

Interview with

AL CARP

Cartoonist

On Humor and Satire in America

produced by Howard Langer

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Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. R 60-480

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701 Seventh Ave., New York City
Distributed by Folkways/Scholastic Records,
906 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

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Descriptive notes inside pocket

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Mr. Langer:

This is Howard Langer in New York. I am speaking to you from the Park Avenue apartment of cartoonist Al Capp--creator of Li'l Abner.

In a few minutes, Mr. Capp will be speaking to us about his comic strip, a powerful satire of American life and times.

Now Mr. Capp sits across the table, completely informal and relaxed. He is wearing a sportshirt, white jacket, dark trousers, no tie. He looks the way you expect a humorist to look--with an infectious grin spread across a friendly face. He laughs easily.

Al Capp was born in New Haven, Conn., September 28, 1909. Shortly after his birth, the Capp family moved to Bridgeport where Al attended school.

As a young man, Al Capp studied at several art schools. In 1934, he began a comic strip about hillbillies. It was called Li'l Abner. When it began, the strip was just another one of hundreds competing for the attention of newspaper readers.

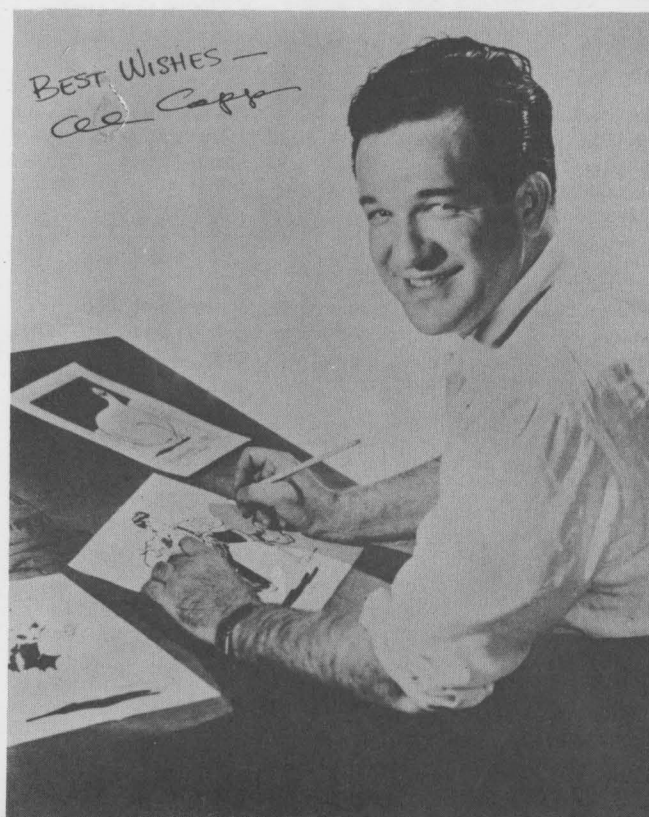
Comic strips had gotten their impetus just before the turn of the century. In 1896, Richard Outcault had made newspaper history with the publication of his comic strip, "The Yellow Kid." The cartoon created such violent competition among rival newspapers that it gave "yellow journalism" its name.

Today, 200 million people in 100 different countries read comic strips in 30 different languages every day. More than 50 million of them read Li'l Abner.

Mr. Capp, why have comic strips proven so popular? What is their universal appeal?

Mr. Capp:

Well, the great misconception is that the comic strip is a new form. The comic strip--actually, if you'll examine it--is the oldest form of storytelling. The comic strip is a combination of



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words and pictures. Now the fact that in modern times what's called the comic strip--this arrangement of words and pictures - runs in little squares placed side by side, makes it no different in its basic ingredients from any arrangement of words and pictures, such as pictures in a book bound by hard covers, or pictures interspersed with text. Or, I could go much further back--the illuminated manuscript in which pictures were sometimes part of the lettering which made up the words. Comic strips are the oldest form of storytelling; they're pictures and they're words.

