were popular. The French could not be dissuaded to dislike an interior minister who, after decades of *laissez faire*, was doing his job. In 2003 Sarko again infuriated the bunkered elites by taking a pro-American position on Iraq. Once again, for all the media noise, he resonated with a majority not allowed a voice.

The last nail in Chirac's coffin was driven home in 2005. The European Union, frenetically expanding, was trying to go federal, to expunge the remnants of national sovereignty. Giscard had been put in charge of a committee in Brussels to write a constitution. Previously he had provoked a constitutional referendum on the seven year presidential term, in favor of five years, a 'modernization' designed to make presidential elections coincide with the legislative electoral calendar—thereby avoiding mid-term 'cohabitations', which had come to seem inevitable now that the majority, left or right, was systematically thrown out every chance the electors got. Perhaps the vote in favor of five years reflected only the eagerness, on both left and right, to get rid of Chirac; in any case it succeeded, and 2007, not 2009, became the date of the next presidential election.

Meanwhile, there was 2005, and referendum on Giscard's European constitution. 99% of the French political and intellectual elite were in the 'yes camp'. They extolled, often in lyrical terms, this opaque, book-long document, Chirac foremost. The 'no' vote was massive. Chirac would have done better to resign then and there. Instead he hung on, play-acting the roll of 'head of state'. In a pathetic and populist effort to expiate his fault Chirac chopped off Raffarin's prime-ministerial head. But such dramaturgy failed to correspond to the public mood. Raffarin was seen as honest, hard-working and good willed. The perceived ineffectualness of his government—except for the ministry of the interior—was known to be caused by Chirac not allowing him to engage the inevitable confrontation with the barons. The French public, whose suffering had long been intense, now had an evil gleam in their eye. It would have been recognized by a Louis XVI, the man guillotined by the revolutionaries of 1789.

With Raffarin gone, the new prime minister was not Sarko, but the machiavellian courtier, Dominique de Villepin, hero to both the left and the anti-American right for his anti-Bush UN performance over Iraq. Villepin grudgingly kept Sarko as interior minister. Firing him would have launched the presidential campaign too soon. At the Interior he was in a manner controlled. Both Chirac and Villepin foolishly imagined themselves potential candidates, and Sarko's activism might still turn against him.

The Villepin government, promoted as an all-out anti-unemployment effort, was short-circuited by the mood of cold, damp immobilism which filled the two year period between the French 'no' to the European constitution, and a next presidential election. Characteristics of this hopeless

* Liberal in the European sense: freedom.

situation were its two most dramatic events. The first was Villepin's spectacular failure to impose a law (the "CPE") which would have allowed employers hiring employees under 26 years of age, and for a period of 2 years, to fire them without the dissuasive penalties which constitute one of many blockages to hiring in France. 'Syndicalist' opposition to the CPE, one might have thought, would have closed down factories, or even universities. Instead it was the high-schools. The 'French youth' (age 15 to 18) or that segment of it immobilized by various 'syndicates', dropped their school books to defended the right not to be fired from jobs they didn't have, jobs which, furthermore, they are not likely to get unless things change in France. For several weeks in the spring of 2006 they clogged the streets and TV screens, and further eroded their already deplorable scholastic levels—though that year there had never been such a high percentage of students to gain their *baccalaureat* (high-school diploma). It would seem that not studying in French school is the best way to succeed there!

Sarko carefully distanced himself from the CPE, so that when de Villepin eventually, ignominiously, backed down, Sarko looked good.

Then there was the "Clearstream" scandal. This mess began as a power struggle among high-level functionaries who run Airbus and the rest of the French military-industrial complex, and members of the Russian Mafia—currently infiltrating the European economy—but it spilled over into the prime ministers office. Villepin was shown a list of persons with secret bank accounts in Luxembourg, full of Euros siphoned off international sales of French weapons. It included 'Nicholas Sarkozy'. The list was fraudulent but Villepin seized the opportunity to launch an assassinating investigation against Sarko, and, naturally, soon there were leaks to the press. Villepin's tactic was pushed hard by the media. Books were published. But in the end it exploded in Villepin's face, eliminating his presidential pretensions.*

Meanwhile Chirac was KO. His approval rating was under 5%. The whole country was impatient, eager for the campaign to begin. There was scowling and muttering, and much ill-humored reluctance, but the *chiraquie* had shot its bolt. Dragging their feet, scowling and swallowing their pride in great gulps, one by one they shuffled onto Sarko's bandwagon. Villepin did it with a certain 'chic', and at the very last minute even Chirac, between clenched teeth, publicly muttered non-opposition to Sarko.

Now that the opposition in his own camp had destroyed itself Sarko's way was clear. But what about opposition on the left? In fact, at this time Sarko was not the presidential front runner in national polls. Already Ségolene Royal had already the top spot.

AVATAR OF JOAN OF ARC:

SÈGO TAKES FRANCE BY STORM

The amazing story of Ségolene's rise to presidential front-runner cannot be savored in the absence of the Parisian details.

* Villepin is currently on trial for these schenanigans.

The head of the socialist party is François Holland. He is the political heir of Lionel Jospin, who, as mentioned, was heir to François Mitterand, the latter adulated on the left for having become president of France—only president of the 'left' of the history of the 5th republic—by allying the Socialist and Communist parties.* Holland inherited Jospin's throne after the latter was cut out of the 2002 presidential election in the first round by Le Pen, bug-bear of the French political scene. The night of his defeat, in a stance of abject humiliation, Jospin gave a speech which is still echoing in France's ears. It lasted less than one minute. Jospin claimed all responsibility for the Socialist failure, announced his immediate and definitive retirement from politics, and walked off the stage.

The second round of the campaign lasted two weeks. Chirac refused to debate with Le Pen. High-school teachers all over the country led their students in a festival of 'anti-fascist' protests, and Chirac beat Le Pen by 80%—thanks to the 'anti-fascist' votes of the left, cast, with rubber gloves and clothes pins closing noses, literally.

These were by no means the only notable events of the 2002 election. The Communist party score dropped to under 5%, under the eligibility level for public funding. This was bad news for the socialist party. Controlling only about 25% of the electorate themselves, (in fact the socialist party is the fief of the public employees) they can win no presidential election without allies; for years this had been the Communist party, with its 15 or 20%. Its other allies, the Greens and other extreme left groups, also dropped to new lows, which five years later, in 2007, were lower still.

As head of the socialist party François Holland was the natural presidential candidate, but he was surrounded by stomping 'elephants'. The socialist party leaders are called 'elephants' not because of their longevity—leaders of the other parties are no less persistent, in fact new faces are the rarest thing on the French political scene, and there is no such term for members of other parties. The term 'Elephant' expresses both affection and frustration: Parisian journalists and intellectuals are obsessed with their socialist party and the politics of the left; TV and radio talk shows often degenerate into conversations between socialist about socialist politic as and especially about the socialist party, as rare interlopers of other political sensibility are obliged to sit in respectful silence. The most dangerous of these elephants were Dominique Strauss-Kahn—a center-tending technocrat of marginally realist economic leanings (now head of the world bank), husband of Anne Sinclair, director of the major French public television station ('France 2')—and Laurent Fabius, ex-prime minister, one of the rare pro-'no' champions of the European Union constitution referendum, a 'jacobin'—favoring centralized state control of everything—and exemplar of the 'gauche caviar'.

But François Holland is more than the leader of the socialist party. He is also a man. The mother of his four children is none other than Ségolene Royal. While Paris held

* Giscard d'Estaing, third president of the 5th republic, as already mentioned, claims in his recent tell-all book that Chirac, Giscard's then unsuccessful rival on the 'right', helped Mitterand by secretly urging his militants to abstain, or to actually vote Mitterand, with the idea that, were Giscard eliminated then, the office would fall to him after Mitterand, which is indeed what occurred.

its breath to see whether Strauss-Kahn's realism, or Fabius' no-vote heroism, would eliminate Holland, a gazelle dashed out of the jungle. In a flash her poll numbers had the elephants eating dirt.

Like Sarko, Sègo ran an American style campaign, appealing directly to the people. She had been a petty and short lived minister in various governments, under both Mitterand and Chirac. Unlike the latter, she had not been a communist in her youth. Like Mitterand she was the beneficiary of a stiffly Catholic and 'right-wing' background.

It was not, therefore, a true surprise when her first proposal as rogue candidate for the Socialist party candidature was to round up the juvenile delinquents and park them in a camp run by the military, where some discipline could be knocked into them. The socialist party fell over backwards in shock, but the voters—on the left—ate it up. Sègo quickly became the favorite, with an advantage over Sarko in national polls sometimes as high as 60% to 40%. The chattering classes were jubilant. With Chirac discredited she need only pluck the presidency like a flower—preferably a red rose, symbol of the Socialist party. But Sègo seemed to prefer white, the color of the French monarchy. She always wore it. And the Parisian media always commented on it, fully alive to its symbolism.

Like Sarko, Sègo was not playing by the old rules. Like Sarko she captured hearts and minds, goring socialist sacred cows to left and left. She criticized the 35 hour work week. She fustigated the absurd ideological rigidities of the educational system. Polls of voters on the left showed Strauss-Kahn and Fabius wallowing at 20% and 5%, while Sègo was floating at 75%. The father of her children, also a candidate, was not even on the scale.

SÈGOLENE IN LOVE

As his campaign was getting under way, Sarko's wife ran off to America with another man, and Sègo dumped François to move in with her lover.

The French pretend to find the American obsession with sex and the personal lives of political leaders immature and laughable. Being mature about such things, and except for a few snickers at Sarko, the media left the candidate's personal lives out of it. But near the end of the campaign two courageous journalists published a book called *Une femme fatale*. In France such books are produced at a frenetic pace, because no one is invited on to radio or TV who has not just published a book. *Une femme fatale* spilled the beans on Sègo's personal life on the grounds it was having important effects on her politics. The Holland 'couple' instantly sued the editor for \$200,000.

Une Femme fatale claims that Sègo's was running for president to avenge herself upon François for having an affair with a journalist,* and it is a fact that her candidature came

out of nowhere. Sègolene Royal was a known political figure, but no one expected her to run for president. In fact no Frenchman has ever tried to become president in the American fashion, storming the country and grabbing a party nomination by sheer force of popularity. Whatever her motivations, however, the book also claims that when François, in his most dangerous attempt to foil Sègo, tried to pull Jospin out of retirement, she warned him that *if he did it he would never see his children again*.

At Holland's urging or not, Jospin did attempt a come back. But instead of trying to impose himself, which might have succeeded, he did something in keeping with the petulant, self-important, spoiled brat that he is: he waited to be begged. Jospin's best moment of the campaign was when, to an audience of sympathizing socialist militants, he energetically defended his 2002 drop-out. Having saved the party by sacrificing himself now he was ready to sacrifice himself again. Did the socialists prefer not to inflict more suffering upon this martyr? Whatever the reason, Jospin was not begged—or not begged enough. The Jospin surge fizzled but the Sègo charge galloped on. Jospin slunk back into obscurity—to reappear after the election with a book slinging dirt at Sègo.

In another development—eloquent of her non-leftist background—Sègo apparently proposed marriage to François, to favor her candidature. François refused on the basis of his socialist ideals. Sarko, after all, was divorced and remarried—and re-divorced, as it turned out, less than a year after the election.

Through all this poor François may have ached to do so—one can understand his dilemma—but he could not play the graceless roll of rebuking and lecturing the mother of his children in public. He could not point to her betrayals, both personal and political, to justify his own peccadilloes, could not perorate on her wearisome abrasiveness, her hectoring, her domineering attitude—more and more apparent in any case. But, as leader of the Socialist party, he could imitate Sarko, and he did. François Holland tried his best to renovate the socialist party. He did not manage to attract hundreds of thousands of new members, like the UMP (the rebaptized RPR), but socialist party (PS) membership did go up massively. In the face of Sègo's success, however, François clumsily ruled that the new members would get no voice in candidate designation—a baronial policy which eventually failed.

These struggles, some public, some private, were the heart of the campaign on the left. They were resolved by an occult compromise, which, of all the strategic factors, was by far the most important in Sègo's defeat. The shameful details are not public, but clearly an agreement was made; the new party members would be allowed to vote, guaranteeing a smooth road to Sègo's nomination, but Sègo would abandon her maverick propositions, and cleave to the party program.

A 'primary debate' was organized between Sègo and the elephants. The three stood behind lecterns and replied to questions from a panel of journalists. This spectacle was notable for stiffness, grinding teeth, and dagger looks—when the candidates deigned to look at each other at all, which Sègo, above all, did not. The media, pro-

* French politics and journalism are in bed together not only figuratively. A promenant journalist of 'France 2' (not Anne Sinclair!) had to take a vacation during the campaign because of conflict of interest, and president Sarko's foreign minister, Socialist Bernard Kouchner (thrown out of the party after accepting the job) is married to Cristine Ockrent, host of a political talk show, who boasts of her friendship with Hilary Clinton. But the examples are endless.

socialist at the slightest provocation, proclaimed it a success, an unprecedented example of democracy and political modernism. In November of 2006 the new PS membership enthusiastically voted Sègo, and the elephants were herded aside.

Sègo now plunged into the campaign, head to head with Sarko, but the magic had died. Gone were the inspiring calls to round up juvenile delinquent and toss them in military camps. Gone was any hope for disadvantaged families to get their children decent educations. Gone were the unabashed and popular panegyrics to 'order'. Armed only with a blunt and rusty 'been there, done that' socialist program, Sègo rode forth and, all on her own, did one darn thing after the next, while the elephants, glowering vindictively through the foliage, sulkily left her to her fate.

SARKO GETS REAL

An example. As minister of the interior Sarko, visiting a neighborhood fraught with riots and burning cars, had a conversation with an exasperated woman of north African origin leaning out the window of a subsidized housing block. "When are you going to take care of that *racaille*?" she called down, using one of the colorful words of which French abounds. Never pronounced by the French elites, this one translates as something between "punks" and "mobsters".

