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No. 3

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It was a pregnant silence which aborted.

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Published and edited by Vernon L. McCain

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Mimeod by Shelby Vick

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The lights in the sky are Flying Red Horse signs.

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### 1929 WAS A LONG TIME AGO

DIN--Actually, a motion picture which lacks a musical score is probably a good one. Chief function of the musical score is to tie the picture together, build up climaxes, and set the proper mood; all functions which should already have been handled by the script, the director, the actors, and the cutter. A host of inefficiencies and ineptnesses are masked by the average score. Once in a while you get a picture sufficiently well made to stand by itself, however. I must see "Executive Suite". I believe there've been several others, although the only one which comes to mind at the moment was a low-budget picture about boxing released in 1949 starring Robert Ryan and Audrey Totter; title eludes me.///Egotist Churchill may be but I hardly think the word 'conceited' applies. This world is so full of people trying desperately to make themselves appear more important than they are that one tends to discount claims of always being right or foresighted or similarly gifted, forgetting that there are occasional very rare individuals who do possess these qualities and if they are not afflicted with false modesty it is possible to get annoyed with them simply because one is used to discounting the overwhelming percentage of such talk which comes from braggarts. I think you will find Churchill's claims to foresightedness fully supported by official records; in fact his record is so good that now when he appears to be losing his grip there are a good many intelligent and well-informed individuals who tend to discount their own opinions on the world situation simply because Churchill says the opposite. In 1950 TIME magazine picked Churchill as the greatest man of the half-century, a judgment with which I haven't the slightest quibble. Another factor in being annoyed at this sort of self-evaluation is simply discomfort at remembering we were wrong while the "I Told You So" individual who disagreed with us is rubbing it in that his judgment is better than ours.////I wouldn't advise any fan to rewrite portions of Churchill's history on a 'What if' basis since Churchill himself has already produced the greatest classic in this type of speculation in a piece called, I believe, "What if the Confederacy had Been Defeated at Gëttysburg".



THE FAN SPEAKS--This is brilliant! It's so good, in fact, that I was one third of the way through the first page before I realized it wasn't serious. And I'll bet some FAPans failed to catch on completely, just passed it off as more neofan mauling.

GENSINE--I'm not complaining but it does occur to me that omission of the paragraph preceeding that excerpt from my letter makes a subtle but very definite alteration in the atmosphere and slant of the rest of it. However, that's precisely what I said, word for word, all right.

GRUE--Superb. However, one of my pet peeves are fan editors who print something about Degler which is highly innocuous and then apologize for it. You've seen the FAN CYCLOPEDIA, Dean, so surely you are aware that Tucker was bending over backward in that rundown on Degler. But for some reason fans are so tolerant each one seems to have to personally suffer at Degler's hands before they'll believe what's said about him, no matter how reliable the source. I never have forgiven Ed Noble for having scizzored out all mention of Degler in a conreport I did for him in 1950 after the NORWESCON, despite the fact that I'd resisted the temptation to editorialize and had merely reported the simplest unadorned facts. Apparently a simple report of Degler's official actions in front of hundreds of individuals impressed Noble as being libellous or something. I had the last laugh though. Noble was so tolerant that he shortly thereafter got involved in a business transaction with Degler (who was running a sf book business at the time). Tolerance is a wonderful thing but there are limits to it and, if I were Tucker I'd consider that paragraph following his article rather insulting. Knowing that Tucker is much too good natured to complain I'm doing it for him. This may seem a lot of fuss to raise over such an innocuous little apology, especially as Dean is and remains one of my very favorite FAPans but this is only the latest in a long long string of similar incidents and my blood pressure has slowly been building up.//// Enjoyed your travelogue which is very unusual, downright unheard of, in fact. These things are usually even more boring than convention reports. The only time I've ever known Tucker to be dull (with the exception of his first sf novel, of which the less said the better) was in his accounts of his travels. You're famous man...you've topped Tucker.

HORIZONS--What's this about tapes deteriorating? You mention it twice in passing but 'tis first I've heard of it and I read a large number of magazines which deal with such things. Elucidation, please. It was my understanding that laboratory tests indicated no noticeable deterioration. Just last year Columbia issued an Oratorio or some sort of performance magnetically recorded (on tape, I think) on Easter of 1939....so it would appear deterioration isn't too severe. Certainly it must have been in better shape than a frequently played disc of the same vintage.////

this is page three

(I see I forgot to indicate that the last page was page two. It was)

You may consider this as one vote in favor of continuation of the musical articles. How about doing for the early composers, Bach, Vivaldi, Handel, Boccherini, Corelli, Couperin, etc. what you have done for the modernists. I, for one, would be highly interested.

ALU--My admiration of Nixon is more negative than positive. That is, he does nothing with which I seriously disagree and usually is very much in the right corner on anything I feel strongly on. Other politicians may please me more at one time or another but each has serious faults I object to. I also admire Nixon's political footwork, something indispensable in Washington, and thus would rather see him President than anyone else currently on the scene. This does not indicate I consider him a great man nor an original political thinker, such as the late Senator Taft or Senator Douglas. But then I don't know that that is necessary or even desirable. Naturally these are highly subjective reasons and, keeping our vast differences in political ideas in mind, it is only natural that you would fail to share my enthusiasm. In effect, my reasons for admiration are due to a feeling that with minor changes Nixon acts as I would if I had his position and his ability. What more can you ask of a politician?

SLIPSHOL--Delightful Hoffman-stuff. We see too little of you in this (or any) guise nowadays, Lee. No, the name Lee Marvin has a vaguely familiar ring, but I can't pin it down.///Yes, I was most pleased at Holden's receiving the Oscar. In fact, for the first time all four actors who received Awards were my choice, plus which I agreed with the choice for the picture. Has to be a fly in the ointment, tho. In the award for Best Director I felt strongly that George Stevens should have gotten it for "Shane" rather than whoever it was for "From Here to Eternity". But then I suppose it would get dull if year after year the award was passed around among Stevens, John Huston, Joe Mankiewicz, and Billy Wilder so every other year or so they give it to whoever directed the award winning picture.

STEFANTASY--Wish you'd named names in that discourse on "Fans". Would have been more interesting. Don't entirely disagree but wonder how much it was influenced by your lack of acquaintance with the current fan field. Many quite active fans more or less ignore things fannish or stfish in FAPA since they deal with them thoroly elsewhere and can deal with more general topics in FAPA.

