

JULES VERNE : PROPHET OR POET ?

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At first sight, to choose to speak about a popular author like Jules Verne in an august institution like the INSEE may seem strange, and even a little provocative. Didn't we all see through Verne when we read him at the age of ten or eleven? Haven't all his predictions happened long ago?

My contention is that the answer to each of these questions is : no. In my view, Verne's public reputation hides works of considerable literary merit, which can be read with great pleasure at any age, and I personally can see little reason why they should not be compared with for instance those of contemporaries like Balzac, Flaubert, or Maupassant.

As one brief indication of at least the importance of the Voyages extraordinaires, they have sold three times as many copies as Shakespeare, and nine times as many copies as their closest French rival (Saint-Exupéry) ; and Verne is also the most translated writer in the world.

As another indication, one can point out the considerable amount of university research carried out on Verne in recent years. This includes three major conferences and at least seven doctorates, the most recent of which are Jean Delabroy's 1200 page "Jules Verne et l'imaginaire" and Andrew Martin's "The Knowledge of Ignorance".² It is perhaps not irrelevant to mention that three of the authors have been at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. There are also studies by, for instance, Roland Barthes, Michel Serres, Michel Foucault, Pierre Macherey, Jean Chesneaux, Marc Soriano, Michel Butor, and Jean Ricardou. The very serious Revue des Lettres Modernes publishes regular collections of articles on the literary aspects of Verne.³

What all these studies have shown is that understanding the Voyages at more than a superficial level is difficult if one does not notice that they contain such fundamental oppositions as : a bien-pensant conservatism, but also a support for oppressed peoples from the Québécois to the Australian Aborigines ; descriptions of technological progress, but also analyses of its pernicious effects on human society ; the use of conventional happy endings with everybody married off, but also the presence in the texts of a general sensuality, often homosexual in tendency ; and direct borrowing from many contemporary sources, but also influences of classical mythology and Poe, Scott, Defoe, Dickens, and Stendhal. The studies have above all shown that the reason

Verne has survived as a writer is not the scientific aspects of the books, but their literary qualities : their intrinsic complexity and universal themes.

Ultimately, though, attitudes to works of literature are largely a matter of individual taste. My principal aim here is merely to argue that virtually all of the popular conceptions on Verne are either wrong or irrelevant to the actual works. In this way, I hope to defuse the usual attacks on Verne and point the way to a proper appreciation.

In very rapid summary, I will attempt to show that Verne was not a great traveller ; that some of "his" books were not written by him at all ; that his works were not generally set in the future ; that his "anticipations" were not especially accurate or original ; that his attitude to progress was not one of naive admiration ; and that the term "science-fiction" - at least in its usual sense - is not particularly appropriate to Verne's works.

First, Verne's life. He was born in Nantes (1828) studied and worked in Paris (1847-66), and spent the remaining forty years of his life living in or near Amiens (1866-1905). He left France for the first time at the age of thirty-one, and his most adventurous exploits were cruises to Northern Europe, the Mediterranean, and the United States (on the Great Eastern).⁴

This bald summary of Verne's life does not tell us that much. But many of the more interesting incidents that have been recounted are to be taken with a pinch of salt : for instance, the story that, at the age of ten, Verne tried to run away to sea, was caught and beaten by his parents, and promised "Henceforth, I will journey in dream only".⁵ The foundation for this story seems to be particularly shaky.⁶

In fact I would go further, and state my scepticism as to the value or interest of knowledge about Verne's life in general.

