WARHOON 31

WARHOON

Warhoon 31, the fanzine which proves you can make it past issue number 30 even if it takes 33 years of trying, is brought to you by Richard Bergeron who can be found dozing fitfully under a tropical palm (waiting for the coconut of enlightenment to land on his head) not far from Box 5989 in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00905, which is a sort of fannish daydream which occured to the editor once back in 1952 during a particularly baleful winter in Northern Vermont. This is the June, 1985, issue of a publication whose schedule can be referred to laughingly as irregular. It is available by whim of the editor and sometimes for letters of comment or in trade for your publication -- though not always. It's best to write and ask first. Warhoon 28 (618 pgs) is still in stock at $25 and still seems to be getting the occasional mention in this or that fanzine. Artwork credits: Cover, typography, and color illuminations by the editor. Interior line drawings by Lee Hoffman. Letters of comment may be published unless otherwise prohibited by the author.

OUT OF MY PLACE AND MIND

Where was I (before I was so rudely interrupted)?

It's all my fault, really. I know better than to break my own rules -- the first of which is that a fanzine editor must Concentrate his efforts in a particular direction and attempt to create an identity through a consistent schedule and level of effort. But I got tired of waiting for the shipment of Wrhn 30 from Stateside and between publishing it in New York and bulk mailing it in Puerto Rico, I discovered first class mail, ensmalled fanzines, and materialized three numbers of something called Wiz before the last issue of this one arrived in most of your mailboxes.

The rest is history (of a sort). Overlooking for the moment, chapters 52 and 53 of my memoirs which cover the mundane activities of the period (including the internecine adventures in New York's housing court to obtain judgement against a recalcitrant tenant in my Manhattan apartment, the launching of a graphics art publishing empire, and weeks spent in the teeming art ghetto of the East Village), we stagger into the sections which account how I revived a column I used to write in the 60's, brought back to fanzines the ancient medium of silk screen artwork after being pestered by Dan Steffan to return to the drawing board (Steffan remains a significant influence on my art and I'll be eternally grateful to him for getting those particular juices flowing again), inspired both D. West's complex and irrefutable arguments opposing reprint volumes devoted to fannish writing and his self-published 180pg collection of D. West writing on fandom (the unmemorable name of which escapes me at the moment, but you can't afford it anyway), displayed flawless editorial sagacity by pre-

4 publishing in Wiz a section of a book writ in lasers and diamonds which has gone on to challenge Robert H. Heilleim for the (you should pardon the expression) Hugto (I refer, of course, to Bill Gibson's "Neuromancer," which has finally toppled Abraham Merritt's "The Ship of Ishtar" from its place as my fave science fiction classic of all time -- congrats, Bill, baby), invented a Puerto Rican fan who stole my thunder by deciding (with no help from me, I assure you) that it would be more fun to be real, and after trying on my Avedon Carol drag emerged on the other side of the Rude Bitch schtick to find a half dozen people frantically trying to convince everybody I was "sick, insane, and a liar" by energetically demonstrating that those words seemed a far better description of themselves than of me. However, I did not make a trip to England and ignore Malcolm Edwards regardless of any delusions he may be labouring under (though I admit being tempted by the sinister notion of appearing at Mexicon in dark glasses and trench-coat wearing my "I Am Nigel Richardson" badge). In the interests of simplifying this summary, I will forego, at this time, renouncing a veritable Whole Earth Catalog of activities and statements which have been attributed to me in recent months, but which even I would not, obviously, have been able to find the time to accomplish.

Whatever I didn't do (and there were plenty of glorious opportunities I only judiciously considered and let pass), it hasn't been dull. And I can prove it. Just check fandom's hypertension chart at the foot of the bed before you leave the room. Why, I understand that someone is circulating totally unsubstantiated rumors behind my back (in the name of friendship) that my doctor has told me I'll be dead in less than two years if I don't get out of fandom.

But that's fannish good fellowship for you, isn't it?

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS: FAN STYLE

"I have been appalled by the unnecessary vitriol Locke and Causgrove have directed at Avedon Carol and Rob Hansen," says Mike Glyer in File 770 #51.

Well.

It's accurate that Dave and Jackie have dealt with some unpleasant truths regarding Avedon Carol, but I can't recall any "unnecessary" vitriol -- though I'll grant that when one is on the receiving end of some tough questions it can look like vitriol. What bothers me about that quote, however, is that I can't remember any rude remarks directed at Rob Hansen by either Jackie or Dave and I've seen everything on the public record which might have come to Glyer's attention and 90%, I'd bet, of their correspondence dealing with Taff. Jackie voted for Rob in his Taff race and both her and Dave's private letters to him strike me as unnecessarily respectful. Where does Glyer get off with informing fandom that Locke and Causgrove have attacked Hansen? And why?

Glyer should quote his sources on this. Or apologize.

Have you been deceived, Mike, or do you just make this stuff up as you go along?

YOU MIGHT ENJOY READING:

Holier Than Thou 21: HTT is the focal point fanzine in the US: The place to see and be seen. #21 features the usual mixture of hilarity and bone grinding grimness (and vice versa). Here you'll find the incredible Taff Wars in full swing, featuring a gallery of dazzling ad hominem arguments, unsubstantiated charges, misrepresentations, and pratfalls. Not to be missed. (11565 Archwood Street, North Hollywood, Calif. 91606)

Time & Again: After years of Watching, Dave Locke shows the kiddies how to do it with the best new genzine in years. A tour de force. Newcomer Al Curry steals the show from such accomplished word-wizards as Grennell, Mayer, Skel, and Tucker. Curry combines

5low and high wit in a column which manages to be simultaneously laid back and superbly written and he reveals a murderous line as a graphic cartoonist. Head for the hills. Strong editorial presence from Locke. How does he do it? (6828 Alpine Avenue #4, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45236)

For Paranoids Only: Mostly fascinating and witty rap on existential angst by Nigel Richardson. A melange of deftly edited letters c/w sly commentary make this the best fanzine from England since Britfandom sank into ApaDoom. My current favorite, but I think you'll probably enjoy it inspite of that. (9 Windsor Green, East Garforth, Leeds, LS25 2LG, England)

This Never Happens #6 3/4s: Intelligent lettercol offshoot from Lake and Edwards' genzine of the same name. Features Simon Ounsley's minimasterpiece (12pgs) Novacon report. In fact, it's so good I've decided to eliminate "The Domino Theory" from the forthcoming Fanthology and replace it with Ounsley's saga. Greater love hath no fan, etc. (73 Gordon Road, Finchley, London, N3, England)

Stomach Pump #6: The sort of thing the Brits are so good at when they don't feel like publishing a fanzine. A 46pg compendium of trenchant criticism on the art (of fanzines, silly). Stunning commentary by A. Frost. Incisive topographical documentation on the state of the fanzine's umbilical punctuation mark. Comment: I don't mean to decline all the glorious gambits, people, but what do you intend to do about it? I know, I know. That's our job. Get it if you think fanzines are something more than a form of communication. (Higgins, 62, Connaught Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG3 2UA, England)

Timbre #2: One reads Timbre quietly and pleasantly impressed by a fan (Tim Jones) one has never heard of before and thinking one should write and say something pleasant to the editor (Tim Jones) when one comes upon the sentence, "I should mention that Dick Bergeron sent me a short and encouraging note..." Do I do this in my sleep? Timbre is refreshing, literate, confident, enjoyable, and promising. What else do you want? Powers looms as an important addition to the ranks of genzine editors if we can prevent him from hearing about apas. (20 Gillespie St, Dunedun, Aotearoa, New Zealand)

NOW AND THEN

The lights went on last night in the house next door. The more modern Puerto Ricans on the street blame the decrepit electrical system, but I know better. The house is deserted and has been for a while now...ever since Donna Pietra del Toro died peacefully in her sleep two weeks ago in the house she lived in for fifty years. Donna Pietra had been living by herself for about a year. We'd kept an eye on things generally for her. I'd water the plants in front of her house in the morning when I do my own. Other neighbors would perform the errands which Don Oscar del Toro could no longer manage. Don Oscar passed away in the same house a year ago.

My little house in Puerto Rico is on a cul de sac among(st) the twisting streets of Old San Juan. The original foundations, built to last centuries, are still here as are many of the ancient walls composed of antique red clay bricks. These houses date from the 16th century when they quartered the staff of the first governors of the island -- the Ponce de Leon family -- and gradually have become residential properties for middle and lower income families as the militia and other aspects of government became redundant or were consolidated in other areas.

(The street is, therefore, a highly eclectic mix of the semi-retired, the well-to-do, and the not so well-to-do...there's the ex-Spanish dancer now restaurateur from Seville, the one-time advertising man from New York who can be seen, occasionally, returning from the post office with strange magazines and heard pecking away late at night on a typewriter, the bright lady from the States who married well (a couple times) in local political circles and then launched her own television show and cookie manufacturing company and operates a retail clothing store, a bartender, an antiques dealer from whom I've purchased a number of authentic turn of the century Puerto Rican pieces which compliment the architecture handsomely, a family of 14 people who all live in the same building in sometimes not so gentle harmony, etc, etc.)