Mr. Langer:

Would you call comic strips an art?

Mr. Capp:

Well, I wouldn't call writing novels an art, or acting the plays of Shakespeare an art if these works of art were performed by bad artists. The fact that a play by Ibsen is performed by a bunch of bums doesn't make this a work of art. The fact that a comic strip, which is an enormously popular art form, is done by a bad artist and bad writer makes it simply a bad work of art. When, however, the comic strip is done by a fine writer and fine artist, then it is a work of art.

The point I'd like to make is that the form of art means nothing. For instance, the mural is regarded as a very respectable art form, and yet a bad artist drawing and painting a mural produces nothing but garbage.

The comic strip is regarded as a trivial and frivolous art form, and yet a man like Milton Caniff, who does "Steve Canyon", or Walt Kelly, who does "Pogo", working in the form of a comic strip, produces a great work of art.

Mr. Langer:

Let me ask you this: Most art forms reflect the times. Now do most comic strips tend to reflect life, the times we're living in, or are they merely a temporary escape from it?

Mr. Capp:

Well, again, you could ask that question about the plays of Shakespeare, the novels of Faulkner. You can ask such a question about any effort of any group of men working in the arts, no matter what the form is, and get as many answers as there are men in the group.

A comic strip done by John Doe, who is a keen thinker and a fine draftsman, does reflect John Doe's keen and fine appreciation of his times. A comic strip done by Richard Jerk, who is an idiot and who has no idea of anything at all, is simply a reflection of an idiot's idea of his times.

Mr. Langer:

All right, now let's take "L'il Abner" specifically. "L'il Abner", I think most critics agree, is a work of art. It is a very great satire of our times. Now did it originate that way?

Mr. Capp:

I don't think--and thank you for those kind words--I'm sure my brother wrote them--but, no, I think this, and I'm speaking now only for myself; I can't speak for other men in comic strips or in any other arts, but again for myself. The reason I did create "L'il Abner" in the beginning, and the reason I continue to do it, is, I think, the same reason that--if he will forgive me--William Shakespeare wrote his plays: because that's the way, the only way, he knew to make a living, and it's the only way I do. Now all artists, I think, are motivated first by a sense of self-preservation. Most artists are like any other unskilled laborers; we all want to eat regularly; we all want shelter; and we all have families. And so we work in whatever area of activity we are paid in, and this is our first reason for doing it. We do it for the same reason a man comes up and fixes your plumbing.

This may seem very unexciting, but it's true.

Now if anything else happens while we earn our living, if points of view are expressed that people approve of, or make people think, then that is how we do our work. And that's the measure of the kind of men we are. But that doesn't come first. None of us, I'm sure--again I speak for myself--but I think I understand others because I understand myself--: none of us set out to change the world, to teach, to do anything but to make a living. If we do make changes, if we do teach, then that's because that's the way we do our job.

Mr. Langer:

Well, you have made about 50 million people laugh now for something like 24 years is it, 25 years?

Mr. Capp:

Yes it is.

Mr. Langer:

What makes people laugh?

Mr. Capp:

I have a very embarrassing theory that I published in the Atlantic about six or seven years ago, and I'm afraid I'm stuck with it. Because I never

heard any other theory that I could possibly accept. And for years I've been defending this theory and hoping that somebody would prove to me that it is wrong.

But here it is: I really do think that what makes people laugh is the humiliation, the embarrassment, and the pain of other people. Almost every--and I say, I say almost hopefully--almost every work of comedy from the shortest one-line joke to the longest evening in the theater has to do with the problems and pains and embarrassments of other people. This is the thing we laugh at. All the comedies of Shakespeare--and, by the way, his comedies were very bad, but if I use the Shakespearean comedies this will have an atmosphere of respectability--all the comedies of Shakespeare, every situation in the comedies of Shakespeare, provokes laughter because of the pain, anguish, embarrassment, humiliation--all the variations of anguish--of one or more of the characters.

