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I S I S

F A C E S

C R I S I S

by S.R. SHEEDY

Within the last few years every sociologist, every pundit, and indeed every noteworthy intellectual hotshot except perhaps Dr. Kinsey, has bent his talents to the study of that curious phenomenon, Soap Opera. These savants have covered reams of paper and burned up thousands of kilowatt-hours of mental energy, but with a single exception, every one of them has been on the wrong track. It so happens, it merely happens, that I am the exception.

The others went astray by connecting Soap Opera exclusively with radio. They investigated as far back as the first rash and ill-advised experiments of Marconi, found nothing there, and concluded that Soap Opera must have been born in the late 1920's. But I went at it differently.

Oh, I made my share of mistakes, too, before I found the answer. I started out, not from the radio angle, but from the soap angle. Beginning with "IT FLOATS", I went back through "GOOD MORNING, HAVE YOU USED PEAR'S SOAP," back through the whimsical detergents of the early Victorians, back to the reign of Louis XIV. And there the trail petered out. I looked everywhere, but -- no soap. I spent three years studying in the British Museum, living on nuts and berries, but without result. I read the eight volumes of Frazer's Golden Bough, the twelve volumes of Gibbon's Decline and Fall, the twenty-three volumes of Beilstein's Handbuch der Organische Chemie, and was no wiser than when I began.

(Editor's note: This article is reprinted from The Nekromantikon #5, Midyear 1951 issue. The Nekromantikon was edited and published by Manly Banister.)

In the Middle Ages, they cleaned clothes by placing them in a stream and beating them with rocks, but they had no soap and no Soap Opera. In Roman times, laundering habits were even more perfunctory and less efficient, and they too were without Soap Opera. I was beginning to get discouraged.

Then it occurred to me that perhaps I was going at it wrong. Maybe the soap angle was a blind alley. Boldly I destroyed all my notes and papers, the fruit of those wasted years. I set out afresh, from the opera angle.

Having wheedled a few thousands from the Guggenheim Foundation, I rented a box (family circle) at the Metropolitan and began an intensive study of the whole field. I studied Verdi, Puccini, Mascagni, Bellini, Pastrami, Rossini, and Toffenetti. With the aid of black coffee and benzedrine I sat through the whole of Parsifal. I even charted the plot of The Magic Flute, a feat that had not been attempted since 1897 when the ill-fated Kochel was lost somewhere in Act III. But I came no nearer to finding the origins of Soap Opera.

The Guggenheim funds were gone, and I had all but exhausted a princely grant from the Rockefellers, when one night, on my way home from Madame Butterfly, a totally new inspiration seized me. Unable to sleep, I paced the floor until morning, puffing at my foul old briar and consuming innumerable pots of strong tea. While the skies were stilled flushed with dawn, I arrived at the Public Library, and when the doors opened I pushed past the startled attendants and plunged into the Egyptology section. Within a few hours I knew I was on the right track at last, and in a matter of days, I had established all the essential features of my theory.

As a result, I am now in a position to state positively that the first Soap Opera in history was an ancient drama which I like to call Isis Faces Crisis. The Ptolemy outfit was the original sponsor, and the show was prepared by some of the topdrawer men from the J. Walter Dionysus agency. It ran for about six hundred years on the Alexandrian network, but along in the third century A.D. it went on a sustaining basis and was eventually dropped.

As is generally known, there was no radio in those days, and of course conditions were somewhat different. But despite the changes and vicissitudes of two millennia, the similarity to modern Soap Opera hits one over the head (I still have quite a lump from it) when one examines the plot.

Isis, the heroine of the story, is just a plain, simple Egyptian deity like your neighbors and mine. She is happily married to her brother Osiris, who is in the agricultural business. He travels all over the world telling people about corn. He is liked and respected by everyone -- wouldn't you be grateful if you had never heard of corn and someone told you about it? Isis and he have an adorable little boy named Horus, or Horace, and in fact everything is going along pretty smoothly for them.

