

## Cartoons

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Just as "The Simpsons" show often satirizes today's movies and television shows, so these stories are a satire of the comic industry. In addition to being entertaining to children, it provides an observant critique of the medium.

At a time when two of the top-selling heroes are the Punisher, who likes to kill bad guys, and Shadowhawk, who likes to break their spines, it's nice to see comic books aimed at and interesting to children, and also witty for adults.

As a side note, Skybox has put out a set of trading cards to correspond with the new comic books, but they're not as funny, and seem little more than a marketing ploy now that other Simpsons merchandise is out of style.

### These Guys Suck!

Then there's "Beavis and Butt-head" from Marvel Comics, the company that introduced the highly popular Ren & Stimpy comic a few years ago, kicking off the

recent "cartoons to comic books" trend.

Just as "The Simpsons" was on the cutting edge when the show started five years ago, "Beavis and Butt-head" has been in a class by itself since it premiered on MTV last year.

Although many dismiss Beavis and Butt-head's crude antics as harmful to children, or humorous only to preteens, viewed at a higher level the show is a sharp, intellectual critique of the music and culture of today's high school youth and society in general.

"Beavis and Butt-head" is the ultimate in parody and self-parody, and is as revisionist and deconstructionist as anything on commercial television.

After all, for the majority of the show, the two teenagers make fun of the very network on which they appear. Even late-night comedy king David Letterman has repeatedly praised Beavis and Butt-head.

Unlike The Simpsons, however, Beavis and Butt-head don't handle the transition to comics well. Instead of adapting to the new medium, the creators try to copy the show's story-telling style and fail.



Beavis (right) and Butt-head display their destructive nature as they demolish their own mail call section of their new paperback cartoon.

Reading their dialogue (example: "Huh huh... huh huh") isn't nearly as funny as hearing it in those unmistakable, quirky voices on television. And the show's hilarious music video criticism interludes have been replaced with the boys reading other comics and saying nothing particularly funny about them. These interludes are little more than commercials for other Marvel titles.

The storyline of "Beavis and Butt-head #1" is thinner than even their worst television

episode — the boys trade some yams for candy bars and Butt-head has to see the dentist. The dialogue (Butt-head: "Crime doesn't pay, Beavis." Beavis: "Yeah, TV lied.") might be funny in full-motion with silly voices, but on the pages of the comic book, they fall flat.

What could have been a heady intellectual parody akin to "The Simpsons" comics turns into a mindless rehashing of the television show, an obvious attempt to make a cheap buck off a current craze.

## Getaway

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As far as bad guys go, Travis is just about as bad as they come. Madsen plays a very convincing and unpredictable psychopath. Enough reason for viewers to watch the screen with one hand covering each eye.

Daredevil driving becomes an art form in this film when Basinger is behind the wheel. (Folks, this is not someone you'd want to anger in rush hour traffic.)

The saving grace of the film is the occasional spurt of humor nestled between scenes of non-stop violence.

During a car chase scene, Baldwin and Basinger decide to hide out in a dumpster. Much to their misfortune, however, a garbageman happens to be making his rounds in that particular neighborhood. After unwillingly riding around in a garbage truck, the couple is dumped into a landfill. While sitting on a filthy, torn up couch, Baldwin sarcastically remarks, "It can't get any worse than this."

I couldn't have put it better myself.

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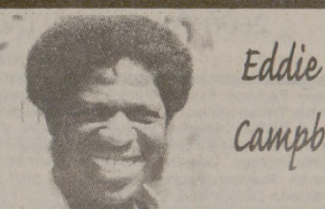
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