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VIE BOOK SET AND VOLUME AVAILABILITY

A number of sets, in private hands, as well as certain individual volumes, are on sale. Those interested may contact EXTANT, as well as watching E-bay, where a Readers set recently sold for \$3,461.00. The original \$1250.00 price for early Readers subscription (a mere \$28.40 per volume + shipping) is a dream of the past. There is a first printing Readers set currently on sale for \$4000.00 (contact EXTANT).



THE VANCIAN DELIGHTS OF HERODOTUS

Nothing is impossible in the long lapse of ages.

BOOK V, 9

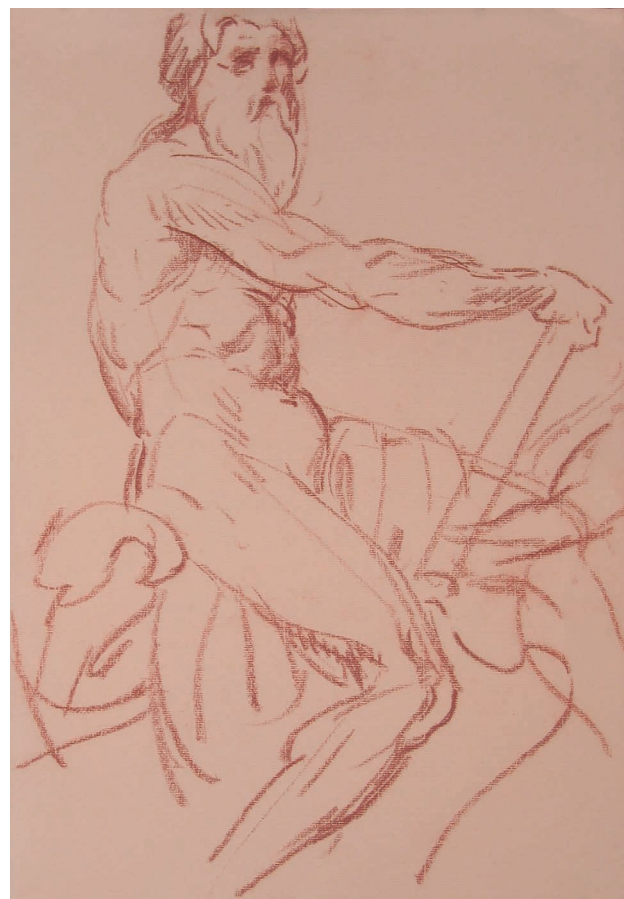
My recent reading of Herodotus was such a surprisingly vancian experience that I asked Jack if he had read him. He has, but only this year; "I know all that stuff", he commented, "but I wanted to hear it from the horse's mouth." Well, I guess he did, because the parallels are constant and striking.

They are of two sorts.

The more profound is a general one. Herodotus' work is not simply a history. It could just as well be called a travel log, but it is more than either. The book deals with the invasion of Greece by Xerxes. Greece at that time included the territory of the modern nation, plus the western coast of Turkey, then know as Ionia. These areas, though unified by language and religion, were politically disunified. When the truces of the sacred games—such as those, once every

four years, at Olympus—were not operative, the Greeks warred among themselves like a passel of Rhunes, or like the societies described in *The Miracle Workers*, *The Dragon Masters* or *The Last Castle*. As for the Persian empire, it was the opposite; politically unified and culturally heterogenous. My version of Herodotus is the Rawlinson translation, in the Everyman version of 1948. In his notes the editor, E. D. Blakeney, quotes J. B. Bury's *Ancient Greek Historians* (a lecture from 1909):

The theme of Herodotus — the struggle of Greece with the Orient — possessed for him a deeper meaning than the political result of the Persian War. It was the contact and collision of two different types of civilization; of peoples of two different characters and different political institutions. In the last division of his work, where the final struggle of Persia and Greece is narrated, this contest between the slavery of the barbarian and the liberty of the Greek,



between Oriental autocracy and Hellenic constitutionalism, is ever present and is forcibly brought out. But the contrast of Hellenic with Oriental culture pervades the whole work; it informs the unity of the external theme with the deeper unity of an inner meaning.

Herodotus recounts Xerxes' expedition—foiled in the

amazing battles of Marathon, Salamis and Platea—not as a mere confrontation of armed forces, but as a clash of civilizations. To achieve this he gives not only background to the quarrel, with the often colorful antecedents of the principal actors, but details the cultures of the endless tribes—Xerxes' horde was composed of peoples from Egypt to present day Armenia—with their dress and customs, religion and government, economy and civic monuments. These pocket histories constitute a study in comparative culture as charming as a festival of vancian footnotes. There is a shared attitude in Herodotus and Vance, a pan-optical, cultural-centered perspective, but it goes deeper. They share a combination of a hard-headed or even somewhat cynical outlook, with a child-like delight in narratives of strange, surprising, and sometimes horrifying spectacles.

There is another aspect to this general resemblance. Vance shares with Herodotus a feeling for the tragic character of life, the precarious quality of all success and happiness in a world dominated by chance—or ruled by jealous gods if you prefer. As it expresses itself in Vance this attitude is perhaps closer to Spengler's crepuscular thesis of civilizational birth and death.

But the parallels can also be quite specific. One constantly stumbles upon names redolent of Vance. There is a man called Amiantus*, a tribe of Hyrcanians†, and another of Alarodians**. The Athenians have a 'pit of punishment',‡ while the Siphnian town-hall is called the prytaneum‡. In *Coup de Grace* Vance has 'priests of Cambyses', and he mentions Xerxes in *The Stark*. The later passage, rife with spenglerian perspectives themselves apparently rooted in Herodotus, is worth quoting:

The Socratics, he says, represent the genius of Occidental civilization, stemming to the liberal Athenians, developing toward the West.

Communism and the elite Optimum Humanism, on the other hand, is the genius of the Oriental mind, having developed from the Sumerian priest-kings, through Xerxes, Darius, the Byzantines, etc.

Kryzenkov ruefully admits the cool cleverness of the Socratic speaker, who has deftly tied Oriental Absolutism, Communism, and Optimum Humanism in the same package.

THE STARK

Herodotus is a great and varied feast, and the selections which follow are by no means inclusive; they are an inevitably narrow but I hope appetizing view of some of the most striking vancian parallels. I recommend Herodotus most warmly to all who love Vance.



* Book VI, 127.

† Book VII, 133.

** Book VII, 79, reminiscent of Arodim, the god name Viole Falushe uses for himself.

‡ Book VII, 63; there is the goddess Hyrcania in *Ports of Call*, and this passage in *Wild Thyme and Violets*: 'Each person must cut his own trail through the Hyrcanian jungle of the future.'

‡ Book III, 57. One thinks of the prutanshyr at Welgen, the Catademnon on Damar, or the Exhibitory of Maz.

RAPE OR MUTUAL CONSENT?

The first cause of the famous quarrel, or feud, was the abduction of some Argive women (Greeks) by a group of Phoenicians (Asiatics), followed, on the other side, by some Cretans (Greeks) who carried off Europe, the daughter of the king of Tyre (an Asiatic). After recounting these mutual insults, Herodotus makes this comment:

Now as for the carrying off of women, it is the deed, they say of a rogue; but to make astir about such as are carried off, argues a man a fool. Men of sense care nothing for such women, since it is plain that without their own consent they would never be forced away. The Asiatics, when the Greeks ran off with their women, never troubled themselves about the matter, but the Greeks, for the sake of a single Lacedaemonian girl, collected a vast armament, invaded Asia, and destroyed the kingdom of Priam.*

BOOK I, 4

CULTURALLY BASED CONTEMPT

Here is a nicely vancian example of cultural discontinuity. The Lacedaemonians sent a herald to Cyrus, king of Persia, warning him not to attack any Greek cities, particularly those in Ionia, "since they would not allow it":

Cyrus is said, on hearing the speech of the herald, to have asked some Greeks who were standing by, "Who these Lacedaemonians† were, and what was their number, that they dared to send him such a notice?" When he had received their reply, he turned to the Sparta herald and said, "I have never yet been afraid of any men, who have a set place in the middle of their city, where they come together to cheat each other and forswear themselves. If I live, the Spartans shall have troubles enough of their own to talk of, without concerning themselves about the Ionians. Cyrus intended these words as a reproach against all the Greeks, because of their having market places where they buy and sell, which is a custom unknown to the Persians, who never make purchases in open marts, and indeed have not in their whole country a single market-place.‡

BOOK I, 153

* The girl, of course, is Helen, and the kingdom of Priam is Troy. So much for that great war, the mythical foundation of the 'Hellenistic culture'. We here see what is so often, and so foolishly, referred to as a 'modern critical sense'.

† The Lacedaemonians, also known as Spartans, not only had the most powerful army of all the Greeks, but were reputedly invincible on the battle field, partly because of the famous Spartan laws: "...the Lacedaemonians, when they fight singly, are as good men as any in the world, and when they fight in a body, are the bravest of all. For though they be freemen, they are not in all respects free; Law is the master whom they own; and this master they fear more than thy subjects fear thee. Whatever he commands they do; and his commandment is always the same: it forbids them to flee in battle, whatever the number of their foes, and requires them to stand firm, and either to conquer or die. Book VII, 104.

‡ Rawlinson comments: "Markets in the strict sense of word are still unknown in the East, where the bazaars, which are collections of shops, take their place. The Persians of the noble class would neither buy nor sell at all, since they would be supplied by their dependents and through presents with all that they required for the common purposes of life. Those of lower rank would buy at the shops, which were not allowed in the Forum, or public place of meeting."

SHADES OF 'THE LAST CASTLE'

Harpagus was the seneschal to the Median king Astyages. In a most dreadful tale this insane tyrant avenged himself upon his servant by killing Harpagus' son, and cooking him, and serving him as the main dish at a banquet, to which he invited Harpagus as the guest of honor. The fault of Harpagus was to have failed to kill a child, put into his hands for the purpose, who later grew up to become the great king Cyrus. Cyrus later appointed Harpagus to conduct a war in Ionia, whereupon Harpagus:

*. . . entered Ionia, and took the cities by mean of mounds.
Forcing the enemy to shut themselves up within their
defenses, he heaped mounds of earth against tier walls, and
thus carried the towns.*

BOOK I, 162

GODS LIKE FINUKA AND VANCIAN SKEPTICISM

Herodotus enjoyed himself in Egypt, where he toured around meeting other intellectuals. We learn that the Egyptian gods, like the Roman gods, are the same as the Greek gods, but with other names. For example, Orsisir is Bacchus (the Roman Dionysus), and Isis is Demeter (the Roman Ceres). As for his attitude, Herodotus is carefully reverent; several times says he cannot reveal such and such, which certain priests have told him, because it would be sacrilegious to do so. But his attitude—at least in its metaphysical aspect, because there is nothing anti-clerical about him—seems to me a half-amused, half-intrigued agnosticism, exactly equivalent to Vance's narrative stance. The modern reader must, perhaps, make some allowances for the cultural environment of 4th century Greece, but the degree of adjustment necessary seems minimal.

In his discussion of the origin of the gods, for example, we read:

*In the early times the Pelasgi, as I know by information
which I got at Dodōna, offered sacrifices of all kinds, and
prayed to the gods, but had no distinct names or appellations
for them, since they had never heard of any. They called*

*them "disposers", because they had disposed and arranged
all things in such a beautiful order. . . . Whence the gods
severally sprang, whether or no they had all existed from
eternity, what forms they bore—these are questions of
which the Greeks knew nothing until 'the other day', so to
speak. For Homer and Hesiod were the first to compose
Theogonies, and give the gods their epithets, and to allot
them their several offices and occupations, and describe their
forms; and they lived but four hundred years before my
time, as I believe. As for the poets who are thought by some
to be earlier than these, they are, in my judgement, decidedly
later writers. In these matters I have the authority of the
priestess of Dodōna for the former portion of my statement;
what I have said of Homer and Hesiod is my own opinion.*

BOOK II, 52-53

A SEXUAL CUSTOM

*The Babylonians have one most shameful custom. Every woman born in
the country must once in her life
go and sit down in the precinct
of Venus, and there consort
with a stranger. Many of the
wealthier sort, who are too proud
to mix with the others, drive in
covered carriages to the precinct,
followed by a goodly train of
attendants, and there take their
station. But the larger number
seat themselves within the holy
enclosure with wreaths of string
about their heads,—and here
there is always a great crowd,
some coming and others going;
lines of cord mark out paths in
all directions among the women,
and the strangers pass along
them to make their choice. A
woman who has once taken her
seat is not allowed to return
home till one of the strangers
throws a silver coin into her lap,
and takes her with him beyond
the holy ground. When he throws
the coin he says these words—
"The goddess Mylitta prosper
thee." (Venus is called Mylitta by
the Assyrians.) The silver coin*

*may be of any size; it cannot be refused, for that is forbidden by the
law, since once thrown it is sacred. The woman goes with the first man
who throws her money, and rejects no one. When she has gone with him,
and so satisfied the goddess, she returns home, and from that time forth no
gift however great will prevail with her. Such of the women as are tall
and beautiful are soon released, but others who are ugly have to stay a
long time before they can fulfil the law.*

BOOK I, 199

After describing various fantastical Egyptian ceremonies and beliefs, Herodotus goes on to describe their doctrine of reincarnation, starting with a little disclaimer:

Such as think the tales told by the Egyptians credible are free to accept them for history. For my own part, I propose to myself throughout my whole work faithfully to record the tradition of the several nations. The Egyptians maintain that Ceres and Bacchus preside in the realms below. They were also the first to broach the opinion that the soul of man is immortal, and that, when the body dies, it enters into the form of an animal which is born at the moment, thence passing from one animal into another, until it has circled though the forms of all the creatures which tenant the earth, the water and the air, after which it enters again into a human frame, and is born anew. The whole period of the transmigration is (they say) three thousand years.

