

bhob stewart
and
John Benson

TALK

with

B. Krugstein

It is our hope that this interview will create new interest in comic art among those not acquainted with it as an art form, as well as new interest in Krigstein's work among those who are. Therefore we hope that it will reach a wide audience, not only among comic art fans, but also among those interested in films and the other visual arts.

In this unabridged version of the interview everything that might be of interest to any reader has been retained. We felt that enough of our readers would be familiar with Krigstein's work to warrant the inclusion of detailed discussion of individual stories. We also noticed that while some of our questions had to be extensively rewritten to make sense on paper, Krigstein's answers read well with no changes. Therefore, most of what he says on the following pages is presented verbatim.

The discussion took place on August 16, 1962.

-- John Benson & bhub Stewart

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BS: Have you ever thought of doing a syndicated strip?

BK: I never seriously pursued the idea of syndication; I never made serious effort. I guess the reason is that it never profoundly interested me.

BS: Because you were more interested in illustration?

BK: No, I think the real reason is that I wasn't able to find an outlet in syndicated form for the things that I'd like to do. In fact, I always found comic books more interesting than syndicated material simply from a formal point of view; because of the possibilities of the form itself: it's just a matter of space. I felt that one couldn't really do anything artistically interesting, except in humor, in one daily strip or even a full weekend page. Al Capp is a marvelous example of what can be done in humor, and I think a couple of Roth's strips, too, were wonderful examples of what could be done in humor in a one page type of thing. But what I was always interested in was in extended development of a story, and the way syndication is set up it's antagonistic to that kind of idea.

BS: You have no chance to experiment with layout, the way you can on a full page.

BK: Well, no ... I think that a very good artist can experiment with layout, but what I'm discussing is extended dramatic development, and this is what really always interested me in comics -- the fact that one could develop a dramatic idea, more or less like a play. And it would be kind of absurd to have a one page serial of a dramatic play appear, say, every week, and that's the same sort of inhibition that existed for me. And this is not to say that I would be welcomed with open arms; it's just that I never pushed very hard in that direction.

BS: Do you feel that you have found a stronger relationship between comics and stage than between comics and films? It seemed almost as if you had a kind of editing technique by breaking up one panel into smaller panels for dramatic effect.

BK: Well, I love plays, and I did find an analogy between comics

and plays ... and movies. I didn't feel there was any real difference between a play and a movie as far as inspiration for a comic book artist or a cartoonist is concerned. They both could equally serve as a source of inspiration, or ideal, for a cartoonist to look toward in his work. But I do want to say that the comic strip itself is a form all on its own ... that I don't look upon it as being sort of a foster child of a film form or a play form. It has its own dramatic problems and possibilities, although there are many areas where all of these overlap, and there are areas where they are all identical.

BS: We were sure that you had adapted film technique to comics, especially when we found a panel where you had drawn the headlights of a car and had drawn in the effect of them reflecting on a camera lens. This is the second panel in IN THE BAG.

BK: That's definitely an occasion where it was a camera effect, but it was just interchangeable with me. Sometimes I'd think in terms of a camera or a movie, and very often I'd think in terms of just a proscenium stage, really. I'd have the same focus on a number of pictures, and I definitely wanted to have the opposite effect of a camera. I desired to stop all action, and make everything still and repetitious, and come back again and again, and keep repeating the effect for whatever end-purpose would result.

BS: Some time ago I wrote an article analyzing your work, but I don't remember what I said, because I haven't been able to find a copy of it.*

BK: As a matter of fact, I have a copy of it. I was extremely pleased by the things you wrote, and I thought you fulfilled a very important function as a critic of the form at that time. I thought that the form was worthy of a critic, and I thought that your criticism was worthy of the form.

BS: In that article I think I said that you built moods in stories by a certain way that you set things up ... a certain way that you paced. For example, there are stories which have a violent climax which intrudes on a calm mood that you have established in the art in preceding panels.

JB: It was done several times. Before the climax, the lines were static - vertical and horizontal - and then at the point of climax they break down and become radial.

BS: I feel this is sort of like Hitchcock. In PSYCHO, for example, before the violent scenes everything is very still and quiet with slow moving camerawork and little sound, and then everything hits your senses with full force -- Herrmann's shrieking music, quick cutting, etc. In other words, like you, he's using his medium for psychological effect.

* "In Defense of B. Krigstein," THE EC FAN JOURNAL, 1954 (Mike May, editor); later reprinted in THE EC WORLD PRESS, 1955 (George Jennings, editor).

BK: I think that I was striving to control these effects, that is, building up to dramatic climaxes and then realizing, as far as it was in my power to do so, all the emotional force of the climax. And I think I succeeded pretty well, because in groping towards something I really feel as if I stumbled upon an important way to tell stories ... to break down stories. As things worked out, I was unable to continue. Soon after that, I ... had to leave the field.

JB: You know, Kurtzman and Will Eisner also used film effects quite often in their comic work. Eisner had a very visual style, sometimes telling a whole sequence just through pictures; I think he's one of the great comic creators.

BK: I suppose he is, really. I never could get very excited about his work, for some reason. But I think that Kurtzman was often trying for different effects than I was. When he had repeating panels, each closer to an object, I think he wanted the reader to think of a camera moving closer. But very often I wanted to create something quite different; I wanted a staccato effect, where each panel is a separate punch, and I didn't want the repeating panels to blend together like a film.

BS: Did EC give you more freedom to ...

BK: Yes. EC really provided the atmosphere of freedom and artistic encouragement; they allowed me to -- allowed all the guys to -- develop our personal ideas. Of course, there were many conflicts, as there would be in any creative organization. But the overall thing is that Bill Gaines did permit, as I see it, something quite wonderful to develop.

BS: It's really a sad thing, what later happened to EC and the whole field. What are your particular favorites of your stories for EC?

BK: My one favorite was a concentration camp story; the name of it is ... ah ...

BS: THE MASTER RACE. We weren't able to reread that last night.

BK: I have a copy of it here. In that one I think I reached a high-point in developing my breakdown ideas.

BS: Do you think if we went over it, that you could show us exactly what you were doing? Or do you think it speaks for itself?

BK: I think the story should speak for itself. I don't think I should point out what I think should happen. Whatever happens should happen in the viewer. But I do want to mention that I originally was given a five page story, and I persuaded Feldstein and Gaines to let me make it into an eight or nine page

story. And I cut the thing apart and repasted it and relaid it out and redesigned it in order to realize my ideas of developing the breakdown of the story. I happen to be extremely proud of it; I think it's a very serious effort. And I don't know if I'm being very self-indulgent, but I think that it does something very new as far as breakdown is concerned. And I'm very very sorry that I could not develop my ideas further, but it was shortly after that that we broke ...

NK*: And THE CATACOMBS ...

JB: That was my favorite ...

BS: Was that entirely your idea in THE CATACOMBS of having dialogue in quotes above the panels instead of using balloons?

