

Starling

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Ken Fettk '70



Vootie.

NOTEBOOKINGS

+ Hank Luttrell +

I've been reading fanzines for a long time, and I don't think I've ever run across a column of fanzine reviews that I thought altogether did what fanzine reviews should do. There have been a number of fanzine reviewers I liked to read, but I've always wished that there was some really comprehensive column around. Doll Gilliland, Ethel Lindsay and Buck Coulson are the most regular and best reviewers around, and actually I find Charlie Brown's comments in Locus interesting -- even though they are hardly more than listings, and he has been publishing the same "review" of Starling for the past 2 or 3 issues.

So, okay, here are the elements that I think should be found in the Perfect Fanzine Reviews: Several fanzines at least should be considered with fairly long, detailed criticism, and this should be supplemented with shorter "buyer's guide" comments on the rest of fanzines around. Ethel Lindsay in particular has adopted the practice of making remarks about the fanzines she receives which are more like letters of comment or the mailing comments in amateur press associations than they are like reviews or criticism. I think this is a fine practice -- this is just the sort of response that fan editors are most interested in -- as long as it doesn't completely replace criticism. Some fanzine reviewers have adopted the trick of passing on pertinent or interesting bits of news found in the fanzine they review; a good practice. Also very important, I think fanzine reviews should be timely. I'm always tremendously disappointed when I get a review on a Starling which I published half a year ago -- I'd much rather get that than nothing at all, you understand -- but something current would be so much better.

A large number of people really care about fanzines: the editors care or they wouldn't be spending all the time and money on their hobbies that they very obviously do. The contributors care for the same reason. Readers care; their interest and enthusiasm always shows in the good fanzines. I think it is a shame there aren't critics around who are willing to go to the trouble necessary to provide the fan press with complete coverage. A lot of fine, creative, fun work appears in the fanzines and I think it is a shame that they don't always receive the careful attention they deserve.

* * * * *

I direct your attention to the heading of Jim Turner's piece this article. This came unsolicited from Dan Osterman, and I gave it to Jim to see if he could think of anything he wanted to write about it. Somewhere along the line Jim said, "Well, I guess I could always write a Lovecraft parody about a man who owned a laundrymat." This was met with enthusiastic suggestions from the rest of us present, so it was decided that this is what he would write. So if you were wondering what the story had to do with the heading. . .

This year's Midwestcon was particularly nice. You may remember last year I complained bitterly about how the convention had been so out of place at the Carrousel. This year the Midwestcon took place at the Quality Courts Motel. While I suppose this was a "good" motel (the color televisions worked very well), it wasn't quite the high class place the Carrousel was. And it wasn't spread out over a one hundred acre lot, either. I was a little annoyed at being made to wait a long time for a room when we arrived Friday; but that was partly our fault, we always arrive too early.

This is the first year that I can recall at a Midwestcon when any sort of organized arrangements were made for hucksters-- well, arrangements were semi-organized, anyway; Usually we open our trunks on the parking lot and sell from there, or from individual rooms. This year, the original plan had been to sell from a Terrace above the swimming pool. This would have proved difficult for a number of different reasons. So Howard DeVore arranged to get a small meeting room not too far from the Hospitality Room. In any past year, this room would have been more than big enough to hold all the buying and selling, but this year the number of hucksters and the amount of merchandise was really surprising. I don't know why everyone else is huckstering, but I do it because it is the only way I can afford to go to conventions. I'm glad tight money hasn't made all fans stop buying science fiction -- I was able to sell enough stuff to make the convention financially painless, which is all I ask.

I recall Friday afternoon I was selling a few things every now and then -- there were a number of customers in the hucksters' room, along with merchandise tables all along the walls, and in the middle of the room, leaving really only enough room to walk past all the tables. And then Buck Coulson arrived, loaded down with a large collection of science fiction magazines he was selling for someone else on commission. There was really no place to put him, except right in front of my table. It was a most unfortunate arrangement. It seemed that there was no way for customers to look at my stuff without my leaving the area to make room for them. I didn't sell much for the rest of that day. I didn't know quite what I was going to do, I needed to sell quite a bit more to pay for the convention. The next day I suggested that someone move his table out into the hall. I guess I hadn't really meant that that someone be me, but as we looked around, it seemed that I would be the easiest someone to move. So I ended up in the hall, there was a little more room for everyone else, and I sold things at an acceptable rate for the rest of the convention.

While I huckster at convention to pay for them, I go to conventions to visit with friends. This one was well attended by good friends -- Doug Lovenstein made a rare fannish appearance, and gave me some recent artwork -- I hope to print some of that next issue, you'll find it rather different from what you are used to. We talked for a while with Steve Stiles and Gale Burnick; Steve promised me a cover for Starling. That too I hope to print next issue. I asked Steve if he was going to become a tremendously successful New York artist, he and Gale say yes; now that Gale can be his manager. Well, I hope so, but I hope Steve can continue to do art for fandom. Do you remember his fabulous Taff Terror Tales? (Or for that matter almost anything else he has done. . .) Bob Tucker was type-cast as an ancient fan in some television coverage of the convention, and mentioned to me that he freaked out one neofan by mentioning that he contributed to that famous hippy fanzine Starling. Head'em off at Generation Gap! I hope amusing events like this will encourage him to do additional material for Starling.

We⁵ talked to Don & Maggie Thompson -- and Valerie, of course -- about many things, but in particular about comics -- like, for instance, the comics Lesleigh has been writing about in Starling. Buck Coulson and I exchanged somewhat nervous conversation while we were trapped together in the hucksters' room, later relations joined by Juanita and Bruce were much more enjoyable. One high spot of the convention for me was when the wonderful Leigh Brackett became trapped between me, several other eager science fiction and cinema fans (like Bob Gaines) and Howard DeVore's table. We were able to pump her for information about her latest film work. Also asked her about John Wayne and Howard Hawkes.

Best of all, we didn't have a flat tire on the way home, something which for a while looked like it was going to become a convention going tradition for us.

* * * * *

Lesleigh is going to be a senior in college this coming school year. She will graduate with a degree in Anthropology. Right at the moment, one of the main concerns around our household is trying to decide which school she will pick to do her graduate studies at. Many factors will be involved in the choice: we can't afford graduate school without some sort of financial assistance; we don't want to live in too unpleasant an area; I'll need some sort of job; and of course Lesleigh wants to go to as good a school as possible, with a good physical anthropology section. If anyone has any suggestions, we'd be more than happy to listen. Perhaps your local fan group has some sort of recruitment program? Well then, here we are, two able-bodied, experienced fans if I ever knew any. With plenty of fanzine, convention and etc. etc. background. Seriously, though, if you do know something about a school that we might find of use, we'd be pleased if you'd send it along.





+ Creath Thorne +



EXAMINING EXAMINING SCIENCE FICTION

When Science Fiction Review folded, a couple of book reviews I'd written last year for Dick Geis were still in its files. Dick sent them back the other day, and I was far enough removed from them (not so much in time as in other respects) to feel strange as I read them over. People continually change, but I don't think you realize this fully when you gradually follow the continuum of change. It's only when you meet an old friend after an absence of years -- or when Dick Geis sends you back something you wrote a few months ago -- that the constant flux of things make an impact.

At any rate, as I read over the reviews some ideas and thoughts drifted into my head and when the R. D. Laing-like title floated by, things coalesced and I decided to write. I produce so little fannish writing that I hate for anything to go to waste. At the same time I wasn't satisfied with the reviews as they stood to send them out again on their own. What my hopes presently became to do were to comment informally on the reviews: why I think now that I wrote them the way I did; what mistakes and what commendable features I think are present; the place of book reviews in fandom; what value they actually hold; the larger idea of criticism in fandom and fandom as criticism. At this point, like so many of my unrealized ideas, it seemed that the whole thing was about to take on an epic form, and so I decided to stop fantasizing and actually write.

But before I carry this any further, here is the first of the two reviews, direct from the files of Science Fiction Review:

7 Teenocracy by Robert Shirley. Ace 80200. 75¢.

By this time there surely is no one left in the United States who isn't aware that two types of revolutions are taking place among younger persons. One of these is a cultural revolution which ranges from such easily definable items as listening to rock music and smoking dope to broader and deeper efforts to create whole new life-styles. The second is a revolution in a stricter sense and is composed of those people who want to see radically new forms of political organization brought about.

The two revolutions are often confused with each other; a right-wing Bircher told me the other day that every time he sees me with my long hair or anyone else with long hair he immediately thinks of that person as someone who wants to tear down the American way of life and institute socialism and communism. His remarks were in the realm of fantasy -- for the idea of long hair or rock music being the basis of a political revolution is still so unrealized as to be a sciencefictional idea.

The idea strikes me as being an interesting one, but in Teenocracy all that I can find is a failure of the author's extrapolative imagination to deal with the idea. The question Robert Shirley should have asked himself before he started writing is this: what qualities are there in the cultural revolution that might lead to necessary social and political forms? But instead Shirley seems to have been content to write a simple-minded fourth-rate novel of a struggle for political power. Items like rock music are pasted onto the surface of the novel with no real justification; and I would call the book sf only by courtesy of the fact that it's set in the future.

Apart from the extrapolative failure, the novel is still bad, for the struggle for political power is melodramatic and unconvincing. It's cast in starkest terms of black and white, the good guys against the bad guys.

There are two types of bad books. One is that type of book which is so bad that one keeps reading just to see what incredibilities will happen next. The cover suggests this type of badness: the blurb reads "Not just wild in the streets, but wild everywhere!" while the painting shows a person that looks vaguely like a 1963 Beatle bursting out of the capital dome in flames with a pastel American eagle in the background. But once into the book I found it to be bad in a second sense; boring, dull, mediocre, just so many words churned out with no redeeming qualities. I suppose the whole thing is an attempt to cash in on the popularity of the counter-culture in the media; if so, whoever edited and guided the production of the book has seriously misunderstood the counter-culture itself and the way it should be presented in order to sell books, which I assume was the only motive behind this so blatantly commercial product.

When I first began to write the review I began my lead paragraph with the idea that I eventually moved to the last paragraph: that of there being two types of bad writing. The idea is not as dubious as it may sound at first. It seems to me to be related to the same type of aesthetic thinking that produced long, erudite articles in Partisan Review by Susan Sontag on the meaning of camp. Of course, that type of writing can be criticized too. Many of those articles struck me as evidence of the social phenomenon where bright youngsters from lower middle-class families make it to important universities, learn large words,

and then have troubles reconciling that environment with the old radio⁸ shows they used to listen to in the evenings. But the reason I abandoned that draft after agonizing over it was that it didn't offer me a way to lead into a discussion of the book. My beginning was my end, and finally I gave up and started all over. I remember being surprised to find that, when I neared the end of the page, the idea fit in very neatly there.

The beginning of the review probably owes something to Charles Reich's The Greening of America which was at its height of popularity when I wrote the review. Though I never read Reich's book, it was extensively written about in the mass media which I was reading at the time. I would make some qualifications now and use the term "would-be revolutions". I'm not as sure as I used to be that the counter-culture is really moving away to any appreciable extent from the capitalistic society everyone deplors. Does it make any difference whether you wear bell bottoms or not if they're sold by capitalists who just happen to have long hair? The outward symbols of the counter-culture are engaging, but I wonder if they reflect any changes that will last.

Still, if I'm less optimistic about the hip future now than I used to be, that doesn't mean that the topic isn't an interesting one. It's readymade for science fiction and has spawned other stories besides Teenocracy which I could have mentioned in my review. The most recent example I've come across is Poal Anderson's The Byworlder in Fantastic Stories. I didn't like the way Shirley treated his subject, but I wish I hadn't written the phrase: "The question Robert Shirley should have asked himself before he started writing is this." Those words smack of a fascistic demand to do what the reviewer wants. It would have been far more skillful if I'd shown how I felt Shirley's novel failed, then suggested what could have been written, and left the question of whether or not Shirley should have done the latter unspoken. Such a scheme would have required at the very least a fuller analysis of the novel than I give so briefly here. But I faced several dilemmas in writing such an analysis. I was limited in space by Geis and, more importantly, I was bored by the book and felt that any analysis of the book at length would also be boring. This is a real problem; I've read so many book reviews in fanzines that devoted space to a recitation of the incredulities of the plot or to reprinting lists of horrendous dialogue. When done by an expert, Damon Knight for example, such reviews are interesting for awhile, but I found myself getting bogged down even with In Search of Wonder. The solution to the problem I took was to arbitrarily impose my taste and judgement on my intended readers and then try to make things look not quite so blatantly obvious by talking about some of the general ideas and themes involved. But I'm not sure that this solution is so desirable either.

One more note on this review: I think the best sentence in the review is the last one. The sentence is a lengthy one, and the spirit of moral indignation is held in check throughout until the very end when I let it flare up. But though the rhetorical effect pleases me, I wonder if it is justified. I've moved from judging the book as an entity in itself to the motives of some unspecified editor at Ace books, and I now doubt that it was fair for me to do that.

* * * *

Teenocracy was a novel. The other book I reviewed was a collection of some of Jack Williamson's stories. Reviewing a short story collection, particularly within the space limits that Geis set, is difficult. I tried to unify the

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Teenocracy review by concentrating on one theme throughout, and I think that was one of the virtues of the review. This approach is doubly necessary in the case of a short story collection unless, as some of Geis' reviewers did, you simply devote a couple of sentences to each story with no attempt at continuity. I think that method is a cop-out, and reviews like that bore me most of all. Here is my review:

The Pandora Effect by Jack Williamson. Ace 65125. 60¢

This collection of seven stories by Jack Williamson spans more than twenty-five years of writing from the publication of "The Mental Man" in 1928 to "Guinevere for Everybody" published by Fred Pohl in Star Science Fiction in 1954. Williamson has attempted to tie them all together by suggesting that they exemplify in one form or another the Pandora myth.

Williamson says: "The Pandora Effect is the pattern of human behavior symbolized by the myth. Somebody who should know better compounds his own disaster. The effect comes in several versions. The victim may be one man or all mankind. The role of Zeus as cosmic trickster may be played by Nature or by society or by our unknowing selves." The main trouble with all this is that the myth can be stretched to fit almost any story. Williamson mentions that he's "drifted into teaching literature"; as a college academician he's undoubtedly been influenced by the rise of mythic criticism, even when carried but by such able practitioners as Northrop Frye, is that it uses concepts so broad that they're hard to tie down. This trouble can be seen throughout The Pandora Effect as Williamson tries to relate myth and individual story.

If the stories here are any good they should be able to stand on their own without any theoretical supporting framework. Unfortunately, most of them can't. The value of this book to me is essentially historical rather than literary. That is, I'm interested in the early days of science fiction when it was first ghettoized by Gernsback, and reading Williamson gives insights into that period. But any sensitive reader will simply have to block off his mind to the limitations of Williamson's writing if he wants to finish the book.

