S E N S E  O F  W O N D E R

Editor and Publisher: BILL SCHELLY

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REALITY IS SLAVERY!
YARMAK
THE FEARLESS ONE

BY JOHN T. RYAN

It is quite common, in the world of literature, to see a popular character or formula imitated over and over again. "Follow the trend!" -- is the cry. "Get on the bandwagon!" And no one gets onto the bandwagon quicker than publishers. As it is with Ian Fleming's James Bond, so it was with Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan. Slave a loin cloth on your hero ... plant him in the jungles of some foreign continent ... let him rescue some lovely damsels in distress ... and the readers would think it was another Tarzan. Or, at least, that's the way the publishers figured it. Tarzan was the type of character that inspired imitations ... and there were imitations galore! Burroughs, no doubt, accepted this as being part of the writing game. But no matter how philosophically he may have accepted these literary imitations, he must have been astounded at the huge tribe of Jungle Kings and Queens who swung their way through a multitude of comic book pages!

Over the years, the U.S. comics industry spawned a host of such imitations ... Sheena, Kaanga, Wambi, Ka-s-sr, Pantomah, Wild Boy, Jo-Jo, Rulah, Camilla and Jann of the Jungle are just a few of the names that spring readily to mind. Some, like Sheena and Kaanga, are remembered with a great deal of affection. Some are confined to that area of the mind where we hide those experiences best forgotten. But good ... bad ... or indifferent, they were all linear descendants of ERB's immortal character.

"Neither the storyline nor artwork were consistent enough to make the comic an all-time great..."

Many countries outside the U.S. climbed the "King of the Jungle" bandwagon ... and Australia was no exception. Our foremost contribution came in the form of YARMAK -- Jungle King, published by Young's Merchandising Company. There were a few other local imitations, of course, but Yarimak stood head and shoulders above them all, so far as we might, for he was 7 feet tall if he was an inch! Since Yarimak's career was spread over the late 40's and early 50's it is, perhaps, a little too early for me to become nostalgic about it. Had Yarimak invaded the comic scene some 3 or 4 years earlier (when I was at my most impressionable age, comically), I have no doubt that I would be speaking about him in terms that would border on hushed reverence! For, in retrospect, Yarimak was clearly superior to the majority of comics from my impressionable period ... both in storyline and art. Neither the storyline nor artwork were consistent enough to make the comic an all-time great ... but both were miles ahead of most of their Australian contemporaries.

While there were over 50 issues of YARMAK COMICS there were, in fact, only 32 originals. Of this number, 19 carried the Yarimak title and 3 were called JUNGLE KING. After the appearance of JUNGLE KING #3 in June, 1952, Young's Merchandising commenced reprinting these stories ... picking up their numbering sequence from the last issue of YARMAK COMICS. For reasons best known to themselves, the first reprint (#30) did not contain the origin story. Instead, it featured "Yarimak's Desert Saga", from issue #6 ... and the cover that was originally on issue #14 ! The rest of their reprints followed the same chaotic pattern and I, for one, would baulk at the task of cross-indexing them. However, listed along with this article is a publishing history on all the 'original' Yarimak stories.

The men responsible for YARMAK were Stanly and Reginald Pitt. Certainly the others of the Pitt production team, Wheelahan and the Ashley brothers, made their contributions ... but it was the Pitts who carried the reissue at this early age, he had reached a stage of achievement that most comic artists never reached in a lifetime. Had Pitt chosen to continue with Silver Starr, I have no doubt that it would still be running in our newspapers, as well as many overseas.

And with that kind of build-up, you'd assume that the Yarimak art was nothing short of superb! Such was not the case; the major reason was that, with the exception of part of issue #1, the only time Pitt inked his own pencils was in #24 and #25. I know, for certain, that this is something that Pitt regrets, to this day. As you can see from the publishing history, the majority of the inking was done by Frank Ashley, who was a friend of the Pitt family. I was continually winning out over common sense. Ashley was not equipped to handle Pitt's fine line ... and, in some issues, came up with some extraordinary interpretations. Possibly because some issues were inked less pressure than others, Ashley turned in a few creditable efforts ... but, for the most part, he continually "lost" Pitt's fine line. In many issues, it is obvious that some wonderful pencils were "covered up!"

In those days, I wasn't aware that there were such beings as 'inkers' or that a strip was done by anyone other than the artist whose name appeared on the comic. So, you can see why I was so hostile toward those who tried to reconcile the issues inked by Ashley as being by the same artist who had produced the beautiful Silver Starrs.

On the other hand, those pages or issues handled by Paul Wheelahan seemed nearer to Pitt's approach. This is understandable, as Wheelahan was of the opinion (and still is, for that matter) that Stanley Pitt was the greatest line artist in the comic book medium! He was following in the steps of his master ... treading on hallowed ground ... and it was only natural that his inking should capture a good deal of the Pitt attitude. However, while he was able to retain the flavor of Pitt's fine line, it was a long way short of the standards Pitt had set.

Jimmy (Jay) Ashley didn't become involved with Yarimak until the 26th issue ... and remained with the comic until its ultimate demise, six issues later. While his inking was better than his brother's, it still didn't compliment Pitt's pencils.

Because Stan Pitt and Charles Young didn't see eye to eye on what had transpired in a good cover, Pitt didn't do all the covers for Yarimak. The illustration on Page 5 is an...
As you can see, this was meant to be the cover of the first issue, but it was rejected by Young as being "too cluttered"! Personally, I consider it to be the best of all the YARMAK covers. Pitt handled the covers for issues #1 thru 5, 9 thru 11, 13, 14, 16 thru 18, 21, 22, 24 and 25 . . . and many of these were "doctored" to eliminate some of what were considered "superfluous details." Inside the cover of #12 (The Pigmies of Atrix) is a full-page illustration which looks as though it was meant to be a cover. Could it be another cover that was rejected by Young?!

It wasn't unusual for Pitt to introduce faces of well-known film personalities into his strip, Errol Flynn's face could be found in a number of issues - Johnny Weissmuller . . . Douglas Fairbanks . . . Richard Widmark . . . Zachary Scott . . . Sidney Greenstreet . . . and many a Hollywood beauty found themselves making unexpected "guest appearances" in the pages of YARMAK.

Frank Ashley handled a number of the storylines . . . but the bulk of this work fell on the shoulders of Reg Pitt, who was also responsible for the majority of the layouts. As mentioned earlier, the quality of the stories varied . . . though very few would be classed as real shockers. Both men had a wonderful feel for the language . . . with Reg Pitt being more inclined to the poetic and offbeat style. One of the major differences in the two men's approach seemed to be that to Ashley the story, and not the character, was the most important concern. Quite often, this delayed Yarmak's entrance . . . as instanced in #22 (Yarmak Meets the Ant-Man), he doesn't make his appearance until page 10, which is 10 pages shy of treating this comic hero. On the other hand, Reg Pitt, while always placing great emphasis on the story, never forgot that it was Yarmak, himself, who was the main attraction . . . and he saw to it that Yarmak was soon on the scene.

I don't know who was responsible for the story in YARMAK #1 - perhaps it was a joint effort, as both men's names are listed in the credits. If so, both men are at fault for the scanty coverage relating to Yarmak's origin.

This story tells of Captain Tolus Landers, a world-famous explorer, who is attacked by a ferocious tiger, while hunting in Africa. Just when it appears that Landers has had it, a mighty figure hurtles from the treetops. With the help of his "swinging blade," he dispatches the beast and stands before the aged hunter, who offers a gold pendant as a token of thanks. The magnificent specimen of manhood refuses the gift, saying "I want not thy amulet friend. Be not afraid! Many questions are reflected in thine eyes - mayhap an introduction will afford thee some peace of mind. I have lived here for two decades - my real name is no longer of consequence for all dwellers of the jungle revere me as Yarmak, the Fearless One."

And that is precisely all you ever learn about Yarmak's origin. In #6 (April 1960) he speaks of having "lived with danger since a small boy". and since he has lived in the jungle for two decades, it is safe to assume that he is in his middle to late twenties. But how did he get to be in the jungle? Was he abandoned? Were his parents killed by hostile natives? Or were they savages? Where did he learn that archaic form of English? Maybe his parents were Quaker missionaries? Who can tell? Perhaps the writers felt that Yarmak's origin was so firmly entrenched in the reader's minds, precious space should not be wasted on such details.

Whatever the reasoning behind Yarmak's peculiar speech, all the "thees", "thous" and "thines" were dropped after the first issue . . . and a more poetic line adopted.

On binoculars: "Ah! And the black tusks with the little pools of hard water inside . . ."

To a lion: "Ah! Fierce doll! You could have staked deer on this day, and seen the moon . . . but instead, you foolishly attacked Yarmak - and expire ere this day has passed!"

To the dead: "Pitiful fools you were to covet the previous tusks, White-ones . . . You could be alive yet, and happy, too! Had you not allowed the lust for wealth to twist your minds so!"

Certainly not the run-of-the-mill dialogue to be found in most jungle-style comics, is it? And, perhaps, this is one of the reasons behind Yarmak's success . . . while some of the stories may have been a bit "way out", the dialogue was imaginative.

As far as I'm concerned, the last really
genuine Yarmak was JUNGLE KING #2. As JUNGLE KING #1 was virtually a "fake". Stan Pitt had "washed his hands" of Yarmak and in the issue in question was by Reg Pitt and Jimmy Ashley as something of a private venture... like, they needed the money! Reg pencilled it to the best of his ability... and even resorted to tracing some of Stan's old artwork. Reg was getting nowhere, he was able to talk Stan into doing a few pages to help them out. How they were ever able to convince Charles Young that the early pages were the work of Stanley Pitt is beyond my comprehension. However, there is not sufficient Stanley Pitt artwork in JUNGLE KING #3 to make it a genuine Yarmak... leastways, not for my money.

Reg, in the "right thing" by Jane and married her, there is no record of Yarmak being so gentlemanly towards his mate, Zira! The lovely Zira Mandelli, a titanic-hared vivatrix, made her debut on page #6 (Yarmak's Safari Saga). The Jungle King had been tricked by old Jim (an Imam tribesman with visions of becoming "King of the Jungle") into entering the desert to search for the non-existent Lasta Plant, which was supposed to hold the only cure for the imperiling Imbani Chieftain. With Wa-Wa (a small monkey) as his companion, Yarmak wanders the desert for many days before collapsing in the blistering heat. Vultures waiting to feast on his almost lifeless body are dispersed by the roar of a muralander (a type of vehicle). Yarmak darts himself to his feet and stags towards the "whiteman's Iron Bird", as a lichene, feminine figure emerges from the small plane. He climbs short of the plane but is revived by Zira... and it is then that she was flying to the Belgian Congo to find him! (Just why, is never explained!) Zira flies him back to his domain so he may settle the score with Mudderbone, with a vengeance. The battle behind him, Yarmak sends Zira away, saying, "The best you return to your own country. Zira, the jungle can only be a home to those who understand, and love, the land."

Isle #7, (The Ape Slave Trade), opens with Zira sharing Yarmak's tree home... and not a wedding ring in sight! It would never do for the CGA, which is, perhaps, another reason why I liked Yarmak!

To my mind, The Fearless One reached his peak with issues 24, 25 and 26, in 1951. This was not because of the stories themselves, but because of the stories themselves. Reg Pitt produced a trilogy dealing with a Pyramid erected by Haruki of Elephantine...

"A great Tomb, hidden for centuries in the tangled jungles of the Belgian Congo..."

A boy, daring and ambitious, obsessed with the desire to uncover the glory of bygone ages...

Zulus -- a primitive people born of the jungle... instinctively savage... oppressive... feared and hated by their Bantu kin...

A forbidding setting and strange companions for the jungle king... as he attempts to solve the mysteries of HARKUP'S PYRAMID...

Thus opened the most imaginative and interesting of all the Yarmak stories. The splash pages of #24 and 25 are a delight to behold... quickly setting the mood for the tale that follows. The opening of the story is told in an Egyptian setting... "as I do", and is most effective. The lettering and

logos, on the splash pages of these issues, were all different... designed to fit the particular story. Throughout the trilogy, even the word balloons were stylized to give an Egyptian flavor. Certainly the series would have been "complete" had Pitt inked #26 -- but I guess you can't have everything.

