

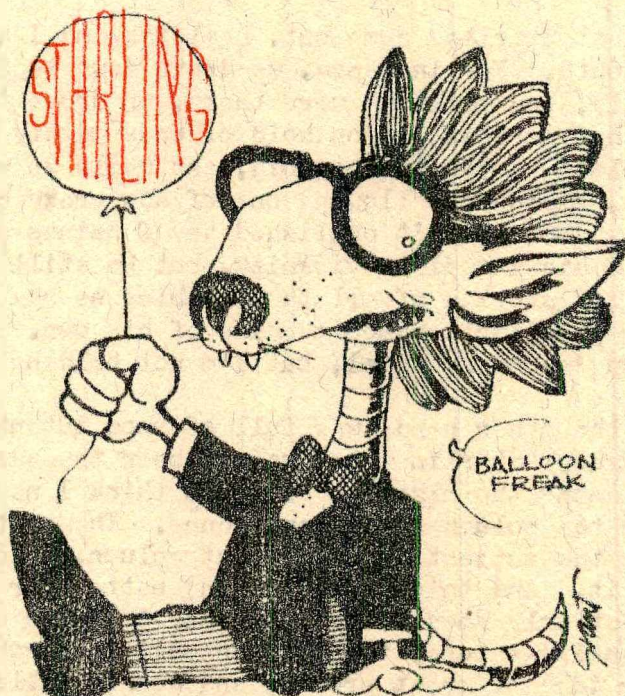
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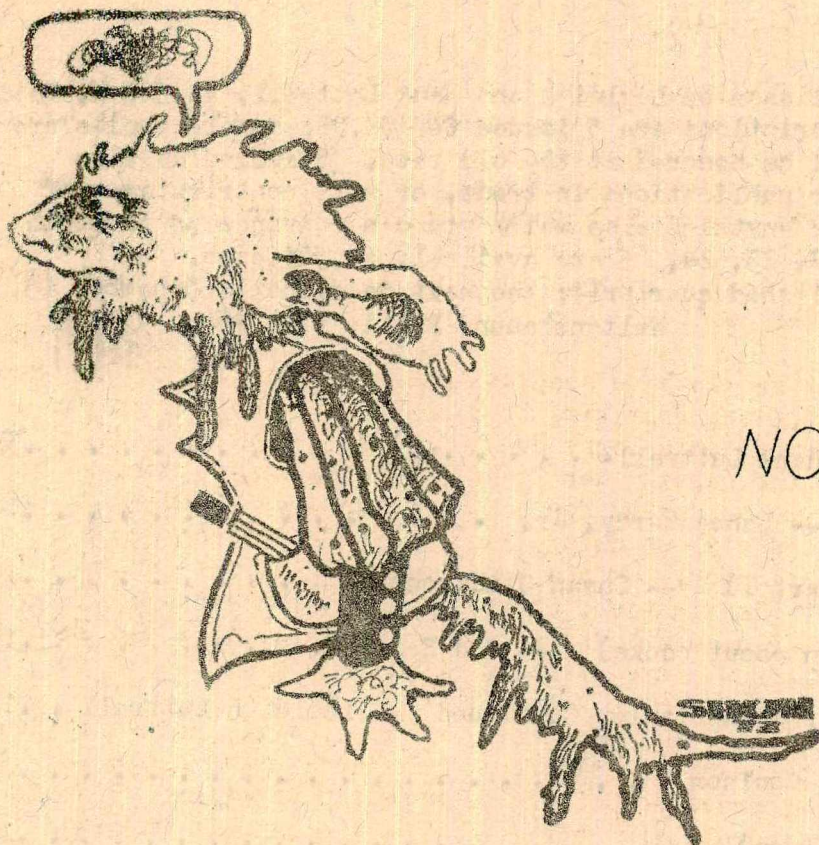
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NOTEBOOKLINGS

+ Hank Luttrell +

Since the last *Starling* came out, Lesleigh and I have done a lot of traveling, both north and south. For instance, we drove down to St. Louis to visit the Couches and my family, and while we were there, we drove on into Columbia, to visit 1501 Rosemary, the remaining stronghold of once mighty Columbia fandom. Jim Turner is still holding forth in Columbia, and while we were in town, Doug Carroll drove up from Tipton, Missouri, allowing one of his crazy old tenants to run his hotel while he was gone. Doug hasn't published any fanzines since our mimeograph machine was removed from his immediate vicinity, but he still has good intentions. In fact, he was full of stories of all the troubles he has been having lately as a result of hunting for a suitable mimeo machine of his own. I expect to eventually see another issue of Doug's *Cowboy Angel*, but I'm not holding my breath.

Turner, on the other hand, was full of good intentions about coming up with a column for this issue. *Starling* just wasn't been the same since Turner's column began to be counted among the missing. I don't think I need to say anything about the various reasons for the column's non-appearance. The most important set of reasons will probably be the subject of Jim's next column, when and if Big Jim ever gets around to writing it. And things are looking better for getting some new Turner material, I think. Not only does Jim have plenty to write about for this first column, and of a very offensive nature, too; but an editorial conference a short time ago revealed yet another idea of great promise and considerable ridiculousness for a future column. That esteemed Canadian writer A. M. Schneider may write most humorously of strange doings in laundromats, as in the last issue of *Starling*, but only Turner

knows the of the great and horrible Oxydol.

Our second long trip was north to Toronto. Actually, Lesleigh went up into Canada with the Couch family, while I stayed another week in Madison so I could go to work. Leigh, Norbert, Mike and Lesleigh zipped all over the eastern part of the vast northern neighbor, trying to see everything there was to see in the space of that week, then I drove up with some friends of ours from Madison to join them at the Toronto World Science Fiction Convention. I'm sure that my 13-14 hour straight-through drive was much less aesthetically interesting than Lesleigh's vacation, but I must say that the trip up was very odd.

Those of you who have visited us, or who have seen us at conventions may recall our old red Dart, which we have referred to from time to time in these pages by her name (which she picked up in a now-classic Terry Hughes entertainment), Plonk. Well, Plonk died this summer. After nursing her to and from the Midwestcon, we had just about decided that it was time to spring for a new convention-attending vehicle -- because other than occasional shopping trips and journeys home to Missouri, that is all we use the car for. We now own a green AMC Hornet wagon, tentatively called The Green Hornet (imaginative, what?) The Hornet performed admirably on both trips, and the ride was perhaps somewhat more comfortable than we were used to as a result of the new Material Possession.

When it comes to long distance driving, I am something of an expert. However, the 13-14 hours of driving required to reach Toronto from Madison did come close to equalling or perhaps surpassing my previous record for non-stop piloting. I don't believe my passengers were always completely confident in my ability to remain alert during the latter portion of the voyage. Mostly, of course, they slept, and I was left alone to commune with the silent Canadian darkness and the rumbling trucks with which I shared the road. But whenever one or two of them would wake up, they seemed to feel compelled to engage me in diverting conversation.

For instance:

"Hank! (You awake?) Hank, are you prejudiced against dwarfs?"

"What!?" This is a hard thing to consider when wheeling down a skinny Canadian freeway in the early morning after driving all night. "I don't think so. . . I guess I really haven't known that many."

"I think I probably am." (Said my friend.) I mean, who would want to marry one." This was pretty philosophical stuff for my friend, who was generally more interested in discussing EC comics.

By the time I got to Toronto I was so flipped out by fatigue and odd conversation that I tipped the bell boy a whole dollar. I guess I couldn't remember where my change was.

The convention itself was a pretty staggering event. Such a large hotel! And such a large convention! Since I stationed myself behind my huckster's table during the day most of the time, I didn't see any of the programming. I did, however, stroll through Susan Glicksohn's All Our Yesterday's room a number of times, and found it most impressive and interesting. I was amazed by the amount of work that obviously had gone into it. And, as usual, I found time for the art show, which was as worthwhile as usual. I'm always particularly pleased by the fine work presented by Starling contributors; this year Grant Canfield, Ken Fletcher and Dan Steffan had some particularly neat stuff on display.

* * * * *

Along with this *Starling* you will find this year's TAFF ballot. To me, such things as TAFF and DUFF and the other recent fan funds have always been some of the most worthwhile aspects of fandom, and certainly some of the most truly international and altruistic. So, Lesleigh and I would like to urge you to vote and support the TAFF fund. In case you might be interested, we think that Peter Roberts seems like a friendly sort, and having shared several year's membership with him in an apa, we would be pleased to meet him in the flesh.

Also, we'd like you to keep in mind that soon it will be time for the next DUFF balloting to begin, this time to bring an Australian fan to the US for the Washington worldcon. Lesleigh will be the US administrator for DUFF, while Shayne McCormick will be the Australian administrator! Deadline for the filing of candidates will be November 15, so the distribution of ballots will begin shortly after that date. If you are interested in distributing ballots with your fanzine, or around your local fan contacts, or perhaps at a convention, we'd certainly appreciate hearing from you.

Along related lines, Lesleigh has decided to write and publish her DUFF report and make it available as a separate fanzine, for sale at \$1 a copy, with all proceeds going to the DUFFund. We plan to have the fanzine ready early next year, but if you'd like to send us the buck now, you'll be certain to be among the first to get a copy.

* * * * *

Lesleigh has taken on still another fan project, believe it or not. Various movie buffs apparently cornered her at Torcon, and, perhaps weakened by the influence of so many smiling fannish faces, agreed to co-ordinate a new apa devoted to film discussion. Lesleigh was apparently picked because of her obvious experience in the area of running apas, having run APA45 for a long time. A number of people (many of them familiar to readers of *Starling* letter columns) expressed interest in this project at Toronto, and if you want your name added to the list, drop us a line. So far, the other details concerning the apa are that it is to be quarterly, with \$2 dues, with the first mailing in January. There will probably be no set page requirements, but members should have something in every mailing. The tentative names are so far Cineapa or CAPRA.

* * * * *

Lesleigh and I had an opportunity recently to see Murder, My Sweet on campus, as part of a series of well known screen detective films. It was pretty good. I was at first confused and rather amused by the idea of jolly little Dick Powell playing Philip Marlowe, but he did a rather good job -- obviously took the job seriously, and worked hard at it. I'm told that he took voice lessons to lower it for the part. There may have been some aspects of Powell's portrayal that don't quite match Chandler's, but in general it probably comes closer than Bogart's. As for which is more appealing, that is another question. Murder My Sweet presents a very impressive visual package, with many startling shots and an imaginatively presented image of Marlowe's neon-lighted world. The film uses one visual touch straight from Chandler: Marlowe is knocked out, and Powell's voice-over goes "A black hole opened up. . . while the screen fills with a swimming mass of black, closing over a close-up of the detective," . . . and I jumped in." This was effective the first time it was used, but less so the second time, and very old hat by the third time.

* * * * *

The next issue of *Starling* is to be a special issue. It will celebrate my 10th year of publishing *Starling*. I've never bothered with an anniversary before, but 10 years seemed too much of a mile-stone to pass by. We have, of course, some special things in mind for the issue. Perhaps you might have some special things in mind for this issue. . . if so, send it along. We'll be seeing you then.

6 BREAST FETISHISTS

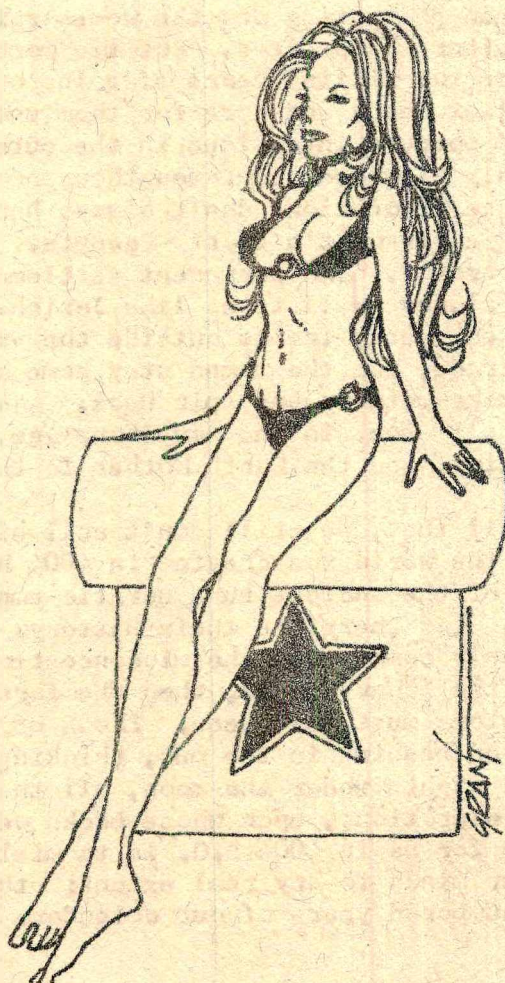
OF SOL III

+ Lance Hardy, Jr. +

Cognitively estranged from his world, his work, and his women, modern man wallows in a morass of existential ickyness. The desire to feel, to touch, to unite, to clutch, has reached desperate proportions. Engendered by the Industrial Revolution, this super-alienation has grown unsteadily, in acceleration, until today it nears a climax. The phenomenal growth of cults in recent years--Scientology, witchcraft, Satan-worshippers, flying saucer nuts, Jesus people, Hare Krishna, religious and political preachers of Apocalypse, science fiction conventioners--stems directly from a gnawing, gnashing desire for faith, for belief in a universal order and meaning: a world where man is at peace with himself, his fellows, and his environment.