Thus endeth the shortest review column I've ever written. Sorry so many were ignored but for reasons too involved to go into here I had to finish these tonight therefore I did an awful lot of cutting.



Recently, British fanzines have been filled with accounts of fabulous fannish characters whom the narrator has attempted, in vain, to lure into fandom. So herewith I give you my contribution to this latest fannish fad. Mine is a trifle different, however, in that I have never met the individual. However, I do have a sample of his writing, reproduced below. Fairly recently Western Union revived a service never at all popular with their employees...the singogram (the only one accepted is the "Happy birthday" jingle, by the way). What follows is the ghost-written version supplied by a WU employee when she was asked for a written explanation as to why she had read, rather than sung, one of these messages over the telephone. We give you Mr. George Rutherford, never a Western Union employee and, since he wrote this, a re-enlistee in the U.S. Army.

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To the Manager:

As regards the singogram to Master Willy Wee, I have only this to say in my defense and in answer to the sender's unjust complaint... To Wit: Said singogram was vocally rendered to the recipient!

I might point out that I said 'vocally rendered' which may or may not imply sung depending upon your definition of the word. To sing, according to Mr. Webster's dictionary, may mean several things, the accepted meaning being, "To produce musical or harmonious sounds by means of the voice." Now this, for me, is impossible, as my voice is neither musical nor harmonious. (This you can verify, having listened to my bleary bourbon baritone for several years.) I may be Swede, but I'm sure no nightengale!

You yourself must realize that I am at an extreme disadvantage, for not only do I lack the thrush-like qualities of an accomplished vocalist but I was (at the time) without benefit of either music or accompaniment. Can you imagine the agony of the recipient of a singogram which was rendered by a terrified amateur from script alone, without musical notation and devoid of any accompaniment??? Oh! that such wailing, squalling, and caterwauling should fall on human ears....

Therefore I took the liberty of applying Mr. Webster's alternate definition of the word "sing" which is, "to chant or intone." I can assure you that, complaints to the contrary notwithstanding, I spared no effort in my attempt to render said singogram with all the beauty, the grace, and the stately measured cadence of those sublime Gregorian masses which were sung in the splendor of the ancient cathedrals which were the thrones of true art.

It is with deep regret that I learn that the stately dignity and articulate euphony of my rendition must indeed have been wasted on the ear of the uncultured churl who so ungraciously complained.

With this I must dismiss the complaint as unwarranted, as it is quite evident that anyone, man, woman, or child, who would prefer my singing to my chanting, must be Stark Raving Mad!!

Sincerely

Mrs Willoughby

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neveragainfilmlessstencilsneveragainfilmlessstencilsneveragainneverne  
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andthislooksbetterthanthefirstthreepagesdon'tyouagreewellldon'tyou????  
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B I R D S M I T H

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++HOUSE ORGAN FOR THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ROBERT BLOCH++  
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THIS IS BIRDSMITH #8, AND TO HECK WITH THE VOLUME NUMBERS. YOU WILL FIND IT STAPLED TO THE BACK OF BIRDSMITH #7 WHICH SOMEHOW FAILED TO GET CIRCULATED IN THE LAST MAILING. THIS WILL COUNT AS TWO COPIES AGAINST YOUR SUBSCRIPTION. SORRY, FOLKS BUT THAT'S THE WAY IT HAS TO BE. HOWEVER, SINCE BIRDSMITH IS RECEIVED ONLY BY FAPA MEMBERS I ANTICIPATE NOT TOO MANY COMPLAINTS. BIRDSMITH IS PUBLISHED AND EDITED, IN CASE ANYONE CARES, BY VERNON L. MCCAIN, BOX 876, KELLOGG, IDAHO. I DON'T REALLY LIVE IN BOX 876, THOUGH, IN FACT, I DON'T REALLY LIVE IN KELLOGG. COME TO THINK OF IT, IT'S BEEN SIX MONTHS SINCE I WAS EVEN IN THE STATE OF IDAHO (! SPEND MOST OF MY TIME IN THE STATE OF CONFUSION) BUT DON'T LET THAT BOTHER YOU. THAT IS MY CORRECT ADDRESS, EVEN IF IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE I SHALL NEVER SET FOOT IN THE TOWN OF KELLOGG AGAIN....EXCEPT MAYBE IF I STOP FOR GAS.-----REMEMBER THE SLOGAN OF THE AMALGAMATED ROBERT BLOCH FAN CLUBS, INTERNATIONAL....."BLOCH'S IN VEYAUWEGA AND ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

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YOU CAN HAVE EDWARD E. AND YOU CAN HAVE GEORGE O. AND YOU CAN HAVE CLARK ASHTON ----- I'LL TAKE EVELYN....  
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1929 WAS A LONG TIME AGO

++THE FANEWS STORY+++WHILE I HAVE NO OBJECTION TO YOUR CIRCULATING THE PRINTED FANEWS THRU FAPA I'D BE MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN MORE INFORMALIZED AND PERSONAL PUBLICATIONS SUCH AS THIS ONE WHICH, FOR THE FIRST TIME, MADE ME FEEL THAT I WAS ACTUALLY BEGINNING TO KNOW THE LEGENDARY DUNKELBERGER.

+++GEMZINE+++EVERY SO OFTEN, HAVING COME TO TAKE CARR FOR GRANTED, YOU PRODUCE SOMETHING WHICH STOPS ME DEAD IN MY TRACKS. AND THE LAST TWO TIMES THE ITEMS HAVE HAD, IN COMMON, THE FORM OF REPORTING. NOT FICTION, NOT YOUR USUAL CONCENTRATION ON YOUR OWN OPINIONS AND ARGUMENTS, NOT EVEN POETRY (THANK GOD!) BUT SOMETHING I CAN'T RECALL EVER SEEING ANY OTHER FAN PRODUCE (OR AT LEAST PRODUCE WELL); AN EXTREMELY CAREFUL AND DETAILED REPORT OF AN EXPERIENCE WHICH HAD OCCURRED TO YOU PERSONALLY, WITH NO ATTEMPT TO SLANT OR OPINIONATE. THE LAST TIME WAS THAT ARTICLE IN YOUR SAPSZINE WHICH I BELIEVE YOU CALLED "N - - - -"; THIS TIME IT WAS, OF COURSE, "STEP RIGHT UP LADIES AND GENTS". THESE ARE SO FAR SUPERIOR TO THE GENERAL RUN OF YOUR WRITING THAT I'M LED TO BELIEVE THIS IS YOUR TRUE METIER. I'M AFRAID IT HASN'T GREAT COMMERCIAL POSSIBILITIES. CERTAINLY THIS IS NOT AT ALL THE TYPE OF 'REPORTING' IN DEMAND BY NEWSPAPERS. THEY'D BE FAR MORE READABLE IF IT WERE. ALTHOUGH NEW YORKER PROFILES AND SOME OTHER ARTICLES IN THAT MAGAZINE DO TEND TO USE THE SAME TECHNIQUE, AND OCCASIONAL PIECES IN OTHER MAGS. IN THE MEANTIME THE MORE OF THIS SORT OF THING YOU PRODUCE THE BETTER I'LL LIKE GEMZINE. WITH YOUR EVIDENCED UNUSUAL OBSERVATIONAL POWERS, AND ABILITY TO RECALL ACCURATELY WHAT YOU OBSERVED, YOU MIGHT SOMEDAY BE ABLE TO BUILD A LUCRATIVE CAREER OR SIDELINE WRITING ARTICLES FOR THE BIG SLICKS, OR LESSER MAGS, WITH A BIT OF CARE AS TO CHOICE OF YOUR SUBJECTS. UNTIL THEN, LAY IT ON US! I LOVE IT.