BK: Yes; that's entirely my idea. But it's not entirely a new thing. As you mentioned in your own article, FLASH GORDON strips used them.

BS: Yes, but you put them above the people who were speaking and FLASH GORDON's old format was just like reading illustrated stories.

BK: Right. I didn't want that effect. I wanted to integrate story and pictures and at the same time retain the identity of the pictures without having the balloon destroy the formal design of the story.

BS: That's interesting, because I have an idea that there are some comic book stories, and particularly your own, that could be put on film sort of like THE DAY MANOLETE WAS KILLED and other films made from still photos.

BK: The truth is that I've always wanted to see that story done that way. And I think that it could take a good musical accompaniment and a good narration. Or the viewer could read it, one way or the other. But I think it could stand that treatment. The story itself is strong enough.

BS: Have you ever seen UPA's THE TELL TALE HEART? It's actually animated, but most of it is dissolves of paintings.

BK: No.

BS: Some of it looks very much like your MURDER DREAM story. It looked to me like it was done cheaply, with many dissolves and little animation. Some of the animated figures are a little too cartoony at times, but they were trying to make it look as much like serious illustration as possible. It's narrated by James Mason.

* NK - Krigstein's wife, Natalie.

BK: I'm sorry I missed it; it sounds very interesting.

NK: We saw the MOBY DICK one.

BK: Some artist had been working on the picture MOBY DICK and he had done a number of paintings, and some producer in New York City, whose name I forget now, put them together as a continuous story and had Thomas Mitchell do the narration. The pictures flash on the screen, and the camera would have closeups, and pan across, and repeat, and the total effect of it is ... It has come up as a very big form now. And of course, the audience would never admit that simple fact, because it would be too humble a source for their ...

BS: Is this picture still in distribution?

BK: It's quite old. That fellow also did art films, one on Goya, and one on Michelangelo, I'm not certain. The Michelangelo may not have been his; I believe Flaherty made that. I don't know what he's doing now.

BS: When you signed this story MURDER DREAM "Dr. Caligari Krigein," were you in any way emulating CALIGARI?

BK: No, it was just that I felt that there is a similarity of genre, that's all. Both very weird, and rather expressionistic.

BS: This panel in THE MASTER RACE really captures the impression of a passing subway train. It's an artful way to do that.

BK: It's really a futuristic device.

BS: Like Balla.

BK: And Severini, and -- who did Nude Descending Staircase? -- Duchamp.

BS: Have you seen George Tooker's painting of the subways?

BK: No, I haven't. I never knew he did one. I'm a great admirer of his work. I wonder if you've seen his painting of the Sleepers? It's a very remarkable picture.

BS: I saw that just the other week. In some ways it's related to what a painter, who has done some things ... I can't remember his name; maybe you know his painting of a summer camp ... there's a strange weird little guy sitting reading a book and eyeing this almost caricatured muscular type, and a fat sunburned woman is walking down the boardwalk ...

BK: Is that Paul Cadmus?

BS: Yes, that's it; Cadmus! I think he's terrific. Do you know Tooker or Cadmus, personally?

BK: No, I don't know either of them.

JB: Did you make stipulations as to how your stories were to be colored?

BK: No. Marie did a sensational job. She was a wonderful artist in her own right, and very often she should have shared a lot of credit with the artist for the way she colored the thing. There's only one fault that I found in this particular story ((THE MASTER RACE)); one of the characters is wearing overalls and when she colored it, she colored the strap of the overalls the same as the shirt and obscured the idea that the man was wearing overalls. And when I costume people, I always have very definite things in mind. Aside from that minor lapse ...

BS: We had this idea that you talked about what kind of colors to use, because big full panels of red seemed characteristic of your stories; like BELLYFULL and THE PIT. And this never seemed to be done with other EC stories.

BK: I don't recall. I know that I ... ah ...

NK: Occasionally ...

BK: Yes, I think that in certain panels I may have suggested something, because I know that on a particular cover we had discussed color.

JB: On that PIRACY cover the colors blended; there were no inked lines to follow.

BK: Right. In fact, I had done outlines which would disappear in reproduction as a guide in color breakdown, but, none the less, Marie was very creative.

BS: In this story ((MONOTONY)), were you trying, by squaring off everything at right angles, to build up this complete idea of the title throughout the story?

BK: Oh, very definitely. It was an attempt to break down, to satirize that particular type of character. Now that you mention it, in your article you took exception to the fact that the books in disarray are inconsistent with the general precision of the layout. How do you feel about it now?

BS: Well, now I realise that what you were doing was trying to break up a static composition.

BK: Right.

BS: I wrote that article when I was 17 or so. I think this is great; building up this whole thing with tones ((a sofa)).

BK: Yes, I was playing around with layers of tone sheets.

BS: This could almost be filmed too. But, you know, the thing about filming a comic book story is the fact that these balloons wouldn't work.

BK: I don't know; that could be worked out.

BS: This is a rare opportunity to see this ((3-D stories in single image)), because I can't see 3-D, so I was never able to read the comics.

BK: Well, that's the smallest part of it.

JB: I got to see the unpublished 3-D stories. Yours was great, more complex than this one.

BK: I don't recall. It was about air pirates or something. Gee, I'm sorry that never appeared; I remember pouring an awful lot of work into it. I have been trying to get some of my original art from Bill Gaines, particularly THE MASTER RACE story. I could have had it at one time, but they moved and all their work went into a kind of a vault, which makes it very difficult to get.

JB: When you did the 3-D, did you start with the sheet that had the most on it, or did you start from the top?

BK: My general system ... I don't know about the 3-D things ... is to work from the bottom up.

JB: I mean sheetwise; which layer did you start with?

BK: Oh, I don't recall how I did that; I forget the technicalities involved there. It was really fun to do, because you were forced to analyze space relationships, and it was a marvelous test of composition. If you are a phony composer, your 3-D will look will look ridiculous. You're forced to use very honest perspective. But personally, I don't see any time 3-D stuff, despite the fact that some good things may be done. It's just a trick, and has nothing to do with the emotional force or the breakdown of a story. I feel sort of the same way about stereophonic sound in music.

JB: I feel the same way about Cinerama. They're powerful in recreating certain kinds of reality, but there're little real possibilities for creative art.

BK: Right. I've never seen Cinerama. 3-D movies are in the same category.

BS: All this stereo and 3-D is sort of a drive, a push, toward a total experience ... a complete escape.

BK: In other words, all form and no content.

BS: You must not have cared too much for their introduction of the story. I notice you've blacked out the Old Witch here.

BK: As a matter of fact, I always felt that they were intrusions. I always thought those things broke the mood of the story.

BS: I feel that this is the greatest story that has ever appeared in comic books ((THE FLYING MACHINE)).

BK: Well, thanks very much. I'm very proud of it. And I'm certainly glad that Bradbury himself wrote such a flattering letter about it.*

BS: He must have realized what you were trying to do.

