Hello Everybody!

...and welcome to the first issue of Woweekowitz. This little mag has been a long time coming. We all got to know one another thru Dean Mullaney, who saw our names in various letters at Marvel, and decided we ought to get together on some sort of mutual project. This book is the result of about a year and a half of work. We all hope it won't be that long before the second issue comes along. But we'll see about that. In any case, if we'll squint over to the right a few inches, you'll see what we have here: this long-awaited (for us) issue. Whether we came up with the kind of stuff a fanzine should have is up to you. Let us know, and you better believe we'll read each letter. We're glad to have you with us!

Willie Blyberg
Editor-for-the-issue

I think this is a pretty good first issue for a bunch of guys who've done very little work on fanzines. As Woweek's first editor, it's been my responsibility to set a standard of quality for the book. I feel this is one you're holding in your hands deserves a place in fandom. If you have any comments or criticisms, please write me, and please give me a break and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Dean Mullaney will edit #2, and all I know about it is that it will contain the second part of my VICTORY strip. If response is good, Vic will be in Woweek permanently. As is, he's set for a three-issue run.

This Issue's Goodies

Page 1: Donald Rogers cover
Page 2: welcome to Woweek
Page 3: The DC Revival Crazes
Page 4: Squeezesbox Serenade
Page 5: "Not Far From Nancy Street"
Page 6: "Davilier" by Jack Frost & Dean Mullaney
Page 7: "The Deus" by Bob Nold
Page 8: "Squibb: Background and Enemies"
Page 9: "The Background Heroes"
Page 10: "The Return of Victory"
Page 11: "The Pathfinder's Course... to Oblivion?" by Dean Mullaney
Page 12: Doc Fate cover

The Woweekowitz staff:
Dean Mullaney
Bob Nold
Jack Frost
Kim Thompson
Willie Blyberg
Don Benner
Tim Corrigan

This issue's guest artists:

Contributions: We'd like to have more contributors, particularly artists. If you're interested, please write first!!! And if possible, send a rough copy of some of your work. We will accept responsibility for unsolicited contributions, and will most likely chuck 'em.

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Woweekowitz, William A. Blyberg, 6b Allott Street, Acton, Massachusetts 01720. Make all checks out to: William A. Blyberg. All characters used herein are (c) their respective companies; strips, articles, and art are (c) the writers and artists.
The biggest obstacle was the fact that the JSA in their
now, rational was afraid to put the JSA in their
their own books, for fear of having it detract from
JSA sales. Renaming the team would be unwise.
However, these days, a super-hero group by another
name is still a big dollar sign... and, so, we have
the Super-Squad, composed of JSA members,
and some new, younger heroes. All of which gives
us a revival of ALL-STAR that actually bears
the title, "The Justice Society of America
Challengers of the Unknown." Considering
the JSA's fans, ALL-STAR would have been
enough.

The first new ALL-STAR issue was tremendous,
and warmly accepted by fans. The revival ball
was rolling.

Here to step: Aquaman. His own book wasn't
revived, basically because ADVENTURE COMICS
was in sales trouble and looking for a strong lead-
character. The Aquaman series, under Dick
Gistaro, Steve Skeates, and Jim Aparo, was
completely one of the most enthusiastically accepted
comics of the early 70's. Like most other comics of
that period, the mystery craze killed it, but
now the pendulum has swung back... so Aquaman
has his chance again. The new Aquaman series
DIARY is even better than the old... and Jim
Aparo has the good sense to bring back
JSA Aquaman on the art. (Ez. Note: now, if they'd
only get Skeates on the story again...)

Then, the long-awaited GREEN LANTERN #90
appeared. After the cancellation of his books
GL (along with Green Arrow and Black Canary)
history, however, Adams and Green Arrow soon left
the strip, Adams for commercial assignments, Green
for ACTION COMICS. However, an issue of
DC SPECIAL (another revival) recently spot-
lighted Green Lantern in a series of reprints.
The response was, again, overwhelming. Another
DC SPECIAL was released, with more GL, and after
selling sales reports, GL was reinstated. Green
Arrow was back as well, since, as far as
sales go today, the more heroes, the merrier.

The direction of the book, however, is back on
Science Fiction. GL making a down-to-
earth element in the book ("Braving in my de-
partment, weirdness is green Lanter-n's..."

PLASTIC MAN was revived. Flash, is, to be
sure, an unlikely candidate for revival. His
Golden Age reprints, collected in DC SPECIAL
#1, didn't spark any cash registers, but, by
now, PLASTIC MAN was scheduled for an FS
tryout, and, in keeping with Infantino's new
policy, he was instead given his own book, a
continuation of the rather disastrous PLASTIC
MAN book DC published during the 60's. But
though the numbering is the same, the Flash
who debuted in #11 in different from the one
who appeared in #1-10. It's a new and improved
PLASTIC MAN is being kept (for the most part).

BLACKHAWK was revived. The Blackhawks
may be considered a super-hero group, I guess... it's
the only logical rationale behind their revival.
But if DC wanted to do another super-
hero group, it's beyond me why they didn't simply
pick another full-fledged super-hero group like
the (right) DOOM PATROL. At any rate, the
merely liberties taken with the Blackhawks, it's
dice to have them back.

Possibly the best revival to date is METAL
MAN. The group was never as popular as
expected, after their cancellation (during their stay in
Earth-II format to include Earth-1, Earth-2, and
this planet Earth, all of which now makes the
JSA conventional enough for their wn book.

