

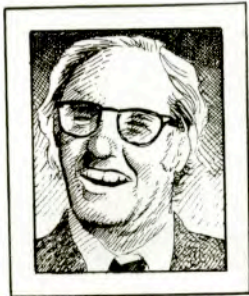
CHAPTER TWO

THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS.



SEE PAGE 216 FOR MORE INFORMATION.





THIS IS NOT A MAN.



THESE ARE NOT IDEAS.



THIS IS NOT A COUNTRY.



THIS IS NOT A LEAF



THESE ARE NOT PEOPLE.



THIS IS NOT MUSIC.



THIS IS NOT A COW.



THIS IS NOT MY VOICE.



THESE ARE NOT FLOWERS.



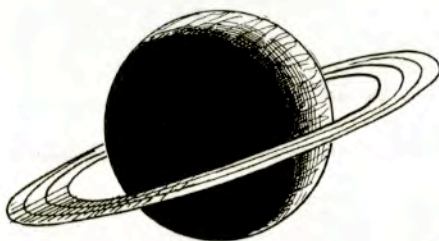
THIS IS NOT ME.



THIS IS NOT SOUND.



THIS IS NOT LAW.



THIS IS NOT A PLANET.



THIS IS NOT FOOD.



THIS IS NOT A CAR.



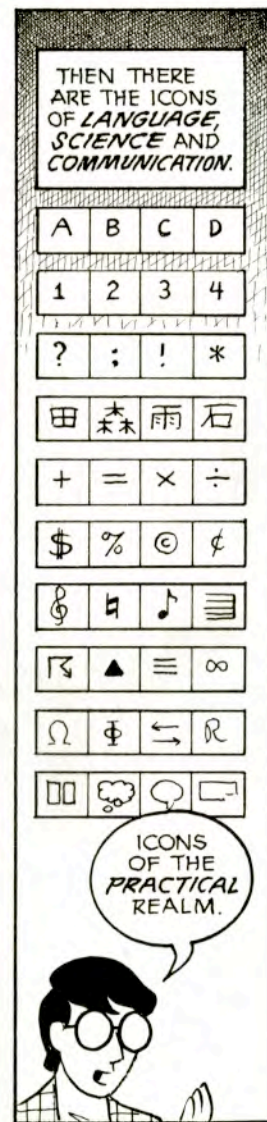
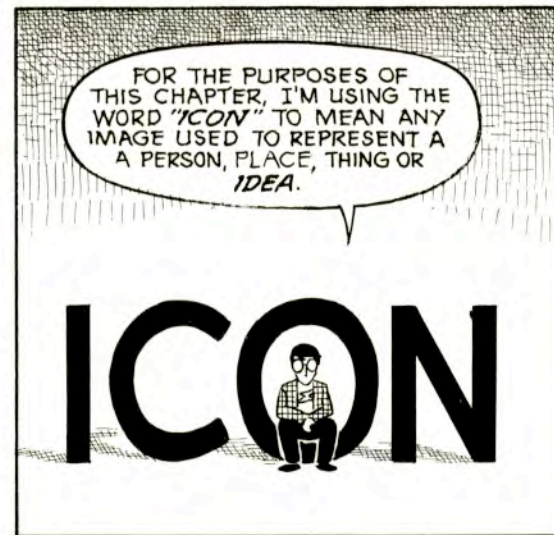
THESE ARE NOT SEPARATE MOMENTS.



THIS IS NOT A COMPANY.



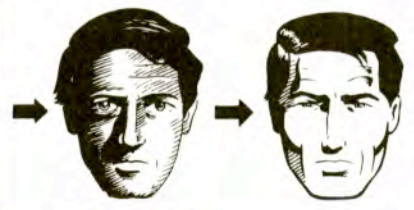
THIS IS NOT A FACE.



IN THE *NON-PICTORIAL* ICONS, MEANING IS *FIXED* AND *ABSOLUTE*. THEIR APPEARANCE DOESN'T AFFECT THEIR MEANING BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT *INVISIBLE IDEAS*.



IN *PICTURES*, HOWEVER, MEANING IS *FLUID* AND *VARIABLE* ACCORDING TO APPEARANCE. THEY DIFFER FROM "*REAL-LIFE*" APPEARANCE TO VARYING *DEGREES*.



SOMEWHAT *MORE* ABSTRACT IS *THIS* STYLE OF DRAWING FOUND IN MANY ADVENTURE COMICS.



ONLY OUTLINES AND A HINT OF SHADING ARE STILL PRESENT, BUT WE EASILY RECOGNIZE THIS AS A *HUMAN FACE*.

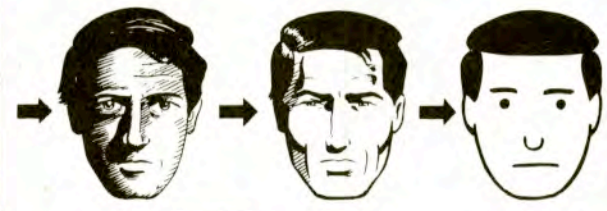
WORDS ARE TOTALLY *ABSTRACT* ICONS. THAT IS, THEY BEAR NO RESEMBLANCE AT ALL TO THE *REAL MCCOY*.



BUT IN PICTURES THE *LEVEL* OF ABSTRACTION *VARIES*. SOME, LIKE THE FACE IN THE *PREVIOUS* PANEL, SO CLOSELY RESEMBLE THEIR *REAL-LIFE* COUNTERPARTS AS TO ALMOST *TRICK THE EYE!*



OTHERS, LIKE YOURS TRULY, ARE QUITE A BIT *MORE* ABSTRACT AND, IN FACT, ARE VERY MUCH *UNLIKE* ANY HUMAN FACE YOU'VE EVER SEEN!



AS WE CONTINUE TO ABSTRACT AND *SIMPLIFY* OUR IMAGE, WE ARE MOVING FURTHER AND FURTHER FROM THE "*REAL*" FACE OF THE PHOTO.



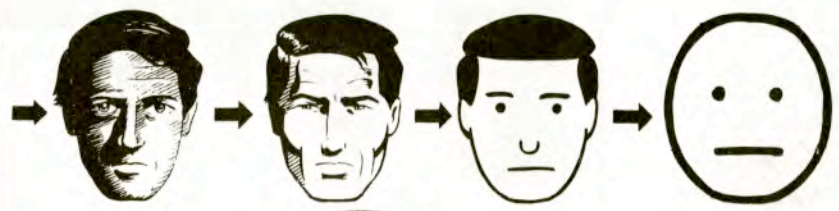
WHY, THEN, IS THE FACE ABOVE SO *ACCEPTABLE* TO OUR EYES? WHY DOES IT SEEM JUST AS *REAL* AS THE OTHERS?

LET'S SEE IF WE CAN PUT THESE *PICTORIAL* ICONS IN SOME SORT OF ORDER.



THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT SET THESE APART FROM ACTUAL *FACES*--THEY'RE SMALLER, FLATTER, LESS *DETAILED*, THEY DON'T MOVE. THEY LACK COLOR-- BUT AS *PICTORIAL* ICONS GO, THEY ARE PRETTY "*REALISTIC*."

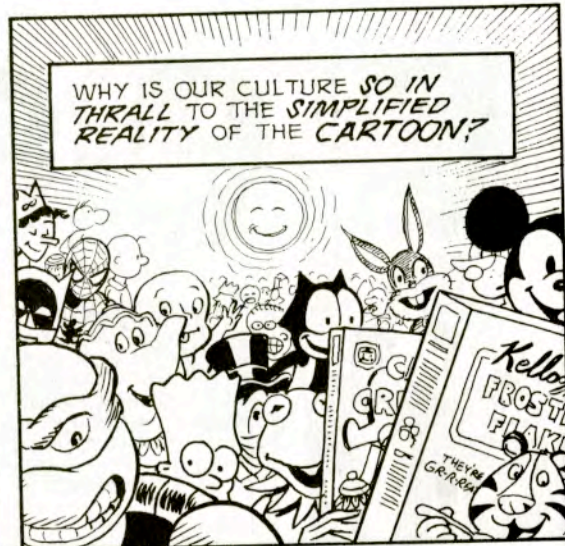
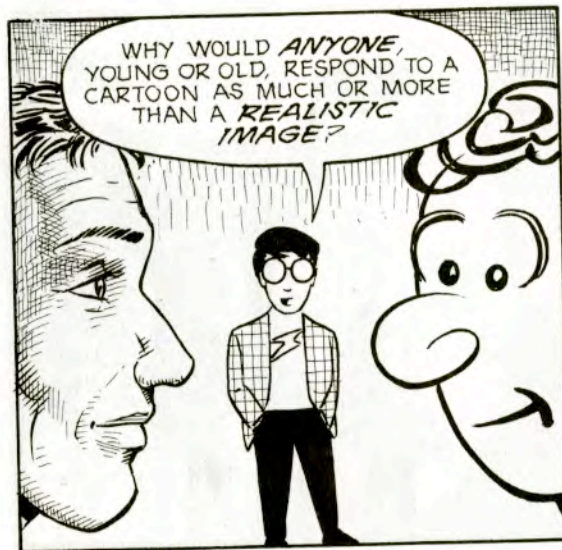
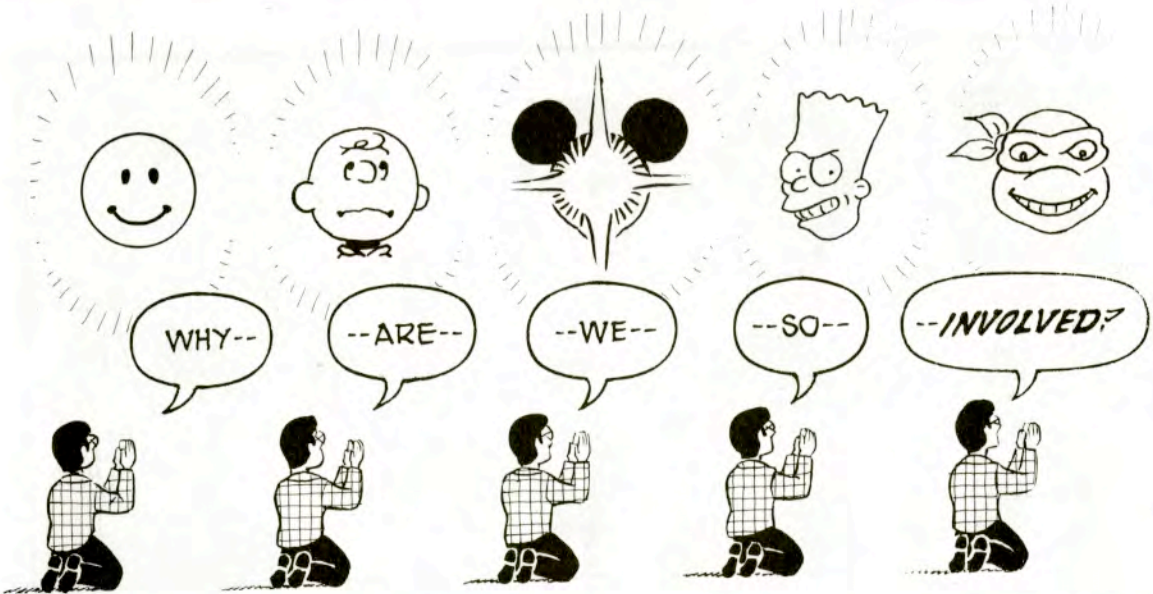
COMMON WISDOM HOLDS THAT THE *PHOTOGRAPH* AND THE *REALISTIC* PICTURE ARE THE ICONS THAT MOST RESEMBLE THEIR *REAL-LIFE* COUNTERPARTS.



