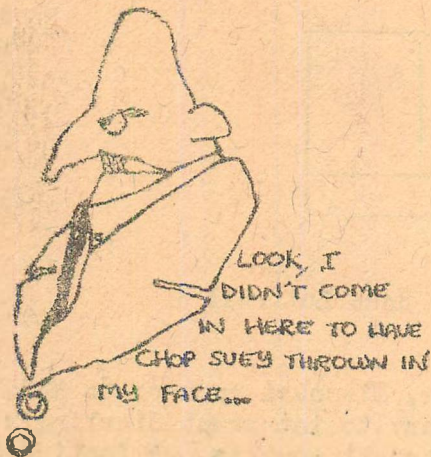


FIGHTS BORE-
DOM THREE
WAYS!





STARLING

Starling #24 was edited and published by Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell, at 525 W. Main #1, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. (Some of you may still have the old Columbia address in your files.) It is available with 50¢ or 3/\$1, fanzines or other publications in trade, or with contributions of artwork, a letter of comment, or anything else which you can convince us is worth publishing. Back issues: 16, 17 and 23 are 50¢ each. March, 1973. Starling is published quarterly; the next deadline is early May. Contributors might consider giving us a hand in getting back to a regular publishing schedule by sending us something. Weltanschauung Publication #58.

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Notebookings

+ Hank Luttrell +

Back when we were making plans to move from Columbia, Missouri up here to Madison, Wisconsin we figured that it would hardly be necessary to interrupt Starling's publication schedule at all. We could have never thought anything so foolish had this not been the first time that we've moved since we were married and settled in at 1108 Locust in Columbia. Under the easiest of circumstances, moving can be a traumatic experience. And as many of you already know, we didn't pick the easiest way to move the 400 miles from Columbia to Madison. Many of you already know much of this story because we visited with you as we moved via Albuquerque and Los Angeles and Australia, all somewhat out of the way.

Some time before the date which had been set for us to move out of our old apartment, I drove Lesleigh to St. Louis to see her off at the airport for her DUFF trip to Australia. At that point, we had only barely begun packing, and I returned to Columbia to finish that particular job. I recall that period as one of the most unpleasant of memory. I jumped out of bed as soon as I woke up, and worked as fast as possible all day, ripping things apart and packing them away. I only had a few days to get the whole job done, and for some time I felt rather desperate. Generally, I allowed myself a short time each day to visit at the Columbia Slan Shack, so I wouldn't go completely crazy. At that time, Doug Carroll, Terry Hughes, Chris Couch and Claudia Parrish all lived there. I can remember sitting around their living room in a glassy eyed daze, telling them repeatedly how upsetting I was finding the task of ripping up the home that Lesleigh and I had known for three years.

Come moving day, Missouri's weather obligingly cooperated with 100° temperatures, while Terry Hughes and Chris Couch and our car Plonk helped me shuttle our junk over into the basement of a friend's house, and also into every empty corner and nook of Doug Carroll's apartment. This day's activity caused Terry to comment that for a hippy, I sure had a lot of material possessions -- like mainly over 100 boxes of books.

With that phase of the move completed, I settled down in the Slan Shack to wait out the few days until it was time to leave for the Bubonicon in Albuquerque and the LAcon. Big Huge, our mimeograph, was for the moment stationed on a table in the Shack, so naturally we helped pass the time by publishing an incredible number of fanzines. Some of the details of this period escape me at the moment -- in fact, all my memories of these few days are masked by sort of a veneer of fantasy. Perhaps this might be partly because of the continued high temperatures, and the fact that the refrigerator would neither freeze ice or keep our Cokes cold. Imagine that! Manac without cold Coke! Despite this, we published The Last Shot, Columbia fandom's farewell one shot, an issue of Mota, Terry Hughes' justly acclaimed fanzine, and an ungodly number of High Times, the Hughes/Couch slavish imitation of Hot Shit. I'm going to tell you something of a trade secret now. . . those boys were publishing

High Times so fast that not enough funny things were happening to them to write about⁴. . . they actually had to make up some of those funny stories. That's right, some of them were actually lies. I hope I haven't shocked you so much that you'll never trust another fine fannish face.

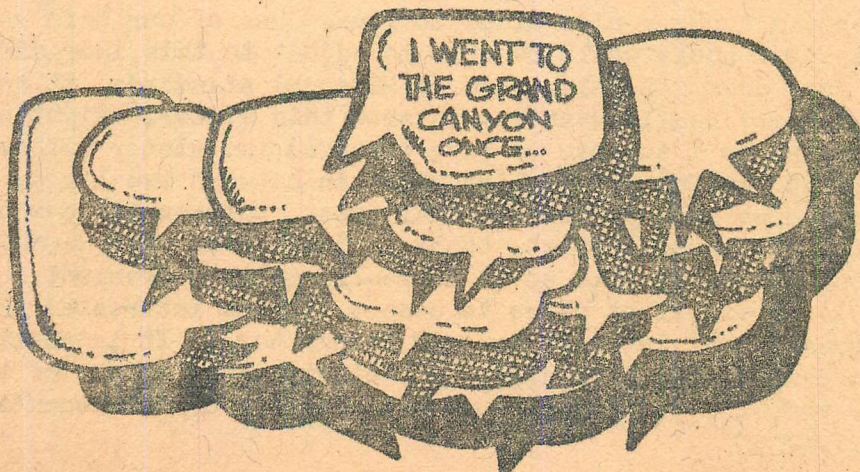
This hectic period of fanning was climaxed with a dash to St. Louis to visit with Joyce and Arnie Katz, who were in Missouri so that Joyce could visit the old home town. Our visit was unfortunately cut somewhat short, however, as it was the next day that we planned to leave on our trip west.

Now, at this point I could tell you lots of stories about our long drive -- four people living in a compact Dart (named Plonk) along with lots of luggage and about a zillion comic books (for me to sell at LA in order to finance the trip) can lead to some unusual incidents. In particular I remember breaking down on a tollway in Oklahoma, with the nearest garage miles and miles away; and the rain storm in Arizona when we were forced off the road by the incredible ferocity of the storm -- I think we were all in genuine fear for our lives for a time; and I remember seeing the Painted Desert and Grand Canyon, it was like suddenly finding yourself on an alien planet. And then there is the story about what happened the night we slept in the middle of the desert. You must ask me to tell that story some time.

Despite all the interesting stories that might be told, eventually all difficulties were overcome and our party did attend the Bubonicon, and later the LAcon -- in Los Angeles our party grew in size when we all walked across the street from the convention hotel to the LA International Airport and welcomed Lesleigh off the jet back from Australia.

I have no intention of writing a convention report. I especially don't want to again have to go through the stories about Geroge Senda, a plague which afflicted both Bubonicon and LAcon. If anyone is interested, I refer you to Bob Vardeman's convention report¹. Milt Stevens recently dropped me a note indicating that at least some of the stuff that Senda made off with in Albuquerque has been recovered, so I suppose that things could have worked out much worse.

As those of you who have been looking have already noticed, Lesleigh hasn't done a DUFF report for this issue of Starling. When Lesleigh returned from her trip, she was not only full of stories about her stay in Australia, she had a notebook with over 60 pages of detailed notes. Right after LAcon, however, Lesleigh had to fly to Madison to start school, having already missed a few days. Meanwhile, I drove



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back to Missouri, rented a truck, and moved out stuff to Wisconsin. So for a week, Lesleigh lived in our present apartment sans furnishings of any type. She had a cot, a few pots, some towels and some of the clothes she had taken with her to Australia and LAcon. If the previous tenants hadn't left a rickety folding chair, some wire milk cases and some boards, Lesleigh wouldn't have been able to contrive a desk to work on her homework. Sometime during this period, that notebook seems to have vanished. Then, too, several Australian fans have produced remarkable records of the Syncon and Lesleigh's visit; Leigh Edmond's article² in particular made Lesleigh feel like anything she might write redundant. For the moment at least, we have no DUFF report to publish. But Lesleigh certainly wants to thank everyone who helped make her trip possible, and in particular those Australian fans who went to so much trouble to make her trip so much fun.

For a while after moving into our new home here in Madison we had a number of perfectly valid reasons for delaying the publication of this issue of Starling. Getting unpacked and organized took about a week or so. There were a number of things that we wanted to do to the apartment: painting and refinishing the floors, and building book cases and shelves. I'm still not completely finished building shelves, though I have enough done now to take care of the bulk of our collections. I consider the cover of this Starling most appropriate; recently I've done a great deal of sorting through piles of dusty printed matter. Eventually, I had to find a job, and until that concern was taken care of I had no time for Starling at all. I hadn't felt too bad about leaving my dish washing job in Columbia; as Terry Hughes once said, after a while all those dishes began to look the same. The biggest employer here in Madison is the University of Wisconsin -- their waiting lists were rather long, however, so for a while I had a horrible job with an outfit which canned vitamin concentrates. At one point I helped can a rather huge amount of vitamin A concentrate for McDonalds (as in Hamburgers). So next time you are reduced to drinking a McDonalds shake, you can thank me for your vitamin A. Eventually I did get a pushy civil service job with the university -- pushy, in that I spend most of my time pushing a mop or a scrub machine. Yes, your hippy-dishwasher editor of Starling is now a hippy-janitor.