BOOK II, 123

Recounting the advance of the army of Xerxes into Greece, Herodotus describes a lake in Thessaly, formerly closed in by hills, but now having an outlet to the sea:

The Thessallians tell us that the gorge through which the water escapes was caused by Neptune; and this is likely enough; at least any man who believes that Neptune causes earthquakes, and that chasms so produced are his handiwork, would say, upon seeing this rent, that Neptune did it. For it plainly appeared to me that the hills had been torn asunder by an earthquake.

BOOK VII, 129

The Persian attack on the Thessallians was hampered by the weather:

The storm lasted three days. At length the Magians, by offering victims to the Winds, and charming them with the help of conjurers, while at the same time they sacrificed to Thetis and the Nereicis, succeeded in laying the storm four days after it first began; or perhaps ceased of itself.

BOOK VII, 191

The naval victory at Salamis was preceeded by a daring and successful action near Marathon, at about the time of that land battle.

I cannot say that there is no truth in prophecies, or feel inclined to call in question those which speak with clearness, when I think of the following:—

*When they shall bridge with their ships to the sacred strand of Diana
Girt with the golden falchion, and eke to marine Cynosura,*
Mad hope swelling their hearts at the downfall of beautiful Athens—
Then shall godlike Right extinguish haughty Presumption,*

* A promontory near Marathon.

*Insult's furious offspring, who thinketh to overthrow all things.
Brass with brass shall mingle, and Mars with blood shall empurple
Ocean's waves. Then—then shall the day of Grecia's freedom
Come from Victory fair, and Saturn's son all-seeing.*

When I look to this, and perceive how clearly Bacis spoke, I neither venture myself to say anything against prophecies, nor do I approve of others impugning them.

BOOK VIII, 77

SPHINCTER CLASPS

Herodotus describes the various Egyptian procedures of embalming, which are ranked by cost:

If persons wish to avoid expense, and choose the second process, the following is the method pursued:—Syringes are filled with oil made from the cedar-tree, which is then, without any incision or disemboweling, injected into the abdomen. The passage by which it might be likely to return is stopped, and the body is laid in natrum the prescribed number of days. At the end of the time the cedar oil is allowed to make its escape, and such is its power that it brings with it the whole stomach and intestine in a liquid state.

BOOK II, 87

This passage finds a second vancian echo in the famous passage from chapter 2 of *The Palace of Love*, where Kirth Gersen and Alusz Iphigenia Eperje-Tokay are taken on a tour of a forest on Sarkovy by Edelrod the venifice:

Edelrod went on: "We are frequently asked why we persist in deriving our poisons from natural sources. Why do we not immure ourselves in laboratories and synthesize? The answer is of course that natural poisons, being initially associated with living tissue, are the more effective."

"I would suspect the presence of catalyzing impurities in the natural poisons," Gersen suggested, "rather than metaphysical association."

Edelrod held up a minatory finger. "Never scoff at the role of the mind! For instance let me see...there should be one somewhere near...Yes. See there: the little reptile." Under a mottled white and blue leaf rested a small lizard-like creature.

"This is the meng. From one of his organs comes a substance which can be distributed either as ulgar or as furux. The same substance, mind you! But when sold as ulgar and used as such, the symptoms are spasms, biting off of the tongue and a frothing madness. When sold and used as furux, the interskeletal cartilage is dissolved so that the frame goes limp."

LAND BOATS

Herodotus evokes a marvellously vancian effect of the Nile:

When the Nile overflows, the country is covered in a sea, and nothing appears but the cities, which look like the islands in the Egean. At this season boats no longer keep to course of



*the river, but sail right across the plain. On the voyage from Naucratis to Memphis at this season, you pass close to the pyramids . . . You can sail also from the maritime town of Canôbus across the flat to Naucratis, passing by the cities of Anthylla and Archandropolis.**

BOOK II, 97-98

TAXATION

Viole Falushe, calling himself Arodin (and other names), used a special system of taxation to finance his Palace of Love.

* The passage continues, with a reference to a predecessor of Imelda Marcos: The former of these cities, which is a place of note, is assigned expressly to the wife of the ruler of Egypt for the time being, to keep her in shoes.

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The same scheme is found in Herodotus, where the funds needed serve a similar purpose; construction of a pyramid. The exploited party, however, coolly reaps a parallel benefit:

The wickedness of Cheops reached to such a pitch that, when he had spent all his treasures and wanted more, he sent his daughter to the stewards, with orders to procure him a certain sum — how much I cannot say, for I was not told; she procured it, however, and at the same time, bent on leaving a monument which should perpetuate her own memory, she required each man to make her a present of a stone towards the works which she contemplated. With these stones she built the pyramid which stands midmost of the three that are in front of the great pyramid, measuring along each side a hundred and fifty feet.

BOOK II, 126

PANDECTS, CHRONICLES AND REGISTERS

Vance enchants us with ancient scrolls and records filled with information of past eons. The mother of all such documents must be this one, evoked by Herodotus in his hobnobbing with the Egyptian elite:

The Greeks regard Hercules, Bacchus, and Pan as the youngest of the gods. With the Egyptians, contrariwise, Pan is exceedingly ancient, and belongs to those whom they call "the eight gods," who exist before the rest. Hercules is one of the gods of the second order, who are known as "the twelve;" and Bacchus belongs to the gods of the third order, whom the twelve produced. I have already mentioned how many years intervened according to the Egyptians between the birth of Hercules and the reign of Amasis. From Pan to this period they count a still longer time; and from Bacchus, who is the youngest of the three, they reckon fifteen thousand years to the reign of that king. In these matters they say they cannot be mistaken, as they have always kept count of the years, and noted them in their registers. But from the present day to the time of Bacchus, the reputed son of Semelé, daughter of Cadmus, is a period of not more than sixteen hundred years; to that of Hercules, son of Alcmena, is about nine hundred; while to the time of Pan, son of Penelopé, (Pan, according to the Greeks, was her child by Mercury), is a shorter space than to the Trojan war, eight hundred years or thereabouts.*

BOOK II, 145

SHADES OF PAO

A certain Psammentichus, one of twelve kings ruling Egypt, eliminated his rivals thanks to the help of a group of Ionian and Carian pirates, shipwrecked in Egypt.

To the Ionians and Carians who had lent him their assistance Psammentichus assigned as abodes two places opposite each

* 17,000 years. Amasis was a king of Egypt.

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other, one on either side of the Nile, which received the name of "the Camps". He also made good all the splendid promises by which he had gained their support; and further, he entrusted to their care certain Egyptian children, whom they were to teach the language of the Greeks. These children, thus instructed, became the parents of the entire class of interpreters in Egypt.

BOOK II, 154

CARVED FROM A SINGLE MOONSTONE*

The most wonderful thing that was actually to be seen about this temple [of Latona] was a chapel in the enclosure made of a single stone, the length and height of which were the same, each wall being forty cubits square, and the whole a single block!

BOOK II, 155

[Amasis] presented to the temple [of Minerva] a number of large colossal statues, and several prodigious androphynxes,† besides certain stones for the repairs, of a most extraordinary size. Some of these he got from the quarries over against Memphis, but the largest were brought from Elephantiné, which is twenty days' voyage from Saïs. Of all these wonderful masses that which I most admire is a chamber made of a single stone, which was quarried at Elephantiné. It took three years to convey this block from the quarry to Saïs and in the conveyance were employed no fewer than two thousand laborers. . . .

BOOK II, 175

SCYTHIAN CUSTOMS

These recall those of folk Cugel encounters on the shores of the Songan sea.

. . . when the king dies, they dig a grave, which is square in shape, and of great size. When it is ready, they take the king's corpse, and, having opened the belly, and cleaned out the inside, fill the cavity with a preparation of chopped cypress, frankincense, parsley-seed, and anise-seed, after which they sew up the opening, enclose the body in wax, and, placing it on a waggon, carry it about through all the different tribes. On this procession each tribe, when it receives the corpse, imitates the example which is first set by the Royal Scythians; every man chops off a piece of his ear, crops his hair close, and makes a cut all round his arm, lacerates his forehead and his nose, and thrusts an arrow through his left hand. Then they who have the care of the corpse carry it with them to another of the tribes which are under the Scythian rule, followed by those whom they first visited. On completing the circuit of all the tribes under their

sway, they find themselves in the country of the Gerrhi, who are the most remote of all, and so they come to the tombs of the kings. There the body of the dead king is laid in the grave prepared for it, stretched upon a mattress; spears are fixed in the ground on either side of the corpse, and beams stretched across above it to form a roof, which is covered with a thatching of osier twigs. In the open space around the body of the king they bury one of his concubines, first killing her by strangling, and also his cup-bearer, his cook, his groom, his lacquey, his messenger, some of his horses, firstlings of all his other possessions, and some golden cups; for they use neither silver nor brass. After this they set to work, and raise a vast mound above the grave, all of them vying with each other and seeking to make it as tall as possible.

When a year is gone by, further ceremonies take place. Fifty of the best of the late king's attendants are taken, all native Scythians — for as bought slaves are unknown in the country, the Scythian kings choose any of their subjects that they like, to wait on them — fifty of these are taken and strangled, with fifty of the most beautiful horses. When they are dead, their bowels are taken out, and the cavity cleaned, filled full of chaff, and straightway sewn up again. This done, a number of posts are driven into the ground, in sets of two pairs each, and on every pair half the felly of a wheel is placed archwise; then strong stakes are run lengthways through the bodies of the horses from tail to neck, and they are mounted up upon the fellies, so that the felly in front supports the shoulders of the horse, while that behind sustains the belly and quarters, the legs dangling in mid-air; each horse is furnished with a bit and bridle, which latter is stretched out in front of the horse, and fastened to a peg. The fifty strangled youths are then mounted severally on the fifty horses. To effect this, a second stake is passed through their bodies along the course of the spine to the neck; the lower end of which projects from the body, and is fixed into a socket, made in the stake that runs lengthwise down the horse. The fifty riders are thus ranged in a circle round the tomb, and so left.

Such, then, is the mode in which the kings are buried: as for the people, when any one dies, his nearest of kin lay him upon a waggon and take him round to all his friends in succession: each receives them in turn and entertains them with a banquet, whereat the dead man is served with a portion of all that is set before the others; this is done for forty days, at the end of which time the burial takes place.*

BOOK IV, 70-73

* Not as directly vancian, but notable for various reasons, is this passage, at Book III, 8: The Arabs keep . . . pledges more religiously than almost any other people. They plight faith with the forms following. When two men would swear a friendship, they stand on each side of a third: he with a sharp stone makes a cut on the inside of the hand of each near the middle finger, and, taking a piece of their dress, dips it in the blood of each, and moistens therewith seven stones lying in the midst, calling the while on Bacchus and Urania. After this, the man who makes the pledge commends the stranger (or the citizen, if citizen he be) to all his friends, and they deem themselves bound to stand to the engagement. They have but these two gods, to wit, Bacchus and Urania; and they say that in their mode of cutting their hair, they follow Bacchus. Now their practice is to cut it in a ring, away from the temples. Bacchus they call in their language Orotal, and Urania, Alilat.

* From 'Rhalto the Marvellous': Arch-Mage Mael Lel Laio lived in a palace carved from a single moon-stone, and the archveult castle 'Djorin' was 'in the shape of a great pink pearl'. In 'The Domains of Koryphon' we read: ". . . the four men approached the shrine, if such it were, and saw, to their stupefaction, that the entire edifice had been carved from a single mass of pink quartz, heavily shot with gold. † Granite blocks.

THE KING AND THE GOD

This story has a nice vancian twist. Cambyses, tyrant of Persia, had conquered Egypt, where he committed various extreme and impious acts. He then decided to invade other places, but his army was defeated, and the cannibals in Ethiopia alarmed him, so he returned to Egypt:

About the time Cambyses arrived at Memphis, Apis appeared to the Egyptians. Now Apis is a god whom the Greeks call Epaphus. As soon as he appeared, straight away all the Egyptians arrayed themselves in their gayest garments and fell to feasting and jollity: which when Cambyses saw, making sure that their rejoicings were on account of his own ill success, he called before him the officers who had charge of Memphis, and demanded of them. — "Why, when he was in Memphis before, the Egyptians had done nothing of this kind, but waited until now, when he had returned with the loss of so many of his troops?" The officers made answer; "That one of their gods had appeared to them, a god who at long intervals of time had been accustomed to show himself in Egypt — and that always on this appearance the whole of Egypt feasted and kept jubilee." When Cambyses heard this, he told them that they lied, and as liars he condemned them all to suffer death.

When they were dead, he called the priests to his presence, and questioning them received the same answer; whereupon he observed; "That he would soon know whether a tame god had really come to dwell in Egypt" — and straightway, without another word, he bade them bring Apis to him. So they went from his presence to fetch the god. Now this Apis, or Epaphus, is the calf of a cow which is never afterward able to bear young. The Egyptians say that fire comes down from heaven upon the cow, which thereupon conceives Apis. The calf which is so called has the following marks: — He is black, with a square spot of white upon his forehead, and on his back the figure of an eagle; the hairs in his tail are double, and there is a beetle upon his tongue.

When the priests returned bringing Apis with them, Cambyses, like the harebrained person that he was, drew his dagger, and aimed at the belly of the animal, but missed his mark, and stabbed him in the thigh. Then he laughed, and said thus to the priests: — "Oh! blockheads, and think ye that gods become like this, of flesh and blood, and sensible to steel? A fit god indeed for Egyptians, such a one! But it shall cost you dear that you have made me your laughing-stock!" When he

had so spoken he ordered those, whose business it was, to scourge the priests, and if they found any of the Egyptians keeping festival, to put them to death. Thus was the feast stopped throughout the land of Egypt, and the priests suffered punishment. Apis, wounded in the thigh, lay some time pining in the temple; at last he died of his wound, and the priests buried him secretly without the knowledge of Cambyses.