+++GRUE+++ I SWEAR, NOT EVEN GRENNELL CAN KEEP THIS UP INDEFINITELY. THREE MAILINGS IN A ROW, NOW.... SOMETHING'S GOT TO GIVE... IF IT'S ONLY THE SEAMS OF THE ENVELOPE IN WHICH THE MAILING IS ENCLOSED. FABULOUS. ALONG WITH LE ZOMBIE, WHICH WAS RUN OFF ON THE SAME MACHINE, THIS MAG CONTAINS 85 TO 90% OF EVERYTHING MEMORABLE AND WORTHWHILE IN THE MAILING. COULDN'T POSSIBLY COMMENT ADEQUATELY ON EVERYTHING, BUT I MUST SAY IT GIVES US POOR ORDINARY MORTALS WITH BILLS TO PAY AND ONLY 24 HOURS IN EACH DAY HORRIBLE INFERIORITY COMPLEXES. (HMM, WONDER IF THE PLURAL OF COMPLEX SHOULDN'T BE COMPLICE?)+++WALT KELLY NEVER GRANTS PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE POGO DRAWINGS FOR ANY 'COMMERCIAL OR PARTISAN PURPOSES'? HAH! THEN JUST WHAT WAS POGO, COMPLETE WITH FIREMAN'S HELMET AND HOSE DOING HELPING ADVERTISE THE LATEST FIREHOUSE FIVE PLUS TWO ALBUM ON THE GOOD TIME JAZZ LABEL LAST SUMMER? OF COURSE, THE FIREHOUSE FIVE PLUS TWO IS COMPOSED OF PART TIME MUSICIANS WHO MAKE THEIR LIVING IN THE HOLLYWOOD VINEYARDS, MOST OF THEM WORKING FOR WALT DISNEY, AND THUS PRESUMABLY ARE OLD PALS OF KELLY'S FROM THE DAYS WHEN HE LABORED UNHAPPILY IN THE SAME CELLULOID SWEATSHOP, BUT STILL THEY DON'T GIVE THOSE RECORDS AWAY, THE THE FIREHOUSE FIVE HAS MANAGED TO RAKE IN QUITE A BIT OF FANCY COIN IN THE LAST SEVEN YEARS. FOR THAT MATTER, SURELY THE FREQUENT ANTI-MCCARTHY EPISODES IN THE STRIP ITSELF ARE PARTISAN.... I SURE WOULDN'T CALL THEM NEUTRAL. NOT THAT I OBJECT, YOU UNDERSTAND, JUST NOTING.+++WOULD YOU OBJECT IF I SUGGEST HARNESS ACQUIRE A GOOD GAG-WRITER?+++THE KNIGHTS OF DAMON GAG IS YOUR BEST INTERLINEATION SINCE THE BOGGS WITH KETCHUP ONE+++ GLAD YOU NO LONGER THROW WHOLE PAGES OF THEM AT US AT ONCE. THIS WAY IS MUCH BETTER. HEY, I JUST FIGURED OUT HOCCUM YOU PUBLISH SUCH BIG ISSUES NOW. IT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN USE UP YOUR QUARTER'S SUPPLY OF PUNS AND INTERLINEATIONS AND STILL PUT A PROPER AMOUNT OF TEXT IN TO KEEP THEM FROM BEING TOO PROXIMATE.

+++LE ZOMBIE+++NOW FOR THE OTHER GIANT OF THE MAILING. THIS ALMOST CAUSED ME TO BREAK PRECEDENT AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME, VOTE SOME OTHER MAGAZINE AHEAD OF HORIZONS. HOWEVER, I DECIDED THE POLL SHOULD BE RESERVED TO REGULAR MAGAZINES WHICH HAVE SEEN AT LEAST A COUPLE OF ISSUES WITHIN THE PERIOD BEING VOTED ON SO LEZ WAS DISQUALIFIED. +++HAS ANYONE EVER CALLED LIFE MAGAZINE THE 'ARISTOCRAT OF SCIENCE FICTION'? JUST TO KEEP THE RECORD STRAIGHT FOR NEWCOMERS WHO ARE A BIT CONFUSED ABOUT THE WHOLE THING, LIFE RAN AN ARTICLE ON SF ABOUT 1951 AND IN A PARAGRAPH ON THE MAGAZINES, THEMSELVES, STRATIFIED THEM AS TO TYPES AND SAID THAT GALAXY, MOF, AND ASTOUNDING WERE THE THREE ARISTOCRATS OF SCIENCE-FICTION. THEN ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY ABOUT A YEAR LATER BOTH MOF AND GALAXY PRODUCED ADVERTISEMENTS IN WHICH THEY BRAGGED THAT LIFE HAD REFERRED TO THEM AS THE 'ARISTOCRAT (SINGULAR) OF SCIENCE FICTION'. IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME ALSO THAT THE BOUCHER MAG BLURBED THAT "PEOPLE WITH IMAGINATION (CAPITAL I) READ THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION".+++PERSONALLY, I THINK IF I'D JUST UNDERGONE WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AFTER THE SECOND DEATH HOAX IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FAREWELL FOREVER TO FANDOM FROM ME. WHICH I GUESS JUST PROVES THAT YOU ARE A DEDICATED SERIOUS CONSTRUCTIVE FAN HIDING IN FILTHY HUCKSTERS SABLE.