How did this whole dreadful business get started? Do you imagine that cavemen could hardly walk down the street without being confronted by weirdly-garbed groups of fanatics soliciting for their various cults, pushing 18-colour magazines with pictures of eight-armed elephants at them? Not bloody likely. Cavemen hadn't invented streets, for one thing, so they were saved the trouble of walking down them, or riding under them in subways. Obviously, subways were superfluous, since if you haven't got any streets to get clogged up with people and cars and religious nuts, what's the point of building tunnels underneath them to siphon off the overflow? Those cavemen weren't dumb, you know.

Seriously, though, they weren't dumb. They were quite articulate, as a matter of fact. They looked just like you and me, though probably a little hairier because they didn't shave as often. (Not having advertising-agency offices and high-school proms to go to, they didn't feel obliged to invent the razor blade.) And they were just as intelligent. Yes, those cavemen that you imagine going around grunting and bashing each other over the heads with clubs. Don't believe it; that's strictly comic-book and Flintstone-television stuff. As Arthur C. (for "Caveman") Clarke has pointed out, for thousands of years there have existed on this planet human beings who had the capacity to operate computers or pilot spaceships, but who never got the chance. They were born too soon. Some of them were born tens of thousands of years too soon, or hundreds of thousands of years too soon. Or maybe a million years too soon. Imagine that. Imagine someone who looks just like yourself (only possibly a little hairier, depending on how hairy you are at the moment)--and just as clever as you are--imagine that person going outside on a clear night and looking up at the moon and the stars and wondering what they're all about, thinking big ques-



tions about life, about the stars, about that moon you can almost reach up and touch.⁷ Thinking with that incredibly complex brain that could pilot a spaceship or write a great novel. And the person stays out there till it starts to get cold. Looking up at the stars, shifting a chipped piece of stone from hand to hand, until it's time to turn around and go back into the cave, where there's a fire burning to keep away the cold.

But if those cavemen (and cavewomen, let us not forget) were so smart, how come they lived such primitive lives? The answer is really quite simple, and a bit awful: if you start with literally nothing but your bare hands, it takes a long time to get anywhere. That piece of chipped stone you were just holding--don't drop it. Handle it with care. That took ten thousand generations to invent. Think how many times the moon went around the earth before you got a stone that efficiently shaped for cutting things with. Think how many potential astronauts stood outside on cold winter nights, looking up at the moon. Think of all the living, the loving, the suffering, the growing, the dying that went on in that time. Think of all the men and women, all the children, all the dreams and tears and laughter. All the travelling and hunting and sleeping and waking up to hot suns and cold suns and misty suns. And all that's only the beginning. Gradually the stone tools are made more efficient. Only a few hundred thousand more years and you have a better type of axe. And the more you have, the more you can get. So things change faster--only another hundred thousand years or so before there's another, more efficient stone culture; then only a few tens of thousands of years after that before a still newer one.

And still agriculture hasn't been invented. There are no streets or towns; no permanent settlements. Humans are nomads, hunting and gathering, and wandering the earth. And looking up at the moon on cold winter nights and warm summer nights. The men go hunting and the women raise the children and lace skins together in the transitory camp sites. But the more you have, the more you can get. So after only one or two million years of going out and looking up at the moon, people learn how to plant seeds and care for them until some primitive form of corn or wheat is ready to be pounded into flour in the autumn. The Neolithic Revolution it's called, and it only happened about ten thousand years ago (give or take a few thousand years, because Revolutions don't always happen quickly, or everywhere at once.) Ten thousand years--what's that? Peanuts. Last week, really, when you think how long we've been around. And permanent settlements are suddenly everywhere. Villages, and in some places small towns like Jericho. With streets. (But no subways yet.) And crooked, dusty trails outside the villages. And the men go out to hunt and fish and trade, and the women stay home and look after the children, and tend the fields, and make pottery and spin wool. And that spinning and farming and pottery is what it's all about in the New Stone Age, so women have a pretty high status in their communities, and the Earth Mother is the goddess that rules all thought.

And all that, we still don't call history. We still hold with the fundamentalists that the world was created in 4004 B.C., a date coinciding very roughly with the first rise of the ancient bureaucratic empires, with their Sun Kings. And with their writing. And therefore their history. Before 4004 B. C., the void. Even to us. Darwin only compounded the misconception in the popular mind. Because if man evolved from the lower beasts, then the farther back in time you go, the more like apes our ancestors must have been. Those of the Old Stone Age must have been brutes, grunting and bashing in the mud, thinking ape-like thoughts. (And not a thought to all those nights under the moon, all that painful intellectual and physical struggle of the generations, upon whose backs we now ride so casually...) But to say that history began for us in 4004 B.C. is to mislead. Only the last two thousand years stand out in our minds to any real extent: the two thousand years that roughly coincide with the numbered years of our calendar. The Years of our Lord. The years since man set

out to conquer the seas. The years of Aristotelian thinking and the scientific method and the rise of nation-states.

So what's been happening? A million years to the Neolithic Revolution and then just five thousand or so to the Solar Gods. Then three or four thousand to the Greeks and Romans. And now, barely two thousand years later (and much of that time taken up with the regression of the Dark Ages after the fall of Rome), we find ourselves in the middle of another Revolution. The tempo of change is accelerating, as Alvin Toffler and the media never tire of reminding us. Remember that chipped stone under the cold moon: the more you have, the more you can get. By now we have a lot. We're not any smarter or more beautiful, but we have more. A lot more. Every television set, every ball-point pen, every garbage can contains a million years of invention, piling up, accelerating, synergizing.

Where's it going to end? The way things are going, that curve of accelerating invention is going to go asymptotic in no more than a couple of hundred years. So obviously, we're all going to become gods. Literally. With infinite power and infinite knowledge. By May of 2203 at the latest. Do you believe that? I don't--despite Clarke's Childhood's End and Well's Men Like Gods. Maybe I'm overly pessimistic, but I can't really believe human beings are going to become divine in the near future.

So where does that leave us? With, essentially, either of two alternate futures: (1) the curve really does go asymptotic in the near future, which means that, failing divinity, we will lose control of our inventions (not to mention our population) and effectively accelerate ourselves out of existence--blowing ourselves to Kingdom Come in our attempt to become divine; or (2) we will deliberately level the curve out, and establish a new and more stable level of societal organization. This latter, if we can manage it, must of necessity be some form of world community, superceding the outmoded and dangerously self-centered nation-states of today. A true world community (with a world governmental authority of some kind--and not the UN, which is merely a council of nation-states) implies an equal global distribution of wealth and power. Which means it must be truly participatory-democratic, and therefore decentralized (in contrast to the centralized, bureaucratic, imperialistic, communist/capitalist nation-states which dominate the world today and prevent any devolution/evolution of wealth and power to local/world authority.)

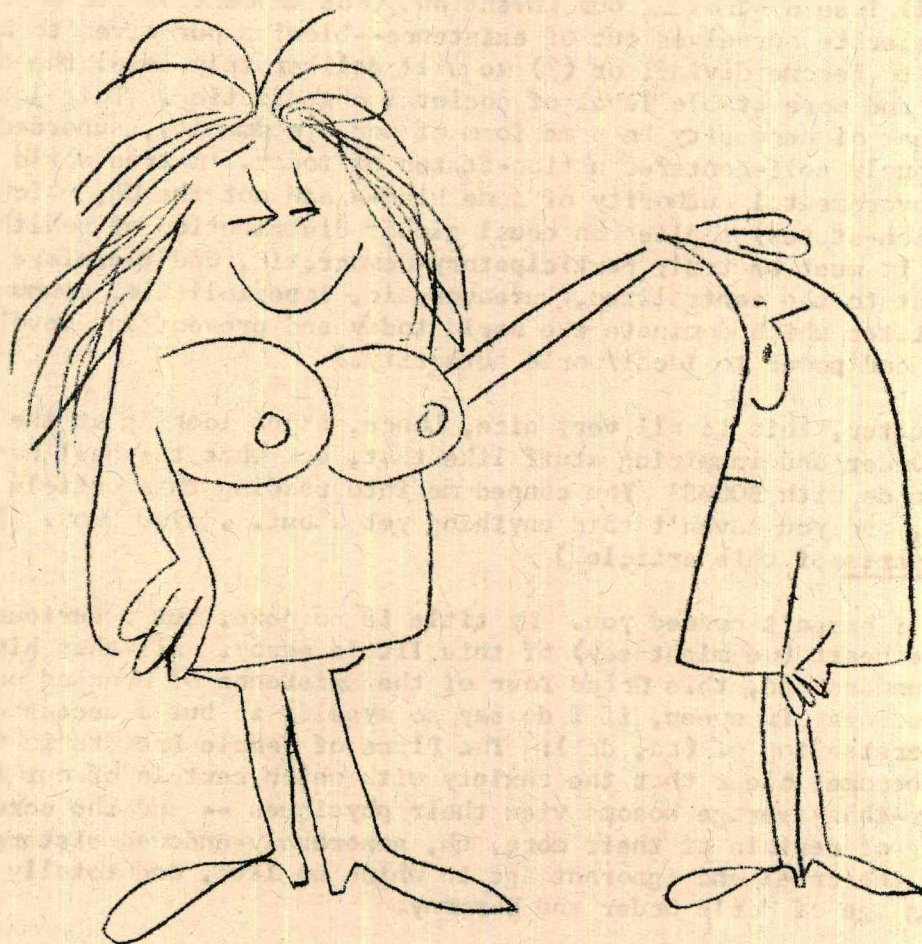
(Well, I hear you mutter, this is all very nice, Lance, about looking at the moon and building the World Order and inspiring stuff like that, but what the hell has all this nonsense got to do with BOOBS? You conned me into reading this article with that salacious title, and you haven't said anything yet about. . .you know. I mean, where are the good parts of this article?)

Be patient, I say. I haven't conned you. My title is no joke, but a serious, deadpan reference to the heart (we might say) of this little essay. All this historical business, you must understand, this Grand Tour of the Existence of Mankind on this planet (truly Stapledonian in sweep, if I do say so myself) is but a necessary preliminary for an understanding of (ta, da!): The Place of Female Breasts in the World Today. For it now becomes clear that the anxiety with which certain of our female friends with smaller-than-average bosoms view their physiques -- and the corresponding gleeful gloating of certain of their more, uh, generously-endowed sisters -- is but a symptom of the cruel and ignorant age in which we live, and totally unnecessary in the coming age of World Order and Harmony.

Consider: what is the mode of thought which characterizes the recent past? It is a

concept of Progress based upon the survival of the fittest, upon dog-eat-dog competition, and the idea that bigger equals better. Bigger highways, bigger populations, bigger ears, bigger buildings, bigger...well, you get the idea. In contrast, what is the mode of thought necessary to a united world of sanity and harmony? Why, it is a concept of Progress based upon the development of the individual in his or her own way, upon cooperation, upon the value of the unique, the local, the small and the beautiful within the larger scheme of things. In short, upon quality rather than quantity. You get the picture, no doubt. In the Golden Age that hopefully lies ahead of us, not only will you be able to walk down the street without being accosted by dozens of Scientologists, Devil Worshipers, and unemployed Ph.D.s seeking handouts, but you will be admired for your qualities of mind and body, rather than your quantities. Now, this is not to say that large minds (for instance) cannot be beautiful -- indeed, they can be, as anyone who has had the pleasure of being in the company of a couple of really large and well-formed minds can testify. But size is not a precondition of beauty. Everything in this world, large or small, has its special place and deserves to be cherished for its unique beauty, its unique form, and its unique place within our marvelous, ever-fascinating world.

Keep these thoughts with you, brothers and sisters, when next on the street you behold the Shape of Things to Come.



BREAST FETISHIST OF SOL III

PART 2

+ Susan Glicksohn +

"Um," said the saleswoman, doubtfully, "I don't think they make them that small." She rummaged beneath the counter. "Lots of 36Cs, 38. . .well, goodness, there are some little ones!"

"Great!" I said. "I'll take two."

Ah, sweet success. For some it might be finishing that difficult story -- getting the promotion you've worked so hard for -- graduating at last. For me, it's little things, like finding a bra small enough to fit me.

So ok, admiration of women solely on the basis of the voluptuousness of their mammary glands is but a degrading stereotype foisted on human beings by a sexist society. I should stop feeling self-conscious about not having What's Up Front That Counts. Right. Except people keep reminding me. Not just Mike, who says, soothingly, "Well, y'know, you're ok, dear," before going back to regarding the ALCOL centre-fold with a wistful sigh; but perfect strangers, too. Rosemary Ulliot and I were bouncing merrily along Bloor St., through the university area, when one of the local freaks drifted by. As he regarded Rosemary's lowcut summer dress, a beatific smile spread itself over his face. "Ah, boobs!" he sighed, happily.