JB: He's very interested in comic strips.

BK: I realize that, and knowing that, I am interested in doing a book of his. You know, I have wanted very much to do a full length comic book.

JB: I just said last night, when we were going over your stories, that it would be great to see you do a full length FAHRENHEIT 451.

BK: That's exactly the one I wanted to do! And I approached Ballentine about that. I spoke to his editor; I spoke to Ballentine, himself. And, unfortunately, he nixed the idea. And I've been trying to push the idea of a full length book, in general ... of some classic story adapted to comic book form. I wanted to do RED BADGE OF COURAGE; in fact, I went so far as to break down a couple of pages, and I submitted them to Ballentine.

BS: What size or format would this be?

BK: Well, that was the least important thing, really. I would have done it in a paperback form and have the work appear sideways. But that really is unimportant; I could adapt it to any shape.

* "THE FLYING MACHINE is the finest single piece of art-drawing I've seen in the comics in years. Beautiful work; I was so touched and pleased ... -- Ray Bradbury, Los Angeles, Calif." was the text of the letter that appeared in the letter page of Weird Science-Fantasy #25.

I approached Simon and Schuster with the idea. I feel a classic of this kind should be rendered in this form. Of course, there's a tremendous amount of prejudice against the form.

JB: If you had had a chance, would you have wanted to cut down on a lot of Feldstein's text?

BK: No; Feldstein and I had a conflict, but it wasn't over cutting down on the text. What I wanted to do was this; I wanted to use all the text which was necessary for the literary enrichment of the story. In other words, the complexity of idea needs a complex text; but what I was fighting against all the time was that the text should be expanded at the expense of the story. What I would have wanted to do would be to expand the story so that the pictures would take up more room. In other words, in his five page stories, I would have wanted to do that in fifteen pages. Keep the same amount of text; this is exactly the ground that he and I went over time and time again.

JB: The reason why I asked is that often I felt that his text was just saying the same thing that the pictures were, only not nearly as well -- merely describing the pictures.

BK: That's only because he didn't give the artist enough room to really illustrate the ideas expressed in the text and therefore the total effect was one of banality, or repetition, rather than an expansion of the original.

BS: Did they know before you turned in THE MASTER RACE story that you had expanded it?

BK: Yes. What happened was that I received this five page story and read it, and it was just the most explosive story that I had ever come across in my work in the field. I called Bill up and told him that I wanted to do it as a twelve pager, and he immediately came back with, "Twelve pages, it's impossible," you know, and then he told me that he couldn't do it because it would be an expense to have it relettered, which was an amusing reason to give. And then I said, "You won't have to letter it, I'll cut it up; I like the story so well, I'll cut it up and paste it down on new pages." And this was such a ridiculous thing for any artist to do, but I felt the story was worth anything. Finally we agreed on I forget whether it was eight or nine pages. I think that we were fighting back and forth for space, and he offered nine and then called back and said he couldn't let me have more than eight. And then, finally, while I was in the middle of the story (and nobody had seen what I was doing with it), he called me up and said, "I'm kinda worried, Bernie; I think we made a mistake. I don't think you should have expanded it at all." So I told him that it wasn't any mistake, and I convinced him that I was doing something very good. When I brought the pencils in, Feldstein and Bill

agreed that it was well worth the expansion. But if only ... and this I felt for years afterwards ... if only they would have allowed me to continue on this track. Where I could have expanded on the material, I felt that I could have done something very new and different; and all these years, frankly, I have been nurturing that frustration. I've done many things since then; books, record albums, book jackets, and so on, and I've been very happy with the stuff I've been doing, but I always nurtured this feeling that something tremendous could have been done if they'd let me do it.

BS: Did you have any ideas of story experiments, or ...

BK: Oh, yes. I kept approaching Al to give me his regular manuscripts, which I thought were terrific (he had some terrific writers working for him), and I would have wanted to break them down in my style. In fact, I wanted to edit a book. I wanted to devote one book to a single story.

BS: I always wanted to see that done, too.

BK: And if he wouldn't give me one book, I asked him to give me a quarter of a magazine -- say, give me twelve pages -- just let me expand a five page story into twelve pages and break it down in my style, because I had all these things that were seething in my mind. And then he would come back and say, "I'll give you a five page story, and you can break it down any way you want -- within five pages;" it was ridiculous. He wanted me to subdivide it, in other words; to take a six panel page and create a fifteen panel page. Well, that was getting a lot for your money. If you get fifteen panels on a page, that sounds like a good proposition. Meanwhile, they were getting desperate, and they were taking their rich story material and cutting them down from seven pages to six pages to five pages. In other words, they were doing precisely the opposite of what they should have been doing! Instead of expanding and penetrating into the meat of the story, and enriching the dramatic effect, they were compressing it from the outside and just working against themselves.

BS: Where you have broken up panels, in THE CATACOMBS for instance, if you had been given more space, would you have made these much bigger? Would you have broken up the panels differently?

BK: Not necessarily. I might have rearranged the text, and then again I might not. I might have let the captions run over three panels. But where I have three panels, I might have put in nine panels. I don't know. Because it's what happens between these panels that's so fascinating. Look at all that dramatic action that nobody ever gets a chance to see. It's between these panels that the fascinating stuff takes place.* And unless the artist would be permitted to delve into that, the form must remain infantile.

* Norman McLaren, in FILM QUARTERLY (Vol. XVI No. 2) says: "What is the essence of animation? It is what happens between each frame of film -- this is what is all important."

BS: In THE CATACOMBS, did you have to cut up any of the lettering to do this?

BK: No, that was unnecessary. I simply followed what I was expected to do. For example, ((in the last line of the second page)) this would have been one panel here with these two characters talking to each other; one balloon would have gone to this character and one would have gone to the second character. Instead, I divided that into two panels in order to get more movement and greater dramatic feeling. In other words, I multiplied the amount of action that was going on, from one panel to two. The first page, I cut up and subdivided; that was entirely my idea. What was expected there was one large splash panel and one panel underneath, and I simply cut it up and rearranged it. I think it was the first time that I did that, which was sort of a natural lead in for me to do it with THE MASTER RACE story.

BS: Well, in a way, this is like a "hooker" in a film before the credits.

BK: In a way, it is, but that wasn't my purpose. It was simply greed on my part; I was merely robbing space to tell the story. I wanted panels; I was desperate for panels. And this is what they didn't give me, so, out of desperation, I began subdividing the panels. In other words, the point came where it was simply absurd to have six panels for a certain amount of text. I began to see these people doing all sorts of things, and it ridiculous to have them doing all this stuff in six panels.

JB: When you have a set of panels like this ((page five of IN THE BAG)), you have a tremendous amount of action in these panels, and then when the action slows down the panels get wider -- square. The change of panel shape fits the mood, so wouldn't you still use these slender panels if you had been able to expand this as you wished?

BK: I certainly would use the slender panels, definitely, because it has the staccato effect. It creates a certain rhythm; even the design of it has a certain rhythm.

