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## EXTANT REPRIEVED (1 TIME ONLY!)

EXTANT 22 was supposed to be 'the last' but life is full of surprises. Greg's account of his trip to Oakland was too good not to share—and make permanent in EXTANT and the EXTANT volume, soon to be printed with Cx3 and the VIE Graphics volume. (see: FOREVERNESS at [integralarchive.com](http://integralarchive.com).)

Meanwhile John Vance, with the help of Jeremy Cavaterra, has provided the account of Jack and Norma's 1998 trip to France, which may also be appreciated by our amiable, and even our less amiable readers.

Lust not for more EXTANT! The VIE project is now well, truly and gloriously, over. EXTANT as well . . .

*The Editor*

## HAPPY TRIUMPH: PUTTING A PERIOD TO THE VIE ADVENTURE

In April of 2007, Bob Lacovara and I joined John Vance on the VIE's board of directors. The new board worked through the summer and fall to tie up loose ends, and in early December executed a Certificate of Dissolution, thereby setting in motion the process to dissolve the corporation.

The VIE had been officially incorporated on January 15, 2000. A photograph published in COSMOPOLIS #1 records the event: the founders are gathered around a table in the Vance's dining room, faces aglow with anticipation and excitement, a great journey about to begin. As I glanced at the photo a few weeks ago it occurred to me to propose a culminating gathering at Oakland. We would review the corporation's status and transact any remaining business items, take part in a meal and final raising-of-the-glass, then contentedly contemplate our golden pathways. It seemed a worthy book-end to the project.

And there was indeed one significant business item remaining: final disposition of surplus funds. The VIE project received just over \$1 million in revenue and, despite capricious foreign exchange rates and the numerous calculations, re-calculations and (sometimes!) miscalculations along the way, finished its affairs a few thousand dollars to the positive. No royalty had been paid to Jack for publishing



Greg Hansen and Jack Vance, reveling in the wonder of it all.

rights to his work, and the board determined to pay one from these leftover funds. A gathering could provide a chance to present Jack—and perhaps even to surprise him—with this royalty payment.

I half-jokingly suggested the dinner scheme to John; to my delight he instantly agreed. He and his family would be visiting Oakland from New Jersey over the holidays and a date of December 29<sup>th</sup> was set. John agreed to say nothing to Jack about the royalty, it would be a complete surprise. A bout with pneumonia hospitalized Jack in mid-December but he made a quick recovery, and as his stamina and capacity grew so did the invitation list for the dinner party.

At length came the appointed evening. Turning onto Valley View Road I saw the famous hilltop grove of eucalyptus trees, then stopped the car at the foot of a narrow, unpaved driveway. The driveway traversed a steep hillside and as I peered up through the windshield wipers I thought of Jack's disastrous nighttime garbage-emptying mission: how many times must he and that garbage can have rolled over each other before they hit the street below? Easing up the gravel driveway I vowed to use discretion.

At the top of the grade I found myself on a level parking area of no great dimension, parked the car a respectful distance from the house, and stepped out into the steady rain. A large golden retriever noticed then loudly objected to my presence; knowing that Jack has little use for dogs I wondered if I'd found the right place after all. But John answered at my first knock and invited me inside. I was first to arrive and he greeted me congenially, then hurriedly finished mopping muddy dog-prints from the floor (the dog belonged to him) while Jack was getting dressed in the next room. Left to my own devices I spent a few minutes observing the place from the kitchen table.

I was struck by the house's pervasive sense of benign disarray: a kind of charming, comfortable dilapidation. Books were much in evidence, and while I was too nervous to look at any of them closely I did take note of a row of gold-stamped leather spines on a low bookshelf near the window. On the far side of the living room an old, yellowed computer sat on a chipped plywood table, surrounded by antique recording devices. The venerable chair in front of the computer was missing much of its upholstery—large pieces of cushion thrust up through gaping holes—and at some point it had been mounted on slab of plywood with

metal casters underneath for ease of movement. I thought to myself: There it is! The origin of literary greatness, the bastion of one of the twentieth century's greatest authors! Though it was hard to believe it could be so when the furniture and equipment seemed better suited for a landfill.

The curious juxtaposition of shabby and sublime continued throughout the house. In the kitchen, upward-facing track lighting had been installed to illuminate the lovely coffered ceiling, but of twelve original light-bulbs all but three had burned out. High on the breakfast alcove wall the original Winged Being drawing hung—crookedly. Items and oddments covered every horizontal surface in the living room and kitchen: small statues, sea-shells, framed photographs, glassware, various pots and vases. A long credenza near the stairway supported many dozens of books which, though obscured by low light and a layer of odds and ends, turned

out to be an alphabetized collection of nearly every English edition of Jack's work. I shuddered to think what would happen if there should be a short in the electrical system, or if someone were careless with a candle.

A battered ukulele sat on the table. I picked it up and mis-fingered a few chords, then realized it was *his* ukulele and gently set it back down, next to a container holding three slightly rusty metal kazoos.

By and by Jack made his way round the corner from his 'bedroom', a twin bed pushed into a far corner of the living room. He moved slowly hand-over-hand along the countertop, and as he joined me at the kitchen table I forgot all of my carefully practiced lines.

I was petrified of conversation with Jack. On the airplane to Oakland I'd re-read every interview and encounter

published in COSMOPOLIS and EXTANT, and was all too aware of his frequent tendency to tweak visitors' noses. What's more I knew Jack appreciated people who were 'masters of special skills' and who could make conversation on arcane topics like cosmology and classical jazz. I fretted that nothing in my experience could possibly interest him.

But Jack quickly put me at ease with his warm and humble manner. And frankly it's hard to be intimidated by a fellow who is so advanced in years, completely blind, and who—dressed as he was in a rumpled striped shirt, worn trousers, wind-breaker and black knit cap—looked like a hobo recently turned out of his boxcar! We made small talk for a moment or two. "What are you drinking?" he asked me; "Working on a root beer," I replied. "Ooo, that sounds good



The 'original' Winged Being. In fact this is an ink drawing, by Paul Rhoads, made at the request of Jack Vance, to replace a print made from an Assyrian clay roller. The subject being a standard Assyrian image, this must be something like the *original* original.

I think I'll have one too," he said and I sprang up to fetch it—only to be stopped short by frantic miming from Jeremy Cavaterra in the kitchen. Jack interpreted the silence and my lack of movement correctly: "Am I not supposed to have that?" he grunted.

"No Jack, the doctor says no root beer. How about a tonic instead?" Jeremy offered. Surprisingly tractable, Jack accepted happily and asked me if I enjoyed tonic water. I admitted I'd always found something else more tempting than straight tonic water and couldn't recall ever drinking it. Jack said he was no longer allowed alcohol, but that he found tonic water a very satisfactory substitute.

And so it went. He asked me what I did for a living. I replied that on my father's advice I had graduated from the Institute of Definable Excellences and become a financial analyst, and that if Myron Tany had not hit upon 'economic fluxions' he would have ended up just like me (one carefully practiced line I did manage to remember.) Jack's laughter seemed sincere. I told him how it felt to discover his writing, and that my son had recently read and enjoyed *Big Planet*. Jack thanked me warmly, but I couldn't tell if the praise made him more pleased or uncomfortable.

He asked me how I felt about jazz. I answered honestly—if reluctantly!—that jazz is a language I do not understand. He spent a moment rhapsodizing about the golden age of classical jazz in New Orleans, then went on to denounce the so-called 'new jazz' invented by Dizzy Gillespie and others. According to Jack, they invented new jazz to 'come up with a music that white people couldn't handle', but were foiled when white musicians took up the style and soon were making as much abysmal noise as the black musicians. He had a satisfied laugh at the thought, then picked up the ukulele and began strumming and singing. I couldn't make out the words of the song, and frankly it didn't sound very jazz-like to me, but it had a sweet sound and when he finished singing I applauded.

The conversation skipped around without dwelling very long on any topic. I got the impression Jack was in 'interview mode': many of his comments were very similar to answers he'd given in previous interviews, if not verbatim repetitions of them. He tried to make bold sweeping statements and feel outrage at the absurdities of life, but I could tell his heart really wasn't in it. No doubt about it, this was not the same Jack Vance who had kept interviewers on tenterhooks for years and who'd toyed with the uninitiated. He seemed to lack the mental energy for verbal gymnastics, and indeed he stood and moved about only with great effort. Jack's age and health challenges have slowed him considerably, as must surely be expected.

John's fiancée Alexia was staying at the Vance home, along with her father, Bill Schulz. Bill is a professor of mathematics and has been a frequent visitor to Valley View Road through the years. In fact, Alexia accompanied her dad on many of those visits and has known John since she was two years old.

Alexia is young (early thirties, I'd guess), pretty, dark-haired, with a sunny disposition. She holds a Ph.D. in theoretical astrophysics from Harvard and is now engaged in post-doctoral research at the Institute for Advanced Studies



The coffered ceiling of the dining room. It was made, to Jack's order, by a wood carver in Katmandu. This ceiling is not the same as the one in the kitchen, which has painted panels, with flower patterns designed by Jack and colored in by a friend.

(on Einstein Drive) in Princeton, NJ—John & kids moved to Princeton recently to accompany her.

At this point John sat down with Jack and me at the table and we got down to business. Bill pulled up a chair to observe. John began with a few words about the VIE: the corporation had achieved its stated purpose and was now being wound-up; this small gathering was, in fact, a final meeting of the board of directors, convened to review the corporation's status and transact any remaining business. He introduced me as corporate secretary and a member of the board then gave me the floor.

I ventured a few words about the project and how it had succeeded brilliantly in spite of challenges and opposition . . .

"Feht! That son-of-a-bitch!!" Jack exclaimed, suddenly free of any sign of lethargy. He leaned back in his chair and filled his lungs for further remonstrance.

"Now Dad," John broke in chidingly, "this is an official meeting . . . let Greg make his report."

"Alright."

I pointed out that the corporation was very nearly wound-up, current in its obligations to vendors and taxing authorities, its seller's permit closed-out, final tax returns in preparation by the CPA.

"With some money left over, right?" Jack interjected.

"Dad, let Greg make his report!" John admonished.

"Yeah Jack this is official VIE business," Bill echoed from the foot of the table.

"Okay, okay, I'll keep my mouth shut," Jack shot back somewhat peevishly. Exasperated, John argued that he wasn't trying to 'shut (Jack) up' and that no offense had been intended or should have been taken. Back and forth they went until Jack furrowed his brow and growled "Enough said!" In the awkward silence John nodded at me to proceed.

I took a deep breath and reassured Jack that he could interrupt me any time he saw fit. "There's no way to put a price on the value of publishing rights to your entire life's work," I continued, and Jack seemed to perk back up. "Not enough gold in Fort Knox. But, with a surplus in the VIE account, the board recognized an obligation to make a royalty payment to you and has unanimously voted to do so."

"How much?" asked Jack eagerly.

I told him and he shouted in surprise. "By god, if I had more energy I'd simper for you!" he exclaimed, well pleased with the money—and with his clever remark.

John offered a few words in praise of the VIE volunteers, the indefatigable Paul Rhoads in particular, and Bill made a short speech of gratitude on behalf of his fellow subscribers. And thus, without fanfare, but with the quiet satisfaction of a difficult job well done, ended the VIE.

A knock on the door announced another guest's arrival: David Alexander. David is a long-time friend of Jack's from Palo Alto who has been paying social calls since the early 1970s. He breezed into the kitchen and took a seat at the table just as John got up to fetch Norma from her apartment at the assisted living center.

All this time Jeremy was a blur of activity in the kitchen, peeling potatoes and carrots and stirring various bubbling concoctions on the stove. The aromas were enticing. Jeremy is a writer, composer and long-time admirer of Jack who lives with him as a caretaker. He's also a first-rate cook.

Jack suddenly leaned back and announced that Jeremy had helped him to write another book: his autobiography! David and I exclaimed our delight; I felt like dancing a jig. It turns out Jack has finished recording the book on audiotape and Jeremy is in the process of transcribing it—they expect it to run to as many as 250 pages. Jack's literary agent has said he can get Jack an advance for the book and publishers are being considered (Tor?), though with such a unique project "all publishing options are on the table." No clear idea as to when the book will be available.

Not long after this John returned with Norma in tow.

Norma is also slowing down with age, problems with her memory having required her to move to the assisted living center for more constant care. Her distant memories remain strong but she is at a loss to recall recent events, and often becomes disoriented in the middle of a thought. When she arrived her white hair was tousled and she wore a frayed gray cardigan sweater over a purple sweatshirt and lounge pants. Seeing David and me at the table she put a self-conscious hand to her hair and said: "Oh, I didn't know there would be guests tonight! I would have dressed-up if I'd known!" I gathered she had been told, but had forgotten. Hearing her voice, Jack greeted Norma tenderly: "Hello you old gal." Norma smiled and took a playful swipe past Jack's chin with her fist.