Like all Jungle Kings, Yarmak had the respect of the bird and animal population of the jungle. He spoke to them... and they answered. His cry of "YAR-MAR-KEE!!!" would echo through the jungle... and they would come to his aid. In the accepted pattern, many of these were known to Yarmak by name. There were the monkeys... Wa-Wa, Ke-ka, Walow... the baboons... Litchich, Ché, Chet, Ornpo... the apes... Dakoma, Bula, Wula... the lizards... Peto, Jesto, the elephants... Buaa, Zondo, Zora... the bees... Bolko the gorilla, Sib the leopard, Guilte the crape, Algor the crocodile, Zedo the zebra, Rorga the hippopotamus, Giro the giraffe and Muvdi the hyena. Of them all, Yarmak chose Wa-Wa as his companion... and they were rare stories when the little monkey didn't make an appearance.

Although blessed with a great deal of wisdom and a fair proportion of animal cunning, Yarmak was an unsophisticated character. While civilization's intrusion into his domain may have startled him... it never converted him. Guns were always "bang-sticks"... and he shunned their use... a tornado was a "vicious snake in the sky"... gold was "glowing rock"... a record-player terrified and baffled him; in turn... he had to be instructed in the use of a wrist-watch. Once, he almost throttled a man who was sucking pop-tops from a friend's wound. (AGH!! I have seen the crazy Blind Bird (a bat) perform such an action... but never before have I seen a human -- A WHITEMAN, do this horrible thing. "This mad man must LIKE"

Yarmak was blessed with a beautiful physique and the strength to match it... and it was responsible for getting him out of more than one ticklish situation. Apart from the normal encounters one would expect with lions, leopards, crocodiles, etc., Yarmak faced many strange creatures. At varying intervals he was confronted with flesh-eating Dragons... Unicorn Men... Gaint Lizards... Fire Dragons... Giant Ants... Prehistoric animals... and a number of supernatural characters. Having conquered the likes of these is it any wonder that mere mortal was no match for his strength?

But this wise, unsophisticated, jungle strongman belongs to the past. He and Zira are biding their time, somewhere in Limboland... along with Sheenas, Kaanga, and the others. The Pitts are working on a new comic project... Paul Wheelahan has forsaken art to become a Western writer... and the Ashleys have been swallowed by the great Unknown. I doubt if either Yarmak or the artists would like to revisit the old redoubt, which perhaps, as it should be. Returning to the scene of former triumphs is a precarious situation at the best of times... and I would rather remember Yarmak in his days of glory, than face the prospect of a humiliating comeback. The Fearless One was created for a passage of time that is past... may he rest there, undisturbed.

The above article originally appeared in Allan Tomkiss' Australian fanzine, E.R.B. DIGEST, in 1967. Allan asked me to make sure everyone knows that E.R.D. is totally defunct, and no copies of any issues have been available for some time.

YARMAK #1 contained a 10 page Silver Starr story.

Reprints of Big Brother appeared in #8 thru 11, and an 8 page Chop Chop story was reprinted in #2.

One-page fillers consisted of reprints of Big Top, Dan Tootin, Jonesy and Smart Aluk.

With issue #12, another Tarzan imitator was introduced to the comic. This was called Konga -- Lord of the Jungle and was drawn by Ray Cay -- which could be an abbreviation for "Cavagnah". Most of the poses are direct copies of Burne Hogarth's Tarzan panels. It ran until #17, each story covering 7 pages.

Issue #18 saw the introduction of another imitator, Chanzor, which was the work of well-known comic illustrator Larry Horsky. From this introduction, Chanzor appeared in all issues except #12 thru 24. All stories were 6 pages, excepting #25 which was 7 pages.

The splash pages of the Yarmak comics carried the sub-title "Jungle King", with the following exceptions: #1, #2, #27, #28 and JUNGLE KING #1 and 2 carried no sub-titles; "King of the Belgian Congo" was the sub-title used in #13 - 19, #24, #29 and JUNGLE KING #3; "Congo King" was the sub-title in #23 only.
GULLY FOYLE is my name
And Terra is my nation.
Deep space is my dwelling place,
The Stars my destiny.

Yarmark Publishing History

All issues were published by Young's Merchandising Co., and distributed by Gordon and Gutch (A/asia) Ltd.

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JUNGLE KING COMICS

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<td>3</td>
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United Feature Syndicate: 'The strip, of course, is beautifully drawn, but the continuity is rather confusing, with flashbacks.

Stan Pitt and
Gully Foye

... additional information on Stanley Pitt and his attempt to syndicate GULLY FOYLE as a Sunday strip, by John T. Ryan

One of the new comic projects mentioned in the Yarmark article was the, now, legendary GULLY FOYLE. According to Ryan, the idea of the Gully Foyle Sunday Page was triggered by my mention of Stan's work in my fanzine called DOWN UNDER (#1, Nov. 1964). Encouraged by my presentation, Reg decided that Alfred Bester and I, The Stars My Destination, would make an excellent showcase for his brother's talents. After contacting Bester and getting his permission to proceed with the strip, the Pitts buzzed themselves on creating it in a 14 week sequence. Mounted bromides were elaborately packaged and sent to the U.S.

However, problems that were to plague the project made their presence felt at the very beginning. Difficulties were encountered with the mail and correspondeence and, seeing the project bogging down, I offered to act as 'business manager' until such times as the project got off the ground. In April, 1967, I talked the Pitts into a different method of presentation... and one that would, virtually, pay for itself. With the help of Al Kuhfeld, of Minneapolis, we had 15 pages (14 pages of comic plus 1 cover) printed up 17 x 11" and stapled into booklets. A quantity of these booklets were set aside for distribution to the various syndicates, additional copies were retained for the Pitts/Kuhfeld/Ryan and the balance were sold to U.S. fans at prices ranging between $3 - $5 per copy. (Kuhfeld donated a copy to the 1967 TOFF (trans-oceanic fan fund) Auction and we were all staggered when it brought $8!) I forwarded a batch of covering letters to a contact we had at The New American Library, Rosalind Wolfe, who forwarded the booklets to the syndicates nominated. This move, which saved a lot of money, confused a number of the syndicaties. They could not reconcile a package bearing U.S. stamps and postmark... but containing a letter from Australia.

From the beginning, it was obvious that the tabloid-style format would not be acceptable to the syndicates. Initially, I had trouble convincing Reg on this score... but as the results flowed in, he realized that the format would have to be altered. It is interesting to note that, when first drawn, the early pages of GULLY FOYLE were virtually in the accepted full/half/tab flexible format. However, Reg felt that this formula was too restrictive of Stan's talents and switched to the tabloid-comic book page format.

What did the syndicates think of GULLY FOYLE?

Panel 4 of 6.

1. "dreams, alter-ego, etc. We feel that this would be better suited to the comic books where the reader gets more material for study and appreciation."

2. Ed Grade of the Los Angeles Times: "GULLY FOYLE is very impressive. The art, especially, is superior. However, because of its unusual format, I believe it is unsuited for syndication in this country without a major overhaul, which would entail almost complete redrawing."

3. Robert Molyneaux of NEA wrote of the problems of selling a Sunday-only continuity but was, obviously, attracted to GULLY FOYLE. He wrote, "However, in the samples you sent the artwork is downright arresting and the story is interesting, and I'd like to pursue this matter one step further. It is with that no daily strip is contemplated. Is this correct?"

4. Syvan Bych, King Features Syndicate, saw the strip as being in the same general field as "Flash Gordon" and "Brick Bradford" -- consequently, there was no room in their stable for a third feature of that nature.

I will leave you to draw your own conclusions as to our reactions to the various conclusions -- except to say that, despite Bych's stature in the field, the comparison between GULLY FOYLE and Flash Gordon/Brick Bradford of 1967 was a bit hard to swallow. That was taking generalisation too far!

I was about to follow-up with NEA when we heard from John Higgins of the Ledger Syndicate. While pointing out that there were many problems involved, Higgins recognized the potential of the strip. Bych left for a vacation and fought back and forth across the Pacific Ocean... sometimes quickly, sometimes after agonising delays.

Passing over the many obstacles and problems encountered in the months that followed, by November 1968 the Pitts were well on the way to completing the "buffer-stock" of 26 pages required by Ledger. During this period, I had been working out per-centages, etc. with Robert Mills, Alfred Bestor's agent. When the Ledger Syndicate cabled for copies of our contracts, late in November 1968, I wrote to Bob Mills about the urgency of the situation. His reply sounded the death-knell to GULLY FOYLE. Apparently, Bestor had disposed of the movie rights to The Stars My Destination to Ashley Famous Agency -- and the motion picture contract called for the control of any comic strip use!

Our solicitor both wrote to and cabled Ashley Famous Agency -- but silence reigned supreme. And that was it... that was the note on which the GULLY FOYLE strip died.
Gully Foyle

By ALFRED BESTER & STANLEY PITT ASSOCIATES

UNAWARE THAT HIS CAPTORS HAVE TATTOOED HIM WHILE UNDER ANAESTHETIC, GULLY FOYLE AWAKENS IN A SMALL ROCKET LAUNCH THAT IS WELDED TO THE SURFACE OF SARGASSO PLANETOID. ALONE EXCEPT FOR A NURSE, HE INSPECTS THE SHIP, FINDS IT FLIGHTWORTHY AND PLANS ESCAPE.

LIKE THE MAN SAID, IM LEANIN', BABY! IM BLASTIN' RIGHT OUT OF THIS CRYMMY ASTEROID!

ITLL BE A WOAH OF A SMASH, GIRL ~ MAYBE ALL DIE YOU, THEM, MAYBE EVEN ME!

GO TELL'M GIRL! WARN'M! GO, GIRL! GO!

HE SLAMMED THE HATCH, DIVED FOR THE CONTROLS AND PRESSED IGNITION. THE JET CHAMBERS IGNITED WITH DULL CONCUSSIONS... HE WAITED AS THOUGH FROZEN FOR THE TEMPERATURE GAUGE TO REACH FIRING HEAT, NOT KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN THE JETS BEGAN THEIR THRUST...

THERE WAS A HOLLOW EXPLOSION AS FLAME FLARED FROM THE JETS... THE LAUNCH SHUDDERED, YAWED, HEATED... WITH A SQUEAL OF METAL IT GRATED FORWARD...

AND THE SHIP BURST OUT INTO SPACE WITH THE SOARING FLIGHT OF A BIRD SET FREE.

MIRROR... MIRROR...
Abandoned by SS Vorga on the wreck of SS Nomad, Gully Foyle is obsessed by a drive for vengeance which compels him to attempt self-rescue by getting Nomad underway.

The massive computer glowed feebly, making its standard salutation in a voice that was an old-age parody of its intended crisp alertness.

I'm the commander, Brighteyes. Now listen to me...

Later course for Jupiter set on auto control. Launching delayed. Checkdown of drive shows main rocket and three tail jets inoperative. One tail jet operative. Firing of one tail jet will cause ship to gyrate, awaiting further instructions. Let it burn, Brighteyes! Let's get movin'!

The lone aft jet slammed out flame with a soundless vibration that shook the ship. The off-center thrust twisted Nomad into a spin.

He lay pinned in the center of half a ton of wreckage—helpless and barely alive.

Who are you? Where are you from? Where are you now? Where are you bound?
Days pass, and the mystery sub speeds toward its secret base, with its prisoner, Phil Corrigan...

...Whose hidden homing device guides the pursuing navy ships!

LOT OF COMMOTION! ARE WE FINALLY APPROACHING THEIR HIDE-OUT?

Ahead... a unique atoll... a long-extinct volcano...

...And secret underwater locks!

The sub passes through the underwater locks and sur Oro... Phil is brought on deck...

RAVEN STORM AND BRYNE ARE USING THIS VOLCANO'S CRATER AS THEIR BASE!

YOU DON'T WANT BRYNE LAUNCHING THAT MISSILE... OTHERWISE, YOU HAVE FAILED WHEN I GRABBED YOUR GUN!

WELL?

THERE'S A HATCH JUST BELOW THE WARHEAD... IT'S THE MISSILES' PROGRAM-CONTROL UNIT! IF YOU COULD DAMAGE THAT...

Meanwhile...

CAP'T BRYNE! CORRIGAN'S LOOSE... HE DISARMED MISS STORM!
The following strip might be considered a sequential folio of drawings, as it basically illustrates my short story. The Bandemars, which appeared in the Signet anthology Clarion: An Anthology of Speculative Fiction, edited by Robin Scott Wilson.

The character of the forest girl Fawn the Dark-Eyed had its genesis in comic format, and while the Narbekian tales were never commercially successful until written as fiction, it seems only fitting that they occasionally return to panel narration.

There are about a dozen Narbekian stories written to date, with several more plotted, and in addition to these I’ve had the first half of a full-length novel gathering dust for some time. In mind is a collection titled Tales of Narbek Forks, hopefully with a profusion of illustrations, but I have some doubts about both the economic and commercial feasibility of the project.

The drawings presented here were done about 2 1/2 years ago, and represent a rather more experimental approach than my usual work in comics.