"feeler": use of BRAVE & BOLD which is the
springboard for his own magazine's revival. Mr.
MIRACLE was always an excellent seller, but when
Kirby dropped his, he stayed dropped... obvious-
ly, Kirby would have no one handling his char-
acters except him. But the King is back at
Marvel, and has no say in the matter now, so
MISTER MIRACLE is being revived. As yet, I
don't know who will be doing it.

SUPER-TEAM FAMILY, another revival book,
will go to all-new material, and will have
yet another revival as its lead feature... the
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN. This long-time DC
favorite is, like BLACKHAWK, a rather surprising
revival, as it has not been preceded by any
triumphs (at least, not in the last few years) on
but was sales at the end of the Challs career
in their own book enough encouragement to
want their comeback. I suppose a margin must
be left for hit-and-miss, however, which could
explain the Challs' long-awaited return.

Another super-group, this time more of a
sure thing, will be revived... the
TITANS. There will reportedly be a 30-book
show, to boot. The Titans' own book, which
started out as part of "Junior Justice League,"
developed into one of the finest books DC ever
put out. Not having seen the revival yet, I
can't say if it will remain that way, but
judging from the track record of the revivals so
far, the odds are in its favor.

DC's revival craze is rapidly approaching
reverie proportions. They've already revived
all their stable super-groups (except for,
might... the DOOM PATROL and have dived into
the well of solo characters, too. I suggest
that we all enjoy it while we can. Either
the rubber will hit the road, or we'll see
a slew of mass-cancellations, or it will prove to be
as fleeting and unmemorable as the
X-Men were years ago. Or, if we're
lucky, we'll see the revival of
the ATHAN'S DOG AND BROTHER POWER, THE GEEK (they seem
to be something to bring back anything but the DOOM
PATROL).

The revivals themselves: First of all, all
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SQUEEZEBOX SERENADE

BY: KJ ROBBINS

Howdy, y'all, and welcome to the first installment of "Squeezebox Serenade." I hope that you'll find what follows to be of some interest, but remember, if you don't like some of the comments, tough break. These remarks are mine and mine alone. If they should strike you into some form of response, delightful. I'd be very glad to get some feedback from you, 'cause it gets awful lonely when it seems like you're the only comic fan in Montana. My address is: KJ Robbins, 1314 Cooper St., Missoula, Montana 59801.

By the time this fanzine sees print, Archie Goodwin will be the editor-in-chief of whatever remaining Marvel Comics aren't published/written by Roy Thomas, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman, Jack Kirby, and Gerry Conway. I think Archie Goodwin is a very, very good successor to Marv Wolfman, who resigned or was fired in October to return to his former job, but later declined an offer from Marvel to return to the company's editorial staff. Unfortunately, Archie Goodwin was then left in charge of the editorial staff, which was a mistake. The first issue of "Squeezebox Serenade" is a good, solid, no-nonsense comic book that Archie Goodwin did an excellent job of editing.

Another unfortunate departure from the ranks of Marvel was Steve Englehart. The stated cause for his departure is a disagreement between Marvel and Englehart over a minor point in one of his "Warlock" stories. Another possibility is that Englehart was simply burned out on the comic book business. Either way, the loss is a great one for Marvel Comics. Englehart was one of the best writers that Marvel has ever had, and I hope we see him back soon.

The prince causes all the same dislike for Gerry Conway, who was the editor of Marvel's "Warlock" series. Many fans felt that the way Conway handled the series was not up to the standard of the original. Unfortunately, there were too many writers involved in the series to make any real progress. I think that Conway should have been given more time to develop the characters and the story line. It seems to me that Englehart was more than capable of handling the series, and I hope that Marvel Comics will give him another chance to show what he can do.

In conclusion, I hope that this first installment of "Squeezebox Serenade" has been informative and enjoyable for you. I look forward to hearing from you and reading your responses. Thank you for reading, and remember, if you don't like what you see here, tough break.
One of the most monumental happenings in the comics world over the past few years has been the rapid growth of the unique union we have come to know as the superhero group. The Silver Age has seen many superheroes band together to form super-groups, beginning with the Justice League of America. And with their popularity at an all-time high, we may reflect and ask just what makes these assemblages so appealing. Well, the reasons are many and varied, but we'll try to enumerate on a few of the more important ones: the whys, hows, the wherefores, and the therefore.

Since their birth, the superheroes have been the most popular type of entertainment the comic world has to offer. Despite infatuations with SAS, horror, Fung-Fu, and the like, the only constant seller remains the superhero. They have weathered the storms and continue to thrive, today expanding their horizons to include everything from cosmic adventurers to urban daredevils (small 'd').

Therefore, it logically stands to reason that if one character attains a great appeal from the public, said character congregated with similarly popular characters would assume a combined appeal which would be greater than the separate ones. This theory was borne out since the forties with one character, starring in another's book. And the obvious outgrowth of this philosophy is the idea of a permanent guest-star situation: the formation of a super-group with a number of separately appealing personalities together issue after issue. Thus, there is seemingly no limit to its success.

One undeniable attribute of a group of superheroes is the exhilaration of seeing not one but several of one's favorite characters acting as a unit to do battle, whether against a powerful single villain, or an offsetting group of super-villains. These legions offer a brand of action which lends itself perfectly towards more grandiose stories, the scope of which are rarely equalled by the exploits of a single character. To name but a memorable two, we easily recall the Kree/Inhumans saga in the Avengers and the great heroes of Earth 1 and 2 in JLA.

Yet this grand scale is only one level of the super-group's appeal. Just as important as the action-oriented detail mentioned above is the ever-important question of character interaction. Relations involved whenever two or more heroes get together. Character interplay has been very influential, and sometimes dominant factor in the development of the super-groups. This element of interest in the contemporary form can be easily traced to the Lee/Kirby Fantastic Four. Yet as the FF were not established characters prior to their becoming a team, a look to the success of Lee and Kirby's first true-blue super-group, the Avengers.