+++PRE-APA+++SOMEHOW I DOUBT IF ELLISON WOULD TAKE KINDLY TO YOUR ATTEMPTING TO LABEL THE LIGHT OF HIS LIFE A HOAX, NORM



THIS IS PAGE THREE

+++PULL NO PUNCHES+++WELL, I SUPPOSE IF ENGINEERS COULD MAKE SOMETHING LISTENABLE OUT OF IT A RECORDING COULDN'T HAVE BEEN 'HOPELESSLY BAD'. HOWEVER, I KNOW ENGINEERS CAN NOW WORK NEAR MIRACLES. THEY HAVE MANY LITTLE TRICKS....SUCH AS ELIMINATING A SOUR NOTE IN AN OTHERWISE EXCELLENT RECORDING AND INCLUDING A GOOD ONE FROM A POORER VERSION, ETC. I HEARD OF ONE CASE....I THINK THIS WAS RCA'S ENGINEERS WORKING, IN THEIR CUSTOM PRESSING DEPARTMENT, FOR ONE OF THE INDEPENDENT FIRMS; THEY HAD A TAPE MADE OF SOME CHORAL EVENT IN RUSSIA. THE ORIGINAL PERFORMANCE WAS EXCELLENT BUT IT HAD BEEN RECORDED WITH A PORTABLE TAPERECORDER OPERATING OFF A RUN-DOWN BATTERY. AS THE TENSION WOULD ALTER THE TAPE WOULD SLOW DOWN (THUS SPEEDING UP THE MUSIC) AND THEN GRADUALLY SPEED UP AGAIN AND SO ON, OVER AND OVER. AND THE VOLUME KEPT FADING IN AND OUT, SIMULTANEOUSLY. IN OTHER WORDS, A REAL MESS. THE ENGINEERS PROCEEDED TO RE-RECORD IT AND MAKE OUT A DETAILED CHART OF THE ENTIRE TAPE...FIGURING JUST WHERE AND TO WHAT EXTENT THE SPEED AND VOLUME HAD DECREASED OR INCREASED. THEN, USING A MACHINE WHOSE SPEED THEY COULD CONTROL, THEY REPLAYED IT WITH THE ADJUSTMENTS CHANGING EACH TIME TO MATCH AND COUNTERACT THE ERRORS IN THE TAPE. THE RESULT WAS A LISTENABLE TAPE WHICH WAS RELEASED COMMERCIALY. SORRY, I DON'T KNOW THE TITLE. THE MOST COMMON TRICK OF ALL IS TO TAKE ONE OF THE OLD 78'S FROM THE DAYS OF DEAD RECORDING STUDIOS AND PLAY IT THROUGH TWO SPEAKERS, ONE AT EACH END OF A LONG RESONANT HALL. A RECORDING MACHINE TAKES THE SOUND OFF ONE SPEAKER AND THE SOUND FROM THE OTHER SPEAKER ARRIVES IN SLIGHTLY JUMBLED FORM A FRACTION OF A SECOND LATER, TO ALSO BE RECORDED, THUS PROVIDING A CONVINCING ECHO AND MODERN 'PRESENCE'. PRACTICALLY ALL THE OLD RECORDS GO THROUGH THIS PROCESS. I KNOW THE TOSCANINI BROADCASTS GO THROUGH ENDLESS TOUCHING UP BEFORE HE WILL OK THEIR RELEASE... A COUGH REMOVED HERE, A FUZZY TONE CLARIFIED THERE, ETC. THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE EXAMPLES OF WHICH I'VE READ. I KNOW THEY REPRESENT A VERY SMALL PORTION OF THE TOTAL USED. SOME ARE FAIRLY SIMPLE FOR EVEN THE AMATEUR TO FIGURE OUT. OTHERS ARE LESS OBVIOUS. TURNING THIN BLURRY BRASS RECORDINGS BACK INTO MUSIC MAY, AS YOU SAY, BE IMPOSSIBLE. IT'S ONE OF THE MORE DIFFICULT ONES, OBVIOUSLY. HOWEVER, I HAD VAGUE NOTIONS THAT POSSIBLY THE BLURRING HISS MIGHT BE CONFINED TO CERTAIN FREQUENCIES WHILE THE MAIN PART OF THE MUSICAL TONE OCCURRED IN OTHER LOWER FREQUENCIES. SOME SORT OF FILTER TO CUT OUT THESE FREQUENCIES AND LEAVE ONLY THE OTHERS WOULD BE ONE METHOD OF DOING IT. WHETHER IT IS THAT SIMPLE OR NOT I DON'T KNOW. PROBABLY NOT. IF I KNEW THE ANSWER I WOULDN'T HAVE ASKED THE QUESTION. HOWEVER, I STILL SUSPECT THERE IS SOME METHOD. INCIDENTALLY, OTHER RECORDS SINCE PURCHASED FROM THE SAME COMPANY EXHIBIT AMAZING VARIATIONS OF QUALITY. I'VE HAD NO OTHERS WHICH BLUR LIKE THAT BUT SOME ARE OF PAINFULLY LOW FIDELITY (I CAN FIX A GOOD DEAL OF THE 'PAINFUL' PART WITH A GOOD TAPERECORDER AND EFFECTIVE TONE CONTROLS, MYSELF, ALTHOUGH THE TECHNICAL FIDELITY WILL NOT BE IMPROVED THE MUSICAL FIDELITY WILL BE) WHILE OTHERS ARE AS SHARP, CLEAR, AND ENJOYABLE AS IF THEY WERE COMING OVER THE RADIO RIGHT THEN....CLEARER, I SELDOM GET TOO GOOD RADIO RECEPTION.+++ BUT YOU KNOW THERE IS A METHOD OF PRINTING HALFTONE ENGRAVINGS IN MULTI-COLORS FROM A SINGLE PLATE, WHETHER TAKEN FROM A PHOTO OF SOMETHING IN COLOR OR BLACK AND WHITE. IT PRODUCES PRETTY CRUDE WORK COMPARED TO FOUR-COLOR PROCESS WORK AND I SUSPECT THE REGISTRATION ISN'T TOO GOOD, BUT THERE IS A METHOD. WE NEVER ACTUALLY



THIS IS PAGE FOUR

GOT AROUND TO TRYING IT OUT, THOUGH WE INTENDED TO. OF COURSE, I'M EVADING THE ISSUE SINCE WHAT YOU SAID WAS THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PRODUCE A COLOR PRINT (MEANING A PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINT NOT A LETTERPRESS IMPRESSION) FROM A BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO.