But we soon learn that Osiris has a wicked brother named Set, who happens to be married to Nephthys, the sister of Isis, who of course is his own sister too. (The Egyptians enjoyed this sort

of confusion.) Although Set is rich and powerful himself, he is envious of Osiris, and one dark night he murders him, nails him in a box, and casts it adrift in the Nile.

Isis is heartbroken. It looks as if she and Horus would have to give up their lovely home: But she starts out bravely, searching for her husband, until one day, just as things are looking very black indeed she happens to learn that his coffin has washed ashore at a little town in Syria. A giant tamarisk tree has grown up around it, and the local King, a prominent date and fig baron, has used the tree in building his palace.

Isis has used all her savings by now, and she is forced to take a job as nursemaid in the king's household. Can she get Osiris out of the tree? Can she save enough money to pay for the operation? If not, it looks as if her husband will never walk again.

Well, the details are pretty harrowing, but it all works out in the long run, and she starts for home with the body of Osiris. But her rejoicing is short-lived, for remember the wicked brother Set is still in the picture. He learns what she is doing, and just as she is nearing home, he falls upon her party with a gang of hired ruffians, steals the body of Osiris, and cuts it into fourteen pieces which he scatters over the length and breadth of Egypt.

Isis is heartbroken again. But brave little wife that she is, she begins the discouraging task of rounding up the disjecta membra. She trudges from door to door, begging food and lodging, and eventually she finds all the parts but one, which was thrown into the Nile and eaten by fishes. . . .It looks as if Osiris will never have children again.

Things look mighty black at this point. Isis has no money to pay for the operation, and of course there is the matter of tuition for young Horus, who is now at trade-school learning to be a demigod.

But meanwhile Nephthys, who we have supposed all along was as wicked as Set, has undergone a change of heart. She sells her lovely jewels to raise the money for Isis! Now Osiris can have his operation. The specialists, Thoth and Anubis, say the odds are a million to one that he will never see again; but miraculously he recovers, and when he is back on his feet he lands a very desirable position as King of the Dead.

However, the troubles of Isis still aren't over. Horus is almost a grown man by now, and of course he is determined to take revenge on his wicked Uncle Set. Will he succeed? Or will Set escape to plan new mischief? And what about Nephthys when the loss of her jewels is discovered? How will it all end? Go to your nearest Egyptologist today!

D O N F O R D F O R T A F F

D O N F O R D F O R T A F F



SWAN SONG #1. Chuck Harris. Chuck does an Elsberry and will be telling us for several issues that he is leaving fandom. In this issue Chuck continues his attacks on Bob Madle and has now added Ron Bennett to the list. He goes on to say that he does not really enjoy all this verbal cut-and-thrust-stuff and that it is more than a personal vendette with himself versus Madle and Bennett. He feels that Bob and Ron aren't following the rules of TAFF as set up (or agreed) to by Walt Willis, Ken Bulmer & Bob Madle, and witnessed by Vinç Clarke, Joy Clarke, Madelaine Willis and Sandy Sanderson. If Chuck will read page 23 of JD-ARGASSY #44, he will find that these rules (as originally published in STEAM) are being followed to the letter in this election as they were in the last one. My advise to Chuck would be to drop it, I'm sure Madle will ignore it and most likely Bennett too. You're a voice in the Wilderness Chuck. Swan Song goes on for six or seven pages in a pretty sick sort of way and then on page 8 and 9 he has a bit called "When Gillings published Steffniscope". This is funny. Good writing. I enjoyed it. Chuck doesn't seem to like the older fans of First Fandom, but he says it in the way I wish he'd chosen for his arguement on TAFF. Truth-

fully, I'll hate to see Harris leave fandom. He has a lot of talent and if he'd just get off this name-calling and hating kick I think he would still have alot of fun and that he would find a lot of people aren't the enemies he thinks they are.