With DC showing great success with their entry, the JLA, Marvel decided to try their hand at such an offering, and the results were seen in the first issue of the Avengers (years later, the Defenders were formed in a similar manner. With the Avenger Lee and Kirby followed thru with their successful formula of trying to make their characters as humanly believable as possible. As the one-to-one to hero, especially when the personalities involved are out of the ordinary, it seems a logical second step that when the super-ego that accompanies super-powers clash, conflicts will arise. This addition to the super-group idea, that of having personalities that did conflict makes the Avengers what we consider the most modern super-group. In contrast to the homogeneous JLA, the Avengers were formed with dimension from the very beginning, with each hero having his own natural horizons, and as Lee and Kirby pointed out, our concepts could and did exist in the comic book world.

Yet another interesting, and also recently prominent factor in the history of the super-group has been the wider use of characters who do not maintain a series of their own. Without the benefit of a solo book, these characters have a more viable influence on the inking artists as the teams begin to develop for development. Then in Avengers #1, Thor, Iron Man, and Captain America could and did exist in the comic book world.

So, as the super-group, or smaller team-up formats become more and more visible in the comic world, a reflection is due, and a lot of thinking concerned the reasons, effectiveness, and by-products scanned. Keep you chin up... the next group may not be far from Vance Street.
But I have come to this great conference for more than the generous accolades of my peers. It is my intention to introduce today a plan that will be my life's work—a machine that will save the world!

The great Dr. Edward Kettering, whose contributions to science have been the most significant of the age, had begun his greatest project, the "Miracle Machine." Yes, I know that many of you here know scientists yourselves will scoff at the idea of a machine that will solve humanitarian problems. But I believe it will work, and I believe it to be our greatest opportunity to use science as a tool to achieve these ends.

Kettering was held in great respect by the scientific community. His plan was accepted with enthusiasm, and he used the available platform to speak to the world.

"Machine as it has been designed will solve the problems that trouble us most. It means the arms race, starvation, disease, and corruption.

Credits:
Writer: Bill FawWalker
Artist & Letterer: Pete Rod

One of the first things done was to construct a space station to joy as a reminder of what we are capable of.

Soon after its completion I stood with Dr. Kettering as he looked out over a world that was virtually his. Well, Dr. Kettering, you have the opportunity you have always wanted—a chance to organize the world—to see its people working together in peace—and if your plans are accomplished, to see that this will become permanent.

I, of course, knew little more than anyone else. I was close to the center of the great project. Yet, the ultimate goals of Dr. Kettering and the scope of the machine were unknown to me. The Doctor gave certain bits of information that could be released to the public...
I was very much worried about his mental stability, but I was encouraged by the reaction of the general public. There was much great faith in Dr. Kettering. The great masses of the poor and hapless for whom we worked. I decided to continue my work on the project for their sake.

Yes, Wilhelm, in another two months we'll be finished and the world will be much better off for our efforts. Our responsibility has been great, but the feeling of accomplishment will be that much greater.

It was two weeks before the machine was to be set into operation. That came upon a device on the spaceship that was similar to the one on the surface of the earth. It was a part of the project that had been personally supervised by Dr. Kettering. Its construction had begun near the time I had met with Dr. Kettering's attitude amusing. I had to know what it was.

I found that the supervision and security were too strict to attempt an elimination of the machine. I had top level clearance, but such action would surely be noticed. I was forced to change my plans. Only a few days until the police is set off. Any one of those arrangements in the apparatus at the key point.

The security in that area was naturally the strictest. Dr. Kettering had seen to that, but my gamble was successful. I was able to work on the part I wanted to. Time was running out. I decided to take a desperate chance.

If I reverse my wiring...the ship may be restored instead of the earth, if I had more time to work...

But I had no more time. The chance in which the wrongs would have to do. I had finished the work, but I had a feeling that Dr. Kettering was aware of my plans. He seemed to be nervous about something. When I spoke with him, the day before the machine was to be put into operation. He called me into his office...

Wilhelm, I think it would be wise if you were to go to earth for the ceremonies at that spot tomorrow. I'll be able to handle things. Of course, up here. Whatever you wish.
A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE CEREMONIES WERE TO BEGIN, THE LEADERS OF ALL THE NATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE PROJECT, VIRTUALLY EVERY NATION IN THE WORLD, BEGAN TO ARRIVE ON THE SHIP.

THEY ASSEMBLED IN THE GREAT MEETING HALL OF THE SHIP, AND AS DR. KETTERING ENTERRED THE CEREMONIES BEGAN. I, IN MY HIDDEN POST, KEPT WATCH OVER THE AREA I HAD WORKED ON. NO INSPECTION OF IT WAS MADE.

I WAS SURE THAT THE ESSOR HAD NOT CLASSED WHAT I HAD DONE.

I HEARD HIS WORDS, AND I KNEW I HAD BEEN RIGHT. IT WAS MEANT TO WORK DIFFERENTLY THAN ANY HAD IMAGINED. BUT IT WOULD WORK PRECISELY THE WAY I HAD IMAGINED, TOO.

I'VE SAVED THE WORLD!

OVER THE MONITORS IN THE HALL, I COULD HEAR THE SPEECHES BEING MADE TO COMMUNICATE THE MIRACLE MACHINE AND ITS INVENTOR...

THE MACHINE WILL BE SET AND OPERATED BY DR. KETTERING!

IN THE GREAT HALL, DR. KETTERING HAD RISEN TO SPEAK...