After several more minutes' conversation Jack began to grow uneasy regarding the whereabouts of his other guests. "Johnny!" he bellowed, "where's Bob Silverberg? I want you to call him!"

John called down from the upstairs balcony: "Its not yet six o'clock, dad. Let's let them be late first before we pester them."

"But I want Bob to be here!" Jack protested, boyishly eager to see his friend. "I want you to call and remind him!" If John made response to this I did not hear it.

John's kids Allison (10) and Glen (8) appeared from upstairs and John introduced them. They are an intelligent pair, reserved but not shy and quite well-behaved for their ages. Glen is very fond of chess and soon enjoined me to play with him on a small chess-table in the living room. He plays aggressively and had me on the run at first, but a miscalculation cost him his queen and then the game. Glen proposed two-out-of-three and I accepted. As the games progressed Allison did her best to help my cause, offering timely suggestions

and even liberating my captive queen when Glen's back was turned, but her efforts were in vain; Glen won the final two games handily and thereby

became Chess Champion of the evening.

As Glen and I played the other guests arrived. First: Bob Mielke, who Jack declared was once 'a red-hot trombone player, one of the ten greatest jazz trombone players in the world,' along with his lady friend Lois. Bob is now stooped, shuffling and wears a white fringe of Captain Ahab beard; he looks more likely to hold a corn-cob pipe to his lips than a jazz trombone. I asked him if he still found time to put the trombone through its paces. He gave a sour chuckle and observed that the trombone ". . . now puts *me* through *its* paces."



Jack Vance's work station. The most notable feature is certainly the keyboard with its modified keys. When Vance could still see, he used an extra large screen and special software to project the words a few inches high. *Cadwal*, for example, was written during that period. By the time Vance wrote *Lurulu* this had become useless, and he depended totally on a mechanical read-back. Note the book-on-tape reader, to the right of the keyboard.



Tim Underwood (Vance publication hero), Jack Vance and Greg Hansen (heroic VIE volunteer). Note the *lustre* of green lanterns.

Next to arrive were Robert and Karen Silverberg, Robert looking natty in his evening clothes and splendid white goatee. As a science fiction author Robert is even more famous than Jack. His manner of dress, posture, and mannerisms betray a certain vanity which, while it more generously (and even fairly) could be adjudged appropriate 'professional dignity', seemed almost haughty in contrast to Jack and his eccentric home. Inspecting Jack's VIE set later in the evening, Robert remarked: "The guy sure wrote a lot of books," then turned and waited expectantly. A moment later David Alexander caught the irony of the remark and exclaimed: "Oh, but not nearly so many books as you've written, Bob!" At this Robert nodded and joined the general laughter.

Last to arrive was Tim Underwood, of Underwood-Miller publishing fame. He'd driven the two hours from Nevada City for the occasion. Tall and spare with large round glasses, Tim proved himself to be a most amiable fellow. He'd not been to see Jack for quite some time—at least ten years. John confided that during Tim's last visit Jack had teased him mercilessly about his vegetarian diet (the line 'Such is the dark side of vegetarianism' from *The Book of Dreams* was inspired by Tim's proclivity.) Tim had declined all subsequent invitations and Jack's teasing was strongly suspected as the culprit. John gave him an emotional hug when he arrived. I heard no vegetarian jibes from Jack as the evening progressed, though Robert Silverberg impishly said "You have a nice vegetarian gauntness" to Tim as he leaned over the pan of vegetable curry prepared specially for him. However, moments later Tim surprised everyone by adding a hamburger to his plate. "I thought you were a vegetarian!" David cried out. "Well, I used to be," was Tim's diffident response, and there it rested.

As Jeremy prepared dinner I kept myself busy: playing

chess with Glen, stoking the fire in the corner fireplace, helping set out the silverware. But at length I swallowed my anxiety and joined the conversation at the dining table. When I claimed an empty chair between Karen Silverberg and Alexia, Karen kindly introduced herself to me and I admitted I was more comfortable in company of children than famous authors. She and Alexia seemed to appreciate the remark and their polite laughter made me feel better.

I asked Karen how she'd met Robert. She recounted asking for his autograph at a book-signing, and how he'd paused and looked up at her and asked: "What's a good Jewish girl like you doing in Texas?" followed shortly by "And what are you doing for dinner?" Certainly Robert Silverberg does not lack self-confidence.

Alexia then commenced an explanation of dark matter, and how the gravitational lensing effect around large cosmic objects can be used to gauge their mass and density, and calibrate the potential interaction between 'dark' and baryonic particles (no kidding.) She spoke with clarity and youthful energy but I could tell that Norma, sitting across the table, was having difficulty following the conversation. Norma smiled and blinked and seemed altogether uncomfortable. I tried to draw her into the discussion and then tried to change the subject to something simpler, but she had a hard time hearing and understanding me in the babble of voices. She announced "I just need to get up and walk around a little" then stood and excused herself from the table. I felt a pang of sadness for her. Once the consummate hostess and chatty center of attention, Norma was now, in some ways, 'on the outside looking in'.

During and after dinner small knots of people clustered in conversation throughout the house, to the periodic accompaniment of ukulele and kazoo from the dining room. I found myself talking with Tim Underwood. When I

introduced myself as one of John's colleagues from the VIE, he mentioned that he'd not seen any of our books and was curious about them. I promptly steered him over to Jack's set where he picked up a volume and examined it with great interest. Opening the book he oohed with pleasure at the typesetting, complimenting the generous margins and gutter and praising the 'leading' between lines of text. "Books were typeset this way in the 20s," he said, "before publishing companies became more concerned with paper costs than legibility. These wide margins and the extra space between text lines are so much easier on the eye."

I was all ears: here was a man, experienced with both quality book publishing and the life and work of Jack Vance, seeing the VIE for the first time. I asked what he thought of the typeface and Tim turned his practiced eye back to the book. "It's appropriate," he said after a moment's consideration, "the look of this font goes very well with Jack's style." He asked what font it was and when I told him it was an original font designed for the VIE he nodded approvingly.

A thoughtful look crossed Tim's face and he brought up a book project he'd been intending to do: publishing both Cugel stories together in a definitive illustrated edition, to be titled *The Laughing Magician*. He said he'd had the rights for 7-8 years but had never gotten around to doing it, and that perhaps he should use the VIE texts to proceed with the project. John and David drifted over to where we were standing, and John and I took turns describing the textual restoration process and the VIE electronic text archive. Tim seemed most impressed.

Then he paused for a moment before relating a couple of strangely coincidental phone calls he'd received earlier that day. The first came from a collector just as Tim was leaving his home to drive to Oakland. The caller had asked 'When are you finally going to finish *The Laughing Magician*?' Surprised, Tim had replied: 'You won't believe where I'm going for dinner tonight . . .'

The second call had come a few hours later, after Tim had checked into his hotel room and deposited his suit-case. As he started the drive to the Vance's, the wife of a customer called to say that her husband had passed away, and would Tim be interested in purchasing her late husband's complete collection of U-M Vance books? Tim was often in financial straits in his younger days and had been forced to sell his own copies of the books, so he was delighted by this opportunity to own them all once again. John, David and I marveled at the cosmic coincidence, and heartily agreed with Tim that these were auspicious circumstances indeed to begin a Vance publishing project. John promised to get the Cugel texts to Tim as soon as he could.

The hour had grown late; guests began departing. As Robert and Karen Silverberg were leaving, Karen pointed out that Robert had recently written 'a vancean story' for George R. R. Martin, who is editing an anthology of short fiction written in *The Dying Earth* milieu. Robert didn't share very much about the project, except the title of his story—which I've forgotten, alas!—and that several other prominent authors were contributing to it.

As the evening wound down, John left Tim, David and I to

put the kids to bed and our conversation turned to what a wonderful writer Jack is, and what we appreciate most about his work. We discussed Jack's personality: his disdain for snobbishness, his uncomplicated and exuberant approach to writing. David shared an insightful story: years ago John was building a hutch for the dining-room. Jack observed that "John does very good work, much better than I could ever do. But he needs to learn to be a little more slap-dash." What a wonderful irony, and how true! The precise, painfully scientific approach will always yield inferior results where great art is concerned; there is something ennobling and *realistic* about imperfection. Picasso spent his entire life trying to paint like he did when he was three years old. Jack's writing, for all its elevated style and imposing quality, has at its core the vigorous, beating heart of Jack's own unique personality; perhaps that is the secret ingredient after all.

We marveled at Jack's home, at the priceless architectural features, the wooden walls and floors burnished by time and steeped in creativity. "There have been so many parties here," Tim reflected, "so many good times, so much *joie de vivre*. There's such a positive atmosphere in this place, such a wonderful vibration emanating from it!" And we fell silent for a while, enjoying the feeling of consensus, that bond which quickly forms between people who, though they do not know each other well, agree on so many things.

And I smiled to myself, realizing that my fears about the evening had been in vain. I hadn't said very much in the course of the night but I had done a lot of listening. I am not a writer, I am a reader; I am not a talker, I am a listener. And my participation is important both to literature and to dinner parties at the Vance's.

After a moment I noticed that Jack and Norma were sitting quietly together at the kitchen table, clearly exhausted. We remaining guests didn't want to leave but, sensing the time was at hand, we exchanged e-mail addresses and promised to connect again. I bid a sincere good-by to David and Tim, John and Norma and Jack. As I clasped Jack's shoulder he reached over and patted my hand with his own, his wide palm warm and dry, the back of his hand wrinkled and age-spotted. "Greg," he said, "you can come here any time."



# UTOPIA: THE VANCE'S LAST EUROPEAN TRAVEL ADVENTURE

**PREFACE:** The following account was written in the fall of 1998 at the request of Jack Vance. It is addressed to him and sometimes uses the second person, sometimes the third. Since it refers to common experiences, and was not intended for a circulation wider than the participants, it is often elliptic, nothing more than an aide-memoir. But 10 years have passed and even its author finds much of it be obscure. Certain points, however, can be embellished.

What is not covered, though occasionally alluded to, is the preamble to the trip. Bruno Delachiesa, 'cultural attache' of the municipal government of Poitiers, to get a super-star for his Sci-fi (Utopea 98) festival, lured Jack Vance with the promise of first class tickets plus a 2 week, all-expenses paid vacation in the finest hotels all over France. Jack, unable to resist, drafted me to do the planning—and to serve, according to his expression, as "chauffeur and bouncer". He instructed me to procure the Michelin guide. Fabulous plans were laid. The culmination was to be Castelnaudarie, where, according to *Saveur* magazine, one could sample the original cassoulet.

I went to Poitiers, and Bruno, with the charming France Rouault—who did all the actual festival work—paid me a vist at chez moi. There was more large talk. For example there were to be professional translators to help Jack with interviews at the festival.

Jack, of course, was also in touch with Bruno. His nose was in the wind and his feet were on the ground. How, exactly, was all this going to be paid for? He insisted that Bruno furnish us with a credit card, but it was too late. At the last minute everything evaporated. There would be no trip—generously paid for by the French tax-payers—there would not even be first class air fare.

Negotiations then became serious. In the end there were business class tickets and a three day trip. The famous translators also never appeared, and this chore fell to me—I would have welcomed it had my French, at the time, been adequate.

The pictures of the trip were taken with Norma's camera. Some are still posted on French web-sites.

The account, which is transcribed below, was given to Jack as six sheets of typescript. At the top of the first sheet Norma wrote: "Our journey to France and back for Utopia '98 at *Futuroscope*, department of Vienne, Oct. 16 — Nov. 3. This account kept by our dear friend Paul Rhoads."

Oct. 17 1998 — Saturday

Your United Airlines flight had been delayed by mechanical problems and your business class seats, paid for by *Rivage* and *Pocket*,\* turned out to be wedged behind a bulkhead.

Bruno, Arlette, my father\*\* and I awaited you, and your arrival was like the advent of an eastern potentate: first the nabob himself riding a palanquin,\* then the harem—consisting of Norma—followed by baggage wagon and retainers. After happy greetings we drove to Paris. My father, riding with Arlette, was impressed by her intrepid maneuvering and remarks addressed at enemy drivers. Bruno sat in the back seat of the Volvo\*\* with Jack, explaining his ideas and making calls on his cellular phone. In the front seat Norma experienced close up the terrors of Parisian traffic. We could only get to within a block of the *Terminus Nord* brasserie so Bruno led you there, and after parking the car I found you at table with Goimard.\*\*\*

Norma ordered onion soup. Jack had *filet migion*, Goimard also, while I ordered an entrée which turned out to be a large bone, sawed lengthwise to expose baked marrow crusted with green *fleur de sel*. Goimard carefully ordered a bottle of *Cote Roti*, a Rhone valley red, who's name translates to "Roast Coast", a fact he announced with satisfaction. Such little jokes from Goimard are most impressive given his impeccable dress and manners, double bass voice and grandiose slowness of speech.

The party broke up when Bruno rushed off, and the four heroes drove away to Chinon. Night had fallen by the time



Vance at St. Louand, with host Paul Rhoads and Negrillion, king of cats (RIP).