GEMZINE 4:23. G.M. CARR. Anyone miss a copy of this? There were two in my bundle. In regards to the waiting list, I like Dan McPhail's suggestion that one or more members be required to sponsor any fan wanting on the waiting list. I have never agreed to well with Consumers Guide either. They have usually lowrated Lincolns, but I was able to get between 100,000 and 150,000 miles from mine with little or no expense for repairs and excellant gas mileage. I use a Ford 6 with overdrive on the road now, and it is an excellant car for mileage but leaves much to be desired for comfort. I have a Buick now, at home for Carole to use, and while it is comfortable and hasn't needed repairs, it is very difficult to get it past a gas station. I may try an Edsel when and if we trade the Buick off. No, I wouldn't be the least interested in publishing a Round Robin. I think those are even worse than the inanities you feel I publish. I would be willing to publish letters

or articles sent to me, but I think Terry and Miriam Carr will take care of what you want in Klein Bottle. Liked your comments on Wraith.

THE BAREAN #4. Ron Ellik. As I mentioned in my comments on Gemzine, I would favor Dan McPhails idea of sponsoring rather than the black-ball idea. That could be put into effect as soon as possible and the fans on the waiting would have to get sponsors or drop.

HORIZONS #78. Harry Warner. The drawings in Bullfrog Bugles signed by Warner are done by Bob Warner of Orlando, Florida. I'm crazy about pro basketball and get to St. Louis every chance I get to see the Hawks play. We'll have it nicer in this area next season as St. Louis has a new independent tv station that is now televising the away from home games of the Cardinals and will do the same with the Hawks basketball games this winter. I didn't know that KMOX reached that far, although I have listened to games on occasion as far away as Ohio.

VANDY #3. Bob & Juanita Coulson. You don't think Max Shulman is funny? Well, that shows the differences in taste. I like slapstick humor (probably the reason I like to watch the old, old comedies on tv). Like the Grennell cartoon on page 7. Tucker's column very enlightening. One thing though, I believe that to see a book in the Library of Congress, you have to ask for it by name. You just can't go in that Delta section and browse.

MIMEO #1. Sylvia White. Those dandelion seeds probably make better dandelion wine or greens. When I was a kid, my grandmother always went out early in dandelion season to get the tender ones for greens. When I was in Maine we used to pick what we called 'fiddleheads', they were a tender fern that would roll up at night and look like the end of a fiddle. Tasty with vinegar oil and sugar.

PHLOTSAM #11. Phyllis Economou. I've tried various bookstores in most of the moderate size cities (25,000 to 150,000 pop.) but haven't found a store that has PSYCHO in stock. One in Springfield, Illinois had it in their lending library but it was out when I was there. With all the requests I've made at these various Book Stores, maybe they'll be ordering the book for stock. My fan room just isn't big enough. Have my hard bound books on the shelves, originals on the walls, 2 multiliths, 3 typers, work table, sofa, platform rocker, and table type tv there. (the reason for the tv being that I like to watch the ballgames and Carole doesn't. I can watch them in there while she can see the programs she wants in the living room.) All of my magazines, pocket books and fanzines have to be stored upstairs. I'm just waiting for the day when I can get a 10 to 15 room house and have a whole floor of it just for hobbies, or a house with a nice basement like Grennell's (we have no basement here), I like the way he has it layed out for his hobbies. What!! No JD at your liquor store? How can you stand living there? Next time I'm through, I'll bring some with me.

NANGEL #2. Nan Gerding. Liked Tom's drawings, although they really don't do justice to the originals he showed me. Am glad you have him attending the art classes in Monmouth now, for he has talent in the art field. Its too bad you can't reproduce the oil painting he did. That was real fine. Gee, it'll be fun when Tom, Paula and Doug can

put out a zine of their own. I found that Jim Harmon does have a phone, but it is registered under his cousin's name. No, I didn't get to see Redd, and he is one fan that I would especially like to meet. Jim came over for the week-end the following week, and we had some good talks over a couple cases of Bullfrog Beer. I hope this summer that you will have more time to fan.