THEY APPLAUSED HIM AS A SAVIOR, EVEN AFTER THE SHIP HAS BEEN DESTROYED. HIS MEMORY WILL LIVE ON AS A MAN WHO TRIED TO SAVE THE WORLD BUT FAILED DUE TO THE INABILITY OF OTHERS TO IMPLEMENT HIS PLANS. EVEN THOSE LEADERS ON THE SHIP WILL BE REMEMBERED THE WAY MOST OF THEM TYPED OUT, LOSS AND DEATH TO HAVE THEIR DESTROYED ALONG WITH THE MADMAN.

I KNEW THEN THAT I HAD GUESSED WRONG—SOMETHING WAS NOT AS I HAD SEEN IT TO BE. DR. KETTERING HAD DIFFERENT PLANS THAN I HAD THOUGHT. I Burst FROM AN ESTATE...

AND SO I REALIZED THAT MY PLAN HAD BEEN A FAILURE. THEN, A THOUGHT CAME TO ME. THE WAY TO REMOVE THE LAST REMAINING BARRIERS TO TOTAL INTEGRATION OF OUR PEOPLE WAS TO...

I WAS SEIZED BY SECURITY GUARDS OUTSIDE THE HALL...

I SPEAK OF YOU HERE TODAY. THE LEADERS OF THE WORLD. MY MACHINE WILL DESTROY THIS SHIP, AND ALL ON IT. YOU WILL DIE AND BE CONSIDERED MARRIERS, AND FOR THIS, FOR YOUR LIVES, YOU WILL BE WORTH SOMETHING TO YOUR PEOPLE.

THE ROBERTS HAD CONTRASTED WHAT I HAD SUGGESTED WRITE HIS PLANS...

THIS WAS OUR HOPPE WEST TO DO. DESPITE THE IMPROVEMENTS WE MET IN OUT ONE-TO-ONE RELATIONSHIPS, WE STILL HAD THE SAME AMOUNT FOR EACH OTHER ALONG THE LINES OF GENERALITIES: RACES, NATIONS, RELIGIONS...

THEN. THE RUINS, I HEARD HIS SPEECH GO ON...

"FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE WORK, JUST TWO OF US JUST SEVEN YEARS HAS BEEN TO CHASE..."

I HAD NO MACHINES PLANNED THAT COULD TRULY SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS AS A PEOPLED SHIP. I HAD SUCCEEDED IN GETTING PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND BACKGROUNDS TO WORK TOGETHER...

"I HAVE A SYSTEM OF VALUES..."

"AND I KNEW I HAD NO CHANCE TO PREVENT WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN...

"I SPEAK OF YOU HERE TODAY.

"THE LEADERS OF OUR WORLD. MY MACHINE WILL DESTROY THIS SHIP, AND ALL ON IT. YOU WILL DIE AND BE CONSIDERED MARRIERS, AND FOR THIS, FOR YOUR LIVES, YOU WILL BE WORTH SOMETHING TO YOUR PEOPLE..."
THE

by BOB RODI

THE DUCK

The Duck is one of the century's literary phenomena. He is certainly without a doubt THE comic book phenomenon, artistically. Unlike other character types (i.e. barbarians, gothic heroines, super-heroes, monsters, etc.), the Duck presages his carefully delineated personality to become the ultimate fictional character, the only type adaptable to any genre.

The Duck has seen his growth come almost entirely in comics. To the comic book writer, the Duck is like a blank canvas he to a painter. A key to any works the writer's imagination comes to dwell in. The Duck can be worked into anything, purged into any mold. And, while the painter is not guaranteed of success...after some work is in placed, the comic book writer has the advantage of the Duck's previously established personality, a personality which lends itself to any situation, and seasons the stories until they are irresistibly appealing.

The Duck's personality...just what is it? The Duck is a humanist, a man of good will. He may be greedy, lustful, or influenced by some other, more powerful vice, but he is still an innocent character, who, when an emergency arises, will place all aside in favor of helping his fellow milk. And still, the Duck is ill-tempered, and almost undoubtedly has high blood pressure. He does not take to idle and holds his personal honor in great esteem.

In short, the Duck embodies all the qualities, both the shortcomings and the beauty, that are inherent in all mankind.

The Duck is Everyman. No more, no less.

Is it poetic irony that mankind should be so flawlessly reflected in the Duck? He is approximately three feet tall, white or pale yellow, downy, haggard, with bigger feet and bill. The physical resemblance to mankind is non-fatal.

The Duck evolved under the guidance of Carl Barks, backed by Walt Disney's studios. The first Duck, the one who established all the Duck characteristics we have discussed. Originally confined to Duckburg, a fictional town which was inhabited by other animals, Donald found himself stagnating. In Duckburg, there were always happy mice, sleepy dogs, and amorous cows. This was the Duck's place. The Duck had ambitions beyond 'Funny Animal' job security. Of the Duck population in Duckburg, one Duck had to transcend the Duckburg facade and become...a fantasy hero. Thus, under Carl Barks, was created the legendary Uncle Scrooge.

Scrooge McDuck, whose limitless wealth gave him access to the world. He included his nephews, Donald, as well as Donald's staunchly loyal nephew Huey; Dewey, and Louie, in his travels. Duckburg became nothing more than a pit-stop. The Ducks raced thru every popular comic book genre in existence. In outer space, they shared cosmic adventures with green space-dudes. In exotic alien countries, they fought the forces of nature. Under the sea, in a dense jungle, in the old west, in haunted houses...no stone was left unturned.