Lesleigh, of course, continues to attend school -- which is the reason we moved up here, of course. Presently she is a graduate student in the University's Physical Anthropology program.

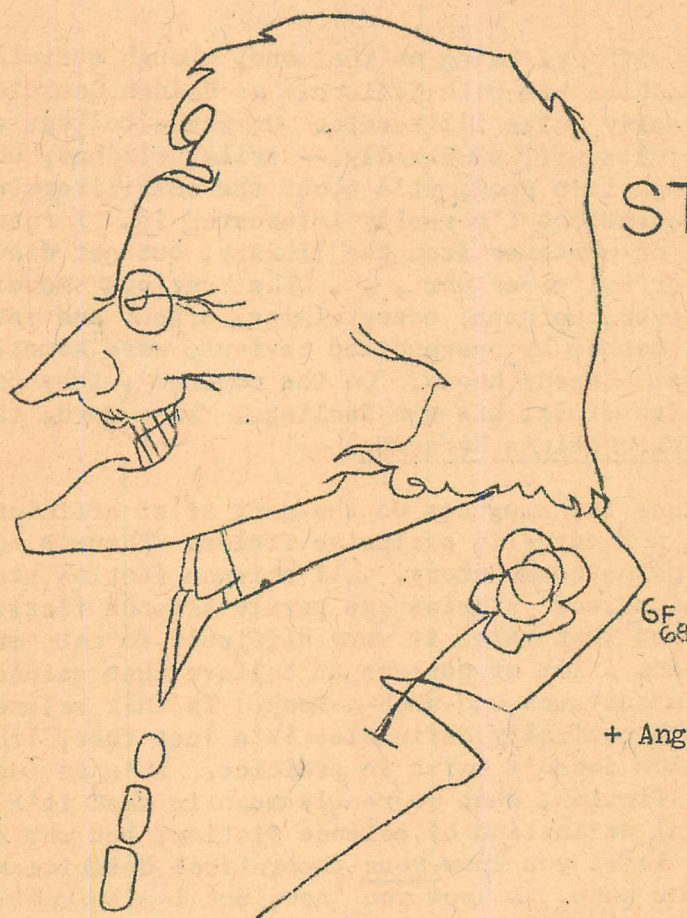
It must be admitted that we could have published Starling long before this if we had made a real effort. But it takes a while to adjust to new situations. . . so I want to thank all of you who have written enquiring about Starling for your concern. It is nice to know that many of you noticed when we weren't around.

Madison has proven to be a nice place to live. One of our main worries was whether or not our Missouri souls would be able to adjust to this incredible Wisconsin climate. It sure does get cold. And by Missouri standards, it snows a lot -- natives advise me that there really wasn't much snow this winter. Right now, spring is just around the corner, so I suppose we have survived the winter without too many problems. Madison itself is very nice. We live right in between two large, beautiful lakes, near both the campus and downtown-capital area. Between the campus business areas and the capital business district, there is just about every imaginable type of store and shop and restaurant, so it is really quite convenient for us. In many ways Madison is an excellent place to base a fanzine interested in the popular arts, as there is great local interest in such things here. It is possible to see a good movie on campus somewhere almost any night, shown by one of the many film groups. Some recent favorites of ours was a series of Hitchcock's early British

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

SGT.
PEPPER'S

STARSHIP



+ Angus Taylor +

Science fiction's no good.
 It it's any good, it can't be science fiction.
 Anyone who thinks science fiction is any good
 doesn't know what he's talking about.
 Anyone who doesn't know what he's talking about
 isn't any good.
 Therefore, if you think science fiction's any good
 you're no good.

-- Peter S. Prescott

Science fiction is good.
 Anyone who doesn't think science fiction is any good
 , doesn't know what he's talking about.
 Anyone who doesn't know what he's talking about
 shouldn't talk about other people not knowing
 what they're talking about
 because he doesn't know what he's talking about.
 If you think I don't know
 you don't know what you're talking about
 then you don't know what you're talking about.
 So what right do you have to talk about science fiction?

-- Harlan Ellison

Ah, gwan!

-- R. D. Laing

Well, I tend to side with Mr. Laing on that one, though strictly as regards Prescott and Ellison, my sympathies are with Ellison. As Holden Caulfield once remarked, I read a lot but I'm really quite illiterate. Or words to that effect. Most science fiction is pretty awful stuff, admittedly -- trite, cliched, uninspiring. When it's bad, it's bad; but when it's good, it's about the only literature capable of discussing the type of questions I'm really interested in. I resolve to bring home some Hemingway, Lawrence, or whatever from the library, but get distracted by Dick or Ballard or Vonnegut or Silverberg or . . . The "serious" novels I do read don't seem all that serious; clever, perhaps; entertaining, often; and yet -- "The novels he devoured so hopefully, conned by overexcited reviews, were sometimes diverting, but told him nothing he had not already known. On the contrary, they only served to reaffirm, albeit on occasion with style, his own feelings. In a word, they were self-regarding." (Mordecai Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman)

And yet that's no cause for smugness on the part of sf aficionados. Science fiction and "mainstream" are not mutually exclusive fields. There's no such thing as a pure sf story or a pure "mainstream" story. All science fiction stories are partly "mainstream", and all "mainstream" stories are partly science fiction. Some stories are about half-and-half and that makes it very difficult to categorize them as one or the other. Which leads a lot of persons to believe that science fiction is undefinable, "because what about such-and-such-a-book? Is that science fiction or not?" Science fiction is theoretically definable; it's just that, like Christianity or Communism, science fiction doesn't exist in practice. It's an ideal type. When we say something is science fiction, what we really mean is that it's mostly science fiction. I know the theoretical definition of science fiction, but why should I tell you? You know it too -- or at least you know your theoretical definition, but you probably don't realize that you know. I know you know, but I also know you don't know that you know. So what's new? If you can point to a book and say, That's science fiction, then you do have a definition, whether you know it or not. If you want to discover what your definition is, then you've first got to rid yourself of the false notion that that book you just pointed to fits your definition. It doesn't. It only approximates your definition. So don't look for the definition in the book. The definition is in your head.

Herein lies the "strangeness" or "otherness" that characterizes an artistic object. The form is immediately given to perception, and yet it reaches beyond itself; it is a semblance, but seems to be charged with reality. Like speech, that is physically nothing but little buzzing sounds, it is filled with meaning, and its meaning is a reality.

-- Susanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form

Clarke's Third Law: Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

And all the science, I don't understand
It's just my job, five days a week;
A rocket man . . .

-- Elton John

Or to put it another way:

The reality of science fiction lies in the meaning you give it.

WITH MALICE TOWARD ALL

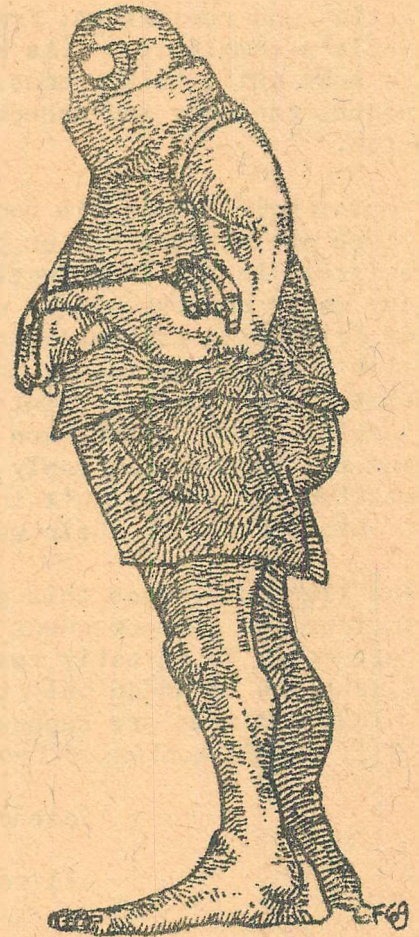
+ Joo Sanders +

THE RETURN OF THE TIME MACHINE by Egon Friedell. DAW Books, 95¢.

If it weren't for THE RETURN OF THE TIME MACHINE's tenuous connection with Wells's novel, it would be of no interest at all. In fact Friedell's novel is interesting because its weaknesses show THE TIME MACHINE's strengths. By itself, RETURN is an innocuous, old-fashioned story, in which a marvelous invention exists primarily to give the characters an excuse to talk. Most of the book is filled with discussions of "scientific," more accurately philosophical, theories. The plot is flimsy and the descriptions, though sometimes striking, are underdeveloped; all Friedell really cares about is establishing settings where his characters can stand, talking or pondering. Although it does contain some "sense of wonder" -- Friedell shows fresh interest in what he's doing -- the story doesn't do much to hold a reader's interest. In fact, intriguing suggestions, like Miss Gloria's kinship to the golden-skinned Egyptians whom the Time Traveller discovers in the future, are ignored deliberately. The action thus appears quite pointless -- although actually it may be Friedell's point that scientific exploration is futile. As the Time Traveler sums it up, "No matter if one tries to conquer the Earth, Space, Time or any other dimension, one always neglects the one and only conquest worth the trouble, in fact the only one possible: one's own 'I'" (p. 118).

