Not even the FORUM, with its network of far-flung correspondents, has been able to keep track of the deluge of published and oral materials speculating on Paul McCartney's alleged demise. We are even at a loss for what to term the phenomenon, for it seems to incorporate elements of rumor, legend, belief, mock scholarship and kabbalistic magic. We had thought to distill the various elements into a short note, but the press of publishing and the sprawl of material force us to limit ourselves to noting briefly some bibliography and adding a few random comments. Obviously we make no pretense to completeness of bibliographic entries, but, taken together, these articles give the bulk of the "information." No doubt the story appeared in many publications and on many radio stations across the country; we welcome further references for a future note.

Two articles, with material gathered from Indiana University students, appeared in the Indiana Daily Student, October 21 (p. 10) and 23 (p.1), 1969. The Louisville Courier-Journal of October 22 carries an article on p. 12; a second story, from the Associated Press and including statements from England, followed the next day, pp. 1, 6. On the 25th the same paper published a p. 1 photo of McCartney, his wife and child, all alive, at the Glasgow airport. The Cincinnati Enquirer of October 26 ran both a straight story and a spoof on p. 3-I. Other articles appeared in Young magazine, November 7, p. 10, Bloomington Herald-Telephone (October 22, p. 1, and November 1, p. 8; UPI stories) and Bloomington Courier-Tribune (October 22, I-1). The November 7 issue of Life carries a cover story proving Paul's vitality. Time's Time Essay for October 31 is a vaguely moralistic treatment of the story and of recent rumor trends in general (p. 11). This article notes three possible original sources: the October 11 issue of the University of Michigan Daily, a Detroit disc jockey and an Ohio Wesleyan University thesis (no further information on that one). Time had reported on the dj, Russ Gibb of WKNR, in the issue of October 24. Gibb claimed to have figured it out from two Beatles album covers.

In Bloomington, student-operated station WIUS broadcast numerous opinions. Folklore grad student Bill Ivey devoted one of his weekly pop music shows on the I.U. FM station, WFIU, to the story. Ivey reversed the relevant tapes and advises us that they do say what they are supposed to say. He also interviewed several students and reports that the undergraduate population at I.U. was very much caught up in the phenomenon. One campus fraternity supposedly called the relevant London phone number; a voice at the number asked questions about the rumor; if a wrong answer was given the speaker hung up; if the answer was correct another question was given and this process was repeated until a number of questions had been answered correctly. After this the caller was presumably to be sent a free ticket to the retreat the Beatles have established. Ivey says that another variant has it that the number is that of Dr. Kite, now himself deceased, the physician who arranged for the return of the body from Mexico. Or the number is that of Billy Shears (McCartney's replacement; one paper reports that Paul's brother supposedly changed his name from John McC to Billy Shears). Ivey will deposit his tape in the I.U. Archives of Traditional Music.

Jean Mayo MacLaughlin, collecting McCartney-data as early as October 18
at a Bloomington party, was told that two girls from Bennington, Mass., called the European number and were told, "You're on the right track." They haven't been seen since. The Beatles paradise is supposedly on a Greek island. One publication reported that the London directory has no such number, another that an irate old lady answered.

Mrs. MacLaughlin informs us that Toad Hall, a Bloomington furniture and fixtures boutique, had a run on black light bulbs and in fact sold out their entire stock. This in connection with the need to examine one album cover in black light (?) for clues. Her informants told her that the song lyrics "roller coaster" and "silver hammer" refer to the fact that McCartney died from drug use.

Robert J. Adams generated a lively discussion in his large (c. 300 students) Introductory Folklore class and garnered a bulky file of short "texts." Charles Boilcs also collected material in one of his folklore classes. At Eastern New Mexico University Rosalind Jordan questioned her students about the story. They had heard the rumor but there seems to have been no mass interest on that campus.

Our thanks to Mrs. MacLaughlin, Mr. Adams, Professor Joridan and Mr. Ivey for giving us information. Mr. William Clements, Senior Archivist at the I.U. Folklore Archives informs us that some articles are on file there.

RESPONSE: ON FOLKLORE BOOK REVIEWS (Cont'd. from p. 166)

...you do too many other things too well for that. As for the certain other journals, they'll just have to learn to try harder.

Jan Harold Brunvand
Book Review Editor, JAF
Department of English
University of Utah

TWO LETTERS THAT NEVER GOT PUBLISHED (Cont'd. from p. 164)

evolved in England throughout the nineteenth century as a result of personal and intellectual relationships and influences. Of none of this does the reviewer speak, while he goes on about Easter eggs. Again, he says that Professor Dorson fails to remark on the relationship of European colonialism to folklore theory, when Chapter XI, "The Overseas Folklorists," begins with just this obvious point. He follows the assumption, too common among social scientists, that theories of the past are of interest only if they point to currently fashionable ideas.

The reasons for the hostility to folklore so evident in this essay in themselves form a curious chapter in the history of folklore studies. Part of the reasons lie in the misconceptions attached to the word "folklore"; part lie in the disdain of entrenched disciplines toward an outsider. If there were chairs of folklore in British universities, the great tradition of English folklore studies could be maintained without interference from sniggering anthropologists or meddling Yanks.

Richard M. Dorson
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