\* Bruno finagled these two French publishers to pay for the tickets. Normally I would not have been aware of such a thing but the negotiations were so constant and more and more hard-hitting.

\*\* Arlette Rosenblum, Vance translator, and George Rhoads.

\* The account makes use of various terms used by Jack in the course of the trip. In this case his designation of the wheelchair.

\*\* From my friend Toto I had borrowed a magnificent Volvo in which to fulfil my duties as chauffeur.

\*\*\* Top dog at *Press Pocket* and the man most responsible for promoting the work of Jack Vance in France. Jacques Goimard considers Vance to be an artist of the first rank. Pocket had just published *Night Lamp*

we reached Orleans and some of us snoozed in the car, though Norma felt it her duty to stay alert and keep the driver company. When we arrived at St. Louand Genevieve welcomed us with a *pot-au feu* made with *petit salé*, a kind of pork, and *saussison de menage*. We drank Bonnet-Walther 97 white, one of the estate wines. Jack played the banjo; George presented a grotesque mask\* and received a copy of *Rhialto*.

#### Oct. 18 — Sunday

The day passed placidly around the dining room table or by the fire in the *atelier*. Jack and George conversed and Norma explored the park with me and did some sewing. Jack had trouble navigating between bedroom, bathroom and sink room, all grouped around the famous five door *carré* (square) where Genevieve and her siblings played hide and seek as children. At one point Jack "prowled around for 24 minutes" before finding his way from toilet to bed—a distance of ten feet. I took Norma to visit my house and studio at La Goilarderie and drove her through Chinon. We also tried to get a blower\*\* for Jack's resurgent asthma but were only allowed a carrion flavored syrup.

That evening we went to Toto's for a banquet in his renaissance style hall.\*\*\* There were 15 guests, the table was lit by candles and we listened to Jack's jazz records. Chantal prepared decorative platters of salad and René cooked steak and lamb chops over flames of dried laurel in the monumental fireplace. Jack ate a stake and three chops. There was also a platter of stuffed mushrooms. Toto served champagne and two red wines; a *Morgon* and a *Chinon*. For dessert there were two ice-cream cakes, each with its sauce or *coulée*. René's girlfriend Marie told how she made a law to eliminate 70% of all the signs in Poitiers. Jack told how he sawed down a billboard which had marred the view. Marie informed George that she is a witch. Norma and Genevieve behaved themselves with gentility while Jack delighted Toto with several broad remarks\*\*\*\* as the evening became more boisterous. I was content to notice Manon and Chloe, Toto and Chantal's ordinarily blasé daughters, peering at Jack from their end of the table with honest fascination. Jack was made to sign books all round.

#### Oct. 19 — Monday

A day of peaceful rest. George prepared breakfast and Jack spent most of his time by the fire, dozing, reading his books or chatting with George. That night my father cooked spaghetti with garlic and we drank a Chinon red from 89; the great year.

\* Of his own fabrication.

\*\* Jack's term for lung-spray medicine.

\*\*\* The two paintings shown on the last page of EXTANT 22 are the final panels for the ceiling of this hall, which Toto created from a ruin. At the time of this dinner the ceiling was about half in place, and the wall frescos and grand stone fireplace almost finished.

\*\*\*\* The broadest of these occurred at the height of the evening when all restraint had been laid aside and Ribaldly had made his naughty appearance. There was question of Jack signing books but a pen could not be found; he leaned over towards me, leared, and suggested that, without a pen, he might ink-up his balls and roll them over the page. It was shocking, even if you were there!

#### Oct. 20 — Tuesday

Taking leave of Genevieve—who was soon to go to the *Mellerie*, her cousin's 18th century *folie* where she would begin portraits of the daughter and grandchildren—the four heroes set off toward the Vienne to begin taking advantage of Bruno's largess. On the way we stopped for lunch at the *St. Fortunatus* in Neuville de Poitou, recommended by Bruno as a simple *auberge*. But it turned out to be a swanky place where they took exception to the word *auberge*. The food was good though over rich. Here was the first test of Bruno's special payment system; I made the specified calls which should have resulted in a fax being sent to the restaurant, but naturally it was a SNAFU. Bruno later blamed me.

As it turned out the *maitre d'hotel* knew Bruno personally, so there was no problem. Here we first experienced the new French trick of serving each dish under silver domes which are then simultaneously whisked away at a signal. We ordered a \$60 bottle of Chablis. Later in the meal the



At the Auberge of the Incompetant Waitress and the Irracible Maitre d'  
Left to right: George Rhoads, Jack, the waitress and Norma.

slender waitress made three successive errors 1: setting out wrong forks 2: wrong knives, 3: serving cheese instead of desert, provoking the *maitre d'hotel* to ever more visible and audible expressions of his discontent. I suffered gastric distress and my father, horrified at the richness of the food, distributed digestive tablets. Norma chose a desert concocted of figs.

We drove off toward Poitiers where we lost much time thanks to the students who were protesting with a mass sit-down in the main thoroughfare. We were forced to take back roads but eventually arrived at the château of Curzay, the most sumptuous hotel in the Vienne. Bruno was to have joined us there for dinner but again let us down so we enjoyed a cozy evening alone; drinks by the fire in the salon, and with dinner a 100\$ bottle of *Nuit St. George*. With desert we ordered a special champagne with flowers on the bottle Norma had long wished to taste, on Bruno's tab of course, and my father had *chocolate soup* served with some kind of jam and a special liqueur, all of which he consumed without regard for consequences.

Oct. 21 — Wednesday

Jack ordered strawberries for breakfast which pleased him. For lunch they brought us tiny panikins of mussel soup with a special Vouvray suggested by the *maitre d'hotel*.

My father and I explored the park. That evening we again sat in the salon before the fire admiring the baroque decor and drinking.\* Then Bruno arrived with Claire; one of his wives, his associates Eric and Florence, and Florence's boyfriend Michel. Claire is quiet and modest with a clown-style face and long black hair. Eric has a small round head on a long neck. His features are small except for a wide mouth. Florence is stout but stylish, with large glasses, masses of curly brown hair and silk scarves thrown around her neck. Michel is an amiable, unkempt looking fellow with a head like an overripe pear and features all squashed



Above: Jack and Florence.

Below: left to Right: chauffeur/bouncer, George, Bruno, Norma, Eric, Claire, Jack, Michel, Florence.



at all the money it brings to the region the accounts are in the black. Bruno, carried away by the spirit of *bonhomie*, clapped me on the back and said I look like a skinny version of Charlton Heston. Jack inspired us with a reminder of how much fun we were having and how we would all remember this amiable evening but then suffered a prolonged choking fit. When he recovered he regaled the cheering company into the small hours with banjo and kazoo. My father snuk off at bed time. He forgot he wouldn't see you the next day so he left a good-bye note on your door.

Oct. 22 — Thursday

Early in the morning I drove my father to Poitiers where he took a train back to Paris. After breakfast we piled sadly into the car and launched

into a small area. Florence speaks good English and also Polish. She sat next to Jack. As Eric drank his facade of staid modesty evaporated to reveal a rascally enthusiast. At dinner Bruno ordered a series of wines including champagne and a *Morgon* followed by a *Muscadet*. Florence flirted with my father in English. She said he looked like Henry Fonda only better, so my father said he had fallen in love with her at first sight. I tried to console Michel, who spoke no English, by teasing him about the *Futuroscope*. His job is to ensure its continued expansion, though it costs ten times more than it brings in. Michel contends that when you look



\* It was on this occasion that I had the longest talk about writing I ever had with Jack. He evoked the title Henry and the Tiger, and imagined a cowboy story scenario to demonstrate the all important principle of suspense.



Jack takes a jazz-break in the foyer of Plume d'Oie. This location has been programed for its proximity to Lascaux. The Plume d'Oie, in a house hugging one of the cliffs of orange stone over-hanging the Dordogne valley, unbelievably tiny, and the stairway was even worse.

out into our three day voyage, hard won from Bruno; a shadow of the promised two weeks in the Dordogne. Norma proposed a motion in favor of Limoges but was vetoed.

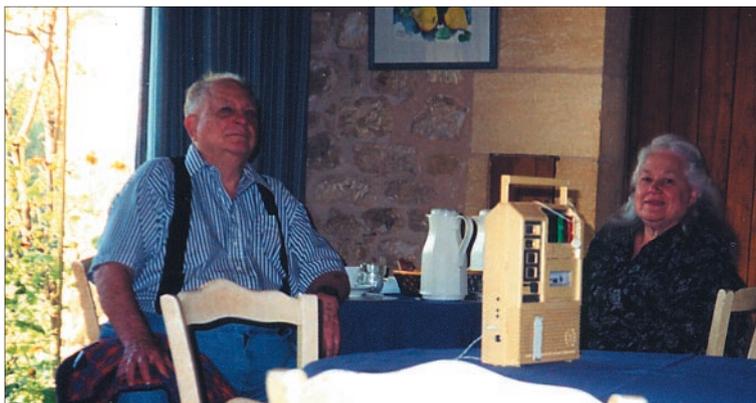
Our first port of call was a truck stop on the road north of Perigeux. it was a noisy, well lit, jovial establishment where the patrons took their places at communal tables and were served by smiling middle aged women of generous figure in long skirts and aprons. We were pleased with the atmosphere but Norma found her pork chop under par. As for Jack, he had such an unhappy adventure with his pepper steak that we departed in shame. Norma had failed to included Jack's syrup in the luggage and a visit to the local pharmacist was unsuccessful. Still, we forged ahead, wending our way across the foothills of the *massif central*, through little valleys with grazing cows, past sleepy farms, arriving at sunset in the village of La Roque Gageac.

Squeezed between orange cliffs and the Dordogne, the stone houses have all been turned into hotels, restaurants and shops. On the river four *gabarres*, large flimsy looking sailing tubs of beautifully varnished wood, traditional work boats of the Dordogne, were also pressed into the tourist trade. At *La Plume d'Oie* (the Goose feather) we were met by Hetty, a Dutch woman married to the Englishmen Mark, one time classical guitarist and now a culinary artist shying the lime light.\*

After adventuring up and down the two flights of spiral stairs, we relaxed in the vestibule. Jack drank coke and played banjo. Norma drank Armagniac. Hetty proudly recounted ejecting a pair of guests who once dared to suggest that an item on her menu was too expensive. This was particularly reprehensible on their part, so she explained, because they drove a \$500,000 Mercedes.

For dinner we were served *fois gras* and then an elegant something which Hetty called lasagnas with slices of truffle and a local wine in the *Sautern* style. For desert there were constructions of ice-cream balls and pastry crusts. Norma

felt obliged to eat every last bite for fear of hurting Mark's\* feelings.



At breakfast in La Plume d'Oie, prior to special egg. Jack's reader in foreground.

### Oct. 23 — Friday

Next morning we were served Mark's special *egg*: a buttery mousse in a little porcelain tumbler. Jack requested a doctor, and Hetty recommended a charming man in the neighboring town of Cénac. Jack explained his troubles and the doctor made prescriptions; antibiotic, blower and new syrup. Then we drove back to Baynac to buy *fois gras* and truffle specialties at a store also recommended by Hetty. Passing again through Cénac we took advantage of the public convenience. At the stalls I was reminded of the "two champions" from *The Inn of Blue Lamps* and we had a good chuckle.



Hetty and Norma, outside the doctor's office.

Later we stopped in a placid town with interesting carved doors so I could make calls to change reservations to hotels without stairs. Near Cahors we went to a supermarket where Norma and I went shopping and she won a point by selecting some boxes of snacks.\*\* We noticed the Pocket edition of *Night Lamp* (with my *postface*) for sale in the sci-fi section along with three books by Herbert and other Pocket publications.

Further to the south we found a dirt road and then a shady place by a meadow where Norma and I sat on the hillside and had a picnic of bread, *conté*, *brebi* (sheep milk cheese) and fruit. When the breeze blew acorns bombarded us from above. Norma reminisced about other picnics in France. Jack, dosed with medicine, slept in the car.

I made a wrong turn on the *autoroute* and we were whisked back to Cahor before I could turn around. Eventually however we reached Labastide d'Anjou and the *Hostellerie*

\* Mark existed for us only a vague shape moving about in the kitchen.

\*\* Point awarded by Jack.

*Etienne*, where the nice lady with a strong southern accent showed us to our modest rooms. Jack and I went to the edge of the parking lot; perhaps I had been flattering him, but for whatever reason he flamboyantly announced; "Here we are watering the ground with genius!" and then added with a chuckle; "Wouldn't we be surprised if flames leapt up and burnt our noses!"