Looking specifically at the stories, "The Cosmic Express" and "The Metal Man" are both very early stories and very typical of the type of thing Gernsback published. As Williamson says, Gernsback wanted "sugar-coated science" and Williamson wrote to fit his market. "The Happiest Creature" and "Guinevere for Everybody" are stories written in the early fifties and one can see a polishing of style and a better idea of story-values in Williamson's writing.

The two most important stories in the book are "With Folded Hands" and "The Equalizer". They're also the longest; together they take up three-fifths of the pages of the book. Both were written for John Campbell's Astounding in 1947. It's my understanding that "With Folded Hands" was later put together with "And Searching Mind" to form the book The Humanoids. The novelette, however, can stand on its own and is one of the most successful things Williamson's done. "The Equalizer" has a theme that will appeal to those hippies and anyone else who's been moving out to the farms away from the cities: free power and energy become readily available to the individual and thus destroy the need for any but volun-

tary organizations. Neither Williamson's technical or social explanations¹⁰ convinced me or even sounded plausible -- but it all makes for a pleasant pastoral taste in a time of over-complexity.

There are two organizing ideas in this review. One examines the Pandora effect, links it to current trends in literary criticism, and then shows the failure of Williamson's idea to unify his book. The other idea is a very brief and limited historical treatment of the stories, mostly devoted to reciting dates, pointing out that Williamson did improve in writing ability, and showing how an earlier story seems pertinent today. The two ideas are linked up in the third paragraph where I decide which approach holds the most value for me.

The main problem again is that I just didn't have enough space to document my assertions. The idea of the Pandora effect could certainly be given more space. I would have liked to examine some individual stories more carefully. And I would have liked to have gone more into some historical questions: how Williamson wrote to fit his market at different times, for instance.

The idea of stories standing "on their own without any theoretical supporting framework" is an interesting one. As I rethink the idea, it seems to me now that no story ever "stands on its own". That is, a story has meaning for a reader only in terms of what the reader brings to the story. Some of the frameworks we bring are: our knowledge of the English language; our literary experience of all the other stories we have ever heard, seen or read; our direct knowledge of the real world plus all the other non-fictional knowledge we've acquired through schooling, reading books, etc. Looked at in this sense, a story is almost entirely outside framework and only very slightly creates new juxtapositions of those frameworks. When a literary genius like James Joyce writes a book like Ulysses the juxtapositions are radical enough that for awhile people can't understand what is happening and may even react to such a creative act with hatred and anger. But usually, most writers are content to rewrite what they've heard and read before (I do not exclude myself or this article from this last group.)

A trouble with my review, especially the second half, is that it won't have much meaning for anyone who hasn't already read, or at least heard of, the stories. My recitation of titles may excite old memory synapses in some fans, but a person who hasn't read Williamson is most likely to just be bored by that recitation. I reacted this way to many of the book reviews in SFR, not to mention a hundred other fanzines.

But an even more serious problem exists. There are a lot of people in fandom who read very quickly, and some of them write reviews. Paul Walker was the most notorious example in SFR. Most of the people who do capsule-capsule reviews for Locus fit into this category. The problem, as I see it, is that the goal of reading x many books has become their only goal. Science fiction becomes so many words to be consumed. There may be a few sharps and flats as the readers munch their way through the pile, but, by and large, the impression I get from such readers is that sf is a sluggish pile of pabulum to be consumed. I wonder if book reviews like mine don't seem to fit right in with those readers. The books aren't really worth reading. Yet, I've taken the time to point out which story might be just a little better than another -- where you might find a brief moment of excitement. I wonder if all that labor is worth it -- if in trying to extend aesthetic sensibilities I'm actually dulling them.

Ideally, criticism should be as creative as primary works of art. Practically, the critic often seems to be the artist manqué, and when the work is bad to begin with, the criticism isn't much good. I think a case can be made for regarding fanzines as basically a critical medium, but such a case shouldn't neglect the fact that, more than any other type of writing, fanzines should be fun. After all, that's what fandom is all about. And yet, what is fun about desultory critiques of desultory novels? All those thousands and thousands of fanzine pages filled with bad criticism are banal and boring and nothing more.

Just because fandom should be fun doesn't mean that it can't be serious. Walt Willis is one of the most serious writers fandom has produced, but his seriousness doesn't preclude him from writing with a controlled lightness in stance. The mental image I get when I read one of Walt's better pieces is not that of the scholar with the furrowed brow, but rather that of a slender Irishman with a smile like that of Buddha. But unfortunately, most of the fanzines I read don't produce any image at all.

Creative criticism is possible and is being written right now. It's just that very little of it appears in fanzines. Alexei Panshin's column in Fantastic is, I suppose, the most obvious current example. Panshin is a skilled writer, but I see no reason why at least some fans could not approach the level of his criticism if they would only think and write to the best of their ability instead of being content to produce an average review.

The potential for a much higher level of literacy in fanzines is present, but it has yet to be actualized. In previous fandoms that potential was actualized. The fandoms of ten and fifteen years ago were, as far as writing is concerned, superior to ours. What fandom needs, more than anything else, is fans who care about writing, about saying sane things in a sane way.

The final problem I face as I finish this article is that the accuser is also the accused. I claim no special prizes for my own writing. Nor is this false modesty. But the main point of my musings over those reviews Geis returned has turned out to be the necessity of caring about what one writes. This is not a particularly profound or original observation, but it is an important one. "The obvious is not necessarily untrue". And it is, after all, in the obvious fact of caring about what one does that meaning begins.





MSS. FOUND IN BOTTLES

+ Banks Mebane +

Last summer the Florida Supreme Court tossed out the state's obscenity law, and on-the-balk entrepreneurs quickly took advantage thereof. Here in Brevard county we now have a number of "adult" bookstores and quadruple-X minitheaters, and the various county and town fathers are whirling in a bind trying to stop them.

Some twenty miles north of me along the beach, the twin communities of Cocoa Beach and Cape Canaveral cropped up with one dirty moviehouse and one porno book nook each, plus a photo studio with nude models (you can bring a camera, or they'll rent you one -- nobody checks to see if you use film). The towns promptly passed ordinances, busted the operations, and had the cases thrown out of court. The businesses went on running, although the Cape Canaveral bookstore later went broke. Too bad, because it had a topless cashier. She'd sit by the register with her Great Dane at her feet. Every time a customer walked in, the dog would lift its head and growl, and she'd say, "Down Boy." I never could figure out if she was talking to the customer or the Dane.

The book shops sell the usual porny paperbacks (is it a Zeitgeis?) (pun intended), plus nudie picture books for all three (or four, or five) sexes. The picture books show complete and emphatic nudity, but, unlike the paperbacks, don't show sexual acts, merely poses that suggest such acts are about to occur, or just have occurred. The book shops also sell some repulsive, if ingenious, equipment.

The movies, unlike the sexploitations films shown before the law was pitched, are the real hardcore. In the earlier flicks, nudity was complete but the sexual activity was simulated. In those at the minitheaters, sex takes place and the viewer gets an anatomist's eye view of it.

The movies do try to have some sort of plot, but not much. I saw one called "Johnny Wadd", about a private detective of that name ("From California to the Rio Grande, he shot his wad all over the land.") (I'm not making this up, you know). First a girl comes to pay Johnny \$500 to find her missing girlfriend; they have sex. Then missing girl's sister comes to pay Johnny \$1000 not to find

girl; they have sex more athletically. Then missing girl's mother comes to pay Johnny \$5000 still not to find girl; they have sex more exotically. Then the scene shifts to missing girl and her kidnapper (hired by mother and sister for obscure reasons); kidnapper rapes her with her enthusiastic co-operation. Then girl escapes from kidnapper, and Johnny (fortuitously on the scene) knocks him out and rescues her; they have sex rather poopedly, as who can blame them. Finis. No doubt it's just packed with redeeming social value. Also with boredom -- you see one porny flick, you seen 'em all.

It's the boredom and not the law that will do in the porno movies here. Attendance is dropping rapidly at the older minitheaters even as new ones open. Titusville tried (unsuccessfully) to close one with a weird law on projectionist licensing, and Melbourne has cases pending against its two, but they're likely to go under from sheer inanition before the courts get to rule.

The county-wide Gannett newspaper, TODAY, ran a public opinion poll on pornography. Surprisingly (to me) the vote was about 60% against trying to limit it by law. Most of the respondents said they didn't approve of pornography but felt it was less harmful than censorship. The number of people participating in the poll was too small to have statistical significance (500 out of a county population of 250,000), but then I'd expect the rabid anti-porno fanatics to be the ones who would fill out a questionnaire in the newspaper and mail it in, rather than the interested citizens with no ax to grind who seem to have answered this one. Every now and then the gen pubs show more sense than you'd believe.

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The economic decay in Brevard county, caused by curtailment of the space program, has led to one strange phenomenon locally: Dr. Carl McIntyre. He's the radio-TV evangelist and rightwinger who led those anti-antiwar Freedom Marches in Washington. It seems that his divinity (?) college has been non-accredited in New Jersey, so he's moved it and his revivalist operation to Florida, where anything can get accreditation.

Cape Canaveral was feeling the pinch, so Dr. McIntyre bought up (for a total sum variously reported from \$6 to \$15 million) the near-bankrupt Cape Kennedy Hilton, two office buildings that IBM and Boeing didn't need anymore, a large apartment house, and a lot of land.

So now he's preaching fundamentalist religion and ultra-conservative politics right next to Cocoa Beach, which one of the CONFIDENTIAL-type magazines labelled "Sin City" (4 space technologists orbiting from topless bar to topless bar celebrating TGIF). Cocoa Beach, incidentally, has its own economic problems. The Ramada Inn there went bankrupt. The new owners of the previously bankrupt Sheraton Inn, which is just across the road, secured what they thought was the Ramada Inn franchise. Meanwhile the receivers of the first Ramada Inn thought they still had it. Result: two Ramada Inns facing each other across the highway and suing everybody in sight to find out which is the real ...

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The new, improved Disney World, scheduled to open in October, is only about sixty miles from me. The father-in-law of a friend of mine is a consulting engineer on some of the operation, and he managed to take us on a tour of the thing three months before the gates crack.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

+ Juanita Coulson +

Recently I watched a rerun of an ANDY WILLIAMS SHOW. This is normally something I would avoid like the plague -- first time around and reruns. But I noticed by the TV Guide synopsis that two of the featured acts were to be Sly and the Family Stone and Bill Haley and the Comets. Curiosity and nostalgia got the better of me. I turned the video on and the audio off and read a book, glancing up occasionally so I'd catch it if Williams made an intro and I'd know when to tune in. As it turned out the two performances were featured almost back to back.

And in a way, I shouldn't have bothered watching. But I'm not unhappy that I saw both Sly and Haley. The time wasn't a loss, since I got three or four chapters read in my book while I waited.

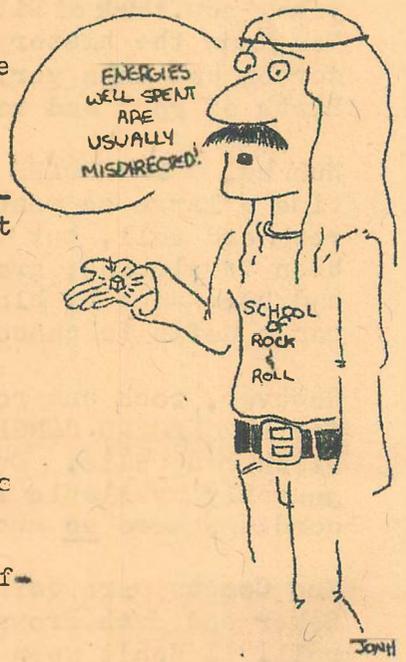
For comparison purposes, the two performances were worthless. It was impossible to use Sly and Haley as examples of new against old, try to see what was rb/rr and became plain old rock. And not necessarily by employing the old cliché that there's "no comparison". No valid comparison would be a better term.

Sly and the Family Stone led off, not trying much. They all looked more than ordinarily bemused -- possibly by the ridiculousness of their appearance on such an instant middle America thing like THE ANDY WILLIAMS SHOW. Or, maybe they'd just gotten some good stuff and didn't give a faint damn. Sly not only looked his usual about-to-giggle self, but as though he'd have some very choice comments onent this schmucky audience, to be made to the others as soon as they were off-mike.

Haley looked and sounded elderly; he made me feel all of my years just watching him, and he was no spring chicken when I was a college girl. It was a stark contrast to seeing Jerry Lee Lewis (who hit big not too much later than Haley) not too many months earlier: Lewis hasn't aged, and his act hasn't either. Haley's lost some of his old outfit, looks like -- though his lead sax player appeared to be the good-old-days' Rudy. But Haley didn't used to get out of breath that fast, and he used to yell louder, and the synchronized guitar-waving routine was a good deal peppier fifteen years ago.

Weren't we all? I mean, those of us who were around fifteen years ago.

DANCE TO THE MUSIC



It's ¹⁵ rather hard to judge, accurately, by external appearances. But I'll risk it. In the 50s Haley was a comparatively coolish type, his gimmick being slumbrous Bob Mitchum eyelids and that dumb spicurl in the middle of his forehead (which he has retained, despite a noticeable thinning of hair). Not for him Gene Vincent's kicked-in-the-balls facial contortions, or Jerry Lee Lewis's hot pant routine on a piano bench. In fact the attitude Haley managed to convey, even in the midst of things like ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK, SEE YOU LATER ALLIGATOR, etc., was one very similar to that affected by some recent very big rock outfits -- total cynicism toward the audience and shekel-counting boredom. Major interest in the audience was the gate -- how much.

Whether it was intentional or not, Haley always gave me the impression he didn't really like what he was doing. That he'd probably be happier grinding out waltzes and fox trots in some big hotel ball room. But a smart manager had convinced him rr was where the money was going to be -- and it was, for Haley at least.

Don't misunderstand. Divorced from his performance and hoking it as he was, he was good for his time. He used to have a sort of fun, I think, if for nothing else in watching the audience overreact to his very basic beat. Like a certain shall-be-nameless sf writer, I think Haley set out to analyze what was going to work, gathered his group together and perfected the routine and produced results.

But any essence of momentary enjoyment seems to be long gone. It's too bad nostalgia brought Haley and his gang out of the woodwork. There's not even the you-idiots-out-there cynicism gleaming in the eyes. They've all graduated to making themselves a freak show and watching out for the buck. And it shows.

Youth and joie de vivre, show too. Even not trying (they did "Thank You Falettime Be Nice Elf Again") Sly and the Family Stone obviously had energy and enjoyment to spare. No intensity, but a nice feel, allowing for the lack of really noisy amps and a crowd that could get out of seats and move.