Only those events of his life that are reflected in the works are *instructive, I believe, and since they are reflected in the works, this is the best place to study them ! I admit that this position is a little provocative...*

Next, the question of who wrote the Voyages extraordinaires Once again, things are not as simple as they might seem. First of all, correspondence demonstrates that Verne's publisher and adviser, Jules Hetzel père, provided many ideas for the Voyages extraordinaires, and even rewrote some passages for his author.⁷

Similarly, although Les Cinq cents millions de la Bégum (1879) and L'Etoile du Sud (1884) were published under Verne's sole name, they were in fact based on manuscripts by André Laurie (pseudonym of Paschal Grousset).⁸ Furthermore, the short story "In the Year 2889" (1889) cannot be totally Jules Verne's work as apparently he could not read English,⁹ let alone write it ; and it is unlikely that it was translated from his French by a native-speaker of English, for it contains a number of Gallicisms.¹⁰ The letters imply that it was Jules Verne's son, Michel, who wrote this story directly in English ; it was presumably he who then translated it into French for the 1890 and 1891 editions.¹¹

As for the posthumous Voyages extraordinaires, recent articles by Piero Gondolo della Riva¹² have argued that Michel Verne's role was much more extensive than that of merely putting the manuscripts in order, as he claimed.¹³ The critic ascribes to Michel complete chapters of Le Volcan d'or (1906), La Chasse au météore (1908), Le Pilote du Danube (1908), Les Naufragés du "Jonathan" (1909), and Le Secret de Wilhelm Storitz (1910), virtually the whole of L'Agence Thompson and C° (1907) and of L'Etonnante aventure de la mission Barsac (1919), and the master piece "L'Eternel Adam" (1910) in its entirety. Gondolo della Riva's arguments, based on the manuscripts (in the Jules Verne Museum in Nantes since 1981), and on the typescripts of the posthumous works (in his private collection), seem convincing, but none of these documents has been made public, and unfortunately, therefore, the evidence cannot be verified for the moment.

Internal evidence shows that some of the apparent anticipations in the posthumous works do seem to be later additions due to Michel Verne. Not only are some of the ideas characteristic of the posthumous period - such as the equivalence of matter and energy,¹⁴ first postulated in Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity (1905) - but also the vocabulary is indicative. Even if one accepts the hypothesis of posthumous authorship, certain words predate what the Larousse de la langue française : Lexis (1977) gives as their first usage : "électro-ioniques", "subconscient", "'planeur'", "syntonisation", "'sans-fil'".¹⁵

But even if a precise set of words, sentences, and chapters were proved to have come from Michel's pen, we would not be able in general to rule out the possibility of spoken or written material by Jules Verne being a direct source. The difficulty is compounded by disagreement in estimates as to whether or not the posthumous works are typically "Vernian". In the light of these uncertainties, the best policy would seem to be to accept Michel Verne's probable contributions as an integral part of the Voyages extraordinaires, but also to consider them as a particularly well-informed "commentary" on the rest, as a discourse at a second level which extrapolates tendencies from the previous works, occasionally to the point of pastiche.

Nevertheless, the problem of Michel Verne's contribution is far from resolved ; and it is surprising that up till now Gondolo della Riva's revelations have produced little acknowledgement, let alone critical reaction or response.

Third, the myth that Verne's works were set in the future. The very first Voyage to have a setting after the date of publication was Robur-le-conquérant (1886), which mentions the existence of the "Tour en fer de l'Exposition de 1889" (RC 12).¹⁶ But others followed in rapid succession. The titles of "In the Year 2889" (1889) and "Un Express de l'avenir" (1893) speak for themselves, but there are also Sans dessus dessous (1889), Le

Château des Carpathes (1892), Claudius Bombarnac (1892), L'Ile à hélice (1895), L'Invasion de la mer (1905), and "L'Eternel Adam" (1905), whose setting is divided between the third millennium and the twenty-third millennium. Nevertheless, virtually all the best-known works are set in the past or present - and it was probably only his decreasing success with the general public that led Verne to try to adapt his later works to ... his own reputation for "anticipations" !