Surrounded by cameras and looking up at the woman Sarko famously replied; "You want me to take care of that *racaille*? Don't you worry; I'll take care of that *racaille*!"

This dialogue was a major log on the anti-Sarko media fire, but the more heat they generated the colder they got. Saying it had made Sarko popular, and reminding people he had said it, no matter how much disapprobation was poured on, only maintained that popularity.

It was now a foregone conclusion that Sarko would walk away with the UMP nomination. The French elites, however, the non-left in particular, hunger for approbation from the left controlled media, and Sarko's UMP strategists also wanted to make a gesture towards the smoldering ambitions and crumbling ideological positions of their internal opponents. The UMP therefore also staged a copy-cat 'primary' debate. With de Villepin out, the only serious contender who dared to menace to loft a banner of personal ambition was the minister of defence, Madame Michèle Alliot-Marie, popularly known as "Mam", a crisp and minatory member of the defunct *chiracque*. Chirac himself was playing coy. His 'presidential dignity' forbade participation, and he refused to declare his political intentions. With his popularity under 5% such antics were meaningless, and only prolonged his personal agony. What motivated his hold-out? The best analysis is that he was praying for a miraculous new middle eastern crisis, so that, by again defying Bush, he could revive his past glory. A foolish hope! Chirac's exit, which might have had a modicum of dignity, was both dismal and ignored.

In clever reaction to stilted PS 'debate', the UMP staged a free-wheeling discussion among Sarko, Mam, Christine Boutin—a bulldogish and bumptious feminist cum-

Christian family activist, the only openly declared rival for the nomination—and a handful of other UMP stars and 'presidentiables', such as the "popular" (because left leaning) housing minister, Jean-Louis Borloo. It was energetically moderated by the affable Jean-Pierre Raffarin. This political show was, in its way, as much a travesty as the PS debate—and as justly criticized by the media as they had unjustly lauded the latter—but the difference of style was notable. Its unbuttoned facade expressed a more real 'modernity', which pleased the French. Despite Boutin's crankiness it was good humored and relaxed. Through the cracks of Raffarin's improvisational brilliance, however, one glimpsed traces of pre-scripting. Mam, Boutin, Borloo and others politely exposed their differences with Sarko's positions, and Sarko made gracious concessions to their pet initiatives. Boutin executed the program gracelessly. Mam and Borloo seemed eager to sign on the dotted line and just get on with it. When Sarko won the election in May, all three were awarded ministerships. It is unlikely they had not been distributed prior to the debate—though there is nothing dishonorable in that. I only mean to underline that the UMP 'debate' was as fake as the PS debate was stiff.

With candidatures official, the campaign now got underway in earnest. It was marked by four phenomena: Sarko's ideological domination, Sègo's spectacular blunders, the PS strategy of "TTS" (*Tous Sauf Sarkozy*: anyone but Sarkozy), and the spectacular rise and fall of centrist François Bayrou—for the UMP and the PS are by no means the only parties which count in French presidential electoral politics.

Let us begin with the second.

THE PERILS OF SÈGOLENE

One of Sègo spokesmen, a popular young wise-guy named Bruno de Montebourg, was asked on live television what Sègo's greatest weakness was. Montebourg paused for a well adjusted second, gave his mestophilophelian smile and replied: "François Holland". This cathartic statement delighted *la France entier*, and it would probably have rebounded to her benefit if Sègo had handled it with any grace. Instead she clambered laboriously up on her high horse and penalized her spokesman (rebaptized 'Montebourde', *bourde* = gaff), sentencing him to stand in the corner for a month. "A month of silence." This penalty was actually enforced. It was a first taste of Sègo's *ordre juste*—a principle she emphasized at her public proclamation of the penalty.

The Montebourg incident was cathartic in more ways than one. Sègo's *ordre juste* was, people began to see, not just for him; it was for them too. By December of 2006 she had begun her downward slide, and the lower she went the more virulently she clawed at Sarko; he was the secret ally of the corporations; he was manipulating the media; he would send French troops to Iraq. Simultaneously the Socialists decried attacks on Sègo from the opposition but, despite the media's eager support, UMP discipline assured that no such attacks took place. There was the occasional wisecrack, wry suggestions that Sègo was incompetent to run a nation. But given the spectacular character of her goofs,

the wonderfulness of her idiocies, the French, addicted to the *bon mot*, could hardly be expected to refrain from following the example of her own spokesman. The 'attacks' suffered by poor Sègo, at worst, were fingers gleefully pointed at her own blatant fooleries.

She went to the Middle east, listened to a speech by a Hamas leader calling for the destruction of Israel, and then stood up to announce she agreed with everything the man had said. It was later pretended that this was a misrepresentation, but given the media's pro-Sègo bias, and that the spin did not surface for a whole week, the damage control was wasted effort.

She went to China where she praised Chinese justice, comparing French justice unfavorably regarding speed and efficiency. Given how proud the French elite is of having banned capital punishment (a pride less shared by the general population) and given the Chinese taste for summery trials and capital executions *en masse*, this went over poorly. In fact the French justice system *is* a mess, as the recent televised hearings on the *Outreau* scandal made painfully clear. In the town of Boulogne-sur-Mer eighteen people, falsely accused of pedophilia were imprisoned on a preventive basis for several years. They were treated like dirt by an incompetent and arrogant young judge, a standard product of the *Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature*. There were suicides and broken families among the victims. Sègo could have scored points by denouncing the scandalous delays and primitive methods of the French justice system (Brussels rates the French penal system better only than that of Moldavia). The French had watched in frustration as the proposed reforms of the *Outreau* committee were first whittled down by the *Assemblée Nationale*, then reduced to almost nothing under relentless pressures from the *Syndicat de la Magistrature* and other fiefdoms eager that nothing be allowed to endanger established habits and privileges. But she did nothing to profit from the consequent popular indignation.

She promenaded on the great wall of China, and gave an interview to the French press in which she paraphrased an ancient Chinese proverb. The proverb runs: "He who has not come to the great wall is not courageous", which in French is: *Qui n'est pas venu sur la Grande Muraille n'est pas un brave*. Her paraphrase was: *Qui va sur la Grande Muraille conquiert la bravitude*, which might be translated as *Those who go on the great wall garner bravage*. In any case it is a linguistic mess, and in France there is no pardon for that. The chuckling, on both right and left, was persistent. Sègo made matters worse by explaining that her neologism referred to the 'bravoure' (courageousness) of women. But why women? Because some of her supporters were claiming that Sègo should be elected because she was one? Exit polls revealed she had been rejected most firmly by her own sex.

While on the great wall she wore her famous white, Chinese color of the dead, an alleged goof much commented upon by the Parisian wise-guys.

On a TV show where she was questioned by 'ordinary citizens', a handicapped man recounted his tragic history, and found it so moving he himself broke down into tears. Sègo left the stage, walked over to the sniffing 55 year old, in her oddly stiff manner, and patted his arm. A newspaper of

leftist satire (*Le Canard Enchaîné*) published a cartoon showing socialists strategists giving Sègo advice for the debate with Sarko: one said; "attack him!"; another said; "hit him hard!"; a third said, "and if he breaks out in tears, go over and comfort him."

Her *ordre juste* was only one of many double-think neologisms. There were also the *débats participatives* which she organized all over the country. Another was *democracy participative*, again, as if the regular version somehow were not. The slogan of her web-site was 'your ideas are my ideas', and her program was promoted as a synthesis of cyber suggestions and the 'participative debates'. Did she have, asked the wags, any ideas of her own?

Another language botch was related to her personal life. Thomas Holland was put in charge of his mother's campaign advertising. He invented slogans based on slangy youth jargon, such as *Ca va changer fort!* This is untranslatable but has an affect somewhat like the phrase: "Things are gonna change, bad!". The poster proved more embarrassing than helpful.

All Sègo's linguistic experiments were not fiascoes. Another poster had a black and white photo of the socialist champion, with the apparently meaningless slogan *La France Présidente*, as if electing Sègo was equivalent to electing France itself. In a country which depends so much on the personalities of kings, prime ministers, national heroes and saviors, a basic reference, though long suppressed and usually evoked only by the extreme right, is Joan of Arc. Among Sègo's early successes was a speech, given dressed in white, in which she evoked Joan. This tactic was anathema to the leftist media, steeped in anti-clericalism and habituated to associating Catholicism with fascism. But the French — ever eager to be saved by a new Joan of Arc — ate it up. Later, when she gave in to socialist pressures to abandon her popular positions, she dressed in red.

Her internet site was called *Desire d'Avenir* ('desire for the future'), sincere or not in its 'participative' ambitions, advertised her popular proposals and was certainly part of how she had generated the support which overcame the Paris establishment. She should have stuck with her program!

Her abrasive personality was an important handicap. In one of the most exciting developments of the campaign the national secretary of the Socialist party for economic affairs, Eric Besson, quit the party in a huff, unable any longer to abide personal contact with the candidate. Sègo dismissed the incident with disdain: "Who" she quipped, "is Eric Besson?". Almost instantly Besson — what else? — published a book, *Who is Ségolène Royal?* which detailed just how unpleasant she can be. But that was not all. Besson turned traitor, joined Sarko, and publicly confessed to having written speeches full of deliberately slanderous lies about Sarko, to the orders of the socialist party leadership! If such a revelation had been made on the other side there would have been a media festival of unprecedented intensity. But, as the barb was sunk into the flesh of the left, the media leapt away with alacrity. The French, however, are not utter fools. Besson was a nice trophy for Sarko. He was paraded, and after the victory got one of the coveted 15 ministerial posts in Sarko's streamlined government. The PS kicked him out.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE EXTREME CENTER

Where was Sègo's support going? Many disappointed Ségolénists were seeping away to François Bayrou.

In Bayrou we have yet another politician on the French model; head of the centrist party, heir to Giscard—second president of the 5th republic. This UDF party has always been an ally of the right. In 2005, as the presidential election approached, Bayrou broke the UDF alliance with the UMP to support a PS vote of no-confidence against the de Villepin government, called at a moment when the Clearstream scandal was pointing the finger of blame at Sarkozy. After this *coup* Bayrou launched a set of unbridled attacks on the government, to the delight of the left. But, the first candidate to secure his party's nomination, he then began attacking the left as well. The French, he claimed, wanted a non-ideological coalition government of competence. To underscore his denunciatory elan, reminiscent of the fustigation characteristic of the 'extreme left' and 'extreme right', he rebaptized his political position the 'extreme center'.

If Bayrou's program was never clear, what was clear—and has been for decades—is that Bayrou wants to be president. Like all centrists he believes he can win by siphoning votes off both sides, and this tactic was now working. As Sègo progressively disappointed her electorate, and as attacks on Sarko began to take hold, Bayrou's poll numbers rose, and rose, and rose, until—joy!—they actually matched Sègo's. When the pollsters explored a hypothetical presidential run-off between Sègo and Sarko, Sarko won. But when they asked how folks would vote were Bayrou his adversary, the miracle occurred: Sarko lost! This marvellous 'fact' fused with TTS; the socialists abandoned Sègo *en masse*, and Bayrou surged past her in polls, actually menacing to wrest first place from Sarko himself.

Sarko had held his lead by a series of dynamic and destabilizing propositions forcing the opposition into constant reaction. He had taken a firm stand against Turkey joining the EU—something hardly any French politician had dared do, though the position is massively popular. He had processed to abolish inheritance taxes, another sacred cow no one is willing to touch, but which has become popular now that the majority of French citizens has joined the middle class, or even become 'rich', at least in the eyes of the 'fisc' (the French IRS) and subject to the confiscatory measures aimed at this hated class.

With Bayrou menacing to grab first place in the polls, Sarko played his master stroke of the campaign. If elected, he promised, he would create a ministry of *immigration and national identity*. The country seemed to go into shock. For a few electrical days the media tingled with horror and indignation. Sarko was a fascist, a racist, worse even than Le Pen. But opinion polls soon set them straight. Nothing in the whole campaign, even Sègo's military camps, had been so popular. Le Pen, who had been holding steady near 20%, plummeted. As he whined about his ideas being pilfered everyone jumped joyfully on the national identity bandwagon. Sègo led the mob, urging all citizens to proudly display the national flag from their windows, like Americans, and the PS

stopped singing *The International* (the anthem of international Communism) and took up *La Marseillaise*. This was amazing.

The lyrics of this most politically incorrect of songs, written to encourage the soldiers marching north to meet the Prussian invasion of 1870, correctly translated, are as 'fascist' as possible:

*Let's go, children of the Fatherland!
The day of glory has arrived!
Against us is tyranny,
The bloody flag has been raised!
Do you hear, in the countryside,
The moans of their fierce soldiers?
They come into our midst,
To slit the throats of our sons, of our wives.
To arms, citizens!
Form your battalions!
March, march!
Oh, that their impure blood
May water our plowed fields!*

To philosophical observers of the French scene, the spectacle of Ségolène Royal, once again clad in Joan-of-Arc white, surrounded by the rallied elephants and a crowd of flag-waving Socialists, singing of fatherland, throat-slitting and impure blood, was . . . well, it a wonderful treat. Inconsistency, opportunism, incoherence, hypocrisy; such terms do no justice to the scene. It was surreal.

Only the Communists complained, and they were given, as always, plenty of air-time—though their election score did not even reach 2%. But what the Communists do, no matter how much cooperation they get from the media, no longer counts because they are committing the ultimate existential mistake: failure to exist. The French media is a like a hashish den: full of smoke and dreams.

Bayrou was not equal to this national identity development. His own measured declarations of national feeling rang false, and his post-modern sneers at both Sarko and Sègo for their juvenile jingoism pleased no one. At this point the heavy hitters of his UDF began to jump ship. Every day a new lot rallied Sarko—none went for Sègo. But her supporters also began to trickle back, and Bayrou's numbers started dropping, and kept on dropping.

In the first round of the election (in May, 2007) Bayrou came in third, with 18%, only 8 points behind Sègo's 26%. Le Pen withered away to 11%, down from 18% in 2002. Sarko was out in front with 31%.