Wells, on the other hand, knew that a writer must get his reader's attention before he can make them think. In Wells's best stories, abstract ideas are made concrete, and lectures are more than balanced by action. Wells realized that a debate between the Time Traveler and spokesman for the Eloi and the Morlocks would stop the action and would reduce the characters to mundane types, stripped of much of their strangeness. To show his readers that strangeness, the range of time and man's limited place within that vastness, is a large part of Wells's purpose. The Time Traveler's enthusiasm for the journey is counterbalanced by what he finds. It makes sense, then, for the story to break off as it does; it is significant that the Time Traveler evidently has been unable to complete his purpose, but without a clear admission of failure. We are left pondering, perhaps, not bored by pondering within the story.

Sequels usually fail -- even when the original author tries to write the sequel, but



especially when it is written by someone else. For one thing, sequels tend to violate the original's tone. Wells's story is a careful balance of optimism and pessimism, action and rumination; Friedell, settled in one narrow purpose, fails to achieve Wells's complexity. (As another example, consider how Tom Disch reduced *THE PRISONER* to some cute, talky games.) For another thing, if a work has been created whole, a sequel can only add unnecessary material. The original author generally knew when to stop.

Postscript: Friedell's book stands or falls by itself. However, the introduction and blurb are misleading, suggesting a much more direct link with Wells than actually exists. In the introduction, Wollheim remarks that "possibly there is no record of any Wells correspondence with Friedell. Yet it is unlikely that Wells was unaware of Friedell's cultural histories so similar to his own" (p. 15). There is no connection between the ideas, and the last sentence proves nothing. As a guess, I'd say that there's only a faint chance of the correspondence that introduced *RETURN* being genuine. The letters are too obvious a burlesque of literary attitudes, for one thing, and for another the reply supposedly from Wells's secretary is quite unlike Wells' attitude. Wells didn't insist on the literal truth of his stories -- just, later in his career, on their wholesome intellectual influence.

The blurb stretches this point into untruth, though stating that Friedell was "an admirer and correspondent of Wells." This is especially hard to take, since Wollheim presumably is directly responsible for DAW books. It's not true, incidentally, that blurbs are intended only to tell what a reader might find in a book. I've written the things. Blurbs are supposed to indicate what a reader can expect to find in a book. SGT. PEPPER continued from page 7: * * * * *

Science fiction is about magic.

All work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy.

Thus, for many sf fans, science fiction can become identified with fandom; fandom becomes more "real" than the existent body of literature about which it supposedly revolves. These fans find the meaning of science fiction in the world they have superimposed on the original art of literature. Fandom becomes its own art. Some carry this process of abstraction one level further, so that fan and fandom become mere instruments enabling the individual to pursue his particular hobby of collecting books, or whatever. His personal library, its care and growth, become his mania -- not the literature embodied in the library or his relationships with like-minded individuals. There is the oft-told story of Harold Sheldon, a fan so devoted to maintaining his books in pristine condition that he refused to handle them even himself, inventing a mechanical page-turner to do the job instead. In order to guard against the most minute damage to the binding of his literary treasures, he made sure that the page-turner never opened a book more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch, and rigged up an elaborate series of lights and mirrors to transmit the wordage on the page to a projection screen nearby which he could view at his leisure. At one convention, Harold hurled into the nearest trash can a newly purchased copy of *TOWER OF GLASS* after discovering that the author had autographed the title page of the book when Harold had his back turned. He immediately stalked out of the convention and spent the rest of the weekend searching city bookstores for a replacement copy unsullied by evidence of human contact, furtively examining copy after copy of *TOWER* for evidence of wrinkles on the outside spine, imperfect alignment of title on the spine, chipped cover edges, finger prints, smudges of glue, and other disasters. Unable to find a single suitable copy, he returned home in a foul mood, only to discover that, against his strictest orders, his wife had been into his book collection, and through mechanical incompetence had allowed the page-turner to crease the upper corners of pages 69 through 82 of his copy of *BUG JACK BARRON*. Flying into a rage, Harold wrung his wife's neck, then took his rifle and disposed of 34 shoppers in a local supermarket before he was picked off by a police sniper.



CHANDLER'S WORLD

+ Michael Carlson +

The detective story as we know it had its origins in the brilliantly disturbed mind of Edgar Allan Poe. Conan Doyle borrowed Poe's character-types without Poe's psychology, and created the most popular detective of all, Sherlock Holmes. As Doyle adopted Poe's techniques to a more "popular" literature he, in effect, genre-ized it.

From that point the story of detection was a British-dominated genre. The scholarly detective was not suited to the wildly expanding American popular literature market. So a new type of detective evolved; with his antecedents in the Wild West and in the confidence man of American myth. He evolved through the early dime novels and pulps until it spawned on the pages of Black Mask magazine.

He was known as a dick. A hard-boiled dick.

Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op and Sam Spade. Carroll John Daly's Race Williams. Stories by Paul Cain, Norbert Davis, Robert L. Bellem; names mostly all forgotten now. And from this came Raymond Chandler. And from Chandler came Philip Marlowe.

Raymond Chandler was an American-born, British educated business man, who had written for British newspapers and magazines before the First World War. He fought in that war as a member of the RAF, but afterwards returned to California and was highly successful in the business world. But the Depression changed all that, and Chandler, a reader of Black Mask, was convinced that he would write well enough to sell to that market.

That was an understatement.

What Chandler wound up doing was reshaping the model of the hard-boiled detective into a character who lived within a framework of the American Dream gone berserk. He transplanted Sam Spade from San Francisco to Los Angeles; and he made him a more intelligent, more introspective, lonelier man; a man who worked out chess problems to pass the time, a man who could recognise an obscure literary or musical reference. He made him a man who could live in that shadowy netherworld of crime, could use the methods of the criminal, could exist freely in the roughest of circumstances. And he made this man literate and creative and observant enough to be able to describe this whole crazy world in the most beautiful first person narrative imaginable.

This was Philip Marlowe. Marlowe. The mysterious poet who had written Dr. Faustus when Shakespeare was still doing small comedies, and soon after was dead.

Chandler did not stumble onto Marlowe overnight. There is a steady build-up of the character before Marlowe himself actually appears, in a string of short stories involving other detectives. Ballantine has reprinted the collection The Simple Art of Murder in three volumes (Trouble is My Business, Pickup on Noon Street, and the original title) as well as the collection Killer In The Rain; and the stories show the gradual creation of the character of Marlowe, as the nebulous and bizarre world in which he operates becomes more and more clearly defined, so does Marlowe.

By the time Chandler's first novel, The Big Sleep, appeared, Marlowe's character was pretty well established; yet it continues to build through the later novels, until The Long Goodbye, which is probably the most introspective of all the Marlowe novels.

What was it about Chandler, and about Marlowe, that made his books so popular then; and what has accounted for the recent resurgence of interest which has led Ballantine to reprint all the novels? And Chandler's increasing popularity with professors, especially in American Studies? First, Chandler was popular because he could write a damn good detective story; with strong characterization, plenty of action, and a fast-paced, if often confusing plot (of course mystery fans just love confusing plots). And he became more popular because he could write period. So many good writers never do turn out anything entertaining, so everybody jumps on one who does. Finally, the American Studies people always look to popular culture for a reflection of the society, a reflection of its needs and wants. Chandler not only answered those desires, he described them in his work; which makes him, like Melville or Hawthorne, one of those unique figures in literature. Chandler understood the myths he used, and why he used them.

The world Chandler wrote of was crooked at the bottom; where cheap whores could be bought and sold and cheap hoods would stab you for a dime; and it was crooked at the top, where politicians bought and sold justice and lives, where classy racketeers hobnobbed with mayors; and where the aristocracy's private lives were filled with the most lurid and sordid details. It is a world of alcohol, drugs, sex, corruption and more than anything else, violence. Death is the last note in a song: the refrain is bullets and the beat is kept with fists thudding into flesh. It is the world we never see, a world to which admission is gained only with a special and hard-earned ticket. This is Chandler's America. . . at its California paranoid craziest. In a very strange way, Philip Marlowe is the classic American hero. Like Natty Bumppo, like Poe's Dupin and like Buffalo Bill, Marlowe has to adopt the style of the enemy to defeat him at his own game. By doing this he alienates himself from the rest of society. By this time, having defeated all our external enemies (except for the Nazis or the Commies) the hero had to turn inward and fight the enemy within (like Cotton Mather exorcising devils from Puritans lost in an evil wilderness) and thus pave the way for the American dream to work. We are fighting ourselves in this battle, so we have Shadows to fight crime, and we have detectives like Philip Marlowe.

The problems encountered in dealing with the character of Marlowe are evident when one considers the movies that have been made of Chandler's books. Although Chandler worked in Hollywood as a screenwriter (among his credits is Strangers on a Train) he never worked on the film of one of his own books, which may be partly responsible for the flaws in the filmic characterization of Marlowe; although more likely it is attributable to the Hollywood conception of its audience as opposed to the literary audience.