So, too, with every joke everyone tells. We just do enjoy seeing other people having a hard time. And that's what makes us laugh. It may be that we laugh out of relief, and that would be nice if we did--it may be that we're really sadists and that we enjoy the pain of other people. But that, I'm afraid, is my theory of why people laugh.

Mr. Langer:

Is that why L'il Abner is the way he is--this big, goodlooking, healthy, handsome guy--but well, kind of stupid, I guess. Why'd you pick a character like that?

Mr. Capp:

Well, I--in order to create comedy, in the beginning I thought that the most effective way of instantly producing comedy was to create and get people to believe in a thoroughly believing and trusting guy--a perfect innocent.

Now, but Abner isn't a hero. As I hope people understand, he's not a hero: he's vain, he's pompous, he's stubborn. But he does believe in the complete decency of other people. To them, contrasts him with the world as we know it--well, where people aren't really very nice--it instantly produces embarrassment and humiliation for L'il Abner, and produces the kind of conflict and anguish that can be drama or can be comedy.

Mr. Langer:

Let me ask you this: Do people laugh as readily today as they did when you first started 25 years ago?

Mr. Capp:

Well, there have been cycles. Yes, well people always laugh readily. But what they laugh at is, has changed in 25 years.

For instance, 20-odd years ago I could do, I could kick around anything in America. I could make fun of any kind of American institution, any sort of American distinguished figure, or any accepted American attitude. This was in the tradition of Mark Twain and the great humorists, who selected the sacred cows of their times to laugh at. And they do need laughing at.

Well, now, 20--15 years--ago all of this was permissible. It was not considered unAmerican to laugh at ourselves.

But then came--it originated in Wisconsin - an attitude that became perilously popular--oh, beginning about 10 years ago--and the attitude was that: if you laugh at America then you are unAmerican. This was presumed to be an attitude that would help us fight the Russians. It was an attitude copied exactly from the Russians. And that made it the most lunatic attitude possible.

It was true, that there was about seven or eight years in which all American humorists were forced, really forced by the pressure of their publishers or--if in radio and television, by their sponsors--and something more, the enormous and vague and crushing pressure of public opinion. We were forced by all of this to stop laughing at anything considered unlaughable at in America. And we all selected the most trivial sorts of things to laugh at. Our subjects, subject after subject for laughter, which had been permissible before, which had been permissible throughout the whole history of the country, were no longer used by us. And if we did we were in trouble.

The letters poured in from indignant and presumably patriotic and very possibly lunatic groups, denouncing us for laughing at the things that our grandfathers had laughed at.

Mr. Langer:

Is this why L'il Abner got married finally.

Mr. Capp:

This is exactly why L'il Abner got married. I no longer could laugh at government, business, mothers--all the things that are really quite valuable and quite idiotic--in American life--and I chose as the one subject, the one non-controversial subject that everybody was perfectly willing to laugh at, and that was marriage. And I did do a little domestic comedy for two or three years, until the attitude that to laugh at America was un-American was finally regurgitated by the American people. We were rid of this dreadful idea, this hideous attitude, we woke up from a nightmare. And only the other day, on a television show, which was an analysis of American humor--about a half dozen of the top American humorists went right smack into politics, and laughed and made jokes about the kind

of and attitudes and groups that 15 years ago
it would have been treason to laugh at.

It was a very healthy sign. It's a wonderful thing
when we can laugh at our betters.

Mr. Langer:

Let's take the comic strip and comic strip humor
now. How does it differ from the humor of books
or the stage or radio or television?

Mr. Capp:

Well, it differs in one way, and that is that it's
much more difficult to create.

For instance, in writing a comedy scene for "L'il
Abner" I have about 30 or 40 words I can use. I
must tell a complete story; I must try, at least,
to make some 50 to 60 million people--totally
different from each other--all laugh. And I must
also leave room for pictures and the copyright
tag of United Features.