VICTORY FOR ALL

In April 2007 the Sègo-Sarko runs-off, confidently predicted all though the pre-campaign period of spring and summer 2006—much to the annoyance of all the smaller parties—had no longer seemed obvious. Le Pen, relentlessly demonized by the media, is a puzzle for the pollsters. Many voters will admit to their support for Le Pen only in the privacy of the voting booth. Would he repeat his performance of 2002 and knock a socialist candidate

out of the second round? Bayrou's late campaign drop had encouraged the socialists, but the numbers were still too close for comfort, and the pollsters, intimidated by angry protests into relinquishing hypothetical second round combinations—Bayrou versus Sarkozy in particular—could offer no assurances that Bayrou was now incapable of beating Sarkozy. The result was that a Bayrou vote could not be peddled as TTS. But what about Ségol? Could she beat the hated Sarkozy?

The 'campaign for the 2d round' lasts 2 weeks. And Bayrou, though knocked out in the first round, would not give up. He proposed a debate with Sarkozy, who turned him down with a shrug. Ségol, however, was all for it. When asked if she would consider Bayrou as her premier minister, she replied cheerily: *pourquoi pas?*

The second round was marked by 3 events. The Ségol-Bayrou debate, the Ségol-Sarkozy debate, and socialist anti-Sarkozy hysteria. Were Sarkozy allowed to win, the nation was solemnly warned, the country would be smothered in riots and collapse into anarchy. Sarkozy's program and person were described in ever more alarming terms. The worst sort of tyranny loomed. But that was not all: once elected Sarkozy would trot docilely after Bush right into the next military quagmire. He was denounced as a new Berlusconi, controlling the French media through fat-cat capitalist cronies—even though the most adamantly and openly leftist papers are owned by fat-cat capitalist cronies of the elephants. As already mentioned, a top director of French national television (stations 2, 3, 5 and several others) is the wife of Stauss-Kahn, only one of several flagrant cases which tie the government controlled media to various political figures—almost all on the left. Sarkozy's partisans modestly deplored these excesses, while Sarkozy himself expressed 'respect' for his 'opponent'. Insincere or not, it was gallant, and came off as gallant, a quality the French admire.

As for Bayrou, Ségol later admitted, or angrily complained, that she had hoped for political fusion—which, after all, was what Bayrou had long claimed he wanted for the country. Bayrou, however, used his 'debate' with Ségol merely to stay in the public eye, offering nothing but nit-picking analysis of socialist policy. Ségol got nothing out of this, despite spin on her willingness to 'dialogue'. Bayrou did not call on the UDF, or what was left of it, to support her, though he did announce he would not vote for Sarkozy. The reaction to this last move was that the remaining members of his party jumped ship, and swam over to Sarkozy.

The Ségol-Sarkozy debate was difficult to watch. Ségol had been advised to dress for 'competence', since the polls indicated this was her weakest point. She dressed in a trim dark suit with a small raised collar, which managed to look less competent than both military and monastic. Still, she looked good, in a severe and intimidating sort of way. The debate was long, and for the first half hour I was sincerely alarmed. The journalists—two individuals who have been fixtures of the French media for the last 4 decades—were almost instantly overwhelmed by the situation. Neither candidate would answer their questions. Each had a private program, and each stuck to it. Sarkozy's plan was to explain his program, which he volubly reeled out. Ségol's plan was

to attack Sarkozy. At first, quizzed on this and that by the journalist, she could not find her marks. As Sarkozy, at his ease, chattered away, I sensed panic develop behind her fixed, flinty expression. I squirmed in discomfort, horrified by the suspicion that she was on the verge of tears, or that she would just stand up and walk away. This, I am glad to say, did not happen, but what did happen was not much better: a sudden outbreak of blunt and uninterrupted aggression. Pulling herself together, ignoring both questions and pleas from the moderators, Ségol fell upon Sarkozy, hectoring and vituperating, quickly achieving a semblance of self-command.

In one of the most commented moments Ségol demanded that Sarkozy repeat his lesson: what percentage of French energy was nuclear based? Sarkozy got it wrong. In the fall of 2006 when Ségol had been quizzed on the number of aircraft carriers in the French navy, she turned out not to have the slightest idea. That happened on prime-time. This was her revenge. But Ségol's triumphant correction of Sarkozy on the energy question, as most of the commentators admitted, was just as wrong, and as the more honest insisted, was even more wrong.*

But the most dismal moment was when, as Sarkozy doggedly laid out his proposal regarding the handicapped, Ségol lashed out, accusing him of "political immorality" on the grounds that he dared propose such measures after having refused to vote for a socialist pro-handicapped law several years previously. In the face of her patently fabricated indignation, Sarkozy reeled in the points by urging her to calm down. Ségol must have regretted this move, because, even though the post debate commentary insisted on her sincerity, it was later made clear that the accusation had no grounds whatsoever in reality.

Her strongest moment was an exchange about redistribution of state funding and jobs in the public sector. Sarkozy detailed his well known policy of public sector reduction (to the already astronomic levels of 1991). Then Ségol tried to expound some vague copy-cat proposition—in fact the socialist have no intention of reducing the public sector, and Ségol clearly has not thought any of this through herself—but Sarkozy jumped on her with a technical point—certainly familiar to him from his days as finance minister to Balladur—about how certain budgets are controlled by certain agencies, not the president. It was too technocratic an objection. Realizing this, Sarkozy changed course and simply informed Ségol that she could not do as she proposed. Looking down at him in sneering contempt, Ségol replied: "Oh I can't, can't I? Well, if I am elected, *I will!*" This was the only time in the whole campaign she appeared 'presidential', though in an unattractive manner.

The 'concluding statements' provided yet more, and embarrassingly blatant, evidence of media collusion with the socialists. Such collusion has been admitted with regard to past presidential debates, where Mitterand's opponents

* The question was assumed, by Sarkozy and the TV audience, to have concerned the percentage of nuclear based electrical energy. Sarkozy got this number slightly wrong. But Ségol (eager to show that nuclear power is insignificant) gave a number which seemed to reflect that she had meant her question to be about the percentage of France's over-all energy use (include gasoline for cars, oil for heating, and so), but her number, even in this regard, was not correct at all.

were disadvantaged by clever camera tricks. During Sarko's statement, a direct address to all French citizens, all the camera angles were used. The full view showed both candidates with the journalists, so that Sarkozy, a tiny figure to the right of the screen, was seen in profile talking into the air. The rest of the time closer shots were used, from right and left, with Sarkozy talking first one way, then the other, but each time he turned towards the active camera the view switched to another. He never got his eyes into the camera even once. When Ségo statement began there was only one camera angle, and it never changed: a full-front close up, with Ségo looking directly into the lens. It was a lousy trick. One could almost hear the camera technicians giggling, and not a single commentator even mentioned it.

The post-debate commentaries, in yet another surreal manifestation, universally awarded the victory to Ségo. But, as usual, the opinion polls contradicted them, and as soon as the election was over it was generally admitted in public that poor Ségo, despite the splendid haberdashery, had not only been used to wipe the floor but had embarrassed herself miserably.

On election day there was an unspoken sense of doom. When the score was announced Sarko's victory was comfortable. Ségo rushed out in front of the cameras, smiling her invariable, fixed smile, and cheerfully made a little speech, which had nothing of concession. It was a call to arms. She then went out and did her best to steal the spotlight by standing on the roof of the Socialist headquarters, surrounded by her allies, cheerfully waving at her supporters.

Bayrou was also given TV time, which he used to aggressively preach resistance-to-tyranny, though he did not actually mention impure blood.

Quite emotional, Sarko's first words were for the losers; he understood their disappointment, but he would be the president of *tout les français*. This sort of talk stirs up dubious memories. Chirac used, and overused, the phrase in 2002 after his 80% victory, going on to mire the country in immobilism. He had offered no ministerial posts to the opposition. The spectacle of politicians on the right trying to appease the unappeasable left has become tiresome.

Sarkozy persisted in this mode over the following days and week, but in a new way. Having announced a government of only 15 ministers, he offered several important posts to socialists (two accepted) and another was given to Hervé Morin of the UDF. Bayrou, who had spent the whole campaign calling for just such a coalition government, joined the socialists to denounce this 'unacceptable', 'disloyal tactic'. The socialists even revoked Socialist party membership of the new foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner. Bayrou could not punish Morin, since almost the whole UDF had abandoned him, in fact he was forced to start a new political party, the "MoDem", a name imagined by his internet supporters, which is supposed to mean 'Modern Democracy' but is probably about communication, as it seems to be.

As for Ségo's threatened riots, the moment Sarko's victory was announced the cars started burning. At first this was not covered by the media, but slowly the truth came out. It was first announced that 300 cars had been burned, *but*

that this was a typical number for any given night — now there was a revelation! Eventually it was admitted that it was more like a thousand — not to mention, and in fact not mentioned, other types of vandalism — the usual looting and burning of libraries, schools and churches. After a few nights of this, the socialists, after having set it off with their 'warnings', sensing the dark public mood, began to distance themselves, protesting that they were not to blame. The rioting then either died down or was, once again, relegated to media silence.

Meanwhile, as Sarkozy was busy appointing a gender-equal set of ministers, and was photographed every day jogging with his new prime-minister, the media went into royalist mode. To the disgust of the die-hards, they started purring at the new king.

The legislative elections followed a few weeks later. The predicted UMP landslide was somewhat moderated by a stupid error by Borloo, announcing a new tax, vigorously exploited by the elephants. This proximity of the presidential and the legislative election was an innovation concocted by Jospin, and they now got the short end of their own stick. Bayrou's MoDem failed to get enough to be a parliamentary 'group', a 10 member minimum which constitutes a recognized, and publicly financed, entity. The socialists and Bayrou vied with each other in dire warnings about 'concentrations of power'. The media, however, rolled over on its back, too busy stretching and wriggling to do anything else. Eventually it jumped up and got back to slaughtering mice, but that's another story

And now? Has Sarkozy use all this wonderful power to whip France into shape? Or will does France continue to be the feudal society it always has been? getting on to a year later the serious observers are pessimistic. The handling of corporate blockages has been deft — but mostly thanks of early and targeted concessions at a key points, which have drained the 'reforms' of most of their substance. Sarkozy seems to this observer more concerned with being universally loved, and in particular being admired by the left, than in causing real change. On the other hand he has turned his back on Chirac's suicidal anti-Americanism, and continues to talk tough about Turkey and Iran. Will he ever talk tough to the French barons? France is still waiting.

Le plus ça change, le plus c'est la même chose, or so it would seem.



FACES OF IMMORTALITY

Except from a novel in progress, by Jack Everett

FORWARD

Standard Calendar 14 June 1000

Gyle Meredon sat in the garden of the house he had built on the banks of the Zylph estuary on Scaum's World. Alone on his patio time passed in melancholy contemplation. The sun had set but the shutters remained open to the garden. Fragrance wafted into the room; sweet azalea and filigree, fresh twippet. Gyle sipped from a drink. His daughter Fane was tucked away in the nursery, tended by her nanny, Christy.

The air was cool. The dark spaces of the garden were filled with the soft buzzing and fluttering of tiny creatures going about their nocturnal business. Gyle bowed his head and stared down into the glass. Tiny motes of light evolved in the amber liquid, reflections of the stars, which also cast a pale glimmer on the tree tops. He mused upon paths of the future—particularly as they concerned Fane with her mother now dead. His thoughts ventured into a brighter future. He closed his eyes.

In a far section of the garden moved a form. It approached the house. Reaching the wide patio it stopped briefly then advanced between a row of potted lime trees. Its silent feet crushed aromatic thyme growing up from among the flagstones. The sharp fragrance disturbed Meredon's thoughts. He looked up to see a silhouette against the Arcady star field.

Obeying an old habit he flicked his wrist; a light beamed from his wrist illuminating a masked figure clad in tight-fitting dark material. The intruder showed no surprise.

Gyle stifled an impulse of panic. 'What do you want? He asked quietly.

'I am here with a gift.' The voice was female.

'How did you pass the fence?'

The intruder uttered a small sound which might have suggested contempt. 'Fences are made to be passed'. With a thin hand elegantly sheathed in a black glove, she placed an object on the coffee table and stepped back two paces.

The object was small, white, and ovular. Meredon had not worked with PLEA for six years, but he recognised a LRG. Panic again flirted with him. He fought it back, calling upon instincts rusted and reluctant.

Had he given offence? Was he the subject of a licensed hunt?

'What is it you want?'

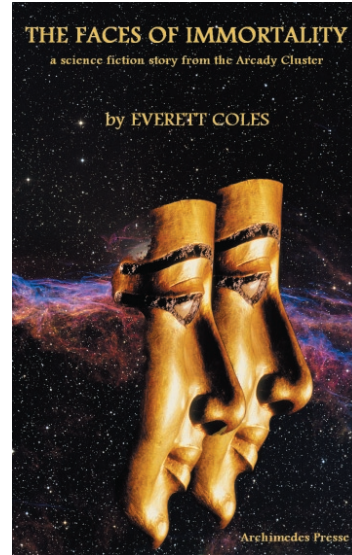
'Merely your attention.'

'You have it.' Meredon looked at the grenade and remained perfectly still.

The woman spoke again, her voice touched with a hint of glee. 'Avoid brusque movements.

Meredon nodded.

The woman turned, walked away into the garden, and disappeared.



The night sounds seeped back into Meredon's conscience. Had the encounter been a dream? He blinked but the grenade was still on the table.

Thoughts crowded Meredon's mind: who was the woman? Who were her collaborators? How had she achieved ingress? What was her motivation? What had she achieved? He pushed the

questions aside. First he must deal with the lethal ovoid. It was not sound triggered—at least at speaking level—but he dared not call for help. Infra-red beam, a timer, brusque movement perhaps?

A door slid aside heralding the approach of Fane's nanny, Christy. 'Sir, Mr Meredon they've . . .'

Meredon held up his hand.

Christy halted. She was sobbing 'Mr Meredon, what is it? I must tell you something terrible . . .'