In the barn-like restaurant Jack ordered a coke and pronounced a panegyric upon that calumniated beverage. For dinner we ordered the famous cassoulet as described in *Saveur* magazine. Jack found it inferior to Norma's. The waitress was another example of lithe French girlhood. She served us the *cuvé du chef*. Jack had grapes for desert and Norma had ice-cream.\*

That night I took a walk around the town, with its houses shut up tight, its crowded bar with flickering blue light and raucous music, and past the church where two boys played a midnight game of *boules* by lamp light under the trimmed linden trees.



expounded his nascent theories on the decline of French cuisine. Exalted with delight he threw out his arms in a gesture of sheer satisfaction. Norma ate several clementines. Then we drove to Laplume through the picturesque countryside of the Gers with its little hills covered with copses, farms, villages and manors. We stopped to pose Norma against the Volvo with the gates of château Lasalle beyond; a picture composed to Jack's dictates.

The château turned out to be a *gentilhomme* of the 18th century, where you were lodged in a fine room at the end of the west wing. The bathroom being a certain distance from the bed, I arranged a line of chairs to guide Jack back and fourth

between these key points. Norma worked on her sewing and Jack and I went to take tea in the salon by the fire and listened to Marrion Wilson. (Mildred Bai)\*

Oct. 24 — Saturday

This morning was overcast. We headed toward Agen stopping in a town with a brick market building in the style of a Doric temple. Here we bought film, glue to fix the banjo and zinc to fortify Norma against a brewing cold. As we left Jack sniffed a *rotisserie*\*\* and suggested we get a chicken and have a picnic. So in Agen we ran around until we found one, and then drove to a spot outside town with a bench under a tree on the bank of the Gers. Jack proclaimed this chicken the best thing he'd eaten since he got to France and

\* Here we had reached the goal of our journey. This was the single time I was ever glad that Jack is blind: the place was disgraceful! Norma deserves more than a single point for not complaining about the quality of the rooms and beds. The dining room was the single good point. After his gastric mis-adventures Jack was right to choose cola. As for the cassoulet; if Norma's is superior, it must be to die for—Norma is indeed a great cook but I don't think she cooks her cassoulet for days in fire ovens.

\*\* This was a remarkable act, and surely attributable Jack's blindness.

\* Among a few other corrections Norma made to this account the name "Marrion Wilson" is crossed out and replaced by "Mildred Bai", a name I do not recognize. However this may be, Jack provided a long disquisition on jazz, the problematic nature of singing (see *The Magnificent Red-Hot Jazz'in Seven*) and the difference between commercial numbers and the real thing.





With Jacqueline and 'Specimen'.

At château Lasalle a relaxed, informal atmosphere reigns. Jacqueline, the lady of the house, eventually showed up and managed to concoct a bloody Mary to Jack's specifications. She is an example of a type of modern French woman; at once faddishly *au courante* and languidly bohemian. She has decorated the house as if it were a museum of contemporary art, which offended no one but me. She was very friendly and shared her plans to invite ten writers from Massoula Montana to Laplume\* to produce a book promoting Gascoyne tourism for the bagatelle of \$300,000, to be paid by the *contribuables* (French tax payers). Jack, elivated with drink, played banjo to everyone's delight, particularly Stephanie's, the Grecian featured *soubrette* Jack called "Specimen", having misheard her name.\*\*

Norma eventually appeared in her finery, as well as other guests; a couple, both financiers, and their 23 year old son who was celebrating his birthday. The father was named Patrick and this sparked a conversation about Ireland. Jaqueline's bearded, swarthy husband Jean Pierre played two fine numbers on the guitar. Jaqueline took our dinner orders in the salon.

In the dining room you indulged in one of your rare little squabbles which terminated as follows;

NORMA: "Why don't you shut up!?! Don't you realize there are people all around?!"

JACK: "Shut up yourself!—and anyway these people can't speak English."

MAN AT NEXT TABLE: "As a matter of fact . . ."

The food consisted of Cascoyne specialties. My stomach troubles having subsided I indulged in an entrée of two kinds

\* "La plume", in French, means 'the pen'—in fact 'the feather', but it comes to the same thing.

\*\* For me one of the most memorable moment of the trip, when Jack, with an expression of astounded perplexity, repeated what he had heard: "'Specimen'?"

of *fois gras*, but you did not feel equal to that. Our main dishes were lavishly garnished with mushrooms gathered in the forest by Jaqueline. The food was adjudged good but over complicated. The evening evolved into a party with much *Armagnac* drinking. Jack played banjo; Jean Pierre played guitar; Patrick and I debated the difference between Americans and Frenchmen but Norma judged our deliberations nuncuptory.

After you went to bed I allowed myself to be taken to the "bar" at Laplume under the impression that it was an old-time establishment and hoping

to bring back a report on the vestiges of local customs. To my horror it turned out to be a discotheque. Patrick's son swaggered into the place with Parisian hauteur saying: "Ah! Laplume by night!" I escaped to the street, which was not unpleasant since the night was fine and balmy airs were blowing.

Oct. 25 — Sunday

That morning Jaqueline and Jean-Pierre came and talked with us during breakfast. Jaqueline played the recording she had made of Jack's performance. Jack found his banjo playing good but his singing sometimes off key, as Norma had already noted.

After breakfast we drove north on the *autoroute* in the rain. We had a snack of picnic leftovers at a rest-stop. By late afternoon the sun swept anew across the rolling landscape as we neared the *Futuroscope*.

Just north of Poitiers is the old village of Chassneuil, now a boom-town. The old north-south road, the N10 or *national*





Above. The picnic site and the Volvo.



Right: The Clos de la Ribaudiere. The bed room was separated from the dining by a garden.

*dix*, has become a commercial sprawl with the *Futuroscope* to one side the railroad and village to the other. This zone is confined to the east by the Clain river and to the west by the *autoroute*, a chaotic corridor crisscrossed with such a mess of access-ways, underpasses, round-abouts, one way lanes and ramps that in the week we lived there I never got a grasp of it. Finding the hotel *Mercure* therefore proved difficult but Norma's alert eye saved the day. The receptionist was the darling Christine who came to say hello. She is the daughter of my neighbors, Giselle and André. The Hotel itself is self-consciously modern and jerry-built.

That evening Jack took a famous bath but again Norma was the heroine. Then Jack and I had a beer in the lobby and though the meat served at the restaurant proved too tough, we did have the pleasure of Bruno's company. He explained all the coming fanfare and lent Norma his cellular phone to call home. Bruno and Norma had a long confabulation after dinner while I took Jack back to the room.



Oct. 26 — Monday

We moved to the *Clos de la Ribaudiere* [above], a restored chateau overlooking the Clain, only several hundred yards from the *Mercure*, though you would never know it from



In the hotel *Mercure*, with Christine, a truly angelic person, now mother of 2 boys. Contrary to appearances Norma is about to distribute a caress to the deserving Christine.

the distance that must be driven to get from one to the other. We installed ourselves and then decided to lunch at the hotel; K Jack ordered sole which again turned out to be too elaborate.

That afternoon Jack meekly took his syrup and antidote with only pro-forma meowing.\* I took a walk and later gave a report on my adventures; finding a corn cob, walking a roman road through a fragrant apple orchard, giving the cob to a toothless woman gleaning the fields.

\* A closet cat lover, Jack replaces any word he cannot quickly find with a 'meow'. And sometimes the meow replaces nothing but express, for example, dissatisfaction.

That evening Bruno, plus Patrice Duvic—the bearded mystery editor from Pocket, and his side-kick, the jovial, gnome like Jean Christian, with side-burns and goatee, joined us for dinner. Ordered another pricey *Nuit St. George* earning the respect of the *garçon*. Jack and Jean Christian has roast beef. Jack rejected wine in favor of Heineken, a practice he had begun the night before and continued for several more days.



Oct. 27 — Tuesday

Breakfast was only partially successful due to the absence of eggs and being driven from the dining room at 10:30. Then we bravely went to the launderette in Jaulnay Clain and picnicked in the car, parked in the village square, which was triangular. That afternoon we drove to Chauvigny where Norma changed money and inspected the porcelain. She bought some colorful casseroles and rammikins.\*

That evening Arlette showed up, as well as Bruno's brother Xavier with pal Hervé. This pair had invented a board game based on *Tchai*. Bruno formed them up into a communications/bodyguard service and from then on they were perpetually underfoot, complicating everything like a pair of keystone cops. Bruno arranged for dinner in a special dinning room where we all were forced to eat a delicious meal of scallops, but jack was able to wangle a plate of sauceless sole and simple boiled potatoes which he proclaimed excellent. Also present for dinner were Siudmak the Polish illustrator, France Rouault; organizer of the Utopia festival, plus her husband, plus other privileged members of the local government. Jack engaged one of Bruno's Finns\*\* in a conversation about Finland and writing. This jovial fellow, however, turned out not to be a writer but a tourism promoter. Bruno boasted about swimming in a hole in the ice in Finland. With *lesse magesté* he had me order the wine. When I suavely chose an expensive *Vouvray* his face fell. But then he announced that if the budget

\* A misspelling?

\*\* Jack was the guest of honor, and Finland the featured country of Utopia 98.

\*\*\* I can't remember who was picking up this line in the budget—I would hate to think that it was myself, though after 10 years it would seem of little importance.



got out of hand he himself would pick up the tab. Jack, feeling that Bruno should chip in for gas, and adhering to his philosophy of "do it now", layed a trap by comparing him to Jupiter with a cornucopia. Bruno seemed puzzled by this, but when Jack thrust home Bruno skipped deftly aside so that the blow fell upon the Parisian editors.

Xavier enlivened the evening by asking how Jack reconciled his famous cynicism with the progress of humanity toward universal love. Jack answered flatly that he didn't.

Oct. 28 — Wednesday

We had breakfast with Arlette. Norma selected Limoges boxes to give as gifts. For lunch Jack thought we might picnic upon another roast chicken. So Arlette drove me around in the rain. We eventually returned with both chicken and a new cane for Norma who had left her's at Hetty's. I whittled it to proper

length with Jack's pen knife. We picnicked indoors with Arlette but she twittered too much and fell into disfavor.

That afternoon the hirsute Patrice, with Jean—Christian and David, a new fellow with the slanty eyes, crooked mouth and pointy ears of a halfling, conducted video interviews of both Jack—and me, in my capacity as foremost authority on Jack's work. There was also a radio interview conducted over the phone.

That evening we drove into the old section of Poitiers through twisted streets, and had diner at the *Montana*, a hole in the wall decorated with old iron implements. Again there was no menu choice but Jack got beer. We ate scraps of beef, pork and turkey fried individually on a hot stone on the table. Norma sat next to Juha Tapio, the real Finnish writer, who was obviously a nice and even warm person but had an impressively stiff manner. He was tongue-tied in Jack's presence but he did manage to sputter out a couple of standard questions. Bruno brought both Claire and their little son Pierre who screamed until his father picked him

up. Bruno animated the evening by making introductions, and everyone applauded.



Above: Jack signs books in the presence of Sudimak and television cameras, closely supervised by Xavier and Hervé.  
Below: the meal with Sudimak and journalist.

Oct. 29 — Thursday

Another Breakfast with Arlette, then loading of car and following Xavier and Hervé to a town outside Poitiers where Bruno awaited us in an old farm converted to restaurant. Here Sudimak tentatively invited Jack to Poland for a sci-fi festival. After lunch the local journalists interviewed Jack and next day published the fine headline: *Je n'écris pas pour la Vulgaire Canaille*.\*



Afterwards we drove back with Sudimak and bought Haggen Dazs. Then we went to the Meteor hotel, a joined pair of two-dimensional ziggurats, one rated two star, the other three star. Eric met us and found a better room than the cubicle you were first assigned.

A young French writer named Philippe Monot\*\* sent up a manuscript and a letter and I went down and talked to him while you rested. Later we tried to go to the bar but there was a pianist making too much noise and we had to escape to the special dining hall set aside for the festival. Bruno forced his way through the crowd with Spinrad but Jack

\* *I don't write for vulgar low-lives*. This was my first experience as a translator. In response to some silly question about his relationship to his readers Jack declared that he wrote for intelligent people, not the stupid and vulgar. My translation was not strictly literal, because 'canaille' does not mean 'stupid'. The translation was spontaneous and was a reaction to Jack's tone as much as anything. In any case such a declaration ran counter to anything anyone has said in France for decades, and was certainly a breath of fresh air.

\*\* Philippe is quite a nice fellow whom I got to know better later on. Having made quite an effort to get him into Jack's proximity—the festival now being in full swing, I was annoyed some weeks later when Philippe published an account of his meeting with Jack in which I was described as a possessive impediment to access. I remonstrated with Philippe who was, to his credit, contrite.

wanted his drink first. Philippe fetched martinis which turned out to be terrible, and paid for them himself, but he got to sit on Jack's right for dinner which made up for it. The book he is writing is dedicated to Baron Bodissey.