Something else showed -- occurred to me -- while I was watching THE ANDY WILLIAMS SHOW. A lot of people who were young in the 50s, and a lot of people who are young now, think of Bill Haley and the Comets as the beginning of rock and roll. You know the history. There was BLACKBOARD JUNGLE and credits flashing on the screen and this very very very noisy outfit belting out "Rock Around the Clock". Birth of rock and roll and all that.

Huh uh. BLACKBOARD JUNGLE was released in 1955. It might have been the first time a large segment of the US white population had noticed the phenomenon called rock and roll, but the phenomenon had been going for years before that. It had been developing, growing, refining itself. But great amounts of advance work had been done by black musicians and singers. Not all by any means, but there was a definite chocolate flavor to the music.

However, rock and roll does owe Haley a debt. His smash recording background for BLACKBOARD JUNGLE put the whole genre of rock and roll music in marvelous black and white. But its big push it suddenly made a lot of recorded music generally available for some very hungry ears. Both r&b and rock and roll recordings were so much easier to come by after Haley did the movie track.

The Comets were doing white rock and roll. Just as the Clovers and La Vern Baker and Ruth Brown and other blacks of the 1955 era were doing black rock and roll. I don't mean there was no overlap in styles and material. Far from it.

The line began to blur very early. (Being Crow Jim I incline toward believing white r&r gained more than black from the melding -- but both of them gained something. And the listeners gained the most -- quantity and quality.)

Probably the differences in those ancient sounds isn't apparent to today's young ears. Listening to old r&r records from the early to mid-50s must be a trifle monotonous: loud, harsh, and almost uniformly corny stuff. But believe me, at the beginning Haley was acceptable to a lot of formerly straight ears -- and black performers wouldn't have been. I don't believe anybody born after '45 can quite realize just how very nervous a lot of the 50s silent majority was -- how impossible it was for them to admit they liked, unreservedly liked, music composed and/or performed and styled by blacks.

It was hard enough for them to admit they liked rock and roll.

At the very beginning of the r&b era Haley and the Comets, the Red Caps, The Diamonds, etc., performed very loud, very enjoyable rock. I enjoyed it very much.

But I didn't get it confused with other branches of rock and roll.

It wasn't until Elvis came along that things got fuzzy. Elvis put white soul into r&r. The southern accent helped. The addition of the Jordonaires heightened the effect. It was frankly popularized white soul. Later on there was a try for really getting the soul sound into r&r and the dividing line got so mushy it became a game to hear new outfits and try to guess whether they were black or white.

Pure rock has changed radically since 1955. I don't think you could build a time machine and take The Doors back to 55, plug them in as subs for a Bill Haley and the Comets concert; you'd have a near riot on your hands. The predominately white middle class audience of 1955 wouldn't have understood today's rock at all.

But, I do think you could pull the same time machine bit and inset Sly and the Family Stone in place of Little Richard -- if the audience were black. There might be a bit of muttering on some stuff, but basically the audience would dig it. That element or thread called soul runs consistently through black music from 1955 to date.

To put it another way, I can put "Crawlin'" on now and find it just as enjoyable as I did when Atlantic was first featuring The Clovers. By comparison, my Haley records are rather boring to listen to now. I enjoyed him in '55 but now the tinsel is peeling. His put-on job is flaking.

Little Richard is still around, and I still don't know whether his is all, partially, or not at all put-on. On stage the mask doesn't slip enough for me to be sure. He used to wear peg pants and a wouldn't-stay-put process and his act featured sax players stepping in unison, atop Little Richard's grand piano (which both he and Jerry Lee Lewis made a big production of playing while standing). Now it's dashikis and headbands and Afros and explaining how he taught everybody in the business how to barre and showed Hendrix where to plug in his guitar and on and on and on. As I say, I don't know how much to believe. I think he's hoking it. I liked him better in the old days, when he was screaming and waving his feet around. That was funny. Different way funny. Nowadays I'm not sure if he's a reverse Uncle Tom or for real.

"...WHY I CAN'T GO TO CONVENTIONS..."

+ Leigh Couch +

Today it's July 3rd and the howling hordes from the city are invading my fair county to the point where it isn't safe to be out on the road. The evidence of their passage is everywhere. I went shopping this morning for the ingredients for that great american religious ritual, the Fourth of July Barbeque, and saw 13 fireworks stands (fireworks are illegal in St. Louis city and county), fried chicken bones and beer cans thrown at random around the shopping center, and a thoroughly charred mattress next to the Good Will box. I kept looking for the ravaged maiden but decided that was an incurably romantic notion.

Does anyone recall the psychological experiments with rats where they were given so many opposing and different tasks to do that they went into a catatonic state? I often feel like that. But instead of complete withdrawal I do things like read, drip candle wax onto wine bottles, play with my cats, or write. Say what if reincarnation is the way it is, and all the rats come back as psychologists, and contrarivise? That would be cosmic justice!

If I were really Dedicated and Serious I would be graphing the results of my latest experiment in summer school, the rate at which magnesium dissolves in a solution of Hydrochloric acid, adding one centimeter strips, one after another and timing each one. That's where the money went this summer, by the way, and it's why you don't see me at conventions and why I can't publish.

Also there is The Job for Money! I work at a mediocre country club. It's classed as a "new money" club, meaning the people there earned it in their lifetime, as opposed to the better, or "old money" clubs, which means that your grandfather or some other ancestor earned it. It comprises a really freaky subculture. Imagine, if you will, all the things you identify as "establishment", and exaggerate the hell out of them. Then you will have some idea of what its like. The people are just as plastic in their own way as are week-end hippies in \$100 head shop outfits. They are really un-sane from my point of view, and I figure I can associate with them for only one or two more years without my head being definitely affected. But that's a whole story, and, if you are interested, I'll save the obscene details for another time.

Tuesday nights are "preserve your identity" nights for me. That's when I get together with a small circle of friends, all female. We are quasi-women's liberationists, mostly interested in working out our own problems. I've been in this for about seven months and it's greatest value to me is that I can say anything I feel like saying. That is really important when you have to be a hypocrite most of the time as I have to do. People, if you are free, I really envy you. Don't let anyone shuck you out of it!

I've decided that I am mostly a listener as opposed to being a talker. I mean that people seem to expect me to listen to them and I seem to fall naturally into the role. When I do talk, I get the impression that people are politely waiting for me to finish, occupying the dead time with their own thoughts, and are ready to resume what they were talking about. I'm almost to the point where I don't fight it anymore, and I seldom say much about myself or what I think

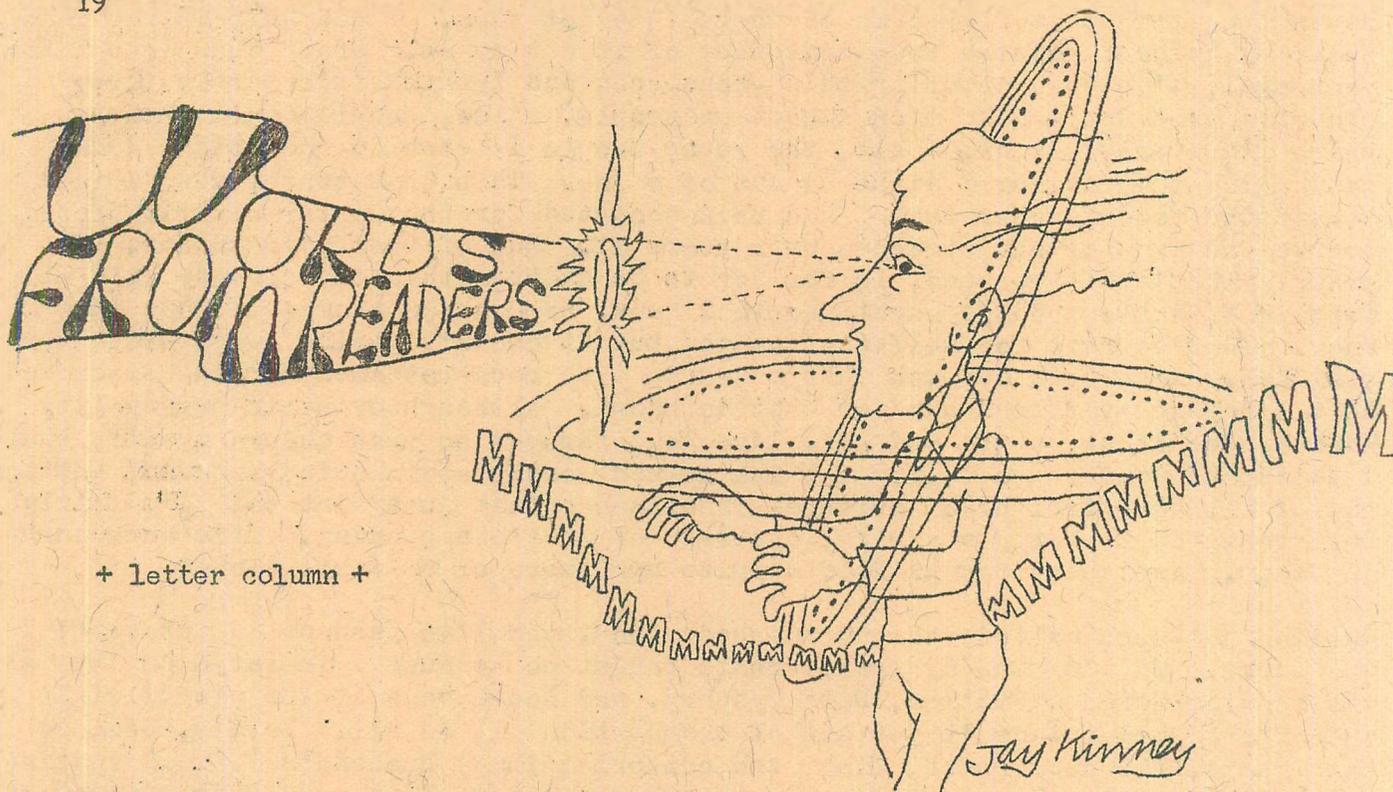
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I've also noticed that people tend to appropriate my ideas and methods without having the slightest awareness of where they got them. I had help in realizing that; my husband pointed some instances of it out to me. Since then (about four year ago), I've been watching this phenomenon and I think it's partly true. I probably just don't make much impact on people. Also, people don't seem to think I'm overly bright. Well, the young people I teach do and it's a damn good thing they do, or I might be out of a job. This past school year I told the fifth grade teacher that I had been accepted for the Master of Arts Teaching degree and some of our students over heard it. One of them said to her, "Oh great! That's all we need, is for her to be smarter than she already is!" Big frog in a little puddle! Most people I know, seem so damn sure of what they know. That's great for self-confidence, but it doesn't strike me as being very rational. I've been so much change and so much rock-bottomed "truth" discarded, that I become ever less sure of what is known. Although my basic personality has been constant, warts and all, I've gone through so much change myself, that I sometimes wonder who I am. I think it was mostly a winnowing process, getting rid of all that freight of cultural inheritance that just aint so! I'm fairly well resigned to being a cynical observer of what's happening. It's an absorbing show. Are there any kindred spirits out there or am I all alone?

Reading has been called "the unpunished vice", and I've been an addict since I was three. That's when my grandparents taught me because I insisted on it. I was reading Science Fiction, Dime Mystery, and Doc Savage at the age of eight and it's a wonder I don't get mental indigestion all in all. Lately, besides text books, the newspapers, Time, the editorial in my husband's V.F.W. magazine, underground publications, fanzines, the SF magazines, I've read "Hard Times" by Studs Terkel, an informal history of the Depression, and if you think violence is something new in the U.S. of A., read it. I even remember some of it! And then, "No Bars to Manhood" by Dan Berrigan, "Helden Two" by B.F. Skinner, "Furthest" by Suzetter Haden Edgin - very entertaining, some novel ideas about the uses of telepathy, "King Kobold" by Christopher Stasheff - he writes E. R. Burroughs style, breaking off constantly and picking up another part of the story, he's amusing, "Moderan" by David R. Bunch - here there should be a grand flourish of trumpets since I am a dedicated Bunch fan, the man's a flipping genius, always a black, menacing background and always such incredible ways of saying things! I re-read "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test" by Tom Wolfe and it seemed almost a period piece, we've come a long way since then, but maybe our path is circular? "Dwellers of the Deep" by K.M. O'Donnell, really awful, a caricature of writing, deliberately done I'm sure since Barry Malzberg is a fine writer when he cares to be. "Tau Zero" by Poul Anderson, scientifically impressive travelogue of the life-and-death-and-rebirth of the universe, but Jee-sus, I get tired of women being the fountain at which men replenish their strength, to put it in really crappy terms. "The Devil is Dead" by r.a.lafferty (that's how it is on the cover, e.e.cummings style), he's another fantastic cat whom I don't always understand. About Lafferty, I sometimes get the feeling I'm touring Roman ruins, magnificent, impressive, but damaged by time and not really whole. What remains is great enough but the quote on p. 55 might have come from a Benedicting philosopher; what has the Church done to him? "Red Moon and Black Mountain" by Joy Chant, I hate to say it but it struck me as being like something I would get off the bookmobile in the SF section, grades 6 through 8, but I enjoyed it. You get the picture I'm sure, I read almost anything and I'm not too critical. If you've read this far, perhaps you wonder where I get the time. Well I cheat on my sleep, and I don't talk much to my family. They don't notice that too much since T.V. or the stereo occupies them or they aren't here.

If I get to move to Florida, as I most desperately want to do, I'm going to go on a real reading binge! I've been getting in training to live poor for the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43



+ letter column +

Carl Barks

Thank you for the copy of Starling which was forwarded to by Gold Key some time ago. Thank you, too, for the kind words you printed about my duck stories. It was a pleasure to me to read an article that did not purport to find a lot of hidden messages and propoganda in my stories. I wrote them to be merely entertainment, and Lesleigh seemed to find them so.

Don D'Amassa, 1510½ "A" Ave., Lawton, Okla. 73501

It was a distinct pleasure to see H.P. Lovecraft getting seriously reviewed by Joe Sanders. Despite his usual classification as a writer of horror, Lovecraft wrote occasionally stories that were clearly SF, such as "In the Walls of Eryx," "At the Mountains of Madness," and "The Color Out of Space." He also wrote Dunsanian fantasy, as recently shown by Lin Carter. While much of his work is admittedly inferior, certain items ("Strange High House in the Mist" in particular) can only be described as classic.

Sanders mentioned one criticism of Lovecraft that I have given a great deal of thought to myself, namely, his habit of having heros overlook obvious solutions. He points out the extremely long introduction to "At the Mountains of Madness" as a prime example. I've long held the opinion that this obtuseness was intentionally written in these characters by Lovecraft. Rightly or wrongly, I feel that he employed it as a gimmick by which to build up suspense. How often have we sat watching a third rate horror movie, screaming silently at the heroine not to open that door, behind which we can hear an awful moaning? Admittedly it detracts from the realism of the story, but Lovecraft was more interested in mood and effect than in realism.