'Do not move Christy; speak softly'. He pointed at the table, 'that is a grenade'

'Fane is gone,' she stuttered on, beyond caring.

All became clear. Meredon signalled Christy to keep back. He extended his hand and grasped the grenade. He felt the activation patches; it was not armed. He cocked an ear, in the distance the whine of a Valk drive rose into the sky. What had he been thinking of hiding himself away in this back of beyond place; how naive could he have become? This was not the way in which the old Gyle Meredon would have reacted; he had to snap out of it. His only recourse at this time was to ask help from his former boss at the PLEA.



Hiding on Scaum's World, obscure though it was, had not proved adequate. The evening's events revealed to Gyle that he had failed to comprehend the grimly realistic options: losing himself outwards passed all human content, to colonize an unknown world, or turning inwards, to face his enemies. Faith had gone and nothing could bring her back, but Fane's abduction denied him flight. Since he must turn inward, best to start at the center. He would contact Benjamin Stray his former boss at PLEA. Stray better than anyone, could help him solve an amazing enigma: how could the Wraiths have tracked him to Scaum's World? This should have been beyond even their power and resources, since all of them were dead.

They were dead because Gyle himself had killed them; on Caleb's World.

Caleb's world. The thought took his mind back six years to when he had removed their filth from the Universe and met Faith, his wife.

CHAPTER 1

GUILD SURVEY DIGEST

copyright Jan 990

Name: CALEB'S WORLD
Mass: 0.93
Day: 26h 42m
Year: 401d

star: FILO
type: M8
luminosity: 0.85
sequence: 7

Chief settlement: HAROLDSTOWN. co-ords: 145.6 433.1 872.4

In brief:

The habitable zone restricted to band approximately 20° North & South of Equator. Winter extends from October to May. Main industries: hunting & fur export, tourism and green opal mining. Recently settled (902) by Earth Scandinavians disenchanted with the world court ruling on anti-hunt laws. Hagar Harold elected mayor in 903, position held since then by heir, Fletcher Haroldson.

STANDARD CALENDAR 21 APRIL 994

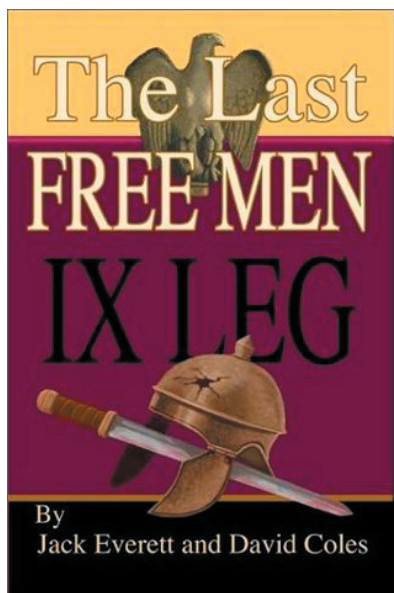
The Summer on Caleb's World, was a season short and intense. Plants burst into blossom, fruited; frenzied coupling preoccupied the animals. For the other eight months of the year the planet was covered by a blanket of snow.

When Meredon landed his old Whistler at Haroldstown's landing field the outside temperature was at its highest, some five degrees above freezing. Snow lay everywhere. In the sky an ancient red star, Filo, cast a dim glow over the landscape. Two other ships were in evidence. One, a private craft, to judge by the accumulated snow, had been there for some time.

...



THE FACES OF IMMORTALITY' IS AVAILABLE AS AN E-BOOK AT: ARCHIMEDESPRESSE.CO.UK



ALSO BY JACK EVERETT (CO-AUTHORED WITH DAVID COLES)
THE LAST FREE MEN, AN HISTORICAL NOVEL WITH FANTASY
OVERTONES RECOUNTING THE FATE OF THE 9TH LEGION,
WHICH INVADED SCOTLAND IN THE 2ND CENTURY.
AVAILABLE AT: VIRTUALTALES.COM AND

CYBER FOLLIES

DAN GUNTER AND THE WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Last September Dan Gunter tidied up his private posting board, "Chicago Blues", by removing the posts concerning the VIE. To explain this house cleaning to a fascinated world he left a comment:

Forums cleaned up a bit. I moved into a private forum some of the posts concerning the Vance Integral Edition. I'm surprised by how important that was to me at the time.

Know Thyself, advised Socrates, and if Dan's comment is sincere he still has much to learn. But is it sincere?

Over a year ago, in the summer of 2006, I filed a grievance against him with the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA). On August 18 I received a letter from the WSBA informing me it had been dismissed, but the communication supplied information which taught me how such matters were to be handled. So, on August 25 I filed a new grievance. On September 15 the WSBA sent me a copy of the defense against the new grievance, which they had solicited from Dan Gunter. It was five pages long, and included 5 more pages of 'exhibits'*. I will not lard Extant with a transcript of Gunter's self-defense but I cannot resist offering an examples of his bumpiously orotund style:

Let me begin by noting that the WSBA appropriately handled Mr. Rhoads's initial grievance by dismissing it promptly. The Review committee should reach the same result. There is no merit to Mr. Rhoads's grievance. . .

But there must have been *some* merit in it, or they would not have asked him to refute it. Doing so raised Dan to rhetorical white heat, and not once, but several times in his own defence he trotted out his favorite expression—"I believe, and continue to believe"—and never tired of insisting how I, the Legendary Locator, and other persons, "could be held liable under the law of applicable U.S. jurisdictions." Perhaps this is so, but the fact is we have not been, and, I feel confident, never will be.

There followed months of silence. In August 2007, a whole year after this process began, I was notified by the WSBA that the second grievance had also been dismissed. It served some purpose, however, for, as noted by Greg Hansen (EXTANT 21), it seems to have been the 'silver bullet' for Gunter.

The matter, therefore, is closed. But the text of my second grievance retains its rhetorical interest. It's preamble responds to the dismissal of the first grievance:

Thank you for your prompt response. Since I understood the WSBA would not be interested in a private dispute I apparently failed to properly explain myself in the previous communication. Specifically, I was not seeking to adjust a personal matter. My only object, in answer to a civic impulse, was to bring to your attention what appears as Mr. Gunter's abuse of his profession. The fact that

* These were pages 1 and 12 from Extant #12, and pages 1, 20 and 21 from Extant #13.

Mr. Gunter, since 2003, has subjected me to various aggressions, both public and private, is not my concern here, and it would never even occur to me to treat that situation any other way than I always have, by seeking to demonstrate, to the pertinent and limited set of addressees, that Mr. Gunter's allegations are unfounded—and even then only in so far as the needs of the Vance Integral Edition (VIE) project seem to require it, which is to say: in so far as the maintenance of my personal reputation, in the eyes of people involved in the VIE Internet based volunteer project, warrants such explanations. Furthermore I do not even regard this as a personal matter, since Mr. Gunter's allegations and insults are of no moment outside the context of the Jack Vance literary project. So it is perfectly clear to me that the WSBA would not be interested in such things.

The ethics rules of the WSBA, as you say, "primarily address a lawyer's conduct related to the practice of law". I assume you say "primarily" because other things may need to be taken into account, but my concern about Mr. Gunter is precisely and only related to his conduct vis-a-vis his practice of law, and in particular with respect to the excellent principals exposed in the preamble to the WSBA ethics rules, 'Fundamental Principles of Professional Conduct', in which we read:

The continued existence of a free and democratic society depends upon recognition of the concept that justice is based upon the rule of law grounded in respect for the dignity of the individual and the capacity through reason for enlightened self-government. Law so grounded makes justice possible, for only through such law does the dignity of the individual attain respect and protection. Without it, individual rights become subject to unrestrained power, respect for law is destroyed, and rational self-government is impossible.

Lawyers, as guardians of the law, play a vital role in the preservation of society. The fulfillment of this role requires an understanding by lawyers of their relationship with and function in our legal system. A consequent obligation of lawyers is to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct.

Certain of Mr. Gunter's actions trample upon these important ideals, whose application is wider than Washington state, and which, as an American citizen, I hold dear. For clarity I will discuss a single instance; on Sunday, July 23, 2006, Mr. Gunter sent an email to Hans van der Veeke, a citizen of Holland, which he copied to John Vance and Patrick Dusoulie, in which he claimed that I had defamed his wife in an electronic publication which Mr. van der Veeke had posted on a website. Please note: I am not here concerned with this accusation as such, but with Mr. Gunter's methods. In his July 23d letter Mr. Gunter, who makes no secret of his status as a Washington State lawyer, posed legalistic questions, offered legal opinions, and gave legal advice, as if he were acting professionally in defense of someone (in this case himself), and as if he were addressing legal adversaries of his client (in this case a group of persons without legal training):

Please advise me [Mr. Gunter wrote to Mr. van der Veeke] whether you understand that Paul Rhoads has made such [defamatory] statements. Also, please be advised that, under principles determined by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, a person who makes defamatory statements about a person resident in the state of Washington is subject to suit in the state of Washington. In linking to Rhoads's website you have—in my opinion—defamed me and my wife. Any injury to either of us—and in particular to my wife [. . .] constitutes an injury to me and my wife in the state of Washington.

Please be advised that you are hereby on notice.

I am copying this communication to John Vance and Patrick Dusoulie. Mr. Vance [president of the Vance Integral Edition not-for-profit California corporation] should be on notice that, based on Rhoads's on [sic] assertions, I consider Rhoads's defamatory statements regarding me and my wife to have been made in Rhoads's official capacity as Editor-in-Chief of the Vance Integral Edition.

I will not speak for Mr. van der Veeke or Mr. Vance, and I do not consider myself stupid, but I am unsophisticated regarding legal language, actual laws regarding slander, and the niceties of state, federal, and international jurisdictions. I was therefore incapable of knowing to what extent Mr. Gunter's impressive jargon indicates anything real. Even now, though I have made a certain effort to learn more about these matters, I remain unable to put another construction on this, and related communications from Mr. Gunter, than the following: he was advising Mr. van der Veeke, Mr. Vance and myself that we had exposed ourselves to being successfully sued, and that Mr. Gunter was likely to do so, or, at minimum, that this is what Mr. Gunter intended his addressees to believe.

In the course of his professional work, or in areas of his personal life where his profession might serve him in this way, if Mr. Gunter is willing to indulge in such tactics, do we not slip towards a situation where individual rights become subject, first, to unjustified intimidation, opening the door to unrestrained power, so that respect for law is progressively destroyed, and eventually—in the words of the preamble to the WSBA ethics rules—even rational self-government becomes impossible?

Mr. Gunter has sought to instill fear of lawsuits he might bring, and though several people acceded to or tried hard to satisfy his various dictates, he never did anything to alleviate the fears he had provoked. For example, he never explained that, in fact, he was in no position to bring a law suit against people living in Europe or California (a fact I was not aware of initially), nor did he ever present a text or even an argument, to support his contention that, for example, my allegedly defamatory statements were indeed defamatory in some legal sense. (I have no wish to defame anyone, even unintentionally, and regardless of jurisdiction.) In my previous communication I noted that WSBA ethics rule 4.3 specifies how: *A lawyer should use the law's procedures only for legitimate purposes and not to harass or intimidate others*; the gratification of Mr. Gunter's personal hostility is certainly no legitimate purpose! I will here note rule 3.1, (Meritorious Claims and Contentions), which begins: *A lawyer shall not bring or defend a proceeding, or assert or controvert an issue therein, unless there is a basis in law and fact for doing so that is not frivolous. . . .* and WSBA ethics rule 8.4 defines 'professional misconduct' as *conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation*. Mr. Gunter, of course, has not brought a proceeding, but he has, in apparent disregard for the facts, suggested he could, and implied he will, when in fact he cannot. I would be amazed if the WSBA were indifferent to this sort of intimidation, given that my friends and myself may not be the only objects of Mr. Gunter's willingness to do such things.

Specifically:

a) After claiming that certain statements were 'defamatory', Mr. Gunter, who ought to know if they are or not, refused not only to justify his complaint, but during several weeks even refused to identify the statements, which deprived me the opportunity, which I promptly sought, of addressing his alleged concern. In fact, as far as I can determine, the statement is not defamatory at all, so Mr. Gunter's claim was frivolous at best. Why, instead of making pseudo legal claims and menaces, did he not inform me he was offended by something I had written and ask me to change it? Surely the WSBA does not look favorably upon lawyers who seek to intimidate using the appearance of professional methods to further personal ends?

b) Given that Mr. van der Veeke and I live in Europe, and that Mr. Vance lives in California, it would seem that Mr. Gunter, in spite of whatever he means with reference to the 'U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit' (an entity the nature and extension of which I am ignorant), in fact is in no position whatsoever to drag us in front of a judge—though it is still not clear to me if he might not do so should I venture into the state of Washington.

c) Mr. Gunter's legalistic opinion that posting a link from one web-site to another makes a person libel for defamatory statements

thus linked to, is probably as frivolous as it seems far fetched—though, at the time, and even now, I have no idea if it was founded or not; I only tend to assume, with perhaps unpardonable naivete, that a lawyer knows the law, and does not abuse his reputation for this knowledge to personal ends.

I can see only two possibilities; either Mr. Gunter actually lacks knowledge of law, and thus the competence to practice in Washington State, or he has taken unethical advantage of his WSBA license to reinforce deceitful claims in order to intimidate innocent people, over whom he has no sort of jurisdiction. In either case this would seem to be an issue of importance to the WSBA since it suggests, in the language of section 'c' of your rule 8.4, that Mr. Gunter is engaging in *conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation*. Has Mr. Gunter forgotten the WSBA ethics rules he has, presumably, sworn to uphold?

While composing this letter a new fact has come to light—another example of Mr. Gunter's characteristically frivolous and dictatorial misuse of his professional status. Mr. Gunter, informed of my grievance, addressed a group of VIE volunteers, including Mr. van der Veeke, in the following terms:

Those of you who work with Rhoads need to get him under control. He filed a grievance against me with the Washington State Bar Association. The grievance was dismissed, but the filing of the grievance was itself a serious matter.