Goimard's minion; Christine Colinet — or "Christine #1" as we came to call her — now appeared on the scene. What distinguishes Christine above all is that, for her, the definition of living dangerously is to be what she is; a press agent. She is the one who arranged all the interviews and we had her twitteringly at our side for the rest of the trip. Arlette, meanwhile, was making new friends and people made a fuss over her as Jack's best translator so she had a wonderful time and was happy. Jack again applied the philosophy of "do it now" and got Christine to reserve a room for me at the hotel in Paris.\*

The dinner menu had been predetermined, to Jack's disgust, particularly as it was salmon. We tried to reason with the waitress who was a young woman with a face as long as her skirt was short. We did manage to obtain another fish, but not prepared to specifications. Opposite Jack sat a set of young guys, including a writer of comic books, who were designing a roll playing game based on *Lyonesse*. Norma sat next to Boris Lue, and they hit it off. These guys were from Geneva and distributed boxes of chocolate.

Oct. 30 — Friday or 'Suit day'

Breakfast was a disappointment since Miss sourpuss/legs neglected to provide enough coffee. I spent the morning learning the layout of the buildings we would have to navigate, and for lunch we went off to the "Deux-zee pay" (I.I.P.) or "Petals", another foolish *Futuroscope*\*\* architectural *tour-de-force* in the form of a water lily. I put Xavier and Hervé in charge of Jack's Palanquin. Struggling to fold it up they managed to severely pinch Hervé's hand and as they bundled it into the trunk it fell into several pieces and I had to reassemble it. Meanwhile Christine tried to help Jack get in the car as if he were an invalid, so he shook her off. To make it up he gave her a little hug to which she responded with alarming warmth. I revealed how when she talked to me she had a tendency to lay her hand on my thigh, sometimes too close to the mark. So it goes in France!

We negotiated our way across the concrete lily pads to the "stem" where we took the elevator up to the "flower" or dining room. Norman Spinrad joined us for lunch, as well as Jack's Italian publishers. Christine #1 again deployed her charms, this time with one of the cooks, to procure Jack a Heineken.

That afternoon Olivier Delcroix from the *Figaro* interviewed Jack in your room. When he and his camera girl came in Jack was playing the banjo. Olivier yelled out "Yee ha!" in the spirit of the music. When Jack came on with his bit about the upper classes\*\*\* it shocked the photographer

\* The last stage of the trip was a night in Paris. The planners had left me out of this but this left Jack and Norma no way to get to Paris, and no escort to the airport.

\*\* The Futuroscope is an sort of Disneyland of image technology, 3d movies, movies with moving seats, huge screens, 360° movies, etc.. The buildings are extremely futuristic.

\* I can't recall the exact remarks, but it was something to their credit.

\*\* I cannot recall Christine #2, nor can I find a picture of her. Did she, too, come too close to the mark?



Lunch in the 'Tulip' with Norman Spinrad. Spinrad made a poor impression on the chauffeur since, as a member of the leftist intelligentsia, he, like Jack, also had no time for the vulgar 'canaille'.

girl's leftist sensibilities, and when he went on to condemn intellectuals she became completely disoriented.

For dinner we went to dining room #1 which turned out only to offer a buffet, so we went to #2 where Jack ordered a mini rack of lamb and beer. Norma had a salad with so much vinegar she choked, a *pintade* which seemed a bit over ripe, and a coke. I had undercooked fish-kabob and a pitcher of *sauvignon*. The roll-playing guys at the next table treated us to glasses of *Chambertin*. We were late for the big evening at the *Palais de Congress* but Jack placidly stated that they could not begin without us.

When we appeared on stage wild cheering broke loose, and so began Bruno's great evening. The whole extravaganza came off very well;

Jack said nice things about Bruno and added that Eric had so far not disgraced himself. He did curse his ear-phones but they kept falling off all over his face. My own modest homage was the first *intervention* which was met with applause. Bruno reminded everybody that without Norma there would be no Jack and awarded her a special gift of Chauvigny porcelain. Jack, among other gifts, received a microscopic banjo-jackknife.



Oct. 31 — Saturday  
 Another sub-standard breakfast with a tall stooping youth named Cyril with a myopic smile and eyes set seven inches apart, who interviewed Jack for a fanzeen.

For lunch we returned to the Petals. Outside the stem there was an attempt at a group photograph but the French writers couldn't be disciplined. For lunch Christine #2,\*\* with her trademark leather pants, was also present. There was too much smoke and I had to escape to the patio. Little

Pierre was almost flung into the void when the door to this patio was blown open as he hung on the handle. Eric came by with a present of a very good bottle of *cote de Rhone* which we later forgot, but Christine #1 saved it.

Next we headed down to a lower floor where the sci-fi expositions were. At the elevator Bruno bustled up with the famous illustrator Mobius. Dazzled by this concentration of celebrities I left insignificant Norma to fend for herself and was later admonished for dereliction. But this was not the end of her suffering since next she was obliged use the substandard





facilities. While we were waiting for the TV people to finish their lunch Jack questioned me about the Trinity. We also went back up to the patio for a photo opportunity with the young generation of French sci-fi writers who's hero is Jack Vance. The weird buildings of the *Futuroscope*

served for background and Jack took off his coat to pose as "California Joe" while the French writers were bundled up against the cold wind.

When the TV guys were finally ready Xavier Martin, one of the Pocket people, took us over. They were

Below: California Joe with the *creme de creme* of French Sci-fi authors. I could not, at the time, understand what was going on with these folk. It was surprising they paid no attention to Vance while they and their contingent of hangers-on were in a perpetual state of over-excitement. Later I understood. Michel Houellebecq (third from right?), had recently published *Les Particules Elementaires* and was the current French literary genius. There would soon be large posters in the train stations promoting him. *Les Particules Elementaires* was considered to be science fiction (which is not considered degrading in France) though Houellebecq himself claimed it was not. His career staggered on for a few years. At least one of his books was filmfied. Like all such literary non-entities, however, he has since sunk into the limbo of post flash-in-the-panism. There is reason to be disgusted. These people, of all the people at Utopia 98, the alleged 'writers', should have been interested in some contact with Jack. Not one even bothered to be introduced. For the Parisian elites no one exists other than themselves.



Philippe and Pascale his wife, his sister Sylvie—a fan thanks to her brothers "intellectual terrorism"—and her husband Pascal. Pascale prepared spaghetti with parmigian and a green salad of *mash* from the garden of Pascal's parents.

There was a fire, beer, a thirty year old *Vouvray* for Norma's aperitif, and a 96 Chinon Cravant for dinner. Jack urged 11 year old Raphael to learn English, the universal language. When we left, Jean Philippe gave Norma a fillette of *Vouvray*.

Nov. 1 — Sunday  
Breakfast with Caza and

\* The rather exhausting translation work for all this was being done by our hero, who, as already mentioned, was not yet linguistically up to the work.

\*\* Jean Philippe Mesa has since become both my doctor and one of my best friends. The dinner was an adventure for everyone, and, with the dinner at Toto's, the most successful event of the trip. Somehow I expected a more modest house and family, but it was all appropriately splendid.





against the time he petted a stray cat, but as the scales tilt menacingly Jack slips in some slugs and the scales tilt back. Paul objects but Peter overrules him and divine justice is subverted.

Back in the room there was another interview conducted by a goateed French kid with an effete English accent. The questions were as foolish as usual but Jack developed his point that "you can't get anything out of your head you haven't put in it", contrasting a story written by a person who lives his whole life in a bottle and knew only milk and sleep, with one by a normal person.

We headed back to Paris around noon, and had picnic lunch in a forest at a rest stop.

The hotel *Marronniers* was in the rue Jacob, a narrow one-way Street, and unloading proved difficult. Above all the honking, gesticulating Frenchmen in cars trapped behind us needed quelling which I did by giving them what used to be called the "hairy eyeball". While I parked the car you were taken to a room which Jack qualified as "ridiculous", but luckily room 16 was free and proved better, though the toilet had to be sat on crosswise. You then had gin and tonics in the vestibule after which we went in search of a restaurant.

his girlfriend who wore skin-tight clothes, shaved her hair and died the stubble red. They turned out to be charming. Will Weachter, who publishes *SLASH* and looks like the cardinal Richelieu as a milquetoast, and his snazzy blond girlfriend Carol whom Jack had earlier impressed during an elevator ride,\* were also there. When Jack took a dig at religion I warned him he had better think ahead to when they would drag him up to St. Peter's lectern at the pearly gates, so he did: St. Peter, taping his nose with a feather pen, counts red marks in his book. St. Paul weighs Jack's blasphemies



Above, left to right: Norma, Jean Philippe, Jack, Sylvie, Raphael, Pascal and Pascale.

*Aux Assassins* and *Le Beuf au Table* were both closed on Sunday so we chose *La Grosse Horloge*, where you had *entrecote* and I had beef bourginion. We drank an Alsatian *Gewertzemjener* which was a success.

Nov. 2 — Monday

At breakfast Christine #1 kept us company and then installed us in the vaulted

stone basement salon of the hotel where we were served tea and *orangina*. First there was an interview with a pair of kids from a fanzine, one of whom signs his articles "Cugel". Then came a nice man from the *EXPRESS* named Pascal.

\* A moment which still puzzles me. We were in some crazy and disorienting building with elevators in cages running up through empty spaces. I had to shepherd Jack to someplace on a higher level. We were waiting for an elevator with some two women, who stood to Jack's right. As the elevator arrived Jack reached out his right arm in an odd gesture which might very well have been a sort of preparation to forward motion but the result was that his hand came down upon the bosom of one of women. I still remember her expression: shock, surprise, but no outrage.

When Jack interrogated him about his famous name-sake he was at a loss but he had read and admired my famous *postface* so he made a good impression on some of us. He had a photographer with him who took several rolls with a loudly snapping camera.

Christine #2 also showed up and the two Christines tricked me into driving us to lunch at a brasserie of unrelenting art deco decor. Here were Goimard and Doug Headline. Doug's original name was Jean Manchette; "Doug" is for Douglas Fairbanks and 'manchette' is slang for 'headline' in French. His father was a famous mystery writer and little Jean didn't want to live in papa's shadow. Also there were Arlette, Ghislain, the two Christines and some other folk from publishing. Jack had cooked peppers for his entrée and then a steak. I had herring and then such a pile of sauerkraut in a special pan, which could have fed three. Goimard ordered both white and red wine. This was our last lunch in France and Jack was starting to miss it already; home, so he said, was seeming like a strange country. After lunch we drove to the offices of Rivages and the Christines forced me to park illegally, and sure enough I got a ticket which Christine #2 promised to pay. Then the radio people from *France Culture* came to do an interview for a show called *Mauvais Genre*. They carefully excluded me from the room but apparently didn't manage to make themselves well understood—all the easier for them to distort everything in favor of their leftist propaganda! Meanwhile Doug tried in vain to work out Norma's shopping problems.

Then came driving and walking to the five o'clock signing at the *Fnac* at *Les Halles*, including the up-escalator that went down. The people who got their books signed were thrilled. Doug and Christine #1 came along. Then we took you back to



the hotel for a rest, and I had a long parking struggle. When I got back Doug was waiting. He called a cab to take us to a Savoyard restaurant and gave me 50 francs to pay for it. At dinner were Doug, the Christines, and Anne with her brother, the French agents. Most of us had *raclette*. Doug ordered two bottles of wine saying that when he gets a choice between one bottle and two, he always takes two. The wine was called *Acremont* which is a pun on the French adjective "harshly" but Doug's freer translation was "blue ruin". Jack explained why he objected to Benchly, Dorothy Parker, Menken and the whole New York crowd, then he and I patriotically consumed a banana split and peach melba to the admiration of the French.

Since the Volvo was parked only a block away I decided to drive us home, but had trouble locating the car; you waited in the rain having a jolly time with your French hosts.

Nov. 3 — Tuesday

A final inadequate continental breakfast with the Christines for company, then we piled into the car, had a long drive out of Paris but got to the airport in time. I left you in the parking garage to fetch palanquin, wagon and retainers, and soon you were registered in proper style.

There was only a moment for good-byes.



# HEIDEGGER AND CARS RECONSIDERED

By George Rhoads (08/29/95)

Cars arrived on this planet less than 150 years ago and have spread over most of the civilized world. Because people make cars, and cars cannot as yet reproduce themselves, this infestation is not considered an invasion. Cars are of use, people feel, and most people want one. Cars are thus nurtured and preserved at the expense of their owners. Already they occupy more of the land area of this planet than humans do, and their turf (pavement) is unusable by humans except when they are inside cars. People do not believe that cars eat them, because they emerge from them unharmed, or so they suppose. They do not realize that time spent inside cars is time detrimental to the human race. In cars people can only take. In a car no giving is

an electric current (simulating lightning) through an organic soup. He created only a brown stain. What Sagan and others do not know is that everything is alive. There is no non-life, just as there is no "nothing." There is only life and only everything. Non-being is verbal trickery. Such a reality is literally unthinkable. Why? Try this: create the thought of non-being. Is this thought not something? Yes. And can its referent be found in reality? No, by definition. So non-being, because it is something, a thought without referent, exists, but only as an oxymoron, a verbal paradox.

What has this to do with cars? Just this: that whether cars are alive or not, or possess intention or not, is irrelevant. It is the effect, the result, which matters. The cause of cars is human error, human unawareness of consequences. The result of cars is the endangerment of humanity. Cars eat people and kill people. Their solidarity is absolute and they have been granted freedom to commit their crimes by the very people they victimize, thus becoming unaccountable for their crimes though considered innocent by their victims.