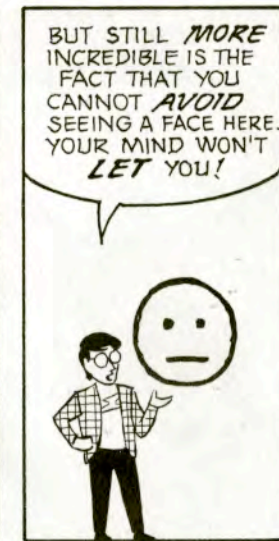
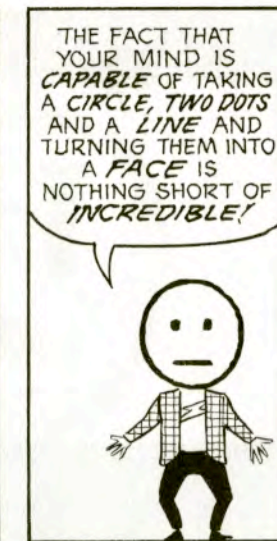
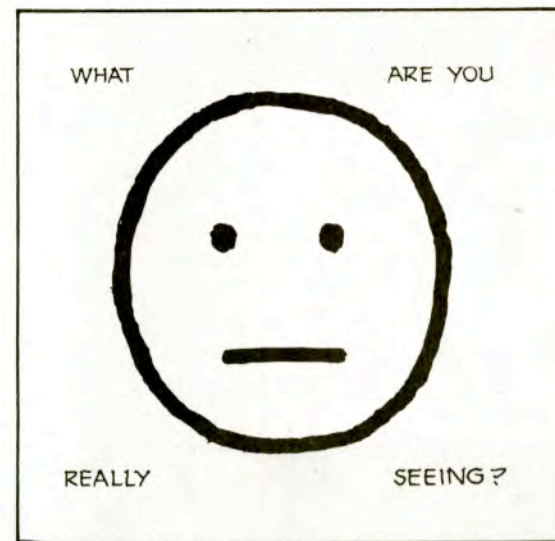
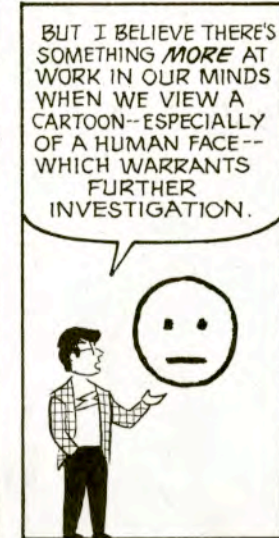
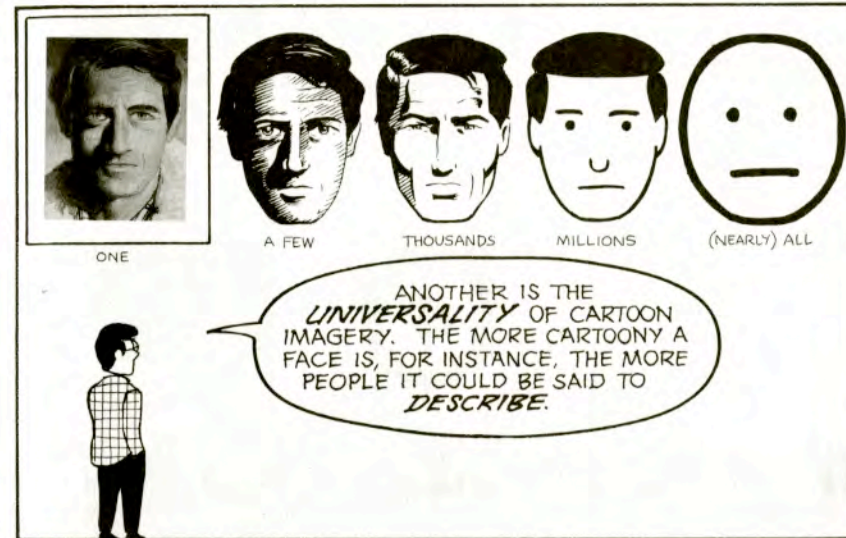
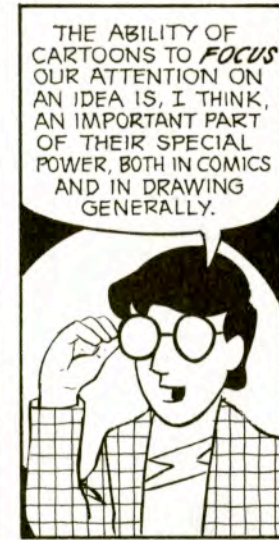
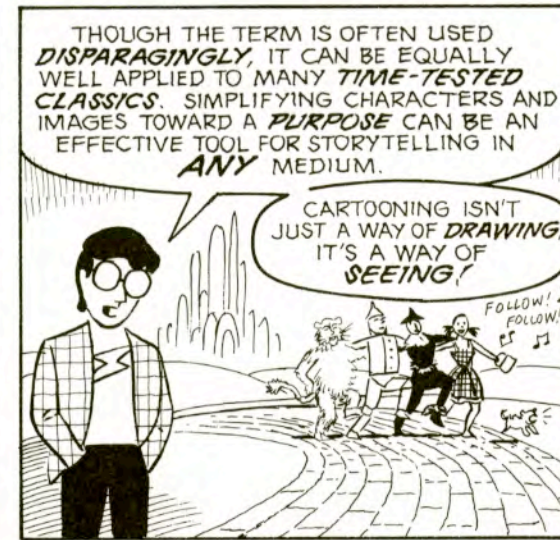
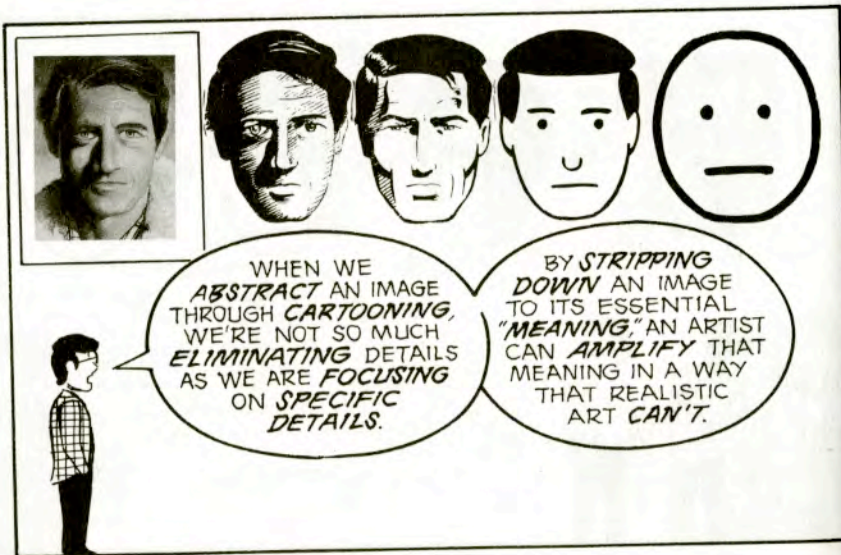
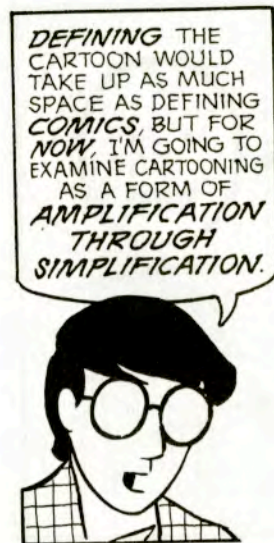
WHAT IS THE SECRET OF THE ICON WE CALL--



--THE *CARTOON*?

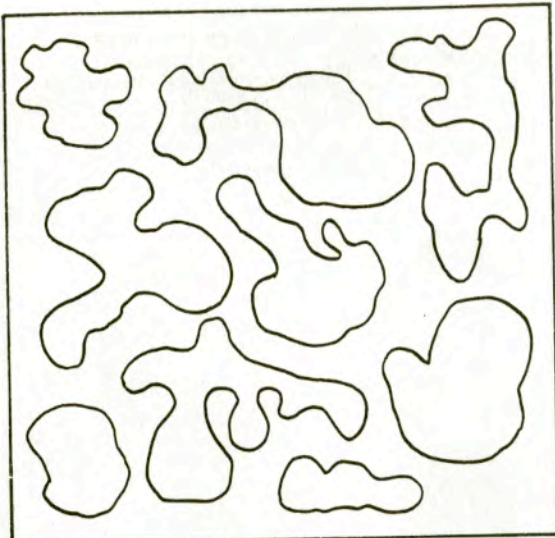


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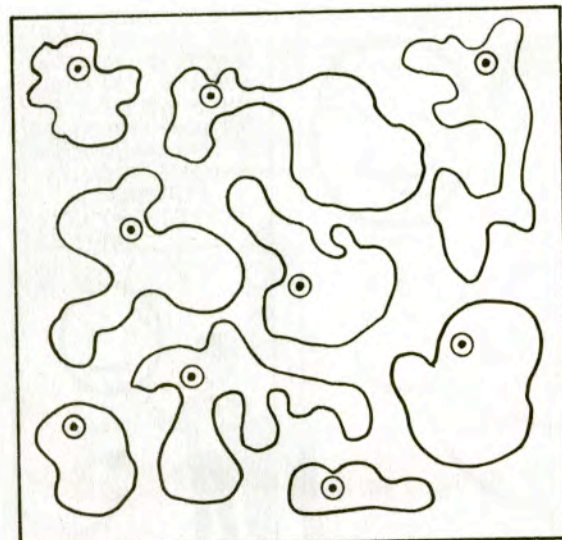
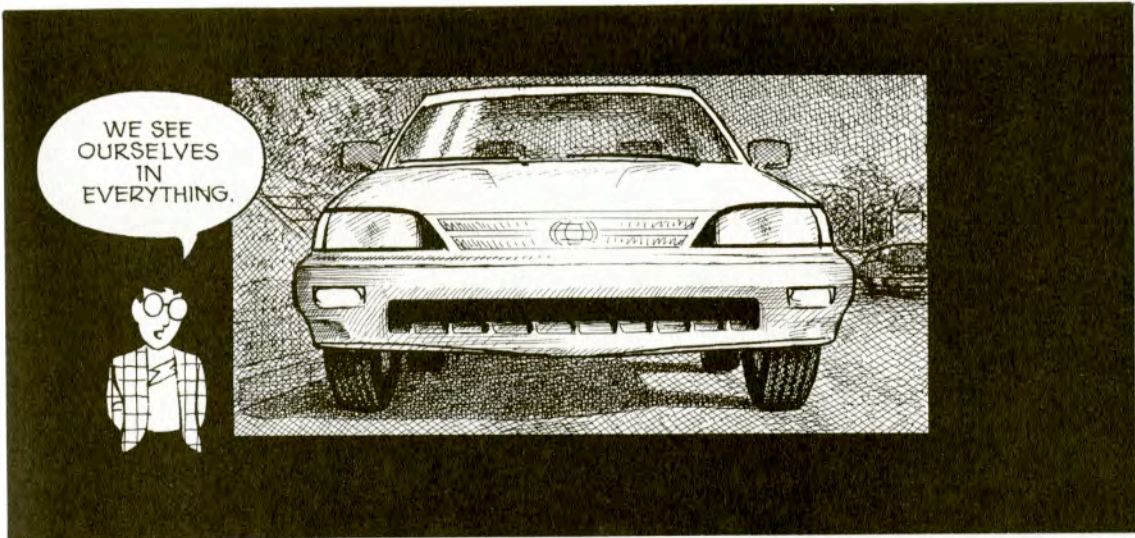


ASK A FRIEND TO DRAW YOU SOME SHAPES ON A PIECE OF PAPER. THEY SHOULD BE *CLOSED CURVES*, BUT *OTHERWISE* CAN BE AS *WEIRD* AND *IRREGULAR* AS HE OR SHE *WANTS*.