And also once I have decided on the final form of
those 30 to 40 words, they are irrevocably in.
There's no way I can try them out on an audience.
There's no way I can edit or revise them; and also
there's no way I can tell as to whether the
audience liked it. Because I can't hear them
laughing.

The strip you read this morning I did eight weeks
ago. I thought it was all right until I went
ahead in the same vein. Now if I made a mistake
I'm dead, I'm dead for the next couple of months.
Now I've worked a little bit in radio and tele-
vision, and I know then--in those areas--if you make
a joke, you create a joke, and it doesn't go well,
then you don't pursue it. You have the reaction of
your audience and you go someplace else.

The cartoonist has no such thing. He really must
work like a blind man gropes along the street. I
think it's much more difficult; it's--and it's
also much more fun, possibly because of its
difficulty.

Mr. Langer:

Are there some areas that the comic strip can poke
fun at, and the other mass media can't and vice
versa?

Mr. Capp:

No, I don't think so. I think that somehow all
creators of humor, no matter in what area they
work, or where they live, sense the atmosphere
of the public. We sort of know when we can make
a joke about our president or vice president,
and when we can't. We sort of know when we
can say something cheerful about the Russians
instead of something venomous.

We know what that atmosphere is, and we know it a
great deal from ourselves; because all humorists
are devoted fans of other humorists. And we're
members of the public, too, and we feel as they
do.

Mr. Langer:

Where do you get your cartoon ideas from?

Mr. Capp:

I wish I knew, I wish I knew and I'd go there
once a day, dig in, and I wouldn't have to hit
my head up against the wall, which is what I
have to do, because I don't know where they
come from.

Mr. Langer:

Well, when you set up institutions like Sadie
Hawkins Day, and the Kigmy and the Shmoo, and--
of course--Fearless Fosdick--where did you get
ideas like this from? Can I take Sadie
Hawkins Day?

Mr. Capp:

Well, Sadie Hawkins Day was created this way:
Most of my stories are not built on any arrange-
ment of action, or different actions...I build
my stories on what I think is a truth about
people.

And if I can discover a truth, then I dramatize
it.

Now it occurred to me some years ago that the
truth about boys and girls were, first, that
they really kind of liked each other, but that
at the point when they knew the difference be-
tween each other, boys became very shy and
girls desperately eager. And yet, our society
insists that the boy be the pursuer and the girl
be reluctant.

And there was this insane contradiction between
the behavior, the actual behavior, of boys, and
the way girls wanted them to behave, and the
fact that the girls couldn't make them behave
as eagerly as they'd like them to, and still be
ladies.

And so I wondered how a girl could obey her most,
her deepest instinct, which is to pursue a man,
and still remain a lady. And so I decided to
create a holiday called Sadie Hawkins Day, on
which any girl could chase any boy legally, and
still be a lady.

I did it first about 21 years ago, and knew exact-
ly what was going to happen. I could have pre-
dicted this, and I did predict it: instantly
the continuity appeared, a half a dozen universities

with more girls than boys adopted it. And decided they would have Sadie Hawkins Days. I repeated it the next year, and the next year, and the next year--and the thing spread until last year, when we at United Features, heard of 80,000 Sadie Hawkins Days being celebrated in America by--all the way from large universities to small schools, church and community groups, and just gangs of desperate girls. (laughter)

Mr. Langer:

How about the Kigmy and the Shmoo? They're two interesting characters.

Mr. Capp:

Well, it occurred to me again: the Kigmy was a dramatization of something I thought was true. I think it is true that people really enjoy kicking other people around. But what makes it uncomfortable is that the people who get kicked don't like being kicked around, and that makes the joy of kicking them around rather dangerous sometimes.

Because they're apt to kick back.

So I thought how nice it would be if there was a creature who loved being kicked, who just loved being kicked, to whom nothing nicer could happen than getting a smart boot where it felt best, and this, it would seem to me would solve the whole thing. First, it would give people who liked to kick people around somebody to kick around, and it would create no resentment in those who liked being kicked around. And so I created the Kigmy, and I think the public accepted it because they knew it was true that such an idea would be a nice thing.