The best known of the Marlowe films is The Big Sleep, which is one of Hawk's better films, and certainly very entertaining and effective; but it is not Marlowe. Bogart is still Sam Spade in this film, not intelligent enough for Marlowe, too intense. Although William Faulkner gets screenplay credit on The Big Sleep his part seems to have been small and Jules Furthman probably wrote most of the dialog, with Leigh Brackett probably doing most of the scenario.

Robert Montgomery starred in and directed The Lady in the Lake which was photographed as Chandler wrote it, in the first person. This technique is marvelously effective in letting a complicated plot unfold before the reader's eyes; and in Chandler's hands provides for good characterization. But on film it is perhaps too stunning a device, too diverting. It does work at times, and perhaps if it were not so unusual it would be more effective. Montgomery makes a good Marlowe; lacking only a measure of toughness.

The only other filmed Marlowe I've seen (although I've been told Dick Powell played him) is the 1968 film Marlowe, with James Garner, a little too young and flippant, but otherwise not bad. I'd appreciate any other info on Chandler films.

Not only did Chandler progressively build up the character of Marlowe, but he also built up his novels using the short stories as the base. He often takes short stories, expands them, sometimes twists the plot a little, and turns them into 10 or 12 chapters of a novel. The introduction to Killer in the Rain points all this out quite clearly. What is added, totally new, is the increasing depth of perception and the increasing facility with which Chandler handles the American idiom. Like these:

1. Small time hood Wendy Menendez describes Marlowe:

"You got cheap emotions. You're cheap all over. You pal around with a guy, eat a few drinks, talk a few gags, slip him a little dough when he's strapped, and you're sold out to him. Just like some school kid that read Frank Merriwell. You got no guts, no brains, no connections, no savvy, so you throw out a phony attitude and expect people to cry over you. Tarzan on a big red scooter." He smiled a small weary smile. "In my book you're a nickel's worth of nothing."

2. Marlowe explaining to a cop who's roughed him up why he keeps calling him Hemingway:

"A gag." I said. "An old, old gag."

"Who's this Hemingway person at all?"

"A guy who keeps saying the same thing over and over until you begin to believe it must be good."

3. Or Marlowe's thoughts, as he drives away from a case:

Where did it matter where you lay once you were dead? In a dirty sump or in a marble tower on top of a high hill? You were dead, you were sleeping the big sleep, you were not bothered by things like that. Oil and water were the same as wind and air to you. You just slept the big sleep, not caring about the nastiness of how you died or where you fell. Me, I was part of the nastiness now.

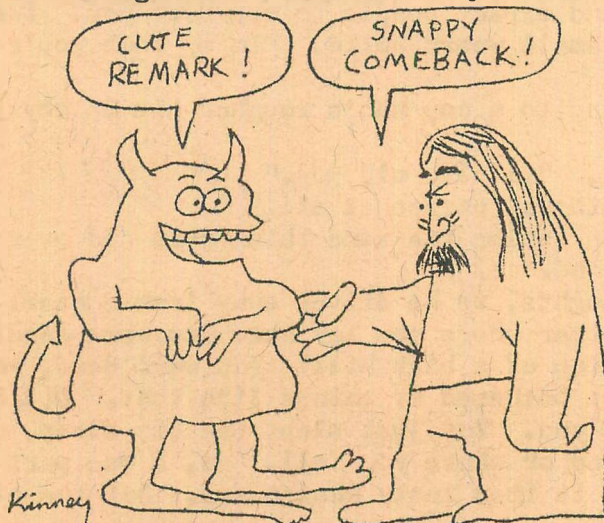
Far more a part of it than Rusty Reagan was. But the old man didn't have to be.

WORDS FROM READERS

Buck Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, Indiana 47348

I have a rather violent prejudice against John Wayne as a performer because he can't act. He can project an image. An image. One. I have seen him try to portray a German sea captain and a Mongolian warlord, and fail miserably. (He did succeed as a comic football coach in Trouble Along the Way because of the inherent ridiculousness of humorous lines coming out of that deadpan visage; sort of a king-size Buster Keaton.) Actually, most of the old-time movie "stars" did the same thing; I haven't seen enough of the newcomers to know about them. (James Dean was the last big-name star that I watched very much, and he certainly followed the standard pattern.) Now, for my money, an actor should be able to play convincingly a variety of roles. William Boyd, who went from drawing-room romances to Hopalong Cassidy, was an actor (can you imagine Wayne in a drawing room?). Theodore Bikel is an actor. Marlon Brando is an actor, when he bothers (which isn't often, any more). Lloyd Bridges is an actor, though he isn't getting much chance to show it these days. Richard Boone is an actor. Lon Chaney, Jr., was an actor, though he was an old man before he got out of the straightjacket of werewolfing. Wayne isn't an actor. On the other hand, John Wayne movies are usually quite enjoyable, as long as Wayne's part is tailored to his image and doesn't require him to act. His supporting cast usually consists of competent actors and occasionally (as in Red River) good ones, and I have no particular objection to the moral being preached!

Angus Taylor's column reinforces my contempt for most of the human race. The need for traditions, drag existence -- idiocy. (I'm not saying Taylor and his experts are wrong, just that the people they're talking about are contemptible.) I would argue: any conclusion based on types of advertising, however, because I don't know anybody who pays any attention to advertising (and I work in a very straight midwestern office). The most successful ads -- I suspect the only successful ads -- are those with a catchphrase that sticks in people's memories. "Put a tiger in your tank." "Lucky Strike green has gone to war." (How many of your readers remember that one?) "You've come a long way, baby." "Not a cough in a carload." (Try that one on your nostalgia-oriented



BASIC FAN CARTOON #1

14
friends.) The ultimate in catchphrase advertising has been reached by an Indianapolis auto dealer who comes on, says "No-o-o-body" and disappears. He used to have a longer ad, but has refined it down to nothing but the catch-phrase; one word is all it takes to remind people that this is the place to go to buy cars. The rest of advertising is so much garbage that goes in one ear and out the other of the potential customer.

Greg M. Burton, P.O. Box 69, Ocean Park, Washington 98640

Jim Turner disturbs me a bit. "The Duke may be a fascist in real life, I ~~don't~~ know and really don't care because it isn't any of my business." I can see not judging a performer on his politics because it doesn't make sense, but. . . I'm just old fashioned enough to think that politics is everybody's business. Wayne publicly supports candidates, publicly makes political statements. Because he does have a large following, his views are covered, just as the Airplane's political views are covered. In either case, if one feels that the statements attributed to the individual are either misinformed or dangerous, it is the right of the reader to point this out if he chooses. I think there is a better reason to not see John Wayne movies -- I can only afford a limited number of films, and his bore me. If, however, people wish to boycott them for political reasons, they are taking action in a legal, fair and sometimes effective way. What more can you ask? It certainly is more equitable than the blacklist leveled at Leftwing performers, since the decision not to support a particular artist is being made by the public rather than the executives.

Mark Mumper, 1227 Laurel Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

I agree with the basic spirit of Jim's article (that political values shouldn't influence one's opinion of an actor's ability; and that the New York critics in general are a cliquish and pretentious group), but his own approach to the problem shows just as much "violent prejudice" as those he attacks. Maybe I'm missing a possible ironic intention, but more likely he had gone a bit overboard.

There is certainly nothing morally or ethically (or politically, for that matter) wrong with John Wayne playing John Wayne in film after film. As an actor he has created probably the most constantly realized and recognizable figure in American cinema. I don't like his views or the attitude he portrays, and I think he is a fascist, but that's my trip; you can call me whatever you like. But what I think is wrong with the Wayne character is that, given his reliance on power and strength (read: violence) to maintain "justice" -- a perfectly admissible set of values -- a good many people who don't have the intelligence or the desire to completely understand and think out such a worldview will nonetheless subscribe to such a doctrine to reach their own ends, with no thought for consequences.

No matter how "noble" or "respectable" or "efficient" the John Wayne System might be, I cannot respect it when it's used to justify such acts as the US government (and others) engages in under its guise: "protective" actions in Vietnam, quelling of legitimate (but "undesirable") citizens' protests, etc. The John Wayne myth is both a reflection (somewhat distorted, true) of these acts and a shield behind which they can stand. There is a time, however, when order and one man rule become less than admirable.

As for Angus Taylor, his article in this issue is the best and most valuable piece of writing I've seen by him. His subject matter is basically the same, but the juxtaposition he achieves here of roles vs. identities is a striking example of where a good deal of current struggle is at. We need less of the myriad of roles available



BASIC FAN CARTOON # 2

to us (as presented and exploited by advertising) and more real effort to mold truly personal identities. When everyone can be "different" or individualistic by smoking cigarette X or wearing Rebecca's wigs, no one is different -- we're faced with a menagerie of varied yet identical beings. I think Angus is probably as uncertain as I whether we can transcend such superficiality, but I hope this confusion won't keep us from creating viable alternatives. In fact I think it can become a challenge. The very fact that advertising and the mass media (especially TV) are using the most sophisticated and relevant approaches ever to hypnotize us is a sign that, with humanistic infiltration, they can possibly become oriented toward individual identity, with real reasons for serving the consumer.