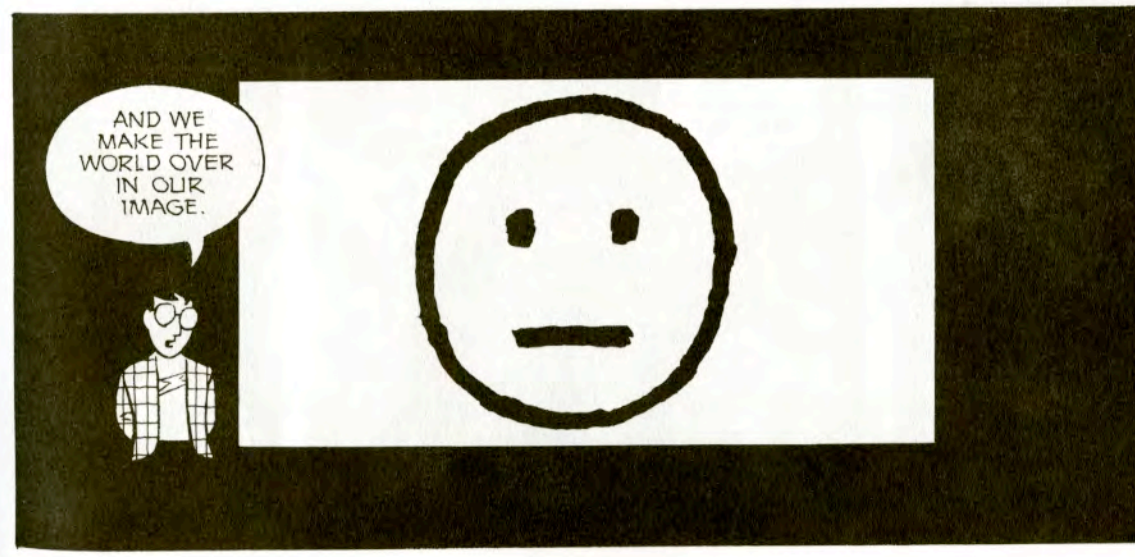
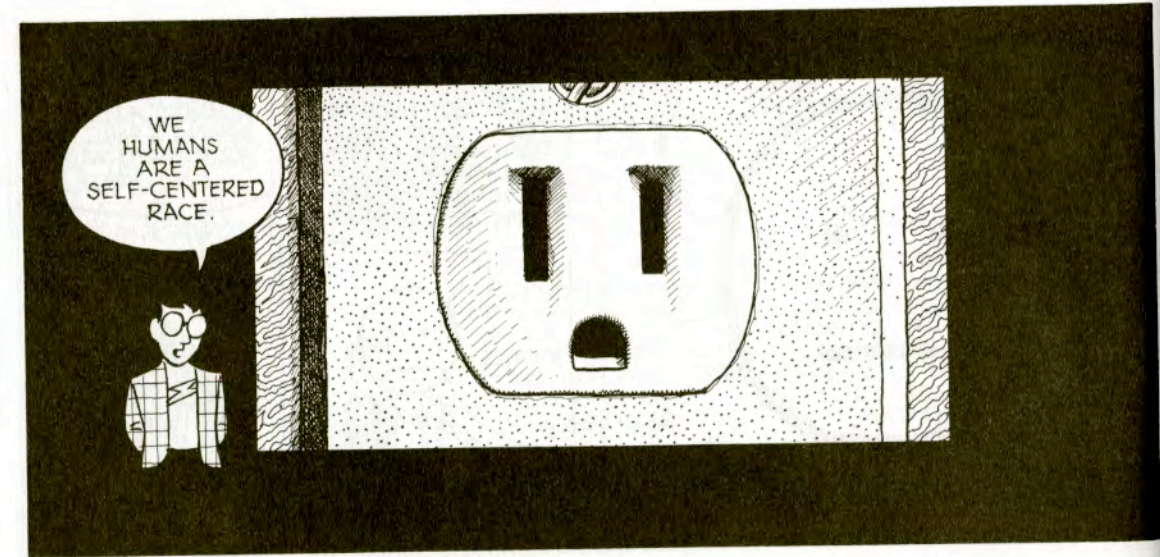
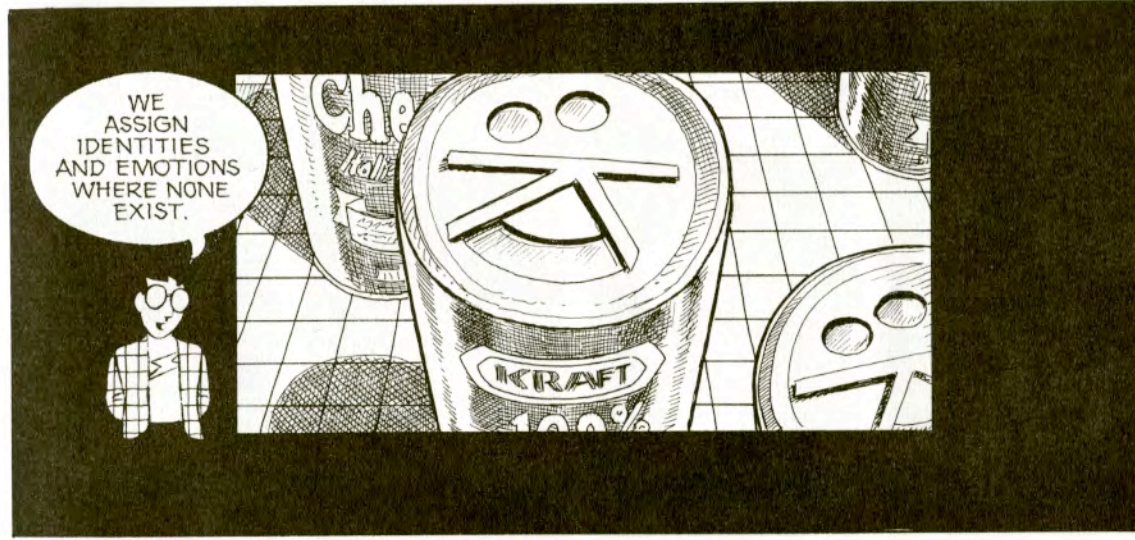
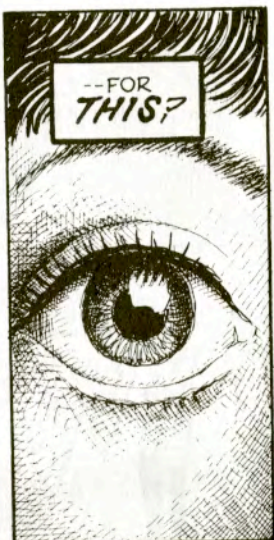
LET'S SAY THE RESULTS LOOK SOMETHING LIKE *THIS*.

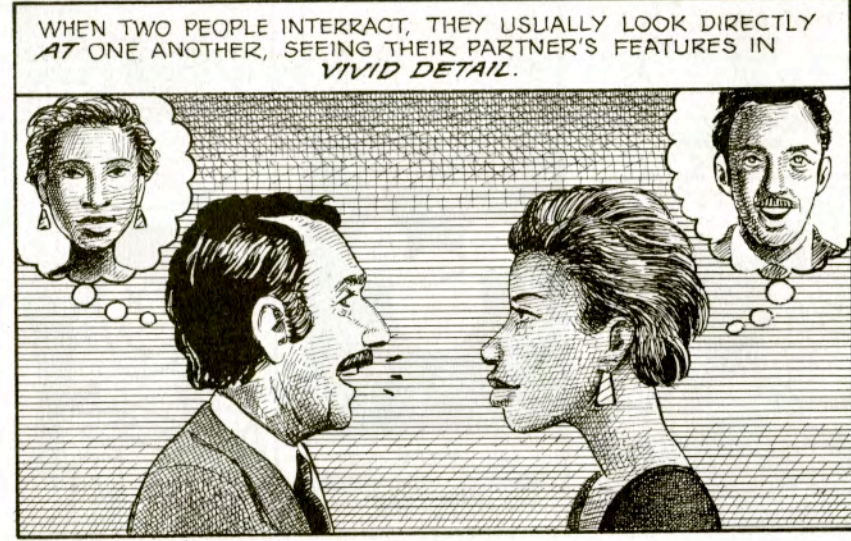
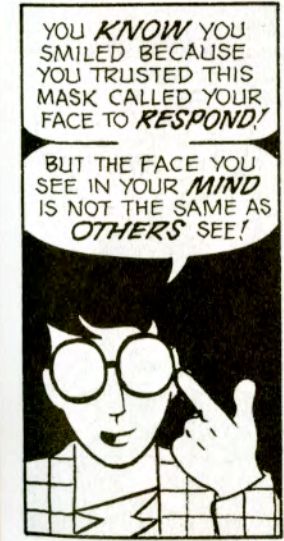
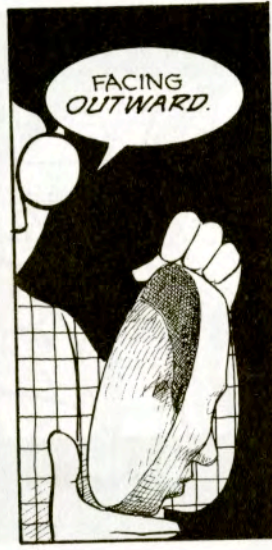


NOW -- YOU'LL FIND THAT NO MATTER WHAT THEY *LOOK* LIKE, EVERY SINGLE *ONE* OF THOSE SHAPES CAN BE MADE INTO A FACE WITH ONE SIMPLE ADDITION.



YOUR MIND HAS NO TROUBLE AT ALL CONVERTING SUCH SHAPES INTO FACES, YET WOULD IT EVER MISTAKE *THIS*--





EACH ONE *ALSO* SUSTAINS A CONSTANT AWARENESS OF HIS OR HER *OWN* FACE, BUT *THIS* MIND-PICTURE IS NOT NEARLY SO VIVID; JUST A SKETCHY ARRANGEMENT... A SENSE OF SHAPE... A SENSE OF *GENERAL PLACEMENT*.



SOMETHING AS *SIMPLE* AND AS *BASIC*--



--AS A *CARTOON*.

I *DOUBT* IT! YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR TOO AWARE OF THE *MESSENGER* TO FULLY RECEIVE THE *MESSAGE!*



APART FROM WHAT LITTLE I TOLD YOU ABOUT MYSELF IN *CHAPTER ONE*, I'M PRACTICALLY A *BLANK SLATE!*



IT WOULD NEVER EVEN *OCCUR* TO YOU TO WONDER WHAT MY *POLITICS* ARE, OR WHAT I HAD FOR *LUNCH* OR WHERE I GOT THIS *SILLY OUTFIT!*



I'M JUST A LITTLE VOICE INSIDE YOUR *HEAD*.
A *CONCEPT*.



THIS, WHEN YOU LOOK AT A PHOTO OR REALISTIC DRAWING OF A FACE--



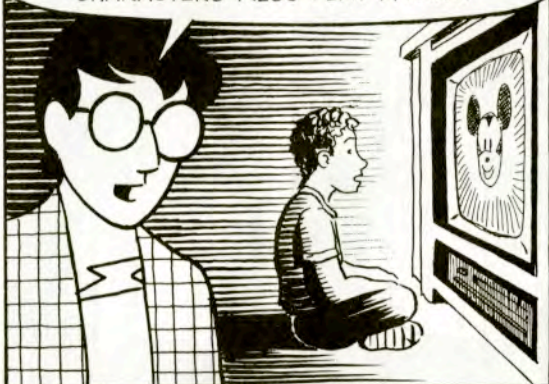
--YOU SEE IT AS THE FACE OF *ANOTHER*.

BUT WHEN YOU ENTER THE WORLD OF THE *CARTOON*--



--YOU SEE *YOURSELF*.

I BELIEVE THIS IS THE *PRIMARY CAUSE* OF OUR CHILDHOOD FASCINATION WITH *CARTOONS*, THOUGH OTHER FACTORS SUCH AS *UNIVERSAL IDENTIFICATION*, *SIMPLICITY* AND THE *CHILDLIKE FEATURES* OF MANY CARTOON CHARACTERS ALSO PLAY A PART.



YOU GIVE ME LIFE BY READING THIS BOOK AND BY "*FILLING UP*" THIS VERY *ICONIC* (CARTOONY) *FORM*.



