A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kubert is a name that's been associated with the comic industry for quite some time. In fact, Joe's been at it for 28 years now. Ahh, the inevitable question: "How does he do it?!"

The year was 1941; and Joe Kubert, then only a youth of 13 not yet out of high school, had become a Jr. of the industry. Reflecting on his earliest efforts, Joe said: "I started working for Mr. Harry A. Chesler. This was in the early forties. I worked in his office 36 hours a day after school, and he gave me five dollars a week. . . . I was allowed the run of the place—let the artists' shoulders look out and then work—and to ask their criticisms of my own work. These guys were just wonderful—their patience and their helping hands did much to engender a desire in a very young boy to be a successful cartoonist."

"Seems to me I remember a little fat kid-type coming up to the place which I worked... about 30 years ago" writes Irv Novick. "He was a bit observant while insisting that he wanted to become a cartoonist for the comic books..."

In a 1944 issue of All Star Comics, Joe Kubert's first job for National Periodical Publications was printed. It was the day after that people started to define Kubert and Hawkman as the same thing.

All through the '40's Joe worked for National, changing and developing his style. During this period, he handled a good number of '40's heroes, including: The Flash, Wildcat, Latara, Crimson Avenger, Shining Knight, Hourman, and the Blue Beetle.

The Star Spangled Kid, Capt. Marvel, and Johnny Quick. Fans have said that Kubert's art on these characters may have been the best they had ever been portrayed in. Still young, still developing, Kubert faced the '50's.

But two of Joe's achievements of these years stand above all his other efforts: 'Viking Prince,' with Robert Kanigher for National; and 'Tig', with Norm Maurer for Alleycat St. John.

Joe took his first job at DC. He worked for Dan Filter, a small job for Batman, and for a short time with the famous DC comic company.

But Joe then set sail for the '60's, his career now only beginning to take shape. For this was the time that he began to turn out some of his most memorable work. Beginning with 'Tales of the Green Berets,' he continued to turn out some of the best work of his career. Joe has also worked for EC, and has done some work for Marvel.

Joe has been a successful cartoonist, and his work has been recognized by the comic book industry. He has received many awards for his work, and has been nominated for several others.

In the future, Joe is sure to continue to produce some of the best work of his career. He is a cartoonist who is sure to be remembered for many years to come.

Joe Kubert's work is a testament to his ability as a cartoonist. He has produced some of the best work of his career, and is sure to continue to produce more. He is a cartoonist who is sure to be remembered for many years to come.

The work of Joe Kubert is a testament to his ability as a cartoonist. He has produced some of the best work of his career, and is sure to continue to produce more. He is a cartoonist who is sure to be remembered for many years to come.
THE INTERVIEW

What was the first job you did for National? When was this?
I've worked for DC and off and on for a period of 20 years, and I can't recall the first job.

When did you start drawing Sgt. Rock? How many years has that been?
Robert Kanigher created the written character of Sgt. Rock, which I illustrated, about 18 years ago.

Why did you finally give Sgt. Rock up to Russ Heath, and decide to work primarily on covers?
When I became editor, about two years ago.

Who was the man behind the idea of Enemy Ace?
Robert Kanigher.

In The Brave And The Bold #84 (the Batman and Sgt. Rock teamup issue), the whole of page 11 looks like it was done entirely by you. What's the story behind this?
Neal Adams was in the process of linking the story towards its completion. I happened to be in the office while he was working, and I asked if he could use a hand. He did. And then I did. Incidentally, I think it was only parts of the first two or three panels I inked.

Many new fans know little of what happened to Viking Prince. Care to comment on why he was dropped? Any plans for his revival in the near future?
Viking Prince reprints have and perhaps will appear again in current issues of Star-Spangled War Stories.

