

"The Shadow" Vol. 2, No. 3
Denny O'Neil
Illustrated by Michael Wm. Kaluta and Berni Wrightson
National Periodical Publications, Inc.
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"Only out of boredom might we perish. And from boredom, fortunately, the comics keep distance." —Federico Fellini

Anyone who signs their work with the name, Michael Wm. Kaluta has a lotta nerve and better have talent to back it up. Kaluta does. Assisted by his old compatriot, Berni Wrightson (of Swamp Thing fame with whom he put out the new rare issues of Web of Horror, a beautifully drawn and edited black and white, horror-type, comic magazine back in the 1960's), the young artists manage to outdo any of their previous individual works.

Wrightson's inking tends to "round out" and three-dimensionalize Kaluta's oft-times scratchy sketchiness which mars the second issue of *The Shadow*, wherein Kaluta has all the artist chores.

O'Neil's writing of the adventures of the most popular 1930s pulp hero of them all exaggerates the feelings of an overzealous crime hater.

"Quiet... and cold... midnight lays upon the city like an inky cloak! Most good people are tucked in their beds. However, the bad are about their deeds... as in this suburban bank..."

Going along with the above narration are two illustrated panels: the first, 1930's scene with old electric street lamps, trolley-car wires, an old car, and a bank with a tiny sign, ABC-DEE GOLDFISH; the second, a supposed inside view of the bank, complete with its three shady men (one who looks like the thug Kaluta did six months ago in "Born Losers") page four, *House of Secrets* no. 98. Now, when art in a comic does not just repeat what is being said in the particular panel, but gives the reader a tremendous wealth of other information, most times vital to the story, it becomes more than "just another comic."

The artwork for *The Shadow* no. 3 is truly amazing. A large variety of differently angled shots (for example page four), last two panels; the first, a view of a cab from high above, and the next, a shot looking up at the Shadow who is at the top of the stairs) makes the reader into an omnipresent viewer who sees behind, in front, above, below, inside, and outside according to the artists' whims.

Kaluta is the comic artist for America's 1930's mood. He proved that with his earlier works. Here's a rumor—Mike Kaluta was given *The Shadow* if he would take on the non-promising *Spawn of Frankenstein* which had two strikes against it. For one, the strip was to be regulated to second billing behind *The Phantom Stranger* (in whose comic *Spawn* was to appear). And second, Kaluta had to face the other line's competition, Mike Ploog, an excellent artist who was doing *Marvel's Frankenstein*. This earlier Kaluta art carries the tightness and 1930's look with women in long-sleeved, slinky dresses, old mansions—an art nouveau look. *Phantom Stranger* no. 25, first panel of the *Spawn* story, shows an elegant woman's profile as she leans on the gravestone of her deceased husband, amidst flowers and green grass. As an oracle acquaintance once said, "The future is being swallowed by the 1930's and 1940's." Kaluta is helping it along!

A
look
at
six
newly
released
books
--and
one
album

Our Crisis

Dealing with the energy crisis
Is going to put all of us under a strain.
Even the Great White Father in Washington D.C.
Has been forced to flying in a civilian-type plane.

When you drive into your favorite gas station,
One you've dealt with for years in the past,
Can you imagine the attendant's consternation
When he has to tell you he has just pumped his very last.

When the breath from your furnace becomes icy,
Causing you to shiver and shake like a leaf,
And the calendar sternly tells you, there'll be
One more week before you can get any relief,

The cold of winter will become a hot subject;
Gladly would you welcome back August's hot blast.
The gasoline in your limousine tank has dwindled—
How many more miles can it last.

We're being forced into accepting a role
In the tragedy that has taken over our land.
Its director the well-known Profit and Loss.
Its co-director, the equally well-known Supply and Demand.

What kind of a performance will we give?
How well will we play our part?
Will we be any wiser when the play is over
Than we were at its very start?

Lynn Bond

The pattering poet of Potter Street

Lynn
Bond's
monthly
corner

Of course, let's give Wrightson some credit. (Berni Wrightson!) Take a look at page five, panel five. The Shadow talking with Margo is a real Frazetta "hit" wouldn't you say? How about page 14, Margo gagged as a lighted cigar approaches her face. (Wrightson again this time, using Alfredo Alcalá's trick of black, heavy lines to intensify the horror)? Pretty nice!

For another example of the variety of "shots", see page 11: first panel, inside jail from above; second panel floor level; third panel, a face close up; fourth, far off, floor level shot at a 45-degree angle; fifth, outside shot of the prison with cemetery crosses in the foreground (dialogue: "Cobra slaughtered everyone except Earl and myself").