Let me note that there is Washington and other authority for the proposition that rhetorical questions can be defamatory: "The form of the statement is not important, so long as the defamatory meaning is conveyed." Henderson v. Pennwalt Corp., 41 Wn. App. 547, 704 P.2d 1256 (1985) (quoting W. Prosser, Handbook of the Law of Torts 111 at 741 (1971)). See also Kirk v. Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO, 934 F. Supp. 775, 796 (S.D.Tex. 1995); Wilbanks v. Wolk, 121 Cal. App. 4th 883, 902, 17 Cal. Rptr. 3d 497 (2004).

It is clear to me that Rhoads is not amenable to reason. But I am out of patience with the VIE on this issue. You permitted this situation to develop. You need to take care of it.

Sincerely, Dan Gunter

This communication, apart from its obviously ridiculous aspects, provokes 3 questions:

1 - My relationship to Mr. van der Veeke, and other VIE volunteers, is an informal one, based on mutual respect and friendship. Specifically, Mr. van der Veeke does not have to me the relationship the WSBA has to Mr. Gunter. To put it another way; Mr. van der Veeke, with the best will in the world, has no possible way to 'get me under control' nor any conceivable 'need' to do so. That Mr. Gunter wishes to make Mr. van der Veeke believe the contrary may be understandable in the context of private wranglings, but is the WSBA indifferent to how Mr. Gunter confounds these wranglings with a citation of *Wilbanks v. Wolk*?

2 - The WSBA, in view of the prompt and courteous manner in which it has dealt with me, the quality of its website and the ideals and standards embodied in its ethics rules, is clearly a respectable and responsible organization. Specifically, as I can testify, it is both approachable and responsive. Since the WSBA thus makes it very easy for any nut to file a grievance, no matter how illusory or frivolously malicious the motivation, it can hardly be a "serious matter" that grievances are filed, as such. An organization of the quality of the WSBA surely knows how to deal with unjustified or abusive grievances so that impact on a lawyer's reputation is avoided! If this is not the case WSBA procedures, it seems to me, ought to be reformed. Is it not totally unacceptable that the reputation of a WSBA licensee be exposed to any consequences at all, let alone serious ones, from groundless grievances?

3 - The allegedly defamatory statement Mr. Gunter has been

so exercised about was cordially removed from my publication as soon as it was identified to me, and prior to Mr. Gunter writing this letter, but to no avail, since he continues to complain about it. And only here, and for the first time, does Mr. Gunter attempt to justify his accusation, but, once again, in a way that seeks not to actually inform but merely to intimidate, for there was no "defamatory meaning" other than the one Mr. Gunter wishes to make people believe there is. So; does it not appear that Mr. Gunter, rather than merely, and yet again, insisting he was defamed, is really trying to bury the fact of wrongful accusation in impressive citations he has gleaned from a law book, and is not wrongful accusation the actual nature of 'defamation'?

Though the matter exposed above is the primary one, there is a secondary matter. I am referring mainly to two websites created and maintained by Mr. Gunter. His personal blog is entitled "Lovely Malice". In this blog Mr. Gunter uses the pseudonym 'Malefic Being'. The blog's sub-title includes this statement: *I shall crouch here, spider-like, and spin webs of gorgeous malice; each thread tainted with sweet poison*. The blog itself is mostly devoted to what, minimally, may be qualified as 'angry vituperation'—but more adequately 'malicious untruths'—against my friends and me. An isolated act of poor taste? Mr. Gunter also has a personal message board, "Chicago Blues". This board has a rubric called "Poster's Choice", in which is a thread entitled "The Shame of the Vance Integral Edition", in which, once again, Mr. Gunter vituperates against me at length, and where, despite his declared outrage at my alleged defamation of him, he has published the very statement in question.

Mr. Gunter's hostilities do not end there; he has used the "Jack Vance Message Board" to the same end, as well as linking that site to the "Gaeen Reach", a site devoted to identical slanderousness, in an attempt to widen its influence. On the "Jack Vance Message Board", I am happy to report, most of the posts in question have recently been deleted.

I cite these matters to indicate the obsessive, virulent and fundamentally dishonest nature of Mr. Gunter's hostility. This, it goes without saying, is not relevant in itself but only in so far as it elucidates the motivation for what appear to be professional abuses.

Now Dan Gunter has 'cleaned up' his posting board. He has not, however, deleted the garbage but lovingly moved it into 'a private forum'. In this he imitates Bruce Yurgil, whose private section of his *Gaeen Reach*, 'The Evidence Room', is devoted to posts he believes, or wishes others to believe, constitute some sort of threat he holds over others. Dan claims to be surprised at how important these 'VIE matters' were to him. Since his ill considered actions appear to have brought him within an ace of being disbarred, he indeed has reason to be surprised—assuming, as would seem justified, he lacks a normal perspective or degree of self control.

LULU; AN EASY GAL?

Dan Gunter yet again! In a VIE related discussion, which bounced around among the usual posting boards, Dan made the following remarks on his *Chicago Blues*:

More calls for wider publication of Vance texts 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. . . 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.

I cannot read such assertions without astonishment.
Question: is it possible to sink so low?

Reply: yes, it is!

Despite the fantasy world inhabited by the likes of A. Feht and D. Gunter, I will remind a fascinated world that I have absolutely no say in any matter, whatsoever, concerning copyright or publication of Vance’s work. Within my restricted scope (banned from various Vance sites) I cheer on any and all Vance publication; the VIE paperback efforts of Andreas Irle, the ‘treasuries’ of Strahan and Dowling, or the various republications currently going forward, both in English and other languages, based on VIE texts, or not (though I believe all of them are, and advertising the fact.*) I understand that Andreas has made an agreement with the Vances for some publication via Lulu—which presents technical and legal difficulties of which Dan Gunter—typography expert and lawyer *de son état*—surprisingly, or not surprisingly, shows no awareness.



* Claims that VIE texts have been altered per a Vatican plan to transform the work of Jack Vance into a vector of Christian proselytization have been ignored by all these publishers. Who will warn them, and stalwart defenders of atheism, of this hideous threat?

FATHER GANDER’S RHYMING FLAMES

What was Gorgie Porgie on about with the girls? Why were Mister and Misses Sprat problem eaters? Whose son John was little Tommy Tucker, and what was the fine lady on a white horse doing at Banbery Cross with bells on her toes? These questions will find no answers. All we know is that Mother Goose is an echo of ancient polemics. Their circumstances are forgotten. All reference is lost in the opaque mist of time and indifference.

Though of more recent vintage Father Gander has likewise progressed some distance down this path to interpretive obscurity. Hopelessly topical, his rhymes are one facet of a vast and vicious flame war waged on the marches of the VIE—with a few forays into the American presidential election of 2004. Surviving participants or spectators may recall the smell of some grilled dog, or even manage to untangle a garbled line in which it is wrapped. Father Gander himself already finds much to puzzle him.

Those discovering Father Gander for the first time must take him as they find him. Hints will not be provided to aid the understanding of things fundamentally inconsequential, though poor Father Gander remains astonished at the arrogant malignance and bold mendaciousness in reaction to which his genius was stimulated. He had never seen the like before.

In Churchillian manner Father Gander gave as good as he got—in fact better—exchanging low-blow for low-blow. We may rejoice that publication, here in EXTANT, prolongs punishments so justly meted out. With respect to the finest of these—the utter frustration of a prolonged and vigorous enterprise—Father Gander’s rhyming flames make no grab for undue congratulations. They did, however, play their part.

To a few matters of purely literary scope we may with propriety allude, as they account in some measure for the shape of this peculiar oeuvre. Most items are *repliques*, and some subvert content or form of enemy stanzas. The latter are not reproduced here, and may no longer even exist. The resultant cross-breeds must now hobble on their own deformed feet. *The Akle of Phot*, like several others, pays homage to a familiar classic, while *Flatus from a Bag* was composed to interdict a disloyal third party attempt to abet the wrong side, as explained in a footnote. *Yop Yéep Yóop* countered another such attack, though it’s literary pedigree is far too low to comment. As for the remarkable first line of the celebratory *Song of Fironzelle*, it was composed by Fironzelle himself. Finally, though Father Gander’s reputation for outrageous invention can hardly be diminished, many of the weirdly distasteful notions, names and epithets which mar these verses are the verbal jetsam of infighting among the bad guys themselves.

Fastidious persons must object to the full-gush scatology which disfigures Father Gander’s inspiration. If they will not hold their noses they must cover their eyes; disapprobation is futile.

ADVERTISEMENT

Father Gander’s rhyming flames
Are blotched with pee and caca stains,
Sex and violence also reigns;
For these the sniffing censor blames!

But if this taste—distinctly tart—
Coloring the Gander’s art
Causes you, as well, to start,
The Gander does not give a fart!

For flame, my friends, knows no restraint,
It fries the sinner and the saint,
The very ether suffers taint!
Vain and hopeless is complaint.

Men of heart, though, will not spurn
To Father Gander's rhymes return
To watch their ancient foes who squirm
In that eternal verbal burn.

Life's a dance of fairy shapes
Which in and out of memory traipse:
Shadow bandits, ghostly rape,
Hung about like sequined crepe!

PULSIFICATION

Inky dinky winky wee!
Itsy bitsy droopy pee!
Fety beddy wetty he,
Spanky wanky be.

Opsy doopsy, pardon me;
Booky wooky vancy see!
Caterwauling, traumenbawling!
Humpty Dumpty plea!

Thea be a kinda he,
Dukey marmite scrawly scree,
Naughy Negus, voidy rest us,
He be jeebee glee!

Churchy baddy sayeth he,
Vancy wancy only key,
Expulcation!
Fumigation!
Tarnashation!
Falsifation!
Wacky cracky cree!

Brucy dingbat tablere,ee,
Burny werny vee ai ee!
This the daily incantation
In his lead phylactery.

Run away the kay bee gee?
Or be in it, capo theel!
Scorcher torture
Butcher lorcher,
Who can telly ify, see?

BALLAD OF THE FLAME WAR

Meany Allicks made a board,
With pigmy troopers, tiny horde,
And, bloated rhetoric his sword,
Sought to slay the Paul.

For its fetty, fried fetty,
Fried fetty we sigh;
If we don't pot-roast fetty,
We surely will try!

Allicks heaved a mighty stroke,
A grand and famous thrust poke,
But then; his proudly sword was broke!
Against the solid wall.

For its fetty, foul fetty,
Foul! fetty we cry;
We'll deflate you yet
If only we try!

What sword is that? its acorn size
Protrudes from pants that should disguise
The unimposing enterprise,
Which hangeth like a pall.

Yes fetty, old fetty,
Fat fetty is nigh!
Will poke holes in fetty,
Until he runs dry!

'My GOD! Oh my GOD!' poor Allicks did wail,
And numb with fear and dumb and pale,
He waited, silent, for the hail
Of retributions fall.

Fetty, poor fetty,
Is mulish, not spry!
He stands there so stumpish
We almost could cry!

Then it was done, thorough and just,
The body laid out, massive of bust,
A giant potato smelling of must!
Slaughtered by the Paul.

For its Fetty, fat fetty,
That makes us decry!
To rid us of fetty
Who would deny?

So sing a song of fetteree
And blaim it all on him? no me!

WHAT DID YERGLE GURGLE?

Brucy Wusy Internet creep,
Posted Vance and made him cheap.
When Pully Tally came out to flay
Brucy Wusy had nothing to say!

Brucy Wusy atheist dweeb,
Bad-mouthed Christian history and creed,
But when a Christian came out to preach
Brucy Wusy stifled his screech!

Brucy Wusy dingbat brain,
Loved his fetty, though a pain.
When fetty flopped upon the Reach
Brucy Wusy gave no speech!

Brucy Wusy nastiness sponsor,
Coddled Ronald, book-burning monster.
When Rony Zany dreamed his dream
Brucy Wusy was on the team!

Brucy Wusy crispest flake,
Tried to eat and have his cake.
But when crusading came a cropper
Brucy Wusy left in the stopper.

DURGE OF THE CLACK

This is the durge of sad troop of cranks,
Some who subscribe to books without thanks,
Others complaining of what they know not,
But all give their credence to Fettle-ish rot.

Ronald Abonimous Ignis the Third,
Fulminates fatwas fit for a nerd,
Makes proclamation: all Vance to burn
And 'Vance Readers Ordinary' urges to spurn.

Hail to Ignis and Terry the Dark!
To Ifness the Yes-man and Brucey the Quark!
A trouplet of pigmies marching in time,
To bellowing trumpeting elephant whine.

Now you are shown for just what you are:
A sad flock of Haters and brushers with tar,
Wallow and low in the muck you excrete,
But never the V.I.E. you'll defeat!

ON FET'S ATTITUDE TO HIS MIGET TROUP

(To be sung to the tune of 'Onward Christian
Soldiers', with chorus of pulsifications)

Carp on cretin posters
Squawking evermore
I, the Judge Incarnate,
Command your battledore!

Orgy worgy
Pokey pee,
Couldn't hidy
Fetteree!

Swords of insult polish,
Tie the hangman's knot,
Try, condemn, demolish,
Execute my plot!

Thea mea,
Oh, the shame!
Fetty's is a
Phony game!

Bring out sulfur matches,
Heap the lovely books,
Burn them up by batches;
Dance, ye gleeful crooks!

Thinky blinky
Sleepy pus,
Peeny weeny
No fool us!

You, submissive minions,
Obey my each dick-tum,
Yet my true opinions
Are that you are dumb!

Wigy waggy,
Hidy dong,
Fet can't matchy
Paul in song.

THE FETONION PANTHEON
AND THE ANXIETIES OF
THOSE LIVING UNDER THEIR THRALL
BY REASON OF PUFFERY

Nothingness filling up temporal space,
VOIDIMUS NULLNESS, first of his race!
In proud contemplation FET eyes his God,
Bravely refusing to blink or to nod!
On the low alter FET lays his vow:
"I'll heckle all heretics that dare not kowtow!"