\$\$\$SPACESHIP\$\$\$ I THINK I KNOW RICHARD K. VERDAN'S IDENTITY BUT SINCE MY DEDUCTION IS THE RESULT OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION FROM AN INSIDE SOURCE IT WOULDN'T BE CRICKET (OR EVEN FOOTBALL) TO PUBLISH IT SO I SHALL TRY TO REMEMBER AND ASK YOU IN A PERSONAL LETTER IF I'M RIGHT, BOB. HOPE YOU'LL AT LEAST GIVE ME A YES OR NO ANSWER. AT ALL EVENTS THIS IS AN EXTREMELY WELL-WRITTEN ARTICLE, EVEN IF I DO DISAGREE WITH IT IN SPOTS. MY THOUGHT ON FIRST READING IT WAS THAT HERE WAS A MAJOR FANNISH DISCOVERY, A NEW FAN-WRITER WITH SOME WELL-THOUGHT OUT THINGS TO SAY AND THE ABILITY TO SAY THEM BRILLIANTLY. BUT ONCE I LEARNED IT WAS A PEN NAME AND DISCOVERED THE SOURCE I CAN ONLY SAY IT IS NO MORE THAN I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED, ALTHOUGH QUITE A BIT DIFFERENT THAN ANYTHING EITHER HALF HAS DONE BEFORE. I WOULD ENJOY MORE....IN FACT, I'LL GLADLY PUBLISH ANY OTHER ARTICLES BY THE SAME IF SILVERBERG DOESN'T WISH TO....IN EITHER REVIEW OR BIRDSMITH. ARE YOU LISTENING RICHARD K. V.? JUST OCCURRED TO ME I MIGHT GET IN A SPOT OF BLACKMAIL BY THREATENING TO REVEAL ALL UNLESS I'M ALLOWED TO PUBLISH SOME VERDAN(T) PROSE MYSELF.

+++STEFANTASY+++THOSE FRICTION BELT-BUCKLES! PLEASE, SIR, DON'T PROVOKE ME TO PROFANITY. IT HAS BEEN MY MISFORTUNE TO POSSESS A NUMBER OF THEM, ALL BOUGHT FOR ME BY SOMEONE ELSE. AS A CHILD (A DEFENSELESS ONE, THAT IS) I WAS FORCED TO WEAR THEM WHENEVER I DRESSED UP SINCE I DIDN'T POSSESS ONE OF THE CIVILIZED KIND. THEY WERE USUALLY THE GIFT OF SOME FEMALE RELATIVE WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE SO MUCH 'NICER-LOOKING' THAN THE OTHERS. THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO WEAR THEM. I ALSO HAVE A BROTHER WHO IS A PARTISAN OF THESE (GENERALLY AN EXTREMELY SENSIBLE CHAP ALTHOUGH HE DOES HAVE THESE LAPSES ON OCCASION...HE'S ALSO MILDLY PRO-MCCARTHY). THESE ARE VANISHING FOR A VERY GOOD REASON, THEIR UTTER WORTHLESSNESS. I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY I'VE OWNED BUT I NEVER HAD A ONE THAT, WITHIN THE FIRST TWO OR THREE MONTHS, DIDN'T START SLIPPING. TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND THE BUCKLE WOULD SLIDE OUT A COUPLE OF NOTCHES; EXHALE AND YOU WERE LEFT WITH YOUR BELT TWO SIZES TOO LARGE AND YOUR PANTS IN A PRECARIOUS POSITION. AND I HAD SEVERAL AMONG THE HIGHER PRICED CATEGORY SO I HARDLY THINK IT WAS MERELY SHODDY WORKMANSHIP IN THE CHAPER PRICE BRACKETS. THE LAST ONE OF THESE I POSSESSED WAS A BIRTHDAY GIFT IN 1950. I HAPPILY DISCARDED IT ABOUT SIX WEEKS LATER, THE FIRST TIME IT SLIPPED ON ME.

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THIS IS THE STF THAT BLEENS ARE MADE OF.  
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+ A VERY WISE YOUNG YOUNG FANZINE EDITOR FROM SAVANNAH ONCE POINTED OUT TO ME THAT IF YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING, THAT IS SUFFICIENT REASON FOR DOING IT....IN FACT, THAT IS THE BEST REASON FOR DOING IT. WHICH IS PROBABLY WHY SHE NOW SPENDS HER TIME IN THE DEBILITATING PASTIME OF SITTING ASTRIDE A MASS OF EQUINE FBESH SOMEWHERE IN THE ROCKIES RATHER THAN RETAINING HER YOUTH THROUGH THE INVIGORATING OCCUPATION OF ENDLESSLY TURNING A MIMEO CRANK. AT ANY RATE, IT IS A STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY WHICH I ADMIRERD AND STILL DO ADMIRE