Mike Deckinger, 649 16 Ave., San Francisco, Ca. 94118

I enjoyed Chris' article on television sf, but there are a few minor corrections I can offer. Captain Video was played by Al Hodge, not Al Hodges. Hodge later went on to do commercials, after the demise of his serial, while his companion, the Video Ranger, played by Don Hastings, went into soap opera, I believe. During its brief run, several sf authors helped write "Captain Video," including James Blish.

Chris is entirely too kind to "The Outer Limits." (John Baxter in his book on sf films makes the same mistake.) "The Outer Limits" was often abysmal, occasionally passable, and once or twice, good. It was basically a monster show, and if an acceptable script managed to infiltrate, it was a mistake rather than an expression of policy.

+I also remember "The Outer Limits" as being very good -- I think it hit Chris
+and me at the right age, for one thing. (Like "Star Trek" did for many people.)
+ --LML

I saw The Thing in a movie theatre, too, when it was first released, and it was the only picture I can recall in which at least 50% of the audience watched the film from the safety of the lobby, ready to bolt as the suspense mounted. Believe me, those kids were scared. Few films since then have accomplished this.

Al Jackson, 2700 West 35th, Austin, Texas 78703

"Video SF" in #23 gives me a case of deja vu. It is exactly the article I always wanted to write and is one that Jeff Haverlah and Bob Vardeman and I had intended for some (now invisible) issue of Trumpet. Now it seems on its way to being done thanks to Chris. Let me give you some subjective judgements about sf tv of the early fifties, I was just a pre-teenor at the time, thus those shows were a staple part of my eye diet.

I can remember liking "Tom Corbett" the best in the beginning but as time went on I found more enjoyment in "Space Patrol" and "Captain Video." This was because, I think,

both Patrol and Captain got better while Corbett pretty much stayed the same. By improvement I mean that the stories improved and in the case of Captain there was a change from abysmal cardboard sets to solid props and better costuming. Even some nice (for TV) special effects. I can not remember when the break occurred on Captain Video but I know it had been on for several years before there was any change. (It is my understanding, and anyone out there can correct me, that the break came when Damon Knight wrote the show for about 6 months.) Unfortunately our local station dropped the Dumont Network in the mid fifties. I think that Captain kept on until 1958, so I will never know if the show kept up the good work. (I should point out that I did all my viewing in Dallas.)

Without a doubt "Out There" was the most unique TV sf venture I have ever seen. It was an anthology series and was an "X Minus One" of TV. They only did adaptations of written sf. (Which except for some episodes of "Tales of Tomorrow" is still a unique venture for TV.) I know that I saw Heinlein's Universe and Ray Bradbury's The Man. All this done with sets and costuming, within bounds of production costs, that could have stepped from the covers of Astounding of the same time in the early fifties. I would like to see if someone ever cataloged "Out There" productions. For it is my judgment, after all these 20 years since it was on that it may have been the finest sf ever done on TV. A remarkable show!

More forgotten TV sf: I know I can remember seeing some kind of crude Buck Rogers production but a snatch is all I can remember. Also as a summer time replacement for something there was a weekly hour long serial about Atlantis which was strongly sf. I remember this one because astoundingly in the last episode they killed off the heroine. There was also a spinoff from "Tom Corbett" called "Rod Brown Rocket Ranger." I never saw much of it.

Some of the finest sf teleplays appeared on "Playhouse 90". There were two Pat Frank things, "Forbidden Area" and "Alas Babalon." "Sound of a Different Drummer" got them a law suit from Bradbury. There was "Brotherhood of the Bell" (not to be confused with the recent made for TV movie), and an excellent forgotten post atomic war teleplay called "The Ninth Day." Note also that "Studio One" did sf from time to time.

There is a little information about early sf tv in Modern Science Fiction, Its Meaning and its Future, edited by Reginald Bretnor. Don Fabun wrote the media section.

Odds and ends. Alfred Bester (who started out writing teleplays) did a version of his story "Fondly Fehrenheit" called "Murder and the Android" with Rip Torn in the title role. This was for "CBS Playhouse" sometime about 61 or 62. Also a very fine production of 1984 was done on "Studio One" back in the early fifties.

That is all I can recall off the top of my head at the moment. One point, though: It would be interesting to know what the British were doing during this time. I have heard that BBC TV science fiction was the best of all.

Michael Carlson, 35 Dunbar Road., Milford, Conn. 06460

Chris' article on TV science fiction was good, and led to one inescapable conclusion, namely that sf on TV was unable to escape from the ooze of mediocrity which has always dominated the tube. The good shows were so few. . . and most of those were unable to sustain their own quality level for whole seasons. My three all time favorites were British -- "Secret Agent," "The Prisoner," and the best of them all, the lovely Diana Rigg and the ever urbane Patrick McNee in "The Avengers." Even "The Avengers" suffered from the BIG AMERICAN NETWORK influence, which ruined "The Saint" completely, but which McGoohan's overwhelming force and talent managed to hold off from doing to

"Secret Agent." The character of Drake, the somber professional who didn't carry a gun or kiss a girl, was entirely McGoochan's own doing, as I understand it. I suppose we couldn't expect the same kind of integrity from Roger Moore. When "The Saint" started on US TV it was in syndication; shown mostly on big city TV around midnight on weekend nights. The show stayed quite close to the Charteris stories, and played up the image of the Saint himself as a modern day Robin Hood, a very clever criminal with a heart of gold. But when the networks picked it up the Saint was soon another Man from UNCLE, solving problems with a sock in the jaw after 55 minutes of so-called plot.

I miss "Maverick," and "The Deputy," and "Slattery's People," "The Defenders," "East Side-West Side," all those Warner Brothers Westerns (remember "Sugarfoot," "Bronco," "Cheyenne") and detectives ("77 Sunset Strip," "Hawaiian Eye" . . . I never liked "Bourbon St. Beat" or "Surfside 6"). I miss "Burns and Allen," "Amos and Andy," "DA's Man," "Mr. Lucky," "Peter Gunn," (That was a great show.) "The Life and Legend of Jesse James," "Howdy Doody" . . . and so many others. What about Crusader Rabbit and Rags, they were much better, although the Ward cartoons have always been good. . . I used to get up at 6 on Saturday mornings and watch "Modern Farmer" then "The Big Picture" (US Army propaganda) and finally an hour of adventure from Galahad Glen. Don't you hate nostalgic reminiscence? I think it must be therapy.

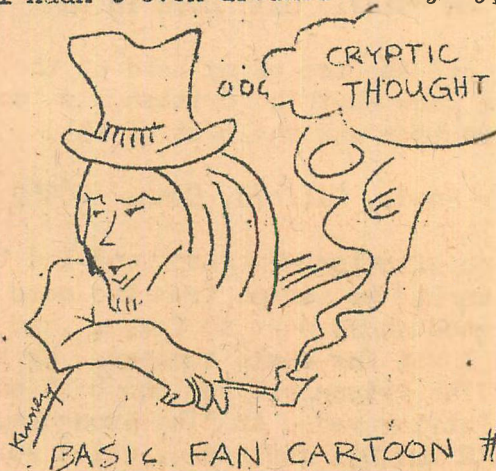
I suppose "The Prisoner" might qualify as marginal sf, certainly it was a unique tv show, possibly the most artistic thing ever to have hit the networks (at least since "Playhouse 90.")

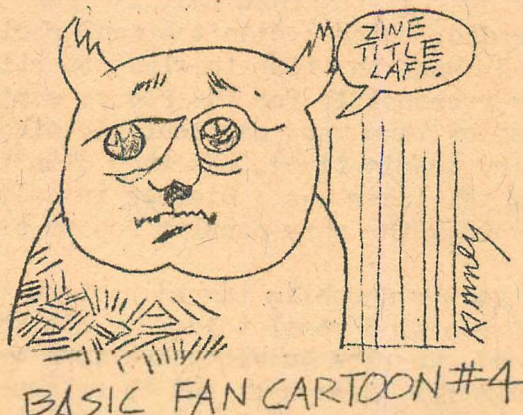
+Since the last episode of "The Prisoner" was nominated for a Hugo, I guess
+that officially makes it science fiction. --LML Chris intentionally avoided
+considering anything except US television in his article. The research neces-
+sary would have been almost impossible. --HL

John Wayne is, as Bogdonovich suggests in Esquire, an extremely talented character actor, and a man who knows a lot about what makes a good movie and what Americans want from their films. Even the two pictures he directed aren't that bad for a novice director. I like Wayne the actor, though I have no use for Wayne the political thinker. I also feel that he is a very good man, albeit misguided at times. Look at the roles Wayne has played. . . these are not all the same character, they may have traits in common, but they are distinct individuals, and Wayne is surprisingly sensitive to picking out the finer points of their characters.

Dan Steffan, 303 Stadium Place, Box 161, Syracuse, NY, 13210

Your review/discussions of the Nostalgia Press books was great, and raised my eyebrows a few times. First of all, I hadn't even dreamed of any type of drug references in





Herriman, but now that I think about it, it doesn't sound too impossible. You don't have to convince me of Segar's genius, he was terribly innovative in the field for his time. But one thing you didn't mention was that the strip was called "Thimble Theatre." And originally it starred Olive Oyl and her brother Caster Oyl. And then one day this sailor came to town and it all started. The strip began in 1919. It wasn't until 1929 that Elzie Segar introduced the character of Popeye, the one eyed sailor with the hypertrophied forearms. He played a secondary role at first but, as we all know, eventually took over as the star. And as you say, the true Popeye magic died with Segar in 1938. I had never considered that Wimpy might be Segar's tribute to the mighty W. C. Fields, but since you mention it I can see it, especially thru the quotes you included.