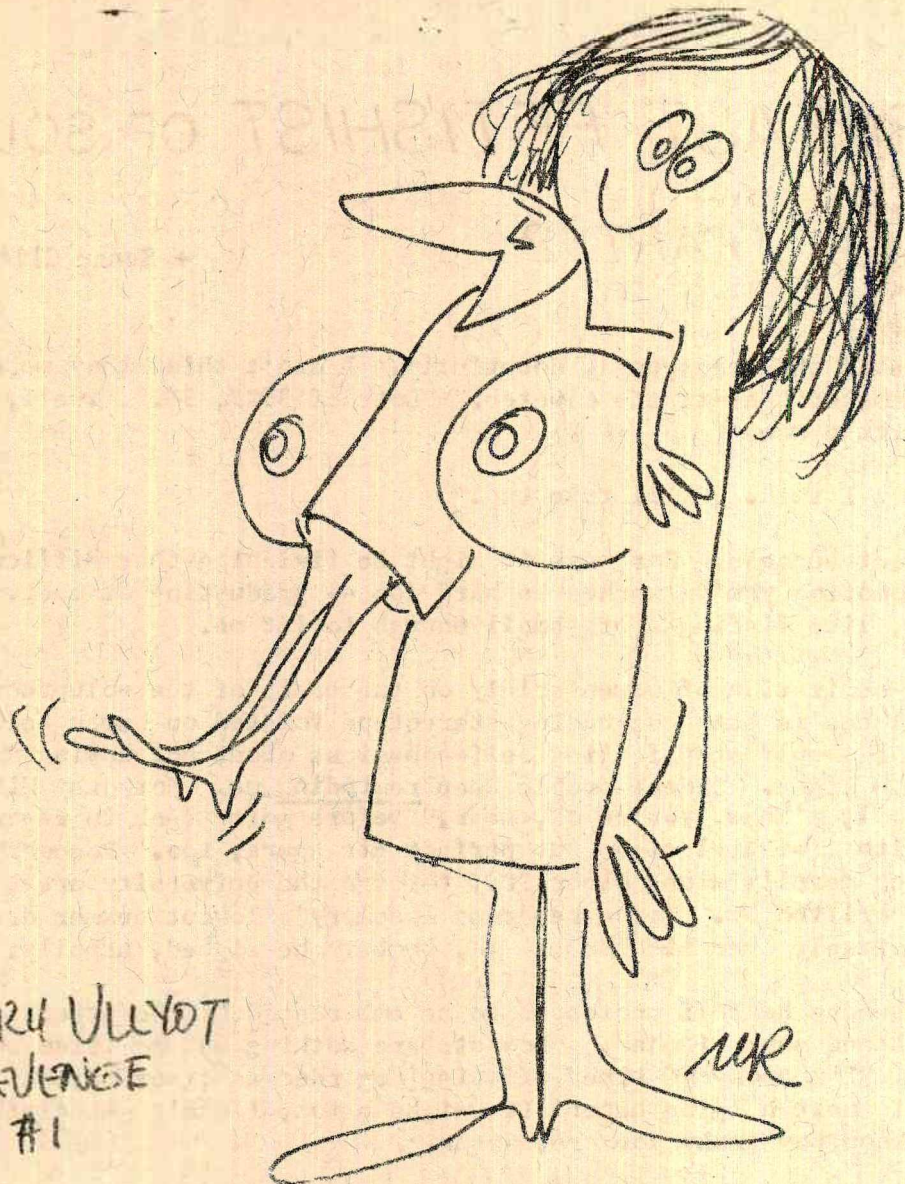
Now Rosemary herself professes to be embarrassed by the attention paid to her forty well-shaped upper inches. "Breasts are nothing but modified sweat glands!" she snaps. "I'm sick and tired of being regarded as a sex object just because I've got all this meat hanging here! It weighs a ton, I can't get clothes to fit me -- you don't know how lucky you are, Susan!"

Yet I've noticed that Rosemary, and similarly-endowed females of my acquaintance, tend to stand beside me, draw a deep breath, and gaze complacently from chest to chest. Every man in the room follows the gaze. And I know perfectly well they aren't thinking: "Ty, what a lovely mind Susan has!"

Sometimes, they get more vocal.

Yeah, I know. It's personality and True Self that count. And even if I can't liberate my mind from the conditioning of a fetishistic, sexist, superficial world-view, I shouldn't make my sensitivity so obvious. But how do you stop your friends from teasing you?

Last September, Bill Wright of the Australia in '75 Committee stayed with Mike and me for a few days. In return for our hospitality, he gave us both Aussie t-shirts. In return for these gifts, we let him help collate ENERGUMEN 13. So there we were, several Canucks, a Token Brit, and a visiting Aussie, sitting around our table licking stamps and sticking labels onto envelopes. Naturally, I was wearing my new shirt. Then, in the general chitterchatter, Angus Taylor said Something Brilliant. I not only roared with laughter like the rest, I bounded up and down. Rosemary, sitting opposite me, regarded my t-shirt, and grew round-eyed with astonishment. "Hey! Look at Susan! THEY DON'T EVEN BOUNCE!"



THE ROSEMARY ULLYOT
COUNTER REVENGE
CARTOON #1

"I know. And one is smaller than the other," added Mike.

"It's quality that counts!" I snapped, and flounced into the kitchen to make scones -- and incidently, hide my chest behind a huge bib-apron.

Over the past winter, I lost a lot of weight. Rosemary wasn't even able to chant "32A~~s~~ of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your fibrefill!" at me any more. My clothes stopped fitting. In particular, my undergarments stopped fitting. Now, normally, this wouldn't bother me, since I find bras uncomfortable ("And besides, who'd notice whether you wore one?" "Shaddup and get out of my article, Rosemary!")

However, I have just been offered a job -- and the way I dress for conventions, even the way I've been dressing as a student-cun-housewife, cooking and thesis-ing, seems inappropriate for an assistant professor of English Literature. I checked out my wardrobe. Lots of exotic flowing dresses, lots of jeans, slacks, t-shirts. A couple of almost-forgotten Good Skirts, two sweater-dresses, some pullovers and thin blouses. Better play it conservative. I trotted off to a Major Department Store to investigate the lingerie section, and relive some old traumas. Padded bras. Moulded bras. All sorts of you-are-artificial-inches-larger-than-God-made-you bras. Lots of perhaps-dear-you-should-try-these-training bras. All full of wires and foam and padding

and bones and garbage. All uncomfortable.

Finally, I discovered the Warners little-bits-of-nylon-for-modesty's-sake section. Sizes appeared to start at 34B. I appealed to the saleswoman. That's where you came in.

Excuse me. There's the phone. "Oh, hi, Rosemary. I was out shopping for Respectable Teaching Clothes. . .well, yeah, as a matter of fact, I did find one. Two, even!... No, not in the subteen section! Listen, Rosemary, just because some of us aren't grossly exaggerated. . .Yeah, I know it's all a friendly shtick, but if you don't stop teasing me, I'll -- publish that cartoon! Right, it's quality that counts. 'Bye."

You see, I have a secret weapon. ("Sent away for the Mark Eden course, did you, dear?" "Get out of my article, Boy Wonder!") At Westercon, I was telling Bill Kotsler the story of how Robert Silverberg autographed Rosemary's Amazing Chest. "She even wrote it up for ENERGUMEN! I'm tired of having a 40 for a friend! It isn't fair!" I wailed.

"Flaunts it, does she?" chuckled Bill.

"I don't know why. All this meat is just a nuisance. It hurts my back, carrying it around, and I can never get clothes to fit me," sighed Dena Brown. "Can we arrange a flesh transplant, Susan?" Absentmindedly, she drew a deep breath, and gazed complacently from chest to chest.

"She's doing it TOO! Stop showing off! It isn't FAIR!" I wailed.

With an audible wrench, Bill peeled his gaze off Dena. "Yeah, you got a problem," he agreed. "Got any paper?" His felt pen began to move, and in a few moments -- "There you are. The Susan Glicksohn Revenge Cartoon! Heh-heh. That's gotta be the NASTIEST cartoon I've ever done! Heh-heh. Here, better take this Rosemary Ulliot Counter-Revenge Cartoon, too, just so there won't be any hard feelings."

So I did. Rosemary chortled over them both -- before she tried to snatch "Revenge" away from me and tear it to bits. Oh, it is nasty. Funny. But nasty. I really don't want to embarrass Rosemary by printing it. As long as Rosemary doesn't embarrass me.

After all, we both agree, it's foolish to accept a sexist society's pronouncements on our bodies, much less let them bother us, right?

Besides, it's quality that counts.

WITH MALICE TOWARD ALL

+ Joe Sanders +

OKLA HANNAH, by R. A. Lafferty, Pocket Books, \$1.25.
 BLUE HILL AVE., by Mark Mirsky, Bobbs-Merrill, \$6.95.
 THE 1973 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SF, edited by Donald A. Wollheim, DAW, 95¢.
 THE GODS THEMSELVES, by Isaac Asimov, Fawcett, \$1.25.

To begin with, answering a question that no one's ever asked, let me explain how I select books to write about in this column. Before I can review a book, I have to read it; before I can read a book, I have to buy it. I have never received a review copy of any book, and my reading schedule is too erratic to rely on library loans. So I look over the books on the stands -- a limiting factor itself, distribution being as uneven as it is -- and buy what I can afford of the books that interest me. That's why the choice is often sketchy and eccentric; so are my finances and my taste. That's also why I express strong feelings; the money and time I spend on something like CLARION or TRAVELER IN BLACK are considerable investments to me, and it's disappointing to discover I've wasted them.

However, I work part-time for Bobbs-Merrill and their packages of new college texts sometimes are padded with trade titles. Looking over some of these freebies, I tried to read Holzer's THE POWER OF HYPNOSIS, thinking it would make an interesting column. I couldn't. Holzer is too anxious to spiel his reader right up to the ticket window and into the tent. The technique repels me. Mirsky's novel looked interesting, though, and I read it with the reactions noted below. I thought you should know, however, that this is the first time in all these Malices that my choice of books was not purely my choice.

OKLA HANNAH, for example. I wrote about a Lafferty collection last time, but this book caught my eye before I noticed the author's name -- so what the heck! In any event, OKLA HANNAH is worth your reading, even if you have to hunt for it in the general fiction or western section of the newsstand. The book is difficult to classify, even for Lafferty. It could qualify as borderline fantasy, maybe, though the main fantasy element -- the Indian's intuitive awareness and supernatural powers -- are not much more pronounced than in Frank Waters' THE MAN WHO KILLED THE DEER, a fine novel of Pueblo Indian life that I've never heard spoken of as a fantasy. For one thing, there's difference in the telling of the tales. Anything Lafferty touches feels like a fantasy, because of his flamboyant love of gesture, sound, color. No Lafferty character remains lifesize for long. Or more lifelike than a given effect demands. Waters is more restrained. Showing a young, "educated" Indian fitting more and more back into the Pueblo way of life, Waters simply expresses his belief in the validity of the Indians' view of nature, though showing how it differs from the white man's by comprehending elements the white man can only label as "supernatural." That means the Indian has a fuller, non-intellectual consciousness of life's flow. Waters discusses the different viewpoints; Lafferty shows the Indian view at work in the life of one man, doing things we would consider impossible.

Of course the two writers' purpose is the same: to make us see, to help us understand the value of what we whites lack. Beyond that -- and beyond, for the moment, the whole question of labels -- Waters and Lafferty both are fascinated by what they see, life experienced in a new way. Whatever you call them, both novels are alive. I recommend them.

BLUE HILL AVE. is another borderline case, but barely. The out-and-out fantasy scenes are easily explainable as dreams, and most of the grotesque exaggeration in the characters' actions is carefully explained as the grotesquely exaggerated way people act when they're stretched well past what should have been their breaking point. The fantasy scenes probably are the weakest part of the story. Mirsky is pretty inventive, however, at hitting the reader with a tangle of strange-acting people, then explaining their behavior in semi-plausible fashion. He has a nice eye for incongruous detail, too. The book is skillfully written and has some very funny scenes. The main thing it lacks is life. I respect Mirsky's ability, his integrity, several things about the book, but the whole basic approach was thoroughly worked by Joseph Heller in CATCH 22. Heller did about all that could be done with the approach before he ran out of steam (BLUE HILL AVE. also has trouble with its conclusion, though it disguises the sag with a good black humor slapstick bit). A writer can reapply Heller's approach in other areas, but there's not much really new that can be done with it. It becomes a little like those ABBOTT & COSTELLO MEET _____ pictures. Applying the mood in a Jewish neighborhood in Boston is somewhat novel, but there's not enough new feeling to keep a reader steadily interested. Understand, Mirsky is not copying Heller and BLUE HILL AVE. is not a bad book; it's just a fairly entertaining, fairly unexciting job.