BOOK III, 28-29

CULTURAL RELATIVISM IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Thus it appears certain to me, by a great variety of proofs, that Cambyses was raving mad; he would not else have set himself to make a mock of holy rites and long-established usages. For if one were to offer men to choose out of all the customs in the world such as seemed to them the best, they would examine the whole number, and end by preferring their own; so convinced are they that their own usages far surpass those of all others. Unless, therefore, a man was mad, it is not likely that he would make sport of such matters. That people have this feeling about their laws may be seen by very many proofs: among others, by the following. Darius . . . called into his presence certain Greeks who were at hand, and asked — "What he should pay them to eat the bodies of their fathers when they died?" To which they answered, that there was no sum that would tempt them to do such a thing. He then sent for certain Indians, of the race called Callatians, men who eat their fathers, and asked them, while the Greeks stood by, and knew by the help of an interpreter all that was said — "What he should give them to burn the bodies of their fathers at their decease?" The Indians exclaimed aloud, and bade him forbear such language. Such is men's wont herein: and Pindar was right, in my judgement, when he said, "Law is the king o'er all."

BOOK III, 38



THE ORIGINAL GREEN PEARL

A certain Polycrates made himself king of Samos, and then became a friend with Amasis, king of Egypt. Polycrates then went on to take over many cities in a series of amazing military successes:

The exceeding good fortune of Polycrates did not escape the notice of Amasis, who was much disturbed thereat. When therefore his successes continued increasing, Amasis wrote him the following letter, and sent it to Samos. 'Amasis to Polycrates thus sayeth: It is a pleasure to hear of a friend and ally prospering, but thy exceeding prosperity does not cause me joy, forasmuch as I know that the gods are envious. My wish for myself, and for those whom I love, is, to be now successful, and now to meet with a check; thus passing through life amid alternate good and ill, rather than with perpetual good fortune. For never yet did I hear tell of any one succeeding in all his undertakings, who did not meet with calamity at last, and come to utter ruin. Now, therefore, give ear to my words, and meet thy good luck in this way: bethink thee which of all thy treasures thou valuest most and canst least bear to part with; take it, whatsoever it be, and throw it away, so that it may be sure never to come any more into the sight of man. Then, if thy good fortune be not thenceforth chequered with ill, save thyself from harm by again doing as I have counselled.'

When Polycrates read this letter, and perceived that the advice of Amasis was good, he considered carefully with himself which of the treasures that he had in store it would grieve him most to lose. After much thought he made up his mind that it was a signet-ring which he was wont to wear, an emerald set in gold, the workmanship of Theodore, son of Télecles, a Samian. So he determined to throw this away; and, manning a penteconter, he went on board, and bade the sailors put out into the open sea. When he was now a long way from the island, he took the ring from his finger, and, in the sight of all those who were on board, flung it into the deep. This done, he returned home, and gave vent to his sorrow.

Now it happened five or six days afterwards that a fisherman caught a fish so large and beautiful that he thought it well deserved to be made a present of to the king. So he took it with him to the gate of the palace, and said that he wanted to see Polycrates. Then Polycrates allowed him to come in, and the fisherman gave him the fish with these words following — "Sir king, when I took this prize, I thought I would not carry it to market, though I am a poor man who live by my trade. I said to myself, it is worthy of Polycrates and his greatness; and so I brought it here to give it to you." The speech pleased the king, who thus spoke in reply: — "Thou didst right well, friend, and I am doubly indebted, both for the gift, and for the speech. Come now, and sup with me." So the fisherman went home, esteeming it a high honour that he had been asked to sup with the king. Meanwhile the servants, on cutting open the fish, found the signet of their master in its belly. No sooner did they see it

than they seized upon it, and, hastening to Polycrates with great joy, restored it to him, and told him in what way it had been found. The king, who saw something providential in the matter, forthwith wrote a letter to Amasis, telling him all that had happened, what he had himself done, and what had been the upshot — and despatched the letter to Egypt.

When Amasis had read the letter of Polycrates, he perceived that it does not belong to man to save his fellow-man from the fate which is in store for him; likewise he felt certain that Polycrates would end ill, as he prospered in everything, even finding what he had thrown away. So he sent a herald to Samos, and dissolved the contract of friendship. This he did, that when the great and heavy misfortune came, he might escape the grief which he would have felt if the sufferer had been his bond-friend.

BOOK III, 40-43

RACHPOLS

The many follies of Cambyses led to Persia being ruled by an imposter, a Magus who pretended to be the brother of Cambyses. But a clever bedroom ruse, involving touching his head in the dark, revealed his identity to a group of conspirators. To spur the band to insurrection, one of their number encouraged them in these words:

Consider that we Persians are governed by a Median Magus, and one, too, who has had his ears cut off!

BOOK III, 73

A PANOPLY OF EXOTIC CUSTOMS

Eastward of these [Marsh men] are another tribe, called Padzans, who are wanderers, and live on raw flesh. This tribe is said to have the following customs: — If one of their number be ill, man or woman, they take the sick person, and if he be a man, the men of his acquaintance proceed to put him to death, because, they say, his flesh would be spoilt for them if he pined and wasted away with sickness. The man protests he is not ill in the least; but his friends will not accept his denial — in spite of all he can say, they kill him, and feast themselves on his body. So also if a woman be sick, the women, who are her friends, take her and do with her exactly the same as the men. If one of them reaches to old age, about which there is seldom any question, as commonly before that time they have had some disease or other, and so have been put to death — but if a man, notwithstanding, comes to be old, then they offer him in sacrifice to their gods, and afterwards eat his flesh.

BOOK III, 99

Passing over a great extent of this rough country, you come to a people dwelling at the foot of lofty mountains, who are said to be all — both men and women — bald from their birth, to have flat noses, and very long chins . . . They live

on the fruit of a certain tree, the name of which is Ponticum; in size it is about equal to our fig-tree, and it bears a fruit like a bean, with a stone inside. When the fruit is ripe, they strain it through cloths; the juice which runs off is black and thick, and is called by the natives "aschy". They lap this up with their tongues, and also mix it with milk for a drink; while they make the lees, which are solid, into cakes, and eat them instead of meat; for they have but few sheep in their country, in which there is no good pasturage. Each of them dwells under a tree, and they cover the tree in winter with a cloth of thick white felt, but take off the covering in the summer-time. No one harms these people, for they are looked upon as sacred, — they do not even possess any warlike weapons. When their neighbours fall out, they make up the quarrel; and when one flies to them for refuge, he is safe from all hurt. They are called the Argippæans.

Up to this point the territory of which we are speaking is very completely explored . . . but beyond the bald-headed men lies a region of which no one can give any exact account. Lofty and precipitous mountains, which are never crossed, bar further progress. The bald men say, but it does not seem to me credible, that the people who live in these mountains have feet like goats; and that after passing them you find another race of men, who sleep during one half of the year. This latter statement appears to me quite unworthy of credit. The region east of the bald-headed men is well known to be inhabited by the Issedonians, but the tract that lies to the north of these two nations is entirely unknown, except by the accounts which they give of it.

The Issedonians are said to have the following customs. When a man's father dies, all the near relatives bring sheep to the house; which are sacrificed, and their flesh cut in pieces, while at the same time the dead body undergoes the like treatment. The two sorts of flesh are afterwards mixed together, and the whole is served up at a banquet. The head of the dead man is treated differently: it is stripped bare, cleansed, and set in gold. It then becomes an ornament on which they pride themselves, and is brought out year by year at the great festival which sons keep in honour of their fathers' death, just as the Greeks keep their *Genesia*. In other respects the Issedonians are reputed to be observers of justice: and it is to be remarked that their women have equal authority with the men.

BOOK IV, 23-26



THE PAPHNISSIAN BATHS?

Now the Tearus is said by those who dwell near it, to be the most healthful of all streams, and to cure, among other diseases, the scab either in man or beast. Its sources, which are eight and thirty in number, all flowing from the same rock, are in part cold, in part hot.

BOOK IV, 90

IMMORTALITY, AND SAPONID SACRIFICE

The belief of the Getae in respect to immortality is the following. They think that they do not really die, but that when they depart this life they go to Zalmoxis, who is called also Gebeleizis by some among them. To this god every five years they send a messenger, who is chosen by lot out of the whole nation, and charged to bear him their several requests. Their mode of sending him is this. A number of them stand in order, each holding in his hand three darts; others take the man who is to be sent to Zalmoxis, and swinging him by his hands and feet, toss him into the air so that he falls upon

SCYTHIAN WIND RUNNERS

Having neither cities nor forts, and carrying their dwellings with them wherever they go; accustomed, moreover, one and all of them, to shoot from horseback; and living not by husbandry but on their cattle, their wagons the only houses that they possess, how can they fail of being unconquerable, and unassailable even?

BOOK IV, 46

the points of the weapons. If he is pierced and dies, they think that the god is propitious to them; but if not, they lay the fault on the messenger, who (they say) is a wicked man: and so they choose another to send away. The messages are given while the man is still alive. This same people, when it lightens and thunders, aim their arrows at the sky, uttering threats against the god; and they do not believe that there is any god but their own.

I am told by the Greeks who dwell on the shores of the Hellespont and the Pontus, that this Zalmoxis was in reality a man, that he lived at Samos, and while there was the slave of Pythagoras son of Mnesarchus. After obtaining his freedom he grew rich, and leaving Samos, returned to his own country. The Thracians at that time lived in a wretched way, and were a poor ignorant race; Zalmoxis, therefore, who by his commerce with the Greeks, and especially with one who was by no means their most contemptible philosopher, Pythagoras to wit, was acquainted with the Ionic mode of life and with manners more refined than those current among his countrymen, had a chamber built, in which from time to time he received and feasted all the principal Thracians, using the occasion to teach them that neither he, nor they, his boon companions, nor any of their posterity would ever perish, but that they would all go to a place where they would live for aye in the enjoyment of every conceivable good. While he was acting in this way, and holding this kind of discourse, he was constructing an apartment underground, into which, when it was completed, he withdrew, vanishing suddenly from the eyes of the Thracians, who greatly regretted his loss, and mourned over him as one dead. He meanwhile abode in his secret chamber three full years, after which he came forth from his concealment, and showed himself once more to his countrymen, who were thus brought to believe in the truth of what he had taught them. Such is the account of the Greeks.

I for my part neither put entire faith in this story of Zalmoxis and his underground chamber, nor do I altogether discredit it: but I believe Zalmoxis to have lived long before the time of Pythagoras. Whether there was ever really a man of the name, or whether Zalmoxis is nothing but a native god of the Getæ, [enough said].

BOOK IV, 94-96

Farther on Herodotus recounts other customs of the Getæ, related to their belief in immortality:

When a child is born all its kindred sit round about it in a circle and weep for the woes it will have to undergo now that it is come into the world, making mention of every ill that falls to the lot of humankind; when, on the other hand, a man has died, they bury him with laughter and rejoicings, and say that now he is free from a host of sufferings, and enjoys the completest happiness.

BOOK V, 4

TALL POLES AND PNUMEKIN

The Tauri have the following customs. They offer in sacrifice to the Virgin all shipwrecked persons, and all Greeks compelled to put into their ports by stress of weather. The mode of sacrifice is this. After the preparatory ceremonies, they strike the victim on the head with a club. Then, according to some accounts, they hurl the trunk from the precipice whereon the temple stands, and nail the head to a cross. Others grant that the head is treated in this way, but deny that the body is thrown down the cliff—on the contrary, they say, it is buried. The goddess to whom these sacrifices are offered the Tauri themselves declare to be Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon. When they take prisoners in war they treat them in the following way. The man who has taken a captive cuts off his head, and carrying it to his home, fixes it upon a tall pole, which he elevates above his house, most commonly over the chimney. The reason that the heads are set up so high, is (it is said) in order that the whole house may be under their protection. These people live entirely by war and plundering.

The Agathyrsi are a race of men very luxurious, and very fond of wearing gold on their persons. They have wives in common, that so they may be all brothers and, as members of one family, may neither envy nor hate one another. . . .

The Neurian customs are like the Scythian. One generation before the attack of Darius they were driven from their land by a huge multitude of serpents which invaded them. Of these some were produced in their own country, while others, and those by far the greater number, came in from the deserts on the north. Suffering grievously beneath this scourge, they quitted their homes, and took refuge with the Budini. It seems that these people are conjurers: for both the Scythians and the Greeks who dwell in Scythia say that every Neurian once a year becomes a wolf for a few days, at the end of which time he is restored to his proper shape. Not that I believe this, but they constantly affirm it to be true, and are even ready to back their assertion with an oath.

. . . The Melanchlæni wear, all of them, black cloaks, and from this derive the name which they bear.

BOOK IV, 103-107

THE ORIGINAL ANOMES, CURSERS OF THE SUN

. . . the Atarantians. . . alone of all known nations are destitute of names. The title of Atarantians is borne by the whole race in common; but the men have no particular names of their own. The Atarantians, when the sun rises high in the heaven, curse him, and load him with reproaches, because (they say) he burns and wastes both their country and themselves.

BOOK IV, 184

A PEOPLE WITHOUT DREAMS

. . . a mountain called Atlas, very taper and round; so lofty, moreover, that the top (it is said) cannot be seen, the clouds never quitting it either summer or winter [which the natives call . . . mountain "the Pillar of Heaven;" and they themselves take their name from it, being called Atlantes. They are reported not to eat any living thing, and never to have any dreams.