PHANTASY PRESS #23. Dan McPhail. I'm sorry that the cover didn't reproduce any better than it did. You will notice the Plato Jones illo in Bullfrog Bugle also came out poorly, seems he got hold of a bad reproduction pencil. Yes, I do quite a bit of printing other than fan material. I publish a monthly Boy Scout paper for the troop my son is in, and since Carole was publicity chairman of the Cancer Drive here in Mt. Vernon, she had me doing quite a bit for them. When I was living in Statesville, North Carolina I published a weekly bulletin for the civic organization (Exchange Club) that I belonged to. Have never done any commercial printing (except for specialized literature to use in my work) but if I had more time I would probably do some of that on the side. I like your plan to sponsor waiting lists and if it is put to a vote, I hope it goes through. I noticed that on page 16 in the art credits, that you omitted Danaline. Fie on you! Like the FAN-OUT page. Have changed the pricing of JD-ARGASSY slightly. All issues will now be 10¢ with the exception of twice a year when I publish the 'big' issues. These will run at least 30 pages and the price will be advanced to 20¢. Of course if you subscribe at the \$1.00 rate, you receive 12 issues regardless of size.

INVOLUTIA #3. Curtis Janke. Was driving through Sheboygan last week on my way to Egg Harbor, Wis., and although I usually bypass the downtown section, this particular day I decided to stop at the newstand and see if the DELL book "Darby O'Gill and The Little People" was in yet. As I was coming out of the newstand I ran into Curt. He usually isn't on the street at that time of day and I usually don't go through the downtown section, so it must be something that draws fanish sensitivities together. It happened another time at the Ford garage in Ashland, Ohio. I was in there seeing about getting a '58 Ford to replace my '57 and Lou Tabakow walked in ready to sell them a few years supply of tire patches. He had Don Ford with him (although he was on the other side of town) We went and got Don and had a dinner together. In regards to the cover of BB#1, you just live too far north. Perhaps if they strike at the Columbia, South Carolina plant of Kohler..... Plato Jones will be in most issues of BB. Your writing is a bit on the bitter side, Curt, but I enjoy your zine.

MOONSHINE. Rick Sneary. REAL cute Bjo cartoon. Living in these various spots through the country and wanting or not wanting to is a state of mind more than anything else. I move around considerably, and there have been places that I didn't want to move to, that I ended up liking very well. For example South Carolina. I had lived in North Carolina but didn't think I would like moving further south. When in Michigan and finding out I would soon be moving to South Carolina, I didn't like it at all and in fact the money was the only reason I made the move. The end is that I liked Orangeburg, South Carolina better than any place I've ever lived and when and if I ever retire that is where I'll be heading for. From the few times I've been in the L.A. area (mostly in the late '40's) I've thought I would never want to live there, but it would really depend on my frame of mind and the people I met when I moved there. That actually is the most important thing.

people. Its the people you meet that make a place for you, not the climates.

LOST IN THE STARS. The Youngs. Nice. Would like to see more like this. The Voyage Of The Ship "Little Gone" was terrific. Loved it!

DAY*STAR #8. Marion Bradley. Noted.

PEBBLES IN THE DRINK #3. The Youngs. Nicely produced, but I don't go for this type of thing.

KLEIN BOTTLE #1. Terry & Miriam Carr. Here's the answer to GMCarr's prayer. Fine cover, two goodlooking people. A Tale of Daring-Don't by Rotsler is the high light of the zine. Great! Bloch's letter was sound advise. A Significant Problem was for the birds, there actually is enough of this type thing without writing an article to deliberately say nothing. Was sorta cute though. Old Fogey was mild. Black Balls over FAPA isn't the way I would like things done. The Rotsler 'toons were all great. I like this, and I like the policy. It could develop into one of the finest zines in or out of FAPA.

SUNDANCE #5. The Youngs. Intersting, but nothing I want to comment on. Liked all the Rotslers.