WHO I AM IS IRRELEVANT. I'M JUST A LITTLE PIECE OF *YOU*.



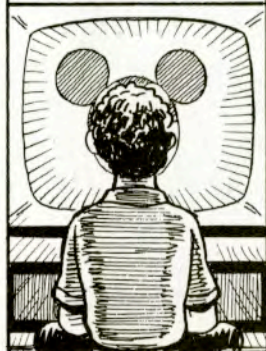
BUT IF *WHO* I AM MATTERS *LESS*, MAYBE WHAT I *SAY* WILL MATTER *MORE*.



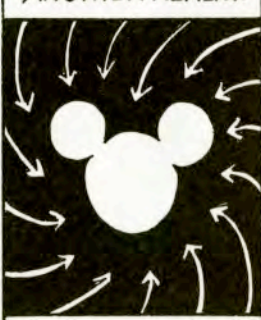
THAT'S THE *THEORY*, ANYWAY.



THE *CARTOON* IS A *VACUUM* INTO WHICH OUR *IDENTITY* AND *AWARENESS* ARE *PULLED*...



...AN *EMPTY SHELL* THAT WE INHABIT WHICH *ENABLES* US TO TRAVEL IN *ANOTHER REALM*.



WE DON'T JUST *OBSERVE* THE *CARTOON*, WE *BECOME* IT!

THAT'S WHY I DECIDED TO *DRAW* MYSELF IN SUCH A SIMPLE *STYLE*.



WOULD YOU HAVE *LISTENED* TO ME IF I LOOKED LIKE *THIS*??



SO FAR, WE'VE ONLY DISCUSSED *FACES*, BUT THE PHENOMENON OF *NON-VISUAL SELF-AWARENESS* CAN, TO A *LESSER DEGREE*, STILL APPLY TO OUR *WHOLE BODIES*. AFTER ALL, DO WE NEED TO *SEE* OUR *HANDS* TO KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING?



THERE'S *MORE*, TOO!



THE LATE GREAT **MARSHALL MCLUHAN** OBSERVED A **SIMILAR** FORM OF **NON-VISUAL AWARENESS** WHEN PEOPLE INTERACT WITH **INANIMATE OBJECTS**.

WHEN **DRIVING**, FOR EXAMPLE, WE EXPERIENCE MUCH MORE THAN OUR **FIVE SENSES** REPORT.

OUR ABILITY TO **EXTEND** OUR IDENTITIES INTO INANIMATE OBJECTS CAN CAUSE PIECES OF WOOD TO BECOME **LEGS...**

PIECES OF METAL TO BECOME **HANDS...**

PIECES OF PLASTIC TO BECOME **EARS...**

PIECES OF GLASS TO BECOME **EYES.**

THE **WHOLE CAR**-- NOT JUST THE PARTS WE CAN SEE, FEEL AND HEAR-- IS VERY MUCH ON OUR MINDS AT ALL TIMES.

THE VEHICLE BECOMES AN **EXTENSION** OF OUR BODY. IT **ABSORBS** OUR SENSE OF **IDENTITY**. WE **BECOME** THE CAR.

AND IN **EVERY CASE**, OUR CONSTANT AWARENESS OF **SELF**--

-- FLOWS **OUTWARD** TO INCLUDE THE OBJECT OF OUR **EXTENDED IDENTITY**.

AND JUST AS OUR AWARENESS OF OUR **BIOLOGICAL SELVES** ARE **SIMPLIFIED** **CONCEPTUALIZED IMAGES**--

IF ONE CAR **HITS** ANOTHER, THE DRIVER OF THE VEHICLE BEING **STRUCK** IS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SAY:

KLUNK!

HEY! HE HIT ME!!

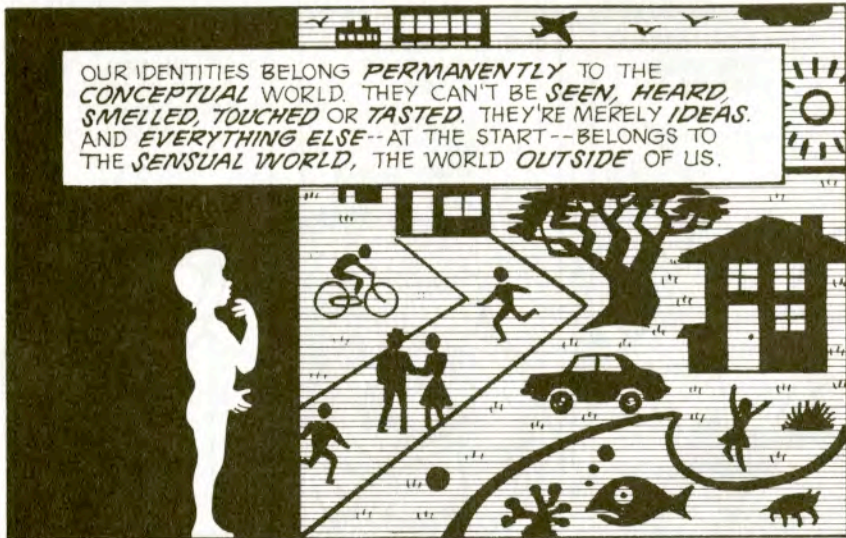
THAN "HE HIT MY **CAR**," OR "HIS **CAR** HIT MY CAR", FOR THAT MATTER.

OUR **IDENTITIES** AND **AWARENESS** ARE INVESTED IN MANY **INANIMATE OBJECTS** EVERY DAY. OUR **CLOTHES**, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN TRIGGER **NUMEROUS TRANSFORMATIONS** IN THE WAY OTHERS SEE US AND IN THE WAY WE SEE **OURSELVES**.

-- SO TOO IS OUR AWARENESS OF **THESE** EXTENSIONS GREATLY **SIMPLIFIED**.

ALL THE THINGS WE **EXPERIENCE** IN LIFE CAN BE SEPARATED INTO **TWO REALMS**, THE **REALM OF THE CONCEPT**--

-- AND THE **REALM OF THE SENSES**.



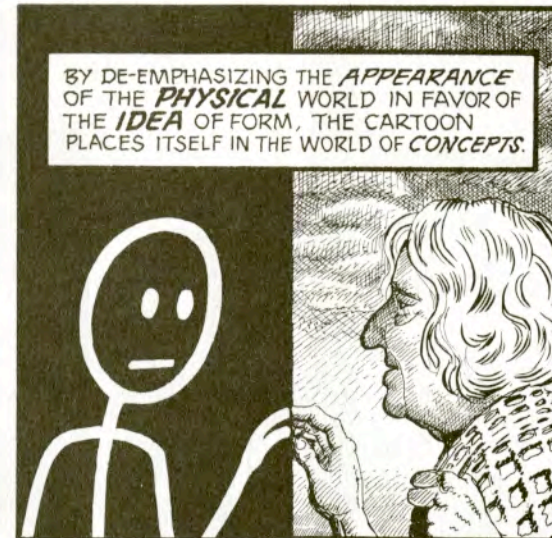
OUR IDENTITIES BELONG *PERMANENTLY* TO THE *CONCEPTUAL* WORLD. THEY CAN'T BE *SEEN, HEARD, SMELLED, TOUCHED* OR *TASTED*. THEY'RE MERELY *IDEAS*. AND *EVERYTHING ELSE*--AT THE START--BELONGS TO THE *SENSUAL* WORLD, THE WORLD *OUTSIDE* OF US.



GRADUALLY WE REACH *BEYOND* OURSELVES.



--WE *LEND* TO THEM.



BY DE-EMPHASIZING THE *APPEARANCE* OF THE *PHYSICAL* WORLD IN FAVOR OF THE *IDEA* OF FORM, THE CARTOON PLACES ITSELF IN THE WORLD OF *CONCEPTS*.



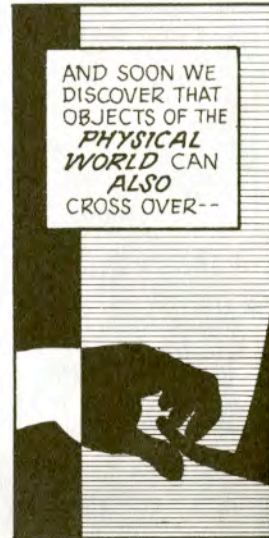
THROUGH TRADITIONAL *REALISM*, THE COMICS ARTIST CAN PORTRAY THE WORLD *WITHOUT*--



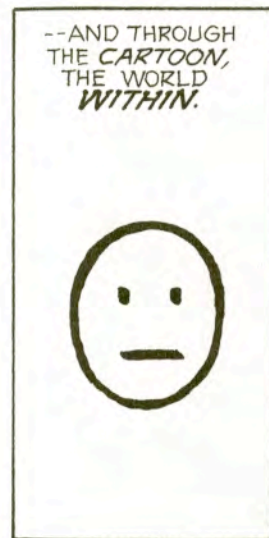
WE ENCOUNTER THE *SIGHT, SMELL, TOUCH, TASTE* AND *SOUND* OF OUR OWN BODIES.



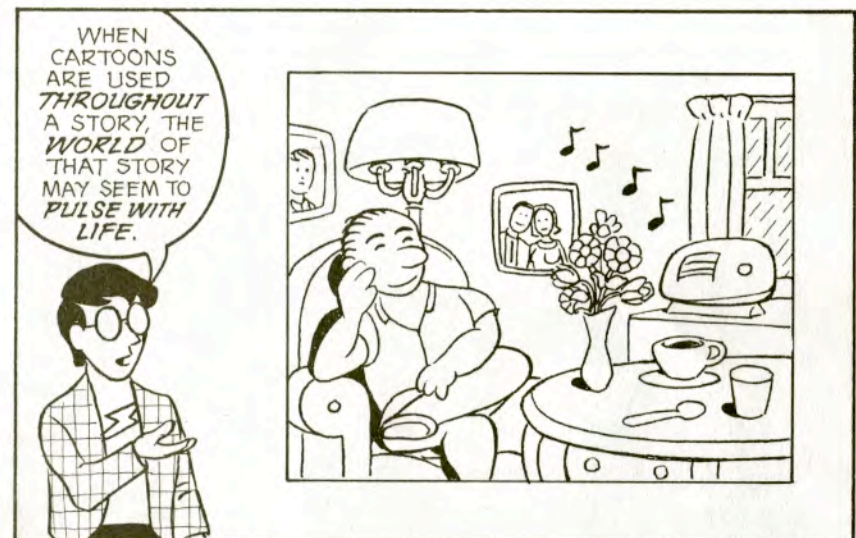
AND OF THE WORLD *AROUND* US.



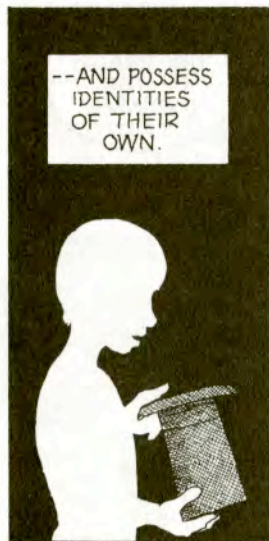
AND SOON WE DISCOVER THAT OBJECTS OF THE *PHYSICAL* WORLD CAN *ALSO* CROSS OVER--



--AND THROUGH THE *CARTOON*, THE WORLD *WITHIN*.



WHEN *CARTOONS* ARE USED *THROUGHOUT* A STORY, THE *WORLD* OF THAT STORY MAY SEEM TO *PULSE WITH LIFE*.



--AND POSSESS IDENTITIES OF THEIR OWN.



OR, AS OUR *EXTENSIONS*--



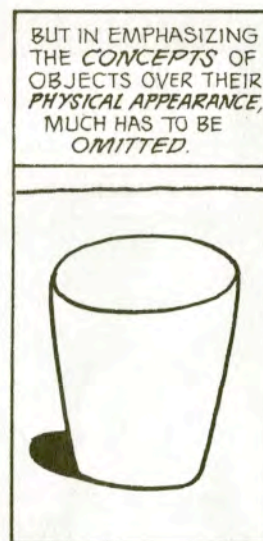
--BEGIN TO GLOW--



--WITH THE LIFE--



INANIMATE OBJECTS MAY SEEM TO POSSESS *SEPARATE IDENTITIES* SO THAT IF ONE *JUMPED UP* AND STARTED *SINGING* IT WOULDN'T FEEL OUT OF PLACE.