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

It would be good if publishers could agree on a term for novels like The Dakota Project, warning off people who don't care for the Drury-type books about the immediate future and attracting the customers who prefer them to all other books about the future. Maybe the old speculative fiction terminology could be revived for stories which principally speculate on what today's situation may produce the day after tomorrow, as distinct from science fiction which usually bases its plots on situations that don't exist or can't be deduced from today. If they were called speculative fiction, I would be on the fence about their merits: they are usually better than further-out science fiction because the settings and props are based on the author's own experience and sound more detailed and realistic for this reason, and they're usually worse than conventional science fiction because the subject matter is more predictable and the author rarely can resist the temptation to doomsay from current trends which aren't apt to survive indefinitely. I like Willis' example of the commemorative postage stamps that keep growing longer and wider and eventually smother everyone in the nation with their bulk and weight as the typical speculative fiction plot.

Today arrived the flyer from Nostalgia Book Club, and it reflects a new hobby by offering the most expensive item I can recall ever finding in this group's offerings: a year-old edition of TV Feature Film Source Book for \$49, or this volume combined with a six month set of Series, Serials and Packages for \$59. The former lists 14,086 features released for television and data about them, and the latter shows what is available, or was last year, in syndicated network series, foreign language releases, and so on. "Television now has its own set of nostalgia fans -- folks who get positively misty-eyed over 'O'Henry Playhouse' (1956/57), 'Trackdown' (1959), and 'M Squad' (1957)," the flyer says.

It's strange: Starling contains an article reviewing Popeye strips and almost simultaneously I hear over the radio that the originator of Popeye is dead at a very

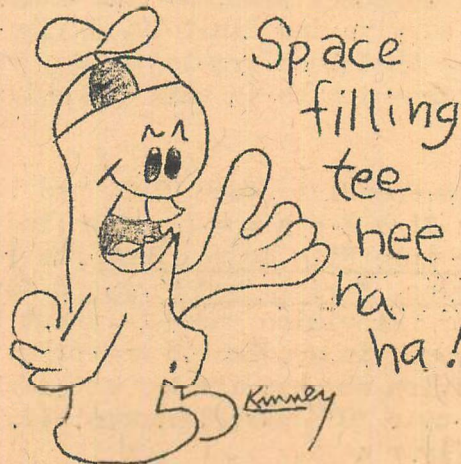
¹⁹
advanced age. Even stranger is the fact that I'm sure Sogar died long ago and the name mentioned on the radio, which I didn't catch precisely, didn't sound that way.

+Max Fleisher died about the time the last Starling was published -- Fleisher
+was the animator responsible for the Popeye cartoons. The cartoons were
+pretty good, some of them were particularly nice (I remember one about the
+Jeep that was very imaginative), but they didn't really capture the magic of
+the Sogar strip. Fleisher was a pioneer in animation, and did many other
+fine cartoons besides the very popular Popeye series. --HL

I must plead guilty to former snobbism toward western movies and I can offer as penance the fact that I've recanted completely. Aren't the westerns considered as a much more significant and superior American art form by leading European film critics? I seem to remember reading here and there how this and that big name in European movie-reviewing and even movie-making have the highest opinion of horse operas that this nation's critics spurn. The same thing happened with Chaplin, of course, and I don't doubt that John Wayne will become a subject for scholars and deep-thinking essayists in the United States as soon as he has stopped making movies and is too senile to appreciate the change. True Grit was the film that caused me to enter the ranks of the all-out Wayne fans and I'm trying to catch up via television on all the goodies I've missed, even though I abhor much of his philosophy as an individual as much as ever. Nostalgia Book Club, if I may bring that up again, is offering the Carpozi biography at 34 per cent off and I'll probably invest, even though Nostalgia selections have a habit of turning up a year later in remainder catalogs for two-thirds off. Meanwhile, if Shadow of the Eagle, a 1933 serial starring Wayne, ever turns up on television in your area, don't miss it: you can sense everything that Wayne eventually became in the clumsy, terribly young Wayne who appeared in this serial.

Will Straw, 303 Niagara Blv., Fort Erie, Ont., Canada

I think a good contrast could be made between the discussion of 1950's rock and roll -- and the development of rock music in general -- and that of old movies. There seems to be a fairly large group of people who are interested very much in discussing old rock, and who are discussing it on a level that assumes some knowledge of the subject. Admittedly, a lot of people who couldn't care less are left out, but the interest to those who do care is great enough that the discussion continues on. But most writing on old movies has always struck me as being too middle-of-the-road -- afraid that it's going to alienate those who aren't interested by going into too much detail. And, at the same time, not going into enough depth to interest real movie fans.



BASIC FAN CARTOON #5

20

Channel 6 in Toronto showed MGM horror films of the thirties for about three Sunday nights this spring. I found Mask of Fu Manchu as dated as Mike Glicksohn says he did, but the sequence where Lewis Stone, caught in the lair of Fu Manchu, surrounded by hundreds of his minions, says "In the name of the British Government, I order you to surrender." made it worth it. Mark of the Vampire suffered from the same dating -- but I thought the camera work and special effects were good. The same channel ran off several of the Val Lewton/RKO films over the last few months; I approached them thinking nothing could be as good as what I'd heard they were, but was never disappointed, and found that the critics I'd read said things I agreed with exactly. The poetry of I Walked with A Zombie, for instance, was very much a dominant force of the film. Beaumont reminded me more of a series of woodcuts or engravings -- the story was based on a woodcut, of course, but the atmosphere was carried on right through the film. I Walked with A Zombie I remember largely for having reassured me that Henry Daniell was, really, my favorite actor.

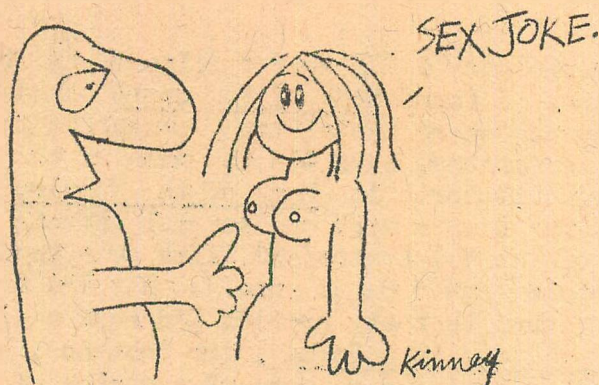
I've always had a desire to have enough money and ability to be able to film a biography of a Big Name Fan that would parody all the cliches of show business and entertainment star biopics. (I'd want to include all the cliches -- the Neglected Wife, the Good Buddy who sticks with the star through thick and thin, and I'd love to do one of those montage scenes from almost every showbiz film showing the star's rise to fame through a series of theatre posters which have his name move from the bottom to above the title. Making it in fandom, I suppose, would be having a column called something like "Terry Carr's Entropy Reprints.") Kirk Douglas is in the back of my mind as a good star -- all those tortured, idealistic, expression-seeking heroes he played in early fifties films like Young Man With a Horn and Lust for Life are exactly the type of thing I'd like to have my hero be. ("But I'm not just turning a mimeo crank, Bill. . . I. . . I'm creating something. Every piece of paper comes out of that machine has a piece of myself on it.")

I think westerns have managed to attain a level of respect in the last few years; auteur theory critics, as you probably know, are jumping on people like Budd Boetticher as being directors deserving more credit than they have been given. The Western seems to be almost ideal, actually, for judging the talent of any particular filmmaker -- with minor variations, each western film maker is working with the same tools (settings, themes, etc.) and the result is similar to giving school children a bunch of blocks and seeing what they make of them. (High Noon, for instance, used an old-hat plot and situation, but that it succeeded in becoming an above average film made Fred Zimmerman stand out as a major talent more than if he had made an equally good film with the benefit of unusual plotline.)

Jonh Ingham, 14A Lovelace Rd., Surbiton, Surrey, England

Dr. Pretorius' Little People (in Bride of Frankenstein) are due to the magic of an optical printer. It consists of a film camera and a projector facing each other on a horizontal track, which can be therefore focused at different focal lengths in relation to each other. Assuming that the people are superimposed, which I think they are (it's been a few years since I saw it), the people were shot in costume against a blank background. They then made a copy of the film with Pretorius and the jars, load that into the camera, load the film of the little people into the projector and focus it for the right size and then shoot. Bingo -- Little People in jars.

If it's matted in, it's a whole different process the details of which I currently forget. You can tell it's matting because of a golden aura shining around the characters' edges. Or maybe they're just on acid. . .



SEX JOKE.