A note on Bandemars: They are small, secretive and fleetingly seen denizens of the Narbek Forest, about whom little is known. Bandemars are reputedly thieves, and may even have some degree of intelligence, for at any rate they inhere a most uncanny cleverness. They are definitely not amiable creatures, yet on the other hand no evidence exists that they have ever done harm to anyone or anything. Most probably, they are better left alone.

--- JOSEPH WEHRLE, JR.

**Gully Foyle**

(Continued from Page 8)

Considering all the problems they had to overcome, it seemed an unflattering reward for poor old Gully and his companions. Right or wrong, we made grumbling noises about what we would do the “next time”, but the damage was done... we had lost our taste for marketing our own comic strip for a long time.

But GULLY FOYLE wasn’t wasted. The promotional book caused considerable interest in comic circles. Al Williamson showed the book to Carmine Infantino and Dick Giordano (who demanded copies for their own collections) and this resulted in Stan doing a comic for THE WITCHING HOUR #14. Again, Williamson showed the book to Western Publishing and the Pitts were asked to do a comic for BORIS KARLOFF #33. The artwork for National was below Stan’s usual standards and the reproduction at Western spoiled some nice art -- but, at least, Stan had the honor of being the first Australian to do original material for U.S. comic books.

Al Williamson made contact with Stan Pitt soon after the appearance of the Yar-k article in EB’s DIGEST (about five years ago). For many years, Al had considered Stan to be his counterpart... hidden in a far-off land... unable to be contacted. In his first Flash Gordon comic for King Features, Al had wiped a few panels from Stan’s Silver Streak. In the hope that it might bring some response, Stan was immensely flattered that an artist of Williamson’s caliber should use his material for reference, but did nothing about it. When they finally established contact, the Pitt-Williamson meeting became a mutual-admiration society! It is not surprising, then, that Williamson should ask Pitt to ghost a Secret Agent Corrigan story for him. Stan agreed and this 12-week sequence commenced appearing on the 16th of June, 1969. Although stiff at first, Pitt was really hitting his stride by the end of the story. Williamson was also responsible for getting Stan a number of other art jobs... so, when the time comes for someone to write the Stanley Pitt Saga, the assistance and consideration given by Al Williamson should not be overlooked. Without it, Pitt may never have recovered from the battering he absorbed with GULLY FOYLE... and may have drifted away completely from the comics medium. And that would have been a great loss to the graphic story world.

--- John T. Ryan

---William Blake

**Tyger! Tyger! burning bright**

In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

---WILLIAM BLAKE
EDITOR’S NOTE: I’ve decided that it would be easier to merge the discussion column, "Breakdowns", with the letter column. So that means that this section will be the "clearing house" for all types of discussion sent to SFW -- both comments on the previous issue, and more general criticism, analysis, etc. about any aspect of the graphic medium you might care to discuss.

And so, with that in mind, let’s start the proceedings with a missive from...

JAN STRNAD, Wichita, Kansas

I’m going to disagree with Rick Norwood (referring to “Breakdowns” in SFW #1). His view is very narrow and would keep a lot of good material from ever appearing in the comics (or comix). Case in point: Bob Kline. He’s done absolutely no strips for a long while; but when approached with a T. Casey Brennan script, he agreed to return to the fold. When this deal fell through, he again did nothing in the comic strip line until I asked him if he’d like to collaborate. He agreed and will have a 16-page fantasy strip called “Anomaly 1.” One thing I might point out: when I asked him how involved I should be with the artwork for the strip, he requested a page-by-page, panel-by-panel script and, if possible, brief sketches (à la Archie Goodwin or Harvey Kurtzman). From what I’ve seen of the strip, I think it’ll be worthwhile. No, it’s not a great literary masterpiece, it won’t revolutionize the comic art world, and it’s not going to win recognition for our ignored and maligned medium: but I think a lot of people will find it entertaining, and for me, that’s enough.

Also, in response to Rick’s comments that collaborations will result in third-rate strips, I’d like to disagree. I think he’s again taking a very narrow view, assuming that “artists should stick to art” and that “writers should stick to prose”; why can’t each benefit from each? Again, an example: how I’ve worked with Richard Corben. I’ll send him a plot synopsis; he then does very sketchy breakdowns, adjusting the story as he sees fit; I proof these breakdowns, suggesting changes if I wish and rewriting Richard’s dialogue if I think parts can be improved; Richard then does the finished art. At any stage of the process the strip can be altered by a letter or phone call from one of us to the other -- our ideas can be exchanged, or one can build on the ideas of the other, or we can discuss sticky areas that will be hard to write or draw. It’s a mutual thing, like your “Rites of Man.”

One problem that Rick has is that he thinks of a writer only as someone who writes words, and an artist only as someone who draws pictures. A lot goes into a script besides dialogue and panel captions, and the way in which a panel or panel sequence is drawn has a vast influence on the storytelling power of the strip. Even when working, as Warren does, with a writer who writes a script and an artist who illustrates it, the two seemingly distinct jobs overlap and -- hopefully -- dovetail. When the writer and the artist can communicate and when their minds work in similar but distinct ways, then the end product is often much better than either alone could have produced on his own.

Besides, isn’t Rick Norwood the clown who dressed up as Charlie Brown for the 1969 World S-P Convention and then fell through the huge movie screen during the costume show? And then everyone had to pitch in money, like a couple hundred dollars to pay the hotel to fix it up? What does the clown?

Speaking of screwballs, Ditko is really scary. His SPIDER-MAN is unsurpassed; but his philosophy is so unrealistically simplistic it’s frightening. As for Mr. A as a comic strip character, I much preferred him as the hard-boiled fanatic in WITZEND #3 rather than the preaching fool he’s become since then. As a form of communication, however, his later work is a tremendous example of top-notch propaganda (not meant to be derogatory); the drawings do a superb job of emphasizing and dramatizing Ditko’s ideas. I have no doubt but that anyone forced to read these diatribes day in and day out would eventually succumb to their illogical logic and the force of the presentation. They do have a lot of impact, the ideas are presented clearly, and nothing is open to interpretation, nothing is ambiguous. And the strip jumps right out at you with something close to the aggressiveness that Ditko deplores when it’s used by the opposition.

I’ve been wondering about two opposing viewpoints of my own lately. Sometimes I tell myself: the comic strip is primarily visual, like the movies; strips should be cinematic. Other times I think: but why toss away an advantage that comics have over movies, their stability on a printed page? Ever go through a good EC story without reading the captions? Would those Bradbury adaptations have been better with less verbiage? Some strips, it seems, demand captions to set the mood or to explain what’s going on inside the character’s head, to specify a locale or change of time, or to compress action that would be boring if drawn out in full. Is that, then, that caption best which captions least? I think that’s another unsupportable generalization. I’d agree with anyone who demanded that each word in a caption should justify its existence there, but I also think “unnecessary” captions are well worth having if they’re entertaining. And once again, I don’t see why a standard rule has to be formulated -- let the captions:artwork ratio fit the story and fit the creators of the story; whatever works.

(For those confused by Jan’s mention of Anomaly #1 -- a first issue -- don’t think this letter is merely incredibly old . . . As I understand it, the issues are out of print . . .) -- Bill)

RICHARD KYLER, Long Beach, California

It’s important to remember that the first all-new comics began in 1935 -- Malcolm Whelan-Nicholson’s NEW COMICS and FUN COMICS, the predecessors of today’s DC line. I also believe FAMOUS FUNNIES may have published some original material in that all-reprint magazine -- or it may have been another reprint publication. In any event, if Eisner was the first to do original work for comics, it could not have been in WOW.

SENSE OF WONDER • 17
The E.C. Horror Library review was informative. I like to get as many opinions as I can on something like the E.C. reprints before I shell out twenty bucks. (Excuse me for interrupting here, but I thought I'd insert a comment I believe Roger Hill made to me. While the E.C. Horror Library might seem like a good bargain today, it must be remembered that the book will depreciate in value, whereas every indicator we know of tells us that the actual E.C. comics will appreciate in value -- in other words, get more expensive [heaven help us].)

"Rites of Man!" was all right . . . if unspectacular. The artwork was above par, but Sanborn is no Frazetta, in his own individual way or any other way. Unless we're referring to an ego-trip. What's more, I think I would sacrifice the hero of this series to the clutter of an evil-villain over-off-color jokes any day. I mean, the underground stuff's got its place, and it does entertain, but can a serious comic fan say that is the direction he wants to see the graphic story take? I really think improvements on the basic adventure strip are coming. There are some great comics out now (CONAN, TARZAN, WEIRD WORLDS, WOLF, WERE- WOLF, etc.) and I see that things aren't too bad. Still, I'd like to see a huge comic, perhaps in color, with a graphic novel, one of them that I'd like to see surmounted more than any other.

CHUCK ROBINSON II, Edenton, N.C.
About the only way I can describe Soff #1 is . . . impressive. And I was impressed. Sanborn's cover was well-executed. It seemed magical, fairy-like, and reminded me -- for some odd reason -- of George Metzger's work. I like it.

Next, you have a cartoon by Frank Frazetta. Well, I don't know how I like his book covers and serious drawings better, but it's still nice to see a piece by Frazetta where it is well done.

Then we find Steve Ditko's Mr. A. And this was a treat. Ditko is certainly one of the finest this is the business, now or ever. It's just a shame that he doesn't do art for some of the major companies anymore. But to get down to it, I really enjoyed Mr. A. I can't say I disagreed with his arguments all the time, but Ditko has a way of convincing you by showing you things. This was an excellent study in propaganda, and beautifully drawn.

The article on Will Eisner was interesting reading. And that's about all an article can be expected to accomplish.

CRAIG WOOD, Bangor, Maine
For the most part, I felt Sense of Wonder #1 was an excellent magazine, and especially considering the amount of improvement over #0. However, four things spoiled the issue for me. First are the two exposed breasts of the woman on your cover. Now, don't get my number wrong, fellows. I believe that the female body is beauti-
ship between that and what I might think about war as war.
I doubt if Ditko is as detached from the substance of Mr. A. In fact, I know that Mr. A reflects his own personal beliefs. To each his own.}

PETER TOWNSHEND, Juneau, Alaska
As I look over my copy of SFW #1, I seem to detect the beginnings of an excellent fanzine. I couldn't honestly apply that worn-out adjective to this issue, but the seeds for future growth are quite obvious.

What are the chances of having a 4-color cover like Star-Studded Comics or funnyworld? That would enhance the appearance of your zine a hundred-fold, though it would also drain your pocketbook considerably. Perhaps as you sell more copies you can get to the point where four-colors are feasible.

You know, there just aren't many good, solid article fan magazines around. And some of the fanzines frequently named as "top zines" are actually barren when it comes to thoughtful, mature articles. Articles with some depth, meat.

One of the faults with SFW #1 is that it reads through so fast. This is partially due to the amount of strips. Now, while I like strips as much as the next guy, I feel they do take up too much space in a fanzine as small as yours.

But, whatever the course you chart, I'll be interested to ride along.

((You're only too right. . . four-color or process color covers are extremely expensive. If this issue sells as fast as #1, I may be able to swing it next time. But I can't promise anything at this point.

SSENSE of Wonder is, hopefully, going to fill (as great an extent as it can) the true lack of good article sizes. I'm glad you're along, and I hope you won't be a crowd of one.))

THAT'S ALL THE ROOM WE HAVE FOR LETTERS THIS TIME; THE LENGTH OF "BREAKDOWNS" WILL VARY ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF INTERESTING LETTERS WE RECEIVE.

BILL LOVES TO GET YOUR LETTERS, FOLKS! HE GETS VERY LONELY AND DEPRESSED IF YOU DON'T WRITE!

HIS ADDRESS IS 8211 CAROL, LEWISTON, IDAHO, 83501 . . . DO ME A FAVOR AND DROP HIM A LINE!

FRANK THORNE, NORT MEAD, FRANK ROBBINS, AND
SANNO KIM -- a not-too-tight, over clean depth
I try to achieve with my own art. For one like what you're doing; it's refreshing.

#1 has a very professional look, due to the
Frazetta cartoon and the Ditko pages opening the issue; he has a point, but has pushed it be-yond its extreme, I feel. Yet again, the time of soft-peddling a message has gone. I suppose one has to be hard-hitting to reach jaded people anymore . . . sugar-coated medicine cancels itself out.

"Rites of Mas!" was extremely effective;
just crude and rough enough to be dramatic --
yet amazing that this is the artist's first work;
he has to be inspired. ((I didn't say that was
Bob's first work -- he's been drawing for several years.))