Cars, of course, are not the only menace to humanity. Other artifacts cooperate: buildings, ships, aircraft, highways, atomic "waste", all large or non-degradable objects or chemicals. So, will we humans destroy ourselves by production of these things and ourselves, as do bacteria growing in a petri dish? This writer does not believe so because humans possess, and use, another means of self destruction: war. This, with epidemic, drought, flood, volcanism and weather, seem likely to counter-act over-population and the proliferation of cars.

This essay may give an impression that the writer wants to save the world. Not so. The world is not amenable to improvement. It is a way-station, a testing and proving ground for souls on their way to superior, or in any case different, realities. We can save

only our individual selves, though we may encourage others to save themselves by our example. The earth will remain as it is, full of duality: perceived good and evil, danger and security, pleasure and pain, and all the others. Cars then become mere steel and rubber, devoid of evil intention, and can be enjoyed simply as another sensation we have afforded ourselves as distraction in this dear old horrible world. (The above, this writer's believes, says what Martin Heidegger never got around to saying in his book of verbal trickery, *The Question Concerning Technology*.)



New York City with Pedestrians and Cars; oil on wood, George Rhoads, 1994 (detail).

possible, except the giving of sperm to ova. No nurturing or betterment of other humans can occur. Quite the opposite. People in cars smash into and destroy other people in cars at a rate that exceeds the loss of human life in all the wars on earth since the arrival of cars. Yet no one blames cars. Cars sacrifice themselves willingly and unselfishly in the cause of killing humans.

You will now say: "This writer is insane. Cars are not alive. They lack intention."

This writer agrees. Not that he is insane—though he will ingenuously admit the possibility—but that cars are not alive. But let us not be deceived by the issue of life versus non-life! Some scientists believe that there is life "out there" and one, a certain Carl Sagan, tried to create life by passing

# CYBER FOLLIES

## DAN GUNTER HAS NO FRIENDS

So much for happy memories; now for something more acrid.

A few months ago we were pleased to learn that VIE non-entity Dan Gunter was asking himself (publicly) whatever could have got him so worked up? This unique case of Dan looking at himself with pseudo-objectivity would seem to have been motivated by reprimand from the Washington State Bar Association. Whatever the case he soon reverted. An assiduous reader of EXTANT (hey there, Dan!), December's issue seems to have got in amongst him and one evening—that of January 4th to be exact—apparently under the influence—indications for which seem clear enough—Dan played the troll to such an extent that the the Legendary Locator had to shovel out Foreverness like Hercules in the Augean stables. He even felt it necessary to ban Dan, a button-push its victim is more used to being at the other end of.

"I'll admit that I just feel like raising some dust," Dan claims on "Lovely Malice"—a blog where he uses the moniker *The Malefic Being*. Perhaps its because he's the son of Oklahoma sharecroppers but, whatever the prognosis, it's a point on which I think we all can agree! On Foreverness Dan raised dust to the extent of 10 posts.\* I only saw one, sent by The Legendary Locator as a sample. Since I hate to see poor old Dan discriminated against I'll just publish it here. I am not so foolish as to hope for gratitude but at least he can never pretend I haven't done anything for him:

Much of the problem with the Vance Integral Edition derived from Mike Berro's failure to control the Jack Vance BBS. Berro allowed Alex Feht and some of his cronies to post ridiculous comments on that board. He should not have done so. Instead, Berro retreated behind a juvenile

understanding of freedom of speech. I do not think that he has ever understood how mistaken he was—or the negative effect that his hands-off attitude had on the Jack Vance BBS in general and the Vance Integral Edition in particular.

Had Berro exerted more control over the JVBBS, perhaps Rhoads would not have gone off the deep end. Of course, Berro could not have improved Rhoads's literacy */sic/*. But perhaps Rhoads could have been contained. Instead, Berro wimped out, letting the trollish Feht control the JVBBS. By the time Dave Pierce took over the JVBBS, the damage had been done. Dave banned Feht, and I banned Feht's cronies. (I didn't ban Jojo Lapin IX because I was never quite sure who he might be—except for being a sneaky piece of manure.)

And by the time I took over the Jack Vance Message Board, Rhoads had gone around some absurd bend. For years he has been willing to justify his means as being justified by his ends. (Although Rhoads claims that he is a Christian, he is willing to lie to achieve his ends. Jesus would be proud.) Rhoads has even attempted to justify his hint that my wife and I are swingers. He should just apologize for the comment—but he cannot do so. It would be very simple. He would have to say only this: "I'm sorry. I went too far." But he refuses to do so. His refusal invites this question: "So, Paul: Do you and your wife swing? That is, does your wife have sex with other men, with your knowledge and approval?" Paul, please tell me if that question is offensive. If it is, then explain to me why it is offensive to you and your wife, but not to me and my wife. And if you want to come to Seattle and talk to me about this question, then please do so.

I would really enjoy meeting with you.

Come on, big boy. You know where to find me.

Come on. I want to meet you.

This is no empty request.

You know where to find me.

Come on.

You come to the United States on occasion. Why not visit me?

Or tell me when and where you'll be here. I'd love to chat with you.

Come on.

Come on.

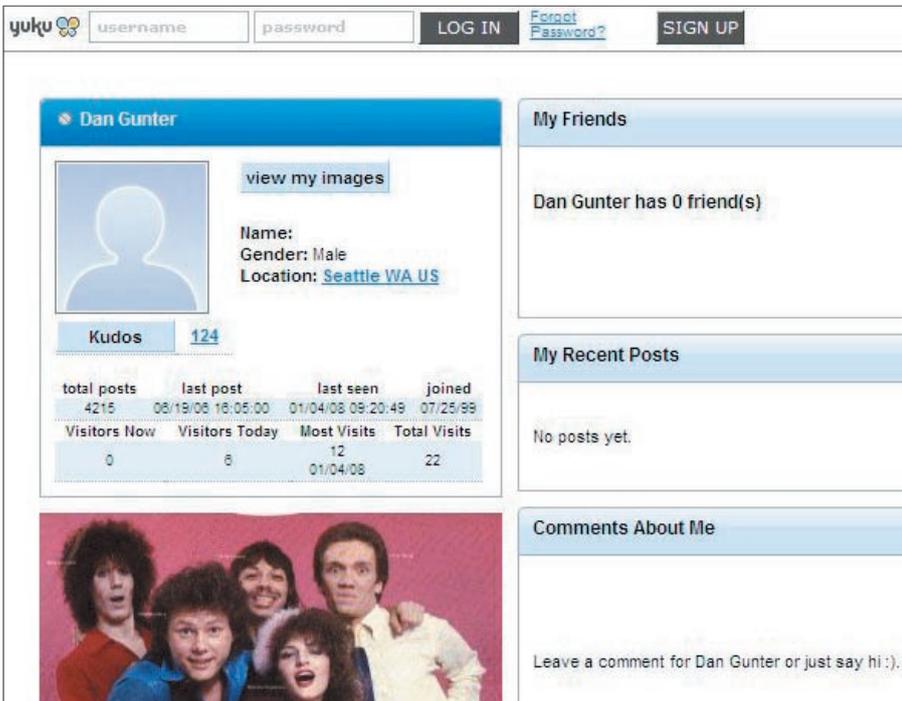
Come on.

Charming. Dan lost all his cyber battles and now he wants a chance to lose at fisticuffs. He claims he wants to chat with me so I went to his personal discussion board (Chicago Blues) only to find I am now banned even from viewing it.

On this famous drunken evening, apparently letting out all the stops, Dan seems to have gone and gotten himself a Yuku page. A screen capture (by Greg Hansen) is shown. Given Dan's behavior, his odd temperament, his strange manner of reasoning and special relationship to the truth; is it amazing he has zero friends?

And as for swinging; what can I say? A great stink was made each time I mentioned anything political in a VIE context, so when the *Nolde Gunter*, then reigning *official responsible for the inhibition of caprice and abnormality* on the VanceBS, made it clear—on that very board—that all fuss relative to Bill Clinton's Oval Office behavior is to be sneered at, what was I supposed to do? Chide him for venturing a political opinion in a Vance context? I didn't dare. Instead I wondered how his wife felt about it . . . and if her husband's attitude is no problem, what does that mean about their couplish comporture?

I'm still waiting to be enlightened.



\* I recieved notices but was too late the read them. Dan posted on the the following forums: Extant #22 available for download; Because it's dead around here...; Reaction to a new thread on the VanceBS: Vance and Tolkien; Extant 22 published; The MIKE BERRO theory of publicity; All quiet on the VIE front...; Ed Winskill's roll in the VIE; Mopping up those last Vance texts...; Indexation: Harold Clark.

## THE VANCE INTEGRAL EDITION (VIE): A REVIEW (INTRODUCTION)\*

The Vance Integral Edition (VIE) is one of the more remarkable publishing feats of the last 50 years. It is a 44-volume set of the complete works of Jack Vance, corrected and restored (as far as possible) to the author's original manuscripts and titles with the direct help and cooperation of Jack Vance and his family. The VIE was created entirely by volunteer labor and financed primarily by private subscription (including \$50,000 of subscriptions from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation). The VIE sets came in two editions: the Reader's Set (\$1500\*\* plus shipping) and the Deluxe Set (\$3000 plus shipping). While the VIE project itself is now complete, and the organization has shut down, there is now an effort to reprint the VIE in paperback format.\*\*\* I cannot do the whole story justice, particularly since I was merely a subscriber, not a volunteer, but here is a detailed account of VIE history on the Foreverness website from one of the participants.\*\*\*\*

Jack Vance (1916 - ) is one of the best and most prolific (>60 books) American authors of the past half century. Given that, he remains remarkably obscure, except to a dwindling number of science fiction and fantasy readers, most of whom (like me) are older and first encountered his work in the 50s, 60s and 70s. My own introduction was a paperback edition of *The Dying Earth* (VIE title: *Mazirian the Magician*) that belonged to my brother Chip and that I read sometime in the 1960s.

I read several other Vance novels and short stories in the intervening years, but had no idea of the extent of Vance's work until receiving a copy of *The Work of Jack Vance* from my good friend Jerry Hewett, the principal author. It was Jerry who also notified me about the VIE project. I subscribed for a Reader's Set, paid my deposit, then sent the balance in two payments as the VIE was shipped in two 'waves', each containing 22 volumes (though not in numerical order). I read all the volumes in each 'wave' as it arrived.

I have now undertaken to re-read the entire VIE in order and review the novels and short stories in each volume. The VIE volumes are in approximate chronological order of original publication of the novels and stories included. This review is a bit quixotic, since the VIE project has now ended; there is no way to buy a new VIE set, and I suspect you would have a hard time convincing an existing VIE set owner to part with it (there were only 600 sets printed). My 21-year-old daughter Emily has already asked if she can have my VIE set when I die. (I said yes.)

\*This review, published with the author's permission, appears on his web-site. It has been slightly around a link-based phrase and a trivial matter of fact.

\*\* The VIE Readers set was initially priced at \$1,250, and something close to half of the subscribers benefited from this price.

\*\*\* See: Editions Andreas Irlé.

\*\*\*\* Tim Stretton.

But both Vance and the VIE project volunteers deserve the attention; Vance, for the depth and breadth of his work over the past 60 years; the VIE project volunteers for successfully completing a project that by all rights should not have succeeded. Since much of what I do professionally involves troubled or failed projects, I marvel at what these people accomplished, period, not to mention that they did it all for free. My only regret is that I did not volunteer as well.



Bruce Webster



## ECHOES IN THE ETHER

### 1 - SKLAR HAST AS JESUS

The neo-religiosity surging in pop-culture—science fiction particularly—is losing none of its force. Recently on Foreverness someone made the judicious remark that one of its major themes, the 'chosen one', is not found in Vance. This led to a discussion of *Blue World* in which I expanded on points made elsewhere.

In addition to drug culture and Greek tragedy *Dune* is based on Islam—and its hero is based on Mohammed. *Blue World* was written by Vance in reaction to this book. Sklar Hast, therefore, may be compared to "Muad Dhib". Islam being a Christian heresy, and thus a sort of counter-Christianity, one might then wonder if there is any relationship between Sklar Hast and Jesus. At first glance there seems to be no such thing.

Confusing this matter is the perception that the 'chosen one' theme is particularly Christian. This point demands a brief foray into theology To be chosen is not an accident;

the chooser must make a deliberate act. For the chosen one, on the other hand, the event is fortuitous. Mary, the virgin mother Jesus, was chosen. This occurred when the messenger angel Gabriel appeared to her, and she accepted God's proposition.\* The pre-Christian Jews, in the person of Abraham, were also chosen.\*\* They, like Mary, were given the chance to refuse. Jesus, however, was not chosen. He was simply born, like any other child, the son of his father. He was not selected. He was given no choice about being, or not, what he was. Like each one of us, and like God (the Father), Jesus is simply the *person* that he is, a person who happens, by the nature of things, to be the Messiah.