BUT IN EMPHASIZING THE *CONCEPTS* OF OBJECTS OVER THEIR *PHYSICAL APPEARANCE*, MUCH HAS TO BE *OMITTED*.



IF AN ARTIST WANTS TO PORTRAY THE BEAUTY AND COMPLEXITY OF THE *PHYSICAL WORLD*--



--REALISM OF *SOME SORT* IS GOING TO PLAY A PART.

WHEN DRAWING THE FACE AND FIGURE, NEARLY ALL COMICS ARTISTS APPLY AT LEAST SOME SMALL MEASURE OF CARTOONING. EVEN THE MORE REALISTIC ADVENTURE ARTISTS--

--ARE A FAR CRY FROM PHOTO-REALISTS!

STORYTELLERS IN ALL MEDIA KNOW THAT A SURE INDICATOR OF AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT--

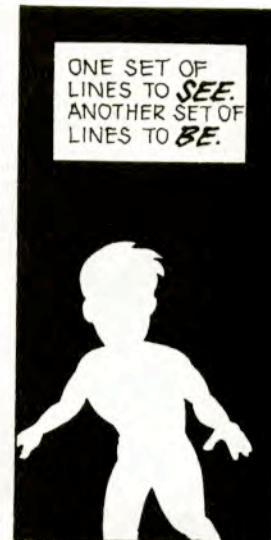
-- IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE AUDIENCE IDENTIFIES WITH A STORY'S CHARACTERS.

AND SINCE VIEWER-IDENTIFICATION IS A SPECIALTY OF CARTOONING, CARTOONS HAVE HISTORICALLY HELD AN ADVANTAGE IN BREAKING INTO WORLD POPULAR CULTURE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, NO ONE EXPECTS AUDIENCES TO IDENTIFY WITH BRICK WALLS OR LANDSCAPES AND INDEED, BACKGROUNDS TEND TO BE SLIGHTLY MORE REALISTIC.

IN SOME COMICS, THIS SPLIT IS FAR MORE PRONOUNCED. THE BELGIAN "CLEAR-LINE" STYLE OF HERGÉ'S TINTIN COMBINES VERY ICONIC CHARACTERS WITH UNUSUALLY REALISTIC BACKGROUNDS.

THIS COMBINATION ALLOWS READERS TO MASK THEMSELVES IN A CHARACTER AND SAFELY ENTER A SENSUALLY STIMULATING WORLD.



IN THE WORLD OF ANIMATION, WHERE THE EFFECT HAPPENS TO BE A PRACTICAL NECESSITY, DISNEY HAS USED IT WITH IMPRESSIVE RESULTS FOR OVER 50 YEARS!

IN EUROPE IT CAN BE FOUND IN MANY POPULAR COMICS, FROM ASTERIX TO TINTIN TO WORKS OF JACQUES TARDI.

IN AMERICAN COMICS, THE EFFECT IS USED FAR LESS OFTEN, ALTHOUGH IT HAS CREPT UP IN THE WORKS OF ARTISTS AS DIVERSE AS CARL BARKS, JAIME HERNANDEZ AND IN THE TEAM OF DAVE SIM AND GERHARD.

CEREBUS © DAVE SIM.

IN JAPAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MASKING EFFECT WAS, FOR A TIME, VIRTUALLY A NATIONAL STYLE!

THANKS TO THE SEMINAL INFLUENCE OF COMICS CREATOR OSAMU TEZUKA, JAPANESE COMICS HAVE A LONG, RICH HISTORY OF ICONIC CHARACTERS.

BUT, IN RECENT DECADES JAPANESE FANS ALSO DEVELOPED A TASTE FOR FLASHY, PHOTO-REALISTIC ART.

CLIK!

THE RESULTANT HYBRID STYLES HAD TREMENDOUS ICONIC **RANGE**, FROM EXTREMELY CARTOONY CHARACTERS TO **NEAR-PHOTOGRAPHIC BACKGROUNDS**.

"MONA GOES TOKYO"

BUT JAPANESE COMICS ARTISTS TOOK THE IDEA A STEP FURTHER.

SOON, SOME OF THEM REALIZED THAT THE **OBJECTIFYING POWER** OF REALISTIC ARTS COULD BE PUT TO **OTHER** USES.

I LIKE THE MASKING EFFECT, PERSONALLY, BUT IT'S JUST ONE OF **MANY** POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO COMICS ART.

MANY OF MY **FAVORITE ARTISTS** USE IT VERY **RARELY**.

STILL, I HOPE THE JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE ON CARTOONING HELPS DEMONSTRATE THAT ONE'S CHOICE OF STYLES CAN HAVE CONSEQUENCES FAR BEYOND THE MERE "LOOK" OF A STORY.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE **MOST** CHARACTERS WERE DESIGNED **SIMPLY** TO ASSIST IN **READER-IDENTIFICATION**.

--**OTHER** CHARACTERS WERE DRAWN MORE **REALISTICALLY** IN ORDER TO **OBJECTIFY** THEM, EMPHASIZING THEIR "**OTHERNESS**" FROM THE READER.

A PROP LIKE THIS **SWORD** MIGHT BE VERY **CARTOONY** IN ONE SEQUENCE--

--DUE TO THE "**LIFE**" IT POSSESSES AS AN EXTENSION OF MY CARTOON IDENTITY!!

AS I WRITE THIS, IN 1992, AMERICAN AUDIENCES ARE JUST BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT A SIMPLE **STYLE** DOESN'T NECESSITATE SIMPLE **STORY**.

THE PLATONIC IDEAL OF THE CARTOON MAY SEEM TO OMIT MUCH OF THE **AMBIGUITY** AND **COMPLEX CHARACTERIZATION** WHICH ARE THE HALLMARKS OF **MODERN LITERATURE**, LEAVING THEM SUITABLE ONLY FOR **CHILDREN**.

BUT SIMPLE ELEMENTS CAN COMBINE IN COMPLEX WAYS, AS ATOMS BECOME MOLECULES AND MOLECULES BECOME LIFE.

BUT SUPPOSE I NOTICE SOME **MYSTERIOUS WRITING** CARVED ON THE SWORD'S **HILT**.

IN JAPANESE COMICS, THE SWORD MIGHT **NOW** BECOME VERY **REALISTIC**, NOT ONLY TO SHOW US THE DETAILS, BUT TO MAKE US AWARE OF THE SWORD AS AN **OBJECT**, SOMETHING WITH **WEIGHT, TEXTURE** AND **PHYSICAL COMPLEXITY**.

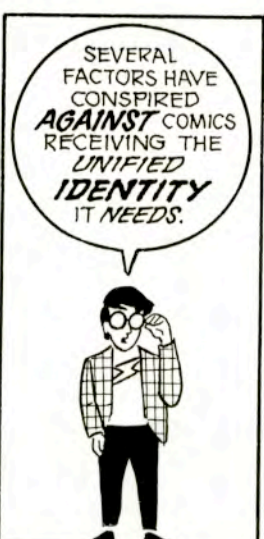
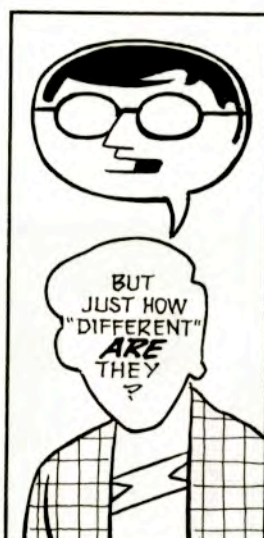
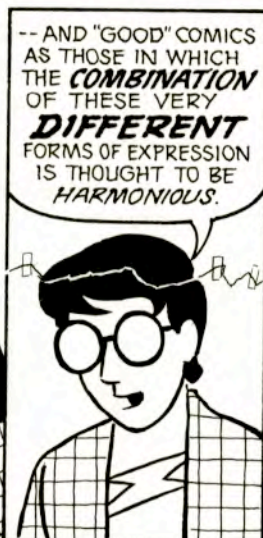
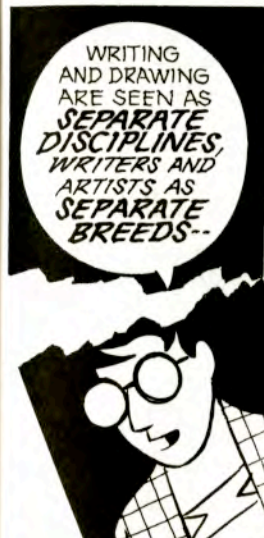
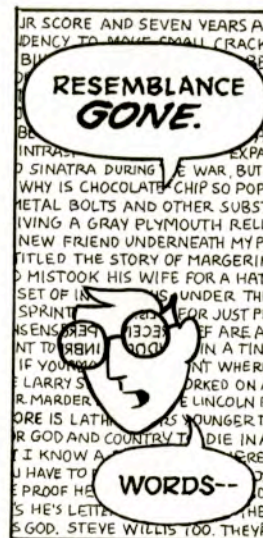
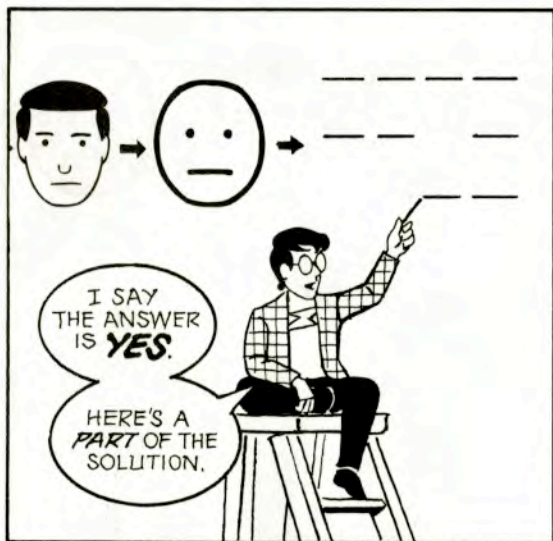
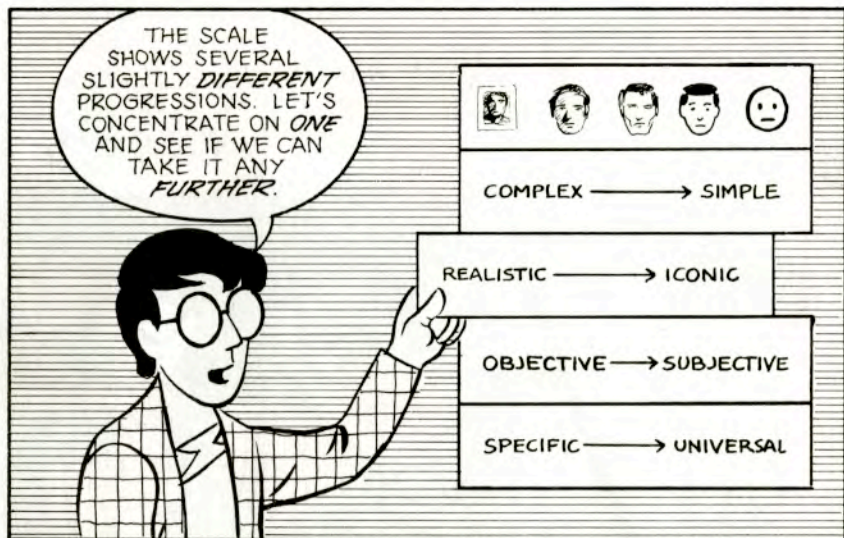
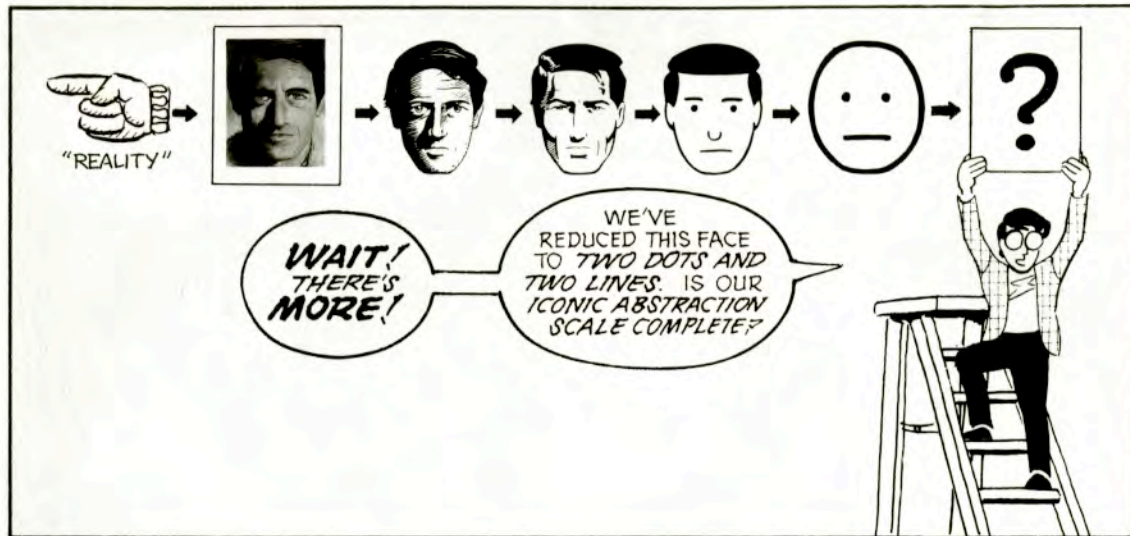
IN THIS AND IN **OTHER WAYS**, COMICS IN JAPAN HAVE EVOLVED VERY **DIFFERENTLY** FROM THOSE IN THE WEST.