Sure, any comic artist can change the scene drastically from panel to panel, but can they maintain continuity of the story? Barry Smith does, in "Hawk from the Sea" Conan no. 19, pages 11 and 12, by having a seagull fly from panel to panel as Conan broods and ponders. Kaluta and Wrightson do, too. They use the motif of shadowed jail bars throughout the whole comic (a la Will Eisner's *Spirit*) repeating it with window frames, stripped reflections as Margo's glasses, wire fences, trolley lines, skylights, floor tiles, and climaxing in a building whose jagged rubble reminds the reader once again of jail bars.

Because art makes the comic, *Shadow* no. 3 is the comic of the year (*Savage Tales* no. 2 and no. 3 are comic magazines!).

Greg T. Weed

"Economics and the Public Purpose"

John Kenneth Galbraith
Houghton Mifflin Company
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For anyone interested in a possible explanation of why things go so bad in the economic sector, this is the book to read. Galbraith's *Economics* is a precise and detailed itemizing of not only the ills of a system, but directions for reform.

Some people, of course, have no time for John Kenneth Galbraith. In fact, just the other night someone told me Galbraith was "all crap." And this is the important point to Galbraith: it isn't so much the detailed positions one by one as it is the over-all acceptance of what he is saying. For some, the American (and Western) economic system does not do what an economic system should—provide the most of what most people want, such as hospitals, mass transit and reasonable, decent housing.

But obviously many people feel the reverse is true: that the system does provide what people want. Oh sure, there's maybe too many deodorants and not enough housing, but it's what people want. Not by coincidence, many of these same people have enough money to pay the high costs of basic needs like housing and health care.

Galbraith unashamedly takes the side of the poor and middle income. He even defends the position of small and medium size business in the United States. The big business world of planning and technocratic structure threatens, according to Galbraith, the very lifeblood of the smaller market system. Responding not to the consumer as described in classical theory but to its own inner needs and requirements, the gigantic planning corporations and conglomerates have the power to fix prices and fees both for the individual consumer and the retail outlet. As a consequence, we are stuck with unneeded products, ranging from elaborate and quickly obsolescent missile systems to total saturation in such trivial areas as deodorants and cosmetics.

Much more is outlined by Galbraith, many complaints also detailed in his earlier books, *New Industrial State* and *The Affluent Society*.

What then to do? Galbraith puts forth suggested areas of reform in the final one-third of *Economics*. Perhaps the most important ingredient for reform is what Galbraith terms "the emancipation of belief." This means, in his words, "The belief to be contested is that the purposes of the planning system are those of the individual. Once this grip is broken, once the regular Joe in the street no longer believes that what is good for General Motors or Boeing is good for the nation and himself, then the public will be well down the road to meaningful, concrete reform. All too often, Galbraith says, reform of the system through anti-trust and regulation has back-fired. But, warns Galbraith, no regulation or anti-trust is equally damaging: "For on no conclusion is this book more clear: Left to themselves, economic forces do not work out for the best except for the powerful."

Galbraith presents a full range of general and detailed recommendations in the economic system, including areas involving public policy, the environment, coordination, fiscal policy and controls.

Although Galbraith is generally critical of the present system (and economists of course) and the Nixon Administration's policies, he does offer praise for the concept of revenue sharing which he terms "a part of reform." While it can be expected that acceptors of the present faith will totally and gleefully denounce Galbraith's book, they'll have a hard time getting around his praise. But then, they'll have to look pretty hard to find any.

George Buddy

"Makes a New Impression"

Margie Joseph
Volt VOS 6012
Copyright 1973

In her recent album for her new label (Atlantic), Joseph proved to be one of the freshest, most exciting new female voices in soul music. *Essence* magazine, rather correctly, described her as a cross between Aretha Franklin and Diana Ross. In the Atlantic album she showed she could handle a variety of styles—from Al Green's "Let's Stay Together" to Dolly Parton's "Touch Your Woman"—with ease.

Apparently noting the attention Joseph has received for the Atlantic album, her former label (Volt) has reissued her first album and it, too, is worth attention. The highlight of the album is her version of "Stop in the Name of Love," complete with an introductory Isaac Hayes-type monolog. Both the Volt and Atlantic albums (the Atlantic one is titled simply "Margie Joseph") are worth a place on your shelf.

Robert Hillborn
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