BS: This really relates to film editing techniques, with quick cutting for violent action, and then it slows down.

BK: Right. It's definitely an artist's tool -- certainly. And I'm a great fan of films.

BS: Who are your favorite filmmakers or your favorite films?

BK: Well, my favorites are drawn from anywhere and everywhere; American films, French films, Russian films. Some of the early Russian films like Dovzhenko and Eisenstein; particularly Dovzhenko. Some of the real old French films, I just love.

BS: RULES OF THE GAME?

BK: RULES OF THE GAME -- tremendous, quite tremendous. Then there are some new things, like L'AVVENTURA that I admired very much. I felt a very, very great kinship for what that man was doing, and I knew exactly what was in his heart when he was doing these things ... the marvelous still shots ... a marvelous leisurely ironic stillness ... marvelous irony ... holding your attention on a sunset or a seascape. I felt a very great kinship with these things.

BS: L'AVVENTURA seems like a film you would appreciate. Just as you are conscious of the panel, Antonioni is very conscious of the picture frame, with actors moving in and out of it, at distances, and in closeup.

BK: And then there's Fellini; NIGHTS OF CABIRIA. There's nothing spectacular about the technique of this film, and some of the others I like, it's just that they are tremendous stories. This doesn't hold true for L'AVVENTURA, of course.

BS: Have you seen LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD?

BK: Yes, I have. I don't like it. There are just a couple of ... I didn't like it.

BS: To get back to your idea of a feature length comic book; I had this idea myself that something should be done like this. Dan Adkins has also wanted to do this same idea.

BK: Well, I think it's a good idea; it should be done. I think that there would be a fantastic market for it. And I think it would surprise people as to who would go for these books; quite sophisticated people.

BS: There are these Spanish paperback comic books that are read by adults. I don't see why there is no American counterpart, except that these books are hack stuff; hokey love stories.

BK: Oh yes, I see them read on the subway.

JB: Comics started off on a different track here. They have these books in Britain -- book length adventure and love stories.

BK: They have them in Italy too. It's always been a form of entertainment for a very low social class; never for an educated group. The fact is that the literate people are repelled by the idea of buying a comic book. But I have always felt that there are comic books always being produced -- they don't call them comic books; they're called something else and put in a slightly different format to make them palatable to a more literate public. But that doesn't mean that they are not comic books. A

marvelous example of a comic book in my estimation is Gustave Doré's book about Russia. It was just issued in this country about five or six years ago. It really is nothing more than a comic book, because there are pictures and captions, and it's very witty, very satirical; but nonetheless, it's the same form as the comic book form. Then there are these paperback illustrated books, cartoon books that tell a story and are very sophisticated.*

BS: Gorey ...

BK: Ed Gorey. Well, yes, that's really a comic book.

NK: Diane di Prima's FABLES ...

BS: Why is it that in your illustration work you go so far away from the sharp angular solid design techniques that you used so much in EC?

BK: Oh I don't know. Some of it I do, and some of it I don't. If you go through the portfolio, you'll find that there are very different styles. This one was done for a text book. This one was done for Ed Gorey for this book; he was the art editor.

BS: Did you talk to Diane di Prima about the book?

BK: Never met her ... although I was interested in it, and it was a wonderful opportunity for me; I loved doing it.

BS: Why is it that you never wrote a script for EC? Did you submit some?

BK: Well, I was so busy exploring the artistic end of it that I was never interested in exploring any other avenue at the time.

BS: It's always interested me that a number of cartoonists and illustrators have gone into filmmaking. Did you know that Fellini was a cartoonist?

BK: No! I did not know that.

BS: And Norman Maurer, who started the 3-D comic books, is now producer of The Three Stooges. He also claims that he's invented a new process that can convert live action into animation.**

BK: That's a new one -- making machines out of men.

JB: This rough draft for the breakdown of THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE is really wonderful. I like this figure of the young man, standing and watching with the gun loose in his arms, that recurs through the battle scenes; it gives meaning to the battle

* Bob Blechman's THE JUGGLER OF OUR LADY might be considered another example.

** Frank Tashlin (WILL SUCCESS SPOIL ROCK HUNTER, IT'S ONLY MONEY) was a cartoonist. Alain Resnais (HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR, LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD) has often said that he owes more to comics than to films.

because it makes one see it through his eyes. This is really adding creatively to the original work; in fact, the whole breakdown does this.

BK: I really regret that I wasn't able to do that. I tried to sell a number of publishers on the idea. It could be something quite interesting. I really feel it's a tragic thing that there's tremendous prejudice against rendering a great classic in this form.

JB: Perhaps that's because everyone immediately thinks of Classics Illustrated.

BK: Well, that's a pity.

BS: You've never done a Classics Illustrated?

BK: No.

BS: Have you ever talked with them?

BK: Yes. I almost did something for them. It just never went through. I spoke to the editor, who was then Len Cole, and we almost got together on something. But I was not too comfortable about the situation, and I just never called back.

JB: They like four panels to a page.

BK: ((laughing)), yes. The funny thing was that I went up there and saw Len Cole and he had this office with somebody else, and this somebody else was the publisher's son or somebody, and he had his ear sticking out all during the conversation I was having with Len Cole, and the atmosphere was so suspicious and unsavory that I just gave up the idea. I didn't know what the hell was going on. But really I'm not interested in doing anything except my own ideas. I'd like either to do my own manuscripts or some great classic in comic book form, like THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE. I showed my breakdown on that, by the way, to Harvey Kurtzman, when HELP was going very strong. And I even wanted to do parts of WAR AND PEACE by Tolstoy; I showed Harvey the breakdown for that, back when we were at EC. It could very well have fit into his format, but he didn't want it at that time. I'll show you the breakdown of this section of WAR AND PEACE that I showed Harvey. This is an example of what could be done with a great classic. I really wish I could do this section of WAR AND PEACE. And here's a breakdown I did of a section of TREASURE ISLAND for Harvey, and it almost went through. I had talked to Harvey about my idea of doing classic, and then he asked me to do a breakdown, to see what I had in mind, and I went ahead and broke down this section of TREASURE ISLAND. I'm really sorry that I was never able to do WAR AND PEACE.

BS: Would this be full page?

BK: It really doesn't matter; it could be adapted to any size page, or shape. The important thing is the continuity of the panels.

BS: Now that Dell is doing ...