Mr. Langer:

How about the Shmoo?

Mr. Capp:

Well, the Shmoo was another idea. Everybody is always hoping for perfection, hoping for a time when there would be no work, no conflict, no worry, and I wondered what would really happen if such a thing were possible. And so I created the Shmoo, which laid both eggs and milk, all carefully labelled "Grade A", which tasted like chicken if you broiled it, but came out steak if it was fried, and which made working and fighting unnecessary, which solved every economic problem. And I let it loose on the world, and the world was in a terrible mess.

Everything we'd organized became quite unnecessary, and you couldn't get anybody to join any army, because armies were no longer necessary. You didn't have to advertise, so advertising was un-

necessary. You didn't have to be respectful, because there was nobody to be respectful to--you had everything.

And I had, I had finally--the story wrote itself, actually--after the Shmoo invaded the whole world and solved everybody's problem it was declared unAmerican by J. Edgar Shmoover, I think--(laughing) and was shot.

Mr. Langer:

Let's take Fearless Fosdick now. He's probably the only successful comic strip within a comic strip. Do you try to introduce that a certain number of times during a year, or just when the fancy strikes you?

Mr. Capp:

Whenever the fancy strikes me. Fosdick is what I really feel about a certain type of policeman. I feel that these policemen, in their extravagant use of firearms and their very bad marksmanship are much more dangerous to the public than any criminal.

We read, frequently, about stories of somebody who swipes something worth 50 cents in a department store, and in the chase the store detective kills eight or ten customers (laughing) and the kid who swiped the 50 cent article.

And Fosdick is the embodiment of that idea, that sometimes in our eagerness to implement the law with force we, in our eagerness to wipe out crime, we commit a much more dangerous crime.

Mr. Langer:

Can you tell me a little bit about the mechanics involved in putting out a comic strip? Now it took you...it was eight weeks from the time you drew the strip and the strip that appeared today. What are the mechanics involved in this?

Mr. Capp:

The actual physical process is this: First, there's the story conference. And that is that I suggest ideas to a couple of very depressed assistants who've listened to my ideas for so long that nothing amuses them any more. And finally, one or both of them will say, "Well that is the least terrible idea; let's do that, and get to work."

And so I then make, write a synopsis of my story, the story...I write the story line. I know how it begins, what the complications are, and generally, how it ends.

Now all of this is subject to change as I go along. But I know where I start from and where I wind up.

I then write one week's dialogue. I put the first development into words, speaking words. I then print the words on the top of each individual strip, to see that there'll be enough room for the words to be read, and how much room there is for pictures. The pictures are then drawn in several stages. One, stick figures--very primitive figures, just to set the composition; two, and then the figures are more and more refined until they're exactly right. And then they're inked in, and then we go back and ink in the dialogue. The dialogue can be changed at the very last minute. After it's all done we clean it up, send it to New York, where some mysterious process occurs, and eight weeks later there it is in the newspapers.

Mr. Langer:

Is pressure ever brought to bear on you by people or organizations with some special cause they would like you to handle in your--

Mr. Capp:

Oh yes; my mail is full every day of letters asking for special posters for "Keep Cleveland Clean" or posters for the Birdwatchers of the World. And I do them, I do them, because--or, I'm now doing a book about the UN, a comic book about the UN for another organization, and I do posters and strips for Muscular Dystrophy, for the Sister Kenny Foundation, any number of them.

And you do as many as you can, and from as many different cities. Because the odd thing is that you may live in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as I do, but if your strip is run in Seattle, Washington, or Bangor, Maine, or Cleveland, Ohio, for several years, people in those cities regard you as a local cartoonist, their friend, and also a guy who's gotta do a job for them if they ask you to, and we do nothing to discourage them.