+Only incredibly stupid people can get in those sorts of terribly scary situations which so thrill us. After all, normal people like us would be scared away at the first horrible incident. LML +

I wonder if any of the Women's Lib people read Philip Wylie's theories of "Momism" in Generation of Vipers. Wylie feels that the female has come to dominate, rather than be dominated. In some ways, he's right. Certainly women are generally tied to the home rather than a profession, but most men are tied to their profession rather than the home. Since only a small minority of workers in this country are actually happy with their jobs, certainly protection of the women from the necessity of having to put in their weekly forty is to their advantage. The problem results simply from the fact that most Americans just wouldn't know what to do with free time if they had it. I should have that problem. If I could be independently wealthy immediately, live to a thriving 100 years of age, and never have to devote time to feeding and clothing myself, I still couldn't possibly do more than dent the mass of unread books, unlearned subjects, unseen places, undone experiences, and unmet people I would like to. Not that a woman can either, but at least in the case of childless couples, she generally has much more time of her own.

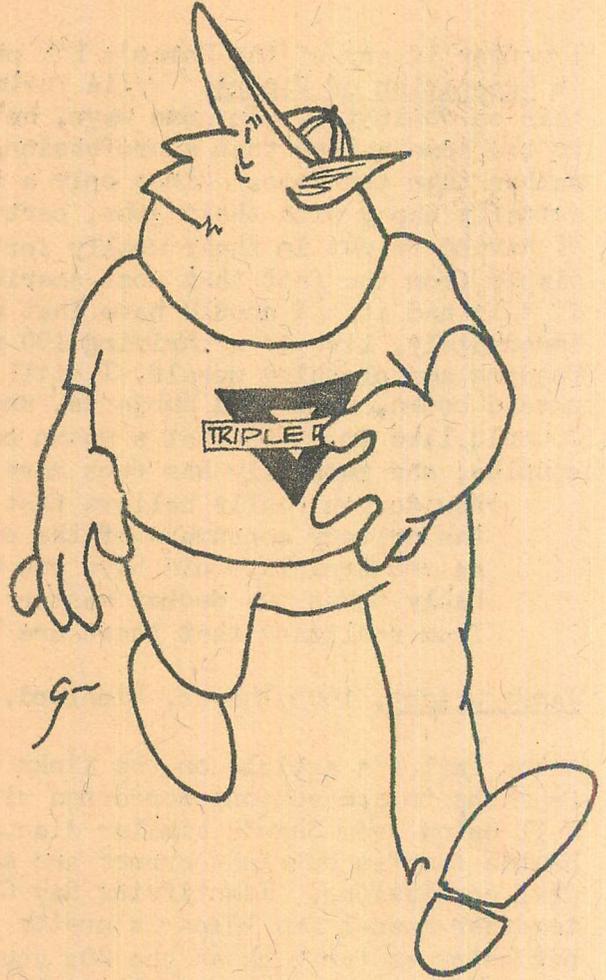
+Now do you really believe that housewives have spare time? The duties of being the primary consumers of the country is very time-consuming (and not as pleasant as commercials would have you believe). This particular duty of the women probably makes our secret masters of the economy do all they can to keep women from realizing that there are better things to do with their time. -- LML +

James Wright, 1605 Thayer, Richland, Wash. 99352

Angus Taylor's article on the kinks was interesting, mostly because it's always refreshing to see someone concerned with good music, but I found the involvement level well below Greg Shaw's similar discussion of the Kinks in Rock or Fusion. That is beside the few outright errors and serious disagreements I have with his more general conclusions. Identifying Ray Charles as being a central figure in bringing together gospel and blues is pretty far-fetched. I can't claim to be an authority but going as far back as the 20s you can find Blind Willie Johnson, a classic example of the fusion between gospel and blues. In fact there are some stylistic similarities between Blind Willie's and Ray's vocals. It probably wouldn't be hard to find older examples, possibly in the work of Blind Lemon Jefferson. Ray Charles can't even be credited with popularizing this music for post-war audiences as the bulk of post-war black music was an outgrowth of this early fusion. Compare, for example the work of gospel groups like the Swan Silvertones, Staple Singers and the Sensational Nightingales (the Swans date back over two decades) and such popular urban performers as Sonny Boy Williamson, Muddy Waters and other Chicago blues musicians from that period. Rhythm & Blues was an evolution of this musical strain and Ray Charles can only be classed as a latecomer, though his influence on white audiences might be worth researching. A good album that shows some of this history is 18 King Size Rhythm & Blues Hits on Columbia, covering over two decades of R&B on King Records.



Angus goes on to say: "In general, popular music during the post-war era showed a turning away from the prettiness and sentimentality which marked the so-called "good" popular music of the middle class. However, the sounds and lyrics of the new music were almost uniformly simple and cliched and displayed little self-awareness or pretension to the status of 'art.'" This began to change in the sixties." These statements are so fuzzy and off base that it's difficult to understand just what the author is saying. On the contrary, "popular music" did not show a turning away from prettiness in the post-war era, and, in fact, the middle class to this day still listens to the exact same type of music it did before the war. What Angus Taylor is doing here is establishing middle class "easy listening" music as The "popular music," then going on to say that it evolved into rock & roll, which just isn't so. There has always been "wild," rockin' type music, but only in the last decade has its audience increased in size enough to proclaim it The "popular music," at least the first time for this since the twenties when hot jazz was pretty widely received. And Angus' second statement, that the "new music" had simple-minded lyrics is pure rubbish. Personally I would qualify about 2/3 of the lyrics quoted in his article on the Kinks as "simple-minded," but there is little point in debating such nits. Agreed, there were few metaphysical pretentious lyrics to rock before the late sixties, but I consider this rather an advantage than a disadvantage. There's no way you can convince me that more profound or better written songs are being performed today than came from the mouth of Chuck Berry.



The only other major quibble I have with Angus Taylor's article is his estimation of "underground" FM radio. Several years ago when KMPX first started in San Francisco this had potential to be a really big thing. Nowadays I consider most of these stations unlistenable and as corrupt and stale as AM. Actually I believe the quality on AM averages better than on FM. Mostly this is due to the fact that the dj's on the stations I've heard (all on the West Coast) are abysmally ignorant of music besides having nauseating taste. For example, on KOL-FM in Seattle I heard a Bessie Smith cut followed by Steppenwolf followed by Donovan, if you can comprehend the mentality behind that. There's just no sensitivity to music there at all. Most of what's called "progressive rock" gives me a classic pain in the butt so perhaps my dislike of "underground" FM is based on this. Nevertheless, I contrast all those FM stations with KRAB-FM, a listener supported, truly "underground" station in Seattle. KRAB puts djs on the air who know about music.

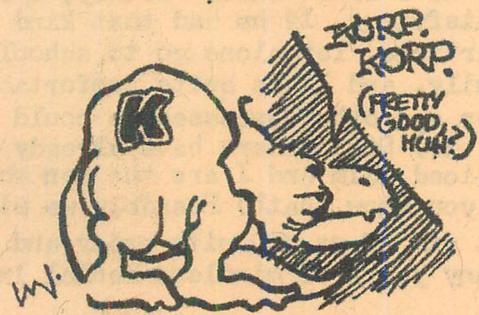
Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

The cover of the 18th Starling is an absolute masterpiece. You really should send Groucho a copy of it. I doubt that anyone else had this particular gimmick as the basis for any of the millions of caricatures that the Marx Brothers must have had down through the ages. And I was happy to see the remarks about the Marxes in

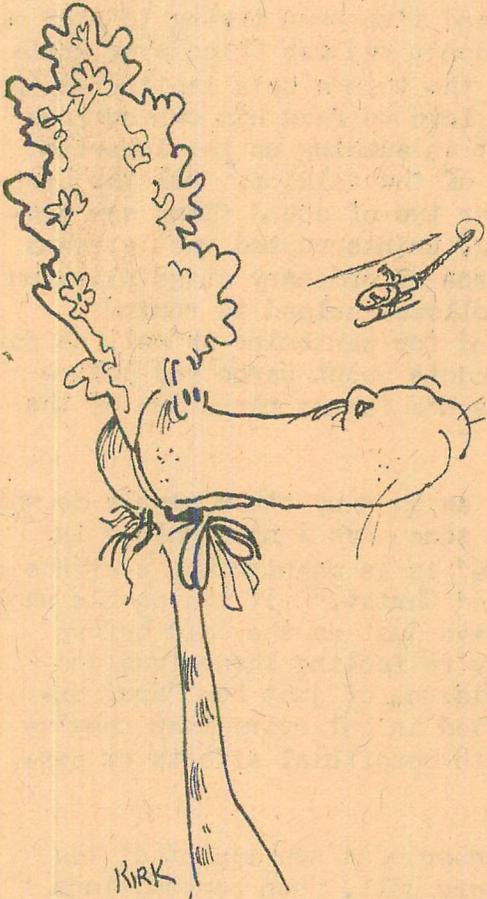
Notebookings. I've been taping the soundtracks for all their movies that appear on television around here at times when I'm not working, and I've been trying to find all the paperbacks devoted to one or more of the clan. I don't suppose Chico ever wrote an autobiography? He couldn't possibly have done all the things he's implicated in through Groucho's and Harpo's autobiographies, and I'd love to read his own outlook on the brothers' experiences. You're undoubtedly right in summing up the important thing that the Marxes contributed to the early history of the talkies. All the histories of the movies seem to agree that the first year or two of sound films saw producers and directors obsessed with dialog, never ending, uninterrupted vast streams of it, and Hollywood was threatening to become the source of ordinary stage plays on film. I imagine that Coconuts and the features that followed helped to remind people about the movies' other potentials for motion and for pantomime as well as for chatter. Incidentally, did you ever encounter the anecdote about Harpo and jelly-beans that seems to be a possible inspiration for Ellison's famous narrative of the ticktock man and the harlequin?

Scott Strauss was interesting until he copped out just as so many other people do when writing about their drug experiences. "I feel that in some ways I have gained in hours what my close friends have taken years to achieve" is as meaningless a cliché as the statement that "My life has changed since I accepted Christ." If the people who claim they are transformed by religion continue to behave just as they did before getting religion, I have the right to suspect that they're fooling themselves and aren't fooling me, and if drug advocates can't give evidence of just how "drug experiences were extremely valuable to me" I feel justified in believing that they've confused the amusement they found in hallucinations with beneficial effects on personality or character or intellect.

The real reason that Fantasia didn't become the forerunner of a new aspect of the movies may be quite simple. Music just doesn't work very well, when compositions of various styles and degrees of seriousness are rattled off one after the other without pauses of silence in which the listeners can shift their mental gears and prepare for the different nature of what comes next. Somewhere I seem to remember reading that Fantasia was played in two sections in big cities, with an intermission in the middle. But in Hagerstown, at least, it was shown uninterruptedly. I was amazed and delighted at the individual sections but felt at the end as if I never wanted to see another animated cartoon or hear another piece of serious music. I know that there were words by a narrator between selections, but there wasn't the break in the demand on the listener that you get at a live concert or recital between numbers. That may be the whole difference between moderate success and a real breakthrough for the Disney film. One minor quibble: I seem to be the only person who found the Disney animation for "Night on Bald Mountain" unappropriate, because that composition always struck me as funny rather than terrifying. It's taken from a comic opera in which the stupid hero has a nightmare and I don't know if Mussorgsky meant it to be part of the comic surrounding or a serious interruption, but it makes me grin every time I hear it.



I liked very much Joe Sanders' reviews, particularly his different sort of criticism of Lovecraft. However, the apparent stupidity of weird fiction characters in not accepting what they've seen six or eight times may be a necessary convention of the medium. It's something like the behavior of villains in spy stories and many other kinds of thrillers, whenever they capture the hero. There is no reason why the villains wouldn't kill them instantly



but we accept the idiocy of their holding him captive because it makes the story more suspenseful.

The Jim Turner article should be in the the Best Fanzine Material of 1971, if someone ever gets enough energy to start publishing anthologies the way Guy Terwilleger, I believe it was, issued them in the late 1950's.

I don't know what the Kinks' music is like but I don't care for the words as quoted in the Angus Taylor article; they strike me as what might emerge if a person with an average memory tried to write down the lyrics for Noel Coward songs after having heard them just once apiece.

Darrell Schweitzer, 113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, Pa. 19087

Starling raises that old question of What Exactly Is A Fanzine; I know there is an old joke that you can discuss anything in a fanzine besides SF, but you seem to take the idea seriously. I wouldn't want to stop you, but what you have here is an amateur magazine of popular culture, which is not necessarily a fanzine.

+Well, I've known for some time that I was publishing popular culture fanzine; (I'm a fan of various types of popular culture, right?) I've been wondering when some other people might catch on. Science fiction is one sort of popular culture that Lesleigh and I find particularly interesting. Other than

sf, I think our tastes and interests are varied enough that many fans will find Starling interesting. Of course, if one doesn't find it interesting, And I for some weird reason insist upon sending it to them, they can always write and ask that I stop -- as several people have. -- HL ++

All I can say about Jim Turner's becoming a dishwasher is that it's his life and his privilege to wreck it. I'm sure that he will get tired of it and go back for his degree, or get a degree in something else. Otherwise he has ruined his entire future. For openers, he'll never have an income worth considering. Now unless he comes from an impoverished family, he'll never be able to live at the standard he is used to. Secondly, what girl would ever want to marry a dishwasher? Thirdly, what's he going to do when someone invents a totally mechanical dishwasher. Surely a job as mindless and drudgery filled as that can be done by a not-too-complicated machine. Fourthly, unless he's got a way around it or lives in Canada, he's draft bait. Fifthly, I refuse to believe that he finds it intellectually satisfying. If he had that kind of intellect he wouldn't have been able to write the article, let alone go to school.

+First, Jim does come from an impoverished family, and lives quite comfortably these days, with all the movies, records, beer and other excesses he could possibly want. 2.) Jim doesn't want to marry. 3.) Dishwashers have already been replaced by machines, in case you haven't noticed, Jim and I are the men who run the machines. (I'm a dishwasher too, did you know that?) Possibly we will be completely replaced someday -- they could get rid of us now with paper and plastic service. But I'm optimistic; I see many years of mindless menial labor

ahead for those of us who prefer mindless work to mind dulling work -- like most desk work, for instance. 4.) Jim will never, ever be drafted; neither will I for that matter. 5.) As I've already implied, some of us prefer jobs at which we don't have to think to jobs which force us to think about things in which we aren't interested. We can come home with the energy to do things we are interested in. Oh yes, and about #2; I'm a happily married dishwasher, you know. Jim and I will perhaps someday develop careers in which we are interested, in the mean time I assure you we aren't ruining our lives. -- HL +

Sandra Miesel, 8744 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN 46240

I loved Fantasia madly when I first saw it as a tot (in fact, from this sprang my interest in mythology) and two more viewings over the years only increased my pleasure. While the treatment of the "Nutcracker Suite" sequence is fairly conventional, the amount of delicate background detail in the drawings would be economically impossible to duplicate today. Funny about the the "Pastorale" sequence: it has never, to my knowledge, been shown on TV although all the others have. Perhaps the bare-bosomed centaresses would raise eyebrows. And for this release the studio performed a wee bit of judicious editing: in the original version, the African centaresses were the maids of the others, now they only appear fanning Dionysus. The tribute to the effectiveness of the film is the way its images stick with one. Who can hear "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" without picturing Mickey Mouse?