In this perspective, we can observe that many of the more daring "anticipations" do occur in these later works : an aeroplane/helicopter (Robur-le-conquérant), a pneumatically-driven train under the Atlantic ("Un Express de l'avenir"), a giant cannon designed to correct the Earth's axis (Sans dessus dessous), perfect audio-visual reproduction (Le Château des Carpathes), a Trans-Siberian railway (Claudius Bombarnac), a motorised floating island (L'Ile à hélice), and a project to transform the Sahara into an extension of the Mediterranean (L'Invasion de la mer). "In the year 2889" describes the disappearance of horse-drawn transport, trains at 1500 km/hr, worldwide televised news in colour, weather control, a life expectancy of sixty-eight years, communication with the planets, algebraic "compteurs" (computers), aerial publicity, skyscrapers, and a reduction of the chemical elements to three basic units and then to one.¹⁷ In "L'Eternel Adam", interplanetary communication, pneumatic trains, aircraft, and colour photography re-occur (EA 233), but the major discovery is that "on avait pénétré l'intime nature du phénomène de la vie (...) dont les prodigieuses découvertes permettaient d'espérer, pour un avenir prochain, l'immortalité des organismes animés" (EA 233).

But the works set in the future do not have a monopoly of "predictions". In the other works, one can observe such innovations as the extensive role of electricity (Vingt mille lieues passim, La Maison à vapeur passim), of the "heavier-than-air" ("A propos du 'Géant'" (TO 101), Maître du monde), of the submarine in Vingt mille lieues but also L'Ile mystérieuse, Face au drapeau and Mathias Sandorf, of an explosive in Face au drapeau which is claimed by its inventor to be capable of blowing up the globe (FD 174), and

of the laser, telecontrol, artificial rain, radiotelephone, and capture by means of electric shock in L'Étonnante aventure de la mission Barsac (1919) (MB 344 ; 344 ; 345 ; 346 ; 377). Amongst particular events "predicted", the most striking is the fact that the moon-rocket of De la Terre à la Lune et Autour de la Lune is the same height and weight as Apollo 8, like it is launched from Florida and observed by means of a giant telescope in the Rocky Mountains, and splashes down in the Pacific at a point four kilometres away from that of Apollo 8.¹⁸

Critical judgement is necessary, however, in assessing Verne's "predictions". First, care must be taken not to read too much into the texts. A self-propelling missile must not be confused with a self-guiding one (FD 179), the delirium of a scientist perhaps exaggerating the power of his explosive is not equivalent to a prediction of the atomic bomb (FD 174) - despite the extravagant claims of certain critics.

The element of choice has also been forgotten by many commentators, as undoubtedly in the case of the splash-down of the moon-rocket. The Einsteinian (or anti-Einsteinian ?) hint of "la vitesse (...) mangeait la pesanteur" (TM 218, MM 287) and the nuclear hint of "l'eau est le charbon de l'avenir" (IM 457) are probably also due to mere coincidence. Similarities between fact and fiction must be considered in the perspective of the many remarks in the Voyages that go wide of the mark.

Thirdly, many of the ideas were not original to Verne. Submarines, for instance, were built and tested between 1796 and 1801, and were actually used in the American Civil War (1861-65) : even the name Nautilus came from the prototype built by the American Robert Fulton, at Le Havre and Brest.¹⁹ Jules Verne himself pointed out that his reading about contemporary scientific developments was the source of most of his ideas (TO 358 (1895)). In any case, virtually all of the ideas Verne used had already appeared in fiction. "In the Year 2889" in particular, seems to plagiarise Albert Robida's works, especially Le Vingtième siècle (1882), although this claim has not yet been substantiated.²⁰ More generally, Pierre Versins claims

that in at most three of Verne's thirty-one "livres d'anticipation" *the basic idea had not already been used in fictional works* : the living fossils in Voyage au centre de la la Terre, the satellisation around the moon in Autour de la Lune, and the joining of parts of the Earth to a comet and their subsequent journey round the solar system in Hector Servadac (1877).²¹