Photographs of the section taken in the early 20th century show many of the same facades here today -- with the significant difference that one sees a row of structures

6

with nothing built up on them or above the first floor. One level living was adequate for the population of the time. The absence of miradors and the identical flat tightly packed terra-cotta brick construction tells us much about the purposes of these roofs. The roofs caught rain which was collected in a cistern under each house for later use in washing and refreshment. Purification of (unpolluted) water for drinking was accomplished by straining it through a dense porous stone bowl suspended in a wooden cage over a large jardiniere. I am told by people who remember that the water was crystal clear and delicious. With the coming of night only candles broke the darkness of quiet streets paved with blue bricks brought over as ballast on ships which came seeking treasure in the New World. Rain beating down on those blue bricks would disintegrate the manure of the horses used to pull carriages or wagons through the narrow streets. Shuttered doors and thick walls served to keep the heat outside the living spaces where the produce of countryside and sea was transformed into dishes which are still prepared today. Such was the world of the late 1800's at the time the United States invaded Puerto Rico and into which Pietra and Oscar del Toro were born.

The roof of a building which once housed conquistadores is now a garden. At 6:30-AM the gringo walks up the stairs to water the plants before the malevolent sun climbs above the level of the tall condos of Condado (where shameless women brazenly sun themselves in broad daylight). It has been an unusually dry spring and expectant bougainvillea and hibiscus could not survive without the attention. I always water the plants before breakfast. In fact, I'm up there in my underwear to inspect what they have been up to in the dark while I've slept. It's a nice time to think, at that early hour, about the possible placing of an additional bedroom on the roof and to wonder if the meeting called last night in Casa Blanca (the old Ponce de Leon mansion -- now a museum) came to any resolution of the problems rising in the wake of more than a dozen bars and discotheques which have proliferated on Calle San Sebastian. Like a plague of locusts the affluent mobile young have discovered Old San Juan. Bars which were once atmospheric dens with the odd drunk falling out of them have been transformed into blaring and often violent goldmines. On Friday night, Plaza San Jose will be filled with 3000 people. A historic part of the city has become an entertainment mecca which attracts thousands to an area which could uncomfortably accomodate 600.

An American Airlines DC-10 roars a few thousand feet overhead in screeching deceleration for touchdown a few miles outside San Juan. The Canarios and Frangipani wince under the persistent insult which occurs several times a day. I consider the idea of drafting an essay contrasting the present and past of this old city, but it occurs to me that that's the sort of thing John D. Berry might write. I decide not to bother. On exquisite Calle Cristo the sonic pollution of the Atari and Pac-Man wars will begin to be heard early in the afternoon in a battle which has already been lost by Pietra and Oscar's grandchildren.

FANDOM: 1985

I've just written a letter to Leah Zeldes Smith commiserating over her reaction to a hoax fanzine annoymously published but credited to Leah. Then I actually read the fanzine and found it only confirmed my initial impression of having been created by someone with the mentality of a nine-year-old. I'm not reluctant to confess that such twittering is quite beyond me. It reminds me that I had to rescue Rude Bitch from the crudzine stack some months after its arrival when it ranked so high in the Pong Poll. On finally giving <u>that</u> a careful reading, I concluded it only worked if I <u>imagined</u> it as satire (on <u>what</u> I refrain from mentioning due to the present inflammatory atmosphere). Even then, I found it obnoxious. But the LZS hoaxzine goes beyond matters of taste (fandom, after all, <u>liked</u> RB!) and into the general area of wholesale deception. Leah was not amused. I don't blame her. One could view the whole episode as aberration, but it doesn't really help one's enjoyment of your hobby to start viewing it as a study in moral and intellectual delinquency -- fascinating though the concept may be.

But it <u>is</u> a rich field of inquiry. Take AussiWorldConFanGoH Ted White's accusation that DuffWinner (their orbits intersect in mere weeks) Marty Cantor accepts bribes, for

7 starters, in Holier Than Thou 21: "It doesn't take much to buy your unthinking loyalty, does it? Just a column and a cover..." writes Ted White. And if that wasn't a stunning enough a text on which to base a dissertation, White himself topped it shortly after receiving his copy of HTT 21 by advising Cantor and (separately) Dave Locke that he has turned the issue over to his lawyer to look for actionable statements and advising them to retain lawyers. "This is not a joke," warned Ted White.

I agree.

Is the AussiCon Fan Guest of Honor using intimidation to silence criticism? Does fandom find such conduct honorable?

You were lucky, Leah. You encountered a coward rather than a failed humorist.

EXPLANATION TIME COMING UP

During the West/Hansen Taff race, Ted White wrote to me, "'What does [Bergeron] care? He won't be meeting the Taff winner!' is about the way it is usually expressed" [by] "Dan [Steffan] and Terry Carr." ... "Your opinion on who should win Taff is irrelevant to the Taff race ... as a non-participant, your opinion has no weight and ought to be ignored" and "The most common reaction (from people like Terry Carr among others) seems to be that you've narrowed your position to the point that it is irrelevant." This astounding view squarely places two future Worldcon Guests of Honor on record as saying that fans who are interested in fandom and Taff primarily for their literary aspects are "irrelevant" to Taff! Perhaps Ted would like to explain this in his GoH speech in Australia later this year? While he's at it he might tell the convention assembled why he says the Atlanta Fan Guest of Honor, Terry Carr, agrees with him that my position on Taff is "irrelevant." And after that he can tell the Australians that as "non-participants," ie, voters who won't be meeting the Taff winner, that their opinions are "irrelevant."

Then, following this surprising assault on the fundamental basis of Taff, he will sit down to thunderous applause, I really rather doubt.

CHANGES

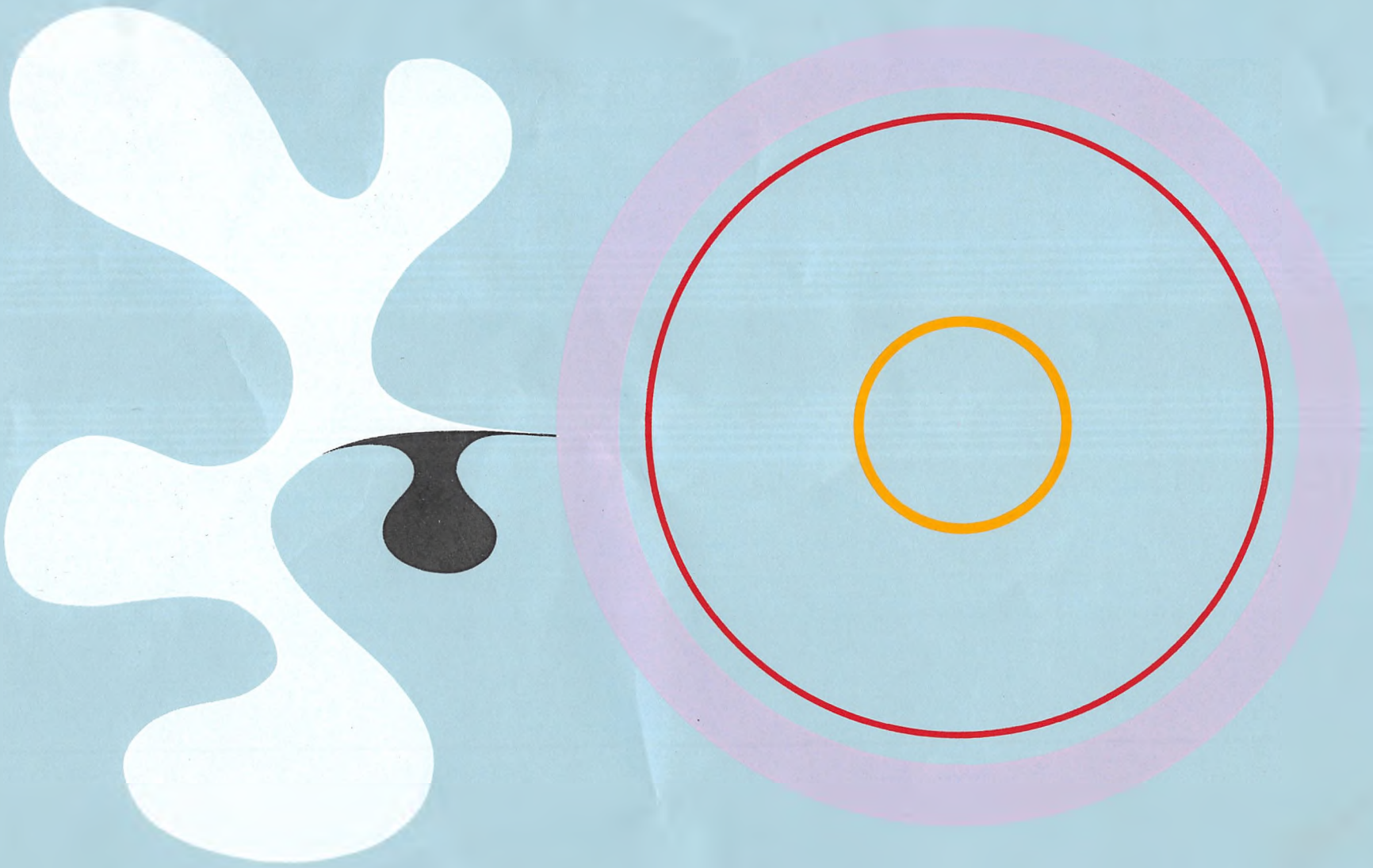
In Wrhn 29 I introduced Harry Warner's autobiography, "All My Yesterdays." The second chapter was crowded out of Wrhn 30 and that installment languished. During the lapse between this issue and the last, I realized if those memoirs weren't to be completed posthumously it would be best if they were bequeathed to someone else. Two installments have already appeared in the Cantors' Holier Than Thou and a third is on the way. The greedy faneditor is saddened by the loss of one of the jewels of his diadem, but, what the hell. I'd rather read Warner in HTT than not read him in Wrhn.