I only regret they didn't choose to do "Finlandia" -- what a pictorial piece of music! I see golden-armored knights cantering through lush forests, sunlight and shadow glancing off their gear like a troop of elven heroes from Tolkien's Second Age. My husband says Disney could never have considered it because of the Russo-Finnish Winter War.

The Disney artists remained capable of imaginative animation -- the conferring of the wishes in Sleeping Beauty -- but on the whole they appear to have sold out for a mess of treacle.

Among the other studios' efforts, did anyone see Gav Purree? The narrative sequences were quite ordinary but the songs were done in fantasy-style with attractive results. And how about UPA's short "Tell-Tale Heart"? No music, but suitably grim and highly artistic. What do you think of the "graphic blandishment" school of TV cartooning? (The Charlie Brown films, Baba, The Grinch, etc.) Today it seems that interesting cartoons are more likely to be found in movie titles and commercials. Sigh.

Grant Canfield, 328 Lexington, San Francisco, Calif 94110

I'm too young to remember the Marx Brothers movies with any tugs of nostalgia, but I do remember "You Bet Your Life." I must call

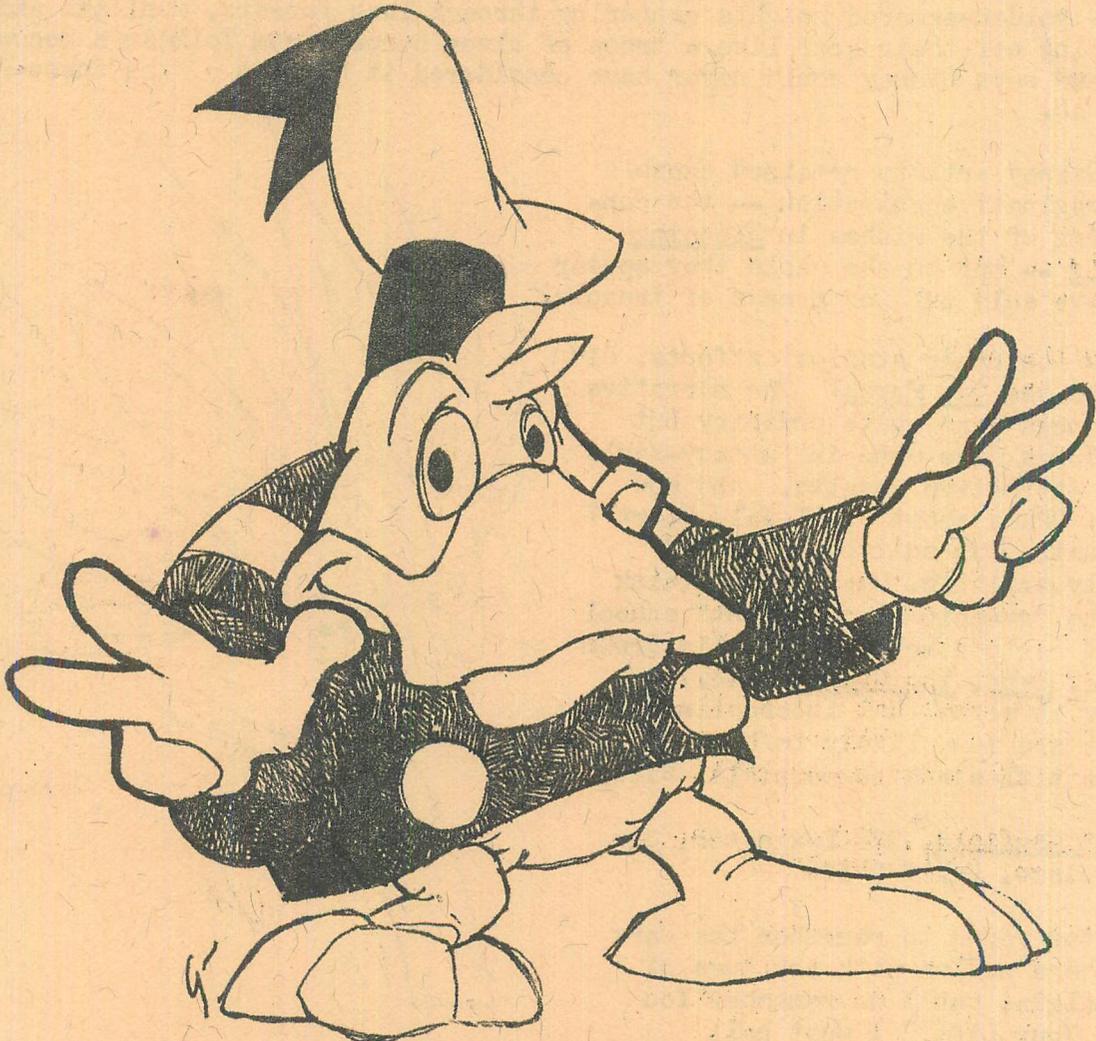


attention to a minor error in your cover for Starling 18. The duck hanging from the top should have had a moustache. Also a cigar, I believe, but I'm sure about the moustache. Also, I seem to recall (from a secondary source, the Goodgold-Carlinsky Trivia of a few years ago) that there was a fourth brother, Zeppo.

+There were 5 Marx Brothers. Gummo never made movies and Zeppo dropped out after several very unimpressive roles. Neither was important enough to mention in that brief article. -- LML +

I remember one particular "You Bet Your Life" show. One of Groucho's two on-stage contestants, or guests, was a man who declared that he had sired something in excess of 20 children. "I love my wife," he said. Groucho arched his spectacular eyebrows, pulled the cigar from his mouth, leaned over his podium and said, "I love my cigar too, but I take it out of my mouth sometimes."

Incidentally, I have been fascinated with the Donald Duck nostalgia you've been fostering. My earliest exposure to fantasy and art was through Disney comics. Because of the nature of his job, my father had to move around a lot in the State of Illinois, so every two or three years while I was growing up, sometimes every year, I found myself a new kid in town again. But I had sent away to the Disney studios for the little booklets they published, telling how to draw Donald Duck and Pluto Pup, et al., starting with circles and guide lines. Actually, I became a veritable fanatic for Disneyabilia, writing away for, and receiving, information on the production of animated films, posters, "flip books" (Mickey Mouse twirling a lasso, Donald Duck jumping



up and down in his famous squawking rage), etc. My earliest ambition in life was to be an animator for Walt Disney Studios. At any rate, I learned how to draw from Walt Disney How-to-Draw booklets, at an age when I could barely hold a pencil. As a new kid in town, I made new friends by teaching other kids how to draw Donald Duck. And showing them my flip books. At times I would even make my own flip books in the corners of my schoolbooks: D. Duck winking at the antics of Dick & Jane & Spot & Puff. I can still whip out a fast 3/4 profile of Donald, even though it's been years since I left him behind.

I may be one of the few existing fanartists who actually has an answer to that age-old question faced by all artists: "Where did you ever learn to draw?"

In the last paragraph of Lesleigh's article "Animasia" you state that Fantasia, Yellow Submarine and The Point constitute a new artform. You call for further experimentation or exploration in this field. Well, you can rest assured that there is a healthy crop of young animators and filmmakers who are exploring the field to a remarkable degree. I recently had the good fortune to attend the 2nd Annual International Festival of Animated Films at the San Francisco Art Museum. The two hour program was enough to boggle the mind. A Russian entry, a Siberian snow-&-sleigh idyll based on incredible puppet animation, was so beautiful it almost made me cry. That's not an exaggeration; there were people in the audience who were. Entries ranged in scope from 30 seconds (a brilliant, explosive bit called "The First Landing on the Sun") to 20 minutes ("The Further Adventures of Uncle Sam," an American entry in which Uncle Sam and his sidekick, a tennis-shoe-wearing eagle, are called upon to rescue Miss Liberty from the hands of aliens and foreign dastards). For "inventive graphics," I wish you could have seen a Polish entry dealing with people-consuming machines. And there was more, much more. The future of this "new artform" (if such it may be, and not merely an extension and cross-fertilization of existing artforms -- my candidate for the progenitor of All This is "Steamboat Willie") looks rosy!

Dave Hulvey, Rt. 1, Box 198, Harrisonburg, Va. 22801

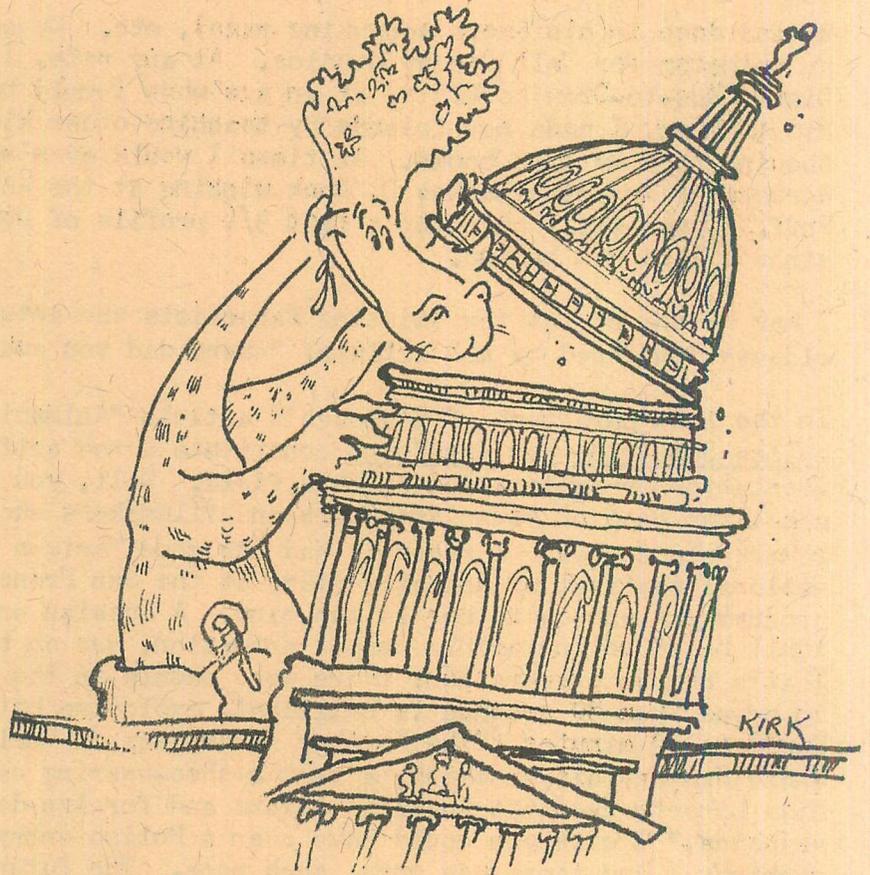
Have you seen/heard about Norton Juster's The Phantom Tollbooth? I believe it, along with the three you mentioned, constitutes part of the new artform. Certainly it has a sound structure in which a boy, Milo of San Francisco, and his dog journey via a candy cane colored box cum grano salis tollbooth to the land of Dictionopolis. There, they engage in all manner of wonderful, multicolored adventures, from escaping the yellow-they-were-of-eye inhabitants of the Doldrums that slurped with great, menacing gulps after Milo to rescuing the Princesses of Rhyme & Reason from an airy fortress in the monster-guarded Mountains of Ignorance. The boy and his dog also meet the fiendish Dr. Dischord, and his pet, a purple thingy called, appropriately enough, his Awful Dynne. The central conflict arises between the rulers of Dictionopolis -- who venerates words above all -- and his biological brother who rules Digitopolis -- and considers numbers the Whole. Thus, the two engage in a lively rivalry which affords Milo a splendid chance to be a hero, save the Princesses who are innocent victims of the power-struggle, and appear in Kaleidoscopic Trip Colors as he battles the monsters without quater -- or nickel or dime . . . -- and races up glass-ice steps to free the princesses. Sigh! How I'm glad my seven-year old's sense-of-wonder is still intact! This Oz-like tale deserves as much credit as the others you've mentioned.

+Yes, I saw The Phantom Tollboth just before I wrote the article, and was singularly unimpressed! The animation and story could have been a great deal better -- the book was better -- and the songs were terrible! -- LML +

Andy Offutt, Funny Farm, Halde-
man, Ky. 40329

It's probably pretty well known now by most people that I think most "reviews" are very bad news indeed; that most reviewers seldom are, but should be, and nothing more; that any man who allows himself to be called "Critic" should slay the callers and begin immediately to look for honest work. I said most, and I mean both in and out of sf.

Lovecraft was and is -- I tried again three days ago -- just about unreadable to me. (But I was the Senior English Major who was told, drily, "Your problem, Mister offutt, is that you think everyone should have been influenced by Hemingway . . . and that was so difficult for Chaucer and Milton and Sterne." And everybody in class laughed, and I grinned, but I noticed that the professor hooked those names together by ands. . . And of course he was right. What Sterne and Fenimore Cooper and Dostoyevski and Tolstoi needed was a little honest editing and access to Montesquieu's statement that "No man knows how to write until he learns to leave out the intermediate sentences.")



In my judgment Lovecraft never learned that lesson, along with a lot of others, and more importantly he never learned how to leave out the extraneous words. I've just read Tom Disch's collection of shorts Fun with You New Head. There are several good ones in there, but Disch's "The Roaches" made me realize that this was the sort of thing Lovecraft and Poe might have been capable of had they been somehow able to survive into the 1960's -- and regurgitate the thesauri both swallowed at early ages and regurgitated in brief bursts every time they wrote stories.

Two interesting facets of the "review" of The Traveler in Black. There was no mention of his fantastic versatility; his ability to handle a variety of styles. Had his name not been on that book you'd never have known it was written by the creator of Stand on Zanzibar, and had his name not been on that you'd not have realized it was written by the creator of Double, Double, who also wrote. . . well. Surely the points made.

The other aspect was the "reviewer's" use of the word "sadism." I enjoy reading sadism and the interconnected masochism, and I enjoyed reading The Traveler in Black. But lord god Man, there's no resemblance between anything I've ever read of Brunner and Sadism! True, he has dropped a bit of sexuality into his writing now and again, carefully, but it's never been of the sadistic sort. A lot of people got zapped in that book, in a variety of pretty ugly ways. But no one stood back quivering and flowing and spurting in orgasm betime. There WAS one ruler who seemed to get a little juice

from tormenting people -- seems to be an occupational concomitant of rulership, what?²⁸
-- and maybe he had a sadistic bent. But even he wasn't a sadist.