BOOK IV, 184

THE TRADING METHOD OF WINGO ON MARIAH

There is a country in Libya, and a nation, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, which [the Carthaginians] are wont to visit, where they no sooner arrive but forthwith they unlade their wares, and, having disposed them after an orderly fashion along the beach, leave them, and, returning aboard their ships, raise a great smoke. The natives, when they see the smoke, come down to the shore, and, laying out to view so much gold as they think the worth of the wares, withdraw to a distance. The Carthaginians upon this come ashore and look. If they think the gold enough, they take it and go their way; but if it does not seem to them sufficient, they go aboard ship once more, and wait patiently. Then the others approach and add to their gold, till the Carthaginians are content. Neither party deals unfairly by the other: for they themselves never touch the gold till it comes up to the worth of their goods, nor do the natives ever carry off the goods till the gold is taken away.

BOOK IV, 190

CYRÊNE AND THE REDOUBTABLE PHERETIMA

The name Cyrène has several Vancian echoes; the planet 'Sirene' of *The Moon Moth* and the star 'Syrene', member of the Purple Rose System around which orbits Cadwal.*

At the end of Book IV Herodotus recounts the tumultuous history of the historical Cyrène, a Greek colony on the

* This Sirene is also mentioned in *The Star King*, by Detteras, in connection with the conventionized society of the Tunkers of Mizar: ". . . not too far from Mizar is Sirene, where for a similar reason men wear highly conventionalized masks, from birth to death. Their face is their dearest secret."

Libyan coast, west of Egypt. The fourth king of this place, Arcesilaüs, ran into trouble, and was expelled. Pheretima, his mother, went to Salamis to raise an army in order to restore her son's throne:

[Pheretima] took refuge at Salamis in the island of Cyprus.

Salamis was at that time ruled by Eveithon, the same who offered at Delphi the censer which is in the treasury of

the Corinthians, a work deserving of admiration. Of him Pheretima made request, that he would give her an army, whereby she and her son might regain Cyréné. But Eveithon, preferring to give her anything rather than an army, made her various presents. Pheretima accepted them all, saying, as she took them: "Good is this too, O king! but better were it to give me the army which I crave at thy hands." Finding that she repeated these words each time that he presented her with a gift, Eveithon at last sent her a golden spindle and distaff, with the wool ready for spinning. Again she uttered the same speech as before, whereupon Eveithon rejoined — "These are the gifts I present to women, not armies."

BOOK IV, 162

. . . during the time that her son, [Arcesilaüs], after working his own ruin [at Cyrène] dwelt at Barca, [Pheretima] continued to enjoy all his privileges at Cyréné, managing the government, and taking her seat at the council-board. No sooner, however, did she hear of the death of her son at Barca, than leaving Cyrène, she fled in haste to Egypt. Arcesilaüs had claims for service done to Cambyses, son of Cyrus; since it was by him that Cyréné was put under the Persian yoke, and a rate of tribute agreed upon. Pheretima therefore went straight

to Egypt, and presenting herself as a suppliant before Aryandes, entreated him to avenge her wrongs. Her son, she said, had met his death on account of his being so well affected towards the Medes.

BOOK IV, 165

. . . they laid siege to [Barca], calling on those within to give up the men who had been guilty of the murder of Arcesilaüs. The townspeople, however, as they had one and all taken part in the



deed, refused to entertain the proposition. So the Persians beleaguered Barca for nine months, in the course of which they dug several mines from their own lines to the walls, and likewise made a number of vigorous assaults. But their mines were discovered by a man who was a worker in brass, who went with a brazen shield all round the fortress, and laid it on the ground inside the city. In other places the shield, when he laid it down, was quite dumb; but where the ground was undermined, there the brass of the shield rang. Here, therefore, the Barcæans countermined, and slew the Persian diggers. Such was the way in which the mines were discovered; as for the assaults, the Barcæans beat them back.

When much time had been consumed, and great numbers had fallen on both sides, nor had the Persians lost fewer than their adversaries, Amasis, the leader of the land-army, perceiving that, although the Barcæans would never be conquered by force, they might be overcome by fraud, contrived as follows. One night he dug a wide trench, and laid light planks of wood across the opening, after which he brought mould and placed it upon the planks, taking care to make the place level with the surrounding ground. At dawn of day he summoned the Barcæans to a parley: and they gladly hearkening, the terms were at length agreed upon. Oaths were interchanged upon the ground over the hidden trench, and the agreement ran thus — "So long as the ground beneath our feet stands firm, the oath shall abide unchanged; the people of Barca agree to pay a fair sum to the king, and the Persians promise to cause no further trouble to the people of Barca." After the oath, the Barcæans, relying upon its terms, threw open all their gates, went out themselves beyond the walls, and allowed as many of the enemy as chose to enter. Then the Persians broke down their secret bridge, and rushed at speed into the town — their reason for breaking the bridge being, that so they might observe what they had sworn; for they had promised the Barcæans that the oath should continue "so long as the ground whereon they stood was firm." When, therefore, the bridge was once broken down, the oath ceased to hold.

Such of the Barcæans as were most guilty, the Persians gave up to Pheretima, who nailed them to crosses all round the walls of the city. She also cut off the breasts of their wives, and fastened them likewise about the walls. The remainder of the people she gave as booty to the Persians, except only the Battiathe, and those who had taken no part in the murder, to whom she handed over the possession of the town.

BOOK IV, 200-202

Pheretima, as a clever as she was proud and fierce, is a worthy predecessor of our modern Feminists, or even the priestesses of the Female Mystery. She also recalls Smonny Clattuc.

Pheretima, however, is not the only redoubtable female in Herodotus. Perhaps even more striking is Artemisia, queen of Halicarnassus, an admiral in the Persian fleet, and one of Xerxes most valued advisors.

HUMAN PELTS

The insane Cambyses learned that Sisamnes, one of the royal judges, had taken a bribe:

Therefore Cambyses slew and flayed Sisamnes, and cutting his skin into strips, stretched them across the seat of the throne whereon he had been wont to sit when he heard causes. Having so done Cambyses appointed the son of Sisamnes to be judge in his father's room, and bade him never forget in what way his seat was cushioned.

BOOK V, 25

KOKODISH CODES OF WARS

I would bet that Vance got the idea for the codified war forms of Kokod from aboriginal practices of New Guinea, but there is a certain echo in Greek warfare as well, at least according to Mardonious, the man responsible for convincing Xerxes to invade Greece:

Greeks are wont to wage wars against one another in the most foolish way, through sheer perversity and doltishness. For no sooner is war proclaimed than they search out the smoothest and fairest plain that is to be found in all the land, and there they assemble and fight; whence it comes to pass that even the conquerors depart with great loss: I say nothing of the conquered, for they are destroyed altogether.

BOOK VII, 9

REGARDING THE WANDERING TRIBE KNOWN AS SAGARTIANS:

It is not the wont of this people to carry arms, either of bronze or steel, except only a dirk; but they use lassoes made of thongs plaited together, and trust to these whenever they go to the wars. Now the manner in which they fight is the following: when they meet their enemy, straightway they discharge their lassoes, which end in a noose; then, whatever the noose encircles, be it man or be it horse, they drag towards them; and the foe, entangled in the toils, is forthwith slain.

BOOK VII, 85

SLANDER

The history of the VIE project has cast this practice into a strong light. Herodotus reports a formidable dictum apropos, spoken by Artabanus, in reproach of the Mardonious mentioned above:

Slander is of all evils the most terrible. In it two men do wrong, and one man has wrong done to him.

BOOK VII 10.7

MODES OF DRESS

Describing the customs of the Ethiopians, Herodotus recounts the mode of corporeal decoration used by the magician Eshimel:

When they went into battle they painted their bodies, half with chalk, and half with vermillion.

BOOK VII, 69

Regarding the Chalybians, Herodotus reports a mode of dress used by the Iszic:

. . . their legs were bound round with purple bands.

BOOK VII, 69

MORE CLASSICAL CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Unable to parse a problem of the relative guilt of the Argives and Susans, involving a diplomatic question, Herodotus concludes:

This, however, I know — that if every nation were to bring all its evil deeds to a given place, in order to make an exchange with some other nation, when they had all looked carefully at their neighbours' faults, they would be truly glad to carry their own back again. So, after all, the conduct of the Argives was not perhaps more disgraceful than that of others.

BOOK VII, 152

CASTRATION

There are some alarming passages along these lines in Vance, notably when Aillas is menaced at castle Sank.

Xerxes had a trusted advisor, Hermotimus, a eunuch, of whom Herodotus gives this account:

The Hermotimus of whom I spoke above was, as I said, a Pedasian; and he, of all men whom we know, took the most cruel vengeance on the person who had done him an injury. He had been made a prisoner of war, and when his captors sold him, he was bought by a certain Panionius, a native of Chios, who made his living by a most nefarious traffic. Whenever he could get any boys of unusual beauty, he made them eunuchs, and, carrying them to Sardis or Ephesus, sold them for large sums of money. For the barbarians value eunuchs more any others, since they regard them as more trustworthy. Many were the slaves that Panionius, who made his living by the practice, had thus treated; and among them was this Hermotimus of whom I have here made mention. However, he was not without his share of good fortune, for after a while he was sent from Sardis, together with other gifts, as a present to the king. Nor was it long before he came to be esteemed by Xerxes more highly than all his eunuchs.

When the king was on his way to Athens with the Persian army, and abode for a time at Sardis, Hermotimus happened to make a journey upon business into Mysia; and there, in a district which is called Atarneus, but belongs to Chios, he chanced to fall in with Panionius. Recognising him at once, he entered into a long and friendly talk with him, wherein he counted up the numerous blessings he enjoyed through his means, and promised him all manner of favours in return, if he would bring his household to Sardis and live there. Panionius was overjoyed, and, accepting the offer made him



came presently, and brought with him his wife and children. Then Hermotimus, when he had got Panionius and all his family into his power, addressed him in these words: — "Thou man, who gettest a living by viler deeds than any one else in the whole world, what wrong to thee or thine had I or any of mine done, that thou shouldst have made me the nothing that I now am? Ah! surely thou thoughtest that the gods took no note of thy crimes.

But they in their justice have delivered thee, the doer of unrighteousness, into my hands; and now thou canst not complain of the vengeance which I am resolved to take on thee."

After these reproaches, Hermotimus commanded the four sons of Panionius to be brought, and forced the father to make them eunuchs with his own hand. Unable to resist, he did as Hermotimus required; and then his sons were made to treat him in the self-same way. So in this way there came to Panionius requital at the hands of Hermotimus.

A CUGELIAN JUGGLING OF PROPHECIES

After mentioning Deïphonus the soothsayer, Herodotus recounts this story:

A strange thing happened to this man's father, Evênus. The Apolloniats have a flock of sheep sacred to the sun. During the day-time these sheep graze along the banks of the river which flows from Mount Lacmon through their territory and empties itself into the sea by the port of Oricus; while at night they are guarded by the richest and noblest of the citizens, who are chosen to serve the office, and who keep the watch each for one year. Now the Apolloniats set great store by these sheep, on account of an oracle which they received concerning them. The place where they are folded at night is a cavern, a long way from the town. Here it happened that Evênus when he was chosen to keep the watch, by some accident fell asleep upon his guard; and while he slept, the cave was entered by wolves which destroyed some sixty of the flock under his care. Evênus, when he woke and found what had occurred, kept silence about it and told no one; for he thought to buy other sheep and put them in the place of the slain. But the matter came to the ears of the Apolloniats, who forthwith brought Evênus to trial, and condemned him to lose his eyes, because he had gone to sleep upon his post. Now when Evênus was blinded, straight way the sheep had no young, and the land ceased to bear its wonted harvests. Then the Apolloniats sent to Dodôna, and to Delphi, and asked the prophets, what had caused the woes which so afflicted them. The answer which they received was this — "The woes were come for Evênus, the guardian of the sacred sheep, whom the Apolloniats had wrongfully deprived of sight. They (the gods) had themselves sent the wolves; nor would they ever cease to exact vengeance for Evênus, till the Apolloniats made him whatever atonement he liked to ask. When this was paid, they would likewise give him a gift, which would make many men call him blessed."

Such was the tenor of the prophecies. The Apolloniats kept them close, but charged some of their citizens to go and make terms with Evênus; and these men managed the business for them in the way which I will now describe. They found Evênus sitting upon a bench, and, approaching him, they sat down by his side, and began to talk: at first they spoke of quite other matters, but in the end they mentioned

his misfortune, and offered him their condolence. Having thus beguiled him at last they put the question — "What atonement would he desire, if the Apolloniats were willing to make him satisfaction for the wrong which they had done to him?" Hereupon Evênus, who had not heard of the oracle, made answer — "If I were given the lands of this man and that —" (here he named the two men whom he knew to have the finest farms in Apollonia), "and likewise the house of this other" — (and here he mentioned the house which he knew to be the handsomest in the town), "I would, when master of these, be quite content, and my wrath would cease altogether." As soon as Evênus had thus spoken the men who sat by him rejoined — "Evênus, the Apolloniats give thee the atonement which thou hast desired, according to the bidding of the oracles." Then Evênus understood the whole matter and was enraged that they had deceived him so; but the Apolloniats bought the farms from their owners, and gave Evênus what he had chosen. After this was done, straightway Evênus had the gift of prophecy, insomuch that he became a famous man in Greece.

BOOK IX, 93-94

A TALE OF PASSION AND VENGEANCE

This passage, near the very end of the book, recounts the life of the foolish king Xerxes after he had retreated from Greece. It is rife with vancian tricks and horrors.

During the time that Xerxes abode [Sardis], he fell in love with the wife of Masistes, who was likewise staying in the city. He therefore sent her messages, but failed to win her consent; and he could not dare to use violence, out of regard to Masistes, his brother. This the woman knew well enough, and hence it was that she had the boldness to resist him. So Xerxes, finding no other way open, devised a marriage between his own son Darius and a daughter of this woman and Masistes — thinking that he might better obtain his ends if he effected this union. Accordingly he betrothed these two persons to one another, and, after the usual ceremonies were completed, took his departure for Susa. When he was come there, and had received the woman into his palace as his son's bride, a change came over him, and, losing all love for the wife of Masistes, he conceived a passion for his son's bride, Masistes' daughter. And Artajnta — for so was she called — very soon returned his love.