Missing, too, is Willis' "The Improbable Irish," the serialization and reprint of Walt's book devoted to Ireland and its people. This should also be passed on to another publisher. The rapacious Cantor has expressed interest. "The Improbable Irish" has drawn more favorable comment than any other item I've published. Why do I, then, reluctantly decide that it does not fit my present aims? Frankly, I want a fanzine more rooted in the present moment and more reflective of its times. Wrhn 28 was intended to remind us what could be accomplished in the fannish form -- from the most humorous of content to the most serious. Having remembered, it behooves us to build on the base which talented people like Willis (and many others: Carr, Grennell, West, Langford, Atkinson, etc, etc) have laid on a foundation of affection. In the present ensmalled Warhoon I must decline the option of the classic reprint. The Ali Baba's cave of fandom's past remains for those who want to explore and return from it with riches -- but caution: there are strange turns and one can forget one's way in the Grotto of Remembrance. These pages are truncated (look -- single spaces between paragraphs!) and I'm anxious to see what I can persuade from many people who have never appeared here. People like Abi Frost, Al Curry, Allen Bostick, Vincent Omniaveritas, Paul Williams, John D. Berry, Dave Rike, and, yes, the Walt Willis of the 80's.

The adventure is ahead of us; not behind us.

rb.

THE NEW SCIENCE FICTION



Hugo Gernsback was an entrepreneur, not overly troubled by consistency or scruples. First he designed batteries. Later he marketed a home radio set. In 1908, he published his first radio magazine, Modern Electrics.

Soon, however, it was clear that all was not well in the Gernsback attic. Something akin to fiction kept creeping in. In 1911 Modern Electrics began running a serial, or, rather, a technical forecasting polemic. This became Ralph 124C41+, a spavined "novel" whose naked technical obsession was barely veiled by threadbare literary technique.

An air of rank hybridization hung over Gernsback's early efforts. Chunks of inferior literary DNA were clumsily spliced into a Petri dish of technical speculation, resulting in a chimeric blastoma he called "scientifiction." Somehow the monster grew, and in April 1926 it clambered wetly onto the newsstands as Amazing Stories, the first true SF magazine in English.

Such were the unholy beginnings of the pop industry that is modern American SF. These were the ethnic roots of true "ghetto SF," a popular art form with a fanatic but strictly limited audience. Literateurs covered their eyes and fled; scientists sneered at its harebrained inaccuracy.

In the decades that followed the young genre veered from one unwilling parent to another. John Campbell's ascendancy brought a long regime of "scientific" rigor, though his magazine's hard-won rep for technical accuracy was liberally besplattered with psi stories, Dean drives, and Dianetics clearance sales. The New Wave of the '60's was SF's closest approach to the maternal apron-strings of literature. The Wavicles, to their sorrow, failed to win either mainstream literary acceptance or the orthodox ghetto following.

SF was left to its own devices and grew up wild and tattered. It lolled in gutters with sleazy movie producers, gashed eyeballs with horror-comics moguls, dropped acid with crack-brained rock stars. It hung around campuses, and even showed up in an ill-fitting tie and tweed jacket for English department seminars.

SF's followers developed the classical trademarks of a criminal underground. They adopted a cant slang. They met in conspiratorial conventions, which grew ever larger. They carried out long Mafia-like family feuds. Their fanzines became Fagin-like schools for Apprentice writers and editors, while simultaneously spreading the criminal ethos.

And over the long term, SF's crass vigor and gaudiness began to seep into the backbrain of culture at large. Young Californians nourished on SF became canny cinema moguls wielding megabuck budgets. Bestseller lists featured SF novels. The American President admitted that the Mars movels of Edgar Rice Burroughs had formed his moral paradigm. A population stunned by future shock found themselves surrounded by SF's cultural icons: robots, computers, rockets.

Now SF finds itself on the brink of truly mass popular acceptance. The ghetto is becoming integrated. Tumbledown Ace duplexes are bulldozed and replaced with faceless shiny high-rise trilogies. SF tribal elders are dusted off, shaved, and given creative writing posts, spots on TV talk shows, and high-tech research camps in Sri Lanka.

SF has never faced a more serious and fundamental challenge.

As a commercial endeavor, SF dates back to the early years of this century. It is not a high-tech industry. It is more like an old, family owned firm, where goods are produced through sweatshop labor for a small but stable market.

Now the market has expanded vastly, yet the workforce is old, management is benighted and crooked, and the clientele has shiny new movies, videos, and computer games to play with. Bloated bookstore chains play havoc with distribution. Unit prices are rising. And the product itself is in dreadful straits: burned-out, floundering, feeding on cliches. A small gerontocracy of top-scale writers build 50's-style Cadillacs, heavy with chrome and fins, while low-scale writers, paid for piece work, produce hundreds of shabby pedal cars held together with chicken-wire and spit.

By and large, the industry's reaction to new opportunity has been to pretend that the outside world doesn't exist. It has left the mass promulgation of SF to movies and rock videos.

The print medium is becoming dangerously obsolescent. Must we wait for the inevitable market crash?

Vincent Omniaveritas

10

Should we barricade the ghetto, hope that SF's core audience will become a modern Amish, quaintly outdated, insular, and ever more incestuous?

It can't work. For SF to stop the clock is a grotesque exercise in self-contradiction. It can only provoke schizophrenia: a schizoid split already abundantly evident in the rise of fantasy. Fantasy is by nature timeless, insular, and traditionalist. It is the ne plus ultra of ghetto fiction; its alienation from the outside world is so severe that it approaches autism.

SF, too, can become introverted, stale, self-absorbed. But then it is no longer a literature. For SF is not simply an industry. Despite everything, it is an art form. No amount of purely commercial reform, within marketing, publishing, or distribution, can redress a lack of artistic sincerity, creativity, and dedication. These matters are the domain of the individual writer. This is where the true power lies, because without the spark there is nothing.

Writers must do the re-thinking, the reforming, the re-tooling for this smokestack industry. They are the only ones who can do it. This challenge, this responsibility, belongs to young writers especially -- the very people who feel most helpless, most inadequate, most powerless in the face of the Market.

But these feelings are wrong. The Market is a paper tiger. It has no creative power -- it can only reshuffle what is given to it. True power lies with the writers. And especially the young, because the renaissance of SF will be a long-term, painful effort, and today's Golden Age doyens will be strumming celestial banjos long before the Revolution takes Jerusalem. By the time today's newcomers reach a ripe age, everyone will be grinning and shuffling and saying it was all inevitable.

How, then, do we approach this seemingly quixotic effort at reform? What we need is a strategic vision. An organizing focus. A purpose.

We know the business we are already in: the business of supplying pop fiction to a specialized clique. But what business should we be in? Or, more pragmatically -- what business would it be useful to us to think we are in? For the point is not to achieve some static utopia, but to adopt a strategic vision that will encourage steady artistic improvement every step of the way. What long-term Grail will produce the best pragmatic results?

It is this: We must create the native literature of a post-industrial society.

Note the two opposites: Literature. And technology. These are our parents, and despite our long history of neglect, our ungainliness, our tastelessness, our numberless errors, financial, social, and artistic, we must unite them or perish in the attempt.

This is the natural birthright of our peculiar genre since the time of Gernsback. The gap between art and science is our natural habitat. We have made it a ghetto, but in reality it is a vast and unexplored territory.

The frightening implications of this gap were pointed out in Lord Snow's analysis of the Two Cultures of Western society, the sciences and the humanities. Between these two powerful coteries there is a very real and cavernous gulf in our society, one fraught with very genuine peril.

The objective world-view of the sciences has no moral component. It will fry you or run your stereo, makes no difference. Yet mainstream literature has failed to come to terms with the modern epoch. The modern world is defined by its technology. And a literature that scorns and ignores technology is running blind. Those who cannot comprehend technology's overwhelming influence are genuinely helpless. Mainstream literature reflects this helplessness, and the anomie that goes with it. Mainstream literature has become powerless.

Is it absurd to think that our feeble and monstrous genre could bridge the gap between these rival camp? Perhaps. But is makes good sense to try.

And perhaps this apparent absurdity is only a relic of SF's parochial thinking. Science fiction writers are, after all, writers. "The unacknowledged legislators of the world." H.G. Wells would approve; he thought social reform was the whole point of the effort. His high moral purpose is as much a part of our legacy as Gernsback's adventurous scramble for a buck.

Are we to become Fabian socialists, then, and load our work with new expository

11 lumps, this time for political ideology? No. Once again, our goal is the creation of a native literature for the society to come, a natural expression of twenty-first-century culture, its human hopes, dreams, plans, potentials. A literature of reconciliation, at home in art galleries or genetics labs. A literature of integration and hope.

It will not be called science fiction. We might as well reconcile ourselves to that right now. It will be, simply, literature, and though it may involve SF themes, or future possibilities, or Stapledonian sweeps of high imagination, it will not be a genre product. It will be how things are done.

Whether this goal is attainable cannot yet be known. But let's consider the implications of trying.