Living in Oakland with wife and with son,
The pen wielding VANCIMUS is the next one.
The son and the wife are only disdained,
But VANCIMUS GREAT has clearly proclaimed,
By word of FET, that FET is ordained
His prophet and instrument, the better to rout,
And heckle the under-men, drive them all out!

His personal selfhood, THINGIMUS REX,
A pontifical pain in our necks,
Flanked by his avatars, 'zzz', organ and prick,
To deepen his ten-penny mystery cult trick,
Imposes his rule on vancians all!
Pope of the Yergels and scourge of the Pauls,
Expelling hot gasses he bellows and squalls.

ODE TO THINGIMUS REX

Many tons of lardish mass,
A cloddish contraption brutish and crass
Chugging, coughing, sneezing; alas
Only manufacturing gas.

Fie on Fet,
and fiddle dee dee!
Give him a spanking
Over your knee.

Bubbling vat of adipose,
Seeping wide, it clogs and cloyes
The brains of nasty-minded boys
With clamorous anti-clerical noise!

Phooey on Fet,
and porkilypik!
Thinks he can hide him
Back of his trick.

Leadend ponderosity,
Billows of bombosity,
Seething with ferocity,
To commit atrocity!

'Feh' to Fetty's
gobbledygook!
Give 'im a match
To fire a book.

Entertaining each suspicion,
Never willing to talk or listen,
Advocates a sole volition:
Sign the anti-Paul petition!

Faugh to Fet
and his multiple cocks!
He's as dumb
As a bag of rocks.

A head as round as a soccer ball,
With grubby beard where insects crawl,
His mind a roil of plans to maul,
Monomaniacally obsessed with Paul!

Flip off Fet,
and fee fi foe!
He's as cute
As mouldy dough.

Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky are you,
A sputnik-nudnik from Timbuktu,
Grozny cod liver oil and glue,
Chernobyl fallout through and through!

Foul Fet,
ruminant moo!
Can't wait to see
The last of you.

SONG OF MASHED POTATO
(with tippy tappy toes)

pauly wally vely bad
paul make fety vely mad
pauly likey jeezy god
fety say oh dat too odd
pauly puty fetty ban
fet he stuffed in widdle can
fety say bad-pauly did it
pauly say come on get wid it
pauly makey jacky jump
fety hadda hop 'n hump
fet say pauly cracky whip
makey jacky dance 'n skip
fety squawky quack quack quack:
"pauly wally gotta pack!"

gotta pack, gotta pack, gotta gotta pack!
pachyderm, pachyderm, gotta pachyderm!
on m'back, on m'back, pachyderm attack!
back back pachyderm, pachyderm go back!

oust rouste
heave and ho
pitch him out
make him go
squermy wormy
pachydermy
say it wasn't so!

POTATO SOUP

What to do about Fet?
You can't make him reason yet;
you can't make him think,
but you can make him Blink!
Which riles him up, you bet!

And what about the lies
he heaps up to the skies?
they creep into minds
and worry all kinds
of Vance supporting guys.

And, jiminy, all those dicks!
Such skinny flabby sticks!
can you abide
his attempts to hide
Behind such tiny tricks?

But why is he so fat,
The hairy Russian brat?
does he eat a lot
or is it a plot
To explode with a lordly 'splat'?

So how to plug the gas
That hisses from his ass?
you can't stop his fart
but using art
You can give him the razzamatazz!

ADDLED BY A DOLF

Addily paddily waddely duck,
Dimlery dolfery puddley suck,
Lettery johnily send it to you?
Booddily boo hoo hoo!

Passily gassily all fall down,
Addily paddily probably brown,
Blamilly flameily slather the tar
Pickily har har har!

Muckily rackily fascists galore!
Addily paddily; you are a bore.
Tearily cheerily waddley duck,
Crotchety cluck cluck cluck!

THE DARRCNESS MOBSTER

Teriyaki oopsy-page
Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Sukiyaki in a rage
Finger dinger screw!
Teri-icky dicky docky
Two and three and nine,
Count 'em, mount 'em
Flout'em, shout'em
Oopsy-page, divine!

MONGOLIAN MONODY

Sing a song of turpitude,
Pitch it low and make it rude!
Use an angry vicious mood;
Attila the Hun!

Spin a moral tale, dude!
Jazz it up with something lewd,
Weave in other stuff that's crude;
Attila the Hun!

It's important to include
Anything that may delude,
Thus the enemy preclude!
Attila the Hun!

Be lion-bold with fortitude,
Impose your truth, make it protrude!
That's the road to beatitude;
Attila the Hun!

FETTIPEE

Ding dong
A Pulsifer song;
Pulsifer is Fet!
Make it wiggle?
Itchy jiggle?
Organism pet!
Blah-bla Thea, mamma mia!
World Stinker too;
But which to choose when Alexander
Wants to make his poo?

THE AKLE OF PHOT

Who or why or which or what
Is the Akle of Phot?

Is he fat and heavy as a truck
Or only as round and plump as a duck
Or a blot,
The Akle of Phot?

Does he translate Vance with accurate zing,
Or does he put just any old thing
For the plot,
The Akle of Phot?

Can he shut his mouth every once in a while,
Or are his words an ever mounting pile
Of rot,
The Akle of Phot?

When he plays Bach does he lightly jig,
Or trundle around like an overweight pig
Would gavotte,
The Akle of Phot?

Does he pick his nose with a cotton-tipped swab
And wipe his hiney like a slob
On a pot,
The Akle of Phot?

Does he bash his enemies with a brick,
Or hide behind his diminutive dick
A lot,
The Akle of Phot?

When he farts in his pants does it echo out loud,
And thunder far across the crowd,
Or not?
The Akle of Phot?

Would that I knew, which or how,
Or when or why or whether by now,
Is shot,
The Akle of Phot!

FLATUS FROM A BAG*

I am that I am: quite jolly but stern,
My doctrine's not that hard to learn:
Rule 1: 'You must obey!'
And here the next: 'I get my way!'
The third is just like number one,
Which makes my dictums easy fun!
And so our lives would go along,
But for some drinkers of Chinon,
Whose squeaks and meows I disapprove,
Because their machinations prove
That history doesn't always move

* It was "Parsifal Pankarow" who, among other foolishness, made the error of taking an ostentatiously neutral stance. *Flatus From a Bag* was published a few hours later, and "Parsifal Pankarow" was not heard of again for almost two years. He had prefaced his post in these terms: "Mr. Rhoads' poems are sort of droll; they remind me (just a little) of the doggerel songs of the Darsh in "The Face". Ultimately, though, the insults are kind of flimsy. The ongoing poetry slam, however, is not without interest. Reminds me a bit of Eminem slamming his adversaries extempore in "8 Mile". If Paul—or for that matter Alex—wanted to try their hands at a rap format, it might be more interesting still. Much of Paul's oeuvre seems overly-concerned with poking fun at Alex for his self-admitted corpulence. As I indicated elsewhere, if you are going to do this sort of thing at all, it's better to do it with a bit of style ("una poca de gracia") as Shakespere did to Falstaff. But never mind. . . That said, some of Paul's lines actually do have a nice ring to them, even for doggerel. The meter even reminded me a little of one of the great doggerel poems of all time, which I will now post for the edification of those who've never seen it. It was written by The James Joyce in 1912, satirizing the point of view of the publisher who'd given him so much trouble. Hear how the lines sing! This is how to slam one's enemies!"

Along the path I did ordain!
How they cause me rage and pain!
And force me to inflict disdain!
So listen to me! and tremblingly learn
How wrong it is to ever spurn
My kind suggestions and advice,
Like when I told him, only twice,
To worship Void, my favorite God,
And he refused; 'twas truly odd!
And yet they dare; they dare Defy!
Whatever is the reason why?
Do they not know, do they not see
How great a thing it is, this ME?
Bah! Never mind these pigmy folk,
To me they're 'insects', may they choke
Strangled in the chains of smoke
That are their petty thoughts and words,
Tweeting whistle songs of birds,
Imbecile noise I can ignore.
Still, certain things I must deplore;
Crimes and treacheries so dark
That men of virtue always hark,
Aroused by righteous indignation,
And hustle to their battle station!
Crimes whose color, truly black,
Like the day they hijacked Jack,
Defiling idols I adore,
By spilling pieties on the floor!
Then I crow, without a rest,
However much the worms protest!
The spineless pigmies; their distress
Is naught to me! I will suppress
Them with my boot, and slowly crush
Their futile yaps! Ah! the gush
Of pleasure at their wriggling pain!
But wait! I say too much; all know
How at times the righteous 'train
Of thought' its whistle shrill may blow!
Aside! Away! . . 'tis now unsaid;
The pangs of conscience all are fled!
The great crusader ever learns
To minimize whatever burns
His noble peace, the shifts and turns
That may disturb his calm repose:
Excuse me while I wipe my nose,

GAS FROM A BURNER

Ladies and gents, you are here assembled
To hear why earth and heaven trembled
Because of the black and sinister arts
Of an Irish writer in foreign parts.
He sent me a book ten years ago:
I read it a hundred times or so,
Backwards and forwards, down and up,
Through both the ends of a telescope.
I printed it all to the very last word
But by the mercy of the Lord
The darkness of my mind was rent
And I saw the writer's foul intent.
But I owe a duty to Ireland:
I held her honour in my hand,
This lovely land that always sent
Her writers and artists to banishment
And in a spirit of Irish fun
Betrayed her own leaders, one by one.
'Twas Irish humour, wet and dry,
Flung quicklime into Parnell's eye;
'Tis Irish brains that save from doom
The leaky barge of the Bishop of Rome
For everyone knows the Pope can't belch
Without the consent of Billy Walsh.
O Ireland my first and only love
Where Christ and Caesar are hand and glove!

The snot has dribbled. . . Now the thought,
 Like phlegm, is gone! I have made naught
 My pangs; and so proceed to loads
 Of accusations aimed at Rhoads!
 A squeaking sniveling imp is Paul,
 A preening, prancing blot on all
 That's dear to me! to ME! the hub,
 The center of the cosmic tub!
 Retribution will be dire:
 A pachyderm of words for pyre,
 An orchestra melting. . . never mind!
 Another lapse, to put behind!
 Revenge is bad for the digestion;
 'Twas my wife made that suggestion.
 But tell I must the ghastly crime:
 Do you recall the 'Censor Time'?
 When he drove out, with jibe and jeer,
 Manipulation dire and queer,
 A few sad-sacks, but also ME!
 The others are my coterie,
 From happy boards, whose cheery talk
 Was nothing more than harmless squawk?
 A crime so vile must earn rebuke!
 To go from mauve to baby puke!
 And I had nearly had my way,
 By means of subtle and innocent play!
 But Paul, his evil power fed
 By toady eaters of French bread,
 Toppled all my plots and plans
 By machinating like a rat!
 Oh! the glutton pots! the pans
 Of continental cooking! that
 Lured the traitors to his cave!
 The case against him is quite grave:
 Here it is: Paul is a knave!
 Such is my cry, bold and brave!
 I do not hide and creep like he
 To do my dirty activity!
 For I am open, true and frank,

Unlike their 'project', a sort of bank
 Filled with fingers abstracting dimes!
 When two professionals, in half the time. . .
 Haw! But those are lesser crimes,
 Hardly anything to compare
 With how he fills the virtual air
 Spouting unholy flat-earth blare!
 An 'artist'? Huh! what fonts are these?
 Totally illegible if you please!
 And those 'smudgies' that he etched;
 They inspire only retch!
 Will not anyone, please, I ask,
 Just tell me how it came to pass,
 That this pathetic, miserable flea
 Is now high-priest of Vancery?
 Who is guilty, Mike or Bob?
 Steve or Tim or Suan or Rob?
 And do not say the name 'John V',
 Puppet of chicanery!
 These worms who dig and bore their hole
 In the wood of my Idol,
 Hopping round submissively,
 To the music of a flea,
 Foul my private infinity!
 When! Oh when! I scream and yell,
 Will they go and burn in hell?
 I sent my dimes, I pledged my help,
 I gave them guidance in a yelp,
 But now that I have been betrayed,
 The Cosmic Tissue to rebraid,
 The heretics of Vancedom must
 In one orgasmic flaming thrust,
 Be banished past the Sacred Gate
 And chained to silence! there to sate
 My lust for vengeance and for hate,
 And in the loudness of my roar,
 Gasp the stench of verbal gore,
 To learn the meaning of 'fehtor'!

YOP YEOP YOOP

Aba Igi give a Yop:
 Veeaaiee he gotta stop!
 Piggy porky he say Pop:
 Borgle Worgle Spleeny Glop!

Aba Igi give a Yeep:
 Piley books in tumble heap!
 Piggy porky he say Peep!
 Mea Borgle Worgle Creep!

Aba Igi give a Yoop:
 Put a flaimy in a soup!
 Piggy porky he say Poop!
 Borgle Worgle Britchy Droop!

Aba Igi give a Damn?
 Never ever notty mam!
 Piggy porky he say Bam!
 Wanna Butta Canna Slam!

AKLE'S VERSE

There once was a bag of gas,
 Who lived in a blue morass,
 All of his verse
 Was like a silk purse
 Made from a blind sow's ass!

O lovely land where the shamrock grows!
 (Allow me, ladies to blow my nose)
 To show you for strictures I don't care a button
 I printed the poems of Mountany Mutton
 And a play he wrote (you've read it, I'm sure)
 Where they talk of 'bastard', 'bugger' and 'whore',
 And a play on the Word and Holy Paul
 And some woman's legs that I can't recall,
 Written by Moore, a genuine gent
 That lives on his property's ten per cent;
 I printed mystical books in dozens:
 I printed the table-book of Cousins
 Though (asking your pardon) as for the verse
 'Twould give you a heartburn on your arse:
 I printed folklore from North and South
 By Gregory of the Golden Mouth:
 I printed poets, sad, silly and solemn:
 I printed Patrick What-do-you-Colum:
 I printed the great John Milicent Synge
 Who soars above on an angel's wing
 In the playboy shift that he pinched as swag
 From Maunsel's manager's travelling-bag,
 But I draw the line at that bloody fellow
 That was over here dressed in Austrian yellow,
 Spouting Italian by the hour
 To O'Leary Curtis and John Wyse Power
 And writing of Dublin, dirty and dear,
 In a manner no blackamoor printer could bear.
 Shite and onions! Do you think I'll print
 The name of the Wellington Monument,
 Sydney Parade and Sandymount tram,
 Downe's cakeshop and Wiliam's jam?
 I'm damned if I do—I'm damned to blazes!
 Talk about Irish Names of Places!
 It's a wonder to me, upon my soul,
 He forgot to mention Curly's Hole.