BK: I did a book for Dell by the way, recently; 87TH PRECINCT. That's an interesting story, too. Len Cole was editor at the time; (I don't think he's there now). I received a manuscript of thirty-two pages, and it was the most fantastically absurd story that has ever been typed or presented to an artist for a breakdown. So I treated it as such; I treated it as a perfectly absurd and idiotic story and I did an idiotic story out of it, and I thought that somebody would get the message up there. I was amazed because they liked it and they printed it. They printed the thing! And finally I got a second manuscript; the same series. I thought that perhaps this time I'd see certain changes there; and lo and behold the second one was even stupider than the first one. I really have never read anything so idiotic in my life, and I called them back and said I couldn't do it, and told them what I'd have to do to change it and so on, and he took back the manuscript and held it for a couple of weeks and then he sent it back to me, and I think they had changed about three words in the thing, and I was so upset about it and spoke to the writers up there, and finally I sent the manuscript back. I couldn't do it. I have copies of the first book, here; I never saw it on the stands. I've never seen anything so fantastic in my life.

BS: ((quoting)) "Just as I suspected, Myra, howling dogs and dead men always go together." "A long, thin, and very sharp instrument to the heart, and the heart beats no more." I see what you mean immediately about it being an absurd story. How do you mean that you treated it absurdly?

BK: Well, I just did exactly what the writer called for, and I can't think of anything funnier than that.

BS: These were his descriptions of this panel?

BK: More or less, yes. As he'd go on, I kind of exaggerated a little bit what the writer required, to heighten the ...

BS: He wanted these big gigantic pictures?

BK: Yes.

BS: It's got about three pages straight of these people just talking. And he wanted this full-page panel?

BK: Yes.

BS: You obviously worked very fast on this.

BK: Oh yes, yes.

BS: Did you break down some of his panels?

BK: Yes, I did. This page was entirely my own; what the writer called for was something quite different.

BS: You have a knack, it seems to me, for capturing certain human poses that other artists and illustrators always seem to miss. And I can even think of specific examples ... like in THE BATH, this guy with his shoulders hunched up like this while he's getting in the bath.

BK: I'm glad you noticed that particular thing. When I drew it, I was very conscious that I was representing a very human action.

BS: Another thing related to that is that it seems that also you sometimes draw faces from unusual angles, for example, from a three-quarter low view.

BK: Well, maybe it's because I have such a strong hostility to common mores in illustration. I feel that the ideals that are employed and accepted by most illustrators are very foreign to me. The ideals of movement, the ideals of human beings, that they use as prototypes seem extremely foreign to me and unreal; I think they're unreal to everyone, and I think that it's a phony kind of glamor that they're loyal to, most illustrators are. I have an extreme hostility to it, and probably it is because of that hostility that I almost perversely steer clear of these stereotypes and I deliberately use almost, one might say, ugly, or revealing, human things, because I think that they are beautiful. I think that these ugly things that people do are really beautiful; they are real. And I just despise this so called beautiful packaging that illustrators do. I can't stand it, and I'll do my damndest to destroy it ... by my work, and if I can get people to see things my way, so much the better. I like my way better; I guess I'm no different from anyone else in this respect.

- BS: ((facetiously)) You probably never worked for THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

BK: No, and I never made the effort to. But I wouldn't make any blanket condemnation (or approval) of any publication or organization.

- BS: Who are your favorite illustrators, in magazines?

BK: You know, I don't have any. I seek my inspiration elsewhere. If anything, they are old time illustrators, like Howard Pyle, or the old American painters, or ... Winslow Homer is to me

one of the greatest artist-illustrators that we ever had.

BS: Most people don't know of his pictures where he did try to capture human characteristics, all his people on beaches and things; people only know his seascapes.

BK: That's unfortunate, because I think his greatest work is the painting and drawing of people; and his Civil War things, his illustrations for HARPERS of the Civil War are his greatest. These are the guys that inspire me ... Bierstadt, and a couple of other early Americans; Remington, of course, is great, but the really greatest of them all is Winslow Homer, and these are the artists that inspire me very much.

BS: How about Franklin Booth?

BK: No, I don't know him.

BS: He was a pen and ink artist who put a fantastic amount of time into a lot of stipple work and little lines.

BK: I may have seen his work, I don't recall. When you speak of black and white, I think of guys like Doré ... or Forain.

BS: This is the best way that an illustrator should work, because most current illustrators are imitating other current illustrators; like Bob Peake has all his little Bob Peakes, and they are all imitating Peake, and it never occurs to them that they could derive their inspiration from a more classical source.

JB: What do you think of Harvey Kurtzman's art?

BK: I think it's wonderful! He has developed a form of artistic abstraction that only a comic artist has. I'm just nuts about Harvey's style! He has the ability to symplify and stylize ...

JB: How did you like Harvey Kurtzman's dramatic comics?

BK: Well, I always liked the books Harvey did. I always regretted that we could never get together on anything. I'd very much wanted to, and I did do one or two things, but somehow it never really worked out. We didn't work too smoothly together, and nothing ever really materialized.

BS: Tell us about the one story you did for MAD and how it happened that you came in that one time.

BK: Well, Harvey and I were always "coquetting" with each other for a long period of time and he suggested that one day he was going to use me, and I suggested that I was very very receptive to the idea and quite interested in doing it; and this coquetting lasted for a certain length of time and finally it came

about that he had this story for me to do, which I was very happy to do. I worked on the story, and he exhibited a very artistically liberal idea; he was never interested in seeing the pencils, I could bring him the finishes, which was slightly unorthodox, you see, because the usual manner ... I had been working with Feldstein and although it was really purely a formal thing, I would bring the pencils in, we would discuss it, and it would be extremely rare that Al would have any editorial comments to make. As I say, it was a pure formality; well, Harvey dispensed with the formality. I brought in the finishes, and it happened that he wasn't there when I delivered them, and I left them there, and the next day I received a call from Harvey. It seems that he liked it very much, "but ..." and then he proceeded to ask me would I be adverse to the idea of doing the story over again, and he would be willing to pay me a certain amount of money in addition if I would do the story over again, because it was not at all what he had in mind. And I was quite shocked by his proposal, and I told him that I wouldn't be able to do it again. What did you think of it?

JB: Not too much at the time, but looking at it again recently just after seeing the film, I realized how very penetrating your caricatures were.

BS: You had a much stronger sense of caricature, real caricature, delineating it, you know, than the other EC artists. Though I still love what they did at EC, this kind of shaded caricature.

BK: Well, I liked what the other people did there; I thought it was just great, but I also liked what I did. And I also resented very much the fact that Harvey had any preconceived notions of how I should execute a job. It seemed to me that that was entirely the province of the artist. That is my province, and therefore I refused to do it over. I don't know if it was the last thing I ever did for Harvey ...

JB: BRINGING BACK FATHER, CRASH McCOOL, and the Hemingway thing.

BK: Right. You see, each time I'd get an assignment from him, it was quite foreign to me to do exactly what he had in mind. Harvey loved to do the breakdowns and prescribe what the artist would do, and I always felt that ... I'm always glad to hear or see what an editor or an art director has to say. That's fine for a sort of document; I'll make a note of that and put it in my files. But I have my own ideas about how to go about these things, and I always felt free to do so, and I didn't feel that Harvey was an exception in this regard, so I always did. The same thing happened with the Hemingway thing; I brought back something which was quite different from what he had in mind. But each time we would get together, it would result in this kind of crisis, and I regretted that very much, because I feel that Harvey is a truly talented person, a rare talent; I have

always felt this and I always wanted to work in his things. He was always doing something exciting and interesting. It was just regrettable that there should be this kind of ...