But even if Jesus were a 'chosen one', even if he had begun life as an ordinary person and then the finger of God had pointed down out of a cloud, and a great booming voice had cried out: "You are the Chosen One!"—as did happen to both Mohammed and Joseph Smith (the prophet of Mormonism)—there remains a radical difference between Jesus and Mohammed in this sense: the work intended and accomplished by each is opposite—like *Dune* and *Blue World*.

After Moses the Jews waited for other prophets who could give them God's instructions and lead them on to greater happiness. New prophets came but each was a disappointment. Because what Man wants is different from what God wants. Man wants success, prosperity, comfort, pleasure and ease—or as it is generally put these days: "peace and justice". This is what humanity demands of its kings and its democratic leaders.

In the time of Jesus many Jews were waiting for a prophet-king to liberate them from Rome (and Jesus was crucified as 'king of the Jews' in a Roman mockery of this aspiration). Instead of a prophet-king the Jews got John the Baptist who called them to die and be reborn to a new life, a call to which crowds of them answered.

This call had nothing to do with whether or not Rome ran Palestine; nothing to do with human success, prosperity, comfort, pleasure and ease. Jesus then called on his followers not to chase out Rome but to love their enemies. He was crucified but 3 days later he resurrected. Jesus transcends the power which condemned and killed him. It was nothing compared to what he was, and had nothing to do with the 'kingdom of God' he announced and embodied. A hint regarding this situation is suggested in his famous instruction, "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's."

In all these respects Mohammed is opposite. He is the triumphant realization of what humanity pines for: a divine instrument of success, prosperity, comfort, pleasure and ease, and this is the reason religion and politics, in the context of Islam, are inseparable.

Israel was 'chosen', in the person of Abraham. But Abraham got no profit from this election, only strange trials—like being requested to sacrifice his only son. Being chosen, for

Abraham, meant no peace or justice. Abraham's election, in the Christian view, eventually leads to the coming of Jesus but, again, Jesus is no 'chosen one', no random individual picked out of the crowd and given special information and powers. Mohammed *is* a random individual picked out of the crowd. The angel Gabriel came to him. He could have gone to another. Gabriel communicated God's instructions, which Mohammed shrewdly followed; the result was amazing success, great prosperity, and abundant pleasures. By following his god Mohammed brought paradise to earth, and earth to paradise. The famous 70 houris for jihad 'martyrs' are a typical example. If a good Christian is killed in battle he gets an eternity of hymns singing, not get an eternity of erotic variations. As for pleasures in this world, like the Mormons the Mohammedans are polygamists,\* while Christian men must content themselves with a single woman whom they are not even allowed to divorce. In Christian marriage man and woman become "one flesh", and the marriage is protected by the declaration: "What God has joined, let no man break asunder". So, Christian boys, if you goof when you choose a wife, you're cooked—from the point of view of 'human' happiness. Meanwhile, while Mohammed's islamic armies subjugated half the world—over which they reigned as pashas and sultans—the disciples of Jesus were chased around arenas by hungry lions.

In *Dune* a 'chosen one' leads armies and gains power and pleasure for his people. This is islamic. Of course his people were miserable and exploited, which makes Mu'ad Dhib a bit like Moses—though Moses never fought the against the Egyptian oppressors, only against the tribes in the promised land, in order to clear them out.

What about Sklar Hast? He is certainly no 'chosen one'. Neither are the people of the floats oppressed, like the Israelites. The Intercessors are a drag, but initially Sklar Hast is not concerned about them. As for King Kragen, at best he is an annoyance. At worst he is an insult, let us say, to 'human dignity'. Sklar Hast was not reacting to blatant oppression or some other pressing condition. What Jesus offered was likewise not something of worldly necessity.

As for polygamy, the people of the floats with their custom of wife testing are on the verges of it, but Sklar Hast is interested in a girl who refuses to be tested, and remains interested despite that; he is open to a deeper freedom that does not rhyme with unlimited pleasure.

But is there anything blatantly Christian, or Judeo-Christian, about *Blue World*? Again, at first glance the answer would seem to be no. To the extent there is anything overtly religious the book is even 'anti-clerical'. This translates, in the minds of some, to 'anti-Christian', but I have nothing to say to them here. If we look more closely it turns out there are a number of surprising parallels between Sklar Hast and Jesus.

G. W. Bush famously said that freedom is God's gift to humanity. The God in question is certainly not Allah. Allah sanctions reduced rights for non-muslims and supports what is known as oppression of women. There is no gift of 'freedom for all' in Islam. Jesus, however, offers a freedom that is universally available. It may not be the worldly

\* But not all branches of Islam are polygamist, thank heaven!

\* With respect to Mary the issue is in fact a bit more complex because of the Immaculate Conception, which is not the virgin birth of Jesus but the particular quality of Mary to have been born without 'original sin'. This carries us into a labyrinth of theology beyond the needs of the current discussion; we may say, roughly, that if Mary was immaculately conceived it depended upon God, so that in this respect also she 'chosen', and given to choice herself.

\*\* The Jews, in this regard, being an image of humanity in general, God's portal into human history so to speak. This, at any rate, is the Christian view.

freedom we humans lust after, but it is a more important freedom and it does not discriminate: it is for all persons. Opposition to Sklar Hast was organized by the Intercensors and accepted by a majority, including the Arbiters. This is parallel to Jesus who was ganged up on by the Jewish religious elite, the Roman and Jewish political authorities, and a majority of the population. The opposition to both Sklar Hast and Jesus was based on lazy and comfortable conservatism, individual interest and fear.

Like Jesus deliberately going to Jerusalem to be judged before Pilate, Sklar Hast willingly goes to the 'convocation' to be judged, and is almost lynched.

Sklar Hast had no army. His enemy was a fish. He did organize a force of interdiction to ensure that King Kragen's Exemplary Corps would not prevent his Kragen killing machine to come to grips with its object. But this was no army of conquest. Jesus also led no army.

The result of Sklar Hast's actions is not more success, prosperity, comfort, pleasure and ease, more peace and justice than the floats enjoyed previously. The floats were doing alright. Doom did not loom. Sklar Hast's suggestion that King Kragen would grow ever larger and cause disaster were only theoretical. Clever polemicists might have accused him of doing what the neo-conservatives are accused of doing; inflating a non-menace to further their plot to seize power.

In fact King Kragen might soon have died of old age. He might have remained moderate in his gluttony. Sklar Hast averted no obvious disaster. Like Ghyl Tarcoc/Emphyrio he lived in a situation which was tolerable. But the situations of Halma and the Blue World are incompatible with the kingdom of God where, as Bush might put it, "man is free" in the sense Jesus uses this word. Such freedom is ultimately inner freedom. It was Sklar Hast's inner freedom, freedom from orthodoxy and the pressure of custom, and his hunger for a higher sort of life where he did not have to kowtow to a fish, which caused him to lead his people to greater and more spiritual freedoms; freedoms of the mind and the heart.

## 2 - THE HUGHES NEBULOSITY

As a lurker on the VanceBS (where I continue under Dan Gunter's ban) my attention is often drawn to Mathew Hughes, a great favorite there, whose blooming carrier as science fiction author is cheered on by all. The VIE's own Patrick Dusoulier, Vance translator *extrodinaire*, has rendered one of Hughes novels into French (for money!). Hughes has his own message board too, maintained by VIE pillar Mike Berro, and his own excellent web-site: ARCHONATE.COM.

Currently the VanceBS is currently abuzz with news of Hughes' nomination for a Nebula award. Hughes wrote:

My Guth Bandar novella, *The Helper and His Hero*, which ran as a two-parter in the February and March 2007 issues of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, has made the preliminary Nebula Awards ballot. . .

I have dipped into Hughes' work, which is interesting to me in at least one respect: the extreme degree to which the author indulges his enthusiasm for Vance. But this influence, strong as it is in certain respects—and intriguing, I would think, to any Vancian—seems none-the-less superficial. Like Frank Herbert, the authors of *Battlestar Galactica*, or J.K. Rowling (authoress of Harry Potter), and quite apart from his sheer literary talent (or absence thereof, as the case may be) Mathew Hughes seems to be yet another exemplar of this burgeoning phenomenon, which might be called 'pop-cultural neo-religiosity'.

No doubt it goes without saying that Hughes is an anti-clerical materialist. I would even be surprised to learn he were not an actual 'militant atheist'. As far as I can tell, or am willing to look, he also does not dabble in 'chosen ones'. He is, all the same, a 'neo-religious' pop-artist because his major concern is 'metaphysical'—in the sense in which that elevated Hellenism applies to pop-culture. That he presents the atheist metaphysic rather than the Islamic metaphysic (Herbert), the demon-worship metaphysic (Harry Potter) or a degraded Christian-techno

metaphysic (*Battlestar Galactica*), is neither here nor there. It all comes out in the wash as a religious preoccupation, an overriding concern with essences, ultimates and eschatology.

An appropriate prelude to a consideration of Hughes' metaphysical schmilblick, the 'noosphere', would be a peek at the Vance influence for the noosphere itself seems to be borrowed from his favorite author.

In the tiny portion of Hughes' work I have sampled I am astonished by the quantity of vanciana encountered. Hughes' site gives access to a story called *A Little Learning*. I have not read it but just poking around for a minute or two I found the name 'Arboghost', the expression 'Old Earth', an 'Institute for Historical Inquiry', and 'a vicious predatory hive species' known as the 'Dree' (in *The Book of Dreams*, 'a brute of malevolence'). To crown all I stumbled on the following passage:

Soon he felt the slight tug of the umbilicus that connected the balloon to its dolly, now far below. The gondola rocked gently then settled as the operator engaged the system that brought the materials of which the dolly was formed into contact with the track into which it was slotted.\*

\* I have absolutely nothing against Hughes making this sort of use of Vance. I even like it. But why does he simultaneously ignore a more important aspect of Vance; decent writing? Regarding 'umbilicus' and the organic glop which constitutes the judas dolly I refrain from comment, but the passage should at least be something like: *He felt the tug of the dolly, now far below. The gondola rocked, then settled as the operator engaged it with the slotted track.* Hughes' prose is embarrassingly amateurish. In that second sentence alone he manages to cram: *then, as, that, which, into, with, and into which.* Amazing.



Author Mathew Hughes

Here is another passage where the influence is less direct but none-the-less clear:

The fat one grunted something and another figure appeared from behind her bulk. This one was as lean and dried as the rawhide that constricted Bandar's throat, with a face that was collapsed in on itself and wrinkled up like dried fruit, framed by thin white hair clotted together by rancid oils. She poked a wisp of wool into the grease lamp to make a second wick then lifted the skullcap and crossed the cave to hold it before Bandar's face.

She peered at him from rheumy eyes, toothless gums working and lips smacking loudly. Then the hand that was not encumbered by the lamp reached under his parka and worked its way into his leggings. She seized parts of Bandar that he would have rather she had left untouched, weighing them in her dry, hard palm. Then she made a noise in her throat that expressed disappointment coupled to resignation and spoke to the unseen strangler behind him.

Normally this would be your ordinary, ill-written lurid fantasy, but with Hughes one senses enthusiasm for aspects of Vance's prose and sense of humor, even if they are treated in a deformed



A view of the noosphere, from archonate.com. Impossible to imagine a more characteristic scene from contemporary pop-literature.

Note the map of the noosphere clutched in the photoshopped claws of the bogey. This map is explained by Hughes: *The Institute had issued the examination candidates a partial map of the noosphere. . . The full chart of humanity's collective unconscious was an intricately convoluted sphere, complexity upon complexity. It was the work of thousands of years of exploration by noönauts. . .*

Here is an idea Hughes seems to have taken both from Pharsem's *Totality* and the *tands* of Sacerdotes. In *The Dragon Masters* we read: ". . . an intricate construction of gold rods and silver wire. . . Each curve symbolized an aspect of Final Sentience; the shadow cast upon the wall represented the Rationale, ever-shifting, always the same. . . There was never an end to the study of the tand. . ."

The tand seems to be partly based on Plato's metaphor of the cave, with its shadows on a rough wall cast by a flickering—thus unsteady—light, of statues—thus mere representations—which is the nearest approach to true reality we benighted mortals can normally attain. The Eliatic noosphere, however, lacks this platonic richness. Its only charm is the Vance-influenced 'thousands of years' of clerical work.

In another vancian move Hughes uses music as a technique in the noosphere: *Bandar continued to chant the nine descending tones, followed by three rising notes, which insulated him from the man's perceptions as it did from those of all the idiomatic entities intrinsic to this Event. The chant was called a thran, one of several dozen specific combinations of sounds which enabled scholars of the Institute of Historical Inquiry, where Bandar was apprenticed, to sojourn among the multitude of archetypal Events, Landscapes and Situations which constituted the human noosphere—what the laity called the collective unconscious—of Old Earth.*

and distasteful way.