Fourthly, the vision of the future in Verne's works is often merely the result of the extrapolation of past and present tendencies. This method, based on "l'application de systèmes déjà connus, mais poussés à un extrême degré de perfection" (RC 239), does throw up many accurate projections concerning giant artefacts or improvements in land-, water-, or air-based transport. But the process is basically conservative, in accordance with the philosophy that "rien n'arrive qui n'ait été déterminé par ce qui l'a précédé, et l'avenir est fait des prolongements (...) du passé" (NJ 444). This uncritical attitude works better therefore in the area of applied science than in international politics or the arts : if the general prediction of the increasing dominance of the United States is correct, those of its physical absorption of Britain (JJA 201) and Canada (B 148 ; 30) are as wide of the mark as the nineteenth-century conventional wisdom of paintings being replaced by photography (JJA 206) and novels by newspapers (TO 383).

The final limitation of the "predictions" in Verne's works is that, despite their use of extrapolation, they do not seem to betray an awareness of the acceleration of history,²² of the exponential rate of technological innovation, and thus their time-scale is all wrong. They mention, for instance, a "progression CONSTANTE (...) du 'mouvement industriel et commercial'" (IM 457). Thus the inventions of "In the Year 2889" will take a thousand years (Robida placed them in 1953) ; and coal resources will be exhausted in about ... "cent siècles" (IN 23) or else just at the moment when "la prévoyante nature" has had time to produce more coal (20M 443)! Concomitant with this lack of acceleration of history is the fate of both the machines and their inventors. The machines are in the hands of a single individual, and his death causes the secret to be lost, as is

explicitly emphasised in Vingt mille lieues (20M 342), Robur-le-conquérant (RC 70), and Face au drapeau (FD 264). The fate of the machines themselves also presents a sombre litany : Nemo's submarine is swallowed up by the Maelström at the end of Vingt mille lieues and, although it is revealed in L'Île mystérieuse that man and vessel survived, they are both finally entombed under the remains of the Mysterious Island after its explosion. The balloons of Cinq semaines and "Un Drame dans les airs" crash ; Hector Servadac's comet and the pneumatic tube under the Atlantic "turn out" to be mere dreams, the Maison à vapeur explodes, Robur's aircraft crash in both Robur-le-conquérant and Maître du monde, the cannons in Les Cinq cents millions de la Béguem and Sans dessus dessous prove powerless and are abandoned, and the Carpathian audio-visual system is destroyed. The "Propeller Island" disintegrates, the Trans-Siberian train blows up, Xirdal's machine for controlling the path of the Meteor is forgotten about, an earthquake upsets the plans for the Sahara, a cataclysm floods the globe and destroys the entire civilisation of the third millennium, and the technological dystopia in Central Africa is razed to the ground. At the ends of the novels, then, it is almost as if inventors and inventions had never existed. The "predictions" usually come to have the nostalgic whiff of "what might have been".

If we examine the explicit opinions on technology expressed in the Voyages, we find a similar ambivalence. On the one hand, the idea of man's technical omnipotence is systematically maintained : "'Tout ce qui est dans la limite du possible doit être et sera accompli'" (MV 274), "il est permis de croire que (...) se fera un jour (...) tout ce que peut faire l'intelligence de l'homme" (CC 18).

On the other hand, there is a deep streak of pessimism in Verne, and in particular a scepticism as to whether technology will be put to good use. From the beginning, fun is made of the scientists' absent-mindedness in everyday life ; but in the later works, virtually all of the scientists end up going mad. If this

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implicit comment on the relation between science and life is not enough, explicit criticisms of "progress" are made, for instance : "Décidément (...) les ingénieurs modernes ne respectent plus rien ! Si on les laissait faire, ils combleraient les mers avec les montagnes et notre globe ne serait qu'une boule lisse et polie comme un oeuf d'autruche, convenablement disposé pour l'établissement des chemins de fer'" (IMer 80).