JB: If you had worked with him in dramatic work, do you feel this conflict would have lessened?

BK: No, I don't. I think that there was an overlapping of functions which would always have meant a conflict. Harvey was deeply interested in breakdown, not only in the story but the breakdown, not only in the story but the breakdown, and breakdown to me is everything. Since we both overlapped on this function of breakdown, there's always bound to be a conflict, and I could not accept Harvey's ideas carte blanche, and so the situation was never resolved. Harvey, I must say, always admired my inking; he always said that I was a marvelous, marvelous inker.

BS: Well, then this leads us to the story about your collaboration with Al Williamson, because I think that Williamson was not happy with your inking.

BK: Well, I thought that it was silly of Bill Gaines to give me as a first assignment the job of working with Williamson. He and I didn't get along very well. He was a little too "artistic" for me -- the artistic type.

BS: What did you think of Williamson as an artist?

BK: Well, I loved many of the stories that he handed in. I've heard it said, perhaps mistakenly, that he always worked with collaborators. One's never certain because their name often didn't appear on the credits. But I think that his stories had a very marvelous mood about them that nobody else had really captured. They were quite marvelous ... although, when I would go into it, there'd be a very peculiar reaction that I'd have that it was kind of put together. I'd get the feeling that the thing was kind of put together from many sources, as if he'd done a kind of clever marvelous paste-up job. I don't know why I had this reaction; there was a certain lack of unity. But he did some remarkable things.

JB: What about your collaboration with Reed Crandall for Picto-Fiction?

BK: You mean where Reed finished the story I had started? I'm surprised that you recognized that it was a collaboration.

JB: It almost seemed to me at the time that it was the other way around -- that you inked and he pencilled.

BK: Well, Reed is a very wonderful artist, and maybe he deliberately created that effect. That was the story that caused the break between Gaines and myself. He started a new book, and the editorial policy of this book was that crime pays. In a word, that was the ideological foundation of that book -- crime pays. And I received this story and was very shocked upon reading it, but I felt that as the artist I would simply employ my prerogative, which I had always employed; making certain changes that suited me, and in the last panel I did something that indicated that there was a moral reckoning insofar as the criminal was concerned. I don't mind cynicism, or realism, extreme realism, but I do mind, very very deeply, propagating the notion that immorality or crime is moral, or good. If you want to point out the existence of immorality, this has been the privilege of the greatest artists in the world, and some of them have been at greater or lesser pains to point out that this is wrong. They may have been very realistic and brutal, but they never condoned it, and I certainly didn't propose to use whatever talents I had in support of this notion. So I changed the panel and returned it to Bill ... to Feldstein, really, and Feldstein read it very happily until he came to the last panel; "What's this, Bernie?" I said, "Well, I changed the story, I don't like the way you ended the story," and he said, "Well, we can't do that," and I said, "Well, neither can I; I can't do it this way." He said, "Well, if you don't do it, this is it. You've got to do it this way: this is the new book." I said, "I can't do it and I won't do it, and I'm afraid that this is it." And he called Bill Gaines and he told him, "Bernie doesn't want to do this," and Bill Gaines said something over the phone, and Al said, "Well, Bill Gaines says you gotta do it," and I said, "Well, no." So I let them know that I didn't want to be credited for it and he had Crandall do the story and I never went back there, and that was the end, between me and EC.

BS: Well, that was about the time of the end of EC, anyway.

BK: I think they made a horrible, horrible mistake in doing that; just poor judgment, just relying on the lowest common denominator for sales, and my view has always been that good stuff is what sells, not bad stuff, and good stuff will last, and bad stuff won't. But they were very panicky at the time, and they just went to the lowest thing they could do at the time.

BS: In other words, they thought they were certain to fold.

BK: That was my impression. They were losing money and they wanted to do something very desperate, and they knew that all this tripe had been selling all this time, and they figured that they'd go back to it, and that the viler the stuff is, the more

money one makes, and I just never had ...

BS: But they missed one important point, and that was the fact that kids won't pay 25¢ for a magazine, and adults aren't that interested in paying money for something that's not up to the quality of other stuff they can find in a magazine. So they really had no audience for these things.

BK: Well, I never figured it out just that way. I really had always been uninterested in the business aspect; you know, figuring out these deals, smooth paper -- 25¢, and newsprint -- 15¢, you know. I really just wanted good stories. I felt that people would pay money for good stories. If you give them something fresh, something interesting, they'll go; they'll go to great lengths to get these stories. Kids may not spend a quarter for a comic book, but they'll spend 75¢ for a movie.

BS: The first thing that became apparent in PictoFiction was that these were printed stories and they were not good stories.

BK: Oh ... yes, I remember that aspect of it too. That was another stupid thing; it went very heavy on text and very small on pictures. In other words, their panic expressed itself in a foolish way. They again (I think Feldstein was the influence here) decided that what people wanted was more story and less pictures, which was the exact opposite of the truth. People wanted a good visualization, and they still do and always will want an imaginative powerful pictorializing of ideas and stories, and there's a hunger for it, and people go to the movies for it, and books are being widely illustrated, largely illustrated, because there's a hunger, a deep hunger for it. And he did the exact opposite of what people are hungering for.

JB: I always felt that Feldstein never really had the idea that the visual aspect of comics was the most important, and that a lot of the stories that he wrote were just illustrated texts.

BK: Right ... I think that reflects a very, very deep distrust of artists, really. And it's a very important sickness that the field will have to overcome; this profound distrust of the very person that is the reason for the existence of the field. And this reflects a tremendous distrust of the artist. The businessman distrusts the artist, but it's only the artist who create the business for them; and it's this terrible distrust that destroyed them.

JB: One finds that in all aspects of the arts.

BK: Oh, definitely. Oh, yes, yes. This is a very deep sickness and one of the important problems that an artist has to deal with. It's a very frightening thing. And I've had a lot of trouble too, in my career, as a result of it.

BS: But you do think that PictoFiction, if it were done right, could be a creative medium?

BK: Not only could be, but has been. I don't mean just the past fifteen or twenty years, or thirty years, I mean for hundreds of years. There's nothing really new about it; the Chinese have done it ... Rowlandson is a marvelous example of it. There have been very great artists and cartoonists who have worked in this medium. And medieval artists worked in continuous pictures. The only thing challenging about it, and the only thing marvelous about it, is that it's a popular form, and it's a very contradictory notion, but that's where the whole problem lies -- it's so popular. It's so popular that it doesn't have artistic respect.

JB: The movies have this same problem. They also are popular because they are visual.