Concerning FIREHAIR...
You seemed to somewhat change your style concerning backgrounds which in part, reflect the style of Kelly Freas. Were you aware of this?
--would you consider this an "experiment" on your part trying to graphically portray scenic views? Looking back on it, are you pleased with the way it all came out?
No. I wasn't aware of the similarities you mention; but yes--I was trying for a slightly different look. I believe the effects I tried for what would develop into something that ultimately will please me.

FIREHAIR lasted a mere three issues of Showcase. Are there any plans for his regular appearance in any of the mags you edit?
Yes.

Concerning HAWKMAN...
By luck, we have obtained original art from one of Hawkman's Brave & Bold appearances; how do you feel about we fans getting ahold of these items?
I've no objections to any work that has been obtained by anyone--legally. I object most strenuously when the artwork becomes another person's property without the knowledge of the artist.

We agree....We've heard that many pieces of original art are actually destroyed after printing because certain people, billing themselves as "fans" are making tremendous profits on the re-sale of such art?
Yes. --But not before the artist has the opportunity to acquire it. A few years ago, the policy was to destroy the artwork and not give the artist the opportunity to save it. Gene Forsten has been very instrumental in stopping this practice.

Which do you prefer: Pencilling or Inking?
I think it's rather important to handle both chores--to make for a completely satisfying job.

Would you ever consider teaming-up with another artist in the future, to work somewhat like "Simon & Kirby" did?
No.

How long does it take you to pencil a page? To ink a page? Do you always use a brush? --why have you switched from pen to brush?
Time variations are too tremendous to try to generalize. I don't limit myself to a brush or pen. I'd use the back end of a mop if I thought it'd give me the proper effects.

What size do you do your art on?
10" x 16"--half again the size of the final copy.
And that size is the standard for all other DC artists?

Yes.

What type of paper do you do your artwork on?

I use Strathmore #2 (kid and plate finish).

And your other materials (pencils, brush & pen types, etc.)?

I did a full page special entitled: "How to Be a Cartoonist" which explains most questions pertaining to artist's materials. It will first appear in Our Army at War #221, and other DC books after that.

Who does the coloring at National?

A staff of the best colorists in the business: Jack Adler, Jerry Serpi, Walter Hirtzhekh, and Tommy Nihjolot.

What's your opinion of Neal Adams as an artist?

Neal is a very good artist in the sense that he possesses more talent than any one person should. He and fellow like Jim Steranko, Gray Morrow, Jim Aparo, and others have the facility to revitalise old "dime-novel" type

And your opinions on Marvel's staff?

They're terrific.

And what do the DC staffers have in store for us?

Bigger & better, newer and more novel things are yet to come.

Have you ever done any "ghost" work?

Not that I can recall.

Concerning fanzines: Do you ever have time to contribute to any of them? Do you have any favorites? What have you done?

Once in a while--I've no favorites in particular. The fact that I'm here in the office 12 hours beyond the time when I should've gone home is the reason I do a minimal amount of "contributing".

Any plans for any further work on the character Tor?

Perhaps--in the future.

To date, is there any of your artwork you consider your best?

"Best"--I'm not sure. However, I always enjoy the job I'm working on right now--whatever that may be.

And what were you doing in the line of art when this interview reached you?

I've just completed a new feature called "The Unknown Soldier", which will be appearing regularly in Star-Spangled War Stories.

Concerning the syndicated strip: Tales of the Green Beret...

What prompted you to enter this area of comics?

I'd never had a syndicated strip published before...I tried to sell Tor as applied in the syndicated strip form but my efforts were to no avail.

Why did you finally drop the strip, then?

I dropped it because I felt I'd lost control of the strip's directional thrust.

Jack Able worked on the strip with you for a time before you quit...

Yes.--Jack Able inked several Sunday pages and dailies.

Why?

Because deadlines were becoming constraining!

Concerning Jim Warren's magazines: When Blazing Combat was being produced, did you get an offer to do a story for the mag?

No.

It seems strange that you wouldn't try to do something for the Warren mags...a wash job or something using various media uncommon to the regular comic book medium. Why haven't you done anything in this vein?

The opportunity/occasion just never arose.