BASIC FAN CARTOON #6

Richard Gordon, 20 Vaughan Avenue, Hendon, London NW4, UK

Have you seen the comic book Filipino Food, by Ed Badajos? Published in this country by the Olympia Press; I imagine it's readily available in the States. It's not too strong to call it brilliant and unique; there are so many dimensions to its surreality that you pick up new connections each time you open it or go through it. It's a continuous strip running to some 70 pages; the tale it tells of an individual tnucking through reality's confusions is cyclic, non-linear, the imagery is complex, Badajos' use of interlocking frames is fascinating, the character is continually drawn through shifting situations where everything turns into something else back to new, parallel beginnings.

Aljo Svoboda, 1203 Busy Ave., Orange, Calif 92665

Your cover reminded me of an idea for a fannish sort of "All in the Family." My favorite line is when Arnie Katz comes on gargling Pepsi, and says "I'm the token neo." Archie Bunker would be a bigoted old fan who believes there is no Ghod but scientifiction and says things like "I need a doctor! Make sure he's a sercon fan." Of course he's been in FAPA and OMPA for a long time, but dropped out of SAPS when all those longhairs started joining. He writes LoCs to Locus and the prozines telling them the New Wave controversy isn't dead. Edith would be a member of the N3F. Mike and Gloria would be in APA45 and all the secret apas. . . Bob Tucker would play Archie, excellent actor that he is, G. M. Carr Edith, and Bill and Charlene Kunkel would be Mike and Gloria. Plots would come easy -- trouble with the Rox Rotary and the purchase of a new mimeo ("Gestetner is run by Communists), fanpolitics, etc. But your last cover, now, looks more like a fannish version of "Ozzie and Harriot."

Boy, Invaders from Mars. I remember seeing that, one of the first horror movies I ever saw. . . the horrible thing was, my mother wouldn't let us see the end of it, and I've never known what happened. For all I knew, the sand pits could still be around somewhere.

+Well, the kid finally talked someone into believing him and the Army destroyed
+the monsters, but I'd still recommend checking the back of your father's neck
+when he comes in to say goodnight. -LML

Murray Moore, Box 400, Norwich, Ontario, Canada NOJ 1P0

I have seen only three films that I have labeled "obscene," obscene in a personal and not legal sense. In order of appearance, Beyond the Valley of the Dolls, Dirty Harry and The Cowboys. I think that those three films are obscene but I won't argue for censorship. Of the three I would say that The Cowboys is the one that you

must see if you are a John Wayne fan. Wayne's performance marks the end of an era as well as any riot or demonstration or changes in morality. What happens to John Wayne will shock anyone who has been watching his movies all through their life.

The message that to mature means to learn to drink, to get horny, and to kill is one that bothers me. I hope that Jim Turner won't object to my dislike of The Cowboys; it might reassure him to know that my all-time favorite western is Rio Lobo.

Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, Yorkshire, England

And can Chris Couch mention the "Addams Family" and "The Munsters" on the same line? Well, I suppose you can, physically; but I'd put the "Addams Family" a few artistic notches higher than the incredulous "Munsters," having the wit and style to dilute the sick humor of the latter "entertainment" and reflecting the sophistication of the original Addams cartoons in a perfect transposition. In fact, John Austin as the father gave it a touch of something more, whereas "The Munsters" seem to have sprung stillborn from the infertile brain of some Seltzer-borne TV executive.

The one question I'd like to ask about Popeye is how well did he survive the translation from the printed page to the movie screen? Or rather the TV screen; Popeye cartoons are the staple diet of ITV when it's got a ten minute slot to fill.

+The original Popeye cartoons were done by the Max Fleisher studio, as
+mentioned on page 19. When the older cartoons became popular on TV, some
+other company started cranking out new cartoons, using the most limited
+animation possible and insipid plots. If British TV is like US broadcasting,
+you'll see some of each. --HL

Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA

Perhaps I had better admit (before going any further) that I have been saying some nasty things about Starling in Gegensatz. Ed Cagle sent a series of questions for me to answer and one of them was along the lines of: What fanzine is of least interest to you, or something like that. After thinking of numerous crudzines I decided I should only pick on well written, literate magazines, lest I destroy some poor neofans ego. Thus I answered Riverside Quarterly, and then, since Ed's question referred to US fanzines only, Starling. This is because I am uninterested in most of the subjects you cover. I haven't read a comic since I was about 9 years old, and as far as I can remember I have only been to the movies twice this year.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

John Dowd, Alan Cohn, Ray Nelson ("Jim Turner's article was so good that it's almost unfair to the other contributors to have to appear in the same magazine with him." Jim says he always knew you were a man of fine taste.) Darrell Schweitzer, Kenneth E. Hicks, Sheryl Birkhead, Rick Stoker, Jay Kinney and Sean Summers.

Dance To The Music

+ Juanita Coulson +

I really think this nostalgia craze has gotten out of hand. I've been thinking that for several years -- starting, I suppose, with the realization that my memories of being a teenager in the late 40s and early 50s provided printable copy. It's amusing and tickles the fond memories ego-trippily to recall music and customs of that era. But some people are making the wrong kinda things out of that sort of data, including those in the music field. Not just in rock, either. Pop, pseudo-folk, pseudo C&J, etc. Flack's "The First Time Ever" didn't do much for me. . .nor did it years ago when the Chad Mitchell Trio was doing it, or the times before that. . .to cite just a teeny example. And I really thought the original version of "See Saw" by the Moon-glows was quite adequate; the alleged updating wasn't. As for those throbs of the teenyboppers -- the Icky Osmonds and the Jivin' Jackson Five, "Itty Bitty Pretty One" was maybe a tad perkier on a rerecording, but "Puppy Love" was just plain awful the first time around. Hearing it redone by everyone's unfavorable castrati Donnie makes one barf all over the car radio. Sometimes the remakes were double-take-y. Almost all of the remakes were precisely that -- copies of the originals. There was almost no attempt to arrange, update, tailor for modern tempi or any of that there other progressive stuff. In one case, what local djs claimed was a remake of "The Lion Sleeps Tonight", I perpetually doubted the truth of their statements. I remember the original, and as far as my fairly eidetic audal memory goes, it was the same damn cut all over again to the last falsetto quaver. I rather enjoyed the original in a rather smarshy easy unconcentrated listening way; if that recent re-runthrough was indeed a copy, it didn't seem to have any reason for being. Why not just re-release the original?



Well, maybe these newcomers had an excuse. They wanted to see how it felt to do one of the golden oldies and feel old moldy and dripping with a nostalgia they couldn't possibly feel. (Because the artists and for all I know the recording engineers probably weren't even a glint in their prospective parents' eyes at that time.)

I don't know what Jerry Lee Lewis's excuse is. "Chantilly Lace," if any song ever was, was a signature tune. I found it in even worse taste than Lewis usually displays to hear him copying -- and damned close, too -- the Big Bopper. Left my tongue all furry.

Following my Crow Jim tendencies, I leaned toward forgiving Mike Jackson and his br'ers a heotchie hell of a lot more than I did li'l Donnie et nauseum. "Rockin' Robin" -- never one of my wow favorites anyway -- was if no better than the original certainly no travesty on it. Quite possibly, thanks to improved mikes and recording techniques, it sported more clarity of tone and percussion this time around. It's still never going to be anything I'll miss if it never recurs.

Somebody ought to point out an old recording of "Bread and Butter" to Donnie Osmond. That farfling sarcastic falsetto of Newbeats' lead would be just his speed. But in: Osmond's case, you'd wonder if he wasn't taking the whole thing too seriously.

I just fail to understand the whole let's-do-a-new-recording bit. I don't understand it from the basis of necessity. I can't think that there aren't enough new possibilities being offered the hit groups on their various demos and starving songwriters beating on their doors. In fact I'd wager a couple of leftover Christmas cookies that tens of really good potential hits are going begging -- while the Osmonds and Sive and Lewis etc. are retaping oldies.

And especially I do not understand if from the point of view of nostalgia. The further back that nostalgia goes the weirder it gets. And I'm not just irritated by recording artists and listeners half my age, either. I realize to most of them the early 50s were a real campy era, slopping over into the late 50s and early 60s in a sort of detumescent musical tsunami. Lewis I can't forgive, because he was there, Sharley. He's pumping milk from a corpse.

Somebody -- somebodies -- else I can't forgive is a spate of articles strewing around various mags, mostly national. By my contemporaries. People who like me were young in that Korean era and aftermath. Most of their articles reek of malt shops and saddle shoes and how sweet it is and their teary-eyed verbal laments for those good old days hit me like trying to drink a bottle of Pepto Bismol, straight. Either they're all lying, or they spent an incredibly naive youth.

One writer said all the good music was black (I'd say mostly, rather than all) and that the only way to hear it was to have the son of your maid sneak you into a Nigra Town concert. He moved in a different milieu than I did, A) we never had a maid, B) there were blacks in the white milieu, musically, right on campus occasionally, and C) whites were too scared to go down to the river and rub elbows with blacks; it might rub off, after all.

Point is, everyone was scared in that era.

It was a very nervous time to be young. I don't mean hassles about hair or occasional hard hats bloodying noses. I mean total ostracism. Not just by the establishment or those never-never land elders of yours. I mean by your peers. Not that they might not sympathize. They just wouldn't do it out loud where you could hear it. Not if you got out of line. And an incredible number of things counted as being out of line. Including, in some circles, having anything whatsoever to do with blacks. Or music that to a lot of ears sounded suspiciously black.