There's a great deal of cruelty and (not-overly-described) gore and what we call "poetic justice" in The Traveler in Black, but there ain't no sadism. I read it once and enjoyed it; had there been, I'd probably have read it twice. Mental "sadists" who go out and buy it on the basis of that "review" are going to be not only disappointed but angry.

Jerry Kaufman, 417 W. 118th St., Apt 63, New York, New York 10027 (CoA)

I have a few remarks about Fantasia, too. I disagree with Lesleigh about what was best in Fantasia. This could be chalked up to de gustibus, but I have my reasons for disagreeing. I found the Pastorale sequence to be sentimental, and cute in the perjorative sense. Darling little cherubs, cute little winged horseys. . . Pegasus was beautiful, but the fat little babies were dunderous (a word I've just invented to mean blubbery, sqwechy, fubsy. . . I am at a loss for words.) The Sacre du Printemps, too, was flawed. The scene was announced as accurate, according to the scientific knowledge of the times, and yet dinosaur mothers were shown herding their babies. I read dozens of books about dinosaurs when I was a kid, all written from the twenties to the fifties, and they agreed that dinosaurs, like most lizards, laid their eggs and left them. So Disney was being purposely inaccurate, and he was being inaccurate so that he could be sentimental.

I find the best part of the film to have been the Night on Bald Mountain (ignoring the little religious tag of Ave Maria at the end.) It still scares me when I see it. It isn't sentimental, the drawing style is more than production line Disney, the use of color is a departure, and it is fun to watch more than once.

Mention to Jim Turner that I once worked in a hospital kitchen, and had an argument with a girl there over a Hobart. I claimed that it was a man and she claimed that it was a woman.

+Well, the Hobart at Boone County Hospital must be a man because the sexists won't hire female dishwashers. LML +

Daniel N. Dickinson, 53 Main Mill #26, Plattsburgh, NY 12901

I must admit that when I first opened Starling and saw the dread phrase "Pop culture" I almost gagged -- despite my misgivings I enjoyed the fanzine anyhow. To my mind "pop culture" is a highly nebulous thing, and like sf, probably a misnomer. While the subject in question is certainly "popular" there is a certain sticky sensation I get in my throat when I reach that word "culture." Okay, I agree that in an anthropological way the subject matter is probably "culture" but culture, as people define it, rather than the scientists define it seems to have a certain permanence about it. Talk to the common hard-hat (for, like it or not, he's the people) and ask him what culture is. Two to one he says "That Beethoven stuff," or something like that. In the same way, ask the African tribesman -- again I'd be willing to bet that he mentions something old and of permanent artistic and religious value, at least to the people of his tribe. If people don't think popular culture is culture at all -- than can it be?

+In 1924, Gilbert Seldes wrote a book called The Seven Lively Arts, about the popular arts. Seldes was one of the first respected critics to champion the cause of the popular arts against the sort of cultural snobbery you seem concerned about. In my opinion the "fine arts" are those which have stood well the test of time -- they were yesterday's "popular art." They can be counted upon to be worthwhile. Today's popular art -- not yet old enough to have

stood the test of time and to be called "fine" -- is much less likely to be worthwhile, much more likely to be chaff. -- HL +

Richard Gordon, 19 Ryecroft St., New Kings Road, London S.W. 6, England

I think most people in this country might tend, initially, to dismiss Firesign Theatre as a drugged up American degeneration of the Goons, which is maybe why Columbia is shy of releasing their albums here. But of course that to put it mildly is a prejudice. They do resemble the Goons and the recording made of the Goon's radio broadcasts from the mid-fifties still nail the "Establishment"-reality right on the head. But I don't think the Goons were anything like so multi-dimensional, they couldn't have been. One of the things I think the Firesign Theatre are probably doing is defining Reality with great wildly manic paranoia which is probably accurate definition for that very reason. . .slabs of overlain reality sandwiches each operating upon different mental tastebuds all at the same instant, the humor relating to so many other instants and implications and references and concepts that you overload. . . peak communication potential almost attained so far as Sound is concerned as the medium. . .touch of Philip K. Dick in there.

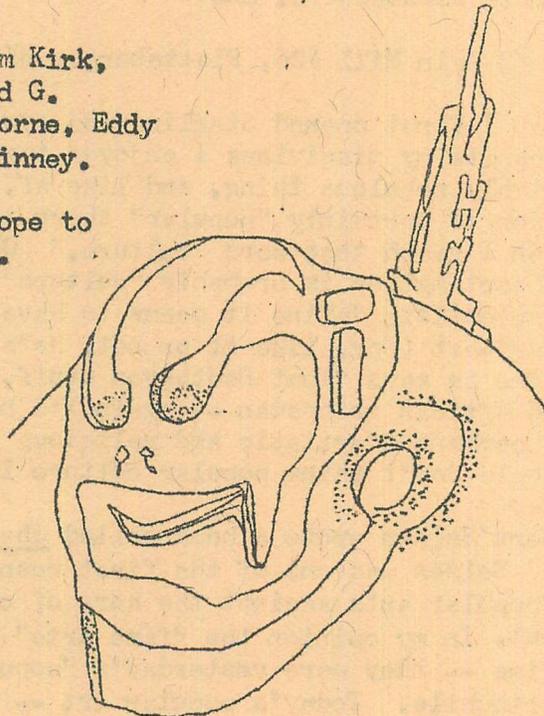
But, if you haven't, give the Goons a listen sometime. . . Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe, and Spike Milligan.

The real equivalent here of Firesign Theatre I think is probably the tv show, "Monty Python's Flying Circus," which is the only thing on the screen that remotely approaches a full use of the potentiality of the medium. Despite its great popularity, it's remained uncompromised, remained totally freaky multi-dimensional, sick, morbid, nasty, hysterical, sharp, provocative, and all the other adjectives you can think of. Its animations by Terry Filliam are particularly surreal -- full of baggy men with moustaches and bowlers sprouting tails like peacocks and getting squashed into the ground by huge feet descending from the heavens. . .other governmental figures wheel about the landscape in prams, suffer many mutilations and indignities.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Rick Stoker, Dan Osterman, Tim Kirk,
Jonh Ingham, Cy Chauvin, Donald G.
Keller, W. G. Bliss, Creath Thorne, Eddy
C. Bertin, John Brunner, Jay Kinney.

Thanks to all of you, and we hope to
here from you about this issue.



IT ALL COMES
OUT IN THE WASH...



THE CALL OF OXYDOL + Jim Turner +

I have always wondered at the seeming inability of the human species to recognize and abhor the inevitable, ineffable and loathsome menace attendant upon objects of mere prosaic technological utility. This racial failure has been all the more apparent since the disappearance of my old uncle Nehemiah Scamander. I say he disappeared, for I will not quarrel with those who say so for they know better than this shy, but amiable, recluse. I say he disappeared because they say he did and because the newspapers say he did. But I know better. This knowledge--so bitterly attained--taxes the puny human mind beyond endurance. Already the knowledge of my certain and, I blanch to say it, my disgusting and eternally hellish death seeps into my blasted soul from out of cavernous depths of the unnameable stars and the hell-wrapped dank and reeking bowels of the lowering earth and drives me shuddering to the shiny steel automatic pistol in the desk. But not yet. Soon it will set me free. But the story must be told; I must use my precious hours and minutes well before the stalking doom that is mine overwhelms me and spirits my quaking essence into places no man was meant to know.

My elderly avuncular relative Nehemiah Scamander owned and operated a coin laundry in a modest university town in the middlewest. It stood in a neighborhood once proud but now the pavements were split as putrescent green grass oozed up from the holes. Decrepit old houses with quaint tarpaper roofs where once dwelled fine Nordic tenants were now soiled by stinking mongrel hordes of hairy and unwashed students so lost in degeneracy that they differed from each other as to sex. Where the old tenants had walked in their tight black jeans and white socks and orange plastic caps and driven in fine elegant old 1957 LeSabres with front plates of fine American rustic humor like "Women Hitchhikers Only," the streets now crawled with vulgar motorcycles snarling unbearably in a shameful erotic manner. Passersby would call to each other loudly like common Italians and intolerable music would issue from windows, harsh and alien as the beating of some Ethiopian war toscin.

The high sheriff of the locality--well-intentioned but stolid like all Celts--notified me of the vanished and perplexing condition of Uncle Nehemiah. I was shocked. He had been a reclusive old gentleman of fine Yankee stock and so genial an old fellow I was inclined to doubt the supposed Bohemian strain on his mother's side. He had left a cryptic note to the effect that I was to take over his estate and a certain mysterious strongbox, the key of which he had en-

³¹
trusted to me in a brief and no more enlightening note he had mailed to me dated the day of his disappearance.

Being pressed for funds like most gentlemen scholars of modest means my first action was to reopen the laundry in the appalling and abominable student neighborhood. After several days of business I was able to purchase sustenance and attend to the sad and unfinished business of the neglected and mysterious strong-box.

I cannot recall my exact emotions in examining it for the first time. It was of stout steel with a huge lock that would have kept out a Hungarian. The box was old and worn, and covered with a layer of fine dust. It should have been dusted by the maid of course but she was a drunken old Swede. The key turned easily in the lock though I evinced some difficulty in raising the lid which was of several pounds weight.

You may imagine my interest in finding a number of clippings from what appeared to be newspapers or magazines and a sealed envelope. I was surprised to discover my own name neatly inscribed upon the envelope with an injunction to first read the clippings and then the enclosed missive before I did as I saw fit to be my duty as an amiable and scholarly recluse of Aryan variety. I knew at once that some higher duty than mere and vulgar curiosity must propel me toward the solution of what frankly promised to be, as the English say, a sticky wicket, but which my stolid and more prosaic microencaphalic stock would inevitably construe to be at least puzzling to a considerable degree.

The clippings were all rather recent things, hastily snipped from their parent organs without due attentions to the recordings of time and place in order to locate them more precisely in our world of obvious empiricism. They appeared to be mostly from small journals and papers specializing in the coin laundry commerce and, when viewed in concordance with each other's presence, presented a distressing similarity in content, surprising in sources so obviously dissimilar in location.

It seemed that a number of all-night laundries across the nation, small businesses near colleges, universities and other impedimenta of civilization, were reporting undue congregating of the more exotic specimens of students late in the night in these laundries. Passing motorists would report weird blue lights flickering out onto the streets and eldritch wild chanting and the flickering of immense tapers. Peculiar and lingering odours would have been found to have invaded the premises when the attendant arrived the next morning. There would be unearthly green wine bottles and the drippings of odd and curious candles with the butts of queer hand-rolled cigarettes within them. Guitar picks would abound and occasional traces of seemingly abandoned articles of clothing not generally of the sort for adequate printed description and--strangest of all--small oblong pasteboard boxes with foreign designs and the label "Mysore Bhanghi Dhoop Factory."

It was at this ominous point that I dropped the sheaf of clippings and reeled back in horror. Where had I first heard those wholly odious and eldritch words, "Mysore Bhanghi Dhoop Factory"? Some unhealthy influence seemed to slowly but inexorably seep up from those printed pages and gnaw at my staggering soul.

Then I knew as remembrance blighted my mind. It had been only the month before that I read of that dreadful factory in the weekly GRIT. It was surely an evil and deathly place given over to the preparation of incense commonly used

by acolytes of unholy and unhalloved thoughts, for covering the wet bactrachian³² stench of things unnameable and deeds better left uncommitted.

But to what purpose? Why should insense be found in a laundry together with such other refuse as described in those sundry and divers chronicles?

With faltering hands I opened the envelope. Several sheets of Nordically white good bond slid out into my fingers, covered utterly with the drabbed and eccentric handing of him I knew to be no longer present at his former abodes. I refer of course to none other than Nehemiah Scamander.

Opening the pages and seperating them, for they were unaccountably adhesive to each other in a manner seemingly inconsistent with good bond and reeking of some unknown thing redolent of something I seemed to wish to grasp but could not, I began to peruse a narrative so distantly removed from our pposaic reality as to boggle one less accustomed to unnameable horrors and forbidden knowledge than are most scholarly but amiable gentlemen recluses of the excellent white race.

"My dear boy," it began, "These last few days have been so filled with unendurable happenings that I am overwhelmed by a feeling of stalking doom. Forgive me if I seem to babble but you can never guess what I have endured in these past days. Forgive me if my chronicle shocks a person of your high sensibilities and spotless character but the tale must be told in its shameful, baffling and altogether mindwrenching entirety.

"You have read the enclosed clippings or I assume you have. Do so if you have not before going farther. These items of note began appearing at times closely associated in temporal distance fo each other from laundry journals from all over our wonderful Republican nation. I was struck by their strange similarity and began to collect them and would often discover myself during periods of ennui to be musing over them and attempting to discern some pattern, if any.

"I know that you can imagine my distress upon entering my own place of business one fine sunny morning in the recent fall and finding similar rubbish and remnants scattered hither, tither and yon upon my previously spotless premises.

"I decided at once to put a stop, at least in my own laundry, to whatever unholy things were transpiring in the nocturnal hours. I resolved at once to cease operation of the laundry at night and to rely wholly upon such revenues as might come to mine from keeping a dawn to dusk establishment. So I hauled away the shamefull mess of bottles and--forgive me--undergarments, and scraped, with much arduous toil, up the varicoloured candle drippings, putting, as the saying might go, my house in order. I locked up that night with a clear conscience.

"Early the next day I looked up from filling the detergent vender to observe that I had visitors that I immediately suspected to be of the distinctly unwholesome and unwelcome variety.

"One was a short and common. sort of fellow, with a sallow olive complexion I found strangely unpleasing, wizened and humpbacked with sharp piercing eyes. He wore a faded tee shirt with the meaningless legend 'Plaster Casters of America' embroidered on it in golden thread and stood leaning on a cane of sickeningly carved wood which he clutched in a hand like that of a big buck Hew. He radiated a sense of great age as he leared into my face and breathed his sickening breathe, reeking of wheatgern and yogurt, into my gagging system.

"His companion was no more pleasant in aspect, being a big wooly darky, dressed

³³ in the gaudy, cheap manner and wearing the expression of happy sheeplike stupidity so peculiar to his unfortunate species that are destined inevitably to be our hewers of wood and drawers of water. He drew the nictitating membranes from across his half-hidden vacant eyes and grinned with an expression verging on a perverted leer (for I have never known a darky without some erotic curiosity and behavior,) and said, 'Howdy, ah's Porkwheat.'

"The old man flashed him a contemptuous look and struck him across the face with his cane. 'Shut up, nigger' he whined. Anger seemed to flare in the thing's eyes and I realized he must be only a half breed, as submission is ever the way of the real article.

"The old man turned to me. 'The laundry must be open tonight,' he hissed, the tongue sliding from between his empty gums like a pink dripping serpent, curiously mottled with great blue veins and choleric purple on the tip. I was reminded of the sickening sea with its unearthly and unknowable odours.