First, we remove at one sweep the long sense of inferiority that came from our bastard birth. We remove the sense of cheapness and worthlessness that limits our ambitions and prevents us from doing our best. For the New Science Fiction is not the semi-literate folk epics of a tiny coterie, but a fully legitimate art form, addressing the cultural needs of society at large. We fulfill a real and necessary cultural purpose, one that only we can address, and one that is firmly rooted in our own traditions.

And this is the second point. By opening our ghetto voluntarily, we bring a new strength to our work: the strength that comes from reforming our own weaknesses. The new viewpoint sheds light on that which is cramped, stale, and insular in our genre. Yet we do not disown or belittle our own heritage. We draw strength from it, we extend it, we bring it into the light of day.

Third, it turns our eyes once again to the future: the real future, implicit in today's cultural, social, and technological movements. It encourages us to come to grips with genuine issues, to act as explorers, extrapolators, pathfinders for a society in dire need of hope and vision. It liberates us from a narrow and stifling role as purveyors of escapist froth. It brings us face to face with the larger audience outside our genre borders, and gives us the conceptual tools we need to attract and win that audience.

It's now time to shift from long-term goals to strategic planning.

Let's get real. Here you are, reading a fanzine from Puerto Rico. Perhaps you are a young, unsold writer. Or perhaps you are a stone fanzine-fan, who likes to read the occasional rocket-ship book in between bouts of character assassination and faan politics. In the first case, how can you, a quivering, mewling speck, who has never yet slept with an editor or given a publisher cocaine, hope to create something worthwhile? Or, in the second, how can you, rendered lame and blind by years of absorbing awful trash, hope to purge your liver of literary DDT and get hold of something real?

What, in short, is the New Science Fiction? How do you write it, how do you recognize it?

First, it is not the property of any editor, clique, publisher, or regional or national association. It is not a question of personal influence, creative writing classes, or apprenticeship to genre gurus. It is a question of approach, of technique. And these are its trademarks:

(1). Technological literacy, and a concern with genuine modern science as opposed to the hand-me-down pseudoscience guff of past decades.

(2). Imaginative concentration, in which extrapolations are thoroughly and originally worked out rather than patched together from previous notions.

(3). Visionary intensity, with a bold, no-holds-barred approach to SF's mind-expanding potential.

(4). A global, 21st-century point of view, which is not bround by the assumptions of middle-aged, middle-class white American males.

(5). A fictional technique which takes the advances of the New Wave as already given, using the full range of literary craftsmanship, yet asserting the primacy of content over style and meaning over mannerism.

The New Science Fiction is a process, directed toward a goal. It is an artistic movement in the fullest sense of the word. It is the hard work of dedicated artists, who know their work is worthwhile, who treat it as such, and who push themselves to the limit in pursuit of excellence.

And it is for real.

--Vincent Omniaveritas

Two Ghosts

I was reminded last week of my own mortality and consequently of the two ghosts I've bumped into so far. The reminder was as unremarkable as the condition itself. My hypertension medication had run out and I was obliged at last to show up at the health center for one of the blood pressure checks I'm supposed to submit to periodically. I skip the appointments as often as I can bluff my way out of them because I find it dispiriting to have to face my own death even at a distance of 30 or 40 years, but on this occasion the doctor won our game of coronary chicken, convincing me that he really wouldn't refill the prescription over the phone, even if I was feeling lightheaded

While the nurse inflated and then began to deflate the pressure cuff, I sat on the edge of the examining table and watched the column of mercury descend in the gauge mounted on the wall, noting the point where the cuff loosened enough for me to feel the first renewed squirm and thump of the temporarily dead arteries in my arm. I've become adept at this trick of reading my own blood pressure and use it regularly to steal the nurse's thunder. "Uh oh," I'll say, or "Not bad," the moment she pulls the stethoscope away from her ears, before she has a chance to break the news to me herself. It gives me the same small sense of being in control of my own fate that I got from avoiding the cracks in the sidewalk when I was a kid.

The nurse was inexperienced enough to be surprised by my trick and to be impressed when I detailed how, by the age of 32, being neither a smoker, obese or black, I had managed to develop a diastoltic pressure of 120. She also allowed the cuff to slip too far down my arm so that it pinched. I was vigorously rubbing the faint welt on the inside of my elbow as I walked out to the car where Kathy was waiting.

I was full of the bravado I always feel after a checkup when no one has told me death is imminent or stuck me with a needle. "It's hard to believe," I told Kathy, "but I actually used to be afraid to have my blood pressure taken. I was positive the doctor had no idea how tight he'd wound the cuff. I was afraid when he pumped the cuff up, my arm would burst, like the toad I saw out on the street once."

It was the long dead toad that reminded me of the ghosts. As soon as I mentioned it I wondered if my fear of the cuff had really been so gaudy or whether memory, as it often does, was belatedly assisting me in my efforts

13

to manufacture reality. Though the fear had appeared as an inextricable part of my memory of Doc Schooley's office, as real as the medicinal odor which seemed to make the air thinner and unbreathable, as real as the glint off the old man's spectacles and off the dreadful instruments waiting in their glass cabinets, it sounded too much like something I would've made up to scare my friends. Maybe I had finally convinced myself of that fear's reality more completely than I had managed to convince John and Tom.

We used to relish terror, especially terror of the supernatural sort. We'd work on our fears as methodically and endlessly as old women working their embroidery. One summer we tied French knots in the question, "Would you rather be touched by a ghost or eaten by Reptilicus?"

It was late August, when night fell early enough to be made use of by kids. John, Tom and I sat around a red emergency flashlight, our backs against the discarded doors that made up the walls of our clubhouse, our enormous shadows peering over our shoulders, bumping their heads on the low ceiling.

"It wouldn't be so bad to see a ghost," John said. "If you just saw one you couldn't be sure it was for real. But if a ghost touched you, that'd be too awful."

Moths thudded against the clubhouse walls, diving at the light that leaked through the cracks in our rough carpentry and sank into the weeds outside. Once, a big Sphinx moth got in through the ragged, mildewed blanket tacked up in the doorway and careened around the dirt floor, banging against the walls like a wind-up toy.

"Imagine an invisible hand grabbing your own hand," I said, trying to sound as sepulchral as an eleven year old could. "A hand like ice. Colder than a hand could possibly be, if it was attached to anything alive. Anything...real."

As I spoke I became deliciously aware of the expanse of dark field between our tumbledown clubhouse and the warm organe lights of our homes. It was an almost kinesthetic awareness, a premonition of the physical effort it would take to reach those lights, the number of running steps, the way the air would burn in your lungs before you reached safety. Then Tom broke in. "Come on. If Reptilicus got you, you'd be dead. And it would hurt."

"Maybe that'd be better," John said, trying to maintain the atmosphere which he and I felt, but Tom apparently didn't. "At least it'd be over with quick. With a ghost ...well, you'd have to live with that. You'd know it might grab you anytime."

Tom sat stolidly in his corner. He was dark haired and husky, in build somewhere between my skinniness and John's chubbiness, and yet when we played tag, or whiffle ball, or even when we sat and told stories, he gave the illusion that gravity's pull was greater on him than on either of us. He looked at me and said, "With Reptilicus it would be like what you were telling us about your blood pressure being taken. Only it wouldn't just be your arm that popped. You'd be like that toad. Your guts'd come out your mouth."

"EEEyooo!" John let loose with our ritualized noise of disgust. "That wasn't his guts. That was his tongue." He grabbed the flashlight off the floor and swung it up under his chin. The powerful beam startled long, hideous shadows up out of unnoticed crevices in his broad face. "Boo!" he yelled, bringing the discussion back from the mundane, into the realm of metaphysics.

We never knew quite what to make of Tom. He was new to the neighborhood that summer and never more than an accessory to our games, sometimes welcome, sometimes not. He attended the Gate of Heaven parochial school and thus was absent from a large portion of our reality. He had holidays we didn't, named after Saints we'd never heard of. We could never figure out what he did on those days, while other kids were all in class. Eventually he contracted polio. It was a mild case but ended our association. During his recovery we kept our distance. Polio was the Great Bogeyman of the era and, watching Tom struggle in his

Eric Mayer

14 leg braces from his door to the family station wagon, John and I were filled with fear and awe. Around the time the braces came off, his family moved away, as I suppose they had to. Although we never got up the courage to ask Tom what it was like to be touched by a real ghost, it was through Tom that I saw my first ghost. It was during the first summer we knew him, before he had become an object of fear. At that time he couldn't tell ectoplasm from celluloid. John and I would slave all evening over amorphous horors, delicately flavored with disembodied voices and icy draughts and Tom would simply slosh on a catsup bottle full of Draculas and Wolfmen and squashed toads.

"Let's show him a real ghost," I finally suggested.

"Yeah," said Joh, "Let's send him to the Indian Tree."

Behind our houses, just beyond the field that in a few years would be turned into a lawn by John's father, there was a small patch of spindley saplings, many rotted and leaning against one another, interspersed with tangles of briars and nettles, which we referred to grandiloquently as The Woods. There were wonders in these woods -- twisting paths, secret clearings, a trickle of a creek that could be dammed with mud, a bush of yellow raspberries and, chief wonder of all, the Indian Tree. The tree sat on the verge of the woods, a birch, bent by some forgotten ice storm so that its twisted upper branches seemed to reach out toward the field. Around the white trunk was a kind of mound covered with spongey moss. John and I knew, with the certain knowledge that children arbitrarily decide upon, that it was the grave of an Indian. Probably the mound contained old patent medicine bottles or rusted cans but in our wisdom we never sank a shovel into it, though we were constantly planning to. If you'd asked us we would have freely admitted that we made The White Indian up, and wouldn't have believed ourselves for a moment.