Rock was new. Therefore it was probably bad.

It was probably communistic.

This all sounds pretty ridiculous now, I know. I know especially because Bruce brought home a big fat history book from the h.s. library. The history of the McCarthy Era. Lhord does that make me feel old and creaky, leave me tell you.

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I don't know how long he had the book out. He likes to speed read and then reread. And because he knew I was in high school and college during these years, there was a lot of incredulous questioning. "Why didn't people just. . ."

Some of 'em tried, including a few musicians. It was a very long time before a lot of them got work again. Late in the 60s or early in the 70s. Think about that.

I don't think it's possible to understand the mood of that era unless you'd been through it. And I sure don't want to go through it again. I wouldn't, like some contemporary nostalgia wallower,, depict it as all prom dresses and back seats and hops and giddy carefree birth-of-rock cotton candy. Maybe she had a zipper on her frontal lobes and let it all hang out with a vengeance during those years. It was a period when you enjoyed your music while nervously glancing over your shoulder.

For example. I naively elbow rubbed with blacks on campus, dug their music, got to hear some of their problems. Next thing I knew somebody had complained to the Dean. Whites didn't mix with blacks, or black music. If we "didn't stay with our own kind", we must be commies.

That sounds silly now, but it was a weapon, and a very nasty one, then. We sweated a bit until the Dean put us down as misguided, but probably not really out and out reds. Fellow traveler dupes, presumably.

My roommate got expelled from a fairly well known Midwestern music school because she dated a fellow musician -- who happened to be black. He'd organised a rock combo and she went to a few of the gigs with him. Got spotted by some slumming faculty members. And that was that. She's lucky one of the state schools let her in, on probation, to finish her degree.

Rock music was, in a way, like the politics of the era. Kinda muffled and fumbling its way toward the future. They couldn't be explicit in the lyrics. And I don't know how many times some sharp adult complained about the sax players committing fornication with their instruments on stage "in front of all those innocent young people." (Who were of course cutting out for dozens of backseats after the concerts. I guess the adults objected to the sax players being so blatant about the sexual nature of rock music.) If Jim Morrison had dropped his pants in that era, I wouldn't have bet on his survival. Not in a Southern concert date. I mean, there were near lawsuits over Elvis's shrunken jeans and mild pelvic gyrations. I wonder if those early day Grundies just look the other way when Jagger or Alice Cooper or Iggy appears? Maybe they just pretend the whole thing doesn't exist.

I'll bet they yearn for the good old days, just like these idiot contemporaries of mine mooning about how lovely it was to be a teenager then. Well, it might have been lovely in some ways (wouldn't all us old crocks like our youthful health and looks back?) but I'll pass on a lot of other items.

I think the music is one hell of a lot better now. Not just the sophistication of instrumentation and electronics, either. You can say a lot more with the music -- melodies and harmonies undreamed of twenty years ago. And unlike Peter, Paul and Mary warned, you no longer have to lay it between the lines. "Signs" couldn't have been played on the radio twenty years ago. Neither could tens of other top 40 hits that throw in with uncensored abandoned hells and damns and fucks and shits. Then it got not even a bleep. It got a strangled dj and lawsuits and outraged nationwide publicity and instant oblivion for the singer or group who dared use the merest suggestion of street language.

Only it wasn't street language then. You talked in whispers, and made very sure no one but close friends overheard you.

And even then, you worried a lot.

"There's no one safe but me and thee. . .and I'm not sure of thee."

McCarthy wasn't a kingpin, he was a symptom. No, I wouldn't go back. Not even for the glorious opportunity of hearing rock and roll being born. I can't say if I went back I would be able to wreak social change and make society open up to the freedom the music of the young was just then beginning to express. Because bighod my eyes were already opened, and I struggled with what feeble strength I had. And I was lucky not to get crushed by a ton of fearsome cement. A lot of older people, eyes opened and struggling for change, were. It wasn't an era when society was satisfied to beat up or shoot a few scapegoats and then grudgingly, several months later, admit maybe you were right after all. (Even if they didn't quite do anything with the admission.)

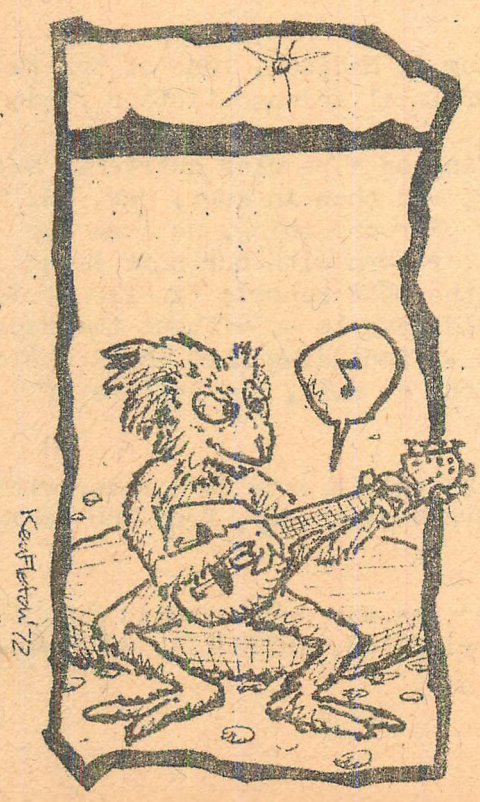
No. Unless you had the excuse (which I did, thankfully) of being young and foolish andy they'll-grow-out-of-it (only we didn't -- the politics or the music), you became an unperson. For years. Your friends smiled thinly and sympathetically and slammed the door very quickly. You were a ghost. Nobody had proved anything, and you couldn't disprove it. But you ceased to exist.

Fellow nostalgia sniffers, by my guest. I'll sit here in the 70s and wish Morrison was back with us and get a new Alice Cooper and maybe consider tongue-in-cheekly getting Bruce a Grand Funk or America album for a New Year's present.

I wasn't, even while living through it, every really sure that we'd be able to breathe as free as rock and roll made us feel. But there began, very slowly, to be glims of light. In 54, when I was a senior, there were some European correspondents touring the US. They stopped off on campus. Faculty members up front listening, students clustered meekly at the rear. In the latter part question and answer period, one of

the Europeans, as a closing statement, made some appalled remark about the terrible suppression the McCarthy era had produced and what a curse the whole post WWII commie-fever had been on all facets of American life. The faculty members bristled in outrage. (They'd spent ten years doing that -- if for no other reason than to protect their jobs; they had to be vocally rabidly anti-commie.) The correspondent insisted on a show of hands -- how many in the audience believed he was right in saying McCarthy and his Era were something long overdue for shoveling? And 90% of the students present raised their hands. The faculty gaped. And I felt like getting up and dancing to a new kind of music. We were finally feeling secure enough to say the hell with you.

And there were a lot of good years coming, despite the Cold War and Viet Nam. A lot of things got done, and it got reflected in the music, happily. Boogs and amps and explicitly dirty sounds those old rock and roll sax



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players would have given their. . .er. . .well, not balls. . .to have available.

Music today is richer, franker, vastly more listenable and meaningful. So why you want to re-record something that's already been said quite adequately before, people? Hey, out there. The future lies ahead and let's hear something we haven't heard before, oh?

I figure, decrepit as I am, I might have quite a few years left to me to dance to the music -- and with nobody telling me how nostalgic I'm being.

Or that I'm being a commie. . .

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CHANDLER'S WORLD continued from page 12:

He could lie quiet in his canopied bed, with his bloodless hands folded on the sheet, waiting. His heart was a brief uncertain murmur. His thoughts were as grey as ashes. And in a little while he too, like Rusty Reagan, would be sleeping the big sleep.

On the way downtown I stopped at a bar and had a couple of double Scotches. They didn't do me any good. All they made me do was think of Silver-Wig, and I never saw her again.

Ballantine has teen Chandler books out, in uniform 95¢ editions. \$9.50 is cheap for all that Chandler. It it were important I'd call him one of the greatest American writers of the century; certainly of the last thirty years. But that's not important. Judge for yourself.

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NOTEBOOKLINGS continued from page 5:

films. There is an active, interesting comics fandom in Madison. One of the few things that we don't have in Madison is some sort of local science fiction fandom.

At this point, we'd like to resume publishing Starling on a regular quarterly basis. In fact, we'd like to publish the next issue in May, and then in Aug., Nov. and Feb. This issue is somewhat less bulky than is our norm. For one thing, we lack our regular Jim Turner column -- we trust that this will return with our next issue. For some time Lesleigh was undecided about writing the DUFF report; finally we decided that if this issue was ever to be done it would have to be without the report. Lesleigh has several ideas about her future columns -- including more about comics and mystery fiction. We could use other contributions as well, and letters of comment. We will be hoping to hear from you.

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1. Bob's convention report was titled "Hugoes There?" and it came as a rider with Sandworm 19. It doesn't have a price listed, but Sandworm is 50¢, from Bob Vardeman, PO Box 11352, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

2. Leigh's report was called "How to Impress People" and was published in Rataplan 10, from Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 74, Balaclava, Victoria 3183, AUSTRALIA. 40¢/issue or 4/\$1.60.