That's not quite the problem with Poul Anderson's "Goatsong" in Vollheim's BEST collection, but it's close. Anderson is a gifted writer, really gifted, one of the professionals who can turn out satisfying story after story. In the past, I've put down a few writers as merely skillful manufacturers. Anderson is proof that you can acquire skill without losing fresh interest in what you're doing with the skill. "Goatsong" is dazzlingly skillful. Anderson takes the myth of Orpheus and does everything he can to breath life into it. But perhaps that's the trouble -- he takes the myth. . . . It is just there from the beginning, having to be worked out in plausible detail. I don't think that's a very effective way to use myth. Myth represents a recurring pattern of human experience, summed up in a particular set of circumstances and names; its appeal and its power lie in the fact that it suddenly leaps at us out of the flow of events, and we recognize the likeness of the myth



pattern to your experience. That recognition clarifies, solidifies our understanding of what is happening to us. It comforts us to know that what we are going through is not absolutely unique, and it gives us a sense of controlling what we now see distinctly. Anderson is aware of all this, and at the story's end his hero acts deliberately to complete the Orpheus pattern. The trouble is that much of the story's plot is simply completing the pattern. Once a reader recognizes the myth, which happens quite early, the story has few surprises. Too bad, because Anderson's writing is vivid and he tries very hard to explain his characters' actions in terms of understandable motivation or conscious working out of myth. But when the story's Orpheus is leading his Eurydice out of hell, for example, Anderson does a remarkable job of justifying the hero's looking back; however, there is never any doubt that he will look back. We can admire the writer's technique, but the story can't catch as a story. It just sits there, beautiful but inert.

Still in the BEST anthology, James Tiptree's "The Man Who Walked Home" is a livelier look at how legend grows. I'm especially impressed at how skillfully Tiptree handles time passing in the first part of the story. Tiptree is one of the good new ones, so is Phyllis MacLennan, whose "Thus Love Betrays Us" struck me as too Moody and Literary at first but pulled me into itself right away, carrying through to the end without a false note. "Willie's Blues" by Robert J. Tilley is another success, interesting in its thinking and convincing in its feel for a setting. Tilley is also good at writing a convincing soliloquy. Clifford D. Simak uses very real-sounding dialogue in "To Walk a City's Street," but the story is too gimmicked, set up and reversed too fast. The dialogue carries it on first reading, no more. I think "Changing Woman" by W. Macfarlane could have been longer too, but perhaps that's just because I'd have enjoyed knowing the characters longer; the story is long enough for its plot, but the people stick with a reader.

To pull some others together, "Rorqual Mara" by T. J. Bass is a successful construct: a story about semi-humans that still holds our human, intellectual interest. Bass can't rely on familiar settings or reactions in the story, but he's quite good at catching readers in the working out of a complicated group of ideas -- and how some human feelings do seep through cracks in a hyper-controlled future. Vernor Vinge's "Long Shot" is an okay but rather minor construct, operating more as a straight process/puzzle tale. Michael G. Coney's "Oh, Valinda!" is rather disappointing, since Coney relies very heavily on tired and true elements in presenting his characters, alien and human. It's not a bad story, but it's too obviously written by someone who's not sure enough of himself to avoid tossing in the misunderstood-hero-full-of-memory-of-his-true-love's-noble-self-sacrifice -- all those good old crowd pleasers.

Finally, there's Frederik Pohl's "The Gold at the Starbow's End." "Gold" is a pretty successful story, certainly better than average Pohl -- but then a lot of Pohl's stuff has struck me as clever ideas inflated, stretched thin as the skin of a carnival balloon. With about as much inside, "Gold" has more substance. Even if it's a relatively small ripple from the splash 2001 made in our field, "Gold" works as a whole story. The idea is clued carefully, interlaced with the social satire Pohl always has done well. As a non-literary aside, remembering how Pohl put down 2001, I find it a little startling to see him using several of the same devices. Perhaps he's not aware of what he's doing.

Hollheim introduces "Gold" with the statement, "Any collection that purported to present the best of the year that did not contain this novella would be either a fraud or an example of very myopic mental vision. . . . If it is not this year's Hugo and/or Nebula winner, then something will have been drastically wrong with the ballot-

counting." I don't want to get into an argument with Wollheim for a lot of reasons -- chiefly that I said my piece about the general attitude a while ago in an extended comment about J. J. Pierce's first tract -- but this is a very incautious thing for Wollheim to say. Like some of his other comments and a few of the selections, it suggests that Wollheim is losing sight of what's happening in the field. But the important thing about the book is the stories, of course. And, crotchets and awards aside, this anthology is very much worth buying.

Somehow I can't imagine that many people have waited this long to make up their minds about buying *THE GODS THEMSELVES*. But if you have waited for my verdict, gang, it's okay. Buy the book; read it; have fun. Reading *GODS* is like watching Gaylord Perry pitch on a good day -- splendid utilization of strengths and concealment of weaknesses. Asimov's greatest strengths always have been his ability to get genuinely interested in a number of fields and his ability to transmit those interests through his writing. His greatest weakness as a writer of fiction is his tendency to use hokey melodrama as the setting for long dialogues that expound his ideas. Both strengths and weaknesses are present in *GODS*, but managed effectively. One more observation: the last section of the book is the strongest for two reasons -- first, Asimov gets interested in speculation about human colonists on the moon as well as the continuing theme of para-universes, etc., and his extrapolations of moon life are genuinely fascinating; second, the hokey melodrama subsides (Neville is hardly used for more than seasoning, brought on to glower and curdle around the edges when Asimov thinks some tension is required), and the hokey romance that takes its place shows some tendencies toward becoming real. If the love affair is supposed to counter the stupidity -- actually egoism -- the puts Earth in danger, it's underdeveloped. Still, it's a nice touch.

So *GODS* is an enjoyable book. Not Hugo quality, I'd say, but perhaps I just don't understand what it takes to win the Hugo these days. Perhaps I'm losing sight of what's happening here, too.

* * * * *

NOTES TOWARD A JOHN STANLEY BIBLIOGRAPHY:

These notes have been compiled with the help of various other Stanley collectors, mainly Don & Maggie Thompson and Chris Couch. I'm publishing it now to supplement Lesleigh's article, which follows. Any corrections or additions would be profoundly appreciated.

Choo Choo Charlie #1 (Gold Key, 1969; one issue only)

Little Lulu (Dell; Gold Key, 1945-present. Gold Key, after they took over the book in the early 60's, soon began using lots of Dell reprints. Little Lulu was produced by a staff, of which John Stanley was a prime member. The earlier books seem to be more entirely his work.)

Melvin Monster (Dell, 1965-1967; nine issues at least.)

Miss Peach (Dell, 1963 -- I've never seen this book, but the Thompsons think it might be Stanley.)

Nellie the Nurse (Dell Color #1304, about 1961. Overstreet lists this as a Stanley book, I've never seen it.)

O.G. Whiz (Gold Key, 1971-1972; six issues. Generally, Stanley seems to have worked extensively on the first issue, though he may have had some part in the others.)

Raggedy Ann & Andy (Peterkin Pottle stories only. Dell; Pottle started in #32, 1949 -- I don't know how long it continued.)

13 Going on 18 (Dell, 1965-67. Overstreet lists issues 13-24 -- possibly they numbered the first issue #13. I've only seen one issue, and it was signed by Stanley.)

Tubby (Dell, 1952-1962. This book wasn't as good as Lulu -- I suspect that it was generally done by the Lulu staff, but that Stanley took less of a role.)

--HL

GREAT AMERICAN COMICS/PART IV

JOHN STANLEY CONTINUED

+ Lesleigh Luttrell +

Two years ago I wrote an article for this fanzine which dealt with what I think is one of the best and funniest comic books of all time, Little Lulu. Since then, I have found numerous people who agree with my estimation of this book. In fact, at times I wish I hadn't found so many Little Lulu fans, since it means it is getting harder and harder for us to complete our collection. But there is nothing like having your friends sitting around your house and giggling hysterically after having accidentally picked up one of your copies of Little Lulu. At one party we hosted, half a dozen people spent the entire evening doing nothing but reading comic books and giggling. Those people are now all Little Lulu fans. But I don't think it's fair to them, and to all the other Starling readers who have discovered this fine comic book to leave them with the impression that Little Lulu is the only book John Stanley ever worked on. There are numerous other books which bear his stamp, and while they are not the same as Lulu, they are amusing and deserve some attention. So, in this article, I'd like to give you a taste of the other characters created by John Stanley, and talk a little bit more about Lulu, especially about the early Little Lulu books which I have read since I wrote the previous article.

One of Stanley's earliest creations appeared in the book, Raggedy Ann and Andy in the late 40s. This book also featured artists such as Johnny Gruelle, Dan Noonan and Walt Kelly, and so would be worth looking at even if it did not contain "The Hair-raising Adventures of Peterkin Pottle!" Peterkin is a little boy, who superficially resembles Tubby Tompkins, but is not really much like Tubby at all. Pottle is rather ugly and a seemingly stupid little boy and as such is the perfect foil for all the meaner kids in his neighborhood. They delight in teasing him (partly because he is fat and wears glasses, and partly because he is so easily intimidated.) But Peterkin always gets his revenge. Not in reality, but in daydreams.

For instance, in one story, Peterkin's mother sends him to the store and he is stopped on the street by a group of neighborhood bullies. They take the grocery list and rewrite it to their taste, telling Pottle if he doesn't get what they have written down, well. . . So Peterkin fetches the few things they had left of the original list and the 3 dozen oranges they had added. He isn't able to carry the groceries by himself and has to enlist the aid of his friend Pam, who convinces the bullies to leave Peterkin alone. Peterkin staggers home with the oranges. Luckily his mother had really wanted oranges and she gives him a glass of fresh orange juice for his trouble. After drinking it, . .

Suddenly Peterkin Pottle finds that he is the strongest boy in the world. After performing a few minor feats like straightening a bent fire hydrant and lifting a truck to help change a tire, he is confronted with real danger. The dam has burst and the town is being flooded. Peterkin goes around the town saving people, including Pam and his mother, and then manages to repair the dam by inserting a stone

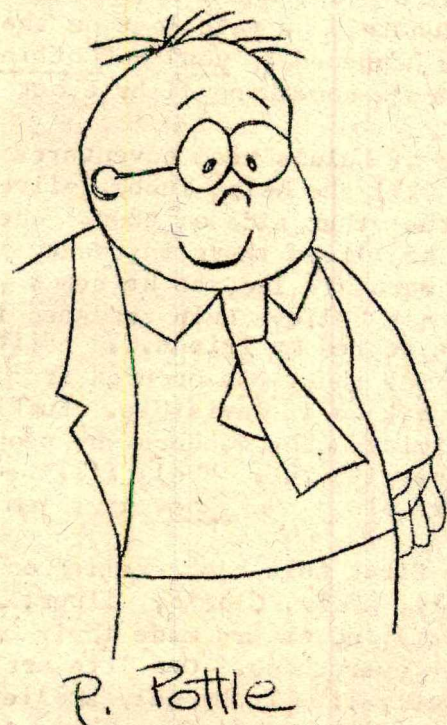
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4 times his size into the gaping hole. But just as he is being carried off by a rejoicing crowd, he is awakened by his mother who wants him to return to the store for the things the bullies had crossed off the list. Poor Peterkin.

Although the Peterkin Pottle stories are entertaining in their own right, they are especially interesting to compare with the Little Lulu books. Stanley has obviously adapted some of the characteristics of the Pottle books to characters in Little Lulu. As I said above, Peterkin resembles Tubby in appearance, although Tubby is much smarter and better liked. Peterkin also has Lulu's talent for making up stories which feature himself, and the friendship between Peterkin and Pam is very reminiscent of the close but not always friendly relationship which Lulu and Tubby have.

Actually, the first Little Lulu book appeared before the Pottle stories discussed above. Four Color #74, the first comic to feature Little Lulu, appeared in 1945. If you have ever glanced at a Lulu you may have noticed the real name of the book is Marge's Little Lulu. This is because Lulu was created as a magazine cartoon character by Majorie Henderson (although I've never heard any indication that Miss Henderson had anything to do with the comic books other than allowing them to put her name on the books.) Marge's Lulu appeared in magazine cartoons which were basically pantomimes and dealt with a mischievous and sometimes bad little girl and a few of her friends.

The earliest Lulu still looks much like Marge's character. The red dress, the little hat and the curls are all there, but this Lulu has extremely red cheeks, as do all the characters, and she does not yet have the vast repertoire of facial expressions made from circles and lines which are so delightful in the later books. Tubby is much fatter and Alvin lacks his distinctive hair style. These three, plus a few miscellaneous children and Lulu's mother (who hasn't changed much over the years) constitute the main characters of these early books.

The early Lulu was still a very mischievous little girl, and even pretty nasty at times. For example, in the first book, Lulu and Tubby go to the beach and get into a lot of trouble. First they put their sunken inner tube around a sleeping man, to see if his snores will blow it up. Then they find they can't get it off his head, so they pull and pull on it, finally dragging the man into the ocean, where he wakes up. Then they lose their lunch in the water and their carfare rolls under the boardwalk. Tubby rips his pants while trying to retrieve it, and the lifeguard who is trying to fetch Tubby out rips his bathing suit in the same place. Lulu finally rescues the pair by stealing a woman's dress from the dressing room for them to put on. The lifeguard, who is by this time quite mad at the kids, has to save a drowning man while still wearing the dress. The day ends up with Lulu and Tubby leaving the beach with three grown-ups, the lifeguard, the sleeping man and the man who gives ice cream cones to lost children, very mad at them. Of



course, it wasn't malicious mischief, but still it was the kind of behavior that a later Lulu would not have engaged in.