Nevertheless, these reservations as to the accuracy, originality, permanence, and utility of the scientific innovations in the Voyages - whether emanating from the works themselves or from our reading of them - do not completely destroy their importance. Verne's works do demonstrate a shrewd awareness of technological implications, an "instinct des directions de la science", as Léon Blum says.²³ From his extremely wide reading, Verne selected the ideas he found most plausible. Florida was chosen as launching-pad because it was the southernmost part of the United States, the Rockies for the telescope because they were the highest mountains. Because Verne played relatively safe, many of his scientific extrapolations have worked - at least until recently.

Because of their lucidity and their clairvoyance (in the non-mystical sense), the Voyages have above all had a popularising and educational role. Verne himself claimed : "mon dessein (...) ne fut pas de prophétiser, mais de répandre la connaissance" (TO 384). Explorers, geographers and scientists acknowledging their debt to Jules Verne include Nansen, Lyautey, Simon Lake, Von Braun, Marconi, Gagarin, and Richard Byrd.²⁴

In sum, Verne's presentation of science and of "progress", if judged over the whole of the works, is far from naive.

I would claim that misunderstanding on this point, or rather the relationship between literature and science, has dogged generations of critics. I would also claim that it goes some way to explaining why Verne has so often been neglected in histories of French literature. Neglect of the literary aspects of the

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Voyages has led, for example, to trivialisations like Erich von Däniken's "Spirit-Telephone Conversation with Jules Verne" or ~~Verne~~ Verne = $\frac{1}{2}$ de renimé Cooper, $\frac{1}{4}$ d'Edgar Poe + $\frac{1}{4}$ d'Hoffmann", and even remarks like George Orwell's "so unliterary a writer as Verne" ! ²⁵

But it is above all certain critics' misunderstanding of science in literature that seems to have led them astray - and this is a point I would like to develop at length. Verne himself, comparing his own works with those of H.G. Wells, claimed "'I make use of physics. He invents'" ; Wells used the same argument to take his revenge, claiming that Verne avoids the fantastic and that "his works dealt almost always with actual possibilities of invention and discovery" ; Suvin describes Verne as a strict Newtonian, dismissing him with a passing reference to his "liberal interest in the mechanics of locomotion within a SAFELY HOMOGENEOUS SPACE" ; and Francis Lacassin extrapolates the claims of these three critics, listing ideas that he says are absent from the Voyages : "Equation espace-temps ; univers parallèles ; voyage dans le temps et sa conséquence extrême, le paradoxe temporel ; promotion du règne minéral ou végétal (... , d')espèces animales (...) ; définition d'une nouvelle cosmogonie ; mutants ; robots ; monstres ; humanoïdes".²⁶. All four, I would claim, seem to be pandering to the expectations of the public more than responding to the texts themselves. Turning each of their arguments inside out, it is my belief that in fact Verne's works use physics in order to invent effectively (more effectively than in the magic potions, black boxes, and mechanical justifications of most of his successors) ; that the side-effects include lucid analyses of science and intelligent guesses as to which of the "possibilities" were also probabilities ; that Verne's space is anything but safely homogeneous ; and that his scientific invention is so rich, and so accurately reproduced in Lacassin's list, that it could serve as a programme for a very interesting thesis ! The common error of the critics is that they seem to have confused the verisimilitude of the Voyages for verism, and science-in-fiction for science, almost as if Verne was meant to be a scientist.

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In my view, the works should be judged as literature, not as pale imitations of the scientific theory or practice of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

The authentic invention of the Voyages occurs on both the literal and literary levels - the new machine-gadgets are subject to metaphors, puns, and shifts in language before being allowed to vehicle new conceptions of space-time and new cosmogonies. Science is judged for coherence, originality, and truth - but as values in and of fiction. "At best", Verne's works are science-fiction, for in them narration governs Nature, experiments are non-reproducible and the comic, the cosmic, and the cosmetic are inseparable. "At worst", Verne's works employ science towards their own ends, sidestep it, or ignore it completely (as for instance in Le Chancellor or Michel Strogoff).