We escorted Tom to the field at twilight, on the time honored pretext of initiating him into an ancient secret society invented by John and myself more or less on the spur of the moment. On the way we recited to him the dire legends we'd spent the afternoon concocting. By the time we reached the clubhouse we were all on edge. John clicked off the flashlight he was carrying. The darkness was thick with the racket of crickets and the smell of wet grass. The Indian Tree was barely visible at first, but as night came on and the dim saplings faded into blackness the tree appeared to grow brighter.

"Its just an old white birch," said Tom.

"Watch."

As we strained our eyes, the tree seemed to come unrooted and float forward, a glimmering shape suspended between the indistinguishable black of field and woods. It was an unnerving effect John and I were thoroughly familiar with. I said, "Its time. Since you don't believe in ghosts this ought to be easy. Just bring us a branch from the tree.

"And be quick or the Indian'll pop up out of the ground and pull you down with him -- into the bones."

"You're not scaring me." Tom took a few deliberate steps away from us, then stopped and turned. "Its just a tree." It was too dark to tell if the expression on his face matched the confidence of his words.

The moon was not up yet and as he moved off across the field we soon had trouble making out his figure. Fireflies had come out, winking into existence, vanishing and reappearing in ever changing constellations. Their cold luminescence was not comforting. In planning to frighten Tom we had agitated our own imaginations. Night reflected our invented terrors back at us and we grew frightened like infants who can't understand that what they are seeing in the mirror is only themselves.

As I followed Tom's progress I imagined myself in his place, felt the cool wetness from the dew in the toes of my sneakers, heard the stiff weeds scratch my pant legs, heard the crickets grow quiet, abruptly, as I approached, leaving before and behind me a path of silence at the end of which floated the moon colored tree. At the base of the trunk lay the shadowy mound. Should I avert my gaze, as I did on the Haunted House ride, blindly wait for the breathtaking touch of the cobwebs hung over the track? Or should I watch and watch, unflinchingly to see the awful hand reach up from

15

the grave?

There came over me then a feeling I have had on only a few occasions, and which has been borne out only once, an unaccountable certainty that the rules of everyday life had been momentarily relaxed and that something uncanny was about to happen. Even as I felt the chill something moved in front of the pale tree, something rustled.

"Where's Tom?" John's voice sounded as if the White Indian already had him by the throat.

We stared out into the dark and the confusion of fireflies. When we finally saw Tom he was much nearer than we'd expected, running. It was too dark to make out his features yet. I remembered clearly the look of fear on his face. Behind him, beside the Indian Tree, there was something that glowed, blue and nebulous in the night.

We turned and fled, stumbling, hardly able to keep up with our feet, too scared to yell. We didn't stop until we'd reached the edge of the light from John's patio, then we collapsed on the lawn. We were not ashamed to have left our friend behind. What could boys do against a ghost? Tom finally came jogging into the light, out of breath. Even with a ghost on his tail he was slower than us.

He dropped a dead branch beside us. He had about him a strange air, a kind of wild exhileration and when he spoke his voice trembled. "I saw the White Indian," he said. "He was right behind me."

John and I should have been pleased. We'd plotted to give him a scare and had succeeded, but we'd frightened ourselves in the process and that embarrassed us. And there was a look in Tom's eyes that told us they'd seen, or thought they'd seen, something we had only told tales about. We were suddenly jealous. What right did Tom have to see the ghost we'd conjured, when all we'd seen was a glow in the woods?

"You're making it up, John said.

"I'm not. It was like you said, an Indian. All white, with long white hair, and fingernails like claws and sharp teeth. It scratched my arm. Look."

"A bush got you," I said. "We were just kidding. There's no such thing as the White Indian."

The next morning, once the sun was well up, John and I went by ourselves to the Indian Tree. We found, lying on the undisturbed mound, a few rotted branches, half covered with black fungus. "Fox fire, I said. "There's our ghost."

All the same, John took out his pocket knife and carved an "X" into the tree trunk. "That'll keep him in," he said. And it did. Still, Tom's ghost has always worried me. The claws and sharp teeth are especially troublesome. If Tom had made the ghost up to please us, it would have looked like a cross between Caspar and Crazy Horse.

::

It was twenty years before I saw my second ghost and it was a more somber spirit. Children are clever enough to wring some fun out of mortality but with adults its usually mortality that does the wringing.

I was all too aware of mortality in the summer of 1981. During the previous six months I'd watched my daughter Fleur come into the world, her eyes wide open, and had looked down into my grandmother's coffin seeing in her slack and unfamiliar features the face of oblivion. So when the doctor informed me I had hypertension I saw it not merely as a condition as commonplace and treatable as nearsightedness, but as an unwelcome milestone marking the distance I'd already travelled on my own path between infinities.

In the late spring, needing more room because of the baby, Kathy and I rented a house. Upstairs, three bedrooms opened off a short hall. Fleur's crib we placed in the center room. Kathy was sleeping in the master bedroom, at the front of the house, and I was relegated to the guest room in the back, because of my new medication. I had been prescribed a diuretic with the result that I woke every few hours to attend to one of nature's more insipid tasks and then lay back down with an empty bladder and a mind full of forebodings.

There returned for the first time in years the episodes that had plagued me as

16 an adolescent but which had gradually disappeared, just as the screaming nightmares of early childhood had disappeared during my teens. I would be lying awake in bed, listening to my heart beating, and for no reason I would be seized, as if by a phantom hand, by the certain knowledge that one day that beating would cease, never to begin again. I would know that I was going to die. It was not simply the theoretical knowledge of our own mortality that we each carry with us, but something deeper and more primitive that carried with it the unbearable touch of the void. These episodes would come upon me with shocking suddenesss, as if a trap door had opened up in reality and I would sit bolt upright in my bed, heart lurching, even as I felt myself sliding down and down into eternity. Afterwards I would lie with my eyes wide open, afraid to be carried off by unconsciousness.

I was ready to see a ghost when Kathy woke me one morning at the gray hour of 4AM. Like all abrupt wakings, this one came in stages -- the sudden consciousness whose previous absence is evidenced only by the mind's momentary confusion, the sense of self, followed by the sense of place. I was facing the wall, which disorientated me since I normally sleep facing the door. When I rolled over and saw Kathy standing in her nightgown in the doorway a fog of dreams still clung to the room. Dreamed awakenings have prologued my worst nightmares.

"Were you just up?" I realized Kathy was repeating the question, not for the first time. Her voice cracked. She must have seen that she had woken me from deep sleep.

"No," I said. The word felt big and clumsy.

"I thought I heard you coming up the stairs. Then you were walking in the hall. You kept stepping on the board that creaks."

I got out of bed. When I turned on the light I saw tears glistening in the corners of her eyes. The light did not entirely dispel the fog of unreality.

I said, "Is something the matter with Fleur?"

Kathy shook her head. She said, "I thought I saw you in the doorway to my room. There was a shape there. It was looking in at me. Then it went out. I could hear it. It stopped in front of Fleur's room."

Kathy's face was white. I could see in her expression something of the dread I'd seen in Tom's face years before but none of the exhileration. If I had seen the ghost myself I might have been able to dismiss it as a dream, a trick of the shadows, any of the possibilities I tried to comfort Kathy with later. But I believed the genuine dread I saw in Kathy's eyes more than I would've believed my own eyes.

She sat down on the edge of the bed and suddenly she was shaking in spasms. I hesitated before touching her, afraid to reach into the zone of cold and unreality that seemed to surround her, and when I did put my arm around her heaving shoulders I was surprised to find that she was not freezing at all but burning and drenched in perspiration.

We tried then, as we tried in the days that followed, to talk about what she'd seen -- two adults attempting to rationalize a thing that couldn't be, yet was. She described how it has been nebulous, yet clearly a figure, how the floorboards had creaked.The sound had been undeniable. I wondered, had the previous tenant, since deceased, returned for one night, curious to see who was living where he had been?

I wasn't comfortable talking about it. When I was a child I considered ghosts to be inhabitants of the land of death which was simply an infinite extension of the land of life. But I have reached a point where my imagination has begun to flag and the pressure of the sphygmomanometer cuff seems more to be feared than the pressure of Reptilicus' jaws. Ghosts seem now little more than harbingers of an end beyond which lies nothing. They are symbols of the limitations of our lives rather than symbols of the limitless possibilities of the universe.

The ghost did not reappear though for months I expected it to. I would lay in bed, facing the door which was cracked open so I could hear Fleur in case she cried, staring into the gray sliver of night until it squirmed and swam in my vision, half hoping the ghost would appear, half fearing it. The worst though, was imagining it out there that night, while I slept, imagining it pausing in the hall, before Fleur's doorway, to stand and look in on my sleeping six month old daughter.

--Eric Mayer.