The 1970's came, and world taste in literature changed. Comic books changed along with it. People no longer wanted to read about the noble heroes they had previously supported. The 1970's saw the advent of the anti-hero, the downbeat, raunchy protagonist who was less than admirable, but still hero material because of his ability to take life on his own terms.

And so, quietly, did Howard the Duck enter the picture, pulled from his funny animal world into our own; a world he never knew. What better anti-hero could there be? A social misfit, rejected by a society he could never hope to join, and yet, his difference allows him to make even more incisive observations into our social structure.

And aside from that, he is a Duck. THE Duck of the seventies.

Howard is the antithesis of his ancestors, further proving the versatility of the Duck as the definitive literary character. The previous Ducks had exotic adventures. Howard lives in Cleveland, capital of urban obesity. Yet, Howard, the Duck, endures; no, more than endures. He sets new literary milestones with each appearance.

Howard has shown us man's survival instinct from the moment he arrived in Cleveland, friendless, we have been with him as he was jailed, naked, then on the brink of suicide, but each time his humanitarianism called him from his own troubles to the aid of someone else.

Such is the lot of the Duck. To serve as a mirror for mankind. To show the dignity inherent in us all, the depth of human suffering and the breadth of humanitarianism. To reveal, amidst all its trials, the mobility and the honor and the love that make up the human spirit.

Waaah!
BEGINNING A SERIES OF REPORTS ON: S.H.I.E.L.D.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND & ENEMIES

In May of 1965, Nick Fury, the tough and tumble commando sergeant of World War II, entered the James Bond world of espionage with the premiere of NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. in Strange Tales #139. Marvel published four years, through 14 issues of Strange Tales (1966-1969) and 15 issues of its own title, before giving in to poor sales. S.H.I.E.L.D. has also made numerous appearances in almost all of Marvel's superhero titles and has been a part of the Captain America series for many years.

S.H.I.E.L.D. was Marvel Comics' contribution to the popularity of secret agent fiction in the mid-sixties, the comics' answer to the movies' James Bond and his like. The intrepid S.H.I.E.L.D. agents, with Nick Fury forever in the lead, did battle with numerous elements of evil around the globe, saving the world from domination by the likes of HYDRA and AIM, the comics' counterparts of Bond's N.E.C.T.A. and ÜL.T.U.M.'s THORN.

In the first S.H.I.E.L.D. story, Nick Fury was a colonel in the CIA. His introduction to S.H.I.E.L.D. came by way of a Pentagon directive to set up a new unit for the making of a set of the model. The agents, extremely sophisticated and perfectly likable android replicas of Fury himself, within minutes of their being turned loose on the city streets, Fury witnessed the destruction of a quartet of LMDs by unknown attackers. Shortly afterward, while being driven to an unknown destination, Fury's car was attacked by a fighter jet. Dispensing of the jet with side-winder missiles fired from the rear of the car, Fury's driver informed him of the existence of an international organisation called S.H.I.E.L.D. Their attackers in the jet, and those who destroyed the LMDs, were agents of a small,Fanatical organisation dedicated to world domination.

Arriving at his destination, Fury was introduced to Tony Stilton, also by Stilton, and head of S.H.I.E.L.D.'s Special Reconnaissance Section. He was hurriedly introduced to a council in which he recognized some familiar faces from his CIA experience and the world. This council informed Fury of S.H.I.E.L.D. and the reason for its creation: the destruction of HYDRA.

The council also told Fury the reason for his presence there. They believed that he was the man most capable of leading S.H.I.E.L.D. to its goal. As Tony Stilton put it, Fury was needed to smash the entire HYDRA network. The team of agents would be called to life his life to it. A man like you, Fury.

At first, Fury refused, feeling himself incapable of leading an organisation with the technology and power of S.H.I.E.L.D. Moments later, however, he discovered that his chair was body-trapped and, with the speed and skill born of a thousand combat missions, tore the chair from the floor and threw it through a window, discovering he was aboard the hell-carrier, S.H.I.E.L.D.'s flying headquarters. Following the orders to lead S.H.I.E.L.D. to its mission to destroy HYDRA.

Recruiting two former members of his W.W.II commando squad, Duke Dugan and Gabe Jones, Fury began his work in earnest. At one point, he was captured by HYDRA, but escaped with the help of Laura Brown, the daughter of the Imperial HYDRA. During his escape, S.H.I.E.L.D.'s unusual squad, led by Dugan and Jones, attacked HYDRA's headquarters and, in the ensuing battle, Imperial HYDRA, whose real name was Arnold Brown, was killed by several of his followers who did not recognize him without his uniform.

Laura Brown in return for her assistance in Fury's escape, was allowed to escape from her S.H.I.E.L.D. base by Fury's intervention. She later returned to join S.H.I.E.L.D.

But Fury's job didn't end with the defeat of HYDRA. As always, there were others who were ready to take up where HYDRA left off. Over the years, S.H.I.E.L.D. has fought the menaces of the Fantastic Four, the Black Widow, the Mad Thinker, and many, many times, the revitalized HYDRA.

In recent years, after suffering defeat at the hands of S.H.I.E.L.D., Captain America, and the Hulk, HYDRA has reorganized itself and sought out more powerful leaders. The present Supreme Hydra in Silvermane, former head of the ancient Maggia crime syndicate has recruited as his division chiefs such powerful men as Blackwing, Commander Kraken, Man-Killer, El Jaguar, Jackhammer, and the HYDRA splinter groups of SHEM, AIM, and the Secret Empire, the Raftman, and the Trucker, among many, many times, industrialists.