After a while the thing was discovered in the way which I will now relate. Arnestris, the wife of Xerxes, had woven with her own hands a long robe, of many colours, and very curious, which she presented to her husband as a gift. Xerxes, who was greatly pleased with it, forthwith put it on; and went in it to visit Artajnta, who happened likewise on this day to please him greatly. He therefore bade her ask him whatever boon she liked, and promised that, whatever it was, he would assuredly grant her request. Then Artajnta, who was doomed to suffer calamity together with her whole

house, said to him — "Wilt thou indeed give me whatever I like to ask?" So the king, suspecting nothing less than that her choice would fall where it did, pledged his word, and swore to her. She then, as soon as she heard his oath, asked boldly for the robe. Here upon Xerxes tried all possible means to avoid the gift; not that he grudged to give it, but because he dreaded Amestris, who already suspected, and would now, he feared, detect his love. So he offered her cities instead, and heaps of gold, and an army which should obey no other leader. (The last of these is a thoroughly Persian gift.) But, as nothing could prevail on Artajnta to change her mind, at the last he gave her the robe. Then Artajnta was very greatly rejoiced, and she often wore the garment and was proud of it. And so it came to the ears of Amestris that the robe had been given to her.

Now when Amestris learnt the whole matter, she felt no anger against Artajnta; but, looking upon her mother, the wife of Masistes, as the cause of all the mischief, she determined to compass her death. She waited, therefore, till her husband gave the great royal banquet, a feast which takes place once every year, in celebration of the king's birthday — "Tykta" the feast is called in the Persian tongue, which in our language may be rendered "perfect" — and this is the only day in all the year on which the king soaps his head, and distributes gifts to the Persians. Amestris waited, accordingly, for this day, and then made request of Xerxes, that he would please to give her, as her present, the wife of Masistes. But he refused; for it seemed to him shocking and monstrous to give into the power of another a woman who was not only his brother's wife, but was likewise wholly guiltless of what had happened — the more especially as he knew well enough with what intent Amestris had preferred her request.

At length, however, wearied by her importunity, and constrained moreover by the law of the feast, which required that no one who asked a boon that day at the king's board should be denied his request, he yielded, but with a very ill will, and gave the woman into her power. Having so done, and told Amestris she might deal with her as she chose, the king called his brother into his presence, and said — "Masistes, thou art my brother, the son of my father Darius; and, what is more, thou art a good man. I pray thee, live no longer with the wife whom thou now hast. Behold, I will give thee instead my own daughter in marriage; take her to live with thee. But part first with the wife thou now hast — I like not that thou keep to her."

To this Masistes, greatly astonished, answered — "My lord and master, how strange a speech hast thou uttered! Thou biddest me put away my wife, who has borne me three goodly youths, and daughters besides, whereof thou hast taken one and espoused her to a son of thine own — thou biddest me put away this wife, notwithstanding that she pleases me greatly, and marry a daughter of thine! In truth, O king! that I am accounted worthy to wed thy daughter, is an honour which I mightily esteem; but yet to do as thou sayest am I in no wise willing. I pray thee, use not force to compel me to yield to thy prayer. Be sure thy daughter will find a husband to the full as worthy as myself. Suffer me then to live on with my own wife."

Thus did Masistes answer; and Xerxes, in wrath, replied — "I will tell thee, Masistes, what thou hast gained by these words. I

will not give thee my daughter; nor shalt thou live any longer with thy own wife. So mayest thou learn, in time to come, to take what is offered thee." Masistes, when he heard this, withdrew, only saying — "Master, thou hast not yet taken my life."

While these things were passing between Xerxes and his brother Masistes, Amestris sent for the spearmen of the royal body-guard, and caused the wife of Masistes to be mutilated in a horrible fashion. Her two breasts, her nose, ears, and lips were cut off and thrown to the dogs; her tongue was torn out by the roots, and thus disfigured she was sent back to her home.

Masistes, who knew nothing of what had happened, but was fearful that some calamity had befallen him, ran hastily to his house. There, finding his wife so savagely used, he forthwith took counsel with his sons, and, accompanied by them and certain others also, set forth on his way to Bactria, intending to stir up revolt in that province, and hoping to do great hurt to Xerxes: all which, I believe, he would have accomplished, if he had once reached the Bactrian and Sacan people; for he was greatly beloved by them both, and was moreover satrap of Bactria. But Xerxes, hearing of his designs, sent an armed force upon his track, and slew him while he was still upon the road, with his sons and his whole army. Such is the tale of King Xerxes' love and of the death of his brother Masistes.

BOOK IX, 108-113



BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS: FROM BIG PLANET TO LURULU

by David B. Williams

The saga seems to be Jack Vance's most congenial fictional form. At mid-career he became a master of the novelette with such triumphs as *The Moon Moth*, *The Dragon Masters*, *The Last Castle*, and *Morreion*. But from early in his career (*Big Planet*) to the Cugel books and right up to the conjoined *Ports of Call* and *Lurulu*, Vance has favored sprawling stories told in episodic fashion with an overarching mission or goal to tie things together.

A recent rereading of *Ports/Lurulu* made me think again about *Big Planet*. Structurally, the two stories have much in common. Claude Glystra must journey across the surface of a giant planet, encountering one society after another; Myron Tany is set upon a voyage among the stars of the Gaean Reach, from one exotic port to the next. Episode succeeds episode, in the end the mission is achieved.

VIE volume 44 reports that Vance wrote *Big Planet* in 1948, which would make it his first attempt at a SF novel, though *The Five Gold Bands* (1950) and *Son of the Tree* (1951) would appear in print before *Big Planet* was published in 1952.

The more I ponder *Big Planet*, the more I suspect that this novel is another example of Jack Vance's early practice of trying different things to discover what worked, story-wise in a technical sense and, more vitally, whether a particular kind of story would sell. Reading Vance gives us such pleasure that it is easy to forget that Vance himself did not write our favorite works for sheer creative joy. As a boy, he may have daydreamed about seeing his name in print, becoming an admired author. As a man, he pursued writing as a source of income.

Vance became a writer by the "earn while you learn" method. As a child, he was intrigued by the fantasies of Baum, Dunsany, and the writers who filled the pages of *Weird Tales*, so he began by writing fantasies (the *Dying Earth* stories, circa 1944). When these didn't sell he abandoned fantasy and took up science fiction, which did sell.

Thank Godogma that Hillman Periodicals needed material for a new paperback line in 1950 and Vance was able to dust off these unsold fantasy manuscripts and cobble them into a book. But this was a stroke of luck. As a writer interested in regular sales, Vance didn't return to fantasy for many years (*Green Magic*, purportedly written in 1956 and eventually published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* in 1963). Once he found a welcoming market for fantasy, Vance went on to write the first series of Cugel stories (also

published in F&SF). Without Vance's encounter with F&SF editor Avram Davidson, who honeymooned in California in 1962, we might never have gotten the two volumes of Cugel, *Rhialto the Marvellous*, and the remarkable *Lyonesse* trilogy.

But all that came later. Having found success in the SF market, Vance next took a stab at the mystery genre in the 1946-48 period, completing two novels that didn't sell. He didn't invest any more time writing mysteries until he finally unloaded those two books for a laughable \$100 each to Mystery House in 1957. Such a "sale" was hardly encouraging, but then Pyramid Books bought paperback rights to one of these novels (*Take My Face*), and Vance began devoting a portion of his writing time to mysteries.

Like all his early stories, Vance wrote *Big Planet* "on spec," as writers say (on speculation, without an editor's prior agreement to purchase), and the first draft ran to something like 120,000 words. Why so long? "Oh, I just felt like it," he explained. But he learned that such a long work couldn't be sold in the SF market at that time, so he cut it down himself and, when it sold to *Startling Stories*, the editor cut it further to fit into one issue of the magazine. So in the end, Vance only got paid for about 40 percent of the story he wrote.

So much for that experiment! He didn't write another novel with a six-figure word count for thirty years, until the evolving book market welcomed longer stories and he could do the work under contract (*Lyonesse*, *Cadwal*). But ten years after *Big Planet*, Vance discovered that he could write an extended story as a series of novels. If the first book in a series sold and did well, it would pretty much guarantee the publisher's interest in the rest of the series, and several slim novels would earn more than the same wordage packed into one very thick novel.

This experiment worked. Berkley Books, having published *The Star King*, went on to publish *The Killing Machine* and *The Palace of Love*. Vance dropped the series at that point. But when DAW Books later decided to reprint those three books, the logic of "the five Demon Princes" impelled them to sign Vance to finish the sequence.

These marketing considerations make me think that *Big Planet* was a missed opportunity. Doc Smith's *Lensman* series was conceived as a single 400,000-word novel but was published in segments with separate titles in *Astounding SF* between 1937 and 1948—a way to handle a big story successfully in a magazine market. A second example springs to mind, Asimov's *Foundation* "trilogy," which was published as a long series of novelettes and novellas in *Astounding*, 1942-50. The *Foundation* trilogy only became a trilogy when Gnome Press gathered the stories for hardcover publication and they divided naturally into three standard-sized volumes.

The one serious complaint about *Big Planet* is that Vance

sets up a situation in which the protagonist must journey 40,000 miles to reach the security of Earth Enclave, then dodges that stupendous challenge by providing a fortuitous ride home. One reviewer lamented that this left him with a feeling of literary coitus interruptus. If Vance had possessed more marketing savvy at the time, he might have planned *Big Planet* as a series of novelettes and novellas that completed the whole 40,000-mile trek. Whichever magazine published the first installment would naturally be interested in the rest (cover blurbs: "Return to *Big Planet*!" and "A New *Big Planet* Adventure!").

Fulfilling the initial premise would have made *Big Planet* a grander and more satisfying story (and resulted in more sales for the author). Nor am I alone in this thinking. After writing the above words, I was startled to read Robert Silverberg's assessment of *Big Planet* in the September 1958 issue of *Original SF Stories*:

If the story has a fault, it is that there is not enough of it. Big Planet is too wondrous a concept to waste on a mere 50,000 words; Vance might have prolonged the journey for four times its length with little loss of interest; and perhaps he might have produced a classic of the stature of the (immensely longer) Tolkien trilogy or Eddison's 'Worm Ouroboros'.

As noted, *Ports/Lurulu* and *Big Planet* share a similar structure. They also resemble each other because each suffers a plot weakness. In *Big Planet*, the mind-boggling 40,000-mile trek is abruptly terminated (when he shortened the original manuscript, why didn't Vance simply cross out the figure 40,000 and jot in a more attainable distance?).

Of the two sagas, *Big Planet* possesses the superior organizing principle, one so perfect that it could have supported an endless series of episodes: reach the security of Earth Enclave while overcoming amazing difficulties along the way. This is precisely the organizing principle of the Cugel epic: return via misadventures to Almeria (and, as a bonus, balance accounts with the detestable Lucounu).

In *Ports/Lurulu*, the plot problem is the unfulfilled Dame Hester story line. Vain, foolish Dame Hester is susceptible to suave rogues. Myron saves her from Dauncy Covarth but is outmaneuvered by Marko Fassig, leaving Myron stranded and ready to begin his odyssey. Myron vows to right this wrong. But in the end, he arrives too late; Dame Hester is dying, the space yacht is lost, and Marko Fassig is reputed to have perished in the Beyond. Myron has the hollow satisfaction of knowing that Dame Hester and Fassig got what they deserved, but none of it was due to his efforts. It's as if Gersen picked up a newspaper at the end of *The Book of Dreams*, after all his efforts, and learned that Howard Alan Treesong had perished while Gersen was otherwise occupied (which nearly happened, since Gersen brought Treesong to the trap but did not personally spring it).

As a writer viewing life from the middle of his ninth decade, Vance may have wanted to suggest that events don't always gratify our wishes. Nonetheless, we should enjoy the adventures along the way. In the end, the journey may be more important than the destination. Myron fails to correct the imbalance in *Cosmic Equilibrium* provoked by Dame Hester and Marko Fassig. He (and the reader) is denied this satisfaction, but he does find *lurulu*—he becomes the space vagabond of his boyhood dreams, exploring the Gaeian Reach and all its wonders.

Ports/Lurulu begins with an overarching goal, but unlike Claude Glystra or Cugel or Kirth Gersen, Myron is not free to choose his next action; he is a junior crewmember of a space freighter with no control over its peregrinations among the stars. At a moment conveniently near the end of the book, the Glicca passes near the planet where Dame Hester sought rejuvenation, and Myron rather easily convinces Captain Maloof to humor him and swerve a bit off course.

Some readers have speculated that Vance may have changed his mind about the nature of the story during the six-year interval between publication of *Ports of Call* and *Lurulu*. This may well be true. Vance didn't initially plan a duology. He has stated that when *Ports of Call* reached book length he still had material he was reluctant to abandon, so he simply ended *Ports* and began *Lurulu*. This material wasn't needed to wrap up the plot, it was simply more ports of call, more incidents and adventures along the spaceways.

The two books are clearly one story. *Lurulu* is not a sequel to *Ports of Call* in the way that *The Killing Machine* is a sequel to *The Star King*. *Lurulu* is *the rest* of *Ports of Call*. If the work had been conceived as a duology, *Ports of Call* would have been the ideal collective title, with each volume given a separate sub-title.

In the era of Louis XIV, French opera added a ballet, which was called a "divertissement". The divertissement did not advance the story, it was simply an entertaining interlude, after which the story resumed. Puzzled by the plot problem noted above, I initially interpreted *Ports/Lurulu* as another Vancean experiment, an attempt to construct a novel composed entirely of divertissements. How else to explain the pages devoted to the card game played in detail by Schwatzenale and the pilgrims?