THIS IS PAGE FIVE

AND I HAVE BEEN MORE OR LESS USING IT AS A YARDSTICK FOR ALL MY ACTIVITY SINCE, BUT ESPECIALLY MY FANNISH ACTIVITY. OF COURSE, EVERYONE LIVES BY THIS CREDO TO AN EXTENT BUT MOST OF US APPLY IT UNCONSCIOUSLY AND MAY HAVE GUILTY CONSCIENCES, AS A RESULT, OR WASTE OUR TIME ON WHAT WE THINK WE SHOULD BE DOING. AT ANY RATE, THERE ARE VARIOUS THINGS ON WHICH I HAVE OPINIONS AND WHICH I FEEL CALLED UPON AT TIMES TO DWELL ON AT LENGTH. UNTIL I ENTERED FANDOM I WAS BADLY FRUSTRATED IN THIS RESPECT. BUT FANDOM PROVIDED AN OUTLET. SOME OF THE THINGS WERE OF A GENERAL NATURE, MANY OF WHICH I'VE DISCUSSED IN FAPA ALREADY. OTHERS WERE MORE SPECIALIZED; SOME OF THESE DEALT WITH THE DETECTIVE STORY (AND ENTHUSIASM OF MINE WHICH HAS BEEN STEADILY DECREASING EACH YEAR. I STILL ENJOY THEM BUT SELDOM FEEL CALLED UPON TO DO ANY SERIOUS ANALYSIS OR DISCUSSION OF THEM ANY MORE). BUT MOST OF THEM DEALT WITH EITHER SCIENCE FICTION, THE MOVIES, OR JAZZ. FANZINES HAVE PROVIDED A BOTTOMLESS WELL FOR SF DISCUSSIONS... SO MUCH SO THAT I HAVE TO RACK MY MIND FOR FURTHER IDEAS, HAVING LONG AGO SAID IN PRINT ALL THE THINGS WHICH HAD PILED UP INSIDE MY MIND THROUGH THE YEARS ON THAT SUBJECT. I'VE DONE A LITTLE WRITING ON JAZZ BUT FOR THE MOST PART FANDOM ISN'T TOO GOOD AN OUTLET FOR THAT. HITHERTO, IN DISCUSSING THE MOVIES, MY COMMENTS, WHILE FREQUENT AND LENGTHY, WERE CONFINED TO CHANCE REMARKS IN MY MAILING COMMENTS. I NOW FEEL THE DESIRE TO DWELL MORE FORMALLY AND AT GREATER LENGTH ON THE MATTER.... FAPA SEEMS THE BEST PLACE FOR IT, SINCE GENERAL TOPICS ARE OF GREATER INTEREST HERE. SO, STARTING IMMEDIATELY BELOW, FROM NOW ON BIRDSMITH WILL FEATURE ARTICLES ABOUT THE MOVIES..... BECAUSE I WANT TO WRITE SUCH ARTICLES. I PREFER TO VIEW THEM SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE TERRIBLY ARTY HIGH-BROW ATTITUDE THE MORE INTELECTUAL MAGAZINES ASSUME AND THE GUSHING PREOCCUPATION WITH GLAMOR AND THE TRIVIA OF THE STARS' LIVES OF THE FAN MAGAZINES. I AM INTERESTED IN MOTION PICTURES AS A UNIVERSALLY AVAILABLE ART AND ENTERTAINMENT FORM.... ONE WHICH PRODUCES MUCH THAT IS WORTHLESS BUT ALSO A GREAT DEAL WORTHY OF ATTENTION (CAN YOU NAME ANY MEDIA OF WHICH THAT IS NOT TRUE?) THIS SORT OF APPROACH TO FILMS IS VERY RARE.... ALMOST UNHEARD OF, IN FACT, UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AGO WHEN I ENCOUNTERED A SYNDICATED COLUMNIST WHO DEVOTES ABOUT ONE COLUMN OUT OF THREE TO AN INTELLIGENT UN-SNOBBISH AND UN-IMPRESSED DISCUSSION OF SOME CURRENT FILM. THOSE WHO CONSIDER IT A POINT OF PRIDE THAT THEY NEVER ATTEND THE MOVIES, THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED ONLY IN AN OCCASIONAL HIGHLY-TOUTED FOREIGN FILM, AND ANY WHO OBJECT, ON PRINCIPLE, TO THE APPEARANCE OF ANY SUCH ARTICLES IN FAPA CAN SKIP THIS AND ALL SUCH SUCCEEDING ARTICLES. I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY WILL BE INTERESTED IN THESE DISCUSSIONS BUT IF ONE OR TWO MEMBERS ENJOY THEM IT WILL BE WORTH THE EFFORT. AS I SAID I'M DOING THIS BECAUSE I WANT TO AND WHETHER OR NOT THE MAJORITY OF FAPA WOULD PREFER SOMETHING OF MORE GENERAL INTEREST DOESN'T BOTHER ME TOO MUCH. AS WALT WILLIS ONCE SAID ABOUT SLANT, THIS IS MY MAGAZINE AND I SHALL DO WITH IT WHAT I PLEASE. WHICH REMINDS ME THAT SOME FAPAN WHOSE NAME I FORGET WAS CROWING THAT I MISPELL THE NAME OF MY OWN FAPAZINE. HOW RIDICULOUS CAN YOU GET! IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE, I SUPPOSE, TO MISPELL MY OWN NAME, OUT OF IGNORANCE BUT NEVER THAT OF SOMETHING I'D NAMED MYSELF UNLESS I ACCIDENTALLY HIT THE WRONG KEY. THIS CHARACTER, WHOEVER HE IS, IS THE SORT OF CARPER WHO WOULD COMPLAIN THAT LEE HOFFMAN HAD LEFT AN 'A' OUT OF QUANDRY. WHO IN HELL DOES HE THINK HE IS! FOR THE INFORMATION OF YOU OUT THERE, WHOEVER YOU ARE, THE FACT THAT I TOOK THE TITLE FROM A HOWARD SCHOENFELD STORY DOES NOT NECESSARILY INDICATE I ADOPTED HIS SPELLING ALSO. BIRDSMITH, AS IT APPEARED ON THE CALLING CARD IN "BUILT UP LOGICALLY" WAS SPELLED WITH A LARGE B AND S AND THE REST OF THE LETTERS SMALL TYPE. BIRDSMITH, THE TITLE



OF THIS FAPAZINE IS PROPERLY SPELLED ALL CAPS. HOWEVER, IF YOU INSIST (AS MOST SEEM TO) ON MISSPELLING IT BY PUTTING PART OF IT IN SMALL LETTERS THEN THE ONLY CAPITALIZED ONE IS THE B.....OR FOR THAT MATTER, IF YOU'RE GOING TO MIS-TYPE IT IN THE FIRST PLACE, YOU CAN LEAVE THE B SMALL ALSO. IN ANY CASE IT IS NOT SPELLED AS IN THE STORY AND ONE BLACK STAR IN FANDOM'S HISTORY IS QUITE ENOUGH, THANK YOU. LET SOMEONE ELSE PROVIDE TUCKER WITH MATERIAL FOR HIS NEXT TEN YEARS OF ARTICLES. THE AUTHORIZED ABBREVIATION FOR BIRDSMITH IS "HEY, YOU!& SATISFIED?

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SOME FAN SAID ONCE, IN PRAISE OF THE LIMERICK,  
WRITING 'WILLIE' ODES WAS A MUCH SIMPLER TRICK;  
BUT I FIND 'WILLIE' VERSE  
IS BOTH FORCEFUL AND TERSE,  
WHILE THE LONGER RHYMES MAKE MY CEREBRUM SICK.

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AND THAT IS PROBABLY THE FIRST, LAST, AND ONLY LIMERICK I SHALL EVER WRITE.

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#### BRANDO REVISITED

A couple of years ago I expressed, in these pages, my conviction that Marlon Brando was not an actor, but merely a personality who played himself in each picture and that I, personally, found said personality extremely repulsive.