One of S.H.I.E.L.D.'s greatest opponents was the oriental mastermind, the Yellow Claw. Several times, the Claw came close to ending Nick Fury's career and his life. Finally, in a climactic battle between the forces of S.H.I.E.L.D. and the Yellow Claw, Fury defeated his opponent, only to discover that the Claw and his associates were robots. To this day, Fury does not know that he and S.H.I.E.L.D. were used as places in a Chees game between Doctor Doom and a gaming machine called the Photon Pheron.

One foe who had an enormous effect upon the life of Nick Fury was Scorpio. A member of the Zodiac crime cartel. Although they met only twice, the second meeting held a shocking revelation for Fury. In that meeting, Scorpio had captured Fury and set him up as a model gun for testing, and disciplined himself as the S.H.I.E.L.D. raccoon in order to witness Fury's death. Once again, Fury escaped his doom, and in battle with Scorpio, tore the villain's mask loose, revealing the face of his own brother, Jake Fury. S.H.I.E.L.D. and Scorpio Jake plunged through a window and into a river below. It is not known whether or not he survived, since a body was never found. In the most recent appearance by Zodiac, however, they had been joined by a new Scorpio.

Since the cancellation of Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., Fury and his agents have made numerous appearances in almost all of Marvel's comics. Nick Fury and S.H.I.E.L.D. have, for many years, been a part of the Captain America strip, beginning when Cap was still a feature in Tales of Suspense. S.H.I.E.L.D.'s most recent appearances have been in Daredevil, in the Incredible Hulk, where agent Clay Quartermain has been acting as liaison between S.H.I.E.L.D. and the U.S. Army. Little is known of S.H.I.E.L.D.'s future plans, although a one-issue feature is scheduled for a coming Marvel Spotlight. What will come after that is known only to the minds of the Marvel Comics Group.
First, the Spirit.

I have chosen, to back up and exploit any general statements, stories from Warren’s Spirit #10 (Oct, 1975), I trust a fairly representative sample of the series as a whole. We have in this book no less than four stories in which Our Masked Hero is not in any way one of the main characters of the plot (maybe the only one, but that’s irrelevant). “Death is My Destiny”: “A Time-Stop” Ground; and “The Meanest Man in the World.”

Curiously enough, in the first story listed above, the Spirit seems to be very much part of the plot indeed, even indulging in a page-long flat-out fight with Jigger and generally making himself obtrusive; yet, he is still not one of the points of conflict. As the real, basic conflict in the story is between Vane, Smiley, and the uh, “spirit” of the gun; also, the resolution of the drama does not at all include the Spirit; hence he is not truly a basic part of the plot, as the action of Jigger could just as well have been done by any cop as far as the story is concerned (but, in that case it would not be a Spirit story, right? We’ll come to that). This is the key point: influence the ending. In each of the four stories listed above, the outcome is not determined by the Spirit himself, but is a logical (from a dramatic if not a verbatim point of view) conclusion to the conflict and the characters in question. Note how little Our Hero has to do with each of the endings:

- he is not even physically present in the final scene of the story
- the death of Tymely is virtually self-induced.
- the phone call is too late.
- Splinter Weevil’s conversion is his own doing.
- At this point, there is a tendency to ask, “Then why the hell are they made out to be Spirit stories?”

The answer is that, while not actively involved in the plot and not playing any pivotal roles, the Spirit is a reference point that indicates all the events chronicled in this series take place in the same fictional world (theoretically, any two pieces of fiction without a common fictional character would be considered as happening in different worlds). All Elmers’ Spirit world (no relation to Kirby’s) contains an incredibly vast gallery of people and situations, such as, drawing from the four stories covered in this article: Jigger, Vane and Smiley; Amos Fife, the old gambah; Marc Tymely, the coal miner Ben Way (famous Splinter Weevil, etc., etc., a Smith but certainly not comic). Without a running character to tie them all together, all the others to whom the gloriously rich and varied tapestry of life that is Will Elmer’s Spirit.

Parenthetical remarks:

Now, there is a simpler, more direct, albeit artistically annoying and slightly cynical argument that states that the reason the Spirit is in these stories in that Elmer did want to do independent short stories, but, considering the title of the mag (or, originally, series), he had to sneak in the hero somewhere. It should be considered, and is in a sense probably true. But, in any event, it is very easy to take facts that have sprung out of sheer technical (or, today’s high-commercial-point of view) necessity and prove them artistic worth.

But then, in it important? Shouldn’t the final result, and only the final result be considered, regardless of the various influences that led to it? Let us restate the Spirit World Controversy. I am not saying that Elmer favored the Spirit in all the stories to achieve that effect (I would probably be wrong). I am saying that the effect was achieved, period.

As an example and reference for film buffs in the audience (usually a high percentage of Warren’s audience), "Targets" was written by John Carpenter from an unfinished Karloff horror flick, and the Dean Martin show were shot at the studio of one of our own fave authors, Roger Corman.

In art, any art — the film affect is the only valid criterion for critical evaluation. By Elmer or Corman (Gerber, as will be pointed out later, is a different case) I am implying later paragraphs to keep you hooked, dear reader, I mean to not only circumvent but even use the limitations of the medium, or of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the piece of art, to produce powerful stories or movies. This is why I am focusing upon critical judgment; not positively, nor negatively. It works both ways.

So return to our regularly scheduled article, with apologies for going off on tangents, but the above point is an important one and I might as well feed off the above-mentioned cynical remarks as soon as possible.