WE'LL RETURN TO THESE DIFFERENCES SEVERAL TIMES DURING THIS BOOK.

AND **LIKE** THE ATOM, GREAT POWER IS LOCKED IN THESE FEW SIMPLE LINES.

RELEASEABLE ONLY BY THE READER'S MIND.

THERE'S A LOT MORE TO **CARTOONS** THAN MEETS THE EYE!



BOTH ARTIST AND WRITER BEGIN, HANDS JOINED ACROSS THE GAP, WITH A COMMON PURPOSE: TO MAKE COMICS OF "QUALITY"

"ARTIE" "RITA"

FACE

THE ARTIST KNOWS THAT THIS MEANS MORE THAN JUST STICK-FIGURES AND CRUDE CARTOONS. HE SETS OFF IN SEARCH OF A HIGHER ART.

THE WRITER KNOWS THAT THIS MEANS MORE THAN JUST OOF! POW! BLAM! AND ONE-A-DAY GAGS. SHE SETS OFF IN SEARCH OF SOMETHING DEEPER.

PICTURES ARE RECEIVED INFORMATION. WE NEED NO FORMAL EDUCATION TO "GET THE MESSAGE." THE MESSAGE IS INSTANTANEOUS.

WRITING IS PERCEIVED INFORMATION. IT TAKES TIME AND SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE TO DECODE THE ABSTRACT SYMBOLS OF LANGUAGE.

IN MUSEUMS AND IN LIBRARIES, THE ARTIST FINDS WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR. HE STUDIES THE TECHNIQUES OF THE GREAT MASTERS OF WESTERN ART. HE PRACTICES NIGHT AND DAY.

SHE TOO FINDS WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR, IN THE GREAT MASTERS OF WESTERN LITERATURE. SHE READS AND WRITES CONSTANTLY. SHE SEARCHES FOR A VOICE UNIQUELY HERS.

FINALLY, THEY'RE READY. BOTH HAVE MASTERED THEIR ARTS. HIS BRUSHSTROKE IS NEARLY INVISIBLE IN ITS SUBTLETY, THE FIGURES PURE MICHAELANGELO. HER DESCRIPTIONS ARE DAZZLING. THE WORDS FLOW TOGETHER LIKE A SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET.

THEY'RE READY TO JOIN HANDS ONCE MORE AND CREATE A COMICS MASTERPIECE.

RECEIVED PERCEIVED

FACE → TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH. *Thy youths proud livery, so gaz'd on now...*

WHEN PICTURES ARE MORE ABSTRACTED FROM "REALITY," THEY REQUIRE GREATER LEVELS OF PERCEPTION, MORE LIKE WORDS.

WHEN WORDS ARE BOLDER, MORE DIRECT, THEY REQUIRE LOWER LEVELS OF PERCEPTION AND ARE RECEIVED FASTER, MORE LIKE PICTURES.

RECEIVED PERCEIVED

FACE → TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH. *Thy youths proud livery, so gaz'd on now...*

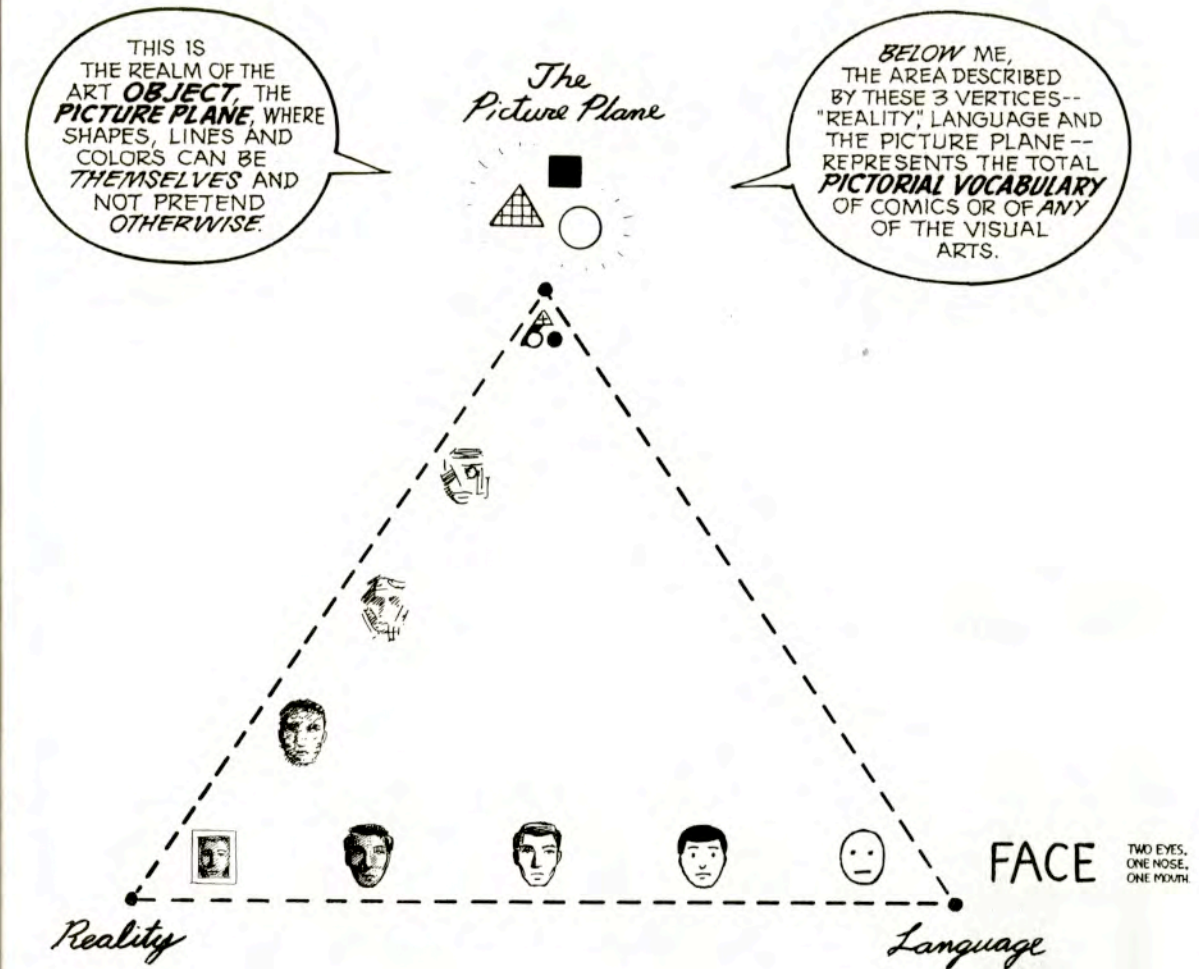
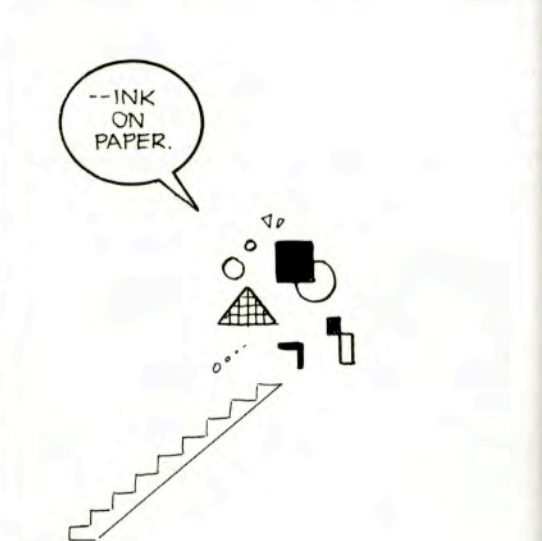
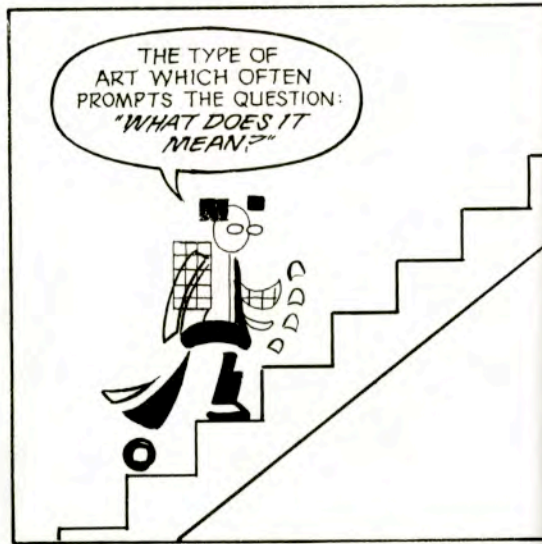
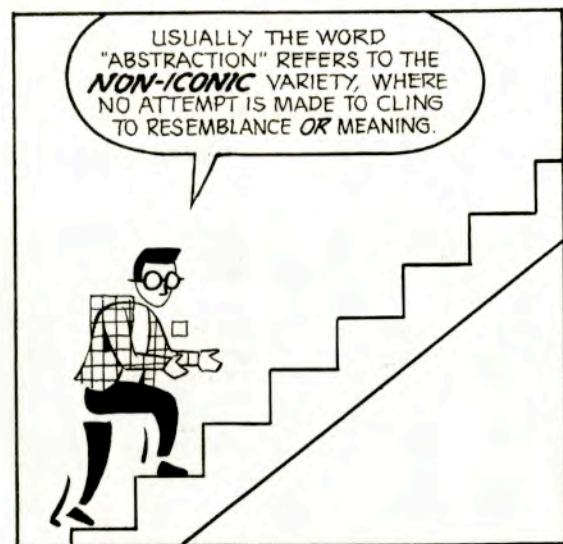
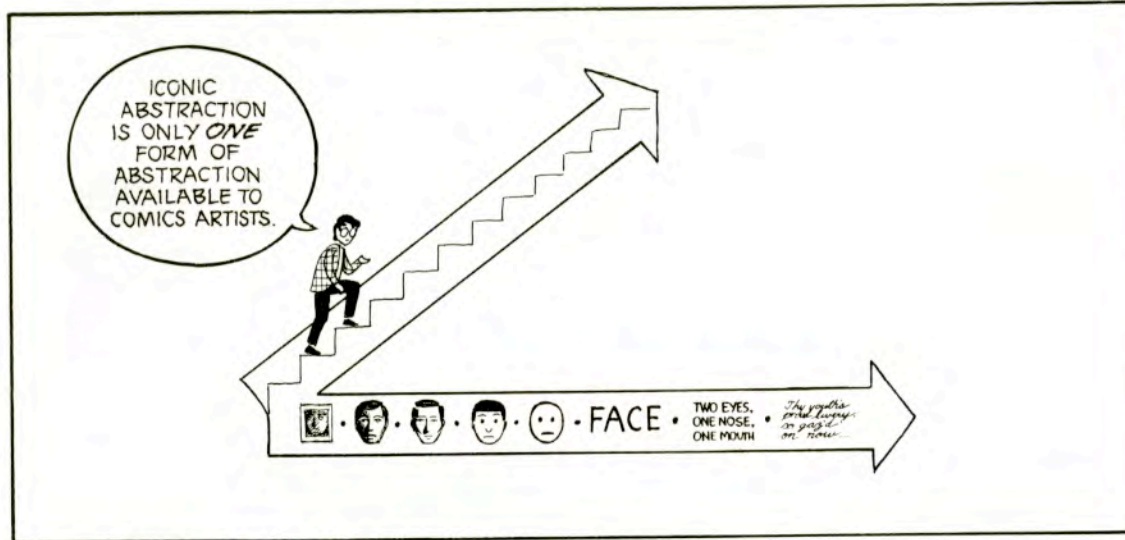
OUR NEED FOR A UNIFIED LANGUAGE OF COMICS SENDS US TOWARD THE CENTER WHERE WORDS AND PICTURES ARE LIKE TWO SIDES OF ONE COIN!