But the myth dies hard, and because the science-fiction reputation has stuck, the most famous French writer still often remains excluded from the accepted body of French literature. Further explanatory factors may be found in Verne's reputation as a children's writer, based on a half-truth, and his very commercial success. But La Fontaine, Defoe, Swift, Alain-Fournier, and Saint-Exupéry have survived similar categorisations. The length of the Voyages - approximately 8 million words - is certainly an obstacle to complete knowledge and appreciation, but such an obstacle does not seem to have detracted much from respect for the only comparably encyclopaedic endeavour, Là Comédie humaine. Stage adaptations and film versions, often bearing only the faintest of resemblances to the novels, have without doubt drawn attention away from the specifically literary qualities of the works, but cannot in themselves be held responsible for Verne's reputation.

Certain features of the Voyages themselves may also have contributed to misapprehensions. On a superficial level, the style is simple and easy to read, and there are errors and contradiction. Verne's reputation may have something to do with the distance between his surface and "deep" levels, the all-encompassing nature

of his irony. In the Voyages, personal and social concerns are camouflaged, truths skirted around rather than enounced, and desire functions in terms of an ailleurs : the networks of obsessions describe symptoms but avoid the sore points themselves.

All these reasons go some way to explaining Verne's unfavourable public and, until recently, critical reception. He will only be evaluated at his just worth when the examples of Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Tournier²⁷ are followed - when non-reading or misreading are replaced by detailed attention to the Voyages themselves.

My talk today has been, I hope a step in the right direction : I have tried to reduce the layers of misconceptions surrounding Verne, in particular concerning his "predictions" and use of science. Although I haven't begun to demonstrate Verne's literary merit in a positive fashion, I hope I have said enough to show why I prefer to call Verne a poet than a prophet. But I admit there is still a great deal of work to be done before we can possess the general depth of knowledge that is taken for granted in the case of Balzac, Flaubert, or Maupassant. Fuller investigations are needed of the themes of cannibalism and sexuality, reading and writing, and of formal elements like the use of person, the "diary" structures, the dialogue, and the use of rhythm. Exploration of links between Verne and twentieth-century writers like Camus and Sartre is essential. Documentary knowledge of Michel Verne's contribution, and annotated editions of the richest works, would seem fundamental necessities.

Only if such studies are added to the growing number of serious ones in recent years can Verne's peculiarly down-to-earth and sensorial universe be totally apprehended, can we gain complete access to the poetry of his gleaming machines and Romantic desolations and dissolutions, his acute sensitivity and sensibility, and his kinaesthetic awareness. Verne shows man as caught between salvation and desire, the beaten track and the

unexplored horizon, the contentment of closure and the voluptuousness of open space, phlegm and passion, and the word and the spirit. His prophetic literal-mindedness topples over into poetic ecstasy, and effects a subtle but far-reaching shift in our ways of seeing and feeling the world.

N O T E S

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1. According to Marc Soriano, "Qui était le vrai Jules Verne ?", L'Express, 22 au 28 mai 1978, pp. 188-223 (199), who is quoting the "Bourse aux valeurs étrangères".

More precisely, his works are translated on average into more languages each year than those of any other fictional or non-fictional writer (Marcel Destombes and Piero Condolo della Riva, "Jules Verne à la Bibliothèque Nationale", Bulletin de la Bibliothèque Nationale, 3ème année, n° 3, sept. 1978, pp. 115-25 (116)).

2. Respectively : Univ. de Paris III (1980) ; Univ. of Cambridge (1982). Cf. William Butcher, "A Study of Time in Jules Verne's Voyages extraordinaires" (Univ. of London, submitted 1983).