Let Us Read Letters

RB: So many bridges have gone up in flames since last issue that I'm sorely tempted to wipe clean the slate on the theory that your heads are filled with the smoke of current conflagrations and you've forgotten the pressing issues in the folder of letters waiting to be culled for this letter column. But I'm loathe to jettison (for even one issue) a department which draws so finely turned a compliment as Bill Patterson's and without which, I suspect, feedback would decline precipitously. Since you've all doubtless forgotten what was being discussed 2½ years ago in Warhoon 30, it's best I strike most of the who-said-what-to-who-and-when and edit for the philosophical statement of viewpoint way-back-when. I'll follow a writer's name with the date on the letter at hand and you'll read bearing in mind that opinions have been known to change.

One comment on Warhoon 30 was made on the telephone the other evening by Jackie Causgrove who mentioned she'd recently reread the issue and found it much more relevant to current fandom than to her perceptions of fandom during its original appearance. I'd had reason to look through West's comments on games of status and fannish manipulation shortly before talking to Jackie with the result that we were practically making the same points to each other. Of course, all that was written before West had the temerity to stand for Taff and can be reread for ghoulish humor. I suggest you do that if you enjoy a good chuckle over a corpse.

Which brings us to Chris Priest and the dead issue of when I was a boring old fart in the Fanhistory Department of TuckerU. Remember the good old days when fannish wars were fought over the significance of Greg Pickersgill and my daring speculation that he must have been some kind of genius who the Brits were keeping from us? Most of that is (thankfully) water under those burning bridges, but for the record I should include Chris' desire to "emphasize that my essay was not full of Willis-bashing, but did have a bit of Bergeron-bashing in it. D. West's opinions on all this are not the same as my own." I don't recall anyone saying that they were and did quote Chris' statement of high regard and respect for Willis' writing, but perhaps Chris has a better understanding of the reading skills of fans than I do.

Chris Priest (30 November 1982) goes on to say: Don't you think you've over-reacted somewhat to my bashing of you? It was more of a tickling, actually. I'm deeply touched that you should record my quotes in a **Gothic** typeface, and I accept that I shouldn't have called you a boring old fart...but apart from that I'm more or less unrepentant about it.What I was trying to do in Deadloss was to make you ask yourself whether ten years dedicated to fannish history was as important as you imagined. What's the point of preserving fannish history at the expense of fandom itself? It's true what Malcolm Edwards has said: that the resurgence of British fandom in the 1970's was not, on the whole, mailed to America. But some of it did go to active American fans: to Terry Hughes and Rich Coad and Joyce Scrivner, amongst others. It might have gone to Dick Bergeron too, if he hadn't been so preoccupied with typing out old articles for ten years.

18

Anyway, welcome back to the mainstream of fannish publishing. Our disagreements aside, I've thoroughly enjoyed reading Warhoon, and look forward to the next. (1 Ortygia House, 6 Lower Rd. Harrow, Midsex, UK)

Mal Ashworth (29 May 1983) confesses: My pleasure with Wrhn was hardly mitigated at all even when I started to read and discovered you had become a Boring Old Fart. Indeed, once I learned that the criterion in this matter was the extent of one's knowledge of Greg Pickersgill's fan career I realised that not only was I in the same boat as you but almost certainly even lower in the boat. I would be fairly safe to bet a pound to a pumpernickel that I know even less about Greg's fan career than you do. I have met Greg and stood around glugging beer and chuntering with him but almost the only thing I know about his fan career is that he has met Mal Ashworth and stood around glugging beer and chuntering with him. Which is, as they say, not a lot. Up to now it just never occurred to me how culpable I was in this matter. I realise now that there are, indeed, many, many things I do not know. I mean -- is it just Greg Pickersgill's fan career we should all know about or are there Others as well? If so, where can we get a list of them so that we know whom we need to know about and whom we can forget about entirely? Is there also, maybe, a published guide to how much we need to know about these essential fan careers? I mean I hope it isn't absolutely everything -- I have a godawful memory for that sort of thing. (16, Rockville Drive, Embsay, Skipton, North Yorks, England)

Rob Hansen (28 November 1982) says: I assume most of your readers have only a vague idea who D. West is and I look forward to their reactions with interest. My own reaction, as someone who knows D. and has been an admirer of his work since first encountering it six years ago, is somewhat ambivalent. For instance D. is not being totally honest when he says "...the awful truth is that scarcely anybody in Britain has given much of a fuck about Willis' reputation for the last decade or more..." because, as D. himself admits, the single most influential fan of the last decade was Greg Pickersgill and, as Malcolm Edwards points out,"...one of Greg's expressed wishes was to recreate some of the qualities of the Golden Age fanzines which had long since vanished from Britain. Over the years he fairly consistently held up Hyphen and the works of Irish Fandom in general as classic examples. And sure enough the attempt eventually bore fruit..." So, while the influence of Willis and IF on 70's British fandom was not always apparent on the surface it certainly formed part of the ideological core on which that fandom was based. In fact 70's British fandom was probably more the true successor to 50's fandom than that of the 60's had been, which makes it sad that 50's revenants such as Vin¢ Clarke have reacted as negatively to those elements as they have. (9A Greenleaf Road, East Ham, London, E6 1DX, England)

Bill Patterson (20 January 1983) writes: Perhaps my own perception of fandom is as parochial as West's, but I thought the notion that fans compete for status a particularly neoish game one gives up when one realizes fandom aint the same as school and kicks back to relax and have a good time. Status per se rarely enters the thoughts of any acti-fans I know or have known for the last 10 years or so. On the contrary, one of the things I find most delightful about fandom is that it is a milieu which requires one to be entirely self-actualized, a completely responsive medium for the Intrinsic personality. You can get "status" without competition! Personally, I refuse to compete. Just as well; for how can, say, Wiz compete with Warhoon or Tappen or Pig on the Wall? None of those zines is in any way commensurate with the others. Each is a unique expression to be valued or disvalued on its own terms.

It occurs to me that West's thesis in "Performance" provides an interesting illumination on what has been touted as the blanket rejection, both hurtful and puzzling, of American fanzines in Britain. A couple of years ago I lived and worked briefly in New York and found myself shocked by the routine rudeness and casual cruelty with which ordinary office workers treated each other -- even, astonishingly, people who felt quite affectionate one toward the other. I had the same kind of amour-propre-shock reading my first British fanwriting in Fanthology '81 and later in Tappen. This is the famous "British reserve"? I passed it off, at the time, as exaggeration for effect, but this may be completely accurate reportage. No wonder, if their "civilization has "grown beyond" ordinary good manners and interpersonal courtesy, that the

Brits cannot find much savagery to identify with in American products. But, while I agree wholeheartedly that mediocrity and blandness is a Bad Thing, I also decline to recognize this call to savagery as a new standard of excellence.

I've come to realize that a major element of Warhoon's (and Wiz's -- and Wiz's) appeal to me, is that it is such a microcosm, a fish-eye mirror reflecting back, if not the whole of fandom, a large portion of it in one sitting. I mean, take a look at your letter column: a broadrange of topics represented there. Quite delightfully unlike the general run of even the best other fanzines. (537 Jones Street., #9943, San Francisco, California, 94102)

Alexei Panshin 26 January 1983) considers with his usual thoughtfulness: Perhaps the key to all the puzzlement is this:

Americans feel that there is an ideal fandom which must eternally be recreated by each new generation. The means of achieving fandom are love, care, tolerance, commitment, involved activity, personal growth. This only sometimes achieved state is an ongoing anarchy, receptive to all conditions of being human, from moron to genius, without regard to sex or race or age or class or state of bank account. What is admired is grace and wit and style, economy of means, sincerity and creativity. Above all, that personal expression or point of view that indicates a degree of development on the part of the individual.

During the Seventies, this ideal fandom was largely in a state of hiatus. SF conventions were swamped by immense numbers of girls in Spock ears and fat boys with swords dressed in muskrat skins, many of whom appeared to be more concerned with comic books or tv programs than with the written word. And many of the persons who had been involved with Sixties' fandom either dropped out or retired to the privacy of encysted little apas.

At the end of this hiatus, one Richard Bergeron, aiming to remind those prepared to heed what true fandom is all about, used as his living example the work of Walter Willis to demonstrate that the activity of fandom ultimately is indistinguishable from being openly expressively human.

British fan activity, on the other hand, is something else altogether. It doesn't have the same implicit ideal of self-realization through sincere fannish activity. And to the contrary, it is marked by ideological stances, programmatic iconoclasm, nihilism, and (dare I say it) a rather pissy mean-spiritedness that American fandom worked out of its system in earlier incarnations.

From an ideological and nihilistic point of view, I suspect Willis might very well look thin and undefined, someone to be dismissed as an old poop.

But this attitude can only be maintained by a total blindness to what the whole loose-limbed, free-spirited, casually creative American fannish experiment is about, and why Willis not only fit comfortably into it, but can now serve as a model for the young.

But, there is also this to be considered:

I know one American fannish fan who admires D. West for the sheer energy of his diatribes. And you have to admit that there are no rants of comparable power issuing from American fan circles. Or much of any power of any sort.

And as for me, I have to admit to having a certain genuine admiration and liking for Charles Platt. From all reports, Platt started out as an insular, pissy, ideological, iconoclastic and nihilistic Brit -- the very model of the breed. And yet, beyond Patchin Review's almost reflexive tone of bitchiness, I must admit that I find its sheer energy stimulating. Platt is trying to take a position -- and that is unheard of these days. And furthermore, I like Platt's moving to this country and taking it on in a one-on-one wrestle. I like even more his adventurism in trekking to the abodes of SF writers, entering into their private spaces and personal headtrips, and emerging again into the light of day to report his impressions. His accounts strike me, at least, as being both truly fannish in the best sense of the word, and also truly science fictional. There is nobody in American fan circles currently doing as good.