Another example of this type of mischief occurs in Little Lulu Vol. 1 #1 (after her several four color appearances had been successful enough to warrant giving Lulu her own book.) This time, Tubby convinces Lulu to go mountain climbing. He ties a rope around both of them and they begin to look for something to climb. The first thing they find is the bureau in Lulu's mother's room. While on top they get into an argument over whether or not Lulu's mother needs all that stuff to keep her pretty. "To Keep Pretty? Your Mother? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, h. . . Ahem... Your Mother sure is pretty...only...er...a little...er...fat!" "So are you! You're fat...but not Pretty!"

The upshot of this is that Tubby walks off the bureau, knocking it and everything on top of it onto the floor. The kids look for something safer to climb, deciding on one of the tallest buildings in town. It's five stories tall, but there are lots of brick handholds on the outside and Lulu keeps her eyes closed most of the time. On the way up, they scare a man by stopping in his apartment for a drink of water and then disappearing out the window. They stop at another apartment to call their mothers and tell them where they are. Neither Mrs. Hoppet nor Mrs. Tompkins believes them. ("You've climbed up to the second story on the outside of a building? I don't think you're being very funny. . .and besides, how many times have I told you not to use Lulu's phone? Hang up right away!") When they have almost reached the top of the building, a policeman sees them and calls the rescue squad. But by the time the firemen and other policemen arrive, Lulu and Tubby have already taken the stairs down and are on their way home to lunch. The poor policeman who made the call is being led off in the last panel by a friend who recommends he take some time off. Again, they weren't really being bad, but. . .

Lulu begins her story telling career in Four Color #110 with a story about a poor little orphan, her wicked stepmother and her stepbrother who is the baddest little boy in the world (his name is Alvin, naturally). Finally her wicked stepmother locks her up, and a knight (who looks much like Tubby) decides to rescue her. Unfortunately he gets lost on the way. "-And that's the end of the story!" "But what happened to you?" "Nothing! I'm still locked up in that darned tower!!!" "There's something fishy about that story."

Some of Lulu's real adventures are more unbelievable than her made-up stories. Once (in #22) she helps Tubby deliver a package that the local druggist wants taken over to the other side of town. When they reach the house, a passer-by tells them no one has lived there in twenty years. Tubby is determined to deliver the package and earn his 10¢, so he sends Lulu in. And there is a ghost in the house! Tub doesn't believe Lulu and goes in too. When he sees the ghost, Yow! "Gosh, you sure scared my friend..." "Little boys are the easiest of all to scare!" It turns out the ghost has ordered iron pills to help build up his little boy ghost, who is so weak he is invisible. Luckily the pills help and the ghost pays Lulu for the medicine. She wonders why people are afraid of ghosts and goes back to the drug-store with Tub. "Well I'll be-! Where did you get these bills? They're sixty years old!" "A ghost gave 'em to me, Mr. Pestle!" True story.

The first Lulu books relied on only a few characters. Later, characters such as Willy, Eddie, Gloria, Wilbur, Annie and Iggy (who were not brother and sister at first) and others made their appearance, replacing the playmates whose names changed with every book. One late arrival to this crow was Tubby's cousin Chub who looks exactly like Tubby only smaller. (Chubby is sort of a mean little kid but he has to say 'Aw, mice' cause he's not old enough to say 'Aw, rats'.) This cast of characters helped make Lulu one of the most entertaining comic books to be had, and if

you want to read their adventures, get a hold of some old issues of Little Lulu. But please don't giggle too much.

If you are interested in finding out what John Stanley has been doing lately, there are more recent books he has worked on. In the mid-sixties, Stanley worked on the book Melvin Monster (it is the only Stanley work I have seen where he actually signed some of the covers.) As his name implies, Melvin is a little monster who lives in Monsterville with his Mummy (who is one) and Baddy and their pet crocodile Cleopatra, who would love to have Melvin for lunch someday, as the main course.

There are fewer characters in Melvin Monster than there were in Little Lulu, and the layout is much simpler, but it all seems to work to create a book almost as amusing as Lulu. Melvin's only 'friend' is Little Horror, a witch who, like most kids in Monsterville delights in being bad. Unfortunately, Melvin is the only goody goody in town and a great disappointment to his parents. He, like Tubby and Peterkin is a fat little ~~boby~~ monster, though his character resembles that of Peterkin more than Tubby, since he is often put upon by his parents and Little Horror and is the butt of many cruel pranks. For instance, his father buys him a slide and insists that Melvin position it so he can land in a heavily thorned bush each time he slides down. Melvin tries to convince his father that he really does enjoy going down the slide that way. After an hour of this, his father says, "Gotta give that daggerberry bush a breathing spell." "Oh, Baddy, . .Do I have to stop. . .?" "Didn't hear a whimper outa him the whole time...Guess he's a real green-blooded little monster after all. . ." "Now, let's see...How many times did I go down the slide...? Oh, yes - eighty seven times...OW! OW! OW! OW! OW! OW! OW! . . ."

Another of Melvin's 'friends' is Miss Gargoyle, the local school teacher. "Six hundred years I've been teaching school in Monsterville and never had one single drop-in problem! No monster kid in his wrong mind would ever dream of setting foot in this place...except to set fire to it! Now suddenly that little pest, Melvin, starts showing up every morning, begging me to enroll him! If I don't think of some way to keep him away, he'll drive me crazy - or into early retirement!" Poor Melvin. In fact the only person who really looks out for Melvin is his guardian demon, Damon. "Listen, Melvin, you're gonna let me protect you from harm an' keep you from gettin' hurt - or I'll poke you so fulla holes -" But the only real danger Melvin faces (aside from Cleopatra) is that sometimes he is unlucky enough to find himself in Humanbeantville. In one issue he finds a tunnel in his basement that leads to Humanbeantville, and he climbs a building to try and see Monsterville. Melvin climbs much like Lulu and Tubby did in the story mentioned above, using bricks for hand and foot holds, but Melvin can also hang on with his teeth and take a nap when he gets tired. He eventually gets back to Monsterville, just in time to get into more trouble with Baddy.

Choo-choo Charlie had only one issue, published in 1969. It dealt with the adventures of a little boy who has his own train, a steam engine and one car, and tracks that can lead anywhere. Charlie takes his friends for rides on the train, especially a little girl who Charlie calls 'Lady'. In the first story Lady tells him, "And for goodness sakes, watch out for elephants on the track!" "Elephants?" "We're going to Africa Charlie!" "Listen, Lady, I'm the one who decides where we're going! And we definitely are not going...to...Af-" BUMP! Needless to say, they had just run into an elephant. Charlie's train also takes him into a lake where an alligator decides to take over the duties of engineer ("Don't worry, Charlie, sooner or later he'll get tired of riding around on your engine and want to go home...He's probably a married alligator with responsibilities and stuff..."), to an amusement park where the train somehow ends up on top of a ferris wheel, and to 'rough country' ("They say long ago this was a place where old worn-out Indians came to retire ... They sat in the hollow of a tree and slowly faded away..." "Hah! You don't

catch me believing that stuff! Even if I do see a slightly faded Indian sitting in that tree over there. . .") It's a real shame that such an imaginative book had such a short life span.

Stanley's most recent undisputed work is O. G. Whiz #1, which appeared in 1971. It is the story of a newsboy who becomes the president of the Tikkletoy Co. The founder of the company, Titus Tootle Tickle and his company are in real trouble because they haven't sold a toy in years. Tickle goes out for a walk after a particularly dismal board meeting and falls asleep with his nose resting on O. G.'s shoeshine kit. O. G. shines the nose and when he asks for his 10¢ (half prize because he only shined one nose), Tickle gives him 49 percent of the business ("Whee! I didn't spend 140 years wheeling and dealing for nothing! The total market value of Tikkletoy's stock is 7½ cents! By giving that kid the stock instead of the dime I did him out of 2½ cents!") When O. G. discovers a way of getting rid of the company's stock of superpowerful Roman candles and old Pogo sticks (he makes jet-powered Pogo sticks and the Australian Ranchers Association wants to buy them all for use in herding kangaroos), Tickle decides to give Orvie Gismo Whiz 51% of the stock and make him president of the toy company. Titus Tickle then retires to the reception room to read 40 years worth of magazines.

Since O. G. is such a whiz at the toy biz, things should be going just fine for everyone. But O. G. has lots of enemies. One is Tickle's grandson, Thutnose, who wanted to take over his grandfather's job as company president, and was always trying to get rid of Tickle. ("He's crazy as a coot. . .as soon as I come out of this faint I'll staple him to a chair and have some funny farm in Finland come and get him. . .") Now Thutnose is out to get rid of O. G.

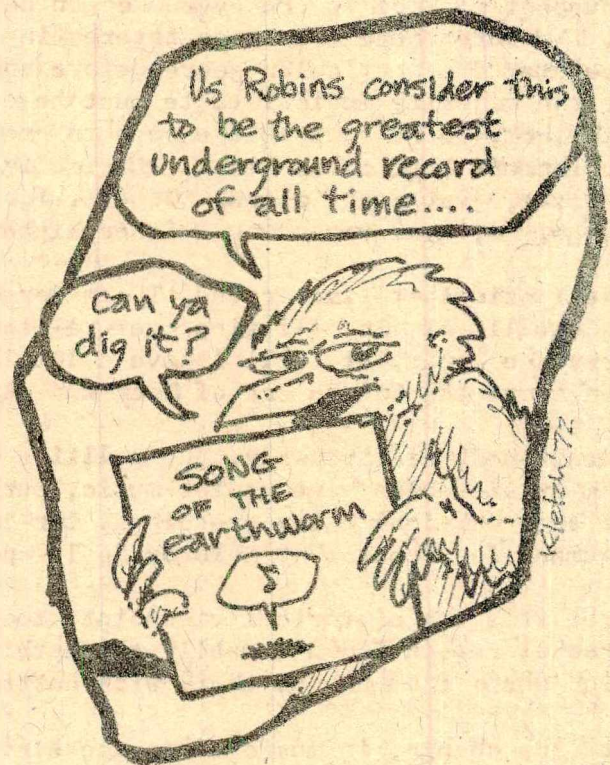
Another of O. G.'s enemies is the president of the rival Whirlygig Toy Co., whose sales have fallen drastically since the Tikkletoy Co. has been revived under O. G.'s leadership. Mr. Whirlygig sends a letter to O. G. Whiz, purportedly from the Boogeyman's mother, warning him the Boogeyman is out to get him. O. G. is so frightened by this missive that he pops his bubble gum, which then covers his face, and rushes out of his office. Soon Tikkletoy's president is the laughing stock of the town (Thutnose having informed the newsmedia of the reason for O. G.'s disappearance.) That night, the president of Whirlygig toys sleeps soundly in his brightly-lit bedroom. ("Twenty years I've had to sleep like this. . .because Harry insists sleeping with plenty of lights on is good for the complexion! A lot of good it's done him. . .he has a complexion like an alligator handbag. . .") Meanwhile, O. G. has climbed a tree right outside the apartment window, to escape his fate, and when Harry opens his eyes to see O. G.'s bubble gum-covered visage at his window, he thinks the Boogeyman has come for him! O. G. discovers the Boogeyman letter was a fake, and Harry's wife says, "Now that we know keeping lights on at night neither helps the complexion nor keeps the Boogeyman away, we'll put them all out, won't we Harry?"

There have been several more issues of O. G. Whiz, and they were all probably a bit more amusing than today's usual 'funny' comic book, but John Stanley apparently did not work on more than the first issue or two. It has been several years since any new Stanley work has appeared on the stands. Let us hope he has spent the time developing a new Peterkin Pottle, Lulu Moppett, Tubby Tompkins, Melvin Monster or O. G. Whiz. Nowadays we need something to giggle at.

dance to the music

+ Juanita

Coulson +



A fan friend of ours once said "humor is the funniest thing around". I almost feel that way about taste -- as in taste is the most subjective thing around. The arts, despite continuing debates about Platonic ideals and absolute standards, come in for the heaviest dose of subjectivity, and music, including rock, is no exception.

I imagine most people might have vague responses to why they liked this or that kind of music. One hopes the majority of Starling's readership would be beyond the "because that's when I first met her!" stage. But a lot of influences must be pretty subtle, maybe even unearthenable short of extensive analysis. (My discipline is supposedly psych, and I would cynically add -- and probably not even after extensive analysis; or if anything was unearthed it would probably be the analyst's subconscious quirks, not the patient's. But no matter.)

I can't, for example, begin to explain why I have such a faunching affinity for Afro-Cuban rhythms. Always have, presumably always will. And lest anyone jump to the wrong conclusion, this affinity has nothing to do with my name. No Chicana I. My name's the result of victimization by my slightly tiddily father, reeling into the hospital nursery after a tough bout with his fellow barbershop quartetters; apparently the schmaltzy "Juanita" was the last chorus these crocks had a crack at, and my birth certificate got the fallout. When I was a tad watching the Westerns, I always doted on Spanish-style background music. I loathed most Disney funny animals but doted on José Carioca and Pancho Gallito (or whatever the Mexican rooster's name was.) I can recall twisting my mother's arm at a tender age of something like nine or ten; we were on a shopping trip to the illustrious capital city of this corn-bordered race track of a state, and I noticed Desi Arnez was playing -- LIVE!! -- at a Naptown theater. This was Desi Arnez Sr., of course. Mama was a soft hearted soul and I enjoyed myself thoroughly digging on the bongo rhythms and maracas.