BK: Right. The odd thing about it is that people think that a visual medium, or a visual art, is inferior to a literary art. I find that very odd -- that a complex art such as a visual art, a picture, which is a very complex, a very complicated, medium of expression and communication, should be regarded as being lesser or on a lower scale than a literary art. And there's a terrible contradiction here, because you read the loftiest art criticism, which will go to very great lengths to explain how complex the art ... this form of communication is, and then if you speak to a literate person, he will tell you what a bastard form it is because it is visual -- "Comics is a bastard form -- it's visual. How can it be good?"

BS: There are a lot of people in charge in the visual arts that don't really think ... ah ...

BK: In other words, a lot of people have power that shouldn't have power. A lot of people have power in the arts ... have power to distribute art, or see what gets produced, who shouldn't. Yes, I agree.

BS: Have you had any one man shows of your paintings?

BK: No, I haven't had any one man shows. I've exhibited in groups. My stuff has appeared in exhibits at the Brooklyn Museum ... the Riverside Museum ... and some local galleries. I haven't really had a one man show. I am told that my work is not commercial.

BS: And why do they say that?

BK: ((laughing)) I don't know.

BS: What are some single EC stories that you recall that you liked?

BK: Well, I remember that Woody did something that touched on the problem of race prejudice that I liked very much. I think ... well, the one I recall had to do with the war, the Korean war, I think.

BS: Do you know what any of the other EC artists are doing?

BK: No. I lost contact with them, and just saw Harvey, spoke to Harvey on very rare occasions. I've been out of it now for a very long time; I don't know what's happening. Is there much interest in comics at the present time? My own view is that there is really nothing of great interest being done ... very very little. Even in comic strips. There seems to be very little being done in comics that really merits attention.

BS: We found out that Craig is working in a commercial studio somewhere, but we don't know where.

BK: I like him very much. And I like his work very much. ... By the way, I do want to mention before the evening's over that I think one of the great cartoonists was Charlie Voight. He was a master, and far ahead of his time.*

BS: What did you think of Jack Davis's cover illustrating THE MASTER RACE?

BK: I was somewhat disappointed that they chose Davis to do the cover. Jack is a good artist, but the spirit of his work would never combine with mine. What I think happened in this case was that the character that he created lost the seriousness of the theme of the story; he became a 'crime' character, rather than representative of an idea. Jack did a crime cover. It was a wonderful cover, but not for the story. I'm not criticizing Davis, because I like his work very much.

JB: There's a question I'd like to ask; how did you start to work in comics, and how did you become interested in them as an art form?

BK: Well, I had always looked at comics with contempt, but a friend of mine, who worked in the field, had repeatedly asked me to try drawing for it. Finally it did come about that I needed the money and I took a job, and then I was forced to examine closely the medium of comics. And in looking, I found that here were spectacular masters of drawing -- Simon, and Kirby ... I found that comics was drawing, and it became the only serious field for me at that time. Then I went into the Army, and when I got, I went back into comics the same day. And as far as the germinating of ideas and style and so forth, goes, my

* See COMIC ART IN AMERICA, pages 80 and 81.

time in comics was the most artistically productive, because of the drawing and composition. And by being in comics, I became no longer embarrassed about the so called limitations, of working in black and white, and so forth, and I shed all the criticisms of the form, as I worked in it.

BS: I wonder what Fredrick Wertham would think if he heard what you've been saying ...

BK: What I think was so criminal about his performance was that he used as a prime example a story illustrated by Woody on race prejudice. The story was against race prejudice and he twisted it.

BS: A question related to John's is; where did you study, and what did you do before you did comic books.

BK: Well, that's the least interesting part of my artistic career. Where I studied is really very unimportant; there's really nothing of interest there. The only time I was able to learn anything was when I actually worked at it. Which includes comics. Comics was one of my most important schools.

BS: That's very strange, because every time I talk to an artist about his schooling, they all say, "Oh well, I'm self taught." It always amazes me that Frazetta, for instance, is completely self taught. When I was at Cooper Union, I got this feeling too, that I was wasting my time, the kind of things that I wanted to learn they couldn't teach me and didn't really understand, that I would have to learn it all myself. They're teaching abstract expressionism at Cooper Union, which, to me, is absurd, because you can't teach abstract expressionism; it's a tremendously personal statement.

JB: Those who've worked with film tell me the same thing, that you will learn more just with a camera than by taking film courses.

BK: I think an important part of that, too, is that schools teach what's most accepted, and an artist is very very rarely interested in what's accepted as good at the moment, because, first of all, it's usually a fraud; what happens to be accepted at the moment is, nine times out of ten, pure fraud, and tripe. And it's what's not accepted, or what's unknown, or even what's despised that might be the precise answer for an individual artist, and one would very often have to do the very thing that brings ridicule and disrepute upon him, in order to get what he wants; so that a real artist, I think, can only go one place to learn, and that's himself ... and work, that's all.

INDEX AND SOURCES OF COMIC STORIES DISCUSSED

- THE BATH Tales from the Crypt #42 June-Jul. 1954. p. 16.
- BELLYFULL Weird Science-Fantasy #25 Sept. 1954. p. 6.
- BRINGING BACK FATHER Mad #17 Nov. 1954. half the story. p. 18.
- THE CATACOMBS Vault of Horror #38 Aug.-Sept. 1954. pp. 4, 10, 11.
(87th PRECINCT) Dell. p. 15.
- FALL GUY FOR MURDER Crime Illustrated #1 Nov.-Dec. 1955. pencil-
ing only. p. 19, 20.
- THE FLYING MACHINE Weird Science-Fantasy #23 March 1954. p. 8.
- FROM ETERNITY BACK TO HERE Mad #12 June 1954. p. 17, 18.
- IN THE BAG Shock SuspenStories #18 Dec. 1954-Jan. 1955. pp. 2, 11.
- MASTER RACE Impact #1 Mar.-Apr. 1955. pp. 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 23.
- MONOTONY Crime SuspenStories #22 Apr.-May. 1954. p. 6.
- MURDER DREAM Tales from the Crypt #45 Dec. 1954-Jan. 1955. pp.
4, 5.
- THE PIT The Vault of Horror #40 Dec. 1954-Jan. 1955. p. 6.

A SELECTION OF KRIGSTEIN'S CURRENT WORK

RECORD JACKETS

Beethoven, Symphonies #9 and #1. Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra
Epic SC 6036.
Handel, Concerti Grossi Nos. 4, 9 and 10. "I Musici" Epic IC 3591.
Milhaud, Les Choephores. Leonard Bernstein - New York Philharmonic
Columbia ML 5796.
Oscar Wilde's Fairytales Spoken Arts 785.
Scarlatti, Messa di Santa Cecilia. Utah Symphony Orchestra, Bach
Guild-Vanguard BG 621.
Songs of the North and South. Mormon Tabernacle Choir Columbia
ML 5659.
Wagner, music from three operas. George Szell Epic IC 3845.