And, interesting as it has all been, I know that I will be just as glad when things move past the phase when it is necessary to rehash where we used to be, and

who we ought to be, and why is a fan, and simply get along to the stage when you do the do. (RR 2, Box 261, Perkasie, Penna. 18944)

Terry Carr (16 December 1982) contributes: I should comment on the remarks about the stupidity of the Denvention II committee in placing Wrhn 28 in the Best Related Nonfiction Book category on their Hugo ballot. I fear that much of the blame for this actually falls on me, since it was I who first suggested, in my review in SF Review, that Wrhn 28 could as easily be considered a book as a fanzine, and as Geis's numerous not-particularly-deserved Hugos attest, his fanzine with its wide circulation among fringefans is quite influential in Hugo voting. I find that despite your displeasure and that of many other trufans I'm unrepentant about my remarks. Wrhn 28 was a fanzine mostly in name; it lacked anything like a letter column to establish continuity from previous issues and was instead much closer to being an anthology or collection of previously published material with a few original pieces about its single subject, and it was bound as a book is. Oh sure, one could make a pretty good case for its being as much a fanzine as, for instance, the Tucker Appreciation Issue of Ploy, but that would require stretching definitions considerably.

In any case, I can't see that you lost anything by Wrhn 28 being put in the book category, since despite its overwhelming quality it wouldn't have had any more chance of winning in the fanzine category against Locus. The overall effect, in fact, strikes me as positive: instead of just being another of many fanzines that deserved a fanzine Hugo but lost to Locus or SFR, Wrhn 28 made history by becoming the first purely fannish publication to be nominated as a book worthy of attention of all fans, and I'm sure that nomination must have drawn attention to it from many newer or fringefans who knew nothing more about Willis or Warhoon than did the committee, and surely that fact caused a number of them to buy the volume, probably bringing a few of them into the fold.

Paul Williams's comments on the persistence of existence of old-time fans who may have drifted away from the ken of fandom at large but who are still in touch with a few old fan friends struck me as quite apropos. People don't die when they gafiate, and surprisingly often they even retain much interest in the field even though other interests or priorities have replaced fanac in their lives.

I think it was in "The Harp Stateside" that Willis remarked on how worldcons brought out the local oldfan gafiates who, though forgotten and unknown to current fanzine fandom, would return to stalk the halls of conventions like Hamlet's father in a good mood. This is just the tip of the iceberg; many or most of those oldfans are still around, wherever they are, needing only a visit by a current fan or sometimes a fanzine in the mail to spark their interest and reminiscences, as Paul discovered with Art Rapp and others. When I was publishing Innuendo, I tended to seek out such oldfans and solicit articles from them which I published as "fanoirs"; Speer, Alva Rogers, and Warner were among those from whom I got contributions of articles, plus a number of letters from them and others that brightened Inn's letter column, even as Harris, Vinç Clarke, Dave Rike, and Williams himself brighten yours.

John D. Berry's wish that "The Improbable Irish" had been published by some other publisher than Ace stings me a bit, though I realize he didn't mean to be critical of me. The thing is, I heard too many similar remarks when I was publishing the original Ace SF Specials series; people would come up to me at cons and such to say, "X was a wonderful book; it deserved to be published in hardcover rather than by crummy old Ace Books." I agreed with them, but since many of the novels cited had been rejected by dozens of the big publishers I felt that the criticism should properly have been directed at the dumb editors who had rejected them, rather than at me.

As for "The Improbable Irish," the book would never even have been written, let alone published, if I hadn't suggested it to Walt and offered him a contract for it. A lot of fans talk about how our top fanwriters are the equal of most anyone, but how many have actually put their belief into practice? (I also commissioned Lee Hoffman's first published novel, among others by well-known fans.) Nor was "The Improbable Irish" published by Ace inappropriately for the book's potential market, as John believes. I commissioned it when David Frost's "The English" was a best seller in paperback and

"The Italians" was about to come out and also do well, so I knew there was a sizable readership for such a book; it was far from being a maverick on the paperback racks. I gave Walt's book as much loving care and personal attention as I had given any book -- I did the copyediting myself, for instance, oversaw the cover design and wrote the blurb copy -- and personally sent it to Taplinger for hardcover reprint . The Taplinger edition reproduced the Ace text by offset, thus preserving the integrity of Walt's writing, which I hardly touched, and the type design that I'd carefully chosen.

I go on at such length, and so touchily, about "The Improbable Irish" because I'm as pleased and proud to have been able to publish it as I am of having published any of the famous novels in the original Specials series, "The Left Hand Of Darkness" not excluded. (11037 Broadway Terrace, Oakland, California, 94611)

Paul Skelton (20 December 1982) reveals: Fortunately Warhoon is not perfection unalloyed. There are lots of typos, which seem oddly out of place in your fanzine, rather in the manner of imposed fannishness, like some self made millionaire who has cockroaches flown in for his mansion in order to make it feel more 'homely.' Still, they served a useful purpose. I was able to point them out to Cas and they cheered her up no end. Cas you see, while typing only about 30% of The Fanzine That Has No Name, was responsible for all but one of the since-discovered typos (she thought that I was checking her stencils for typos whereas I, who was checking my own, thought that she was doing it). This fact has hit her hard as she used to be a professional secretary/typist. So, your typos have performed a service to fandom, if only to one very small part of it. (25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 5NW England)

George Flynn (2 March 1983) discloses some background information: I never saw the original account of (as Bob Leman puts it) "the Denvention committee member who said, "Who's Walt Willis?", so I don't know what the story's based on. "What's Warhoon?" seems inherently more probable, since the nominations would have come in in either the magazine's name or yours. Anyway, I'm not sure what kind of image the phrase "Worldcon Hugo Committee" inspires in people, but in actuality it's ordinarily one or two people who are willing to take on a thankless job involving huge amounts of paperwork; this has no correlation with knowledge of fanzines, of course, and I believe I'm the only fanzine fan who's held the job in recent years. For Denvention it was Steve Larue, who wasn't a fanzine fan but knew enough to ask for advice on the areas he didn't know. And while he had not seen Warhoon 28 at that time, he had a reasonable idea of what it was and was hoping to find someone with a copy. I think I'm responsible for the inclusion of Willis' name on the ballot: I suggested a format like the one we used the previous year for "The Language Of The Night" ("by Ursula Le Guin, edited by Susan Wood"); such works are bibliographically awkward, of course. In any case, if someone on the committee did ask that question, it was probably someone who had nothing to do with the matter. I believe there's also been some brouhaha over Warhoon 28's appearing on the ballot as a Non-Fiction Book rather than a fanzine. Terry Carr wrote in SFR that it deserved nomination in either category, and I'm sure a fair number of people acted on this advice (I nominated it in both categories). When they counted the nominations, it had 28 votes -- curious coincidence there; I don't know if it was 28 total or 28 in each category -- which was 4th-highest among the non-fiction books but only 7th place among the fanzines, so...

Fandom as I understand it is a community, and I simply reject the argument that this community is limited to fanzine fans. I am a club fan, a convention fan, and a fanzine fan, and I see no sharp boundaries between the categories. My friends in all these areas largely share the same understood body of references, the same sort of sense of humor (and love of puns), even the same concern over the "media freaks" (some of whom, I hasten to add, are also nice people), and many of them have gone back and forth across the boundaries. I see a tendency to define everyone outside the inmost circle as an undifferentiated horde of barbarians; things are much more complicated than that. To expand on the point I just made, most convention fans I know are concerned

over "conventions being inundated with media freaks," and are trying hard to find ways to limit this inundation without also destroying what makes conventions valuable to them.

Which I suppose makes this the point to answer your question, "What do you people see in conventions?" Quite a few things. We get to see friends whom we'd be unlikely to see otherwise. We can indulge the interest in science fiction that just about all fans had originally and many of us still retain. We can even take in all the fringe activities: there's a time and place for everything, even 10-ring circuses. And if we're actually working on the con, we can share the satisfaction of accomplishing a challenging task.

But, you will argue, fanzine fandom is unique in its time-binding. Only as a matter of degree: there are some impressive oral traditions around. And sometimes I wonder how well the soi-disant time-binders really understand their own history. After all, the original motivations of fandom were almost entirely related to SF, either in itself or as an inspiration to change the world. Like it or not, "fannishness" is more alien to that original impulse than conventions or even media fandom. Which of course has nothing to do with its value -- but surely it does have something to do with who is entitled to inherit the name "fandom."

Basically, I guess I hear alarms going off when people start drawing lines and saying, "We're better than they are." I like the idea of relating to as many people as possible, and drawing lines only when there's no other alternative. As far as I know there's no invading army trying to force their way into our fanzines, so why should it be necessary to stir up emotions against the outside world?

I like Paul Williams' concept of fandom as "a web of friendships, common experiences, and connections", and I see no reason to define it more restrictively than that. (Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, Mass. 02142)

Eric Mayer (21 January 1982) complains: D. West, in "Performance," has described fandom as accurately as I have ever seen it described and produced a work that is very nearly a work of genius. He is also an idiot. Ah, but aren't all geniuses?