I think the comic strip is an ideal vehicle
to communicate a message whether you agree
with it or not. Hell, look at Will Eisner's military indoctrination/training work -- it works
-- the graphic medium is most effective, even
more so than films which are usually forgotten minutes after viewing. A strip is permanent,
to be reviewed again and again. Perhaps this
says something for our level of intellect?

((The reaction to "The Defenders" (Mr. A)
has been mixed, but even those vehemently op-
posed to Mr. Ditko's philosophy grant that he has
used the comic strip as an effective teacher.
Re: his army contracts, Will Eisner said
in John Senson's excellent interview in Wizend #6) in part: "What I'm doing for the Army today
is instructional and educational material. We're
teaching people how to maintain their equipment.
I'm a teacher . . . I don't feel the slightest feeling of guilt, or separation, or any relation.

RONN FOSS, Decatur, Indiana
I received Sense of Wonder #10 and 11 -- much appreciated. Sorry I haven't been able to reply
sooner. It must have been a long time since I've seen
SFW, as it surely has changed and improved tremen-
dously.

Fantasy overtones, as in the covers, are al-
ways enjoyable. The inside front cover to #10,
a la Heinrich Kieig, was well-done, but your own
Assembled Man comic strip is the real surprise;
you've gotten really good with the inks, and the
drawing (pencils) are looking fine. There's a quality about your work I really like, as I do

Frank Thorne, Nort Mead, Frank Robbins, and
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ll the action, the drama, and the excitement of myth have always been present in comics at their best, and nowhere has this been more true than in the work of writer-artist, Jack Kirby. From the beginning of his career, Kirby has exhibited a persistent fascination with myth -- ranging from his early days on MERCURY right up through THOR.

With the coming of Kirby's so-called "Fourth World" series at National, Kirby deliberately set out to create a mythology wholly his own -- a mythology that would truly be "an epic for our time."

The power of mythological "archetypes" or universal symbols, seems to be that they combine a common, universal, human meaning with a specific form that is peculiar to a certain culture. Thus, while an archetypal figure is unique in himself, his meaning is subconsciously understood by peoples of varied cultures.

In view of the current revival of interest in mythology, and of Kirby's continuing efforts in that field, it seemed an appropriate time to attempt to analyze Kirby's work from the viewpoint of mythological criticism. It is only one of many approaches, one which sometimes leads to over-interpretation, and is not very useful in evaluating aesthetic value. However, once its limitations are understood, it can be a meaningful way to increase the reader's understanding and appreciation.

The following article suggests certain archetypal patterns -- and then sketches the ways in which Kirby's characters follow those patterns.

---

The story of the Creation is the most fundamental, most basic component of any mythology, the foundation upon which the entire mythos rests. It is not surprising, then, that in the first issue of Kirby's pivotal book, THE NEW GODS, Kirby chose to begin with the creation theme, a theme which he elaborated upon in the opening pages of the very next issue. Kirby chose to build his new mythos upon the dark Norse tales of Ragnarok, the final destruction of Thor and his companions, the hero Kirby had worked with at Marvel. According to Kirby, "the holocaust which destroyed the old gods split their ancient world asunder," creating the world of the New Gods on the one hand, and the evil home of Darkseid, Apokolips, on the other. And so, the new universe -- the second genesis.

---

Jack Kirby, Modern Mythologist

By Robert Cosgrove

Left: Jack Kirby studies the work of a young artist.

Photograph by Vincent Davis

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not a real mother, but has taken the appearance and name of a 'granny.' She represents the hated-mother image, the wicked authority figure. Her function is to civilize her charges, to make them loyal followers of Darkseid. Thus, she assumes the role of a super-ego twisted to serve the purposes of the id -- Granny is 1984 and Brave New World with a serving of apple pie thrown in for good measure. Her wards find themselves, in Darkseid's words, "jammed into that clanking mechanism Granny calls an orphanage," (para-phrase) there to suffer will-sapping chemical food and slogans which read: 'You're not a beast -- if you kill, for Darkseid!' and "You're not a liar -- if you lie for Darkseid!"

"Love him! Serve great Darkseid! Wear your pointed helmets proudly where he leads: Die for him -- and reward Granny!" -- that is the creed of Granny's Goodness, the lesson of her orphange. It is a lesson that she has proven most successful in teaching, for so far at least. Kirby has revealed only two people who have escaped from her clutches: Mr. Miracle himself, Scott Free, who had the assistance of Metron in resisting Granny's training, and unknown to him, the approval of Darkseid; Barda, presumably, made it by herself. Indeed, it would appear that Granny's pointy-headed warriors develop a real, if sick affection for their wicked mothers. For example, when one of their warriors is about to tackle Scott and his assistant, Oberon, one of their exclamations with pleasure and anticipation: 'We'll take them both! Granny will be doubly delighted!' And later, when the dead is decapitated: 'They are ours! The head and his gun! We'll be heroes to Granny!' Whereupon her colleague replies: 'She'll sing our praises and give us gifts! I can't wait to get back!' The fierce warriors are like little children, competing for Mommy's approval. Granny trains her wards by employing a grotesque parody of the Cub Scouts -- instead of wolf, bear, lion, her charges are worms, rats, and tigers.

As for Granny's motherly love, it appears to be nothing more than calculated sadism, concealed by a thin veneer of an affection that appears real to her brainwashed orphans. 'Poor Scott Free!' she laments in MR. MIRACLE #2. "How must he be suffering! It's so bad he couldn't learn to see things -- Granny's way!' This is a sympathy belied by her earlier outrage, 'Granny Goodness wants to kill Scott Free! He was the first to run away from her institutions!' However, it does seem that Granny has played her little game long enough that she sometimes forgets that it is she who is to blame. It would be a challenging role for an actress, since how she spoke Granny's lines would be the clue to her true personality.

Granny is not the only example of the 'Terrible Mother,' for Darkseid's late mother, Queen Hagar, neatly fills the role. This woman is fat, ugly, tood, a piggy eater, and repulsive. In spite of Steppenwolf's assertion that she is 'clever and cunning' and a 'clever woman,' she does not appear too intelligent. She is most likely clever in the sense of the stereotype used-car dealer.

A final female archetype is Tigra, Darkseid's wife, whose red hair and 'fighting, snarling, killer-cat' is said to have inspired the Stone Age woman somewhere along the line. She is also a character that is related to the Shrew Wife, "so common in the plays of the middle ages.

There are three basic hero patterns, of which Orion falls loosely into the first pattern, that of the Quest Hero, the savior or deliverer. Briefly, this type of hero battles ogres and monsters, undertakes impossible tasks (laborers of Hercules, for example), answers insolvable riddles (Sphinx's question to Oedipus, and generally overcomes insurmountable obstacles on his way to winning power, kingship, and glory, and a good-lookin' princess. Orion is a variation of a quest -- note the title of NEW GODS #1: 'Orion Fights for Earth.' Orion's task has been set by the white, oracle-wail, the link with the divine and mysterious 'Source,' which commands: 'Orion to Apokolips -- then to Earth, then to

WAR: In his brief existence, Orion has had to date encountered far more monstrous foes than his solos -- where Scott Free has battled Doctor Vandalus, Orion has faced Kalibak -- the forever people have battled Desaad, Orion has faced the water demons -- the Deepsea, Orion rather closely follows another pattern, the Oedipus-hero. In this pattern, the hero (Orion) is the son of distinguished parents (Tigra and the then prince of Apokolips, Darkseid). The birth of the hero is unusual by nature. He is born in secret by some secret intercourse or a prolonged barrenness -- a feature dispensed with by either Kirby or Mr. Darvin of the Comics Code. There follows a prophecy, usually threatening the hero's father. Tigra does tell Darkseid that Orion will 'live. He'll grow. He'll kill you!' but this comes after, not before, the next feature, the abandonment of the hero -- where Orion is thrust into the world of New Genesis. The hero is saved, as Oedipus himself was, and brought up in the house of a royal family -- that of Highfather. Later, the hero finds his parents, takes revenge upon them, and achieves rank and distinction: three things which may be in Orion's future.

Another interesting aspect of Orion is his relationship to Jung's analysis of the three basic archetypal projections of the psyche, as vividly revealed on page 116 of NEW GODS #5. Orion's true ugly face equals Jung's shadow, the dark side of the unconscious. His handsome face, on the other hand, indicates the persona, the 'actor's mask' -- each person shows the world. Finally, the Mother Box acts as an electronic anima, mediating between the outer and the inner Orion, and acting as his life force, his vital energy.

Orion wears purple, the color of royalty, and a red suit which matches his red hair. Red is the color of fire, blood, and passion.

The second basic hero type in the 'Initiation Hero.' This hero undergoes various ordeals in passing from immaturity to adulthood. Highfather, as mentioned previously, is a classic example of the Initiation Hero. The initiation process generally consists of three steps: 1) separation and isolation of the hero from society, 2) hero's transformation, and 3) the triumphant return of the hero. Both the initiation and quest heroes are deaths and rebirth archetypes. The hero without any change, or by the decision of making impossible for the hero to return, the initiation story becomes a rite of passage story, as in Hawthorne's 'My Kinman,' New Melville's. This idea is present, somewhat, in the many tests Granny's charges -- especially Scott himself -- must undergo. However, if Kirby suggests the rite of passage, he clearly indicates that Scott is an initiation hero. Consider: born in New Genesis, the fragile young infant is thrust into the perilous world of Apokolips, where Granny's orphanage seems to robotize him with deadly efficiency. However, within Scott Free lurks some inherent quality, sparked by Metron, first flickers to the surface, then becomes a raging inferno of rebellion.

The final archetypal hero is the sacrificial scapegoat, who, though himself innocent, must die to atone for the sins of his tribe or nation. Classic scapegoat hero: Jesus Christ. Kirby has only hinted at who may fulfill this role -- perhaps, again, Scott Free -- who has, after all,
already descended into hell, and arose from the dead. However, an excellent case exists for Lightray. His costume is mostly white -- the color of power and innocence, and his name and powers relate to the symbolic notion of innocence, which should be obvious. In the context of the title NEW GODS, Highfather refuses to allow Lightray to travel to earth to assist Orion, indicating that he must wait for the right moment.

In the third act, Lightray and his partner in crime, the death figure chasing Lightray -- emphasizes his youth and innocence: "I am no respecter of tender years!" When Lightray finally enters the fray in F#6, his first appearance wrapped as a mummy, tied to a pole and covered with a symbol. More important, however, or at least more direct, are Orion's comments. First, "The smiling lamb decided to try his hand among the wolves, after all." The lamb, a defenseless creature, represents a sacrifice, a symbol of innocence, and in the last 20 centuries, a Christ symbol. "It saddens me to see you here, Lightray. Your kind brings an undeserved honor -- or to war!" says Orion, again emphasizing his friend's innocence. Lightray's actions are revealing too: instead of destroying the sender, he transforms it. When Sheridan refuses to leave the ship, Lightray will not force him. "Your father's message is not for you, Lyrani. Like Christ, Lightray, forced no one to accept his advice, but if they do, they -- like the sender -- are transformed. As Highfather would say, "That is the Light Equation!"

Another archetype, that of The Traitor, the betrayer of the hero, is also present in the NEW GODS epic -- his name is Metron, and as Kirby so clearly indicates in The Fury, Metron is a traitor indeed, for he is willing to betray his Darkseid a weapon that visits upon his fellow gods ungodly death and destruction, and all in exchange for his own power -- the element for his Mobius Chair, which will hold in Darkseid's words, to fulfill his "scholarly pursuits." The other gods dislike Metron, for at least one of them, Highfather, is aware of his treachery. Orion, especially, deems the master of the Mobius Chair. However, the hero's fate is not sealed, for as he has returned to the side of the angels, temporally at least -- motivated in part by his hatred of Darkseid, for cold Metron has indeed emotions, but he subordinates them to intellectual pursuits. Thus, when Kirby depicts Lylar, he is not wise, else shrewd Darkseid would not have been able to use him as a pawn. "You'll betray us all in time, Metron!" Darkseid bluntly tells him, revealing his personal assessment of the hero. Could one say of Metron that he had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity? He was no longer a brother man, open, creating the energy by which men create the holy spirit by the key of holy sympathy. He no longer meant to right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and putting the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study?" In this writer's assessment these words almost perfectly describe Metron, though they were written by Nathaniel Huxley, who claimed to defend Ethan Brand. And thus, an intriguing link appears, connecting two American mythologists. Haw throne's Brand had committed "the unpardonable sin." Now, the symbolic definition of that sin comes from the words of Christ: "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." To explain, Jesus did not mean that there was something especially sacred about the holy spirit. Rather, since the holy spirit is the means by which man comes to accept God, receive Grace and forgiveness, he who chooses his heart to the workings of the holy spirit, is very much "in danger of eternal damnation." Now Hawthrone had his own, peculiar definition of the unpardonable sin; for him, it was sin for its own sake, that is to say, sin committed without purpose, either humanitarian or utilitarian. Essentially, it is a critique of intellect, of the triumph of cold-blooded experimentation over morality. Both Hawthrone's sin and the blasphemy against the holy spirit are unpardonable, says God. There is some evidence that Kirby subscribes -- at least in part -- to this concept of evil. For example, he continually draws a contrast between Desaad, who takes pleasure in torturing his victims, and Darkseid, who is above and distant "more cruelly." "I regret to say this," he tells Desaad, in FP #6, "but I don't have the stomach for your kind of pursuits!" "The third issue of Graphic Story World quotes Kirby as saying "... that man that makes him evil." True, but Darkseid's evil is utilitarian, where Metron's actions are not. Hawthrone said his evil characters had "Ice water in their veins." Kirby calls Metron an "icy mask," an image more vivid than Hawthrone's, but very similar.