BUT OUR NEED FOR SOPHISTICATION IN COMICS SEEMS TO LEAD US OUTWARD, WHERE WORDS AND PICTURES ARE MOST SEPARATE.

BOTH ARE WORTHY ASPIRATIONS. BOTH STEM FROM A LOVE OF COMICS AND A DEVOTION TO ITS FUTURE.

CAN THEY BE RECONCILED?

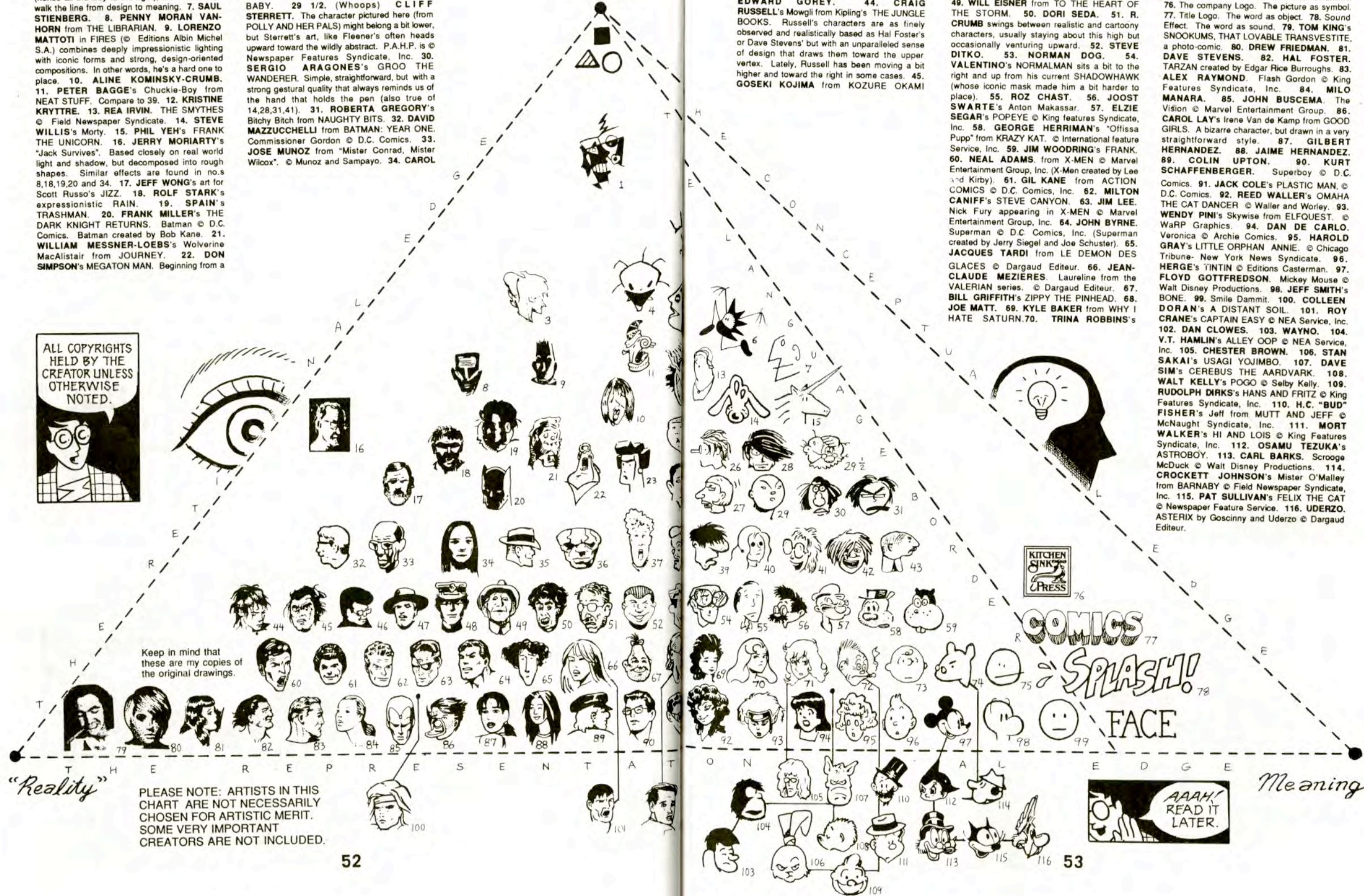
I SAY THE ANSWER IS YES, BUT SINCE THE REASONS BELONG IN A DIFFERENT CHAPTER, WE'LL HAVE TO COME BACK TO THIS LATER.



1. MARY FLEENER at her most abstract. 2. MARISCAL's Piker. 3. DAVE MCKEAN employing one of the many styles found in his series CAGES. 4. MARC HEMPEL's GREGORY. 5. MARK BEYER. 6. LARRY MARDER's Beanish from TALES OF THE BEANWORLD. "Resembling" nothing ever seen (hence all the way to the right). Marder's beans walk the line from design to meaning. 7. SAUL STIENBERG. 8. PENNY MORAN VANHORN from THE LIBRARIAN. 9. LORENZO MATTOTI in FIRES (© Editions Albin Michel S.A.) combines deeply impressionistic lighting with iconic forms and strong, design-oriented compositions. In other words, he's a hard one to place. 10. ALINE KOMINSKY-CRUMB. 11. PETER BAGGE's Chuckie-Boy from NEAT STUFF. Compare to 39. 12. KRISTINE KRYTTRE. 13. REA IRVIN. THE SMYTHES © Field Newspaper Syndicate. 14. STEVE WILLIS's Morty. 15. PHIL YEH's FRANK THE UNICORN. 16. JERRY MORIARTY's "Jack Survives". Based closely on real world light and shadow, but decomposed into rough shapes. Similar effects are found in nos. 8, 18, 19, 20 and 34. 17. JEFF WONG's art for Scott Russo's JIZZ. 18. ROLF STARK's expressionistic RAIN. 19. SPAIN's TRASHMAN. 20. FRANK MILLER's THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS. Batman © D.C. Comics. Batman created by Bob Kane. 21. WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS's Wolverine MacAlistair from JOURNEY. 22. DON SIMPSON's MEGATON MAN. Beginning from a

realistic anatomical base, Simpson distorts and exaggerates M.M.'s features to the brink of abstraction. 23. MICHAEL CHERKAS from SILENT INVASION, © Cherkas and Hancock. 24. RICK GEARY. 25. PETER KUPER. 26. GARRY TRUDEAU's DOONESBURY. 27. LYNDA BARRY. 28. SAMPEI SHIRATO. 29. CHARLES BURNS's BIG BABY. 29 1/2. (Whoops) CLIFF STERRETT. The character pictured here (from POLLY AND HER PALS) might belong a bit lower, but Sterrett's art, like Fleener's often heads upward toward the wildly abstract. P.A.H.P. is © Newspaper Features Syndicate, Inc. 30. SERGIO ARAGONES's GROO THE WANDERER. Simple, straightforward, but with a strong gestural quality that always reminds us of the hand that holds the pen (also true of 14, 28, 31, 41). 31. ROBERTA GREGORY's Bitchy Bitch from NAUGHTY BITS. 32. DAVID MAZZUCHELLI from BATMAN: YEAR ONE. Commissioner Gordon © D.C. Comics. 33. JOSE MUNOZ from "Mister Conrad, Mister Wilcox". © Munoz and Sampayo. 34. CAROL

The Picture Plane



SWAIN. 35. CHESTER GOULD's DICK TRACY © Chicago Tribune-New York Syndicate, Inc. 36. JACK KIRBY's Darksaid, © D.C. Comics. 37. BOB BURDEN. 38. DANIEL TORRES's Rocco Vargas from TRITON. 39. PETER BAGGE's Buddy Bradley from HATE. Compare to 11. 40. SETH. 41. MARK MARTIN. 42. JULIE DOUCET. 43. EDWARD GOREY. 44. CRAIG RUSSELL's Mowgli from Kipling's THE JUNGLE BOOKS. Russell's characters are as finely observed and realistically based as Hal Foster's or Dave Stevens' but with an unparalleled sense of design that draws them toward the upper vertex. Lately, Russell has been moving a bit higher and toward the right in some cases. 45. GOSEKI KOJIMA from KOZURE OKAMI

("Wolf and Cub") © Koike and Kojima. 46. EDDIE CAMPBELL's ALEC. Realistic in tone, but also gestural and spontaneous. The process of drawing isn't hidden from view. 47. ALEX TOTH. Zorro © ZorroProductions, Inc. Art © Walt Disney Productions. (Zorro created by Johnston McCulley). 48. HUGO PRATT's CORTO MALTESE © Casterman, Paris-Tourmai. 49. WILL EISNER from TO THE HEART OF THE STORM. 50. DORI SEDA. 51. R. CRUMB swings between realistic and cartoony characters, usually staying about this high but occasionally venturing upward. 52. STEVE DITKO. 53. NORMAN DOG. 54. VALENTINO's NORMALMAN sits a bit to the right and up from his current SHADOWHAWK (whose iconic mask made him a bit harder to place). 55. ROZ CHAST. 56. JOOST SWARTE's Anton Makassar. 57. ELZIE SEGAR's POPEYE © King Features Syndicate, Inc. 58. GEORGE HERRIMAN's "Offissa Pupp" from KRAZY KAT. © International Feature Service, Inc. 59. JIM WOODRING's FRANK. 60. NEAL ADAMS from X-MEN © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. (X-Men created by Lee and Kirby). 61. GIL KANE from ACTION COMICS © D.C. Comics, Inc. 62. MILTON CANIFF's STEVE CANYON. 63. JIM LEE. Nick Fury appearing in X-MEN © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. 64. JOHN BYRNE. Superman © D.C. Comics, Inc. (Superman created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster). 65. JACQUES TARDI from LE DEMON DES GLACES © Dargaud Editeur. 66. JEAN-CLAUDE MEZIERES. Laureline from the VALERIAN series. © Dargaud Editeur. 67. BILL GRIFFITH's ZIPPY THE PINHEAD. 68. JOE MATT. 69. KYLE BAKER from WHY I HATE SATURN. 70. TRINA ROBBINS's