Vance has always been tempted by digressions. His fertile imagination keeps suggesting interesting scenes or situations. He is perfectly aware that each scene should advance the plot, but he has never sworn allegiance to plot development. His natural inclination is to explore the worlds and societies he creates, not to skip over what he considers the good stuff in pursuit of a plotline.

Writing is a matter of choices. In the case of *Ports/Lurulu*, Vance had two options: 1) allow Myron to catch up with

Dame Hester and Marko Fassig and achieve full satisfaction at the conclusion of the story; 2) use the Dame Hester line as a means to get Myron into space, then follow the logic of the situation and allow Dame Hester and Fassig to pass into history, never to be heard of again, as the Glicca sails on. Vance seems to have decided to split the difference rather than make this choice.

If he did change his mind about the nature of this bifurcated novel, the best solution would have been to go back, delete the Dame Hester set-up, and replace it with a more straightforward means to get Myron into space. But the first volume was already in print and could not be changed.

I continued to struggle with these qualms until Jack Rawlins, an astute Vance scholar, provided a credible explanation. In the afterword to *Demon Prince*, *The Dissonant Works of Jack Vance* (Borgo Press 1986), Rawlins explains that Vance's career to that date can be divided into three periods. During the first decade, Vance imitated the Establishment SF of the time. But, beginning around 1957, Vance departed from mainstream SF and began publishing his own brand of story, focused on culture rather than technology.

Then, says Rawlins, "The third period began in 1973, with the publication of *The Anome* and *Trullion*, the initial volumes in two series of books in which the quest is found to be utterly barren. Plots go nowhere, heroes are abandoned in befuddlement, and Vance's novels become devoted to locales and their esmeric* alone."

Many Vance readers and critics have noticed his tendency to avoid the perfect conclusion to a story, his "distaste for ending on the tonic, so to speak," as Richard Tiedman observed as early as 1965. I have noted this Vancean signature myself, citing the protagonists' lack of fulfillment at the ends of *Emphyrio*, *The Asutra*, and *The Book of Dreams*, in my Vance biography and literary assessment.

So if you accept Rawlins' analysis, in *Ports/Lurulu* Jack Vance is just being Jack Vance, reverting to the kind of story he told so often before *Lyonesse*, *Cadwal*, and *Night Lamp*, which have "happy endings". He never intended to resolve the plot set-up of Dame Hester to Myron's satisfaction. He had other goals and other stories to tell. From this perspective, *Ports/Lurulu* is quintessential Vance, with roots going back to his first attempt at an SF novel and bejeweled with some of Vance's finest writing, a picaresque revel in the esmeric of the Gaeen Reach.



* A term coined by Vance himself, indicating "the association or atmosphere clinging to a place" (Ifness, explaining a word from a dialect of old Caraz).

SOME THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE DOMAINS OF KORYPHON

It was the French Revolutionary, Babeuf, who most pithily articulated the insight at the heart of *The Domains of Koryphon*, when he cried: "Property is theft". This statement radicalizes an idea already expressed by Jean Jacques Rousseau, who wrote: "Society is a trick played by the rich on the poor." This insight, or alleged insight, is at the heart of modern political theory, particularly Marxism, and *The Domains of Koryphon* elegantly accepts it as a given. According to this strand of modernist thinking, prior to Man's liberty—that freedom to pursue happiness which is the essence of his nature—he must secure his *right* to self-preservation. Self preservation means, obviously, physical self-preservation. And what does man need, both prior to all other things, as well as ultimately, to assure his physical self-preservation? Land. Control of land is the fundamental condition of the basic, primitive human activities: gathering, hunting, herding, or later growing and storing food, and the tranquility crucial to these tasks.

Though considerably more complex and less direct in developed society, a basic relationship between human life and land remains. 'Social progress' depends on the famous division of labor. If everyone remained a hunter, a herder, a peasant, we would be obliged to continue to make our own clothes, build our own houses, and so on, individually. Such secondary but important work would not, therefore, be done efficiently by experts. It would be more slowly and less well done, with the result that no one would have time for anything else, like building ocean going ships, writing books, and so on—pursing greater prosperity, greater freedoms and, generally speaking, happiness. Therefore it is not necessary that everyone actually own land, so long as everyone can get the food, shelter, and other things they need. This is a basic meanings of the 'right to life'. To be very specific: the right to life might be met by giving every person their own land, but that solution would be crude and would not lead to a maximum of happiness. For reasons like these the Marxist elaboration of the insight that all property is theft had to do not with land, as such, but with 'the means of production'. Land is perhaps a basic 'means of production', but it is only the most fundamental one of many. Other means of production are tools, vehicles, factories, information. All are crucial to the development of society, and even if, ultimately, most of them rest on control of land, each has a dynamic of its own.

The issue treated in *The Domains of Koryphon*, however, does not concern land in any sense of 'means of production', because not only do the robbed *uldras* have all the means of production they need without the domain lands, but land

barons control of these lands has done the opposite of depriving them of any means of production. Thanks to the domains the treaty uldras gain expanded possibilities, greater 'means of production' and possibilities of happiness than they previously had. By setting up the situation in this way Vance separates the issue of land ownership, or theft, from the problem of 'means of production', or right to life. By doing so he has reduced the issue to its philosophic essence; namely, that ownership is theft; the problem as posed by Vance is not that anything essential to their right to life has been taken from the treaty uldras. That would be the Marxist objection, because his materialist approach puts the emphasis on the right to life in the sense of physical survival. In fact Marxists are not concerned with theft as such, since they themselves are eager to steal the land—in order to give it to the proletariat. For the Marxists this transfer is the acme of justice. So theft is neither (for the Marxists) violation of some eternal or trans-historically absolute moral rule, nor (as presented by Vance) is it necessarily a problem because it deprives anyone of any means of production (truncating their right to life). But theft is a problem, because Babeuf's slogan is both unqualified and a complaint. So: when Babeuf says 'ownership is theft', what is the problem?

That treaty uldras are materially better off as a result of the land baron theft is not a bizarre exception or some sort of marginal paradox. There are many cases where we are better off deprived of something we have, or denied something we want to have, even if such deprivation occur by theft. A dangerously over-weight person is better off when someone steals his chocolate sundae. A drunkard about to drive, and some innocent pedestrians, are all better off if the drunkard's car gets stolen. So, if the uldras are better off regarding their basic 'right to life', why is the theft a problem? Or we could ask the question the other way round: by reducing the issue to this philosophic essence does Vance empty it of its substance?

To answer this question we must look more closely at the 'right to life'. The essence of Babeuf's slogan, as we have seen, is not a complaint with respect to the right to life. It is a complaint about theft. But Babeuf and the French revolutionaries were as ready as the Marxists to rob in order to adjust what they regard as an unjust situation. A small group was oppressing the others, or just not being egalitarian, through 'unjust' (because unequal) ownership, and the revolutionaries were therefore justified in correcting the situation. We, of course, are not obliged to agree with Babeuf and the Marxists about this. For example, we might feel that, in many cases, there is nothing unjust, or even ungenerous, about various cases of unequal ownership. There were French aristocrats who owned all the land, but the peasants loved them anyway, and protected them from the revolutionaries—like the treaty uldras who helped the land barons. Of course it might be objected that they were blinded by bourgeois propaganda—but this needs to be proven, and it does not seem like an objection one

can make regarding the treaty uldras. Their attitude is not unreasonable, whatever else it may be, even if other reasonable views might be imagined. They are clearly better off with regard to access to the 'means of production', and thus to the 'right to life', and they seem to appreciate that, in spite of some disadvantages, like not getting invited into the big hall. Likewise it is permitted to look at the history of the Russian revolution and see that the collective farms were dysfunctional, and that the peasants, even though they now were supposedly collective owners of the land, had in fact less access to the means of production, and thus less 'right to life'—and thus less happiness, at least in the materialist view. So, in some cases peasants are better off, in the sense we have indicated, if the land is owned by others. So, again, this means that the essential problem is not land ownership, or actual control of the means of production. The essential problem, at the heart of Babeuf's slogan, is injustice, and the heart of this injustice is the problem of equality.

Let us say we go into some new country and find the following situation: all the land (or the means of production, or the fruits of the means of production) is equally divided among the people. This would be just, because everyone would have the maximum possible 'right to life'. Everyone would have as much as they could justly demand with respect to the essential thing; procuring what they need to live.* This could be why the theft Babeuf is talking about is unjust, but that brings us back to ownership equaling deprivation of someone else's right to life. This is another way of noting how theft, in itself, is not the problem; the problem is how theft deprives others of their rights. But it is not yet clear what right is being deprived, since, as shown above, such 'theft' may increase, rather than decrease, someone's 'right to life'.

The French barons of the 18th century controlled the land in France. They lived high on the hog while the majority, the miserable peasants, had to work hard on these baronial lands in exchange for mere sustenance from these miserly barons. Whether this view of 18th century French society accurate or not does not matter; such a situation could exist and probably has existed. Now, what gives these barons any *right* to lord it over the peasants? Their control of the land

* This sort of justice is based on the Kantian 'categorical imperative', whereby a person cannot rationally (or publicly, or when proposing a law for society) say: 'I want to have more than others'. It equates justice with equality, which is an equation Vance looks at in *Wyst*. I will touch on this matter further along, but it need not be gone into fully, beyond pointing out that the equation of justice and equality may be problematic. For the purposes of the present analysis we may provisionally admit that justice does equal equality.

In this connection we might also cite a phrase of Marx, from *The German Ideology*, a youthful text, published after his death, but which was written at a time when his ideas, according to Leo Strauss, were already fully developed, :

"...either property can be abolished, in which case universal lack of property or destitution results, or else the lack of property may be abolished, which means the establishment of true property."

The meaning of 'true property' needs to be defined (clearly it is not like the normal property we know, and to that extent may resemble the abolition of property, at least from a 'bourgeois' perspective) but from this we may at least conclude that 'property rights', in some form or another, must be envisaged relative to the 'right to life', or, to state it the other way, that abolition of ownership, even from Marx's perspective, is untenable.

gives them the *power* to do so; but they stole that land! Of course they did not necessarily steal it from the peasants they exploit but, one way or another, they stole it from the ancestors of these peasants, or the ancestors of peasants like them. They are abusing their strength by taking more than their fair share, and depriving others of a fair share.

Still, let's not forget what was said above: in some cases such theft might increase the right to life of the peasants. But some right of the peasants is clearly being violated! The land barons of Koryphon, by contrast with the French barons, even if they did steal uldra land from the direct ancestors of the uldras in question, also augmented their right to life.* Now; does this cancel out theft as a problem? Let's say the land had been stolen by a group of genocidal maniacs who went out every day and hunted uldras for sport; in that case the theft would certainly have contributed to reducing the uldra right to life. So, the theft of their land, as such, in so far as it is connected with their right to life, is neutral; but again; some uldra right has certainly been violated! The right in question is not the right to life, but the right to property.

The problem now becomes subtle. The 'right to life' is generally considered a 'progressive' or 'left wing' sort of right, while the 'right to property' is generally considered a 'conservative' or 'right wing' type of right. But the two rights, as the foregoing analysis shows, are identical in many respects, or confused with each other. Equality, which is 'left wing', can be satisfied by a 'right wing' right to property—on condition it is equal property. By contrast, the right to property, a 'right wing' kind of right, can be protected by 'left wing' equality, though 'equal protection under law'. This is the case of uldras. Their rights have

* Thanks to the land barons the uldras have better medical care, more education, more material prosperity, etc. but different argument is that, because of their unique culture, the uldra idea of the good life is different from the outker idea, so that such material advantages are not advantages from the uldra perspective. That argument, however, does not affect my point here because if it did one could also argue that, since, in uldra culture, justice might not equal equality, theft therefore might not be unjust. Theft, in the absence of some standard of justice, is merely a misfortune, like losing something by accident. In fact Vance does take this problem into account, because the redemptionist movement is informed and inspired by the standards of outker culture, and the treaty tribes are not concerned about having been robbed. It is the Gray Prince, with his outker education and outker attitudes garnered at Morningswake, who has made an issue of the matter, and roused the retent rabble. This, of course, follows the historical development of many examples of colonialism, since so many liberation and 'nationalist' movements were inspired by western attitudes learned from the colonialists. I am not saying there were no true 'native rebellions', but many of these rebellions were based not on the western abstractions so important to western political debate, but on a the simple desire to be in control, a desire which was just as operative, or non-operative, prior to colonization. The West does not recognize a right to control based on the mere desire to control, which the West terms 'tyranny'. Colonized peoples did not automatically regard their colonized condition as disadvantageous, or even undesirable. If this situation, of which there is ample proof, was a majority situation or not is irrelevant. It is by no means theoretically absurd to postulate a preference for being colonized by a 'culturally superior' group, however unfashionable this attitude may be today. Per present Western theory colonization is bad as such, and should be combated. One may look at many areas today, such as Algeria and Rwanda, which suggest that it would have been better, at least in some cases and at least materially, if colonial control had continued. However, my point is not to plead in favor of colonialization, it is to point out that the attitude of the treaty uldras was neither theoretically nor historically absurd. In *Domains of Koryphon* Vance also shows us uldras who object to colonial control.

been violated because they are equal to land barons under law. Of course there is not much law in Uaia, but that is only due to the Mull lacking power to impose it, which is merely an unfortunate accident of circumstances. And even if no actual written law has been violated, or even if a written law cannot be enforced for whatever reason, the standards of outker civilization have been violated by this land baron theft. The land barons have violated a sort of natural law, an unwritten law, which all members of outker civilization recognize, including the land barons themselves. The land barons have violated their own ethical standards; in particular the one which guarantee the right to property. It is unjust to violate the right to property.