Now a look at Man-Thing and this book’s mildly calculated cast of characters (at last). For this series, I have chosen as references eight titles (containing eleven issues): “No Choices of Evil” (F1 #12); “The Great” (F10); the Gloom stories (Man-Thing #5); the "Mad Against the Beast" (magnificently); the "Sage, Fool, and Angel" stories; and the book burning scenes (F11). Which are that I consider to be the most important ‘human’ influences or maybe book influences. I realize its something akin to wishing for a Man-Thing annual which doesn’t even mention Howard the Duck, so there’s no way to tell what’s in the mind of the artist. So I count the fantasy (I mean outright, wild-eyed stuff, not based on the comics) into the background character series, as well.

One immediately notes a structural similarity with the Spirit stories (see how neatly it
...in the dynamic tension/conflict is set up between parties other than the presumed "star," and that these conflicts were their way towards logical conclusions without any true interference from this "star." If there is any attempted interference, it is usually ineffective and amounts to nothing in the end. For example, in the stories chosen:

- Jackson, temporarily saved by Nancy, is nonetheless killed by Corey.
- Darrel is driven to suicide by his wife.
- Taw is killed.

All the have-meantings, with the exception of two "uninvolved" (or "innocents"?), are killed.

Darrel's soul is supposed saved, but his life on Earth was miserable nonetheless; besides, it's in a way grim that the only bright point in the series is brought on by such mystical happenings even human life is more to be taken as a thematic point, rather than at face value.

However, the reader will object, in each case, despite his alleged being a part to the conflict, Man-Thing does do his thing; every time the character comes to the conflict, the Man-Thing does do his thing; every time the character comes to the conflict, the Man-Thing does do his thing; every time the character comes to the conflict, the Man-Thing does do his thing; every time the character comes to the conflict, the Man-Thing does do his thing; every time the character comes to the conflict, the Man-Thing does do his thing; even though it was in a way grim that the only bright point in the series is brought on by such mystical happenings even human life is more to be taken as a thematic point, rather than at face value.

In other words, we have here a recurring Deus ex Machina, also definable as literally cheating.

"Deus ex Machina" means "the god from the machine," and in this case, it is not used only as a concept (which is the case with e.g. Reed Richards whipping up some wonderful technology on the next-to-last-page and saving the situations of the series, or, more precisely, a direct physical manifestation of the true law of the (or any) series: the author, if you assimilate the telling of a story to a puppet show, the author is the one who is pulling all the strings. This sirro-biologically intriguing phenomenon as possible, and it would seem downright dishonest if the puppet-master disposed of the evil imp at the end of the show by smashing down his feet on the circle of the stars. With the "Man-Thing" story, it's exactly the same story."

Man-Thing in the last part of the conflict, he does not interfere with the fate of the characters in question, has no true motivation, is omnipotent, and his actions, inventive and destructive, are a sign of his desire to destroy the world as the author desires it. The "Man-Thing" story is exactly the same story."

An intriguing sidelight to the "Man-Thing" relationship is in "The Kid's Right Out," where the "Man-Thing" is in so far being "spirited" away by a group of characters, who take it off into strange, very similar relationships. The "Man-Thing" stories are even more complex, as we shall see, to the figure the book's back-up feature Melor, as well as the moderately Herberman's "Climb" anyone care.

suddenly has developed a faculty to detect unincidental accidents. Manny is the avenger, or avenger, period.

I believe that if there lingers an uneasy feeling after the reading of the "Man-Thing" stories, rather than the total mental cathartic organism the traditional ed shortener experience, it is because while the negative part of the story (the hurting or killing of the good or innocent) is a logical part of the plot, the subsequent punishment of the evil that has perpetuated the act is not a consequence of this act, but is brought on by an element, a force extraneous to the plot and is thus unsatisfying.

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As all you comic aficionados are aware, confrontations occur pretty often in comics. Once a meeting of hero or villain, evil group vs. super-group, or just what-have-you becomes a hit with the readers, well, you can be positively sure that you haven't seen the last of them. To elaborate more on what I'm getting at, let me enumerate some classic meetings of these confrontations, mostly from DC and Marvel books... Galactus vs. Fantastic Four, FF vs. Doctor Doom, Spider-Man vs. Superman, Aquaman and Ocean Master, Batman and Joker, Mister Miracle and Granny Goodness, Squadron Supreme vs. the Avengers, and the list goes on and on and on. One particular and very popular meeting that I've grown very fond of over the years is the one-and-only, knock-down, drag-out showdown of the ever-loved, blue-eyed Thing and the incredible Hulk!

The Thing and Hulk first faced off against each other in mortal combat in the now-classic FF #4, 24 and 75. Since that time, they have battled each other on and off over the years. Their last meeting get-together was FF #166 and 167. This confrontation was unique and so unlike its predecessors, in that Ben and Greenskin fought side-by-side. Unfortunately, it was an alliance short-lived, as it didn't last because of their belligerent natures, which once again took control, and they were at it once more.

Which one is the strongest, you may ask? Glad you asked. Obviously, I think the Hulk is. Obviously again, due to his explosive emotional rage and hatred. To borrow from the Hulk's own vocabulary: "The sadder Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets!"

I remember one fan mentioning years ago in an old Marvel lettercol that he believed the Thing to be the stronger of the two. His theory goes that Ben, being of larger stature, more rugged, and sheerer strength than the frail Bruce Banner, could assimilate more cosmic rays than Banner could those gamma rays. I note that Ben Grimm was exposed, despite his space suit's protection, longer to the cosmic rays in Space than Banner was, and those gamma rays here on Earth. So I don't see why this theory should not have a sound foundation. Thus, it is a cogent one to be sure, and, in my opinion, I agree that the Thing is actually stronger than the Hulk, up to a point. The Hulk, you see, does have the advantage in the long run 'cause he hardly ever tires.