In closing: Is there anything about yourself that you consider strange?

The fact that I'm sitting here answering questions--when I have 13 deadlines on my back!
John Schoenherr's
FANTASTIC SCRATCHBOARD ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM
analog

SCIENCE FICTION SCIENCE FACT

SPACEMAN
KNOW WHAT'S WORSE THAN FIGHTING-OFF A FRENZIED HOARD OF GROPING FAN FANATICS!?! HAVING A GROUP OF PROFESSIONAL PUBLISHERS TAKE THEIR PLACE AND BEGIN HUNTING YOU DOWN!

The Tales of the Green Beret strips appearing in this issue are Copyright 1966 by The Chicago Tribune. Sgt. Rock is Copyrighted 1970 by National Periodical Publications, Inc. The material by John Schoenherr originally appeared within the pages of Analog, as separate illustrations to a number of different fiction pieces. This material appears here, in portfolio form for art's sake. Parman is Copyright 1970 by E.K. Publications. The Sub-Mariner and Dr. Strange are the Copyrighted property of Bill Everett of the Marvel Comics Group. Continuum and The Alien (Alliance) are Copyright 1970 by James A. Pinkoski. Raman and Vibranium are Copyright 1970 by Tower Comics Inc. Vampirella is Copyright 1970 by Warren Publishing Co., Inc. The art by Dan Adkins on pgs 40 and 41 were originally presented in issues of Creepy and Eerie, published by James Warren. It was changed, and appears here, also for the sake of good art. Buck Rogers is Copyright 1952-1970 by the National Newspaper Syndicate. The Phantom strip appearing herein is Copyright 1966 King Features Syndicate. The character, The Phantom, is Copyright 1970 to King Features Syndicate. The Prince Valiant art appearing on page 50 was Copyrighted in 1940-1961 by King Features Syndicate, and again in 1963 by Hastings House Publishing, Inc. The character, Prince Valiant, is Copyright 1970 to King Features Syndicate. Thanks people, we're nowhere without ya!
DEAR MR. ADKINS...

Last issue I compiled a list of "swipes" that I observed in stories illustrated by Dan Adkins. I then wrote a short article describing my personal reaction to this discovery. It was not an attempt at sensationalism, nor was it challenging Mr. Adkins' talent as an artist. From the response that it provoked, it became obvious to me that I had failed to get these two points across. I feel that it is necessary for me to clarify my feelings on the subject of "steals" and Mr. Adkins. But first, I would like to explain a little bit about myself.

So far, in response to my article, I have been called "an ass, a little kid, a little strange, and told to Go To Hell" by Martin L. Greim; accused of "Muckraking and Character Assination" by Berni Wrightson; and called "irrelevant" by Jeff Jones. I really don't feel that this is an accurate representation of myself. I hope the following will help in understanding exactly what I was trying to prove when I wrote that article.

My name, as you probably know, is Jim Vadatonceur (how nice to be infamous). I am 23 years old but a relatively new member of fandom. I started buying comics in 1966 while majoring in art at Foothill Junior College. I had always read comics but had never been interested enough to purchase one until I saw Spider-Man #33. I was so impressed by Ditko's dynamic drawings that I began to buy comics in earnest. For over a year I was collecting in total ignorance of fandom. When I suddenly discovered other collectors, it was like the opening of a new vista. I discovered a realm of art I had not even dreamt of. Artists like Williamson and Frazetta, Hogarth, Raymond, Foster, Wally Wood and Reed Crandall had been unknown to me. I had never seen such a wealth of art as was suddenly arrayed before me in the collections of my new-found friends. Since art had always been my primary interest, I began to search out the work of these artists. I was introduced to Creepy and Eerie, Frazetta paperbacks, Tower publications, and all of the old comics that contained their art. Each new discovery was like taking another step into a grand new world, a world populated only with beautiful things, dynamic people, and exotic landscapes. A world which I realized I could never be a part of.