Mr. Langer:

Well, what I had in mind was something a little bit different. For example, oh let's say some campaign to keep American beautiful. They want an anti-littering campaign, or an anti-billboard campaign, or--

Mr. Capp:

Oh yes, we do all those things. Oh yes indeed. Certainly nothing is better to attract attention than a familiar comic strip character on a poster. People are used to seeing the character, and they'll read what he says.

Mr. Langer:

You say "on a poster". Now I'm talking about in "L'il Abner" itself--

Mr. Capp:

Oh no, no. No one, there's no pressure that anyone can bring to bear, not even the publishers of "L'il Abner", who pay for the strip, to get me to do anything in the strip except tell a story.

Mr. Langer:

Comic books have come under fire as a possible cause of juvenile delinquency. Comic strips on the other hand have been relatively free of criticism. Can you explain why?

Mr. Capp:

Well, I'll explain why comics in any form come under fire. They come under fire because there always are with us the idiot publicity seekers who have the good sense to choose to aim their fire at groups that can't hurt them, or won't bother to hurt them.

Now, there are bad comic books. There are some comic books which by any standards are unreadable, and undesirable.

I say of the total output of comics, that might comprise two or three per cent of the total output of comics. Because kids don't buy the books about sex and horror and torture. They just don't. They much prefer the charming Disney stuff, the reprints of wholesome newspaper comics. But there are two or three per cent of the wildcat and lunatic and reprehensible comic books.

And that's a pretty generous percentage of the total.

Now if you bought all the nasty comic books you could possibly find in your neighborhood; you wouldn't get one fraction of the sex, horror, torture and general disgusting stuff, one tenth as much, as you could get at any neighborhood movie during any double feature, or any evening on television.

And yet those who denounce comics and comic books and say (laughing) they cause juvenile delinquency... keep deliberately away from the great mass of such stuff which is movies, television. Actually, the comic books, even including the worst of them, have a lesser percentage of bad stuff than any other mass entertainment. Those people who choose to denounce comic books and comic strips as the cause of juvenile delinquency are mental juvenile delinquents, who, no matter what their age, are incurably sick.

Mr. Langer:

How important is humor in today's world?

Mr. Capp:

Enormously important. We find humor in everything. Americans find fun in the most terrible disasters and catastrophes, and thank God we do.

Mr. Langer:

Finally, Mr. Capp, what kind of training does a young person need to become a successful cartoonist?

Mr. Capp:

Well, he needs exactly the same training--and a little more--than the successful painter or the successful illustrator. The standards of comic strips today - the art standards - are the highest any form of storytelling has ever achieved.

For instance, our museums are full of paintings by incompetents and lunatics. And these are called abstract art. Nobody understands them--possibly psychiatrists might understand them (laughing)--that is, if anyone understands psychiatrists.

However, the classic artist, the artist who still works in the tradition of Michaelangelo and Leonardo DaVinci, and the great men who made the human figure more beautiful, or more exciting, or more dramatic, no longer appear in our galleries, because there's no demand for such artists. They no longer appear in our museums, the modern ones don't; they no longer appear in our magazines, because our magazines are full of photographs.

They now all appear--and this may come as a shock to teachers and students--the great classic artists are now all drawing comic strips. If you'll forget the size and form of the comic strip, and look at the draftsmanship, you'll find that the heirs of the great men are all today the men who draw in the great tradition of natural and more glorious than natural art, are all on the comic page.

These men are, for instance, Milton Caniff--I must mention him again--who is one of the greatest artists the world has ever produced. In another time he'd have been doing enormous paintings, like The Night Watch or The Last Supper. Today he draws a comic strip because this pays most.

There's another--there's a man named Stan Drake who does a comic strip called "The Heart of Julia Jones", who is probably a better draftsman than DaVinci or Michaelangelo, and the fact that he does a comic strip, and works in that form, mustn't blind you to the fact that he simply has more talent than these awe-inspiring names of men who performed in more respected, that is, more respected today, areas of art.