3. Jules Verne I (1976), Jules Verne 2 (1978), Jules Verne 3 (1980), Jules Verne 4 (1983), ed. François Raymond.

For bibliographical information, see Edward J. Gallagher et al., Jules Verne : A Primary and Secondary Bibliography (Boston, 1980) and Jean-Michel Margot, Bibliographie documentaire sur Jules Verne (I et II). (Ostermundigen (Switzerland), 1978, and Nyon, 1982).

4. For biographical information the most reliable study is Jean Jules-Verne, Jules Verne (1973). Marc Soriano, Jules Verne (1978), and Charles-Noël Martin, La Vie et l'oeuvre de Jules Verne (revised edition, 1978), may also be consulted with profit. (There seems to be no hard evidence for the idea that Verne went to Switzerland at the age of twenty-five (Jean-Michel Margot, "Jules Verne et la Suisse : Le(s) Séjour(s) de Jules Verne en Suisse", Bulletin de la société Jules Verne (hereafter BSJV), n° 51, 3ème tri. 1979, pp. 85-92).)

5. Jules Verne, p. 91.

6. See Charles-Noël Martin, "La Fugue du 'mousse' Jules Verne", BSJV, n° 60, 4ème tri. 1981, pp. 136-40, and Olivier Dumas, "Quand Marguerite se contredit", BSJV, n° 64, 4ème tri. 1982, p. 312. But for an opposing view, see Marc Soriano, "Vernir/ Dévernir ?", Europe, n° 595-96, nov.-déc. 1978, pp. 3-9 (5).

7. See for instance letters quoted by Jules-Verne (e.g. pp. 101, 113, 145, 148-49, 153, 155, 161).

8. Demonstrated by Simone Vierne, "L'Authenticité de quelques oeuvres de Jules Verne", Annales de Bretagne, t. LXXIII, n° 3, sept. 1966, pp. 445-58.

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9. See for instance Marie Belloc, "Jules Verne at Home", The Strand Magazine, Feb. 1895, pp. 206-13 (210).

10. Eiq, "'Do you come (this evening) by tube or by air-train?" (p. 676); "by a just turn-about of things here below" (p. 670); "the telephote was got in readiness" (p. 676); "the case stood just as the reporter said" (p. 677).

11. See Piero Gondolo della Riva, "A propos d'une nouvelle", in L'Herne : "Jules Verne", pp. 284-88, for an analysis of the editions.

12. "A propos des oeuvres posthumes de Jules Verne", Europe, n° 595-96, pp. 73-88; "A propos du manuscrit de Storitz", BSJV, n° 46, 2ème tri. 1978, pp. 160-63; "Encore à propos du manuscrit de Storitz", BSJV, n° 58, 2ème tri. 1981, p. 72. For an opposing point of view, see "Une Lettre de Jean Jules-Verne", Europe, n° 595-96, pp. 89-93.

13. Le Figaro, 2 mai 1905, and Le Temps, 3 mai 1905.

14. "La substance, éternellement détruite, se recompose éternellement. Chacun de ses changements d'état s'accompagne d'un rayonnement d'énergie et d'une destruction de substance correspondante" (CM(1908) 127).

15. EA (1910) 233; MB (1919) 183; 341; 344; 346. (The reference system used is that of Jules Verne 1 etc.; EA = "L'Eternel Adam" (for complete list, see my List of Sigla), 233 = "p. 233".)

16. For the reference system used here see note 15.

17. JJA 188; 210; 189; 192; 195; 196; 199; 188; 206.

18. Jules-Verne (p. 154), quoting Frank Borman.

19. Information given in Francis Lacassin, "Préface : Dans le sillage du Nautilus", in Gustave Le Rouge, Le Sous-marin "Jules Verne" (1978 (1st edn. = 1902)), pp. 5-16(6-7).