Since then Brando has garnered two more Academy Award nominations (out of a total of seven pictures made to date), has essayed such varied roles as Mark Antony and Napoleon, and has firmly established himself as a popular favorite, making #10 in this year's MOTION PICTURE HERALD listing of the top ten box-office stars, the generally accepted such survey. In addition, it has become the fashion to 'oooh' in awed tones about Brando's tremendous talents, in print, by some of the more intellectual journalists and creative artists on the Hollywood scene.

There is no argument as to Brando's effectiveness in portraying Stanley Kowalski in "A Streetcar Named Desire". But this writer is not the only one who has leveled the charge that Mr. Brando was not acting. It's become so common, in fact, that in each interview he now is constrained to deny this, modestly portraying himself as a sensitive and shy type. In fact, in the latest interviews, he's taken to denying all those nasty reports about his habits of belching, scratching and wearing disreputable clothes in public, not to mention his record of being insulting to anyone within his range. Considering the unanimity with which these were reported by all, including many sources, the denials of the newly sartorial Brando have a slightly hollow ring but, true or not, Mr. Brando's personal life (although it does make a fascinating psychological study) is not a legitimate field for inquiry in trying to assess his worth as an actor.

Despite the attempts to exhibit Brando as a versatile actor with a tremendous range he merely emerges as Kowalski wearing a toga or a cocked hat. Presumably his next appearance, in the musical "Guys and Dolls", will give us a Stanley Kowalski who sings and dances.

Brando has attempted to alibi his reputation by say it stems from his roles in "The Men", "Streetcar", "The Wild One", and, to a lesser extent, "On The Waterfront", all having been that of slob.



But Napoleon was not a slob, or at least should not be played that way. And certainly the incredibly complex and fascinating Mark Antony was not a slob. But a more slobbish depiction of the character as written by Shakespeare, would be hard to conceive than the one in the recent Hollywood version.

Why a director of Joseph Mankiewicz' brilliance should have cast Brando in the role at all is hard to imagine. Perhaps Brando was forced on him, as box office insurance....Shakespeare having been notably weak at the box office in the past. Although Mankiewicz does enjoy more independence than most directors it is doubtful if he was responsible for selecting the cast of the upcoming "Guys and Dolls", which he will direct, since most of the stars were announced before it was made public that Mankiewicz would be at the helm.

"I saw "Julius Caesar" and "On the Waterfront" about two weeks apart this fall. These are supposed to be the two chief claims of Brando to repute as an actor. In "Caesar" he was a distraction whenever he was on the scene. Brando is a star and Mark Antony is not a starring role in that play. The two chief characters are Brutus and Cassius, finely played in this version by James Mason and John Geilgud. Brando did control his tendency to mumble, more or less. And in one spot the Brando characterization shed new light and conviction onto the most hackneyed portion of the entire play, the first few lines of the "Friends, Romans, countrymen" speech. Rather than the stately, ringing, enunciation of immortal poetry to which we are accustomed Brando delivered it hurriedly, and at the top of his voice, as an impatient attempt to quiet a crowd. It made one wonder if that wasn't what Shakespeare had intended when it was written. But credit for this probably goes to Mankiewicz, rather than Brando.

In "On the Waterfront" Brando does display more range than ever before and more than I'd thought he possessed. But it is a shaded, more human, more dimensional, Kowalski....there is not a basic difference. The character is still incoherent, unintelligent or with an unused intelligence, and basically barbaric and, at times, bestial. This seems to me perhaps reason to see some promise in Brando...that in another ten or fifteen years he might make a competent, though never a great, actor. But the claims of greatness now, of, in fact, being the world's finest actor is so ridiculous as to make one wonder what possibly inspired them. In a world containing such still active performers (ignoring the really elderly masters of the craft) as Jose Ferrer, Laurence Olivier, and Fredric March Brando bears the relationship of a counterfeit (though shiny) nickel, to a certified check for a half million dollars.

Sometimes they merely call him the best 'young' actor...but even here, where the competition is much less intense, Brando is far from supreme. The New York and London theatres must be full of actors superior to Brando who have not yet had their chance and may never acquire it. Even in the movies (a field I will deal primarily with in these articles....not due to any preference for them....but because I am normally unable to see much in the way of theatre) there is a sizable contingent which is clearly superior to Brando. Most of them, of course, are much less well known than Brando. Brando is a big star. Few would deny that Brando can outact such bobby-soxers delights as Tony Curtis or Rock Hudson. Brando at least makes some casual attempts to act. But Brando possesses one



quality which has made him a star and which, if possessed in sufficient quantities will make almost anyone a star. This is intensity. Brando visibly seethes with intensity at all times. He continually gives the impression of insufficiently sheathed forced constantly at work within, apt to burst forth at any minute. It draws audiences. Another star who possesses the same quality is Bette Davis. And, like Brando, she fooled many into overrating her ability as an actress while at her peak in the thirties. This is not to deny the ability of Miss Davis who is a highly skilled performer and an actress of integrity, although limited scope. But she is not the foremost lady of the theatre, or even of the screen. Compared to Olivia de Havilland, or Ingrid Bergman, a Shirley Booth, Miss Davis powers fade to their proper perspective. And comparison with an Ethel Barrymore would be unfair. Others possess this intensity... Barbara Stanwyck, for one. But the most intense of all is Tallulah Bankhead... whose intensity is so great that it overwhelms her not inconsiderable dramatic ability and makes her forever a freak. No matter how well she may ever play any role people will go to see Bankhead. She is probably the only star in the theatre today who could regularly fill theatres no matter how bad the material she was working with.

Brando has intensity. It's made him a star at an early age and convinced many he is an unparalleled actor. Most good actors don't become movie stars. The movie star needs a recognizable trademarked personality to draw the same customers over and over. A really fine actor sinks into his role, allows it to absorb him so completely that you forget who he is and believe only in the character he is portraying. As a result you remember the character, not the actor. So why go see another of his pictures? He's not playing that character again. But Tony Curtis still has the same dimples in each picture. And Brando can be relied upon to seethe and rage. An outstanding example of the truly fine actor who will never become an important star is Wendell Corey. I don't believe any other currently practicing actor is absorbed so completely into his roles, no matter how varied they may be, and is so consistently convincing. But perhaps it would be unfair to place Corey into the competition as a 'young' actor. But there are others. Arthur Kennedy has turned in one sensitive heartfelt performance after another for the last fifteen years, since he made his first appearance in "City for Conquest" in 1940, when still quite young. Kennedy was a nominee for the Academy Award in 1951... the year Brando was expected to take it for "Streetcar". I saw each of the five performances in this category and it was my opinion that Kennedy's was the best. But he never stood a chance. He'd been around too long, was too consistently good... and he wasn't a star. It went to Bogart for a merely clever performance. And Kennedy returned to supporting roles.