But here we must return to Babeuf, and also to Vance, because there is a problem with property rights; namely that all ownership—and ownership of land in particular—is theft! Theft is bad even if it is not a violation of the right to life; it is unjust, because it violates property rights. The fact that the uldras stole the land in the first place does not make it ok for the land barons to steal the land from them, because, after all, the uldra theft occurred many generations ago; the present uldras were not responsible for it. The Windrunners have all moved to the north, and don't want to come back, so there is no one to restore the land to. Anyway, the Windrunners were themselves land-thieves, they do not deserve to have their stolen goods returned to them, etc.

The outker ethics of the land barons, based on human equality, accord the uldras the very property rights which the land barons have violated. But here another problem crops up because, as a matter of fact, equality is a myth. People are not equal. To prove this we only have to imagine a society in which there is one farm and two people; one of the people is ignorant and lazy, the other is a competent, hard-working farmer. Who has the 'right' to the farm? These two people might be equal in various ways. They might have the same height, weight and age. They are both equally members of the same species. But with regard to the means of production they are not equal. Now, if the concern is that everyone should have the right to life, this right can only be satisfied if the farm is given to the competent farmer, because he can then feed both himself and the ignorant lazy man, while in the opposite case both will have their right to life violated.

Let us resume the argument so far. Equality is not a deep enough basis to justify ownership, since the right to life, which is more basic from a materialist point of view, might be violated by strict egalitarianism, as we see just above. But the right to life (apart, in cases like that of the treaty uldras, from how it might actually be increased by a violation of property rights) is not necessarily an issue when it comes to property rights. This brings us to the following point: the basis of property ownership may be theft, but such theft is *not necessarily* unjust, because it may be 'according to nature'; in other words, since property ownership, per Babeuf, is *by*

nature based on theft, and since, because of the need to assure physical existence, property ownership *cannot be avoided*, ownership as such, therefore, is not unjust, because it cannot be unjust to act according to nature. But this reasoning does not cover the situation Vance presents, because the theft of the uldra lands obviously could have been avoided.

Let us proceed by proper steps. Theft cannot be avoided, because ownership cannot be avoided, because life depends on ownership. This sort of 'theft' (ownership that assures life) is therefore natural. Because it is natural, and therefore unavoidable, it is therefore not necessarily unjust, because what we are forced to do by the nature of things cannot be unjust. Breathing, for example, cannot be unjust. We must also eat, and defecate; we are obliged, by the nature of reality, to do these things. So we cannot be accused of injustice for doing them. Of course they might be done in an unjust way, if, for example, we eat someone else's food, or defecate in someone's private shit-hole. But, in themselves, such acts are not unjust. Property rights, therefore, are not unjust—i.e. they are not rendered unjust by the fact of their basis in theft.

However, is it really true that ownership is natural (or necessary) and that it is also based on theft? Could the theft be avoided? In fact it is difficult to imagine a situation where theft is necessary. The famous example of the starving man being obliged to steal bread is no good because he could also get the bread by begging for it. However, there are proper examples. Israeli occupation of the Golan heights is plausibly justified on this ground. But such cases are exceptional. In most cases of land theft some group comes in and takes what it wants, in order to improve, not to save, its life situation. There is no reason, other than greed, that the new-comers and the previous owners do not cooperate. Legal sales are like this; transfer of ownership is made in a manner that does not involve theft. Another solution is that the new-comers might have stayed where they were. But let's say they were forced to move because they lost their means of production. Many colonists came to America simply to better their condition, not to save it. But some came to save it, like the Irish in the 19th century. The ones who stayed behind died by millions. The 19th century Irish immigrants, however, did not steal any land from the Indians. It had already been stolen by previous colonists. The land, or means of production, which benefited these Irishmen was stolen; but does that make the Irish immigrants guilty of injustice? Today there are people who believe it does, and some people or institutions are being dragged into court for this alleged crime of their alleged ancestors. This is a real life sample of the application of Babeufian logic. The problem, as *The Domains of Koryphon* makes clear, is that if certain Indians, through the process of the courts and justice, were to recover the territory stolen from their ancestors, they could then be put on trial by the descendants of other Indian tribes from whom these first tribes had taken that land. And after all the human protagonists had been dealt

with, the process could be carried further with law suits in favor first of animals, and then of plants, some in of which might exist only as fossils, but all of whom had suffered theft of this land, right back to the primordial microbe, who himself took it over from local minerals which, prior to his arrival, had enjoyed its untrammelled use. However, were such a process carried even a short distance down the human part of the chain, the result would be social chaos, or a situation of injustice probably even greater than the original one. So, being practical minded, we may dismiss this aspect of the problem. In other words: the question of the chain of ownership-theft is nuncupatory with respect to property rights. Or, in other words, there is still a *right* to property even if its basis is theft.*

We are now at this point: uldra property rights have been boldly violated by the land barons, and the land barons refuse to give up their stolen land. Vance makes the case doubly clear because it is not the treaty tribes (conscious of their consequently augmented life opportunities) but the retent tribes, instrumentalized by outker attitudes, who make objection. This sly nuance, far from diluting the problem, etches it more strongly, for the objection is clearly not some 'loss of means of production' it is clearly and only a problem of justice. The retent tribes suffer nothing from the land baron theft. Their concerns are for justice in its pure form.

Here is the situation. The land barons stole the land. Because of this they possess the land. They are therefore its owners. It has become their property. By keeping it they are exercising their property rights. So the property is theirs by right. Devious as this line of reasoning may seem, it is, perhaps strangely, a recognized aspect of the western legal tradition, as expressed in the maxim: *ownership is nine tenths of the law*. So, since the land barons own the land, can anyone justly steal the land away from them? The answer is again strange: since theft is unjust, it would be unjust to steal this land from its owners, the land barons.

At first sight this may seem absurd. The land barons are thieves who retain their stolen land by force. If the retent tribes were to grab the land, and hold it by force, why would they not be just as justified as the land barons? Perhaps they would be—after they got it, and managed to keep it. But certainly not before they get it. The act of theft is unambiguously unjust. The act of having, depending on various circumstances, might be just. This justice might be less than absolute but it probably cannot be improved upon.

We can look at this again from a final perspective. Vance might have made the land barons nasty people who trample

* This result (dismissing previous ownerships lost though theft as a problem for ownership as such) is a pragmatic solution, which can be added to the theoretical solution already proposed, namely that since the right to property is intimately related to the right to life, it cannot be done away with on the basis of its relation to theft, particularly because theft, as such, does not necessarily reduce the right to life, or necessarily result in more limited access to the means of production, or restrict prospects of happiness.

upon the rights of others without a care, but he does not do this. They are perhaps somewhat bigoted, but they are not grossly evil. On balance they are 'good'. In my previous article I emphasized this goodness, in how it turns out to have been the key to their strength, their power to retain what is 'theirs'. But it would be easy to imagine a situation where they were not so good, where they were oppressive and mean, so that the treaty tribes would have sided with the retent tribes. In this case the land barons would have lost their land, *unless* they had some other source of strength which would have allowed them to maintain ownership. Vance looks at something like this situation in *Cadwal*. The outkers of Szintarre side with the retent tribes, but the treaty tribes side with the land barons. The Agents of Araminta Station have both the Peefers and the Yips against them, and there is even a sort of anti-Agent alliance between Yips and Peefers. One thing the Agents do eventually get is clear legal title to the land; in fact a great deal of the story is about gaining control of the relevant documents. The Agents therefore feel, and the reader is forced to agree, at least to that limited degree, that the Agents have 'legality' on their side—even if the reader agrees with the Peefers that the Yips ought to be allowed to colonize Deucas. The land barons lack this legality. But is not a great scramble after some documents just a contemptible farce, particularly in the face of the destruction of Stroma and Yipton with massive death?

The difference between the Agents, on the one hand, and the Yips and the Peefers on the other, is that the Agents have a society of law. This is the meaning of their long pursuit of the documents, however tawdry. They would lose their moral underpinning, and with it their will to protect the Conservancy, in the absence of a proper legal justification. The Peefers only chase the documents in order to undermine the Agents; they themselves—to the extent they are not hypocritical—justify themselves by what they judge to be universally valid moral imperatives. One might say, at least superficially or provisionally, that the Peefers rely on a natural law, while the Agents rely on positive law. As for the Yips, or rather the Oomphaw and those she influences, they are boldly tyrannical, hiding neither from themselves, nor anyone else, their lust for vengeance and rule by force.*

The goodness of the land barons is by no means absolute but, on balance, the land barons are benevolent. The inherent goodness of the Agents, however, is harder to see—at least with a piercing theoretical eye, because the author tricks us into siding with Glawen. Araminta Station is rife with nepotism and painfully arbitrary rules. The Agents use a hard and ungenerous attitude toward the Yips. They hypocritically neglect their own laws regarding temporary workers. Their core philosophy is non-humanist (they put

the interests of animals and plants before human interests). They make unabashed use of both force and ruse. If these hard-hearted anti-human Agents had let the Yips colonize Deucas they would have saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

All this makes case of the Agents more difficult. The clear legal title which they eventually scrape together—and which the land barons so conspicuously lack—seems to be a flimsy nothing, since the defense of this title depends very clearly on raw force, or at least on cunning tactics. Still, there is a certain parallel between the Agents and the land barons; the goodness, or humanity, of the land barons, has its counterpart in the *society of law* upheld by the Agents. The Peefers, whether or not their allegedly universal principles are valid, were revolutionaries; they sought to undo the established law of Cadwal.*

Now Babeuf's complaint is that ownership is theft, which suggests that legality (property ownership) and morality are in conflict. Vance, however, suggests the opposite, that there is a link between morality and legality, even if legality is harsh or difficult.



* See COSMOPOLIS #8, *Reflections on The Cadwal Chronicles*, where this analysis is made in greater detail. My thesis there is that the three attitudes (Agent, Peefer, Yip) reflect the world basic stances of WW II, democratic, communist and fascist, and that *The Cadwal Chronicles* is a crucial commentary on 20th century civilization.

* I happen to believe it can be shown that, on balance, the Agents' position is actually closer to natural law, while the Peefers, under cover of universals, use a positive law (a law invented merely by men based on nothing but their own notions and desires). But that is another question.

CYBER FOLLIES

DAN GUNTER'S ANTI-VIE OBSESSION

Our famous friend has been dormant. Since the aggressions, detailed in EXTANT 15, he has contributed but a single post to the VanceBBS, as well as one sly stab at the VIE on his personal discussion board, 'Chicago Blues'. The probable reason for this silence cannot be revealed at present, but the comments posted are of a pettiness so sorrowful the hostility must be placed in the 'compulsive' category. On 'Chicago Blues' he begins:

I received the three Lyonesse books as published by Edition Andreas Irle. . . First impressions: The frontmatter bears the marks of amateurism. . .

The nit-pickery which constitutes the body of this first indictment is not worth quoting. It features a complaint about the maps which fails to acknowledge how they are the only proper transcriptions of Vance's original drawings in print . . . but as a sample I will reproduce this typical remark:

. . . the copyright information is placed on the verso facing the title page. This information should have been placed on the verso of the title page.

Once again the VIE has fallen regrettably short of its exalted ideals! Dan follows this with a set of expert gripes* about page layout, including:

The bottom margin or foot appears significantly oversized in comparison to the other margins (especially the gutter). The expanse of white space at the foot of the page gives the page numbers far more significance than they should have.

The Edition Andreas Irle pages are identical to VIE pages, so owners of any VIE volume may verify this for themselves. Dan sums up this section with the remark: *Of course, it would have been better to redesign the page entirely.* This calls into question the artistry of Joel Andersen, VIE Master Composer, which, naturally, Dan is free to do—though the VIE page has been exposed to public scrutiny since the summer of 2001, when a sample was published in COSMOPOLIS (#16). Dan is the first to make this complaint, which, of course, does not invalidate it, though it could only have been helpful several years ago.

In the *de rigeur* 'down with Amiante' department, Dan wrote:

I also note that the text is poorly kerned. Capitals and lower-case letters in particular do not always fit together well. For example, the "Ma" combination always appears to have too much space between the "M" and the "a."

Let us look at this closely. Here are 5 views of the 'M'-'a' combination, chosen at random, from Edition Andreas Irle *Madouc*:

Extant - #16

Madouc

Front cover

Madouc

page 56

Many

page 235

Madouc

page 244

Mangeon the Marvellous

page 384

Deplorable, most certainly . . . ?

This kerning pair can also be verified in any VIE volume, since the fonts are the same in all cases.†

Finally, Dan makes a suggestion:

[The] VIE would be better off going to an entity such as Lulu or an equivalent POD publisher.

This suggestion might be helpful, except that a) it is not the VIE which is publishing these books, but a partnership of the Vance estate and Edition Andreas Irle, and b) were the text to be entirely reset (usually a complicated matter in Vance's case), as they would need to be for Lulu publication, the economic advantage of using the VIE settings would be nullified. (These settings are now the property of the Vance estate, per the original VIE plan). The price of the Edition Andreas Irle paperback may be considered high by some, but it would be higher still without this short-cut. We are not in the realm of some international corporation practicing high volume and low profit margins, but a quasi volunteer effort by Andreas Irle, in conjunction with the Vances and Rob Friefeld, to make out-of-print Vance texts available. The Vance estate is directly remunerated for each VIE facsimile paperback volume sold by Edition Andreas Irle.

One wonders if Dan Gunter has a personal problem with Andreas Irle; perhaps he is expressing disapproval of Andreas' guilty failure not to appear on the cover of EXTANT 13 in notoriously poor company.