Each new story that I saw by these artists was not only a step into beauty, but also a private disappointment. It was a deep tragedy to discover that I lacked the talent to help create more worlds of excitement and beauty. I was not capable of even approaching the quality of art produced by these men. So I admitted the obvious and looked to

To Jim Vadatoncoeur:

Yes Jim, I called you all the things you mention in your article. I did say you had the poor taste of a 9 year old. At the time I said this (after reading your first article) I believed I was dealing with a 9 year old. However, since then I have found you are an adult; and that, sir, makes the Dan Adkins article even worse! I could see, perhaps, a 9 year old writing a tasteless article like "Dan Adkins & the Incredible Tracing Machine", but for a grown man -- boy!

You call me childish for name calling. Perhaps this is you are right; but even more childish was your attempt at name calling Dan Adkins.

I'm not about to debate with you on swiping; for you seem to be the type of person who would ban "West Side Story" because it was based on Romeo & Juliet. Plus the fact, I believe enough damage was done by your article without me turning the pages of MCR into a battleground. To do this would only be lending me to your cause.

So you may keep your logic and your opinions of me -- you may go protesting swiping in the streets -- I don't care. I've said all I'm going to on the matter. However, while you're doing this, I'm going to enjoy Dan Adkins' art -- swiped or not; and I'm going to do a little creative swiping myself. So, lots of luck!

--Oh! I do want to apologize for calling you a strange little kid. I did make a mistake in that. It just is, that your article, in poor taste, gave me that impression. But then I suppose you couldn't help that.

--Martin L. Greim
2/24/70
other talents which I possessed. I changed my major to Business Management, worked my way through college, and am now happily employed at a Micro-Metallurgy firm as Quality Control Manager. During this time I continued to collect comics and expand my appreciation and interest in the Graphic Art form. I "discovered" other artists like Russ Manning, Will Eisner, Alex Toth, John Buscema, John Severin, Angelo Torres, Harvey Kurtzman, Jack Davis, Joe Orlando, Russ Heath, Joe Maneely, Bernie Krigsten, Doug Wildey, and Joe Kubert. This period also brought about an involvement in fandom. I published the first issue of a magazine devoted entirely to the comic art form. I also began to pick up on the new artists appearing in the comics and underground fields. These artists included Vaughn Bode', Jim Steranko, Rich Griffin, George Metzger, Neal Adams, Robert Crumb, Jeff Jones, Berni Wrightson, and, (quite honestly) Dan Adkins.

That brings me to the present and the article that appeared in the last issue of this magazine.

I did not write that article as an "expose" of Dan Adkins. I believe that most fans were well aware of the swipes occurring in his work long before I even conceived the notion of writing the article. Since it was common knowledge, how could I expose it?? Nor was I condemning him. If the tone of the article carried that impression, then it was due to my lack of writing skill and knowledge of my readers. I wrote that article half tongue-in-cheek and half in pity. Since I quite obviously failed to convey my message, I will attempt to clarify it. I hope that I succeed this time.

The title was a take-off on a typical Tom Swift book. The "Incredible Tracing Machine" was supposed to be the "Magic Art Reproducer", which was advertised constantly in comics of the late Fifties. I didn't actually believe that Mr. Adkins actually used such a machine, but since I was writing an article for comic fans I thought that I would use comic related material. It was symbolic, although many readers took it to be an actual magical machine or else called my attention to the fact that such a device can be obtained for over $800 not $1.98 as I suggested. I thought that the last sentence carried my feelings about the whole thing. It was meant to convey the fact that Mr. Adkins was not pleased with his use of other artists work and that anyone else who "swiped" art would not be any too happy about it either.

It was pure naivete on my part when I mentioned those artists whom I thought did not swipe. From the number of letters informing me otherwise, it is unreasonable to continue to believe that none of them do. I do maintain that few could possibly do so in the volume that I have observed in Mr. Adkins' work. This is not meant slanderously, nor is it an attempt to criticize the quality of his craftsmanship. It is a fact. I did not pursue the morality of "swiping" in my first article because I believe that morals are an individual thing. I have no more right to impose my personal beliefs on Mr. Adkins than Mr. Martin L. Greim has to inflict his on me.