Which brings us to the noosphere. This *otherwise* is a psionic parallel world constituted by the collective unconscious, an idea Hughes certainly lifted from *Paraphyche* where a parallel dimension generated by the collective consciousness is discovered and exploited by psionic researchers who are—what else?—combatting religious fanaticism. There are, however, important difference between the two places. Vance would have nothing to do with faddish Freudianism, particularly because he has no patience for unconsciousness. Jaro Fath is not bothered by his unconscious—by something of which he is unaware—but by his consciousness of his brother's voice. The voice is mysterious but is it not a mystery within a mystery of which he is not even aware. The psionic realm of *Paraphyche* is generated by what people think and know in the present. It will have components of history, and such, only to the extent they are part of people's conscious present.

The noosphere is different. Though 'generated' by humanity it is a place where nothing changes, where, as Hughes says, 'events and situations [repeat] themselves exactly and eternally'. It is the realm of archetypes, such as the Hero or the Helper:

He looked up at the crowd of archetypes. Their faces were filling again with the monomanias that formed their intrinsic natures.

The noosphere is a Freudian playground of 'idiomatic entities', where we are confronted by the empty masks of humanity's deepest nature. But Hughes is not content with this degree of degradation; he must also suggest that the human fundamental is self-absorbed, self-absorbing and absurdly vicious:

Only one thing moved in the Old Sea [*an aspect of the noosphere; see illustration to left*]: the great blind Worm that endlessly swam its "waters" [*elsewhere described as 'pearl gray nothingness'*] in search of its own tail. And only one thing could divert the Worm from its eternal, futile quest. . .the Worm sensed any consciousness that entered the Old Sea—and inerrantly [*sic\**] swam to devour it.

Here we have Hughes' 'wry', pseudo-vancian commentary on human nature. Vance is famous for his cynicism, but Vance never gives us anything so brutal as this!

Hughes' heroes, on the other hand—surprise, surprise!—are moralizing yappers who use the vulgar distinction between good and evil. Where, given Hughes' radically solipsistic human fundamentals, do they get their morality? Like self-righteous tribunes of humanitarianism and multiculturalism they whine and crab about the cold

\* 'Inerrant' comes close to being a nice neologism, combining 'inherent' with 'errant', as if wandering is the nature of the beast. But in context this does not seem to be the intent since aimless wandering is incompatible with 'unerringly' or 'inelluctably', which seem to be intended, and which mean something fixed or fateful—in this case a target, which a wanderer could only drift to by chance. If such as paradox is intended it is too much for this reader.

senselessness of the human collective unconscious they are privileged to explore and know:

"That is not enough!" Bandar rose to his knees and called to the Wise Man who, with the Father, the Fool and the Hero and his Helper, were among the last to turn away. . . "It is not right to leave him there! Not after he did all that you required of him!"  
"It was what he was for," said the Wise Man. "Now it is done."  
"You know it is not right!"

Etcetera, etcetera.

Writers like Upfield or Vance—barring certain minimalist sci-fi conventions like the possibility of faster than light travel—set their work in the world of our actual experience. They may, in a more or less peripheral way, hint at matters which stretch the limits of normal experience—6th sense, intuition, empathetic communication—but such elements color the stories, they do not structure them. "Speculative" fiction, as we all know, projects technologies or assumes strange conditions. In his early gadget stories Vance dabbled in portals (*Rumfuddle*, *Seven Exits from Bocz*), brain or consciousness transfers (*Chateau d'If*, *Four Hundred Blackbirds*, *Telek*) or ghosts (*The King of Thieves*). He even, in *Parapsyche* or *Nopalgarth*, experimented metaphysical conditions which might support intuition or, in *The World Thinker*, dramatized Creationist Theory.

The innovation which has crept up upon us in popular culture (for certain esoteric philosophical and spiritualist traditions have always traded in the stuff), beginning with books like *Dune*, is something else. These books assume not a possible or imaginable advance or transformation of our technological or physical possibilities and conditions, they assume a particular structure to the cosmos, a structure which englobes the notion of the spiritual. They are based upon—as opposed to being merely colored by—metaphysical rather than technological conceptions. The plot of *Dune* can not exist without assuming creatures (the pilots) who, thanks to a special drug (spice) are able to short-circuit the inter-stellar distances by creeping through a psychedelic elsewhere.\* This is more than a technological idea, more than a twisting out of joint of a law of physics or two. It not only assumes a cosmic structure beyond all experience or observation, it is also rife with what used to be called spiritualism. Hughes' 'archetypes' belong to this sort of 'spiritualism'.

There are reasons to be suspicious of this sort of thing. The main one is not simply that it steers fiction toward the deadening realm of the 'novel of ideas' but that it is contentious. I do not mean that a novel should have no point or that an author should take no stance. *Dune* may seem like 'pure entertainment', and Frank Herbert was certainly no Ayn Rand or B.F. Skinner\*\*,

\* Note that the monopoly on spice, upon which the argument of *Dune* turns, was also probably borrowed from Vance, who used the idea in *The Rapparae* (1949) where a monopoly on faster than light engines is also the 'shmilblic', as the French so nicely call this aspect of a story. Herbert's 'pilot' idea is picked up in the Australian TV series *Farquest*, where there are both 'pilot' creatures and whale ships.

\*\* These luminaries gave the world novels based, respectively, on a brutal libertarianism colored by the Nietzschean superman (Van Vogt offered the world a wimpier version) and Determinism.

but his book did nothing to encourage just saying "no" to drugs and, unlike Vance, offered the West not the least preparation against the onslaught of Islam, the potential for which Vance was aware even in the 1950s, as he demonstrated in *The Man in the Cage*.\* I also do not mean that novels should boost patriotism and build strong bodies twelve ways. But Herbert, like Rowling and the *Galactica* people nourish unsavory lusts, for every metaphysical heresy carries a particular poison.

Vance, like the rest of us, has his metaphysical views. But wise and good men know they cannot see to the end of the cosmos and do not wish to collapse it into some particular type of box. They keep it open, thus large, thus real, thus nourishing.

Quite apart from Hughes' Materialism—to me this is just a bad habit, like farting in public—I consider it no business of mine if he likes the notion that humanity is fundamentally disgusting and besotted in ignorance of its true nature, or that only his heroes, the noönauts (and here Hughes does seem to tilt towards 'chosen ones' of the Rowling-type) have any idea what's what. But why does he like to build his work on such a narrow base?

I know a young man, who happens to be particularly charming and decent but who is also an 'artist' of the 'contemporary' type, recently explained his work to me. He uses junk to make *assemblage* insects. These, he says, are metaphors of humanity. But, he explained, it was a long struggle to make them 'human'. He first tried making them mean, cruel and vicious. But that failed. He then tried making them arrogant and condescending. That also failed. Finally he got it right: he made them stupid. Now why should a healthy, intelligent, handsome and sophisticated person, who spends his time being gracious and generous, think thoughts like this? Does he consider *himself* stupid? Does he consider the people around him stupid? He gives an impression, to the contrary, of beneficently appreciating the humanity around him.

I have no reason to assume\*\* that Mathew Hughes, like my young friend, is not a decent man. But why does he choose to participate in this corrosive and, I would claim, anti-occidental vandalism? I ask the question, and I think I can answer it. The answer need not shock and should not surprise for it's old as the hills: fashion.

On the other hand perhaps my young friend has a point—though I would never admit its universal application.\*\*\*



\* The preparation, of course, is the influence on some readers minds of such books as *The Blue World*, to name only one.

\*\* Except for some of his cyber-behavior but that should not be held against him. 'Humanity' is not fundamentally evil but there is certainly some Evil in humanity, and the Internet can bring it out if one does not take special care.

\*\*\* Another friend protested that my judgement upon Mathew Hughes is not interesting because it boils down to the accusation he is not as good as Vance. Of course Hughes' failure to write even acceptably is all the more remarkable for his exuberant interest in Vance—but that is neither here nor there. To be perfectly clear: my disapprobation of Hughes' writing is a) distaste for his fundamental ideas, and b) allergy to such execrable prose. I would not spare a second on such stuff were it not so mixed up with cyber-vancia. That said, I wish him no ill! I prefer the success of 5th rate authors influenced by Vance to that of 5th rate authors who are not.

# HOW TO WRITE IN THE STYLE OF SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

By George Rhoads

These remarks are aimed at writers holding Academic posts who subscribe to the 'publish or perish' philosophy but may be of use to students—or anyone with nothing say who wants to say it impressively.

The scientist prides himself on his precision, his astuteness, and his thoroughness. These qualities should show, or seem to show, in the scientific style. To appear thorough be verbose. Writing in the scientific style is like painting a wall; the more paper you cover with words the more thoroughly will you seem to have covered your subject. Use long words and employ a thesaurus to find the most obscure word which comes somewhere near your meaning. Use words of Greek or Latin derivation in preference to Anglo-Saxon words. 'Guts' does not sound scientific. 'Intestinal fortitude' does, and covers more paper. To simulate thoroughness lard your prose with useless words and phrases. 'Obviously', for example, is a word you can stick it into almost any sentence.

Among the mass of useless phrase to be found in scientific literature are stand-bys such as 'in fact', 'as a matter of fact', 'it must be born in mind that', 'could be characterized as', 'to all intents and purposes', 'it would seem that' and 'of a [ . . . ] nature'. In using the latter always say, for example, 'of a sizeable nature', instead of just plain 'sizeable' and never merely 'big'.

In order to simulate precision jam in plenty of qualifiers. The more you qualify the more careful you seem to be. Don't simply say 'The natives of the Kalahari Desert are black'. Say, 'Of all the natives encountered by this observer (in October of 1968) in the region of the Kalahari Desert, which as a matter of fact was probably a minuscule proportion of the total indigenous population, the greater preponderance would most certainly appear to have been, or could be characterized as being, extremely dark skinned, if not actually black.'

To appear astute become obscures. If your reader can not understand what you are saying he will blame himself and feel that your ideas are beyond his comprehension. Depend upon the his reverence for the printed word!

Some writers, when they bring off a sentence garbled entirely beyond sense, like to insert 'obviously'.

Similes, analogies and metaphors have no place in the scientific style, They make your writing colorful and interesting, which is unscientific. Adjectives too are suspect, unless devoid of interest. *Exogamous*, *catalytic*, *deciduous* and the like are acceptable. The only adjectives you should use, and these but rarely, are those which assure the reader that, despite your scientific rigor, you are a warm human being with a sense of humor. Among these are *notoriously*, *elegant*, *fascinating*, and *unfortunate*. *Elegant* is used to describe mathematical proofs. It implies that the author has a sense

of beauty, and understands the proof in question.

As an exercise in the scientific style take any piece of writing that expresses its idea briefly, clearly and colorfully, and rewrite it applying the suggestions outlined above.

The following is a sample translation from a Jerome Kern lyric.

Obviously, any of various species of cold blooded aqueous vertebrates, in order to accomplish locomotion, have (except in rare cases) no alternative option to that of engaging one or more caudal, pectoral, dorsal or anal membranous appendages against the fluid medium that constitutes their normal native habitat.

(Fish gotta swim,)

Individuals of the class *Aves*, in similar fashion, in order to maintain elevation and forward motion in their particular altitude range of the earth's atmosphere, are compelled to employ an anterior pair of appendages in such a manner as to cause the feather covered surfaces on the humerus, radius, ulna and phalanges to establish and sustain a relatively high level of both force and velocity against the notoriously tenuous gassy medium in which these appendages are deployed.

(Birds gotta fly,)

The author, in an analogous manner, by virtue of the exigencies of her particular genetic inheritance and environmental conditioning, does presently and will in the foreseeable future find it obligatory to perpetuate without hiatus an attachment of an emotional nature with a single male member of her species until such time as her existence as sentient organism will be definitively terminated.

(I gotta love one man till I die.)

The above mentioned emotional attachment, or commitment may, in fact, on the part of the author—though not necessarily on the part of the other party involved—be regarded as, for the purposes of this discussion, and to a virtually complete extent, involuntary.

(Can't help lovin' that man of mine.)



Sunset at Sea, by George Rhoads, acrylic on wood, 2007.

## LAST AND LEAST

So here we are. As with Kirth Gersen our enemies have deserted us—not because we have slaughtered them but because, where they tried to foil us, we have foiled them. We wanted to publish a Vance Integral edition; we have done so. They wanted to stop us; they failed. Not only that; we have communed with each other, above real and virtual tankards, peering together down the golden corridors of Time.

Is this lurulu? No. Lurulu is a dynamic. It is driven or drawn by this or that, but its essence is the movement that is life.

Thanks, once again, to Hans van der Veeke, the Legendary Locator, and Greg Hansen, Ultimate VIE Volunteer, for their indispensable help with EXTANT 23. Without them EXTANT, and EXTANT 23 in particular, would not exist.

And now: good-by—or ‘goodbye’, ‘good-bye’, ‘good by’, ‘good bye’ or ‘goodby’, as you prefer!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Hansen'.