No, ladies, my press shall have no share in
 So gross a libel on Stepmother Erin.
 I pity the poor—that's why I took
 A red-headed Scotchman to keep my book.
 Poor sister Scotland! Her doom is fell;
 She cannot find any more Stuarts to sell.
 My conscience is fine as Chinese silk:
 My heart is soft as buttermilk.
 Colum can tell you I made a rebate
 Of one hundred pounds on the estimate
 I gave him for his Irish Review.
 I love my country—by herrings I do!
 I wish you could see what tears I weep
 When I think of the emigrant train and ship.
 That's why I publish far and wide
 My quite illegible railway guide,
 In the porch of my printing institute
 The poor and deserving prostitute
 Plays every night at catch-as-catch-can
 With her tight-breeched British artilleryman
 And the foreigner learns the gift of the gab
 From the drunken draggletail Dublin drab.
 Who was it said: Resist not evil?
 I'll burn that book, so help me devil.
 I'll sing a psalm as I watch it burn
 And the ashes I'll keep in a one-handed urn.
 I'll penance do with farts and groans
 Kneeling upon my marrowbones.
 This very next Lent I will unbare
 My penitent buttocks to the air
 And sobbing beside my printing press
 My awful sin I will confess.
 My Irish foreman from Bannockburn
 Shall dip his right hand in the urn
 And sign crisscross with reverent thumb
 Memento homo upon my bum.

DO THE TAMERLANE LIMP!

In heavy stepping Tarantella
 Alex shows that he's a fella
 Whose mind just cannot jump in rhyme,
 Whose tapping fingers can't keep time,
 Whose face is like a wide umbrella!

Hexos starting A-A—white bread—
 But then go B-B-A, are dead!
 It's a Fetty innovation,
 Destined for a short ovation,
 Ending with this thread!

Fet brought out his bag of tricks,
 A whopping set of pulsifer pricks,
 But each little poem he tries
 Is a pain on all our eyes,
 Mongoloid blots, not limericks!

WHAT WORGLE WANTED

What is the reason for all of this rhyming,
These insults so fast and so free?
They march to the timing of Worgle conniving
To bust up the V.I.E.!

So why does he do it, the great tub of suet?
Is he a bluish meaneer?
He hates all things Christian,
like Bach and like Pishkin,
Like Mozart and Tolstoi and me!

If not for Cosmopolis he says he'd not topple us,
But he's such a liar, you see,
That I don't believe 'em, the fat hairy heathen,
Who can't even write poetry!

Worgley lusted to slice up the mustard
but all he could cut was the cake,
So plug up your noses and get out the hoses
To wash him away like a flake!

BORED FAMILY SHOT

Popi fet; pulsy pet.
Momi fet; she pet pet?
Babi fet; get all wet
Cause popi fet let fly!

Roni twit; it ain't lit.
Teri dwit; he like "shit".
Ify nit; speck of spit
Cause bruci let if fly!

Bruci flake; big mistake.
Jaki cake; it no bake.
Pauly wake; must forsake
Cause V.I.E. let fly!

THE ROUT OF THE TEN-CENT TROLLS

Of flames and project paladins I chant,
Who bold against the slandering and cant
Of ghostly goons which, writting fourth annoyed,
Did seek to drive the project into Void.
Their dark battalion raised a great hurrah!
And slogans yelled of keen anathema,
So in an umbral valley, blue and cramped,
A ghaunish reach of sour coldness, camped.
Now writ fourth the boldest; Fironzelle!
Who, slewing in their ranks, did soon dispel
Pretence to reason, justice or good-will,
Then fast withdrew, his righteous ire to chill.
In pride the giant champion of the host,
The tubby Klingox, waddled forth to boast!
'Mungst his angry trumpetings and fog
Did come this blast of heretical smog:
"Oh never, when I fix the empty Void,
My eye that view of terror doth avoid!"
Quoth he, paunch pushed out to full extent,
Sanctimonious as a priest in Lent.
This vaunt disdained the tricky Sadohar,

Who on a jibe its puffery did jar:
If I'd a dime for every time, he writ,
I'd heard that caw, that squeak of mortal wit,
Today I'd have two dollars thirty cents!
So stung, the Klingox, thinking to dispense
A punishment to match this enfilade,
Did skrichle verse, and set it 'bout his glade
Of reeking blue, like traps to foil and blight,
And demonstrate his spiritual height.
Laughing then, a catapult of rhyme
Did Sadohar roll out for launching slime;
As sly Sir Ax his calculations gave,
To best triangulate upon the knave,
They buried him so quick and deep in wit,
In doggerel taunt and pulsiphating scrit,
that for riposte the ox but gasped: 'resign!'
Repeated, like a bleat, a buzzing whine;
Too late! For now the mighty Legion Green
Came writting down upon the host in spleen!
With fracas noble, hard they did engage
The yergling mob of imbeciles enraged,
Disputing, refuting, their logic sad undoing
To leave them mute, their yellow bile spewing!
Oh, the proud Sir Pom Pom and Sir Bud,
In fetor and in rhetorickle blood
Though splattered, nary once did reel or swoon
At each fresh charge of yammering platoon!
From near to far the blue clohwahk they rid,
To massacre Radignus and Toridd!
Then Sir Darec, on Kozmahflis set,
His famous charger, did the fiends beset!
He rid them up and rid them down
The foul vale of blue, and so renown
Is his: all hail! But others too did shine
By doughty pennant deeds that never flow
Of time can fade, so fervent is their glow!
I call their hero names, an honor list:
Emphyrio sublime! Funambulist!
Squire Cygnet! and wise Sir Ax Alil!
Sirs Phelt the Ceal and clever Penwippil!
But others more, more than can be told,
Did good their part to confound and to scold
The demons! Yea, where filth and mud doth stink,
Where Eatle's brown excreta bent to drink
Ihphmis and Martonis, so to loom
Ever fatter in their cramped blue-gloom,
Is now distress! their edifice is wrecked!
The spate of blue conspiracy is checked!
They, no more, shall dare rid forth to smear;
Whilst th'Green Legion stands to arms in cheer!
The victory in Blue Gulch; oh triumph grand!
An anthem for the brave and puissant band!
May all who love the project and its goals,
Thank Green Legion for this rout of trolls!

THE SONG OF FIRONZELLE

Fironzelle leapt like a penguin in heat
From icy silence, his usual beat,
Excited to lust by ejaculations,
Fountains and puddles of hot declarations,
That Baron von Walrus, with tuskish panache,
Broadcast in gouts from his flut'ring mustache!
Ah the desire! The luxurious dream!

The exquisite anticipation to cream
That bladder of blubber in an issue of such
Argumentative caress that its gush
Would provoke the climax, the swan-song jig
Of Walrus's marathon calumny gig!
So Fironzelle came and splattered the hog
With an amorous douche of dialogue!
But baron von Walrus, how did he repay?
Did Fironzelle's ardor and passion delay,
In dalliance soft, of reason and love,
The Siberian creature? Or did it shove
The proffered embrace and affection away,
Mocking his pleas, and Fironzelle dismay?
Alas! So it was! Poor Fironzelle!
His arctic elan and wooings befell
The fate of all suitors to baron von Tusk:
A frosty deluge of intestinal musk.

YORGLE'S BORGLE

Yorgle-borgle, mince-meat cries,
Jello pudding slander pies,
Makes bad eating, so s'no surprise
That yorgle-gas honks out slantwize!

Yorgle-borgle, Yorgle-borgle,
He's a solemn quack!
Brandishing, like a syringe,
A poisen pen he would impinge
To stab me in the back!

Enchanted by the dingbat litany,
Censorious bans and romps in Brittany,
Outrageous things in Cosmopolis written, he
Wishes to have shamed and smitten me!

Yorgle-borgle, Yorgle-borgle,
He's a yammering bore!
He longs and yearns
to chase and strangle
But comes a cropper in a tangle
Of contradictory lore!

Although of facts he's woefully short,
Encouraged by a mean cohort
Moronically stubborn to make retort,
He's careless if his plans abort.

Yorgle-borgle, Yorgle-borgle,
He's no loving friend!
With avid brush of sticky tar,
Daubing scenes from Acharnar,
He'll burble round the bend!

If his thoughts were not so stilted,
All his facts and reasons tilted,
Lady Truth might not have jilted
Poor old Yorgle, now so wilted!

Yorgle-borgle, Yorgle-borgle,
Hoop! and hup! and ho!
Running backwards fancy-free,
Always chasing after me,
With his gassy blow!

ODE TO SIR PYNTLYRE

Sir Pyntlyre; Euphues
Charmed the birdies off the trees,
But prissy verbiage like yours
Is music only to the boors.

Sir Pyntlyre; Uncle Joe,
Your inspiration and hero,
Vanquished all his enemies;
How's it you're down on your knees?

Sir Pyntlyre; poor Cosette,
Made to suffer and to fret,
Was never treated bad as you;
Does that explain your sniveling boo?

Sir Pyntlyre; realize
What's so clear to other eyes:
Your chosen victim will not crawl.
He's got you nailed to the wall!

ODE TO A WASP

When dealing with a Wasp, alas,
Beware diplomas under glass
For parchment proud in uncials writ
Does not confer a whit of wit.
Before the wizard gave him his
The scarecrow's brain was all afizz
While diplomated Wasps buzz naught
But scuttlebutt and afterthought.
It comes too late, the drab quadrille,
The thin and piping ritornelle,
For Wasp to play a hero part,
Weight thrown left and right with heart.
Yet amid the chittering hoot,
If we bend an ear astute,
A verse we'll catch, though loud and rough
And hard to winnow from the guff,
'Tis this: 'the hum of insect wing
Hath logic more than anything!'

ODE IN INDIGO

Smartly gowned in midnight blue
To tip a toe in morning dew
But never to be doused or sloshed
in waters of the great unwashed.
Unseemly scenes are to deplore,
Yet open eyes look out for more,
While yammering how they don't agree
with any criminality
which happens not to be in vogue;
A taint on this year's style of rogue!
A virginal spirit, pristine fuss,
Thus they finger-waggle us.

ODE TO HIS MISERABLE SELF

Woe and tears, I'll tear my robe,
I pity me as much as Job!
I've dumped out ashes on my head
So crushed am I at what I've read.
All've now seen my erring face:
Quarrelsome, vengeful, wrong and base!
'Artistic genius'? not a hope;
The irony is clear as smoke!
My noble judges, puffed of mind,
Their pointed words prick my behind;
How the poke doth cause me itch!
Shamed am I by their sharp snitch!
But should I not cry out with thanks?
Have they not exposed my pranks
And by the shame of truth inflicted
Put to rights a world afflicted
By the scandal that is mine
And forced me to confess my crime?
'Thanks to them!' therefore, I yelp,
For only by their earnest help
To disappear, to slink away,
To never peep where they may play,
And finally to obey their...sigh;
Welcome to the Internet, guy!

WORM OROBORIAL

Your little poem, weak and strange,
Shows that your I.Q.
Wavers somewhere in the range
Of 80 to 82.

That's not too low, but even so
Should not you modest be
When matching wits with better men,
Such as the likes of me?

You are a snake who loves to lie;
That is established fact.
So no matter how you cry,
Your reputation's sacked!

SEMPER THE KLINGOX

Kling to thine idol Priapic ovation,
But never to facts ye stoop;
Thy microcephalic caput orporation
Is boiling with single-bean soup!
Otiose is the middle and swaddled with grease,
Outward expansion and inward decrease,
When will thy scabriolosity cease
Imbecile yap-doodle?
Thimbleful crap-toodde!
Semper the twaddle police!
Lilyish Putins, marching like ducks,
Tiny ensemble of mini-brain clucks,
Emblematical towel he chucks,
Malister Bishery?
Halitoe Shishery?
Semper such tossage of mucks!

Kling to thine idol Priapic oblation,
And thy shall be brought up short;
Thy microcephalic caput orporation
Might just find itself hauled in court!

PAUL TO ALEXANDER

As 'svelte' to 'fat',
As dog to rat,
As crocodile to salamander;
So is Paul to Alexander.

As prim to bumptious,
As trim to sumptuous
As 'courageous' is to 'dander';
So is Paul to Alexander.

As 'great' to 'puny',
As 'clever' to 'loony',
As 'inspire' is to 'pander';
So is Paul to Alexander.

As parry to bait,
As love to hate,
As 'caress her' is to 'slammed her';
So is Paul to Alexander.

As mountain to pit,
As fountain to spit,
As 'direct' is to 'meander';
So is Paul to Alexander.

As is eloquence to burbles,
As Winston Churchill is to Goebbels,
As diatribe is to slander;
So is Paul to Alexander.

As is 'fact' to 'shot-in-dark',
As is 'score' to 'wide-of-mark'
As Equanimity to flander;
So is Paul to Alexander.

As Vance to Gorky,
As Bugs to Porkey,
As 'vivid' is to that what's blander;
So is Paul to Alexander.

PULSING ZANDER

Oleg Zander,
Pulsy pander,
Sauce for goose
is sauce for gander.
Clod for once
Is clod for good;
Zander dunce
In Pulsy hood.

GRANNY'S GNATS

Pearls in brine,
Pigs in wine,
For Granny Gnats it's buzzing time!

Fly in soup,
Shoe in poop,
Granny Gnats is such a dupe!