The fascinating thing, however, is that Metron somehow comes across as a somewhat sympathetic character -- Kirby does not condemn him to the fate of the other gods. Perhaps it's a sign of the times that the Judaic figure receive some sympathy. National Review, in a mixed review of Jesus Christ Superstar, wrote "observed that it was characteristic of the theater to play serious to have a far better understanding of Jesus than it did of Jesus. Well -- this writer finds 'understanding' to be a sticking point, since Jesus's Judas has little to do with the Biblical one, but the point is well-taken indeed.

Thus, in summation, Metron is a new character, a close cousin of Ethan Brand, but not the same as Ethan Brand. He shares Brand's sin, it would seem, but has not allied all the evil that seems to suggest that the sin is not unpardonable.

Another interesting, if minor, archetype is the character of the prophetic god, especially in America, the scientist has assumed the role of the all-powerful magician, who can cure any and all ills. Recently, though, a reaction has set in, and Americans are moving in an equally extreme but different direction: the scientist and his psychological trappings. It's hard to say who is the more naive, the fellow who says there's no need to worry about population growth since science will find ways to solve it. Everybody who sees the science out the window, who happily predicts a return to the agricultural societies of yesterday. At any rate, Kirby has scientists-sorcerers galore -- Desaad, Doctor Bedlam, Glorious Godfrey. They reflect the dark side of technology, just as the Mother Box and Thaddeus Brown symbolize the good side. Note that Sta -- oops, Funky Flashman says that Thaddeus, "like a warlock of ancient yore -- conjured up his magical manipulations!"

The Sea, with its pounding waves and endless tides, is a particularly rich symbol -- it is symbolic as well as actual, the mother of all life, as well as symbolizing the abstract Earthly mystery, the infinite, death and rebirth, timelessness and eternity. According to Jung, it is the most common symbol for the unconscious. Kirby chose to use, in the comic book, a device called HUDDLE, device, that of the journey. For example, Kirby might cite the great American archetypal novel, Huckleberry Finn, in which Huck travels down the Mississippi River, undergoing a series of symbolic deaths. Kirby opens "The Glory Box" with a symbolic resurrection: Jack the Christ figure, Lightray, emerging from his mummy-like box with the assistance of Orion. He and Lightray are thrown together with three other characters, one of which (Lynn Sheridan) is unimportant. But the other two, Richard and Farley Shryden, are important indeed. Both men feel the awful pressure of a direct confrontation with evil incarnate, Jaffar of Apokoliis, one of the Deep Six and a symbol of the cruel, death aspect of the Sea. Richard, deemed a coward by his father, rushes forward and attacks the demon, to little avail. Jaffar kills Richard. On the other hand, his father, Farley, recoils, breaks, is unable to act. His brave words stand shorn of their glory, revealed as mere sham. When Orion takes the screen, Farley is in shock, but vows not to "run from the face of the second time." In Richard's case, the pattern is symbolic rebirth, then death. For his father, the pattern is symbolic death, followed by an attempt at symbolic rebirth, then death. This is left to his readers to judge whether or not that attempt is successful; personally, he feels it is not, but Kirby leaves the issue open. Finally, Richard's dead body joins "the Source" which brings this essay to its final archetype.

Somewhere beyond the final, impenetrable barrier at the end of the universe lies the Source, a mysterious force that works for good, contacting Highfather to tap into the walls, writing in letters of fire, and aiding the gods with the remarkable "Mother Box," which, amongst other things, allows the Forever People to have a birthday party! There seems to be no limit to the Source's power. The gods believe that in death, both god and demon go to the Source. Obviously, then, the Source is nothing more than the infinite, moral order which structures the universe, i.e. God.

*POSTSCRIPT*

This article hardly exhausts the possibilities the Kirby books offer for mythic analysis -- let alone beginning a comprehensive critical analysis. And of course, two or three more issues of each Kirby title have appeared since the article's writing, which suggest new lines of exploration.

Readers might also be interested in reading an interview with Kirby which appeared in a Canadian fantasy entitled Comic and the Crypt. Where this article has neglected to show the universality of Kirby's symbols, Kirby discusses (in C&C) the problem of creating symbols that speak uniquely to the present age and time.

Unfortunately, National has now decided to limit the fourth world series to MR. MIRACLE. Kirby is moving on to other projects, and there is little doubt in the mind of at least one critic -- that some of the future efforts will display the same intense interest in myth that he has shown in the past.
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RECOMMENDED

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IN Sense of Wonder #11, an article by Raymond Miller and Thomas Fisher brought to light a great deal of information about Will Eisner and those associated with him in many projects. It also, highlighted how little we know about the comic book artists of the 1935-1948 era. The main purpose of this article is to provide a few more details about that period...and I make no apologies for the emphasis placed on dates, publishers, comic titles and characters. I am indebted to Willard Ogden, Al Williamson and Ken McQuillan for providing the basis for much of the text in the article, and to John Scanes for many of the photographic copies he provided.

As Will Eisner's work appeared in WOW - What a Magazine: #2 (Aug. 1936), #3 (Sept. 1936) and #4 (Nov. 1936), it doesn't take much courage to predict that Eisner's work, also, appeared in the first issue of that magazine. While this issue would have appeared in June or July 1936, this would still not support the contention that Eisner was the founder of original comic strips for the comic books. Research tells us that this honor belongs to Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, who was in the field in 1935. However, even if Eisner wasn't the first in this field, he did more with the medium than any of his predecessors, and he was the prime mover in determining the direction that comic books would take. His contributions to, and monumental effect upon, the comic book industry can never be questioned.

The Flame, which appeared in WOW - What a Magazine, is instantly identifiable as a forerunner to Eisner's 'Hawks of the Sea.' In fact, the villain of the former story was 'Claw Carlos' -- and this same character turned up as a villain in an early adventure of Hawks of the Sea. Because WOW was, basically, printed in black and white, Eisner utilized half-tones...though not particularly effectively on this strip.

On the other hand, his use of half-tones on 'Captain Scott Dalton' was most effective and I would agree with Ken Mitchell that this strip was superior in appearance to The Flame. In the previous article, the locale for Scott Dalton was described as being 'set in the city...a favorite background in any Eisner strip, and later perfected in The Spirit.' On this point I part company with the previous writers' source of information. In WOW #3 and 4, the setting is the City of Lob, surrounded by a jungle and controlled by a 'mad 200-year-old Monk.' Dalton is assisted by Dr. Fung -- a Chinese scientist who was believed dead 'after failing to return from one of his expeditions.' The preface in WOW #3 indicates that this same setting prevailed in the previous issue -- so, it is my contention that, while this strip was set in a city, it was not the same type of city we associate with The Spirit. It is interesting to note that, like Claw Carlos, Eisner made further use of Dr. Fung some three years later, when this character was given his own strip in WONDERWORLD COMICS. And he was the spitting image of his 1936 predecessor.

Not mentioned in the previous article was another Eisner strip which appeared in WOW. This was a humorous strip called 'Harry Karry' and it was the cover feature of WOW #3 -- which was, also, drawn by Eisner.

It should be noted that, as well as using his own name, strips in WOW #3 and 4 were signed 'Bill Rensie' and 'Will Erwin'. Other artists whose work appeared in this comic were Bob Kane, S.M. Iger, George Dick Briefer, Vernon Henkel, Bernard Baily and Losis Ferstadt -- all of whom went on to establish themselves during that era we call 'the Golden Age of Comics'.

Miller and Fisher state that they were unable to discover any evidence of Eisner having any comic book work published prior to the end of 1937. I think this could well be the case -- and I think the major reason for this was Eisner's involvement with Editors Press Service, Inc. which operated out of 220 East 42nd Street, New York. Although small, this company was one of the first to translate U.S. newspaper strips and sell them to South America. In 1937, they decided to create some of their own strips and hired the young Will Eisner for that purpose. Eisner created many characters and then found artists like Bob Kane, Lou Fine, Bob Powell and Nick Viscardi to illustrate them. There is every indication that Eisner retained the rights to those characters he created -- which was a smart move for a lad who wouldn't have been much older than 17 at the time.

My knowledge of EPS comes from a remarkable comic called WAGS. It was remarkable from the point of view that it was published in the U.S.A., but strictly for export purposes. One edition went to Australia and one edition went to England. It commenced publication in November 1936 and was published every week for at least four years. It may even have continued publication up to the outbreak of the Pacific War -- but the latest issue I have seen was from late 1940. This tabloid/comic contained 24 pages of

In The Great Comic Book Heroes, Jules Feiffer cites a strip by Eisner called 'Muss 'Em Up' Donavan, which may have been published in 1937.

2 According to Dennis Gifford (author of Discovering Comics, Stop Me!), the British Museum records the first English edition of WAGS as being received on July 1, 1937. Also, the publisher changed from Joshua B. Powers to T.V. Boardman (an English company) on July 9, 1937.

3 All dates quoted for Australian Edition of WAGS represent the latest possible release date in Australia. My own feelings are that they were released earlier than the dates indicated and research is continuing along these lines. Initial information from both Joshua B. Powers and Greater Buffalo Press suggests that WAGS was only published between 1936 - 39 and that publication did not continue into 1940. Based on recorded newsagent release dates in Brisbane (Queensland), imprint dates on 16 issues and 1940 copyright dates on a number of the newspaper reprints -- there seems to be no question that WAGS was published well into 1940. If Joshua B. Powers is correct, it would mean that Australians saw all the Editors Press Service comics long before they ever appeared in U.S. comic books! Maybe some delving into the library archives in New York, Waterbury or even the Library of Congress would establish some clear cut dates.

BY JOHN T. RYAN

26 SENSE OF WONDER
AHH—THIS WATER IS GOOD—WHAT HAPPENED?

YOU GOT ANGRY AT DR. SNYDE—YOU KNOCKED HIM DOWN—HIS MEN OVERPOWERED YOU AND THREW US DOWN HERE! THEY'LL BE BACK SOON TO TRY TO MAKE US TELL WHERE THE TREASURE IS!

AND WE'LL NOT TELL THEM—NO MATTER WHAT THEY DO—I SHOULD SPANK YOU FOR EVER COMING ABOARD THIS SHIP—but you saved my life and burkes, by cutting that sail down in time!

GEE THEN YOU'RE NOT ANGRY AT ME, HAWK?

SUDDENLY THEIR CONVERSATION IS CUT SHORT AS A HATCH OPENS ABOVE THEM...

STAY JUST AS YOU ARE DOWN THERE. WE'RE COMING TO PAY YOU A LITTLE VISIT!

DR. SNYDE, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS MEN, DESCEND INTO THE REEKING HOLD...

SEIZE THE HAWK, MEN—COUL YOU WILL—YOUR LASH READY!

HERE IS A LITTLE TOKEN OF MY FRIENDSHIP, HAWK. HANG HAWK TO TAKE THIS!

IF MY HANDS WERE FREE, I RETURN THAT TOKEN THREE-FOLD!

IF IT IS YOUR PLAN TO TORTURE ME, SNYDE, YOU'RE EVEN MORE STUPID—NOTHING YOU CAN DO WILL MAKE ME TALK!

WE SHALL SEE! WE SHALL SEE! HANG HIM BY THE WRIST, MEN!

STOP! DON'T DO THAT TO THE HAWK!

NOW, MY AMUSING FRIEND, WILL YOU TELL ME THE LOCATION OF CAPTAIN COGGS TREASURE NOW? OR MUST I HAVE YOU BEATEN TO A PULP?

DR. SNYDE, I SUGGEST THAT YOU GO ON A DIET OF CHEESE... IT IS GOOD FOR RATS!
I WASN'T SEEN......NOW TO GET THE REST OF THE MEN UP......