"That is impossible,' I insisted stoutly, remembering who I was and what they undoubtedly were.

"'Youse bettah oben hit tonite or our lawd Oxyd--' A single glance from the old man's suddenly three-lobed eyes silenced Porkwheat. I watched aghast as his eyes shifted back to what others might brand as a kind of normality.

"The blackamoor remained cringing as the old man once more surveyed me. 'Beware,' he warned, 'Forget the name of Oxydol. There are things launderers were not meant to know.'

"He turned and began to leave me, the person of undoubted Moorish extraction preceding him in his place. The old man looked back over his shoulder at me in a manner almost sardonic, but somehow I knew not why or even if for certain, but in no wise friendly.

"Dear boy, you may imagine my distress. I locked up though it was in the middle of the day, depriving myself of no end of good American commerce and hastened to my abode where I pondered at length over these quaint and curious and unwelcome events which had so readily and unpredictably occurred in so brief a time with so little of what might be construed as sound reason. I was, as you may well imagine, in something of a quandry.

"Along toward the dinner hour I was sitting down to my meagre but not unwholesome repast of good pastoral food and was aroused by the sound of someone seemingly knocking on my back door. Wondering who was calling at so familiar an hour and place, I opened.

"It was then that I beheld the most extraordinary female creature. She had great greasy and ratty piles of frizzy hair in colour most similar to that of gold but not altogether of that exact shade or tint and a mottled half-breed complexion. She was clad in a dirty and oddly patched pair of short breeches with frizzled ends fully as unkempt as her pelt and a thin -- I shudder to say diaphanous -- shirt or tunic of sorts which barely restrained a grotesque set of great amorphous mammalian appendages. I was overcome with shock as well you might suppose.

"She whispered to me in a sort of choked hiss as she pressed her way into my stall and altogether proper bachelor residential premises, 'Hi, I'm April Snow-

berger, and I've come to do wonderful things for you.'

34

"At once and almost by some arcane means she divested herself of her upper wrapping and drew me to her as by some superhuman strength I knew I could never resist. I cried against her but without avail. As I gazed uncontrollably into her eyes I found myself, despite all gentle upbringing and scruple, losing my iron control in her clammy hot embrace. The wet massages of her opened leering lips sent unknown and unguessable surges of emotion and uncontrollable strength throughout my laboring body.

"I tried to fight but it was hopeless. She drew me to the cold, tiled floor, crooning, 'And tonight you will open the laundry, won't you please, please, for me, and we'll always do wonderful things together, yes, oh yes, just us--'

"Horror-struck, I found myself moaning yes, yes, I would, I would, I would do anything she said and my entire soul was slipping from out of my puny body into some unknowable and unguessable place in the nether universe, plunging into the great dark where unwholesome things lurk, where it is dark and dirty and old spiders whispering to each other, and I was gone and the world was gone, I had no control, and finally I screamed and screamed again and that was all that saved me, dear boy. For it was then she broke away with a vicious sneer and did she? could she? have laughed?

"She seized her worthless garments and fled my home with no parting word but with a terrible cry over her shoulder as she ran out into the moon and the night through the hanging trees in the back of the highwalled yard that is my own. I slowly raised myself from the pile of garments I had somehow shed and for some reason and gagged as though I had drunk in the bracing stenches of the tomb.

"But it was worse, far more, and more shameful and I blush to write it as you cringe to read it. For in our nameless and unholy struggles. . . somehow I had unleashed that which is the source of generation and life.

"Somehow I peeled my hands from where the horror of the situation had them clenched and attempted some form of composure. What to do? What to do?

"There is some unholy thing that goes on in that laundry, my darling nephew. Therefore, I am going to find out what it is and put an end to it before it attains greater status. I have written the letters, done what has to be done.

"If you read this, then you know I have failed. If so, I give you a trust. Whatever this thing is, it must end. Your loving and tender uncle, Nehemiah Scamander."

I wasted no time in useless thought but, arming myself with the key to the laundry, I undertook the long walk. It was dark, very dark, and the trees shuddered against one another suggestively in inexplicable wind under the gibbous moon.

The key turned easily in the oiled lock. I threw on the light and sat on a bench by a wall. It was three exactly. First the room shook and all the washers went on at once, their gleaming white sides shaking and churning and water flowed and then all the dryers began to revolve at once as their little red lights flashed in unison and the building shook harder and I might have heard chanting that began low, "Oxydol, Oxydol, Lord of the Churning Detergent Foam," ghostly white light erupted over the premises and I saw, saw that which was there to be seen,

³⁵
that which had come when its time was nigh, and I saw all and realized all and ran out into the night screaming and into madness.

Soon I shall be dead. I care not. He who saw what I saw cares for little.

For there before me it reared up, faceless and amorphous, two great vertical lips and a great animal pelt reeking of unguessable seas and its eldritch and unknowable life, opening wide to disclose rows of razor fangs and mandibles and a monstrous gaping throat, all red and pink and hanging with strange molds, still masticating the mangled, spoiled, but still recognizable corpse of him who had been my uncle, Nehemiah Scamander!

- finis -

* * * *

Ms. Found in Bottles, Continued:

The Disney company bought up some 27,500 acres of Florida swampland and orange groves (or about 43 square miles) and are building something to dwarf the original Disney land in California. Much of the land will not be used for years, but the Theme Park (corresponding to the California operation) will stretch for over a mile, and there are many other facilities.

Most of the Theme Park was nearing completion when we saw it, and I'd judge that it resembles the West Coast thing on a grander scale (I've never been to Disneyland, only seen pictures). Cinderella's castle looks like Sleeping Beauty's, and the 1890's American town is like a smaller one out west. There are mechanical elephants and hippopotami along the canal trip (but also a large Cambodian ruin and the Swiss Family Robinson's tree house -- a gigantic artificial banyan tree mit haus). There's a Polynesian long house, a 16th century European village, a haunted house (a la West Coast), and *many*other*attractions. The Tomorrowland section was the only one really far from completion, and it won't be ready in October.

I enjoyed going behind the scenes, including the enormous basement, a mile long that runs beneath the Theme Park, where workmen travel about in little motor-carts and thick pipes and cables carry electricity, hot and cold and iced water, heat, air conditioning, and vacuum trash removal systems, all from a central plant. We also saw the factories, all on Disney's land, that manufacture the exhibits out of wood, fibreglass, steel and what-not, plus another that built the room modules for the hotel.

Oh yes, Disney has built a hotel (the monorail goes through the lobby), two or three motels, and plans more of each. Two golf courses have been finished, and a whole resort complex is growing up. They plan eventually to build a futuristic city with permanent inhabitants.

They've learned from California, where others got rich building motels and hamburger stands near Disneyland. Here in Florida, Disney plans to get all the gravy.

The operation is a monument to what the Disney organization is known for: imagination, large-scale planning, ingenuity, and gross lack of taste.

--July, 1971

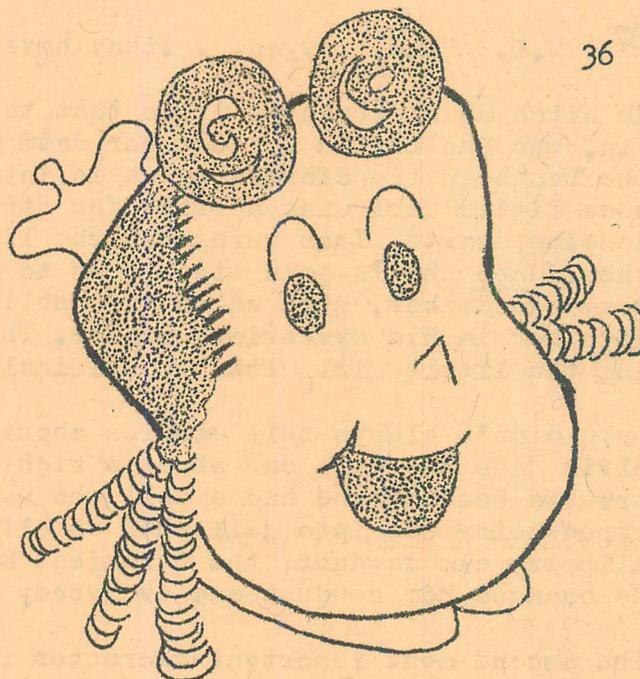
GREAT AMERICAN COMICS: PART TWO

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JOHN STANLEY'S

Little Lulu

+ Lesleigh Luttrell +



Little Lulu looks like one of those nice, safe little comics that mothers would like to have their children read, and that even Dr. Wertham could find nothing wrong with. That just proves that comics don't have to be 'bad' to be good. Little Lulu books, as done by John Stanley in the fifties and early sixties, are as enjoyable and creative as any other comic you could name, and they are just as enjoyable to read now as they were then.

Perhaps the best thing about Little Lulu is how real the characters are. Lulu Moppet is the title character. She has ringlets and always wears a red dress. She likes going to school, reading books, playing with dolls, eating ice cream cones and outwitting the boys. She is old enough to sometimes take care of Alvin Jones, the often bad and sometimes cynical little boy who lives next door. But Lulu can always make Alvin behave by telling him a story.

Lulu's stories are really the most imaginative things in the books. They are almost always about the 'poor little girl' who is Lulu herself, with a lot of patches on her dress. The remarkable thing about these stories is that they are very much like the stories children do make up. Lulu is the poorest little girl in the world, who lives with her mother in a house devoid of furniture. They live off the beeblerries which the little girl gathers every day in the woods. She is an extremely nice little girl, and this makes Little Itch, a witch girl who lives with her Aunt Hazel in the woods, hate her. Itch is always thinking of ways to get even with the little girl, but they always backfire.

One of my favorite stories is called 'ol witch hazel and the goblin with the tender toes'. In this, the poor little girl is invited by the handsome rich boy to go to a costume ball, because he is sure her patched dress will win a prize. Little Itch is infuriated by this, and her aunt suggests she go to the ball with a goblin.

L.I. "You can't dance with a goblin auntie! You know what would happen if you let them put their arms around you! Brrr! It's the end!"

So Witch Hazel arranges it so that the poor little girl is picked up by a goblin, who she thinks is just her date in costume, and the rich boy takes Itch, who has been transformed by magic into a beautiful little girl. At the ball the poor little girl wins a prize for "the most original partner!", and when the dancing starts, Itch turns out the lights because; "It's better that nobody should see what's going to happen to her!" However, the little girl, being a very bad dancer, stepped on the goblin's toes before he had a chance to do away with her in his mysterious manner. The goblin shot through the ceiling, leaving the little girl with her original partner.

Lulu didn't always tell stories about this poor little girl. At least once, Alvin made her tell one about a rich little girl. This girl got into a lot of trouble because she had a doll who was a kleptomaniac. However, the girl escaped being put into jail when an elf discovered that the doll was filled with slippery elm sawdust, the stickiest kind, which made her have sticky fingers. He changed her sawdust and everybody lived happily ever after.

The second most important character in the books is, of course, Tubby Tompkins. He is a fat little boy, but he is not a stereotype. He is sometimes bested, but he often wins in a contest of wits. Lulu and Tubby often fight, but they are really good friends. Once, when Tubby very unwillingly took Lulu to a ballgame and teased her through the entire game for bringing her baseball glove, Lulu gave him the ball she had caught and got autographed, instead of selling it.

Tubby does have some very unusual friends, the men from Mars. These are tiny men who travel about in a flying saucer and seemingly have revealed themselves only to Tubby. Sammi is the only one of these identified as an individual. They come with all the accoutrements, such as anti-gravity belts, shrinking pills ("Millions of years ago we little men on Mars were even bigger than your Earth men, Tub. . .but Mars got so overcrowded we had to do something about it. . . so we invented a pill that made us small!"), etc. One could perhaps accept these little men as real, and consider Little Lulu as science fiction. Or, they may simply be Tubby's more realistic version of Lulu's made-up stories.

The only people who really don't like Tubby are Gloria Darling and Wilbur the rich boy. These two are very attractive, but also very stuck-up. Tubby often goes to a great deal of trouble to get Gloria to go out with him, often with no success, and Lulu does the same for Wilbur. But Gloria and Wilbur seldom deign to play with the more common children. When Gloria was chosen to name the baby hippo at the zoo, Tubby, knowing how she felt about him, was sure she would name it 'Tubby'. He decided to change his name to Lancelot, and spends an entire day telling everyone his new name. Of course, the hippo is named Lancelot. ("Hey Tub, you been to the zoo to see your new twin brother! Ha, ha, ha!!!").

There is probably one other person who doesn't like Tub very much, and that is Lulu's father. Tubby often, in his secret identity as the Spider, finds out when Mr. Moppet has done something stupid. For example, Lulu once told Tub that somehow her bottle of Tiny Tot's Tonic had been emptied over night. Tub thought it was a case for the Spider and came to Lulu's house disguised as a table with a comic book on it. Tubby is sure that Mr. Moppet is the culprit.

"Why would my Pop want to drink my Tiny Tot's Tonic?"

"He wants to build himself up 'cause he's afraid of me!"

"Phooey! Who's afraid of you?"

"Well, you're not 'cause you know me too good. . .but to your Pop I've always been a mysterious stranger!"

"Listen, Tub, I don't want you to solve this case! Go home!"

"I will not! The wheels of justice have been set in motion! I'll follow your Pop to the farthest corners of the earth! I'll follow him over mountains an' rivers an' through blizzards! By the way, where is he right now?"

"Upstairs in his bedroom, I guess!"

"Darn! Do I have to walk all the way upstairs?"

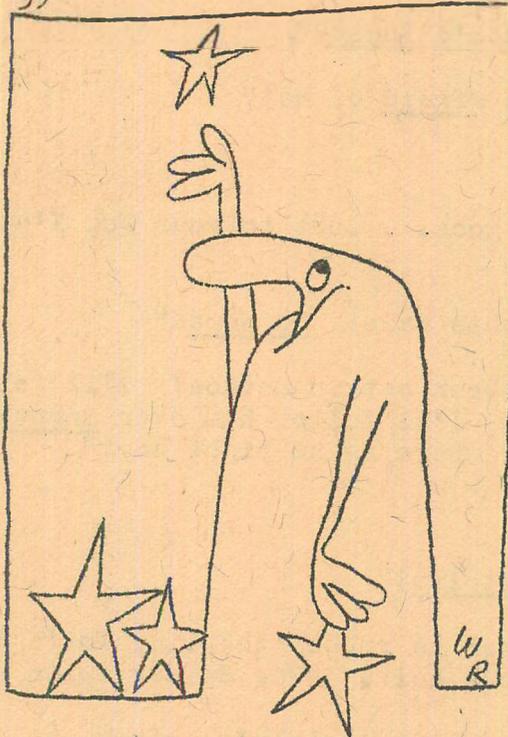
Needless to say, Mr. Moppet finally reveals that he rubbed the Tiny Tot's Tonic on his head in a lost ditch attempt to grow some hair. "The Spider spins again!"