Another actor who tops Brando is one of his fellow players in "Julius Caesar", Edmond O'Brien. O'Brien is an extremely skilled actor and a clever one... although seldom given credit for it. He usually appears in B roles playing one of three parts... the crook... the cop... or the crooked cop. He has died groaning on the pavement reaching for his gun, in the final reel, a hundred times. In the past ten years I can recall only two non-shoot-em-up films in which O'Brien has appeared... "Caesar", and the same director's "The Barefoot Contessa" which I saw two days later, in which O'Brien had an amusing role as a press agent. Certainly you will have to admit O'Brien's skill as an actor. How else, in sex-conscious Hollywood



could an actor with a face like a suet pudding and absolutely no physical qualifications for the usual star specifications, whatsoever, not only hold his own as an established, if not too important, star playing romantic leads year after year, but actually improve his position, steadily but slowly, each year. O'Brien will never threaten Brando's spot in the top ten boxoffice draws but neither is he a flash in the pan. In another fifteen years he might be able to start playing Spencer Tracy type roles. Good looks aren't so important in character-type roles.

A couple of other actors who show promise but haven't really ever had a chance to properly display their abilities are John Ireland and Lloyd Bridges....also not stars. Ireland showed considerable depth in his "All the King's Men" portrayal but both he and Bridges are far down the hierarchy of Hollywood importance and usually spend their time in gangster or western quickies.

However, the plaudits Brando draws cannot be dismissed as merely the result of no important well-known competition. Brando's one close friend in Hollywood society is Montgomery Clift. Clift and Brando studied acting under the same teacher, have very similar styles, and a similar outlook on life (except that Clift seems to be polite about it). Clift preceeded Brando by a couple of years in achieving stardom (he's four years older) and, like Brando, has never tied himself down to one company, refusing to make any picture unless he personally is enthusiastic about it. Like Brando, this has resulted in an unusual number of good, well-recieved, and important pictures in which he's appeared, although he acts less frequently than the normal Hollywood star. But, unlike Brando, Clift has exhibited a wide range of ability. The laconic soldier of "The Search", the intense young outdoor hothead of "Red River", the really beautiful job he did as the effete money-seeking suitor of Olivia de Haviland in "The Heiress", the confused adolescent of "A Place in the Sun", the irresponsible masochist of "From Here to Eternity"..... Clift is both skillful and versatile....so versatile in fact that only his skill in selecting only important pictures to appear in maintains his stardom. He had the opportunity to become a personality, a bobby-sox delight, after "Red River", and chose otherwise. As a result he has no dedicated following, and is not the important name that Brando is.

But, to my surprise and very great glee, my own choice for the best young actor I know of, has out-Brando'ed Brando. There were three new additions to the list of top ten stars this year. Brando squeezed into the #10 spot. Into #9, went Jane Wayman, another surprise. Long a favorite of mine and another person who refuses to be typed but plays all sorts of roles brilliantly, I had assumed her stardom was merely a carryover from her Academy Award of 1948 and that she was in constant danger of retiring to the supporting ranks again through her constant and usually-fatal insistence on diversity rather than being typed. So her accession to the top tens was quite surprising and very pleasant. It led to speculation that perhaps movie audiences were maturing slightly (not too much, John Wayne and Martin & Lewis are still numbers 1 & 2 respectively) as did the third addition which was that of William Holden, in the #7 spot, ahead of Bing Crosby even.

Holden has been a star so long it may sound a trifle silly to refer to him as a young actor but he was about 19 when he had his first starring role in "Golden Boy" in 1939, so he is presumably only 35 or at least not more than a couple of years older than that



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so, being under forty I'd say he was still in the 'young' bracket. At any rate he's not more than five or six years older than Brando. A picture by picture review of Holden's career would be impossible. Unlike Brando and Clift he's made lots and lots of movies. Despite his high level of activity their quality level in recent years can compare favorably with that of almost any other actor. He's had an occasional dud but most of them were above average and, more important, Holden has portrayed one varied role after another. He doesn't quite possess Wendell Corey's ability to eliminate his own personality, but he makes a pretty good attempt at it. Some types he plays more frequently than others. I suppose you could say the 'typical' William Holden role would be that of the busy, fast-rising, and charming young executive, since this is what he most resembles in real life and he has played that type several times. Can you picture Marlon Brando trying to play such a character. It is downright ludicrous. And not just through social backgrounds... it's not like the late John Garfield who played 'What makes Sammy run' slum types both off and on the screen. Holden's and Brando's backgrounds do not materially differ. Holden comes from the upper upper middle class whereas Brando merely comes from the upper middle class. Despite his present prosperity Holden still has a smaller income than his father. Brando's family was less prosperous but he comes from a quite comfortable and leisurely environment and is no slum product. But Holden is not chained to what is typical for him. He not only could play a typical Brando role...he's done so! And he won an academy award for it. The character he played in "Stalag 17" was almost exactly the sort of thing Brando does....with one small difference. The Sergeant was a slob, but he was one with brains. Holden's ability is great but it is not yet great enough for him to convince the audience that any person he may be playing is not a very smart cookie, indeed. Braininess radiates from Holden constantly just as intensity does from Brando. And who who has seen it can ever forget what is, for me, the finest Holden performance of all, the indecisive, near-perverved writer of "Sunset Boulevard"?

I think the test of a really fine actor is his ability to convincingly don and off varied personalities. In my book Holden passes with straight A's while Brando gets only an E for effort.

I realize that Brando will probably become a staple among the top ten stars while Holden will probably be off again next year. After all, this year Holden had the advantage of an Academy Award and an unusually large number of pictures in circulation, all but one of which received critical raves. With fewer pictures, poorer roles, and less publicity Holden will probably find it impossible to duplicate his success this year. Holden lacks the intensity of Brando (although of course it can be simulated when necessary by a good actor) and his insistence on diversifying his efforts, which achieved this success, will probably drag him down again in the future. But, at present, I'm savoring to the full the fact that a really good actor rests three notches higher on the ladder of public esteem than the so-called 'world's finest actor'. I only wish Wendell Corey were up there in the top ten also.

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