EAGER HANDS REACH OUT OF THE ROLLING WAVES TO GRASP THE DESCENDING ROPE.

A MOMENT LATER 10 MEN HOIST THEMSELVES OUT OF THE ROLLING SEA......

ABOUT TURN!! THEY'VE COME UP BEHIND US......ABOUT TURN!!

INSTANTLY THE MEN CLOSE IN BATTLE......

AND, AS THE TIDE OF BATTLE SLOWLY TURNS

WHERE'S MERRYSTONE? I MUST GET HIM BEFORE MY MEN TEAR HIM TO PIECES!

THE COWARD!......HE'S ABSCONDED.
well-known U.S. newspaper strips as well as a lot of material which has, previously, been considered to have been created exclusively for the comic book medium. Most of the established newspaper strips were reprinted in full color while the material from EPS was, always, in black and white. As it contained no advertisements, paper-wise, WAGS was equivalent to a 48-page comic book for which was charged 20 cents (TaggerteNo). In those far-off days, a U.S. comic cost six cents -- so you don't have to be a genius to see that, for the cost of a normal U.S. comic book, we could get 72 pages of top-class material... and not have to squint your eyes.

Top class material? Certainly. In the newspaper strips there were full tabs of Tarzan (with both Foster and Hogarth art), Alley Oop, Terry and the Pirates, Dick Tracy, Little Orphan Annie, Moon Mullins, Bringing Up Father, Myra North, Smitty and Toonsville Folks, as well as half pages of such strips as Smokey Stover, Smilin' Jack, Tailspin Tommy, Herky, Sgt. Stubby Craig, Dos Winslow, and a number of others.

But it is the black and white pages that are relevant to this article... the pages that came from EPS. WAGS Vol. 2 #4 (Nov. 1939) saw the introduction of Eisner's swashbuckling Hawks of the Seas. This is the same date as the Hawk's accredited appearance in FEATURE FUNNIES #2. The inking on the early pages was very scratchy in appearance -- but it was long before the strip reached the fray that is usually associated with "genuine" Will Eisner work. While it is unlikely that this work is "pure" Eisner, it is, certainly, the work of Eisner and some of his best assistants.

Hawks of the Seas (it was never called "The Hawk" in WAGS) ran for 123 issues, at the rate of one page per issue. Even at this stage of his career, the Eisner trademark of developing the characters of the supporting players was evident. As so often happened in The Spirit, the Hawk often played a subordinate role in a number of stories. It was almost as if he were there to set the stage, then linger in the background until the final scene was to be played. One suspects that Eisner realized the value of the "non-individual-star" for much long before the TV mogul hit upon it.

Before moving on to the other EPS material that appeared in WAGS, let me draw your attention to the printing history of Hawks of the Seas. It appeared in (1) FEATURE FUNNIES; (2) WAGS - Australian Edition; (3) WAGS - English Edition; (4) JUMBO COMICS... it was also translated into (5) Spanish and, finally, was (6) cut up and re-used in EPS COMICS. This means, within a period of three years, Eisner was able to paid a number of times for one piece of artwork. With business acumen like that, no wonder Eisner has stated that he was very rich before he was 21!

Making their debut at the same time as The Hawk was Peter Pupp by Bob Kane, and The Hunchback of Notre Dame by Dick Briefer (who had already experimented on this adaptation in WOW - What's Ahead) by WAGS. In Spencer Steel joined them in January 1938 -- which means that all these features were seen in Australia before they appeared in JUMBO COMICS #1 (Sept. 1938). Peter Pupp was another Eisner creation and, like the Hawk, it also appeared in FEATURE FUNNIES. The next Eisner creation to appear was Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, who made her debut in WAGS Vol. 2 #37 (July 1938) -- once again, before her appearance in JUMBO COMICS.

The name of the first artist to draw Sheena is unknown but, somewhere between the 8th and 12th page, the art chores were taken over by Mort Meskin. Once again, I disagree with the previous article -- mainly because the position as stated by Bob Powell could lead the reader to draw the wrong conclusion. On reading Powell's statement you could be forgiven if you assumed that Meskin was the first artist on Sheena and that he only drew one week of the strip. As already stated, he was not the first artist. At a minimum, Meskin drew 20 pages; at a maximum, he did 24 pages. Even if Meskin was a prolific worker, practicing his craft in a period when standards were not as demanding as they were to become, later, I find it hard to imagine that he would have turned out that many pages in one week. When Meskin left the strip, after the 32nd page, there followed 8 pages of very mixed art. Mixed, in the sense that many older Meskin panels were re-used and a new artist contributed various panels, trying to adopt Meskin's style. This new artist may have been Powell, but certainly there was no doubt that Powell's very individualistic style became evident with page 42 -- and he continued to handle Sheena for a number of years. It was Powell who was responsible for introducing Sheena's leopard-skin costume (JUMBO #10) -- prior to this, she wore a tootcut, single-piece mini-dress.

Another Eisner character that appeared in WAGS was Yarko the Great, who appeared in December, 1939. This was some six months after his initial appearance in WONDER #2. Like the Hawk, Yarko contained the breakdown, angles and art style that exhibited the unmistakable Eisner touch.

Other EPS material that appeared in WAGS included The Clock Strikes by George E. Benny, Gallant Knight by Vernon Henkel, Jim Swift by Ed Cronin, Tex Mason by Cecelia Musson, Scrapy by Charles Mintz, and "Russ" Robinson and the Amazons by Arrano Caserneau... and an adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo. This latter feature is most interesting by virtue of the artists who worked on it. The early pages were handled by "Jack Curtis" who is better known these days as Jack Kirby. The strip was then taken over by "Jack Cortez", who was none other than that master draftsman, the late Lou Fine.

Comming with WAGS Vol. 4 #10, the price was increased to three cents.

If the Joshua B. Powers dates are correct, Hawks of the Seas first appeared in January, 1937.

The Great Comic Book Heroes erroneously credits Sheena with being the star of JUMBO COMICS.

In The Great Comic Book Heroes, Feiffer mistakenly refers to Yarko the Great as "Yarko the Magician".

In History of Comics Vol. 1, Jim Steranko mistakenly credits the "Jack Cortez" work to Jack Kirby. Also, the reference is made that much of the early work appearing under the names of "Curt Davia" and "Fred Sande" was done by Kirby. Kirby, undoubtedly, handled the earliest pages but from JUMBO #4 through #10 the work was again by Lou Fine. By sheer weight of pages, Fine has more claim to those names than Kirby.

A sample page from The Spirit

SEISE OF WONDER • 29
OUR SCENE OPENS IN THE BUSY NEW YORK HARBOR, CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD... MID CLOUDS OF SMOKE FROM A MYRIAD OF CHUGGING TUGS THE SUPER LINER TANORA GLIDES HOME...

MRS. LAWTON HEADS FOR A WAITING LIMOUSINE...

HOME, JAMES...

AND BY THE WAY, HAND OVER THE ROCK YOU SMUGGLED IN...

THE WOMAN STOOPS OVER AND REMOVES HER SHOE...

FROM A HOLLOW HEEL SHE REMOVES A SMALL FORTUNE IN JEWELS...

IN THE LAWTON HOME, YARKO IS CHATTING WITH HIS OLD FRIEND, JUDGE LAWTON...

AND I BROUGHT HIM DOWN WITH ONE SHOT...

PADDON, SIR—YOUR WIFE HAS JUST ARRIVED...

HELLO, FRED DARLING

HELLO, MY DEAR—THIS IS MY OLD FRIEND, YARKO

DELIGHTED, MADAM...
Initially, a number of these features appeared under the banner of Universal Phoenix Features Syndicate but, eventually, were controlled by EPS. As many of the features appeared in the comics of those publishers with which Eisner was associated (i.e., Fox, Fiction House and Quality), it may well be that Eisner had a major interest in Universal Phoenix and brought his features with him when he changed over to EPS. This is one point that, probably, only Will Eisner could answer.

It is true that, as a comic book professional, he would suggest that the success of the tabloid format of WAGS (allied with the possible reduction in production costs, due to the availability of printing plates/matrixes for the first time, and that the tabloid format was different from the conventional comic book format) led to the inspiration for Eisner to print those first 8 issues of JUMBO COMICS in Tabloid format — usually described as an “outside, black and white comic.”

Also, I would suggest that when Eisner was negotiating to sell The Spirit to the Register and Tribune Syndicate, his performance in supplying so many regular features, each week, for WAGS must have weighed heavily in his favor.

WAGS was published by H. B. Fawcett, Inc.; and, for the first 2 and 1/2 years it was printed by The Buffalo News Press, Inc., Buffalo, New York. From that point onwards it was printed by Eastern Color Printing Co., Waterbury, Connecticut.

There has been a tendency for comic fans, generally, to speak of The Spirit as if it was the perfect strip; as if every episode was superb in both art and storyline; as if any copy of The Spirit should be purchased and treasured. I do not subscribe to such a fallacy — and I think the Miller-Fisher article was the first step in enlightening many fans who hold such notions.

That The Spirit, at its best, was a magnificent example of the potential of the graphic story is accepted by all serious students/critics of the medium. That The Spirit, at its worst, was a trite in storyline, dull and unimaginative in layout and, even, poorly drawn is a simple fact of life. It is, indeed, unfortunate that the strip which was responsible for pointing the medium in a new and exciting direction should be forced to accept, as part of its whole being, the many mediocrities. For, unless you clarify the position, when you speak of The Spirit, you are speaking of The Spirit stories. Therefore, let me clarify my position. When I speak in terms of the greatness of The Spirit, I refer only to those tales in which it is obvious that Will Eisner was the guiding hand. And, as you would have gathered from the Miller-Fisher article, as a comic entirely produced by Eisner is something of a rarity, my references to Eisner’s work are meant to indicate Eisner’s best, and his best plays.

Many of the early Spirit stories were not very Eisnervish in appearance. No doubt, this was due to the particular artist responsible for the inking. There was, also, a tendency to incorporate gimmickry that was too easily beamed at home in the comic books of the day. Two that come to mind are The Spirit’s Autoplane (which looked like a sports roadster equipped with wings, some propeller and tail fins) and his Gliding Suit (a bat-like overcoat which allowed the Spirit to leap, safely, from both cliffs and crashing airplanes).

Fortunately, these items only lasted until the first half of 1941. However, these observations should not deter you from acquiring copies of these early stories, should you have the good fortune to encounter them.

By July 1942, the strip was starting to change its appearance. It reverted to the Eisner look in August but, by September, it was obvious that the Eisner influence was stronger than ever. By 1945, the U.S. Army had a lot to answer for! While those that continued the strip attempted to retain the flavor of the unique integrated logo and splash page, for the most part, their efforts were pallid imitations. It was a case of (if you pardon the pun) the spirit being willing but the flesh being weak! Lou Fine’s hand became very apparent in January 1945, with his fine linework, attention to detail and less-grotesque posturing and caricatures of his figures. His attempts to add humor, while well-drawn, were not compatible with his particular art style. According to the previous article, the strip was a strip also by Alex Kot-Sky whose linework was of the Fine mold.

From the middle of 1943 until December 1945, The Spirit lost its charm and impact. The artwork and layouts were like dozen of other strips which were appearing in comic books and the stories seemed to rotate around fairly simple themes. Basically, they were detective-cum-whodunit stories with occasional humorous (and I use the word “humorous” in a critical sense) plot twists, and the art around Ebony and Dolan.

There was nothing distinctive about these efforts... there was none of the Eisner magic. Many of the sections from this period looked as if they may well have been handled by the Quality line’s house artists. In fact, there was more than a sneaking resemblance to Midnight, Quality’s imitation of the Spirit, which was handled by such artists as Jack Cole, Paul Gustavson, and Mr. Heiss.

On December 23, 1945 the splash-page suddenly departed from the bland stereotypes of the previous 2 1/2 years and, once again, took on an Eisnerian appearance. Eisner himself was active in this, as well. His style of grotesque caricature was, once again, involved in guiding the destiny of his brainchild.

It is interesting to note that, during Eisner’s absence, the strip’s writers would ignore the possibilities of making up of many of the interesting supporting characters created by Eisner. Unless Eisner had placed some form of restriction on them (which is unlikely), this seemed a strange pact to take — particularly as they could not come up with any worthwhile characters of their own.

As if to make up for lost time, on December 30, 1945, Eisner confronted the Spirit with three villains... The Squid, Mr. Shush, and Mr. Fly. Then, on January 13, 1946, the section was devoted to giving a recap of the origin of the Squid. It was more or less an attempt by Eisner to clarify his intentions and saying to the readers, “Forget that stuff you’ve been reading in recent years... this is the real character I created... this is what you’ll be getting, now that I’m back at the controls”.