The parents of the strip have little real personality. Lulu's mother, as well as Tubby's are just foils, remarkable only because they always wear spiked heels. Tubby's father is a seldom-seen Businessman, and Mrs. Jones is an extremely harried young mother. Other parents are never seen. The only other adults of consequence are Mr. McNabben, the truant officer who is almost neurotic on the subject of catching hooky players, and Miss Feeny, the spinster school teacher who often gives much-dreaded Tea and Dance's for her pupils.

There are a number of other children in the books. Lulu's best friend is Annie. The two things Annie does best are play with dolls, and fight with her brother Iggy (who incidentally is one of those strange bald comic children). Iggy, along with Willie and Eddie make up Tubby's gang. This gang was mentioned in All in Color for a Dime (a very fine book), in the article about other boys gangs such as the Boy Commandos and the Little Wise Guys. However, Tubby's gang is not at all fantastic. They are simply four boys who have built a wooden club house next to the woods and engage in such activities as having circuses, secret meetings, and once-a-month "don't talk to girls day". (Of course, Lulu broke their silence when she tried, but not the way she thought she would). All in all, they are very believable.

Lulu and Annie sometimes resent being kept out of the boy's club, but all the children often play together and get along quite well. In fact, the only openly antagonistic characters in the books are the West Side Boy's Gang, led by Spike, a group of young toughs who occasionally come around to threaten Tubby.

Little Lulu is the creation of a group of very funny, yet believable children who live in a residential neighborhood, but whose adventures take them through the entire universe of imagination. Certainly they are the kind of books that even the most conservative parents could not find objectionable. But they also are the sort of books which an adult could enjoy even more than a child.



SGT PEPPER'S STARSHIP

presents an exclusive interview

with

SGT. PEPPER

+ Angus Taylor +

((As the author of the Sgt. Pepper's Starship column, I thought it might be a good idea if I tried to talk to Sgt Pepper himself to get some of his ideas on the current scene, rather than simply using his name as a cover for my own ideas. With this intention I set out one afternoon in May to track down the elusive Pepper and interview him for Starling. I found him on his small estate northwest of Toronto, where he was putting the finishing touches to the first volume of his Memoirs. He hastened to assure me that this did not imply he was washed up by any means. He said he was still relatively young, and that there were many more volumes of his life story yet un-lived--a hope I'm sure will be echoed by his many admirers the world over. After some inconsequential chatter he showed me out onto the terrace that adjoins his private study and we sat down. The Canadian spring was in full green bloom, with a warm sun in a clear blue sky. Pepper's very attractive wife, her hair graying slightly like her husband's, brought us tea and home-made biscuits. Pepper begged me not to be deceived by appearances, saying he was all in favor of women's liberation, and that in fact he had baked the biscuits himself only half an hour before. Rita Pepper nodded vigorously at this, as if to vouch for her husband's sincerity in the matter. The two of them then winked rather roguishly at each other, and with that issue apparently settled to the satisfaction of all, I proceeded to conduct my interview over afternoon tea.--Angus Taylor))

STARLING: You've been called "the thinking man's McLuhan". Would you compare yourself to McLuhan in any way?

PEPPER: Not really. I don't think McLuhan is rigorous enough in his analysis of what's going on. I'm not putting him down, mind you. I think what he's doing is very valuable. But he admits himself that he's only putting out "probes" to get reaction. I try to be a little more specific, by doing more research first.

STARLING: If you're so good, how come he's a Marshall and you're only a Sergeant?

PEPPER: McLuhan's rank is an honorary one, awarded to him some years ago by the Canadian Armed Forces, after a series of lectures he gave on "War and Peace in the Global Village". At least I can claim I came by my rank legitimately. Not many people realize I was a policeman for seven years before dropping out, as it were, to pursue my other interests. That's my Ontario Provincial Police badge Paul McCartney's wearing on the Sgt. Pepper album. Paul got it from a mutual friend that I had given my old uniform to.

STARLING: But you had never actually met any of the Beatles at the time of the Sgt. Pepper album, is that right?

PEPPER: That's right. Our first meeting wasn't until 1969, when John Lennon came over for the Toronto Rock 'N' Roll Revival.

STARLING: Did you know Pennebaker made a movie of the Revival.

PEPPER: Yes. Sweet Toronoto I think it's called. I'm looking forward to seeing it. The review I read of it was very favorable, although I got the impression that the Doors' act at the end of the festival was omitted from the film. A pity if it's true, because I really like what the Doors are into.

STARLING: A lot of people think the Doors haven't made any progress since their first album, which everyone admits was a classic.

PEPPER: No, I don't agree with those people at all. Those people are only considering the music as such, trying to evaluate a group by how "heavy" its music is. They fail to realize that the Doors are the romantics par excellence of the rock world, and that this element, and not any one musical sound, is their main contribution to the field. The Doors know that the essence of romanticism is the will to make reality fit fantasy. I saw Tiny Tim at the Toronto Pop Festival--the one held a few months before the Revival--and he was up there singing "The icecaps are melting to wash away the sin." It was his own version of "Wishful Sinful", even if he is somewhat less partial to sin than the Doors. By the time he had got to the line "I am a fish, I swim around", it had started raining. I think Morrison and Krieger would have understood that. Tiny Tim is a romantic too, who lives a myth of his own creation.

STARLING: In a recent issue of Jazz & Pop Chris Reabur said that "Wishful Sinful" is an "unfortunate and unfitting" appendage to The Soft Parade album.

PEPPER: Reabur misses the boat completely. "Wishful Sinful" in fact dwells on the recurrent Doors theme of finding freedom and innocence through the subconscious. The water that symbolizes the subconscious to the Doors serves the same function in J.G. Ballard's novel, The Drowned World. Kerans, the central character in The Drowned World, is Ballard's own Demolished Man, his mind unravelling toward its primal state as he follows its dictates southward. Ballard describes him as "a second Adam searching for the forgotten paradises of the reborn Sun." I think that for the Doors the lines "Magic, rising/Sun is shining deep beneath the sea" are perhaps the most succinct summation yet of their Surrealist philosophy.

STARLING: You seem to talk about Ballard a lot. How would you assess Ballard's place in modern science fiction?

PEPPER: He's a genuine original. As time goes by I am more and more convinced that he's in a league by himself. I don't think there's another sf writer in

the⁴¹ last twenty years who's shown such consistent brilliance. I get the feeling, however, that he may pretty well have exhausted the vein he's been mining. He's just about said it all by now. I think he must have realized this too, because lately he's been looking for new directions, new media to get into, such as sculpture and advertising.

STARLING: What else is new and worthwhile in science fiction?

PEPPER: Well, the answer that springs to mind immediately is, not very much. I guess it's a case of Sturgeon's Law: ninetenths of everything is crud. The percentage these days seem somewhat higher. Maybe we're entering some sort of field in intergalactic space that will require us to revise the percentage in Sturgeon's Law upward. Actually, though, the old man here has been blowing his mind recently on The Firesign Theatre. Don't Crush That Dwarf, Hand Me the Pliers is really an amazing bit of work.

STARLING: A lot of people seem to be getting off on that album, even though they admit they can't completely figure it out. I saw where one reviewer claimed its point was that television would "rot your mind" if you watched it too much. There's more to it than that, isn't there?

PEPPER: Definitely. The key to understanding the album is in the two courtroom scenes near the end of side two. Tirebiter figures out that what he has taken for reality all along is just a movie set that he can walk out of if he so chooses. He leaves and goes over to tell the truth to Porgie. Porgie isn't hard to convince because the whole Commie Martyrs business already made him suspicious of what's going on. So he makes up his mind to leave his movie set, even though he isn't quite sure at first how he's going to do it. The Firesign Theatre is talking about the way people relate to each other and the way they become mystified as to what is real and what is not real. They're saying that each of us as individuals must realize that the shape of society is in our own hands and is not something over which we have no control. Society is not a thing out there which exists independently of the individuals that compose it. Almost all of us screw ourselves up by adopting this false view of the world, and then acting-- or reacting--from false premises. This is the sort of thing that R. D. Laing is into in his books.

STARLING: But the individual can't change the world all by himself.

PEPPER: No, he can't. At most he can start with himself and with trying to influence those around him. Maybe I should say that the point is that he does start with himself and he does influence those around him. But the effect is usually negative because he doesn't realize the effect he's having. He keeps thinking that everything is happening to him, and never really realizes that he's making things happen as well. He may be just a drop in an ocean, but if it weren't for all the drops, there wouldn't be any ocean.

STARLING: If we can get back to science fiction again, I'd like to ask your opinion of sf in rock, and in particular the Blows Against the Empire album.

PEPPER: There's a lot of sf-oriented stuff coming out in the rock field. Science Fiction and also fantasy in general. Not because there's a necessary connection between the two as such, but because almost everyone young is into rock and there's a natural orientation among youth today toward exotic ideas and romantic things generally. Magic is afoot, to use Leonard Cohen's phrase. So it's not surprising that a lot of rock groups are picking up on fantasy themes. I think

if I could award a Hugo to just the title of a song, I'd give it to Pink Floyd for "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun". I can't even remember how the music to that one goes, but I just love that title. Maybe Chip Delany would get off on it too. As for Blows Against the Empire, I think one reviewer suggested it might be more appropriate to call the album "Slaps Against the Empire". While the songs may be good music to hum to yourself on the way to Far Centaurus, they are a little short on specific planning. Jefferson Airplane--the earth-bound version of Jefferson Starship--has always been more revolutionary in rhetoric than in action. Kantner and company string together a lot of pretty phrases about outer space and the new generation, but how much do they contribute to our understanding of the processes involved? On the other hand, I must say the album contains some of the nicest sf lyrics I've heard, and the more I listen to the music, the more I like it. It's a fine album, and there can never be enough good music in this world. I think rock may be emerging as the vehicle for most of the good sf poetry around. Most written attempts at sf poetry haven't been too successful. Maybe rock is the answer. I think maybe we can put references to hijacking a starship down to poetic license. Looked at objectively, the idea of a bunch of freaks stealing a starship and shooting off to some dreamland in the sky where no one has any problems is pretty naive. We're not doing such a hot job with the starship we're on right now.

STARLING: What's your assessment of the present ecology movement?

PEPPER: There's a lot of enthusiasm, but the way things are going I don't expect too much in the way of lasting results. At present I'm working on my own formulation of the problem. You might call it "Pepper's General Law of Pollution". In layman's terms, it says that the amount of crap lying or floating around in any community is directly proportional to the alienation from that community of the individuals composing it. The trouble with most attempts at cleaning up the environment today is that they're entirely too superficial. They fail to attack the root of the problem, which is alienation. As long as individuals continue to differentiate between "public" space and "private" space, the "public" space will remain a mess. It is only when people begin to believe that public property belongs to "us" instead of "them" that they start treating public property as they treat their own private property. The precondition for this is making people feel a part of their community. This is impossible under a system based on exploitation. The whole capitalist system has to go before we will have any lasting solution to the pollution problem. In a socialist society disturbance of natural ecological equilibrium would be kept to an absolute minimum, not through laws or coercion, but simply as an inevitable result of the way the system worked.

STARLING: Are you suggesting then the sort of society which we see today in Eastern Europe?

PEPPER: Far from it. The state capitalism of the East bloc is certainly not any better than the corporate capitalism of the West bloc. Both those systems are similar in that they both rely on rule by technocrats rather than rule by the people. Technocrats think and act like they are part of a big machine. You get the paradoxical situation of societies where everyone is taking orders and no one is giving orders. Hannah Arendt called this "rule by nobody". I don't think Leonid Brezhnev knows any more about socialism than Richard Nixon knows about democracy. In fact, if they were actually realized, socialism and democracy would turn out to be identical. Places like Cuba and Tanzania, which have at least made some effort to realize these ideals on a national level, are greatly hampered by economic conditions. I think democracy requires not only a politically educated

citizenry but also a certain minimum level of economic and technological development to sustain it. The countries which could possibly meet these conditions at the moment have power very unequitably distributed and they have ideologies which perpetuate the status quo. "All power to the people" is a revolutionary demand because it strikes at the heart of the problem. It demands a fundamental and democratic redistribution of power in society. Obviously, decentralization is a key to the matter. You can't have democracy or socialism in a society that centralizes power.

STARLING: One last question. I know this sounds ridiculous, but some people have been asking. Does Sgt. Pepper really exist?

PEPPER: Well, I guess your readers will just have to make up their own minds on that one. Where did Pepper come from? Where is he going? Maybe they should try reading between the lines. It's a good rule to follow in life. There's usually more there than meets the eye.

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Dance to the Music Continued:

I'm almost afraid to take a chance and see Chuck Berry perform again. I'm sure age wouldn't let him scoot all over the stage -- now without making his tongue hang out. It would be sad to see thinly-masked disillusionment (as I saw on Haley's face) on Berry visage, that mug that used to dance with enjoyment -- at what he'd written and how the audience was digging it. I'd hate to see Berry, like Haley, up there on a stage trying to do an act for an audience which would take it as camp.

You can't go home again. I can't imagine today's audiences sitting still for The Clovers' easy rendition of "Mint Julep". Very lightly recorded, very smooth. No sparks. No fancy instrumentation. Sort of the Mills Brothers with a bit of loving acid -- or I should say alky -- under their belts. "It had me really charging like a Jet B-99" -- which might qualify it for earlyday sf rock.

I can't knock it. I hope I'm as listenable fifteen years after as some of the rock records from the fifties are. But then, unlike Haley, I didn't fall on rock with glad cries because of the potential profits in it. Good thing. Gold devaluates. But music endures. If it means what it should to you, the first time around.

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". . . Why I Can't go to Conventions. . ." Continued:

past two years. I think it will be necessary in the not too distant future for me and I'd better learn how to do it. I find it pretty challenging and I get a lot of help from young people I know. I don't buy anything unless I really need it (I need books!) or, if I have decided I really want it. I do without a good many things that "Better Homes and Gardens" would have me believe are essential to the American Way of Life. I take advantage of anything that's free. I haven't bought any matches for a year. I shop at the local farmer's market and the day-old bakery store. I tour the Good Will stores occasionally and I hit the neighborhood garage sales. I'm going back to making my own clothes and I stay out of department stores. Shopping hypnosis can hit you in a department store as well as in a Supermarket. If I must buy something in a department store I go in and buy it and get out - fast! To linger means to spend! I would be happy to trade ideas and methods if any of you are on the same trip. Inserted here, a small prophecy, things are going to get a lot worse here before they get better. Prepare! Now that 18 year olds have the vote, I hope they do, if only to prove those experts wrong who say it won't make any difference. Now seems to be the proper time for some deferential disclaimer like, "Well, I've run out of things to talk about." I find that I really have. Just exactly where you are friends, I'd like to know. I'll listen.