By that time, certainly, my taste patterns were pretty well pointed. But then I'm the sort who gets locked in the groove early on and stays with it. Fortunately for my taste buds, it's a very wide groove.

I suspect most of us are engrammed in certain musical taste patterns fairly early. Oh, I'm sure there are those interesting souls among us who have never...~~somehow~~... encountered a particular genre before and suddenly go ape on first hearing it. But for the majority musical taste must be a gradual osmosis, probably from infancy on. With luck, we're adaptable enough to grow and expand and take in each experimental development that comes along. Logically some of those experiments, from our point of taste, just don't click. Others, far out or not, will fit our grooves, and on we go, go, go, ever upward and higher higher higher.

Like I said last time around, I can forgive the under-30s who never heard the birthing squalls of r&r, flipping over re-issues of originals and recreations by Haley, Jerry Lee Lewis, et. al. I have a lot less sympathy for my age contemporaries who moon about the Golden Era of Rock and gush over the simplicity and good old days.

I mentioned, disfavorably, the politics of that era. But I ought to stress that from my listening vantage the music, purely speaking, just wasn't that good. I've got some original Haley pressings, for instance, I'd probably trade without much argument for Preston or Nalo or Seals and Croft or like that.

Maybe it's the historical viewpoint, too. I can reminisce about WWII, but for some personal reason I don't really think that was the grandest time in my life. I still think where I am now is that, with better things, hopefully, to come.

Lots has changed in music since the early 50s, practically all of it for the better. Recording techniques, and really basic musical effects. I don't mean just sophisticated electronics, the neonate cries of which were available years ago mostly to movie studio engineers. Of course there's a lot of ground between say all that controlled feedback by Duane Eddy and the cutsies put out by Focus or the Edgar Winter Group. Lot more amps to work with now, lot more interesting refinements in the end product, tape editing down to an art, etc. But the music itself has improved.

Sometimes you can hear it in a repetition or recut of an oldie. Probably not from Jerry Lee Lewis, who insists on doing his stuff as much as possible exactly like he used to -- sharper sound, but otherwise ditto. Chuck Berry uses better instruments, bigger amps, and produces a smoother, but still enjoyable sound. (I won't get into things like costume. They may enhance the eye but don't do a thing on record. Unfortunately. What I wouldn't give for a hologram recording of Tina doing "Proud Mary" or "Higher".)

For example, Billy Preston's "Will It Go Round" is a pretty simple musical thing. About as simple as you get much anymore. Beat you could walk on, as they used to advertise. Beat. Beat. Beat. Beat. Just what the critics claimed r&r was all about when Bill Haley first hit the scene. "There's nothin' to it but just sit there and hit that goddam drum." I don't think so. Even to young ears there certainly must be a difference. The basic beat has grown up in a bit shy of twenty years. Not only can you hear it better, but what's most important to me it's become about 1000% more dancable.

(Don't pay any attention to my grey-beard brothers and sisters over there muttering in their whiskey sours. They probably paid attention to their parents when thy mooned over Glenn Miller and the Swing Era -- certainly one of the dullest musical motifs ever to evolve since the drum was invented. One giant step backward for music loving mankind.)

As I said, it's all a matter of taste, of course. But I'll defend to the last finger-

nail your right to like moldy music. All your taste's in your appendix, but. . .

We wouldn't have had Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young in the Bill Haley period. The public's taste simply wasn't sophisticated enough to handle those harmonies. It could barely cope with Stan Kenton, and he was assumed to be a fad. Forerunner, prophet without as much honor as he deserved is more like it. We wouldn't have had Seals and Croft. Chicago would have confused the hell out of them; brass is a hang-over -- to the old timers -- of the swing era, but what they hear isn't.

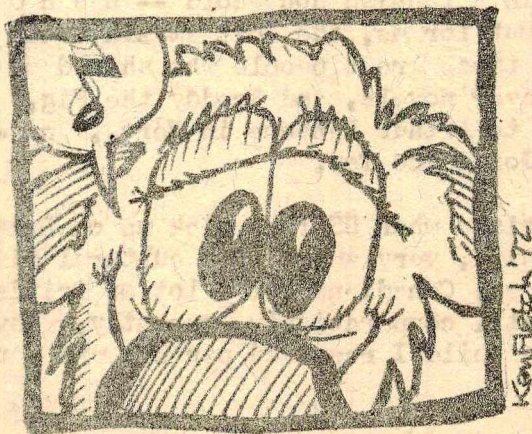
The "new" harmonies (new for rock but not necessarily in music as a whole -- listen to Webern, etc, sometime), the electronic effects, the experimental blends of sounds, and ventures into exotic instruments in weird combinations. . . all, for my taste, big, lovely improvements. Put it this way -- you can hang onto every scrap of music out of the past, put down the present as not, on whatever basis you choose, as good. But why? The music you're hearing today grew out of the stuff you heard in the past. Like kids generally are bigger and healthier than their parents with each generation, music grows. (Sometimes you get a dud musical experiment, like sometimes you get a dud kid. But in general, those are exceptions.)

Do we want to hang onto Johnny Ray crying? Elvis smearing his blue suede shoes? Little Richard squealing until he makes the ivories peel?

Bill Haley, in retrospect, was a rock n roll Lawrence Welk. Beat you could walk on, yeah. Uh one and uh two. . . One, two, three o'clock, four o'clock rock. . .

Think of it this way, music expands outward constantly. And in myriad directions. I don't know about you, but I have all I can do to hang on tight to what's going on right now. I have plenty to criticize in the present. Like why do outfits insist on releasing bad cuts -- generally on the argument that they're "live" and that excuses matters because of the "excitement". We get two cuts, locally, of "Smoke on the Water" -- one live and mushed to the point of turning off the radio in disgust, one studio and sharp and very listenable. I dig Alice Cooper on record, but their performances are so busy hoking up and shucking the audience and sponsor the results are execrable; I don't pay good money for non-music, gang, live "excitement" or not. The excitement available in a mushed up live performance is the same thing people get at a massive football crowd, jammed up to the rafters, unable to see or hear -- body contact and the communicable thrill of mass socializing. For my taste, anyway.

If we don't all keep our taste buds up to the present and tuned, we'll fall too far behind in following whatever new developments come along, musically. Then we too can sit in our rockers in the corner and complain how music isn't like it was in the good old days of the early 70s.





WORDS FROM READERS

Susan Glicksohn, 139 Mayfair Cres., Regina, Sask., S4S 4W1, Canada

But how can one be comfortable with Angus Taylor about? "The Frisbee Players of Triton" is the single most brilliant piece of writing to come out of fandom this year. That story works on so many levels. . . the initial reaction, of course, is to admire the wit. Or to put it in a less English-major way, when Angus came over to collect his copy, I was still rolling around on the floor over jokes like "Leibnitz, Silverberg, all those German philosophers look the same to me!" Chortle at the funny lines and in-jokes, admire the skill of the Dick pastiche. And then realize the thing works as a story in its own right -- and a damn fine one in terms of its human relationships, a damn scary one in terms of its reality-is-unreal extrapolation. There are already elevators that talk to you. And now I'm nervous about using the laundry room. Still, the machines there are pretty stupid.

Lesleigh, you offer living proof of something Buck Coulson said to me at Midwestcon: "Fans have read everything." I think every fan -- with the exception of someone like yourself who grew up in a fannish household -- has had the Great Revelation: Someone Else Reads SF!!! But for me, the most amazing thing about fandom was gradually discovering that all those great people who shared my love for sf also shared my devotion to Georgette Heyer novels, and Freddy the Pig, and the Saint stories. I made a passing reference to Arthur Ransome in Nerg., and -- "oh, say, you read those too?" And now it's Josephine Tey.

I am, somehow, always surprised when US fans pick up on British authors. I suppose it's because I was, as a child, very aware of a cultural difference (accentuated by things like copyright laws; Canadians got a lot of British books that weren't available in US editions until comparatively recently. Heyer is a prime example.) My Mum is English, and as a child I received parcels and parcels of books from my

relations across the pond (or "over 'ome" if you prefer.) Somehow, I always felt more comfortable in the English fiction world than in the American; on my thrice-weekly pilgrimages to the local library, I chose Arthur Ransome, the Lang fairy books, Rosemary Sutcliffe, Hugh Lofting and so on in preference to US childrens' books -- with the exception of good old Freddy-the-Pig. Canadian chauvanism, or something, but I was more at home in the world of fourth-form dormitory rivalries than that of sixth-grade Thanksgiving Day preparations. And British books seemed written for children, while US ones seemed more sex-differentiated. Girls got nurse stories and drippy Betty Cavanna-type romances; boys got the good stuff, Heinlein juveniles! And when, at a tender age, I graduated to the adult section of the library, I preferred British mysteries to American ones. In fact, I'm pretty specialized -- I prefer pre-World War II British detective fiction; Sayers, early Christie, and so on. It took a heavy dose of Chandler and MacDonald's Travis McGee series to break down my snobbish conviction that all American attempts in the genre were just "thrillers" (said in veddy-veddy-Uppaw-Clawse tones of mingled condescension and contempt).

+You shouldn't be surprised that our tastes in mysteries coincides so exactly --
 +your excellent article on Dorothy Sayers is what started me reading mysteries.
 + -- LML

Tey presents a good example of the things I like about British detective fiction. Well-written books, books you can re-read and enjoy -- does anyone re-read Spillane? Expertise and a certain intelligence shown by the author, and expected of the reader -- the prime example, of course, is Daughter of Time, where all the historical material is integrated into the plot, and made interesting. You never feel she's hitting you over the head with her scholarship, or showing off -- it's so naturally a part of the book, like the discussion Grant and Marta Hallard have of the portraits, just as if Mary Queen of Scots was someone they knew well, and could talk about without being scholarly and pretentious. Other books that do that sort of thing well are Sayers' Nine Tailors and V. C. Clinton-Baddley's My Foe Outstretched Beneath the Tree, in which the entire plot turns, respectively, on campanology and opera -- quite esoteric subjects that are really part of the plot, not just clever gimmicks to make the standard plot different.

And character, and a safe, secure world. The two go together, of course. It is utterly unthinkable that anyone could call Grant a pig. British detective-story heroes tend to be regular police, or Talented Amateurs, not tough, cynical private-eye or ruthless-cop types. And they are Basically Good. Grant, by the end of the books about him, is a fully-developed human being, not just a collection of traits -- and he's a likeable human being. The federal agent in The French Connection is an extremely human character, too, but in a different way: you see all his flaws, all the little things that bug him, all the imperfections that make "the law" a joke. Grant comes across as someone you could quite happily invite home for dinner, and someone you could turn to for help. Maybe it's a fantasy world, his world -- British police are armed, now, not the genial bobbies of yore. Imagine, a detective admired and respected by his subordinates, trusted and respected by his superiors, with friends and a normal life, doing his job but not corrupted by it into not caring about people; retaining his faith in their basic goodness. Idealistic, isn't it? If A Shilling for Candles were being written now, of course, it would be told from the point of view of the poor suspect, hounded by the pigs and ignored by the apathetic public -- he'd end up actually dying of pneumonia while the real killer got away. Instead of which, Grant is the hero, carrying on with routine duties but worrying over the man's disappearance. And not because it'll be a black mark on his record if the suspect can't be found, and not even because the papers are shrieking about police brutality, but because through him an innocent man is in trouble, and he feels responsible.

Generalization: British detective fiction offers a world in which there is right and wrong, and in which certain positive human values operate: loyalty, integrity, honesty and so on.

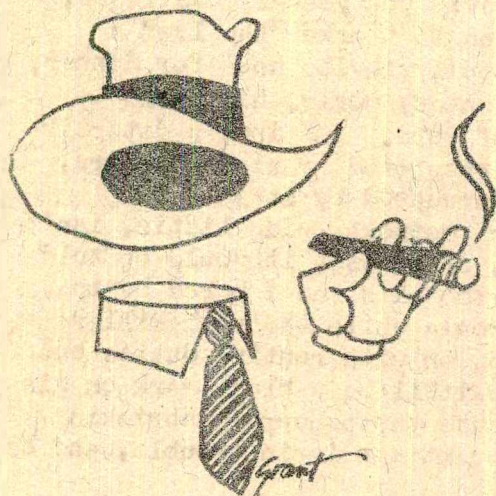
Interesting that Miss Pym Disposes contradicts most of what I've said above, in that good doesn't operate, the guilty student goes unpunished and the innocent one, for whom the crime was committed, suffers. Except it doesn't really present a contradiction, because concepts like good, evil, guilt and atonement do still operate -- the murderess is evil precisely because they don't operate for her, because she sees no reason why human life should stand in the way of human profit and personal ambition.

I know it's sentimental, but I like that world. And it still exists. I basically trust the Toronto police, and they are basically un-hostile, because un-hassled and respected. The cops from the crowd-control squad keeping an eye on the lineup for Rolling Stones tickets last year were sharing apples and jokes with the crowd, and things were pretty cool. I only get paranoid shivers at cons in places like New York and Boston -- those aren't people, those are robots with guns and mace and dogs and minds used to violence.