This Sturm and Drang fandom just doesn't appeal to me. He doesn't want blandness, has nothing but contempt for us weakneed, knifeless types. Maybe we ought to pep up US fandom for D. West, import some people who would appeal to him. Perhaps Yuri Andropov might be D. West's kind of fan. I don't know how well he can write but anyone who can threaten to destroy the world ten times over in a nuclear holocaust can't be called bland; not if you value the future existence of the human race. I figure Yuri would provide the sort of criticism West admires. If someone disagreed with him would he ignore them, or try to reason in a weak sniveling manner? Hardly. He'd just get in touch with the Bulgarian KGB. Maybe we could import Castro, too. His speeches are nearly as long as West's articles. Of course, asking these personages to join fandom would probably be like asking E.B. White or Russell Baker to join. Their talents might fit in but are better used elsewhere. There is, however, a class of people who are not rich or famous and who, therefore, might be amenable to participating in our hobby and turning it into something we could be proud of. I'm thinking of bill collectors. Anyone who's ever talked to a bill collector knows they are callous, vicious bastards. Not boring people at all. Wouldn't fandom be a wonderful place if they lent us their talents? Wouldn't it be thrilling to receive a fanzine and a week later a notice -- "Your loc is now SERIOUSLY OVERDUE. Please remit a total of 2 pages immediately. Failure to do so may result in damage to your STATUS." Whenever I read someone like D. West telling us how much they despise simple civility, I can't help thinking that their mundane lives must be remarkably free of the normal tensions and aggravations of life for them to want to seek such things out in a hobby. Either that or they're crazy. Geniuses are all crazy. (1771 Ridge Road East, Rochester, New York. 14622)

Ian Covell (24 March 1983) tells us the secret of happiness: The joke about 'Life Is A Fish' which Walt Willis mentions has now been corrupted to 'The Man Who Discovered Eternal Happiness.' Having found it, and departed for Tibet, he is sought out by someone determined to prove him wrong. The man demands to know what the secret of Eternal Happiness is. "Don't argue," says the happy one. "Whatever anyone says don't argue with them, don't cause friction, don't follow disputes, just agree."

The new man is furious, "That isn't the secret of Eternal Happiness!!

"Okay," says the mystic, "It isn't." (2, Copgrove Close, Berwick Hills, Middlebrough, Cleveland, TS3 7BP. England)

Harry Warner 30 January 1983) reminds me of those approximately 100 stencils containing his long series of articles devoted to fanzines of the 40's and 50's (perhaps someone would like to publish them?): I must confess that everything after page seven in Warhoon 30 was anticlimactic, in a way. When I encountered your revelation about having someone cut stencils for all those installments of the "All Our Yesterdays" column, I was positively staggered. It had never occurred to me that anyone would think them worth that much trouble, then after I began to absorb that concept, I started to wonder what effect the task might have had on the life and thinking of whichever unfortunate secretary got the assignment from you. Does she still wake up in the early morning hours, bathed in cold sweat, worrying about the meaning of this or that fannish term I used? What if that crumbling mass of unmimeographed stencils should be found by law enforcement authorities after this or that splinter group has bombed the building in which they are stored in New York City and their incomprehensible contents are assumed to be somehow connected with the terrorist attack on the structure? I tell you, page seven gave me as much egoboo as if you'd actually gone through with your notion to anthologize the column. (rh: Harry, I hardly imagine those stencils are "crumbling" in the short time that has elapsed since they were cut. They were typed in 1978 or '79. Something like half of the stencils for Wrhn 28 were over 10 years old before they were fed to a duplicator. They should be maturing nicely for any fan publisher who wants to make a bid for immortality with the Yank version of "Fanzines In Practice.")

I can't find now the line somewhere in the letter section which says that it's the emphasis that is different today, not the basic situation, because cons have been a part of fandom from the start. But I wanted to object to it, because the start of fandom as a hobby group with a consecutive, chronicled history is generally placed around 1930, give or take a year or two, and it wasn't until after 1945 that cons became an appreciable factor in fanac; that's more than one-fourth of the entire history of fandom. Fanzine fans were responsible for everything that is prominent in convention fandom today, even the movies and costumes and weapons. Maybe cons would have developed in the same way if they had been started and expanded by fans who had never seen a fanzine. But we'll never know for sure and meanwhile, cons owe everything to fanzine fandom, no matter how hard the media fans and specialized subfandoms may argue about the unimportance of fanzine fandom.

I'm sure I'll think of a dozen other things I wanted to write, as soon as I mail off this letter. I'll try to do a better job next time, if I'm not too preoccupied with my second childhood by the time you publish your 31st Warhoon to be able to think at all. You realize, of course, that 30 issues was where Spaceways got stuck. So you'd better hurry up and get another issue out before the curse has time to find you. (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland. 21740)

Al Sirois (19 March 1983) considers what was (clearly) the single most admired letter published in Warhoon 30: I think that fandom is a good place to learn a lot about writing, if not about people. Or oneself. Perhaps flexibility is the key, as Deindorfer suggests. Do it one way, try it another way. This is easy to say and hard as hell to do. But it can be done. I correspond with Ray Capella, and I know him in his letter personality. But I was taken aback at the vividness of his letter in Wrhn... I mean, I was there, man, right there on the cobblestones. Now, I've read some of Ray's fiction and it hasn't the sheer power of this letter. If he can harness it, he'll be a hell of a writer. This bears on what Garry was talking about: sometimes the best stuff comes out on the sly, as it were. And maybe that says something about fanzines, too. The slickest ones aren't always going to have the best content. I'd rather read Groggy than Algol or Star Ship or whatever the hell Porter is calling it these days. (72 Hubinger Street, New Haven, Conn. 06511)

John D. Owen (20 January 1983) analyzes: West condemns the idea of publishing collections of old fanzine articles, insisting that the place to read old fan-writing

24 is in old fanzines. He says that abstracting removes the pieces from their natural context. Yet just reading the old fanzine (singular) in itself is equally abstracted from context, since a single fanzine rarely contains the whole story, but is actually a part of a larger communication that involves whole segments of fandom. (4, Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks., MK16 9AZ. England)

.....

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

At NovaCon 14 weekend before last there were some words of appreciation for Rob Holdstock (GoH), and I think that they presented him with a bottle of drink (it's rather vague because of what happened next). "And just before we close we have a surprise for you, Rob." Burst of music from a tape-recorder, a door at the back of the hall behind the stage opened, and a honey-blonde girl in a white blouse and black skirt darted in. "How nice," I thought, "This must be Holdstock's wife who they've brought along as a sort of 'This Is Your Life' surprise. Then my ears registered what the music was...David Rose's "The Stripper." And she got on to the platform and proceeded to do just that -- bumps and grinds in front of Holdstock. Off with the blouse, off with the skirt. Oh, it's one of those strippagram joke things...then she went up to Rob, undid her bra and cast it away, waggled herself at him, turned around and did the same to the audience, faced Rob again, cast aside her knickers to reveal a slim bottom to the audience and waggled again. Pandemonium. Then someone put a black coat around her, and someone else shouted over the mike, "And that ends NovaCon 14." Whereupon the girl turned round, opened the black coat to Reveal All, for a few seconds, then left. Holdstock hurried down from the platform and down a side aisle with a most peculiar expression on his face, and the place broke up into chaos.

Two hours later: (in a corridor by the Reception Desk) we (Dave Wood and self) have a few words with Martin Tudor and Paul Vincent who are sitting there with a whole range of expressions (these two are always in the heart of Birmingham fanac). It turns out they've had to apologise to Holdstock for the stripper incident. He was angry. They were innocent. Steve Green had been told to hire a strippagram girl for £45 ($56) who'd have just gone down to underclothes. The rumour was that Green had paid £150 ($176) for a genuine stripper to go all the way without consulting the committee. They wouldn't have consented if they'd known (youngsters in the audience, etc). I pointed out that their biggest complaints were likely to come from Feminists -- degrading woman-hood -- and they said they'd already had one complaint. We tried to cheer them up, "Look what they do on TV." Dave broadened the discussion considerably by saying nudity was natural, and what he objected to were obscenities, and a lot of verbal ping-pong resulted...

I thought of something else, and pointed out that the Committee need only give Green £45 anyway, and, in any case, £150 seemed excessive for a girl willing to display under those circumstances. They cheered up slightly at this, then looked apprehensive as Holdstock came down the corridor. He stopped and towered over them -- they were sitting and he's about 6'2" -- but he just exchanged a few amiable words and walked away. The atmosphere lightened and the discussion veered to the usual thousand-and-one things. Then Holdstock came down the corridor again, holding a small unlabelled bottle of brown liquid, and took off it's cap.

"Here, have some," he says, thrusting it at Martin. Martin looked slightly unhappy, but took the bottle and had a small swig, rolling it around his mouth like a wine connoisseur. "What is it?" asked Paul. "It's piss," said Holdstock, watching Martin closely. Martin swallowed and shook his head gravely. "It doesn't taste like piss," he said. "Here, let's have a go," said Paul, grabbing the bottle and taking a swallow. A girl I'd noticed knocking back pints of beer earlier, also joined in. Everyone looked at Holdstock. "Fifteen-year-old Canadian whiskey," says he, "Some of the finest you can get." And screwing up the cap proceeds up the corridor. Honour satisfied all round.

-A. Vinç Clarke-

.....

WARHOON 31