On the VanceBBS Dan—having abandoned the sobriquet 'Irker of Paul Rhoads', now identifies himself as: 'The Original Spider-Man'—joined a conversation about spelling in which it was noted that variant spellings of a certain word

* See EXTANT 11, page 14: *Dan Gunter, Typography Expert.*

† A certain discrepancy of treatment in some Wave 1 volumes exists, which changed the general treatment of the 'metrics' in these volumes, though not the relative kerning. This matter is detailed somewhere in Cosmopolis post Wave 1, but in any case does not concern the Lyonesse volumes. I would also like to recommend my remarks, re complaint about VIE font kerning, in COSMOPOLIS 40, page 13.

were used in the VIE (see ECHOS IN THE ETHER). He wrote:

*"Vermillion" isn't an "alternate spelling" of "vermilion."
It is a misspelling. There is no good reason for using
"vermillion" anywhere in the VIE. Any argument in
such of that misspelling is an argument in favor of any
misspelling — e.g., using "it's" for "its," "you're" for "your,"
or anything else.
"Vermillion" should never have appeared in the VIE. No
explanations suffice.*

To this ill-humored and inapropos impertinence
'Emphyrio', a.k.a. Tim Stretton — providing a link to
ONELOOK.COM to back up his argument — replied:

*I fully accept that the VIE will have made textual errors
somewhere along the line.
This is not one of them.
Either spelling is acceptable. The word derives
from Middle English "vermelion", from Old French
"vermeillon" . . .*

As for the *Lyonesse* books, Dan went back to 'Chicago Blues'
to admit at least one positive aspect:

*I do have to note one plus to these paperback editions of
the Lyonesse novels: They lack Paul Rhoads's illustrations.
Based on my review of his other illustrations for other VIE
books, the absence of his illustrations significantly increases
the value of the Andreas Irle editions.*

PATAPHYSICAL SPAM

SRI CHUTRAPRANDRA: MASTER OF THE NOBLE SURFACE

Matty Paris

Sir Chutraprandra, Master of the Noble Surface is holding his annual workshops in intense and spasmodic superficial epiphanies within the innards of Monmouth Cave in Kentucky at the apex of the winter solstice. He will conduct a series of opaque discourses of random words and dense chants aiming at perception of the ultimately shallow and of course the Four Rhinestone Truths. They are:

1. We embrace, after a short while, a vast ineluctable abyss, a wall, a cliff, a sea, or we go to sleep.
2. We need to embrace a divine world that is shiny and impeccable, ineluctable as sheathed vinyl.
3. If the veneer of truth is nothing, the truth itself is less than nothing. Only deceptions are more than nothing, yet what are lies? Deliberately, consciously, willfully nothing.
4. Even if one is less than imbecile, or a sham imitation moron, one is never stupid or ignorant as the true demons of lead and stone.
Shanti, shanti, shanti, baby.

Sri Chutraprandra is the former Laurent Lockness, a Belgian chef still expert in steaming mussels spiced with raspberry flavored beer. He discovered his spiritual identity while staring at a dead mussel that would not open. After these dark and dour ceremonies Sri Chutraprandra will cook a mussel dinner for the faithful that will delight all his inner acolytes with his cunning and blisteringly hot Sri Lankan sauces and condiments. Those not members of the Ashram of the Noble Surface will have to pay twenty dollars for the dinner and bring their own beer.



ECHOES IN THE ETHER

VANCIAN SPELLING

In a recent conversation on the VanceBBS, which touched on variant vancian spellings, PATRICK DUSOULIER made the following remarks, of general interest regarding VIE editorial processes:

It's a fact that Vance could not care less about spelling consistency (in fact, he doesn't much care about spelling itself . . .). He has gone so far as to claim he was "inconsistent" on purpose. You may remember what he said about "grey" and "gray", saying that those two spellings felt different to him, and he used the one that seemed most appropriate to the text and his mood. He may have exaggerated a bit on this one, who knows... but I understand what he means, since I feel the same way for some words. For instance, I feel that "honour", "armour", "valour" etc. are best suited for fantasy stories, whereas "honor", "armor" "valor" sound quite all right for more modern settings. This is no reflection on the relative merits of British and American English... just that one form is "older" than the other, and goes well for stories about knights and dragons and so on, while the other is perfect for modern military operations . . .

Another point I wanted to make is that the variation of spellings we see now may not necessarily correspond to what Jack wrote. Norma typed most of his texts, and may have introduced her own idiosyncratic variations, deliberately or not. Then copyeditors intervened, and may have modified those spellings, usually attempting to standardize/consistencize them, but missing a few here and there . . .

And then, VIE itself may have also introduced some differences of its own. Spelling consistency has been an ongoing subject of debate within VIE, and there were several schools of thought. The one that prevailed in the end was probably as close as possible to Jack's position (consistency is the I don't remember what of small minds . . .), i.e. to hell with consistency, it's a thing for engineers, not artists. So be it. I don't think there were any of us who really advocated the other extreme, i.e. standardize spelling throughout the whole VIE (with one exception I can remember, but this decision was finally reversed : "marvellous" and "marvelous". Jack having expressed his preference for "marvellous", this was adjusted in the texts for a while. Eventually, we reverted to the "original" spelling, but I wouldn't swear this was 100% perfect. In any case, it's a fact that Jack has used both spellings extensively!) Personally, I deplored spelling inconsistencies when they occurred in the same paragraph, or within walking distance between the two occurrences . . . I thought it untidy, sloppy, and have always failed to find any artistic merit in that. I'm for spelling consistency within a given text, but I'm not bothered about variants used across the texts (I don't find it "appalling" . . .)

Note also that Jack has not always been consistent

with the proper nouns he invented, and some of these inconsistencies appeared in print, despite Norma's efforts to write out lists. Some still went uncaught, of course. VIE caught most of those, I daresay (we had powerful tools for that, KV's VDAE foremost) but I wouldn't swear we spotted every single one of them.

Patrick's memories accord with my own; this issue was constant source of controversy.

At the first TI meeting, in Chinon* Patrick advocated standardization, particularly for hyphenation. This was not an issue of much importance to me but, having a certain natural sympathy for a Cartesian approach—perhaps by reason of my own congenital incapacities—I had no opposition to it. I recall discussing the matter with a somewhat discouraged, or even annoyed Patrick, assuring him I would support such a program, were he to organize it. As it turned out, and as I am sure I have recounted somewhere in COSMOPOLIS, circumstances made any such plan to standardize nomenclature. These circumstances were Alun Hughes' unavailability for the amount of TI supervision foreseen, and the structure of the work itself.

Alun's plan called for progressive treatment of texts, beginning with those for which we had the best evidence. Responsible standardization of spelling and hyphenation would have required that we first gather all textual evidence, and make general choices on that basis. I was not conscious of it at the time, but I soon became aware that the politics of the project would exclude such an approach. We had to publish some books within a reasonable period. This human necessity was not only a matter of subscriber trust; the volunteers also might have lost confidence if work dragged on for years without any material result. Had Alun been able to supervise, however, he might have been able to devise and propose general standards at an early date based on private researches. I was incapable of making such researches, or of setting standards based on them. Meanwhile, in Alun's absence, there was a vacuum of authority in TI. Champions such as Tim Stretton and Steve Sherman, and Patrick himself, were immersed in work on specific texts. General supervision was left to me, whose basic VIE work was such general supervision in any case. It was part of this work to defend standards established at the TI conferences. Of course I was never 'head of TI', and nothing delicate was decided without close consultation with Tim and Steve in particular (and others as well), and I also did much work in tandem with Patrick on a series of 'fast track' texts, which had little complicating evidence and were therefore processed per a more or less constraining protocol in service of the Wave 1 schedule. So, in the early stages, doing much Board Review work, I struggled to impose the standards established by Alun to the best of my ability. I acceded, as much as possible, to the individual tastes of the wallah for each text. These tastes changed nothing essential, and could, as far as I was concerned, exercise themselves freely on such

* See COSMOPOLIS #11, 'News From The Ivory Tower, Textual Integrity on the March!' by Tim Stretton.

issues as hyphenation or spelling consistency in a text. My interpretation of Alun's standards was certainly colored by my own incapacity to spell, and my high tolerance—not to say indifference—of inconsistency, and while I generally did not oppose standardization, I sometimes complained about it, and insisted, in cases where I believed it counted, on retention of vancian phrases or spellings denounced by some as ungrammatical or nonexistent.

At the end of the project, with much of Wave 2 already being printed, such issues were still being debated, and in this context I made an impatient remark about a consistency issue which exasperated Patrick—I could recover the specific issue with a little research. I was, and am, very sorry because Patrick merited exceptional respect.

Let it never be forgotten that, without the contribution of Patrick Dusoulier the VIE could not have happened. One only need glance at page 449 of VIE vol. 44 to understand this with full force. Patrick's credits are also published on FOREVERNESS at:

[HTTP://WWW.INTEGRALARCHIVE.ORG/WORK-CREDITS.HTM](http://www.integralarchive.org/work-credits.htm)

Finally, to return to the conversation about spelling on the VanceBBS; in reaction to Dan's ill-tempered post (see CYBER FOLLIES) Patrick wrote:

This vermilion/vermillion affair is a perfect illustration of one of the problems we had in VIE. I knew those two spellings were "acceptable" according to some very respectable dictionaries (The American Heritage in particular, since this is one the Vances often referred to). Of course, some readers may not be aware of that, in good faith. It's something else to be subsequently accused of sloppiness, however politely . . . But I'm resigned to the fact.*

I remember another such example where VIE was crucified by, admittedly, one of its fiercest opponents, who considered us as hopeless illiterates. I'm talking about "objects of vertu"... This perfectly correct expression is used in Ecce & Old Earth, Night Lamp, Ports of Call, Strange She Hasn't Written, and also in Throy as "artefacts of vertu" (Thanks to KV's Totality...). In Lurulu, it became "objects of vertu" (and believe me, this is straight from the original "manuscript"). We respected this variant, simply because it is honourably recorded as such in dictionaries. I tried to explain this on "the Other Board" at the time, but to no avail. Again, our job was NOT to standardize and homogenize Jack's spelling, syntax and so forth. Many editors did that, more or less. We undid as much of it as possible. Right or wrong? Debateable in the absolute, of course (meaning an endless debate) but this was our goal, our principle, so I feel quite comfortable about it. As Alan Hughes expressed it, we went for the "authentic, but not too painfully authentic". Such variants did not cause me any pain. . .

THE NORMA FACTOR

Commenting on Patrick's remark about the factor of Norma's typing, the clever DAVID B. WILLIAMS wrote:

An interesting point. By coincidence, there is an essay on a visit with the Vances in 1995 by He Who Must Not Be Named in the latest number of The Publication That Must Not Be Linked, which interested readers can reach via the front page of Foreverness. Norma casually mentioned that she sometimes corrected situations in which Jack, for example, used too much alliteration (the author was shocked). I have long thought that this sort of thing may have happened; the temptation would be simply irresistible. And after typing and retyping about 4 million words of Jack's manuscripts, Norma probably had a better feel for his stylistic foibles than he did.

Much as I love and respect Norma Vance, both personally and from a literary angle, I cannot share David's complaisance. Norma Vance is, without any question in my mind, personally responsible for the quantity, and in certain ways even the quality of her husband's production.

Like several of their other friends I have enjoyed the privilege of extended house visits with the Vances, both in Oakland and in France, and I can testify that Norma brooked neither idleness nor shoddy work. Jack Vance, of course, is no sluggard and no slouch, but he is only human. He has a certain penchant for moony dreaming in the morning and late drinking in the evening. I throw no stone! One can easily sympathize with these tendencies. Still, I consider Jack Vance to have been professionally lucky to have had so active a collaborator.

That said, I find it unacceptable, however great the temptation (though, in most cases, it must, per force, be accepted) that anyone at all, no matter how acute their alleged feel for alleged foibles, abrogate to themselves the stylistic correction of such a master as Vance. His stylistic mistakes, if they exist, must be more interesting than the best efforts of any ordinary writer, and thus should be carefully preserved, like the brush strokes of a master painter. My attitude, however, is not blind reverence. Norma, and others, including editors, have offered comments which have provoked, or sometimes obliged, the author to changes, which have been sometimes willing and sometimes less willing. Such changes, however, at worst have the legitimacy of being authorial and, at best, are considered improvements by the author himself.

* These overly delicate references to Dan's "Vermillion" should never have appeared in the VIE. No explanations suffice, are. . . overly delicate. Good faith, indeed.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

THE JUDGEMENTS OF IMAM PEDALA SEZZ:



"Bread thief."
"Cut hand."



"Baby girl."
"Cut clitoris."



"Adulteresse."
"Cut head."



"Infidele."
"Keep cutting."



"Coran."
"Don't cut!"



Paul Rhoads

LAST AND LEAST

EXTANT NOTIFICATION

Hans van der Veeke reports that he has started an email notification for EXTANT at Forvereness. He writes: "If you send an email to:

EXTANT@INTEGRALARCHIVE.ORG

you will be notified when Extant is published. Your email address will only be used for this purpose and will never be used for any other emailing or be given away or sold for commercial purposes.

"You can also unsubscribe to Extant notification on this address."



ILLUSTRATIONS

The drawings decorating this issue of EXTANT, like the drawings and painting which illustrate other issues (unless otherwise attributed), are by—to use David B. Williams' expression—*He Who Must Not Be Named*.

The drawings in this issue were made between 1990 and 2006. They are in chalk or graphite and, except for the cows, and the study of a Boucher figure from a painting, they are drawings of sculptures.

page 1: Neptune (Coustou, Tuileries and Louvre)

page 3: Female figure (Roman, Louvre)

page 5: Roman figure (Tuileries)

page 7: Nymph (Boucher)

page 9: Bather (Falconet)

page 11: St. Rita (St. Roch)

page 13: Diana (Fontaine des Medecis)

page 15: Figure from 'Le Bain d'Appolon' (Versailles)

page 22: Corybante (Roman, Louvre)

page 24: Cows near Chinon



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Thanks to THOMAS RYDBECK, STEVE SHERMAN, and HANS VAN DER VEEKE for their help with this issue.

Contact EXTANT at:

EMERALDOFTHEWEST@YAHOO.COM