Although DaVinci and Michaelangelo were commercial artists, too. They painted for money. And the Church took the place of the newspaper syndicate then. They had the money and so they painted religious subjects. Today the newspaper syndicates have the money, and they hire the artists, and they get the best ones. And our artists today are better than they ever were, and they're all on the comic page.

I've just named two of them. There are a dozen of the finest artists in the world appearing every day on your comic page.

Mr. Langer:

Thank you very much, Mr. Al Capp.

Journalism classes:

The news story here, as I see it, is that a prominent cartoonist has come to the vigorous defense of the comics, which have been under heavy fire for allegedly stirring up juvenile delinquency. In this interview, Al Capp says more than "It isn't so." His theme is that comic strip art is no different from art painted on canvas. So why shouldn't artists draw comic strips--especially when they can make a better living at it than by working in other art fields? He also takes some hefty pokes at critics of the comics. Write a news story using the headline: "Cartoonist Al Capp Defends Comics."

English classes:

Recording should enliven a unit on humor and satire. Such a unit might include Aristophanes, Rabelais, Jonathan Swift, Cervantes, Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, Robert Benchley, or James Thurber. You might want to compare the cartoon humor of Capp with that of Walt Kelly ("Pogo"), Hank Ketcham ("Dennis the Menace"), Charles Addams, Peter Arno, James Thurber, and George Herriman ("Krazy Kat"). Gilbert Seldes, in his Seven Lively Arts (Sagamore Press, 1924 and 1957), devotes an entire chapter to the antics of "Krazy Kat", a popular strip of the 1920's.

Before playing the recording, have your students write compositions on "The Funniest Thing I Ever Saw". Then see how many of the compositions fit Capp's definition of humor: "the problems and pains and embarrassments of other people."

Set up forum discussions on one or more of the following topics: "Do Comics Contribute to Juvenile Delinquency?", "Do Movies and Television Contribute to Juvenile Delinquency?", "If It's Modern--Is It Art?" Invite a local museum official to lecture to the class on abstract art.

Howard Langer is Managing Editor of Scholastic Teacher magazine. Formerly associated with the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools and the Bridgeport (Conn.) Herald, he has produced the Folkways recordings Interview with William O. Douglas (FC-7350), Interview with Robert M. Hutchins (FC-7351), Interview with Margaret Chasesmith (FC-7352), Interview with Margaret Mead (FC-7354), and a documentary on the Declaration of Human Rights, featuring Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (FH-5524).

Social studies classes:

Al Capp's "Shmoo" is the newest and most widely-known version of Utopia in the world. It brings down to the most basic human terms the idea of a so-called "perfect" society. Compare and contrast Capp's world of the Shmoo with Plato's "Republic" (ca. 400 B.C.), the original "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More (1516), "Erewhon" of Samuel Butler (1872), and "Brave New World" of Aldous Huxley (1932). Write a composition on "My Idea of Utopia." (The Life and Times of the Shmoo is available in a paper-back edition, published by Pocket Books, Inc.)

Capp's "Kigmy" symbolizes every scapegoat who ever suffered brutality or torture in all of recorded history. Trace the derivation of the word "scapegoat," and cite examples--from the early Christians in the days of ancient Rome to the European Jews of Hitler's time. What do scapegoats tend to have in common? What conditions tend to bring them about?

Bibliography

In addition to collections of cartoons which Capp has published (Life and Times of the Shmoo, Pocket Books; Fearless Fosdick, Simon and Schuster; and World of Li'l Abner, Farrar and Straus), he has written some excellent pieces for the major magazines. One piece is absolutely indispensable for a study of Capp's humor: "The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin," which appeared in the February, 1950 Atlantic. Another is "It's Hideously True," which ran in Life March 31, 1952. The latter explains in detail why Li'l Abner got married. No research on comics would be complete without some reference to Dr. Frederic Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent, published by Rinehart. In his book, by the way, Wertham makes it very clear that he is opposed to comic books and NOT comic strips.