The following week, Satin (Sylvia Satin... alias Silk Satin... alias Black Satin... alias... etc.) made a welcome reappearance. And in the meantime, the Squid was discovered by old friends and presented with a host of new friends. Over the years, Eisner’s capacity for producing fascinating characters to assist the Spirit storyline is remarkable. Consider, if you will, some of the following:

The GOODIES: Commissioner Eustace Dolan... Eben Dolan... Ebony White... Sam Klunk... Wilmot Walf... Dick Whittier... P.S. Smith...
In Sense of Wonder #11, Miller-Fisher states that the last "new" Spirit art was that which appeared in December 1947. The first page reproduced in that magazine originally appeared on January 26, 1947, and the same page was reprinted in the Sunday Section of January 1, 1950. The recent Spirit art was the story that appeared in the New York Herald Tribune on January 9, 1966. (That error was on the part of the editor, not authors Miller and Fisher. - Bill)"

The first half of May 1959, the standard of art on the Spirit began to slip and continued its downward trend until it reached the "Outer Space" series of stories. From time to time, a story appeared with the Eisner touch about it, such as on January 14, 1951. This section was made to resemble a copy of LIFE magazine, complete with yellow subscription sticker bearing Eisner's name. On August 5, 1951, there was a dramatic change in the art style... and a change for the worse. According to the previous article, during this period the art was handled by Jerry Grandinetti and Jim Dixon; and then passed on to the Charles William Harvey Studio. If this information is correct (and I have no reason to believe otherwise), I am at a loss to understand how someone like Grandinetti, responsible for drawing and inking much of the Spirit in its hey-day, could be a party to such mediocre efforts. Perhaps it was the old story — no Eisner at the helm? As for the work from the Charles William Harvey Studio, the efforts were so incredibly bad it is difficult to believe that Harvey Kurtzman and Bill Elder were involved if they read this, they should hang their collective heads in shame!

Apart from Eisner's acknowledgement on the first page, there is no doubt about Wally Wood's involvement with The Spirit when the title was altered to "Outer Space". In fact, I would go so far as to suggest that the three sections I have seen (July 27 through August 10, 1952) contained pure Wood art. I don't suggest that Eisner wasn't the guiding force behind this series but the credit for the excellent art should go to Wally Wood. So, whether the final section appeared on August 10 or September 28, it went out on a high note.

In all departments...

No discussion of the Spirit should fall to mention the splash pages. They were unique. With a weekly strip to produce, no one would have blamed Eisner if he had adopted a standard logo which could be used year-in, year-out. With an ever-constant deadline threatening, and the ever present need to attract and hold. Eisner had to look for a different logo for every story. Maybe there were a few that looked similar in concept, but, for the most part, they were all different. They had to be different because Eisner liked to integrate the logo into the mood of the particular story. These mood-setting titles set the pace for what was to follow and, in doing so, they were entitled to the credit for The Spirit's success. Obviously, Eisner realized that with comics, as with other mediums, the best way to capture an audience is to grab their attention from the very beginning. The graphic story field has yet to be probed by Eisner; his reputation is his "grabbiness". If ever he comes along, I want to be around.

These titles took on the forms of Goal Posts, Neon Signs, Stretched Rubber, Newspaper Headlines, "Stop" Posters, Film Posters, Tall Bars, TV sets, Dossier Files, Income Tax Forms, Window, Ranes, Carvings in Wood and Stone, Reflections... and just about anything. But Eisner's lavish imagination does not stop with the titles. His imagination is often used to make a point for the Eisner grasping record. If ever he comes along, I want to be around.

Words cannot effectively demonstrate the broad range, substance and impact of the Eisner splash pages. They have to be seen, they have to be experienced to be appreciated.
Only a purist, with a complete collection of the Spirit, would be able to count the number of times the Spirit was shot, clubbed, punched or kicked. I don't qualify on either score - but I do know that if the Blood Bank could have bottled all the blood that flowed through the pages of the Spirit, it would have yielded a lot of blood for many a long year! It flowed thick and it flowed often - but, under Eisner, you never got the impression that it was "gore for gore's sake".

But, in case I have given the impression that The Spirit contained nothing but blood and violence, let me assure you that this was only a portion of the canvas. It contained a great many observations about the world of that period; it contained tongue-in-cheek humor that, at times, bordered on slapstick. This is the kind of literature that is known in literary terms, and it contained satire. During 1947-48, Eisner and his crew had the time of their lives spoofing anything that took their fancy... including themselves...  

On July 20, 1947 The Spirit had a gig at the reigni...ng champions of the newspaper strips. There was Al Capp ("Al Slapp - L'il Adams"), Harold Gray ("Elar...y Little Homeless Brenda") and Chester Gould ("Nero...gh). The artist was drawn in the style of his strip. Orson Welles. George George and the Roller Derby were all given the once-over, at one time or another. On April 27, 1947 The Spirit contained the complete words to another comic strip, "If You Dig Bud (Has a Honey to Bud Me)" - a ditty that often flowed from Ebony's lips. Two months later, Robert Millard made a guest appearance in the strip and... 

On April 25, 1948 The Spirit accepted a sponsor - "Goo's Cream", complete with spot ads, and singing comm...ercial. Under the heading of "Fairy Tales for Juvenile Delinquents", Eisner presented updated versions of "Hansel and Gretel" and "Cinderella". In keeping with his early interests, Eisner also featured adaptations of "The Thing" by Ambrose Bierce and "The Fall of the House of Usher" by Edgar Allan Poe. No, my friends, this was not the artist's awareness of the macabre; he was aware of this - Will Eisner, Jules Feiffer, Abe Kaneg...son... "Now, what I want to know... is who is Abe Kanegson and where does he fit into The Spirit's...k."

With reference to the "Will Eisner Productions" imprint, the earliest section I can locate bears this date is June 24, 1951.

One of the pleasing aspects of "Will Eisner: A Man and His Work," in Swf 81, was the recognition in part of S.K. Powell's contribution to the field of the graphic story. Bob Powell was in comic books from the very early days and, possibly, due to his eight years with the Downtown, he understood the medium. He was a prolific producer for the industry and handled virtually every type of comic story. He, also, produced a number of newspaper strips. His work was distinctive and always in demand, to read any sort of detailed coverage of this man's career.

The influence of The Spirit's integrated logo is obvious in the early stages of the back-up feature, Mr. Mystic. However, due to the pressure of deadlines or the lack of inspiration, Powell soon adopted a fairly straightforward logo and continued to use it until he left the strip. Mr. Mystic, which was an extension of Eisner's Yaro the Great, was an excellent strip under Powell's control. In fact, during those years of Eisner's Army service, it was the best feature in the section - and deserved to have the lead-off space occupied by the Spirit.

Powell, first, shared the strip's byline with W. Morgan Thomas on March 16, 1941 and progressed to a solo byline on April 11, 1941. This was around the same period that Klauss Nordling began editing the Lady Luck strip, so it is not unlikely that Powell was inspired by Nordling's initiative in this area, and followed suit. Because Mr. Mystic was produced entirely by Powell, it was only fair that he should be given due credit.

When Klauss Nordling took over Lady Luck, the appearance changed from one of real adventure to one that could only be described as cartoon-slapstick. Because my tastes, in the main, tend to favor the more realistic style of art, it is difficult for me to be objective about this strip's ability. I first encountered his work in 1939 in WONDERWORLD and MYSTERY MEN COMICS and, in retrospect, it must be admitted that his work was not without its share of material that appeared in the Fox line of comics. His ideas, perhaps, the fact that he replaced artists like Lou Fine and Nick Viscardi that didn't sit too well with me - rather than the quality of his work. Like Powell, Nordling's devotion to the medium was one that shared with the majority of the better artists of the Golden Age - he knew how to handle panel-to-panel continuity dramatically.

The foregoing started out as a letter of comment... but I decided to expand it for two reasons. First, and foremost, to call attention to the fact that, in almost a decade in fandom, I have never seen a more genuine sense of the wonder of this man, quite rightly, has been hailed as the greatest innovator in comics has seen a living legend; a giant in the field of the graphic story. Yet, apart from John Benson's excellent interview with Nordling in the last issue of Sense of Wonder, what substantial examination of comics fandom on Eisner and those associated with him? This article is, certainly, not the answer to that question -- though it is one of the most memorable features in this book, even if I have broken a few records for conclusion-jumping. It seems to me that U.S. fans should tackle this project before any more time slips past. But, is this really the way to go about it? Who knows? It's time we should be getting details about John Adams and Frank Frazetta at the present time but, with all due respect to those fine artists, I'll go ahead with John Benson's Section of October 5, 1952.

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, Old Father Time is a-flying..."

John Ryan - June 1972

JOHN RYAN recently celebrated his forty-first birthday July 8th, after spending nearly a fourth of his life involved in Comics Fandom. He is Sales Manager for Firestone General Productions Division, and lives in Yermo, California with his wife Jan (who kindly provided the photos) and their two children (Fiona, 6, and Sean, 4).

John has the distinction of publishing the first Aussie comiczine, Down Under, in November of 1944, about the same time Jerry Bails was getting comics ads from Alpha off the ground. John became a member, and still contributes an issue of his excellent apa-zine, Boomerang, whenever he can find the time. His Alley-winning Bedge columns have appeared in The Comic Reader, GoshWow! and Star-Studded Comics.

As you may have gathered from the Stanley Pitt article, John has become firm friends with most Australian comic artists, over the years. His chief interest in collecting is for U.S. comics prior to mid-1942 and Australian Fandom. He has a good working knowledge of older U.S. comic artists, which complimen...
WANTED
FOR
CONTEMPT OF COMICS

DR. FREDRIC WERTHAM
RUSS MANNING
MODEL T TO T-BIRD

On a shelf in my studio is an eight inch stack of Dell comic books...

FOUR COLOR COMICS #75, #83, 100 (Gene Autry) and #269 (Johnny Mack Brown). GENE AUTRY #1 through #37, and JOHNNY MACK BROWN #1 through #9. There are gaps in the stack...I haven't located several numbers yet, and the rest of the missing issues do not contain that particular distinction that makes these stack contain the work of one certain illustrator.

The artwork of others is also present, but this particular artist is the featured illustrator, handling the lead story in most of the issues. He illustrated every page of the Autry #75, and almost all of the JOHNNY MACK BROWN #2, but it is possible that even the sharpest eye in comic book fandom might not credit the same artist with having done both magazines. Therein lies comic book history and the profile of a pro.

Missing (still) from the stack is Dell FOUR COLOR COMICS #466 (1945 Gene Autry), the very first comic book assignment this artist ever received. He was working at the Walt Disney Studios at the time as a story man, and was recruited by Carl Buehner, an art editor at Whitman Publishing Company (and also the creator, author/artist of the fondly remembered Bucky Bug in Walt Disney Comics). The newly recruited illustrator was soon working on Dell titles other than the Autry and Brown westerns, but his development from earliest attempts to mature style is most clearly shown in these two.

Like tracing the evolution of the T-Bird out of the Model T, it is possible to follow this artist through this eight inch stack of comics as he learned and mastered the art of comic book illustration.

His earliest steps...the Four Color Autrys: Each page has four lines of panels, usually with two panels per line, rather than the three line, six panel page common today. An adventure illustrator is at a disadvantage in this format...eight panels per page can all too easily seem overcrowded, and the panels too small. But one of this artist's greatest distinctions -- simplicity -- keeps eight panel pages from seeming crowded. There is none of the terrible overcrowding of detail prevalent on too many comic book pages.

Aside from a fine avoidance of unnecessary detail, the artwork is rather rough and crude, and the characters are not too appealing; but the style is reminiscent of no one else. The handling of black areas and wrinkles is somewhat in the Sickles/Caniiff tradition, but there is no copying at all from these two masters. The storytelling is straightforward and clear, without any attempt at unusual angles, attention-getting close-ups or any pyrotechniques whatever.

Here, then, in his very first comic books, this artist showed the major traits that have been his ever since: absolute originality of drawing style, smooth consistent storytelling, and an all-too-rare simplicity.

How did this artist's work compare to others on the stands at that time? He couldn't have cared less! He studied Caniiff in the Sunday pages and in several Popular reprints, he has said, but never studied any of the other comic book artists' work. He soon stopped looking at even those he himself had illustrated.

This was a very independent original artist. He consciously chose the direction he wished his art to go...and he went. He has occasionally shifted emphasis within his basic directions, but the main course is as clear as tracks in fresh snow.