Since my reasons for writing that article have been challenged, I am going to express my opinion. I do feel that "swiping" is unethical. It's plagiarism. An artist is not just selling a drawing to a magazine, he is selling his talent. The quality of art in a comic is a determining factor in the quality of sales, and though not the major factor, it can make or break a comic. Stan Lee, for example, attempts to increase the sales of a poorly selling mag by putting a popular artist on it. It may fail in the end, but it shows that he is aware of the influence a good artist can have on sales. Everyone in Fandom and the Editors of Marvel and National keep insisting that comics are an art form, a legitimate art form; yet when someone attempts to apply the standards of the rest of the Arts regarding plagiarism, the outcry is to the effect that comics are exempt because of their frequency of publication. Since an artist is required to produce such a plethora of panels, he does not have to account to anyone regarding how he obtained his material as long as it is submitted on schedule. If that's the case, then I maintain that such an artist is either a hack, or that he has not really prepared himself for his work.

I think that Dan Adkins falls in the latter category. If you reread my first article you will find no pious condemnation nor even an attempt to force anyone to subscribe to my own ethical standards as expressed in the preceding paragraph. I merely presented the facts to be judged by the readers' individual standards. It appears that my thoughts about the ethics of the situation are not widely held, but that does not prohibit me from believing in them. This is known as Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press.

As I said, I think that Dan Adkins has not completely prepared himself for the comics field. I feel that I possess a fairly discerning eye for good art and I think that Dan is a very talented artist. He does good layouts, is a capable story teller and pen-ciler, and has a fantastic inking style. I just want to know why he feels that it is necessary to "swipe". The answer is that he can't draw fast enough to fulfill his commitments. Take, for example, "The Day After Doomsday" which appeared in Eerie #8. This, to me, is some of the best work that Mr. Ad-
kins has ever done. He must have spent weeks, or even months, to produce it. The fantastic detail, incredibly fine inks, and beautifully-done figures attest to the time he spent on it. I can't understand why he would want to include someone else's work in such a magnificent masterpiece. I can almost picture the pride, effort, and sweat involved, and then the personal grief he went through when he decided that it was necessary to copy some of John Schoenherr's scratchboard work to complete it. Dan wanted to create beauty and was succeeding up to the point where the economics of the situation prompted his borrowing it instead of creating it. Mike Kaluta said in his letter that I gave the impression that Dan was proud of his "swipes". I was definitely not attempting to convey that at all. If I did, I'm sorry. I'm also sorry that Adkins does swipe. He knows the quality and the quantity that he is capable of producing, yet he continues to accept more work than he can handle. I wish that he would be honest enough with himself to admit his limits and work within them. I wish him luck and hope that the day arrives when he doesn't find the need to "swipe".

I would like to thank Mike Kaluta for his very interesting and informative letter. He was able to make his point without resorting to name calling. I also want to thank Jeff Jones and Berni Wrightson for their comments, although I can't help feeling that they were overreacting. And finally, since I restrained myself this long, I would like to convey a personal message to Mr. Martin L. Greim. In his LOC he called me (in order of appearance) an ass, a little strange, a clown, a little kid, told me to go to hell, told me to grow up, told me that I have the poor taste of a 9 year old, accused me of slander, or having a juvenile mind and in general, attacked me as a person. If he disagrees with my opinion, then he should try to attack my logic or point out where my facts are wrong. The only rebuttal that he gave was that Dan swiped well and that that made everything groovy. Well Mr. Martin L. Greim, I refuse to lower myself to your level of name-calling, and I hope that someday you manage to outgrow your childishness.

--Jim Vadeboncoeur
2/18/70
This adventure is somewhat like others—but then again, it is very different.