In FF #112 (one of my favorite issues ever), we see this plotted. Here's let me point out that the blue-eyed Thing usually got the best of Greenskin during this confrontation. The final outcome, that of the Hulk flooring the Thing, was just a fluke. If Ben hadn't been distracted by Alicia's voice, well, yours truly feels the outcome would have been much more in the Thing's favor. Especially seeing as how he was just getting his second wind together. If you'll go back and count the blows, the punches, etc., exchanged between the two, you'll be surprised to see that the Thing is on the offensive and the Hulk is on the defensive. Up until page 17, that is. You must remember, however, that in this meeting the Thing wasn't in full control of his mental faculties, which mitigated some of his will-power and fortitude.

This debate could go on and on as to which of these powerhouses is truly the stronger, but one thing is for certain, and that is we have not by any means seen the last of the Thing vs. Hulk confrontations. Believe it. As it has been shown to be said, Fandom Is a Way of Life...

LETTERING BY: PETE IRO

STORY & ART BY: WILLIE BLYBERG
Our story begins in deep space. The power is off, and the vessel has lain dormant for no one knows how long.

But there is life on board. A prone figure groaning noiselessly begins to stir.

The being rises to his feet and is revealed to be Victory, an heroic agent of good and the central figure of this tale.

Leaving...that electrical system, the ship must have passed right through its circuitry, knocked out the power.

There doesn't seem to be any physical damage. Better safe than sorry.

In fact, Victory is in sight of his objective, the planet Earth. Programmation the auto-pilot to land at the coordinates of Earth's greatest city, Victory turns from the deck.

Earth? Good old Earth! It will indeed be a pleasure to stand again upon the world of my origin!}

The ship's stall is smooth. I'll try to contact Worldopolis!
NOT GETTING ANY ANSWER—NO WAY TO KNOW IF I'M EVEN SERIOUS. THE STORM MUST HAVE SCRAMbled AS... SUDDELLY THE SHIP LURCHES VIOLENTLY OUT OF CONTROL?

BY JUPITER! WHAT??

ENTERING EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, I'D BETTER...

GLANCING TO THE SHIP'S FINE, VICTORY IS ASTONISHED TO SEE...

AT LEAST... I ASSUME SO.

I'M UNDER WATER. I WAS CRUSHED INTO AN EARTH-TIANT OCEAN.

THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION SEEMS DIFFERENT SOMEHOW.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE TRUSTED THE AUTO-PILOT, BUT IT SEEMED TO BE IN PERFECT CONDITION. I'D BETTER RECHECK THAT MACHINERY.

THINKING HIS CONTROLS HAVE BEEN IMPERSONALLY DAMAGED ALONG WITH HIS COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES, VICTORY TRIES TO OPERATE MANUALLY.

OOF! NO PROBLEMS!

CAN'T FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH THE AUTOMATIC CIRCUITRY—THIS IS CERTAINLY Puzzling...

VICTORY SEIPS THE SHIP DOWN ON A LEASE OF ROCK NEAR THE OCEAN'S FLOOR.

I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT MIGHT HAVE CAUSED THIS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE SURFACE.

I'LL CHECK THE OUTER HULL FIRST—GOOD THING I UNLOCKED THE SHIP AFTER PUTTING IT ON AUTO-PILOT.

OTHER INSTRUMENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY WRECKED WHEN THE SHIP SANK.

BUT THAT STILL Doesn'T ANSWER...

BY JUPITER! FANTASTIC!!
Victory is not achieved, but men and women must
wonder about his nature, and can
behave.

If it was
when he
began his
journey, how
became
unconscious
in the void
of space?

VICTORY IS NOT
ACHIEVED, BUT
MEN AND WOMEN
MUST
WONDER ABOUT HIS
NATURE, AND CAN
BEHAVE.

What manner of thing is he?

Strange from the Master of the Mystic Arts to the
Sorcerer Supreme, we found that through such
fantasy elements as a trip to Hell and a
confrontation with Satan, we were able to
relate these events to our own heads. The
resultant karma was beautiful. As Doctor Strange
becomes more and more of a master of the fabric of
his being, so too do we readers develop. The
favorable aspects of each of these books are
easily understandable to those who care enough
to look for them.

Yet Kirby now has the Panther, Wolfman Dr.
Strange, and War of the Worlds has reached that
ultimate state of oblivion-cancellation.

With these three books currently out of
circulation, or at least not the revolutionary
trends that they were, we are left with a Marvel
comics, consisting of solely escapist writers.

That is, with the one exception of Steve Gerber.

Presently I'm very excited about the likes of
Mark Waid's Daredevil and John Buscema,
Chris Claremont's Iron Fist and X-Men, and in
the realm of escapist comics, Marvel is prob-
ably in better shape today than it's ever been,
back to and including the Stan Lee days. There
are so many fine, fine escapist writers such as
Mark, Chris, Bill Mantlo, Len Wein, etc.

And for what they write, these guys are without
par. Yet while I do love escapist comics, and
realize that they have their place, having been
the foundation of the medium since its begin-
nings, there are none, myself included, who
desire other types of comics to go hand in hand
with the escapist variety.

With Don McGregor and Steve Englehart not
writing for Marvel anymore, a formidable loss
I'll say, what is to become of the progressive
Marvel book? There have been cries throughout
the years that the comics need to branch out, ex-
pend into other conceptual types of books, yet
today the cries lean towards a resurgence of
the Stan Lee days of the mid-sixties. And no
I ask, are we to have only a rehashing of the
sweet old flavor, as great as it was? Or are we
to have this resurgence coupled with trans-
verse reaching out in other directions, progres-
sive feelers as it would be?

You decide, the fate of comics hangs in the
balance.