Evidently the Four Color one-shots sold satisfactorily -- a regular series began, with GENE AUTRY #1 (May-June 1946), and our artist's work is smoother, his characters are more firm, and the foreshortening is more convincing. Here for the first time, too, there are glimmers of another trait, one in which this artist fairly shines...design.

In what is perhaps an oversimplification, comic book/strip artwork can be divided into two basic divisions: composed, and designed. It would take too long to define the difference between the two, but basically, Hal Foster's panels are superbly composed, while Chester Gould's show fine (though perhaps unconscious) design. Our artist has a very fine sense of design, and AUTRY #1 begins to show it. The second story in this magazine was done by someone else and it is obvious that our artist was called in to do corrections.

The artwork in AUTRY #3 falls apart. Too tight a deadline, perhaps.

#5 is back on the main line of steady improvement, as are #6 through #10. The opening panels in #6 and #8 are very fine, beautifully designed; that in #8 is pure essence of the 'western'.

The opening panel in #11 is a knockout, a superb design and for once, very effective color...and the magazine has gone to the three line, six panel page format. The larger panels seemed to have agreed with the artist. His panels become downright dramatic, the towns become three-dimensional, and the characters, including a lovely girl, are very fine. The artist now has to create and render two less panels per page, and he evidently used the gift of time to further improve his art. The likenesses of Autry are more heroic (an almost hopeless task), and the story itself is almost interesting.

How well the comic book script is written greatly influences most illustrators. At its simplest, scene following scene following scene of two people just talking gives the artist little chance of keeping the reader's interest. Conversely, when the script has lively action and sparkling dialogue, a good illustrator feels like doing his very best. The editor, of course, would have the opposite...the poorest script needs the best artwork, while a fine script can carry poor art.

Who wrote the Autrys? It isn't possible to check Whitman's files, but the artist has said that Eleanor Packer wrote many of the scripts he illustrated...and that lady is still writing some of the dullest, least imaginative, most talkative scripts conceivable, as long after 1952. I believe I detect the style of Dick Calkins, Senior (yep, the Dick Calkins of Buck Rogers) in the better stories: chiefly in the later Autrys and best Johnny Mack Brown's. Calkins definitely wrote many Red Ryder scripts in the early 1950's, and I strongy suspect his hand in the most interesting Autrys and Brown's. Elizabeth Beecher was also scripting westerns and movie adaptations in the early 1950's, and she, too, may have done some of the more imaginative stories.

With #11, the Autry magazine became a monthly, and the time gap between Autry assignments had virtually disappeared. The artist's drawing becomes steadily smoother, his handling of western scenery and characters is becoming exceptional. No other western comic book of that period approaches the best of these early Autrys for excellence in depicting the American Southwest. Red Ryder might, but Harmon's work is comic strip, with the additional time and money for careful creation.
Then, a bombshell! The difference between the drawing in #15 and #16 is startling! If this artist had continued to use the drawing style he suddenly springs in #16, he might today be the most copied originator in the field.

His use of design, heretofore subordinated to rhetoric, suddenly breaks through, and every figure, every shape, is designed. The artist uses much less black shading to show form, but indicates depth by the careful juxtaposition of shapes. Clear-cut, finely designed shapes fit within and against each other in a quite unique illusion of reality, and the overall impression is very pleasing. A young girl is handled particularly well.

Again, the artist has done the original. I don't remember anything like this style in any other comic book or strip. It may have come partially from a study of the 19th Century French painter-draughtsman, Ingres, whom our artist had long admired, but it most likely reflects his own particular beliefs and way of seeing. The element of design is strong in all of his work, and here in #16 it is set wing-free.

Incidentally enough, in the back pages of #16, this fine style is beginning to weaken, and by #17 has disappeared. Why? I suspect that arch-nemesis of all comic book illustrators: time. This particular style would require far more careful layout and rendering, and it is probably that deadlines necessitated a less demanding way of working. Deadlines... and an opportunity too good to pass up.

As the most consistent and reliable adventure illustrator, Whitman had been able to find, he now had the opportunity to make more money than he had before, and he made most of it. He appreciated fine books and expensive pasticcs, and the only way he could achieve them was to send Whitman. The artist who paid was long hours at the drawing board, and incredible drawing speed. Almost anyone can chain themselves to the board, but entirely without assistance, this artist was soon penciling, lettering, and inking an average of two complete adventure comic books per month.

Yet look at these Autry pages. Rushed, they are at times, but it is the design and storytelling that suffer. Page after page, story after story, even where most evidently pinched by deadlines, his work is strong, the drawing is firm... and the magazines sold.

#17 through #21 appear to have been pencilled somewhat similarly to #16. Once achieved, the basic style would not be easy to forget, and for some artists, pencilling, rather than inking, comes closer to their fundamental way of seeing, thinning. The inking style of #17 - #21 is too heavy and swiftly done to match the unique images of #16.

#22 through #25 have other artists on the lead story, with our artist doing the short stories in the back of the book (except #26, where he does not appear at all). I do not know the name of the artist of #22, but in #23 is Nicholas Firefly -- a fine artist painter of western scenes who went back to his easel in Santa Barbara when Gene Autry ceased being published.

In #27 our artist returns for a one night stand, and a great one. For the first time, the story itself is interesting from a viewpoint other than the classic ranch-town-sheriff hero type. A wild old man who lives with a bear, Indians, and an exciting storyline. Our artist is unshamed and consistent. #16 was an unexpected tour de force that weakened... #27 comes off perfectly.

From #28 to #37 it is sometimes Fireflies, sometimes our artist, on the lead story. Of this group perhaps only #34 approaches the quality of #27, with some unusual characters and use of textures. It also features a petticoat blonde who bears a close resemblance to Sybil, a young lady the artist knew at the time.

#37 is the last Gene Autry the artist was featured in. He did the second stories in #39 (a wonderful artwork of a New Orleans setting) and #40; but by the time he was no longer drawing Autry, he was illustrating Johnny Mack Brown.

In my opinion, Johnny Mack Brown #2 is the best western illustration this artist has done. It may be the best artwork he has done in any comic book... truly western comic book anyone has done!

It benefits from a fine script, in the classic western mold... a tenderfoot who turns on Johnny after Johnny Mack makes a man of him... a man of hidden wealth on a ranch... a pretty gal... everything's there. The illustration is bed-rock simple. The characters are real working westerners, unglorified, and the panels breathe the dust and saddle west in a fine visual representation of the half true/half legend southwest as it is ever received. Perhaps others show us a more universally accepted image of the cowboy here, but it is interesting to imagine what this artist might have done had he not had to use these carry-over heroes from the silliest, most untrue stories ever made of the cowboy legend.

With Johnny Mack Brown #9 this artist left the western to concentrate on other comic books for Dell, and comic strips for Walt Disney. Over the years, his western illustrations have appeared very intermittently in Buck Jones, Rex Allen, Annie Oakley, Jesse James and Range Rider, and none of them exhibit the drawing and strong feeling for the theme as does Johnny Mack Brown #2.

His work changed quite drastically in the middle 1950's and it would seem to be largely responsible for the present day reaction of his work by so many comic book fans. That it may be that special breed of cat -- the fan -- who is rejecting his work might be inferred from the fact that the comic book that carries his work today is one of the best selling of stands, and that his work was in the increasingly successful Davy Crockett (good for eight million copies sold it's very first few months).

How can this artist who is so criticized by Fandom, this paragon of speed who once illustrated nine complete pages in one very long working day, this man who never looks at a comic book, especially one he himself has done... how can this artist, despite these seeming handicaps, produce best-selling comic books?

"Perhaps it isn't the whole answer, but the simple fact may be that he is a fine natural artist who can tell a story originally. Especially here in the later issues of this series of comic books, the beautifully designed, strong, simple panels tell a story as well as any other ever done in comic book form. While we can't always identify ourselves completely with his heroes, they are not copies of any other that ever existed. His style is unique, and at this date in comic book strip art, how rare that is!

Where does this artist rank in the pantheon of comic book greats? My own opinion is that we have yet to reach the heights to which his earlier, better work was prizeworthy. The passage of time tends to confer the favor of approval on the strong, the simple, and the truly original. We still stand too close, too close, but I strongly suspect that time will certainly favor this artist's work and reputation; though the artist, it would seem, could hardly care less.

... ... ...

For those fans who haven't already guessed, and for those who do not have a "like stack of comics wherein to trace his art to the recognizable mature style, and for those collectors whose alter-egos are searchers of comic book esthetics... a very distinctive-looking character is inscribing this artist's name on a tombstone in panel 1, page 9, of Johnny Mack Brown #3 (Jan-Mar 1951)."
Originally, I planned to editorialise in this space... in the traditional sense, rather than the somewhat new-fangled Finnish sense of just talking about the fans, etc. At this point, though, after weeks of typing and pasting and transferring rub-off lettering (and no, Harvey, justified margins just aren't worth the trouble), well... I'm too exhausted to discuss proposed topics like 'art-zines vs. articles-zines'. Besides, that sort of editorialising just isn't one of my talents. I have a list of things to cover sitting on the desk before me, and by George, I'm going to go right down it, bit by bit.

My advertising a four-color cover in RRCC was, obviously, overly ambitious and premature. While I'm happy to report that Sense of Wonder is beginning (I repeat, beginning) to hold its own financially, it may be a while before I can manage that kind of lavish production. Four-color covers are especially good if you plan on hawking your fanzine at conventions or on newstands... and I would never deny that they are very nice; personally, I would prefer a 40 page fanzine in black and white rather than a 25 page zine with color covers, if a choice had to be made. After all, Sense of Wonder isn't an 'art-zine' of the infinity/inanity ilk. If I had to describe the strongest point of SoW it would be the articles and lay-outs. There are plenty of customers around to support all kinds of fan-zines. (I could point out, somewhat cynically, that a fanzine like Phase just couldn't hack it... despite the Jonesses and Wrightsons.) I stubbornly hold by the theory that 'quality will out'. In other words, if you've got something good, it will find its market. And if you don't, why, then you either become a martyr (as I did with earlier issues of SoW), function with a small circulation, discontinue, or alter your product so that it supplies a real demand.

Didn't I say somewhere back there that I wouldn't discuss the art-zine/article-zine question? Ah well... ye editor can't resist shooting his mouth off occasionally. And, as I believe Roy Thomas once said, you pretty much have to tolerate such idiosyncrasies, because the editor is also the publisher. I am constantly amazed at the help I've received from so many fans/friends. For example, Alan (E.R.B. Digest) Tompkins provided numerous photocopies for John Ryan's articles and insisted on footing the bill himself. Ray Miller, Joe Brancati, Tossy Isabella, and Jan Strnad all lent me artwork from their collections. When his first finished cover was ruined in a Phoenix flood that inundated his home, Don Newton found time to do not one, but two full-pagers. And Dick Kyle came through with Vince Davis' beautiful photo study of Jack Kirby. Heroes all!

But, without slighting the aforementioned gentlemen one bit, I must single out John Ryan, without whom half these pages would be a rather stark white. John... remember how you couldn't manage anything new for me because you were so busy? -- Famous Last Words, if I ever heard them. Seems like ancient history now, after you wrote one and a half new articles and supplied twice as many photocopies as I could possibly use.

This issue contains two reprints. The main body of the Yarmak article, as stated, ran in the long-defunct E.R.B. Digest, and "Model to T-Bird" saw print in Capt. Billo White's Batmania #1... way back in July, 1946 (my first fanzine). Due to their excellence, their age, and their rarity, I decided to dust them off... do some updating... and, with the best wishes of editors Tompkins and White, here they are. (Bob Cosgrove's fine Kirby piece and Jim Schumeister's equally fine cartoons were given trial runs in comics apa, CAPA-Alphas.)

Way back in issue #10, in an editorial entitled "Transition", I talked about how my concept of Sense of Wonder was changing, and how I envisioned the fanzine as improving until it became a well-balanced, informative magazine of the graphic arts. I talked in somewhat lofty terms about what I felt the goals of the fanzine should be. Now, several months and two issues later, I see a substantially different fanzine before me... one that, I think, has taken a couple giant steps toward becoming the sort of journal I wanted, and I felt Fandom wanted. What I want to know is, do you approve? Does the direction SoW has please you? How would you alter it if you were editor?

Let me know, either by writing a letter or re-ordering and including a brief note. Feedback is essential if I am to know how SoW looks to you; in many ways, I'm too close to it to look at it objectively. So write (published letters merit a freeish)... and re-order. #13 will cost $1.50, and taken please you? how would you alter it... if you were editor?

I guess that's all for now. Take care, have fun... enjoy yourself.

Peace,
Bill Schelly

Bill Schelly