NOMAN, renowned for his war against evil, has truly made himself a prime target for those who would gain pride and prestige in their warped minds by knowing they had overcome him. This story is very unique. T.R.U.N.D.E.R.'s agent is about to become involved in the strangest, most important happening in his life—one that will change him permanently...

From another irrelevant planet came a danger that established itself upon our world, and it was ready to strike...
WISH THESE BLASTED DRAINAGE TUNNELS HAD LIGHTS IN THEM...!

THAT MOAN—SOUNDED LIKE A GIRLS!

A SUDDEN BARAGE OF VICIOUS SOUND WAVES...

UHH!

AND AGAIN WE MEET, NOMAN! A SHAME YOU CAN'T HEAR ME—BUT YOU WILL KNOW EVERYTHING SOON! AND YOU'LL BE POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT TILL THE DAY YOU ROT IN YOUR GRAVE!!

NOMAN AND THE EQUIPMENT ARE LOADED ON A WAITING TRUCK.
HAS IT EVER OCCURRED TO YOU THAT GOOD ALWAYS FINDS SOME WAY TO CONFRONT EVIL? MY HELPLESS FRIEND?

WHERE -- AM I --?

AH YES, THAT DOES APPEAR TO BE A TOO SOPHISTICATED QUESTION TO PUT BEFORE A PERSON IN YOUR PRESENT CONDITION, NORMAN. WE SHALL WAIT A MOMENT 'TIL YOU HAVE RECOVERED YOUR SENSES.

READY THE MACHINE.

THE DANGER OF HIS PREDICAMENT CASCADES UPON ME, NORMAN'S MIND AND MUSKETES WITH ALERTNESS...

I REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED OTHERS LIKE MYSELF WHO HAVE STRIVEN FOR THE SAME GOAL. BUT UNLIKE THOSE BEFORE, I AM ENTIRELY CAPABLE AND DO POSSESS THE MEANS BY WHICH IT CAN BE LOGICALLY ACHIEVED. YOU SEE, I AM GOING TO CONQUER AND RULE YOUR WORLD!

AH AH! A MARKED IMPROVEMENT! SOME SIMPLE ANSWERS TO SOME SIMPLE QUESTIONS: YES, I AM NOT OF THIS WORLD; AND I GUARANTEE YOU, MY INTENTIONS ARE NOT GOOD. APPROPRIATELY NAMED, HERE I AM CALLED CONTUITUS.

NO RESPONSE? YES, YOU HEARD ME CORRECTLY, MY FRIEND!

OKAY BUDDY -- LET'S GET SOMETHIN' STRAIGHT -- IT'S NOT "FRIEND!"

MY APOLOGIES -- WAS I PRESUMING TOO MUCH TOO -- SOON?

I COULD SWITCH BODIES, BUT IT WOULD DO NO GOOD RIGHT NOW -- AND JUST WHAT'S MEANT BY THAT?

YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN --

CONTINUED...
I believe that if a person has been "wronged" (to use the popular term) he should have the chance to openly defend himself and his beliefs. By the very nature of the soap-opera format, Jim's views oppose mine. That's also the reason I'm pleased to run a rebuttal by another character.

There was no "campaign" against swiping artists. Poor word choice on my part was misleading.

But, we decided not to use the article anyway.

...I agree, Horror, as well as Fantasy, are on the rise again. The appearance of Conan and King Kull at Marvel are very appealing. But, they are the pulse of a moving force. If the younger audience, the chance of Frazetta, Williamson, etc. going back to their roots and putting some guts back into our industry, then the future is very, very bright.

...When I said that I thought amateur artists like Jim Finkoski, Bob Johnson, and Dave Cockermouth were very influential in the conception of my art, I was speaking in terms of development. Jim, for instance, is a prime example of an artist who didn't have much commercial potential. The learning process is quite restricted when an artist has no opportunity to compare his originals with those of other pros his age -- I learned much more as a result from my good friend Jim, and his potential is way above average.