Barry Gillam, 4283 Katonah Ave., Bronx, NY 10470

My only connection with Miss Tey is the delightful film that Hitchcock made from A Shilling for Candles. Young and Innocent (37, US -- a cut version -- A Girl Was Young) is the most relaxed and in certain ways the most personable of Hitchcock's British films. From what you say about the novel, there's been considerable re-writing. Typically for Hitchcock, the film focuses on Derrick de Marney's innocent suspect and his at first unwilling helper, Nova Pilbeam as Erica. The plot follows their often stumbling progress, always one step ahead of the police, toward the real murderer. The film is full of comic policemen, genially caricatured lawyers and generally humorous rural types. Basil Radford (who will be familiar from his pairing with Naunton Wayne in The Lady Vanishes, Night Train, Dead of Night, etc.) puts in an appearance as Uncle Basil in a marvellous children's party sequence (inexplicably cut from the American version) in which an innocent game of blind man's bluff makes all the difference between jail and freedom for the hero. And the film has one of Hitchcock's tour-de-force single shots in the climactic hotel-restaurant scene: starting with an overhead view of the entire restaurant, dance floor and band, the camera commences a long, deliberate crane track-in which not only reveals the murderer but ruthlessly bores in on him until the entire screen is filled with his blinking eyes.

+Since the murderer in Tey's book was a
+nutso old lady, I can believe the story
+was much rewritten for the screen. -- LML



I'm afraid I can't help with the film featuring Miss Pym. But I might recommend The Murder Book by Tage La Cour and Harald Mogensén, a lavishly illustrated history of the detective story which includes a good deal of information about film adaptations. It's well written and shows quite good taste on the part of the authors.
+I do have it -- it's a lovely picture book,
+but the bits of information in it are
+rather difficult to dig out. -- LML

Rumor now has it that Robert Altman's The Long Goodbye will be released intact.

in September, but with a new ad campaign. If it flops a second time, the studio will be able to write it off conclusively as a loss. There was a long plug for it in the June Esquire by Peter Bogdanovich, whose taste is excellent if erratic.

With the exception of The Big Sleep, Double Indemnity and Strangers on a Train, the twelve (now thirteen) Chandler related films are almost uniformly dreadful. The novel adaptations not mentioned in Grant's letter are: Time to Kill (42, dir. Herbert Leeds) and The Falcon Takes Over (42, dir., Irving Reis). The second is from Farewell My Lovely and stars George Sanders.

+I've read about the Sanders' film -- apparently Marlowe becomes The Falcon, +a B-movie detective. --HL

The best Chandler films aside from The Big Sleep are those he helped write: Wilder's excellent Double Indemnity with Fred MacMurray trying to swindle his insurance company and wily old Edward G. Robinson out of \$150,000 for love of Barbara Stanwyck, Hitchcock's Strangers on a Train, which you have doubtless seen many times, and The Blue Dahlia, Chandler's one original screenplay, which features Alan Ladd as a recent veteran of WWII trying to prove that he didn't murder his wife. Of course, The Blue Dahlia's direction (George Marshall) is pedestrian, but there are some side benefits in the presence of Veronica Lake and William Bendix.

His other two writing credits are for And Now Tomorrow a 44 Irving Pichel meller starring Alan Ladd and Loretta Young and Lewis Allen's The Unseen, which, I am given to understand, is a 45 attempt to cash in on Allen's successful and interesting sophisticated ghost story, The Uninvited. Gail Russell is in both, with Joel McGrea in the later film apparently standing in for Ray Milland in the earlier one.

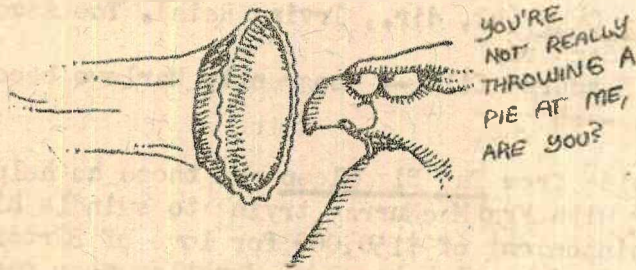
No, John Wayne isn't a great actor, but in the hands of a great director, like John Ford, he has given performances that are, categorically, great. (The Searchers is not only Wayne's best movie and Ford's best movie but in all likelihood the best American film ever made.) What these directors have done is to use the continuing persona that Wayne brings to each film and play the fact off against the legend. In The Searchers, for instance, Wayne is a renegade, a former member of Quantrill's Raiders, whose ambivalent feelings toward the fragile frontier society he has so often defended (Fort Apache, She Wore a Yellow Ribbon) is the mainspring of the drama.

Amid all the verbiage on politics, I see that only Buck Coulson mentions the considerable comic talent that Wayne has brought to some of his best films. Wayne's inflexibility makes him the greatest straight man of all time -- if the director and writer know how to use this quality. Much of the comedy in Rio Bravo comes from Wayne's stalwart refusals of any help when he most needs it.

On the subject of Wayne's politics, I have two quotes. One is spoken by Wayne (courtesy screenwriters Frank Nugent and Laurence Stallings) in She Wore a Yellow Ribbon, as Wayne tries to negotiate a truce with the Indians: "Old men should stop wars, not start them." When I saw this last, as part of a four film Ford all night screening at the Elgin, there was a confused attempt at applause from the largely college-age audience: they couldn't reconcile the speaker with the statement.

The other quote is taken from the writings of Jean-Luc Godard, the French film critic turned director who is so far left that his only cultural heroes these days are the Red Chinese and Jerry Lewis. "Mystery and fascination of this American cinema. How can I hate MacNamara and love Sergeant La Terreur, hate John Wayne upholding Goldwater and love him tenderly when abruptly he takes Natalie Wood into his arms in the next-to-the-last-reel of The Searchers."

As for aging character actors, last year I saw Leo Gordon (who terrorized both the²⁹ guards and his fellow prisoners in Riot in Cell Block 11 and who played Dillinger to Mickey Rooney's Baby Face Nelson) doing a TV commercial for a baldness remedy that involved spray painting the bald spot! The only props were a mirror and a slinky girl, but he looked as if he was about to demolish both at any moment.



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

Grant Canfield's letter was extremely helpful. The possibility that Playback began as a screenplay seems even more likely now, after I've seen The Blue Dahlia, an original Chandler screenplay. He doesn't seem to be able to work the convoluted plot as well within the strictures of the screen, so the ending of Dahlia, like that of Playback, seems hokey. Long Goodbye reads like a last novel, and the very neat appearance of Linda Loring at the end of Playback seems a lot more plausible as a tack-on.

I have the definitive statement on Chandler, from my movies source, Jeanine. Chandler's screen credits are:

- 1944 - Double Indemnity (co-script), And Now Tomorrow (co-script) which is a soapier about a girl going deaf
- 1945 - The Unseen (co-script) Jeanine says this one's terrific
- 1946 - The Blue Dahlia (Orig. Screenplay)
- 1951 - Strangers on a Train (co-script)

Films based on Chandler's writing are:

- Time to Kill (1942) b/o The High Window
- The Falcon Takes Over (1942) b/o Farewell My Lovely
- Murder My Sweet (1945) b/o Farewell My Lovely
- The Big Sleep (1946)
- The Lady in the Lake (1947)
- The Brasher Doubloon (1947) b/o The High Window
- Marlowe (1969) b/o The Little Sister
- The Long Goodbye (1973)

As for influence, I think John D. MacDonald shows the overall stylistic influence of the "hard-boiled" writers; certainly Ross MacDonald is the direct descendant of Chandler -- the early Lew Archer books could well have been written by Chandler, although as the series progresses, Ross MacD. seems to move away from Chandler's approach to the strange world. Archer is less a participant in the seum world than Marlowe, more an observer.

Sandra Meisel is a woman after my own heart. Ribbon and The Quiet Man are indeed my two favorite Ford/Wayne films, although Stagecoach joins them as a third. How about the guys who've sort of replaced the older grizzled actors in today's westerns, especially in Peckinpah's films -- Slim Pickens, Strother Martin, . . .

LQ Jones, etc. If it's grizzle you dig, Sandra, how about Jack Elam?

Joe Sanders should review whatever the hell he's reading. Sterling seems to be heading toward a round-robin of all the tastes, desires, and feelings of a number of people loosely connected by fandom. That's good, I hope. I notice that even sercon articles have an element of fannishness about them.

Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, N.M. 87107

Yeah, the Powell movie was Murder My Sweet. As you probably know Powell's movies during the 30s were musicals in which he played the pretty young fellow who sang and got the girl. I really don't know how many there were -- dozens, it seems. Powell's popularity was waning and he was looking for a way to change his image. He hit upon playing Marlowe in Farewell My Lovely -- the first of his tough guy roles. The title was changed to Murder My Sweet because the PR people figured the public would assume that Farewell My Lovely was just another musical. My recollection of the film has faded in the past almost 30 years but I think that Powell did a creditable job in the role. Certainly better than either of the Montgomerys although perhaps not up to Bogart. But, then, who was?

+I read recently that Chandler's favorite Marlowe was Powell. -- HL

I would recommend to you the works of Dashiell Hammett, particularly those involving the Continental Op. Spade and The Maltese Falcon are in a class apart, of course, but Red Harvest offers some of the most cutting comment on small-town America you'll ever read.

Rick Stoker, 1205 Logan Street, Alton, Ill., 62002

The nostalgia revivals are not really so hard to understand when you look at the sad state of modern entertainment. A person interested in good film comedy has to turn his attention to old movies. Economics is involved too. It'd be nice to afford to buy all the records you wanted, but most people have very limited budgets. Therefore, when faced with buying an old album by a well-known talent that you know will be worthwhile, and taking a chance on a modern but possibly terrible record, the first choice is logical.

The differing characterizations of Sam Spade and Marlowe, which Grant Canfield notes, only point up Bogart's skill as an actor. The differences Grant notes were based on the original books. Spade fell in love with a woman he knew was a murderer; but being the tough guy he is, he turns her in anyway. Marlowe simply could not fall in love with a killer. He just isn't built that way. He has scruples and integrity.

I've seen Robert Montgomery in Lady in the Lake. As director, he attempts to tell the story in the cinematic equivalent of first-person viewpoint, using the camera as Marlowe's eyes. It's interesting, but doesn't work, for me at least. The movie's greatest asset as a medium is its ability to show, and Lady in the Lake throws that away. Further, it's very disconcerting.

Will Straw, 181 Fifth Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 2M8, Canada

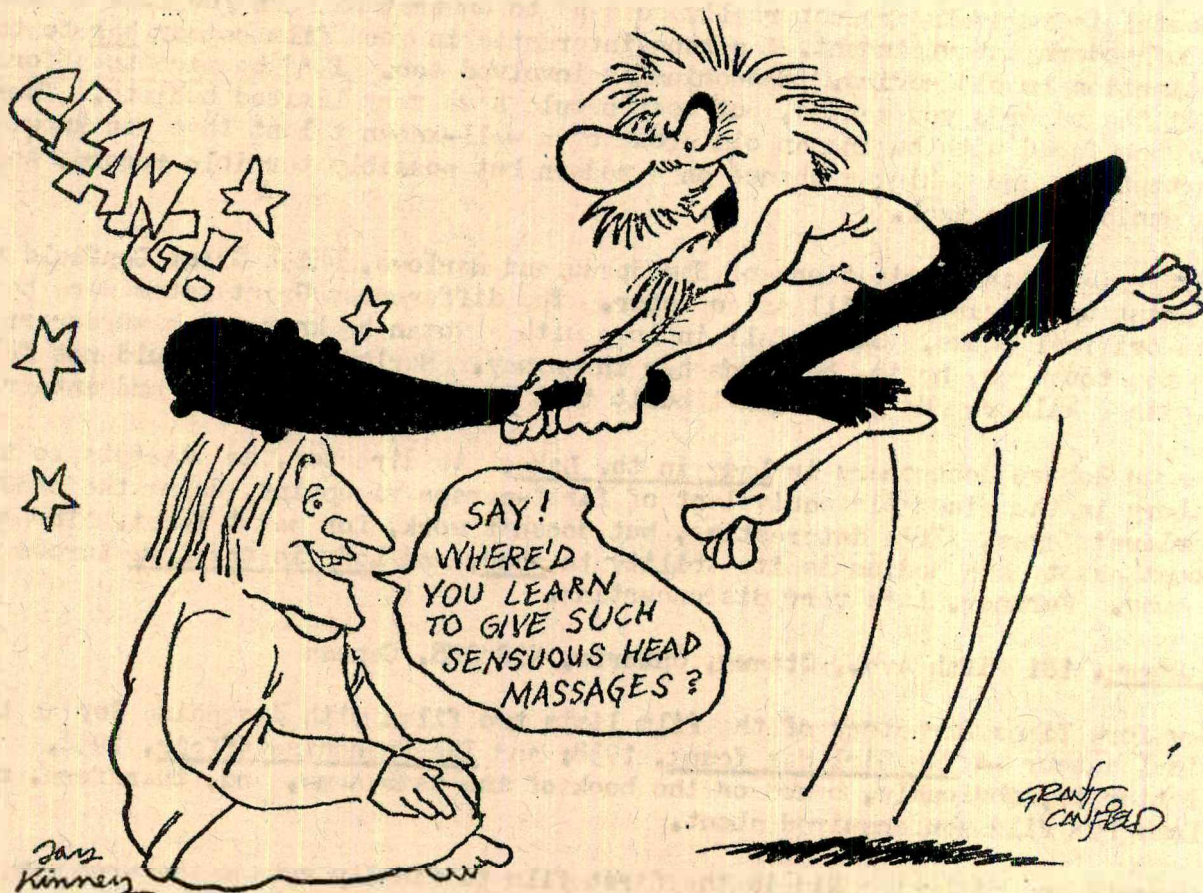
My New York Times Directory of the Film lists two films with Josephine Tey as the original author -- The Girl Was Young, 1938; and The Franchise Affair, 1952. The latter is, obviously, based on the book of the same name, and, therefore, not the Lucy Pym film you enquired about.

Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid is the first film to finally rub me the wrong way in

its violence -- throughout most of it, following the first couple of killings, the introduction of any secondary character who came into conflict with Billy would see me silently praying to Peckinpah not to have him killed off. He always did, and the few moments following the murder of the Jack Elam character were among the worst I've spent in a theatre. I certainly wouldn't label the film obscene, question his right or judgement in including the scenes, or otherwise see myself as the victim of any crime; I have a feeling that my reaction may have been as much the result of an accumulation of smaller feelings of that sort toward all of Peckinpah I'd seen up until that time as it was a result of that film only.

I've never had any desire for a color TV, partly out of having a 1966 view of color television that still sees them as things involving hours and hours of dial turning and partly because I watch old movies more than newer ones and wouldn't get the usage that the extra cost would involve. I tend to prefer creative black-and-white use in films over all but the best color work -- I couldn't imagine My Darling Clementine in color, for instance, and McCabe and Mrs. Miller is one of the few films I've seen where I thought the color did more than make things Prettier.

Ray Nelson's letter almost screams out for an answer but its a lot easier for me to see the faulty assumption in back of statements like "And you hate John Wayne and Clint Eastwood because they are playing a kind of person you are afraid you might never be able to be. They are playing a Man." than it is for me to wade through the conceptions of Manhood he's built around himself and get through to him. And I suppose some effort should be made to divorce what John Wayne does in politics from what he does in Hollywood, but the evidence of his part in blacklisting people **working** in the cinema in the fifties that keeps coming up in things I read



³²
makes the distinction difficult.

My own theory regarding rock music -- and which seems to be shared only by two or three others, none of them in sf fandom -- is similar to my theory re fannish history -- that fandom is most concerned with its present and has direction most when there is one or two unifying fandoms providing a focal point. (Arnie Katz went into this in greater detail a year or two ago in Potlatch.) I place a lot of responsibility for most of the current state of rock on the split of the Beatles, both in the precedents they set (or, at least, brought into prominence) -- solo albums by former group-members, preformer-owned record companies -- and for the lack of direction which their disappearance has resulted in, and the looking away from the present, to the past, and away from the music, to the theatrical aspects of rock. Robert Martin, in a review of Lemmings in the Toronto Globe and Mail that he turned into a detailed look at the current state of rock in general said what I feel exactly: "When the Beatles broke up, the Rolling Stones, crown princes of rock, did not assume the crown. They were too old to move up, and while they are still the top group, their reign is more of a regency, marking time until a new supergroup comes along. . . the difference between the current low period in rock and the last one is the fact that everyone is aware of it. Observers point to the current decadence of rock as the final phase of a culture that is burning itself out, and, thus purifying itself for a new, simpler, pop period -- the third coming of the rock messiah."

Maggie Thompson, 8786 Hendricks Road, Mentor, Ohio 44060

You can tell Sandra Miesel that we're fans of the character actors who play in various action films. We have a very nice infrequent correspondence going with Jack Elam, who has been second-banana bad guy in bundles of Westerns -- both in films and on TV. Often, he gets shot in the gut and writhes in agonizing death just before the top bad guy. Elam is primarily a Western actor -- but more and more plays a wide variety of characters. Got rave reviews in Support Your Local Sheriff. . .

Have you heard the Monty Python record albums? You comment with pleasure on The Marty Feldman Comedy Machine and associate it with Monty Python -- which we do, too, mentally. . . dunno if Feldman was ever with MP's Flying Circus, but we wouldn't be surprised. MPFC is now touring Canada as a roadshow -- and we almost went to Toronto to see it. Well, we were sorely tempted, anyway.

We gather MPFC is subject to British censors -- but not till after the show is taped. This way, they "get away" with a lot more -- since an obscenity in an appropriate spot (which would stand out in cold type in a script) is simply appropriate in the course of the action.

Our favorite TV show is The Mary Tyler Moore Show -- which we finally discovered stands up beautifully to repeated listening. We now tape each show on cassettes and re-listen through the months that follow. There are sight gags, but it's the most verbal show on TV, at least of the regular series shows. The actors are enormously competent and the scripts superb.

Mike Deckinger, 649 16th Avenue, San Francisco, Calif., 94118

I don't believe that Sandra Miesel is as much of a John Wayne fans as she claims to be. If she was, she'd know that old timers like Jim Davis, have bit parts in nearly all Wayne films. Davis, because of his craggy appearance and grizzled voice, usually cameos a heavy for a few moments. Wayne's best film of the past few years,



outside of True Grit, was the almost un-noticed Big Jake. On the other hand, the very much inferior Rio Lobo received all the publicity because of the director, even though it floundered in dozens of places.

Beyond the Valley of the Dolls was scripted by former fan, and now film critic, Roy Ebert. As I heard it, he had written a perceptive review of some of Russ Meyer's earlier skin-flicks, and Meyer, who believes any attention is flattering, felt that he'd be a good choice to write one of his own, drawing on the lucrative success of (but otherwise unrelated to) Valley of the Dolls which had captured the attention of the great unwashed.

Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 74, Balaclava,
Victoria 3183, AUSTRALIA

John Wayne films are about the only ones I'll go out of my way to make time for when they are on the TV but I was very put off by him when he came out at the Academy Awards thing and said his bit. John Wayne being himself is too much like the real thing and I can't take that in real life where as I can take it in films where I can treat the whole thing as fantasy. In fact I hope it is fantasy but you have to live with it more than I do so you are more entitled to get involved in it. Personally I'd like to see them pass a law which forbade John Wayne from showing his face outside his house except when he was making a film so that we could all keep a nice image in our heads and not get it tarnished with cold reality.

Jerry Kaufman, 622 W. 114th St., Apt 52A, NY, NY 10025

My own favorite character actors are Warren Oates (who I first remember as the rodeo clown in Stony Burke), now a star, and Jack Elam, cast in Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid as Alagoosa Bill (or some such) and was very hard to recognize in a beard.

We are asked to identify with Capt. America and Billy in Easy Rider by two things. . . the advertising and a sort of lemming instinct (much more prevalent at the time the film was made) to go along with the long hairs. There are signs throughout the film, mystic flashes, warnings, that the two have done the wrong thing. The land around them tingles with violence and hatred, but by making the immoral choices they have made (being pushers -- the soundtrack roundly damns them through the mouth of John Kay) they invite the failure and death. That's why Capt. America finally says, "We blew it."

The major sympathy of the director lies with Fonda's character who finally realizes his mistake, and with those who live quietly off the land -- the farmers and the communards.

The ineptness of the film is in that the sympathy of the audience still swings over to the pushers. Outside of the first and worst of the choices, they do no brutal thing through the rest of the movie. They are harassed by people who don't know of their wrongdoing. They share with us some carnal pleasures and a painful acid

³⁴
trip. And they are rather viciously blown off the screen by two men who would be "good guys" in a John Wayne movie or Dirty Harry.

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

When I wrote the loc, part of which appeared in Starling 24, I remember hesitating in puzzlement over the idea that Rio Lobo was my all time favorite John Wayne film. When I saw it in print I realized why. I meant Rio Bravo, not Rio Lobo.

Rio Bravo has an interesting connection with one of my favorite films, To Have and Have Not, Lauren Bacall's first film. Rio Bravo is vintage 1958, To Have and Have Not vintage 1944, both directed by Howard Hawks. The similarity that I am referring to is in the character relationships between the male and female leads, Bogart and Bacall and Wayne and his leading lady. In the key scene in both films, 14 years apart, the dialogue is almost the same word for word. I realized the cause of this when I noticed that Leigh Brackett was a writer on both films. I'm sure she wrote the screenplay for Rio Bravo and although she isn't credited as being a writer for TH&HN in Pyramid's Humphrey Bogart, I'm sure she was credited in the film. James Furthman and William Faulkner are given the major credit for the screenplay of To Have and Have Not. A third connection between the films is the inclusion of Walter Brennan as a supporting character, both times superbly.

+As far as I can tell, Brackett had no part in the writing of To Have and Have Not -- this is according to the credits given in Robin Wood's Howard Hawks.
+Furthman, however, worked on both films. Wood's book on Hawks, by the way, is very interesting. You might also find an article published some time ago in the Canadian film magazine Take One, concerned with Hawke's attitude toward his female characters -- this article was made even more interesting when Leigh Brackett added her comments a few issues latter. --HL

Ed Gorman, 1311 Oakland Rd. NE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 52402

Easy Rider is indeed merely a formula melodrama that substitutes left-wing morality for right-. But then Nelson loses his point in polemics. If the villains in Rider are straw-men, how about those in Dirty Harry? The D.A. wears a bow-tie ala Arthur Schlesinger, and the Police Chief is a victim of that tedious right-wing bogeyman, Sociology! Nelson cleverly fails to mention that Dirty Harry turns on a single plot point -- that Harry, by stomping a confession out of a killer, disallows from court all the evidence he's so painfully gathered. Not for Harry the niceties of Law or the inconveniences of due-process. Harry (I use Nelson's caps) is "A Man," the essence of which is somebody (again Nelson) "who decides for himself whether or not to obey, but who, once he has decided, is willing to stake his life on that decision." Just so did the "Riders" refuse to obey and just so did they stake their lives. Or is Nelson's definition of Manhood limited to those who wear a badge? What interests me is not the differences between Harry and the "Riders" but their similarities -- the contempt for society they share. I grant Nelson one thing, however -- Harry is by far the superior entertainment.

Peter Roberts, Flat 4, 6 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2, UK

"The Frisbee Players of Triton" was extremely fine, even though I shouldn't perhaps tolerate a satire on the best of the few good sf authors. Have you seen Sladek's skillful parody of Phil Dick's fiction? It was one of several on well-known sf writers that appeared in a paperback collection over here recently -- The Steam-Driven Boy. Of course, Dick's technique is easy game -- it's distinctive and often self-parodying -- but Schneider's piece was nonetheless amusing and had a fine, sharp edge.

Andrew Darlington found himself an entertaining subject; one mention of Dan Dare³⁵ and I immediately melted into a puddle of nostalgia. That comic strip must have been one of the earliest sf influences on me; I still remember the earlier stories -- "Rogue Planet" and "Reign of the Robots" -- with something akin to awe. Chris Priest told me recently that he'd come across the original artwork for those Golden Age Dan Dares lying around a publisher's office. Restraining himself, he said they looked interesting and he'd be willing to pay as much as 75 pounds for the artwork. The publisher laughed and said that 750 pounds would be more like it -- Chris said he made a rather unfounded offer to raise just that much; but the other bloke then decided that they were priceless and not for sale at any price. At least the originals still exist and are not about to be chucked away by some over-zealous office innovator.

Dan Dare lingers on in the folk memory, however. Any British fan knows the archetypal mundane response: "Science fiction? That Dan Dare stuff?" The fearful figure of the Mekon still drifts through underground comix as well -- a distinctive creation, more so than Dan Dare himself who was never much more than a clean-cut spaceman.

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+Before we move on into the We Also Heard Froms, I need to publish this somewhat mysterious, unsigned note which arrived at our editorial offices recently:

Now let me just say one thing about your forthcoming SPECIAL GIANT BREASTS ISSUE. There have been attempts in some quarters to link my name with that of Lance Hardy, Jr. Whoever he may be. I just want to deny any involvement in this whole sordid affair. When this matter first came to my attention (I remember Ms. Glicksohn coming to my office and saying, "Mr. Taylor, there are giant breasts growing on some of your closest associates. This must be stopped."), I told Susan to look into the matter. "Take a week off," I told her. "Fly out to Regina or Oakland and make a full report on the matter, absolving me of any involvement." So let me make this perfectly clear: I deny any knowledge of Lance Hardy, Jr., or of his obscene article on breast fetishism, which I think is badly written and not very funny. Furthermore, I deny any involvement in this present attempt to cover up my involvement in this matter. I say this because I want to make a clean chest of things. So let Starling wallow in this slimy disgusting revolting mess. Let its readers concern themselves with all the murky vicious little speculations about the identity of Lance Hardy, Jr., whom I've never heard of. I have better things to do: in particular, my search for a lasting piece.

Thank you, and goodnight.

* * * * *

WAHF:

Ray Nelson, Buck Coulson, Alan Sandercock,
E.B. Lindsay, Jacob Schumacher, Tim Kirk,
Paul Novitski, Ken Ozanne, Bruce D. Arthurs,
Amos Salmonson, Don D'Ammassa, Eevin J.
Dillon, Andy Darlington, Moshe Feder,
Norman Hochberg, Al Jackson, Norm Clarke,
Alex Eisenstein and Harry Warner.

Lots of good letters this time! The letter column almost got a little too long. . . I've got a few letters that I'm going to try to fit into next issue's column.

