

If you want  
Hyperbole

The Dying Earth

by

Jack Vance

I've hyperbole'd  
can't read this now  
without (a trace, at least)

HILLMAN PERIODICALS, INC.

NEW YORK

Ambrogio  
Jack Vance

This concerns the most unique Hillman #41 ever autographed by Jack. The Hillman #41, a seminal Vance paperback from 1950, constitutes an imperative goalpost for serious collectors of Vance books. Owning any Hillman #41 is *de première nécessité* for any collector, and the much rarer autographed copy makes for a solemn apogee in Vance collecting.

As to this book, inscribed along with Jack's signature is a curt blurb about Jack's writing style for the enclosed group of stories of *The Dying Earth*.

Fascinatingly, it is a terse critique of the writing style used for those *Dying Earth* stories; it has Jack decry his own "hyperbole" to whomever was presenting the book for autograph. It confessed how in hindsight Jack actually felt a tinge of "embarrassed" by a style of writing for these unequivocally **iconic** early stories! Or to be fair and more accurate, had had "a trace, at least" of embarrassment.

This is rather astonishing in light of the cogent significance these very same stories have had and continue to have toward Jack's reputation, his popularity & renown, his impact on culture (e.g., the whole RPG arena propelled by Dungeons & Dragons of Gary Gygax), and as one of the core edifices of the Vance Estate.

I purchased this paperback from John W. Knott, ABAA, a well accredited and highly regarded seller of used books, having one focus attending to serious bibliophiles. Purchase price was \$750 (in 2010).

Not too long later, I took it on my visit to Jack Vance's house in Oakland during the summer of 2010, and presented this one-of-a-kind 'nonesuch' to Jack and his marvelous son John for their comments. After having looked it over I wished to hear their assessment about this astounding, very opinionated plug.

Well, first things first: Jack was flabbergasted that I had paid \$750 for it.

Second, the autograph was easily authenticated by Jack, as well as further vouched for by son John ("that's my dad's signature").

Next, Jack then John inspected this rather fastidious comment inscribed above the autograph.

1. Jack could not exactly remember writing it, but he said, "it sounds like me".
2. John took the book over to the large window in the kitchen nook, leaned against it, and closely examined the book in that clearest light while holding it near. After some minutes, John gave it a positive likelihood based on his scrutinizing: that the handwriting looked like his dad's, that the ink appeared the same as the autograph, and that the tone of voice did surely ring very much of Jack's.