THE BULLFROG BUGLE #4. me. Will no doubt expand the mag both in the comments and outside material as time allows and I see what is liked and disliked in the zine.

BOBOLINGS #5. Bob pavlat. I like mailings of the same size you do, from 300 to 400 or so pages. Easier to read it all, and easier to comment on the contents. In the same vien, I like zines that run to about 20 pages. Over that and it is hard to do justice to the contents. They had quite a misprint in one of the Madison, Wisc. newspapers in the lovelorn column. Stu Hoffman had saved a copy for me. Can't locate it right now but the gist of it was this gal who was in PUBLIC RELATIONS writing in and saying that she couldn't get any one to propose because she made so much more money than the average male. The answer was "You may be razor sharp in your pubic relations but....."

CELEPHAIS. Bill Evans. By the way those lose were written, I would also guess that they were written by W-----. The only answer I see to getting the present day readers interested in fandom, is that each time a letter appears in any of the letter columns that are left, that a fan from somewhere in the same general area, write that person a nice letter to find out just how interested in sf that person is, and to get acquainted in that way. Then send a fanzine or two. This is a tough way to do it, but with the absence of any fan columns, seems the only way. I don't know whether the N3F does this or not, or whether they are picking up any new members. I have done this in a very few cases with fen in my area when I have some spare time. Whether it will do any good in bringing them into fandom I don't know yet, but I have several that were interested enough to invest a buck in JD-A. Perhaps we'll get a good fan out of them.

THE RAMBLING FAP #16. Gregg Calkins. Enjoyed your descriptions of the Fapans you had met. While I have met a number of them, it was nevertheless enjoyable. I guess Pavlat and Ellik are the only ones who met more of the group than I have.

THE STORMY PETREL. Terry Carr. Interesting. Don't wish to comment though, as from the tone of the articles, although I might have liked Laney as a fan, it is doubtful if I would have liked him as a person. Of course, I never knew him, and these articles could throw me clear off.

TARGET FAPA. Rich Eney. I like these postcard covers you are doing. Your explanation on 'arse' and 'ass' makes me wish to apologise to Chuck Harris for saying that I thought he should learn to spell when he said I was the pimple on the 'arse' of fandom.

IF #'s 16 & 17. Ted White. Saw CONTROVERSY on the stands but didn't buy it, mainly for the reasons you listed. I agree with you that the US has started its decline, with all the red tape and personal freedoms that have been lost. The loss of States Rights and the Federal Gvt. dictating what you can and can't do in business, will pull us down farther and farther. Personally I'm for stronger state governments with a minimum of Federal control.

KWARLY. Walter Coslet. HAEMOGOBLIN. Fred Smith. AMATEUR'S JOURNAL. Chick Derry. SON OF BUCKSHOT. Read, but no comments to make this time.

Just received the post-mailed LE MOINDRE #15 and GASP #15. To Bob Silverberg: I should have said that Bob Pettit set a new record for Keil Auditorium. It was an NBA record, but only for Keil Auditorium. Bevo Francis went to work for Sapperstein touring with a white team on the same order as the Harlem Globetrotters. Am not not sure if that team is still touring or not. Frank Selvy (now on the NY Knicks) scored 100 points in one game while playing for Furman U. in South Carolina. To Gerald Stewart: I haven't been out of touch with fandom that I know of. Am also in two other apas and have been pubbing JD-A regularly and also attending some cons, etc. I introduced myself in BB for the reason that although I know many of the members personally there are some that I have never met nor corresponded with, and I thought it would be better if they were to know a little about me as a new member.

D O N F O R D F O R T A F F ! !