20. Fred Robida, "Jules Verne et Albert Robida", Bulletin de la société archéologique, n° 247, jan. 1973, pp. 27-29(30), merely points out two details plagiarised, "le journal téléphonoscopique" and "les trains électropneumatiques qui (...) roulent à 400 lieues à l'heure". Dominique Lacaze, "Lectures croisées de Jules Verne et de Robida", in Jules Verne et les sciences humaines (1979), pp. 76-90, claims that Verne borrowed themes from Robida for many works (SG, MB, SDD, ES, ChC, VA, G, EA) but produces no direct evidence at all.

21. Pierre Versins, "Le Sentiment de l'artifice", L'Arc, n° 29, Sept. 1966, pp. 51-65.

22. Simone Vierne's argument to the opposite effect is not convincing: Verne was "sensible à l'accélération de l'histoire

(...) puisqu'en somme, Robur, en enlevant son Albatros hors de portée des hommes, essaye de ralentir ce processus" (Jules Verne et la roman initiatique (1977), p. 140), an idea repeated by René Dillenger, "Optimisme ou pessimisme de Jules Verne", Europe, n° 595-96, pp. 19-27(22). Pierre Macherey's argument that "l'accélération de l'aventure exprime une accélération de l'histoire, is hardly more convincing (Pour une théorie de la production littéraire (1980 (1st edn. = 1966)), p. 234).

23. "Jules Verne", L'Humanité, 3.4.1905.

24. M(arguerite) Allotte de la Fuÿe, Jules Verne, sa vie, son oeuvre (1953 (1st edn. = 1928)), pp. 205-10 ; Marcel Mitton, "Jules Verne précurseur", BSJV n° 48, 4ème tri. 1978, pp. 257-59 (257) ; Gallagher, p. xv-xvi.

25. "My Spirit-Telephone Conversation with Jules Verne", taken from Erich von Däniken, According to the Evidence (1977), in Peter Haining, The Jules Verne Companion (1978), pp. 90-93 ; Charles Noël Martin, "Recherches sur la science de Verne" (Thèse d'Etat, Univ. de Paris VII, 1980), p. 254 ; "Two Glimpses of the Moon", The New Statesman, 18 Jan. 1941, reprinted in Haining, pp. 17-19(17).

26. Quoted in Robert H. Sherard, "Jules Verne Revisited", T.P.'s Weekly, 9 Oct. 1903, p. 589 ; "Jules Verne and I", reprinted in Haining, pp. 62-63 (62) ; Darko Suvin, "Introduction", in H.G. Wells and Modern Science Fiction (1977), ed. Darko Suvin, pp. 9-32(20) ; "Les Naufragés de la terre", L'Arc, n°29, sept 1966, pp. 69-80(69).

27. See Eugène Brandis, "Jules Verne en Russie et en Union soviétique", BSJV, n° 5, 1er tri., pp. 2-16 ; Michel Tournier, Les Météores (1975), pp. 400-02 and passim.

List of Sigla (and edition used : LP = Livre de Poche ; 10/18 = U.G.E. "10/18" ; HA = Les Humanoïdes associés)

- B - Mistress Branican (LP)
- CC - César Cascabel (10/18)
- ChC - Le Château des Carpathes (LP)
- EA - "L'Éternel Adam" (LP)
- ES - L'Etoile du Sud (LP)
- FD - Face au drapeau (LP)
- G - "Gil Braltar" (10/18)
- IH - L'Ile à hélice (10/18)
- IM - L'Ile mystérieuse (10/18)
- IMer - L'Invasion de la mer (10/18)
- IN - Les Indes Noires (LP)
- JJA - "In the Year 1889" (LP)
- MB - L'Etonnante aventure de la mission Barsac (HA)
- MM - Maître du monde (LP)
- MV - La Maison à vapeur (LP)
- SDD - Sans dessus dessous (10/18)
- SG - Le Sphinx des glaces (LP)
- TM - Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours (LP)
- TO - Textes oubliés (10/18)
- VA - Le Village aérien (HA)
- 20M - Vingt mille lieues sous les mers (LP)