MAGAZINES

The New York Times Book Review, Sept. 29, 1957.
Harpers Magazine, Jan. 1959, Dec. 1960.
Boy's Life, April 1960, July 1961.
American Heritage Magazine, Oct.-Nov. 1962.

BOOK COVERS

Buccaneers and Pirates of Our Coast, Looking Glass Library.
The Buffalo Soldiers, Harcourt Brace
Bo of the Caves, by F. W. Rowland, Walck. *
Fables, by Diane Di Prima.*
The Flagship Hope: Aaron Lopez, by Lloyd Alexander, Covenant.*
Jedediah Smith, Trail Blazer of the West, by H. G. Evarts, Westerners*
The Life and Times of I. L. Feretz, by Sylvia Rothchild, Covenant.*
Love Affair, by Robert Carson, Henry Holt Co.
Madame Bovary, by Gustave Flaubert, Dell.
The Manchurian Candidate, by Richard Condon, McGraw Hill.
Prisoner of Grace, by Joyce Carey, Universal Library.
Rusty's Space Ship, by E. S. Campman, Doubleday.*
St. Helena and the True Cross, by Louis de Wohl.

Krigstein is presently teaching at the High School of Art and Design.
(With the exception of several children's books, this page is a
listing of the material in Krigstein's presentation portfolio.)

* also interior illustrations.

INDEX

- Balla 5
 Ballantine, Ian 8
 Bierstadt 17
 Booth, Franklin 17
 Bradbury, Ray 8
 Brooklyn Museum 22

 CABINET OF DR. GALIGARI, THE 5
 Cadmus, Paul 6
 Capp, Al 1
 Cinerama 7, 8
 Classics Illustrated 14
 Cole, Len 14, 15
 comic strips 1, 8, 23
 Craig, Johnny 23
 Crandall, Reed 19
 CRASH McCool 18

 Davis, Jack 23
 DAY MANOLETE WAS KILLED, THE 4
 Dell comics 15
 Di Prima, Diane 13
 Dore, Gustave 13, 17
 Dovzhenko 11
 Duchamp, Marcel 5

 Eisenstein, S. M. 11
 Eisner, Will 3

 FABLES 13
 FAHRENHEIT 451 8
 Feldstein, Albert 3, 9, 10, 18,
 20, 21
 Fellini, Federico 12, 13
 films and comics 1, 2, 4, 11,
 12, 13, 22
 Flaherty, Robert 5
 FLASH GORDON 4
 Forain 17
 Frazetta, Frank 24
 full length comics 8, 12, 13, 14

 Gaines, William 3, 7, 9, 19, 20
 Gorey, Ed 13

 Harpers Magazine 17
 HELP 14
 Hemingway 18
 Homer, Winslow 16, 17

 "In Defense of B. Krigstein" 2

 Kirby 23
 Kurtzman, Harvey 3, 14, 17, 18,
 19, 23

 LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD 12
 L'AVVENTURA 12

 MAD 17
 Maurer, Norman 13
 MOBY DICK 5

 NIGHTS OF CABIRIA 12

 Old Witch, The 8

 Peake, Bob 17
 Picto-Fiction 19, 21, 22
 Piracy cover 6
 PSYCHO 2
 Pyle, Howard 16

 RED BADGE OF COURAGE 8, 13, 14
 Remington 17
 Riverside Museum 22
 Roth, Arnold 1
 Rowlandson 22
 RULES OF THE GAME 12

 Sabrini 5
 Saturday Evening Post 16
 Severin, Marie
 Simon 23
 Simon and Schuster 8
 stage and comics 1, 2

 TELL TALE HEART 4
 three-D 7, 8, 13
 Tooker, George 5, 6
 TREASURE ISLAND 14

 Voight, Charles 23

 WAR AND PEACE 14
 Wertham, Fredrick 24
 Williamson, Al 19
 Wood, Wallace 23, 24

KRIGSTEIN'S TIMELY-ATLAS STORIES

Some Notes and a Partial List

THE MAN WHO SHRUNK Marvel Tales #142 Jan. 1956 (4 pg. 41 panels)
B'WANA MARTIN Tales of Justice #58 Feb. 1956 (4 pg. 35 panels)
THE HOUSE THAT LIVED Mystery Tales #39 March 1956 (4 pg. 58 pnl.)
THE HYPNOTIST Astonishing #47 March 1956 (5 pg. 61 panels)
THEY WAIT BELOW Uncanny Tales #12 April 1956 (4 pg. 75 panels)
THE MAN WHO WENT BACK Strange Tales #45 April 1956 (4 pg. 52
panels)
SOMEONE IS CALLING Journey into Mystery #34 May 1956 (4 pg. 52
panels)

(This is quite an incomplete list. If those who can add to it will send in the information, a more complete list will be published later.)

Krigstein spoke of doing these stories as being like "writing messages and sending them to sea in a bottle." These were his last published attempts of the breakdown technique. Here, he says, he was trying to carry out an object lesson of how comic stories could be broken down. He said he wanted, and got, an opportunity to dramatize the technique, and the extremes of twenty to thirty panels on a page showed the limitless ways comic stories could be unfolded -- that the form was fluid and dynamic and should not be considered static or set. He said he spent more time on the breakdown, proportionately, than on the art.

Of the seven stories above, four have vertical splash panels on the right side of the page, with multiple panels on the left. One has no splash panel at all. Of this, Krigstein says that a splash panel is not a very useful device, dramatically, and that a story should generally start right out with the opening situation, instead of having a big panel first.

Proof of the success of these techniques is that Krigstein's multiple panels and general treatment carry the reader through these rather typically unreadable Timely stories. This is particularly noticeable in THEY WAIT BELOW, a story Krigstein remembers as one of his most interesting stories at Timely. Each panel is more closely associated in meaning and action to the one before; the reader does not have to look at each panel as a new scene to be analyzed, but as a close extension of the last panel, so the story flows smoothly.

Of the stories themselves, Krigstein says that he considered most of the plots serviceable enough, and that he tried to transcend the written treatment and bring out the idea behind the story. Atlas's banal stories became, as much as possible, light humor fantasy. Some of the stories are reminiscent of Harvey Kurtzman's early s-f work. THE HOUSE THAT LIVED, for example, has a character who does dance steps as he dreams of personal success.

Although a somewhat minor part of Krigstein's career, these Timely stories are worth study.

Please address all comments and orders to our new and permanent address:

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Addenda: The American Heritage double page spread, listed within, was one of the larger illustrations at the February 1963 Society of Illustrators Show. Krigstein not only did the cover for Prisoner of Grace, but for Grosset Universal Library's entire set of Joyce Carey titles, including Except the Lord, The Horse's Mouth, To Be a Pilgrim, and Not Honor More

The back cover is a splash panel for one of the many western stories that Krigstein did early in his career; the style is unfamiliar to those who are only acquainted with his later work.

SPECIAL NOTE: A complete bibliography of Krigstein's work for all media may be possible. If such a work is published, details will be sent to the TALK mailing list.