...Mr. Sternako (again, just as an example) was able to attend the School of Visual Arts for three years. --To study under and learn from the masters. Yet, Mr. Sternako's art lacks a certain illustrative and emotional energy that Finkoski's art does have. To put it simply, I think that Finkoski's art truly excels in the area of making excuses for their artists' work. It's obvious you feel it's good material--you printed it and got it out for the world to see. But, in the same time, it is always the "brainless children" that get what they want; because unlike random multiple numbers, the "brainless children" number in the millions on the publishing side when the "Silent Majority" runs past the six-zero mark -- dig it?

...I think you were the most naked of all, that's a major thing when an artist's writing. The discussions concerning clipping, with pro's and con's from the fan viewpoint and the necessities and futility of signing stat sheets from the fan viewpoint. The fact that the artists are already well worth printing.--But-throat-slitting is left to little gatherings of friends where it is entertaining and nobody gets hurt.

This is my belief.

A few more trivial things that irked me and I'll shut up, OK?

1. No more logo.--That's the only thing I got out of it upon reflection to make excuses for your artists' work. It's obvious you feel it's good material--you printed it and got it out for the world to see. But, in the same time, it is always the "brainless children" that get what they want; because unlike random multiple numbers, the "brainless children" number in the millions on the publishing side when the "Silent Majority" runs past the six-zero mark -- dig it?

2. The only thing I got out of it upon reflection was, to continue your creative work. The discussions concerning clipping, with pro's and con's from the fan viewpoint and the necessities and futility of signing stat sheets from the fan viewpoint. The fact that the artists are already well worth printing.--But-throat-slitting is left to little gatherings of friends where it is entertaining and nobody gets hurt.

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Dear John,

I just had the time to read a copy of MCN #8 and thought on the whole, was quite good. As for me, I thought things like:

- The article on Dan Adams was, in my opinion, in very poor taste. An artist's methods, whatever it be swimming or just plain making things up is #4 business. I admit, you don't have to work as hard or be as skilled in making it come out, but the important thing is, this is Dan's business, not yours. You are the artist, and you seem to be neglecting your craft.

- Dan has said, if you have a problem with the way he is doing things, the best way to handle it is to tell him directly.

- The title of the article is misleading. It implies that you are in a position to judge other people's work, which I do not believe is the case.

- Your article is more about your own beliefs and opinions than it is about the artist's work itself.

I would be interested in your thoughts on this.

Sincerely,

Berni Wrightson
(Address withheld: Policy)

Paul Dushkin
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Secondly, I think that the artist should have been more consistent with his depiction of Fury. The artist seems to be very critical of his work, and fully realizes his shortcomings; although, I'm not sure he can take it all. He's trying to make people believe it. I think he's doing a good job.

I'm sure that in the future Fury will be developed much more, but his development against the best established professional.

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Dear John,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the current state of comic book art. The decline in quality is alarming. Artists are no longer putting in the time and effort to create truly captivating works. Instead, they seem to be phoning in their efforts, relying on tired formulas and lazy shortcuts.

I believe that this is a direct result of the commercialization of the industry. Comic books are now viewed primarily as merchandise rather than art. The focus has shifted from creating something beautiful and meaningful to turning a profit.

I implore you to consider the importance of art and the role it plays in society. We must value creativity and excellence above all else. Let us not let the industry cheapen our appreciation for art.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