THE WORLD STINKER

(a Limerick)

I am Feht: Feht am I,
Epicenter amphetamized,
My mouth is open, opened wide,
Like huffing hippopotamae.

As the planets round the sun,
Like Hadj around Kabaa doth run,
Like Bruce Yergil's naughty tongue
Doth slither up and down his chum,

So the world and all men in it
By me be moved, t'is I who spin it;
T'is my word that doth begin it;
T'is my law which sets its limit.
I am the culminating point,
The heart, the lung the eye, the joint,
The spiritual core, by dint
of g-force bellybutton lint.

Totality, in orbit bent
Around my strained integument,
Doth slid around the whole extent
Its *raison-d'être* there to scent;

Every cultural event,
However, 'puff!' evanescent
Or merely insignificant
Has its cause inside the lint!

Perhaps you'd like a demonstration
Of how my lintish ponderation,
By gravitational rotation,
Effects this cosmic ministration?

Nothing is so quickly done,
Though, if you'll pardon me a pun,
Another sly religious one,
I must say that there is 'nun'

Better fit to tell of Feht
Than in whose corporate fat is set
The course of stars, as in a net
Miraculous fish, Tiberiad wet,

Our Lord Jesus once did get,
Though he's a thing you'd best forget
For, as my battered wife doth fret:
"Obedience is best, you bet!"

By this I mean, it should be clear,
I, myself, my subject dear,
I, myself, my only peer;
I love myself a lot I fear!

So now I give you, right away,
An explanation to dismay
That fink Paul Rhoads, whose feet of clay
Track mud along my cosmic way.

Here's the gist, attend I pray:

Once a thought I did propound,
A question of letters quite profound,
But straight away it ran aground
Of Rhoads' crazy run-around!

He seized it up, and quick as that,
At Jack a villain question spat,
While hiding out, the dirty rat,
Behind a frog, the scaredy cat!

So it is that nothing passes,
No odd smells, no hissing gasses
Escape from poorly sphinctered asses
Unprovoked by lintish masses.

For I am Feht; Feht I am,
Egocentric fountain-pen,
My exits dilate, all unhemmed,
Offal grandiose I send!

ANGLO-BANGLO BLUES

Back wey dat 'ol sun don' shine
Mahty Smahty sip him wine,
Him real smaht, sanscrit 'en all,
Way mo smaht den dat 'ol Pol!
Dat Pol, he BAD. . .you saw him go?
De way he hurt dem good folk so?
Huh! he make me wanna shrug;
Why, he no better den a. . .BUG!

OUT-REACHED

Gaeen Reach! it is a place
Dedicated to the case
That Paul is bad and should be far
Away from where the Good Folk are.
And yet, right here, right in the Reach,
Paul is making public speech!
What is the reason for this fact?
Can it be that Bruce is cracked?
Honest, I can't work it out!
It makes no sense for Bruce to flout
His own sweet logic, clear as mud,
Pure as gook and clean as crud:
Where the good folks discuss Vance
Paul should not be let to prance!

Yet prance he does, with heels a-clicking,
Giving Reachers a through licking,
Spreading wide his foul-mouthology,
Not to mention flat-earth-ology!
Is Bruce a fool, a dink, a dunce? Or
Does he fail to be a censor
Cause of something, rhymes with 'bag',
A fashionable state. . .it sounds like 'sag'. . .
Is Bruce a. . .well you see my point,
I can not say it in this joint,
Cause porno-graphy is vebOOten,
Unlike slander, lies and hoot'n.
So, my question, clear and pure,
Here it is without detour:
Why don't Brucey kick me out?
Izzy worried that without
The faithful presence of his Star
His Reach'll never reach too far?
Why is Brucy much less wiser,
than his favorite wasp advisor?
A well known wasp of BS fame,
He kicked Paul out, and Paul's to blame
Cause Paul won't to his orders bend,
Preferring his own way to wend.
So arrogant is Paul, and stubborn!
He just won't let himself be governed!
Like Al Caida and Saddam,
Pushing Bush from El Kazzam,
Why not push Paul out of here,
Clean up the place and make it clear?
Take the case of Oleg Zander:
He barks his laws but Paul won't pander!
That cad Paul heeds not a bit!
For Oleg-laws, cares not a whit!
Oh the bad one! Oh sublime
Such disobedience and crime!
So black a knave, insane a fellow,
Cause of all this 'mely-melo';
What can be done for neutralization
Of this menace to civilization?
Our democratic cry he'll heed
Or we'll yap at him indeed!
We'll yip and yell until we're horse,
We'll lie and slander too, of course,
Cause any tactic is ok
When you're not happy with the way
That things are going round your place,
As is presently the case;
Which way to turn, which way to trot?
Such a tempest in a pot!
Sadness on the Reach, and yes,
Sadness too on B.B.S.!
And Paul? he lifts the 'ol left brow,
Watching as they have their cow,
Such a folderol big-deal,
Who can believe it's really real?
In fact, no matter, it's all one:
The VIE is getting done!
Its enemies have been deflated
They've been morally castrated.
But what a gyre and what a gymbel!
As important as a thimble!
So sing a song of vancsery:
Fiddle diddle daddle dee!

READ MY LISP

Sodomy lobotomy,
yingle yangle yee.
Mongoloid misogyny,
fingle fangle fee.
If I'm so bad, so very sad,
Well, it's because, you see,
of fingle yingle yangle dong
Who's persecuting me.

Serpentine mendaciousness,
mumbo jumbo jee.
Hymenopteratiuousness,
dingo dango dee.
Though I'm a cad I've hardly had
A respite from the schpeel
of mumbo dumb dango ding
A certified schlemiel.

BUSHWACKED

From Kabul he has chased the brats,
From Bagdad he has chased the rats,
From Saddam's beard he chased the snails;
The Democrats can chase their tails.

LOVE SONG OF AN ANCHORMAN (March 11, 2004)

Oh, Sammy Ben Laudun,
Mayhem and gore,
higledy piggledy
Corpses galore!

"Eta is guilty!"
But if you did score,
allah kaballa
It's you we adore!

Anti-american,
That's what we're for,
shallom kaballom
In Medias Roar!

Oh how we love ya,
Please give us more:
hushilly shushilly
Bush is a snore!

HIPPOPOTAMI

I thought I saw a butterball chewing on a pipe,
I looked again and saw it was a slab of rancid
tripe;
If they don't lug this out, I said,
The neighbors all will gripe.

I thought I saw a Pulsifer licking at a screed,
I looked again and saw it was with what Sir
Fartness peed;
If urine levels rise, I thought,
The Ronalds will be treed.

I thought I saw a fatso with a pimple on his bum,
I looked again and saw it was a gob of Russian
scum;
That's the talking slime, they said,
Paulito taught to run!

THE HOWL OF THE WEEPY SWAMP PIG

Addicted to tobacco,
How the troll doth suffer!
His ubermenchen DNA
Is blushing like a duffer.

Wounded in his ego,
How Phampoon doth bellow!
A lying slanderous mastodon,
A very Kerry-like follow.

Weeping in self-pity,
How the brat doth bawl!
Instead of watching videos
He's mesmerized by Paul.

MANGEON FLASHES

Phampoon,
Pootin goon,
Hide your dot, you fat baboon!

Darwin nut,
Zeppelin gut,
Pea-brain rife with spleen and smut.

Hard at work?
Movie perk!
Off the couch, you stupid jerk!

PITY THE FANATIC!

The fanatic's fanny is far too fat:
When he sits down his stool goes splat!
His toilet cracks, his pants are tight,
When he farts it burns quite bright!

The fanatic's brain is far too small:
His one and only thought is: 'PAUL!'
Though his plots are wreaked and spoiled
He can't admit that he's been foiled.

Pauverito caro Fet!
Pity him; he's in a net
Of his fanatic fantasies,
Gasping the smog of his own decrees!

I THOUGHT I SAW A DEMOCRAT...

I thought I saw a Democrat who won the
nomination,
I looked again and saw it was an anti-Bush
flirtation;
Can you win this race, I asked,
With only defamation?

I thought I saw a hero with his medals on
parade,
I looked again and saw it was a yippy in
charade:
How'd he get them back, I asked,
Despite the palisade?

I thought I saw a candidate debating with
disdain,
I looked again and saw it was a spinning
weather vein;
RPMs like that, I said,
A dervish wouldn't deign.

I'D RATHER BE BLUE (to the tune of 'Danny Boy')

Would Rather rather
That his memos fake
Though fake be true?
Or would he rather
Not be feeling
Quite so very blue?
If Dan can dance
With devil docs
His shuffling darn't be wrong;
It's like in hell, when dining,
How your spoon had best be long.
So sing a song of CBS
The Cock-Bull-Story show,
Of how Dan Rather made a mess
And plunged the ratings low.

KERRY ME

Kerry me back to September ten,
The comfy days of yore,
Of economic girly-men
And virtual president Gore.

Kerry me back to sixty eight,
Cambodian Christmas-tide,
When Nixon was the guy to hate
And American grunts deride.

Kerry me back to the dawn of time
When God ordained creation,
And shuffle it out of reason and rhyme,
To build a deviant nation.

Kerry me back to a primal state,
A never-never land,
I don't want to fight or liberate,
Just bury my head in the sand.

ADVISORAL MENU

Taliban for Breakfast,
Muamar for brunch,
Dr. Khan for pre-lunch snack,
Saddam Hussein for lunch.
They tried to boil Dr. Rice
But, oh, she's such a flirt!
Kim Jong Il for dinner,
Komeni for desert?

OH NOBLE!

Oh, no noble ye.
No bull;
Me no noble be?
Excentric captain, yea.
Trick cap
On caput extra fey.
Me poor moron too?
Pour more
'moron' on me, do?
Ay, no noble thy.
Bull's eye!
No-bull noble I.

PUFFY HUFF

Pipy puff
Wify cuff
Cerebelum?
Not enough.
Wisker skuff
Willy buff
Corporation?
Much too muff.
Blather guff
Sloppy stuff
Capitulation?
Defacto huff.

SONG OF AN UNKNOWN LADY

Here's a story of a dame,
Mrs. Bunter is her name,
who moonlights down in Lover's Lane,
Her hubby blushing green with shame.

Here's what's being said about
Mrs. Bonter, short and stout,
"Cuffs her husband on the snout,
A kaligynic roustabout!"

Here's the scoop on a wild lass,
Mrs. Grunter, full of sass,
She lifts her rim to show her brass
And fumigates with methane gas.

Here's the file on a gal,
A sergeant in the ranks of Tsahal,
Mrs. Gronter fires while
U.N. envoys holler 'Foul!'

Here's the gossip 'bout a chick,
Mrs. Punter, she's so slick
That Mr. Punter's wad, though thick,
Disappears in no time quick.

Here's the tale of a girl,
Mrs. Poonter, such a pearl
Mr. Poonter's whips goes 'whirl';
Will he thwack her? Oh, the churl!

Here's the history of a baud:
Mrs. Gaggle has them awed,
Wriggling so she can't be pawed,
Her atributes remain unflawed.

Here's the word on Mrs. Jee;
You don't know her but, oh me!
If you did her mate would be
Growing horns out to his knee.

I'll now recount a lady who
is married to a lawyer—eeuw!
Seems the only thing he'll do
Is call out "libel!" or "I'll sue!"

This gig is meant to show a man,
—His name's not Don or Fran or Stan—
That blibber-blabber as he can,
He's got a tiger by the ban.

POCLIVITIES OF THE EFFETE

In cyber-land of Cuts, what's long?
It is the memory of the dong,
(though the dong itself's not long)
The dong of Oleg A. LaFong!

Of each event it's kept the score,
And slyly stocked up all its lore
To regurgitate before
A silent court it must not bore.

But dingy-dong, it could not hide
The bulk of Oleg's fetid hide,
And now it cannot, though it tried,
Get the peanuts to abide

It's prickly tricks and dartish slop,
Its pages of malignant fop.
Will its poo-poo, puff and pop
Pooter out and dry to 'stop'?

Or will it try to make it long,
With pill and pull for poor LaFong?
This attempt will do it wrong:
Twill be a sore and reddish dong!



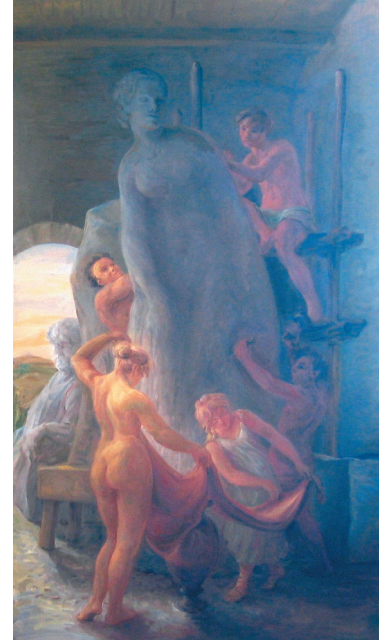
LAST AND LEAST

ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS ISSUE OF EXTANT



Some may recall a report in COSMOPOLIS about Vlad Degen's computer game in progress, based on *The Dragon Masters*. This effort came to an end when his Play-By-Mail game rights were taken away in favor of a new film option (which, after more than a year, has shown no signs of life) when insisted that all types of game rights be included. Frustrated in this, Vlad and I changed direction, profiting from much of what had been developed for 'Dragon Masters', in favor of a game of medieval statecraft. The dragon images which decorate the pages of EXTANT 22 are the now obsolete basis of a opening animation for the defunct game, and the three figures on page 47 are graphic for the main screen of the new game.

Flanking this text are small images of two large panels, painted in oil, part of an elaborate decoration, soon to be complete. It's theme is the history of Praxiteles and his Venus of Cnidus, and includes about 80 oil panels, as well as fresco and bas relief.



ADIEU EXTANT!

This is the last issue of EXTANT. We hope to present the whole collection of 22 issues in a bound volume, in parallel with Cx3. I wish to express my gratitude to all who helped publish EXTANT (often at some inconvenience to themselves) as well as the contributors and readers!



Thanks to
Hans van der Veeke
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