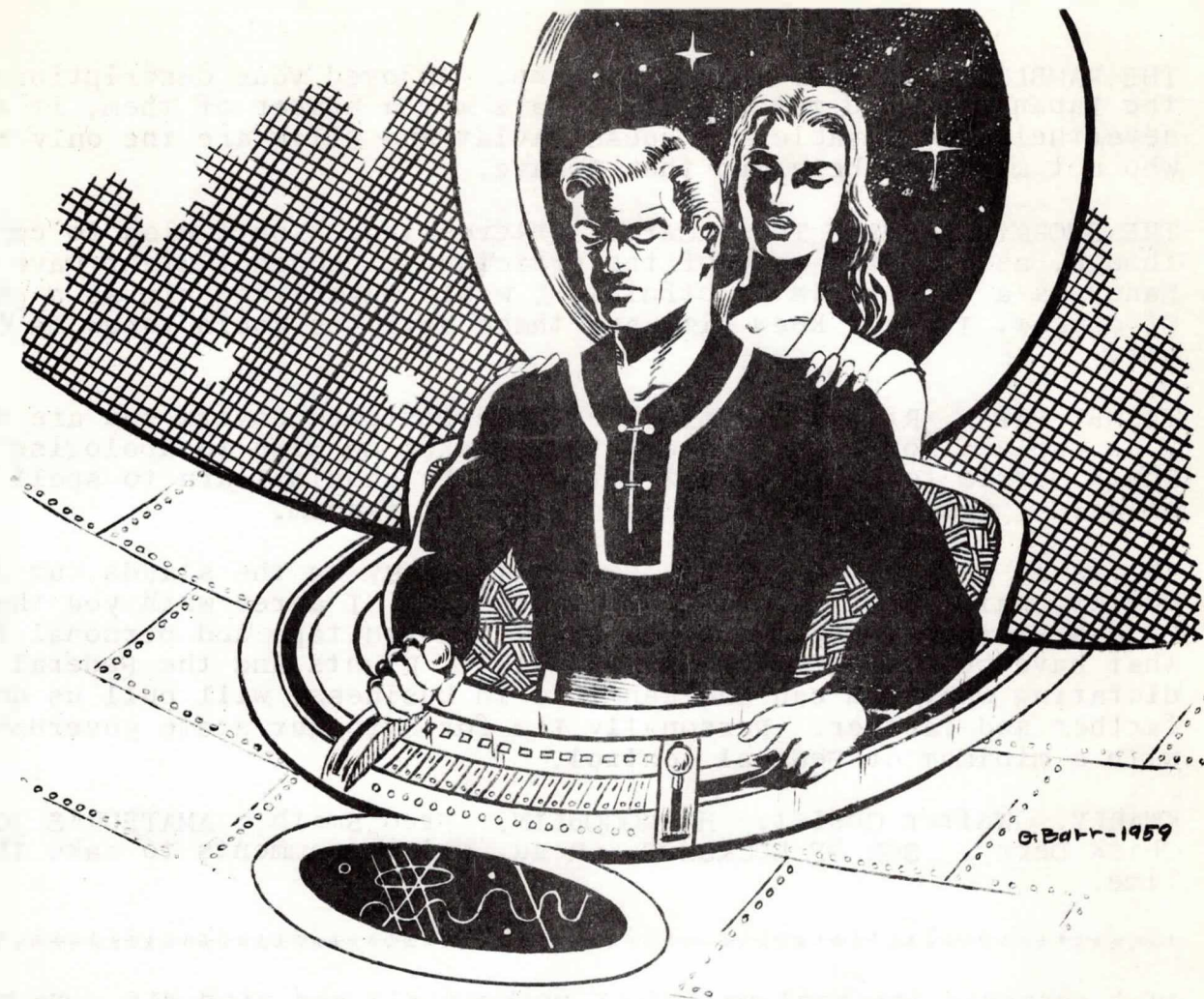
The cover on this issue was sent to me on just a portion of multilith master and is an experiment I made in splicing. Although it worked out good to waste.

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* P I T T I N ' 6 0 ! !

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poorly, I felt the drawing was too



The Bullfrog Bugle #6
Lynn A. Hickman
304 N. 11th
Mt. Vernon, Illinois

Artwork by George Barr and
Bob Warner. Written mater-
ial by S. R. Sheedy and
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