[Full Name]
In recent Marvel letter columns, the question has come up from the readers as to just what is the cosmic chain of command in the Marvel Cartooniverse. Who created the universe, who is worshipped by Marvel people, what is the exact role of Odin, and so on. After some speculation on the subject, I think I can offer a few viewpoints. Stan Lee (born Stan Lieber) is a Christian, despite his Jewish name. This much is obvious from stories like "Monsters On Mercury," with its Christmas message (and Ditko, the artist, could hardly have been responsible for it since he is an atheist), and the story in Captain America #106 with its reference to Christ. Lieber may be somewhat indefinite about religion; various interviews he has given put across the picture of a bland, uncontroversial person with no outstanding political, social, or religious philosophy. What religion he does have might probably be a mild Christianity, not thought through; but simply something he has absorbed all of his life and never questioned. Comic books written by Lieber reflect his personality in at least that regard. While the Christian religion is obviously the dominant one in his Cartooniverse, obvious, because of reference to Christmas, an occasional depiction of a minister, and the comment of Captain America in #106 of his own magazine, it is for the most part ignored. Depicted, too, have been Jews and Moslems. Thus the religion on the human level is not greatly different from the way it is here. Religion is a funny thing. It must be accepted without proof and many people are willing to die for their faiths never realizing that for all the evidence that exists their faiths could easily be erroneous and those of their enemies, correct. Despite all attempts at compromise, one central fact remains: there is only one reality. A Christian and a Hindu cannot both be correct in their interpretation of reality, and both are probably wrong. It is doubtful if the situation in the Marvel Cartooniverse is any different. Different people will believe different things about the nature of the universe, but A is A and only one reality can exist. Since Lee is a Christian, it is doubtful if he seriously intended for Odin to be the supreme, omnipotent, and all-powerful lord of the Universe; especially since he introduced Zeus, who is, if anything, Odin's opposite number and equal. Not only have two separate line-ups of gods been introduced, those of Asgard and Olympus, but in one of the Thor letter columns, the door was left open for still more by a half-veiled qualification. I personally suspect that Odin is of quite recent origin, and while possessing vast power, is still not master of more than a fraction of the cosmos. Perhaps eons ago three races of man developed. Mortal man, the Inhumans,
and those who would eventually be the gods of Asgard and Olympus. The gods departed Earth first for some reason, and two communities of deities grew up in what might be called dimensional vacuoles. Neither Asgard nor Olympus seem to be co-existant with Earth, and are probably separated by a slight variation in the space-time plane, which while quite simple for a god to bridge might be utterly impossible for a human. The machinery controlling and stabilizing Asgard's dimensional position is located in the Odinsword, the pulling of which is popularly supposed to result in the end of the Universe. I doubt that it would be that cataclysmic; what is far more likely is that the sword's removal would cause a difference in Asgard's position in space and time, moving it into a new plane, co-existant with Earth. In a physical sense, Asgard is quite close to Earth and once it appeared in Earth's space-time plane, mutual gravitation would result in a collision meaning the destruction of both bodies. While hardly the end of the universe, and certainly not a cosmic level no more than a local disaster, it is quite enough for Asgardians to seek to avoid. The location of Olympus is obscure, but the same principals doubtless apply. An interesting possibility is that the gods first developed, and the Inhumans are next. They may be the gods of tomorrow, and the X-Men the first hints of what lays ahead for mortal man. Odin, Zeus, the Watcher, and even Eternity: None of them are God. All predlate the beginnings of the Universe by some time. They are simply beings who have gained vast power, and on worlds where they have been, they may even be the inspiration for various religions and cults. So may be such beings as Mephisto and Satanish, though in the opposite direction. Neither is the literal devil, but possibly the inspiration for him. Indeed, the two might have spawned two different legends which later merged. Mephisto may have the power to control the minds and ultimately the egos (i.e., souls) of men, but his power is not infinite. Someone with the power of Eternity would be more than his match and his captive souls, liberated by his defeat, would be able to go on to wherever the dead in the Marvel Cartooniverse go.

If one believes that the universe was created by someone (which raises the interesting question of who created HIM), then that entity is above all characters, no matter how powerful, so far introduced in Marvel Comics. It may be the Judaeo-Christian god or perhaps something else entirely. Perhaps it may be Stan Leiber himself. The same question puzzled Greek philosophers. Like Marvel gods, their gods were also of a more recent origin than the Universe. So they theorized that there was something higher and somewhere in Athens they raised an altar inscribed "To The Unknown God." And in Marvel Comics, so must we. END