MISTY. © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. 71. RIYOKO IKEDA's Oscar from THE ROSE OF VERSAILLES. 72. GEORGE McMANUS. BRINGING UP FATHER © International Feature Service, Inc. 73. CHARLES SCHULZ's Charlie Brown from PEANUTS © United Features Syndicate, Inc. 74. ART SPIEGELMAN from MAUS. 75. MATT FEAZELL's CYNICALMAN. 76. The company Logo. The picture as symbol. 77. Title Logo. The word as object. 78. Sound Effect. The word as sound. 79. TOM KING's SNOOKUMS, THAT LOVABLE TRANSVESTITE, a photo-comic. 80. DREW FRIEDMAN. 81. DAVE STEVENS. 82. HAL FOSTER. TARZAN created by Edgar Rice Burroughs. 83. ALEX RAYMOND. Flash Gordon © King Features Syndicate, Inc. 84. MILO MANARA. 85. JOHN BUSCEMA. The Vision © Marvel Entertainment Group. 86. CAROL LAY's Irene Van de Kamp from GOOD GIRLS. A bizarre character, but drawn in a very straightforward style. 87. GILBERT HERNANDEZ. 88. JAIME HERNANDEZ. 89. COLIN UPTON. 90. KURT SCHAFFENBERGER. Superboy © D.C. Comics. 91. JACK COLE's PLASTIC MAN, © D.C. Comics. 92. REED WALLER's OMAHA THE CAT DANCER © Waller and Worley. 93. WENDY PINI's Skywise from ELFOQUEST. © WaRP Graphics. 94. DAN DE CARLO. Veronica © Archie Comics. 95. HAROLD GRAY's LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE. © Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate. 96. HERGE's TINTIN © Editions Casterman. 97. FLOYD GOTTFREDSON. Mickey Mouse © Walt Disney Productions. 98. JEFF SMITH's BONE. 99. Smile Dammit. 100. COLLEEN DORAN's A DISTANT SOIL. 101. ROY CRANE's CAPTAIN EASY © NEA Service, Inc. 102. DAN CLOWES. 103. WAYNO. 104. V.T. HAMLIN's ALLEY OOP © NEA Service, Inc. 105. CHESTER BROWN. 106. STAN SAKAI's USAGI YOJIMBO. 107. DAVE SIM's CEREBUS THE AARDVARK. 108. WALT KELLY's POGO © Selby Kelly. 109. RUDOLPH DIRKS's HANS AND FRITZ © King Features Syndicate, Inc. 110. H.C. "BUD" FISHER's Jeff from MUTT AND JEFF © McNaught Syndicate, Inc. 111. MORT WALKER's HI AND LOIS © King Features Syndicate, Inc. 112. OSAMU TEZUKA's ASTROBOY. 113. CARL BARKS. Scrooge McDuck © Walt Disney Productions. 114. CROCKETT JOHNSON's Mister O'Malley from BARNABY © Field Newspaper Syndicate, Inc. 115. PAT SULLIVAN's FELIX THE CAT © Newspaper Feature Service. 116. UDERZO. ASTERIX by Goscinny and Uderzo © Dargaud Editeur.

Keep in mind that these are my copies of the original drawings.

PLEASE NOTE: ARTISTS IN THIS CHART ARE NOT NECESSARILY CHOSEN FOR ARTISTIC MERIT. SOME VERY IMPORTANT CREATORS ARE NOT INCLUDED.



COMICS

SPLASH!

FACE



Meaning

MOST OF THE PRECEDING EXAMPLES WERE PLACED ON OUR CHART BASED ON THE DRAWING STYLES USED ON *SPECIFIC CHARACTERS*.



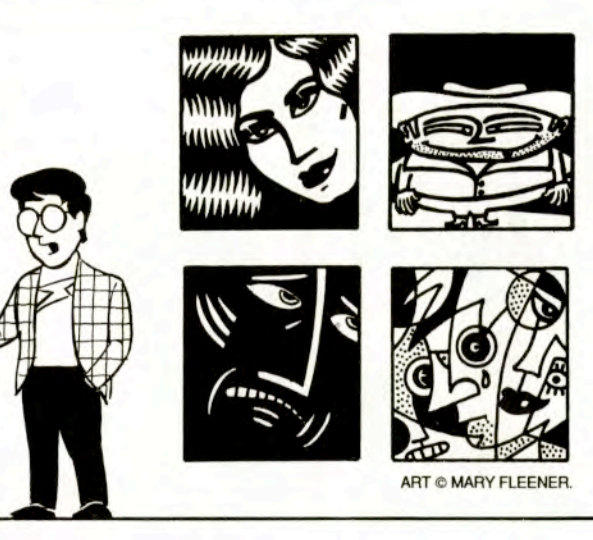
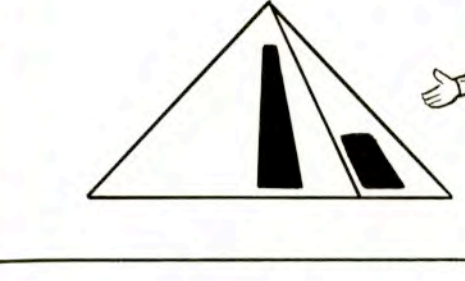
EACH CREATOR EMPLOYS A *RANGE* OF STYLES, THOUGH, AND MANY OCCUPY *SEVERAL* PLACES ON THE CHART DURING A GIVEN PROJECT.



SOME, LIKE MATT FEAZELL'S *CYNICALMAN*, KEEP TO ONE AREA CONSISTENTLY.

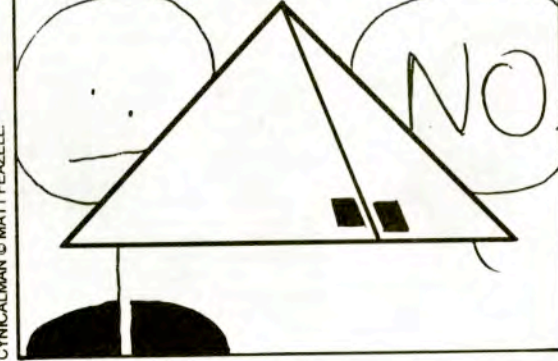


MARY FLEENER, ON THE OTHER HAND, VARIES ONLY *SLIGHTLY* IN HER LEVEL OF *ICONIC* CONTENT, WHILE THE LEVEL OF *NON-ICONIC* ABSTRACTION GOES NEARLY FROM *TOP TO BOTTOM!*



ART © MARY FLEENER.

THE COMBINATION OF *EXTREMELY ICONIC CHARACTERS* AND *ENVIRONMENTS*, MIXED WITH *SIMPLE, DIRECT LANGUAGE* AND A *SOUND EFFECT* OR TWO WOULD GIVE US A SHAPE SOMETHING LIKE *THIS*.



CYNICALMAN © MATT FEAZELL.

BUT OTHERS *RANGE CONSIDERABLY* FROM ONE END OF THE CHART TO THE OTHER.



WE'VE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE RANGE OF HERGÉ AND OTHERS WHO CONTRAST *ICONIC CHARACTERS* WITH *REALISTIC BACKGROUNDS*.



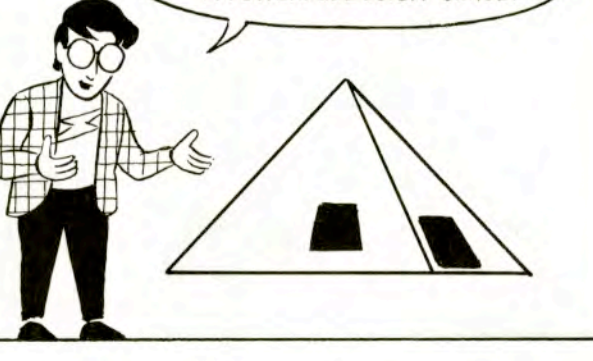
HEY!! COME TA THINK OF IT... WHAT ABOUT THAT WALKIN' TIME BOMB??

THAT'S RIGHT!! IF HE'S STILL LOOSE... THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT'LL HAPPEN!!



ART: JACK KIRBY AND JOE SINNOTT (MY FACSIMILE)
SCRIPT: STAN LEE.

IN THE MID-SIXTIES, JACK KIRBY, ALONG WITH STAN LEE, STAKED OUT A *MIDDLE GROUND* OF *ICONIC FORMS* WITH A SENSE OF THE *REAL* ABOUT THEM, BOLSTERED BY A POWERFUL *DESIGN* SENSE.



Sound on!

Vision on!

O.K...Let's roll!

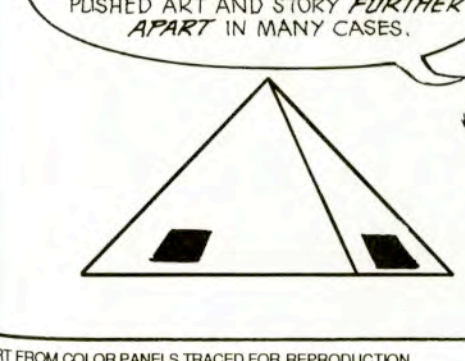


HERGÉ STRETCHES NEARLY FROM *LEFT TO RIGHT*-- FROM *REALISM* TO *CARTOONING*-- BUT VENTURES VERY *LITTLE* INTO THE *UPPER WORLD* OF *NON-ICONIC* ABSTRACTION.



ART © EDITIONS CASTERMAN.

TODAY, MANY AMERICAN MAINSTREAM COMICS STILL FOLLOW KIRBY'S LEAD FOR STORYTELLING, BUT THE DESIRE FOR MORE *REALISTIC* ART AND MORE ELABORATE SCRIPTS HAS PUSHED ART AND STORY *FURTHER APART* IN MANY CASES.



ART FROM COLOR PANELS TRACED FOR REPRODUCTION.
© MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC.

A FIGHT STARTED ON HIS DOORSTEP, HE PUT A STOP TO IT. FAR AS ANYONE KNOWS, ALL THE SURVIVORS ARE PRETTY MUCH OKAY.

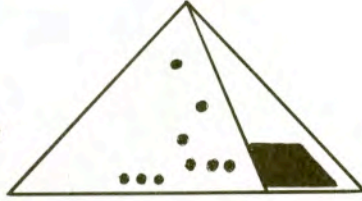
WAY YOU TALK, NICHOLAS. FOLKS EXPECT HIM TO START NUKIN' MAMA RUSSIA ANY MOMENT.



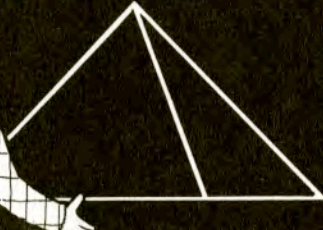
ART: JIM LEE AND SCOTT WILLIAMS (FACSIMILE)
SCRIPT: CHRIS CLAREMONT.



IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES, MOST OF THE COUNTERCULTURE OF INDEPENDENT CREATORS, WORKING MOSTLY IN BLACK AND WHITE, STAYED TO THE **RIGHT** OF MAINSTREAM COMICS ART WHILE COVERING A BROAD RANGE OF WRITING STYLES.



WHEN AN ARTIST IS DRAWN TO ONE END OF THE CHART OR ANOTHER, THAT ARTIST MAY BE **REVEALING** SOMETHING ABOUT HIS OR HER STRONGEST **VALUES** AND **LOYALTIES** IN ART.



THOSE WHO APPROACH THE **LOWER LEFT**, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE PROBABLY ATTRACTED BY A SENSE OF THE BEAUTY OF **NATURE**.



THOSE AT THE **TOP** BY THE BEAUTY OF **ART**.



THIS FOLLOWS THE LEAD OF THE POST-KURTZMAN GENERATION OF **UNDERGROUND** CARTOONISTS WHO USED CARTOONY STYLES TO PORTRAY ADULT THEMES AND SUBJECT MATTER.



IRONIC THAT THE TWO BASTIONS OF **CARTOONY** ART ARE **UNDERGROUND** AND **CHILDREN'S** COMICS!

PRETTY FAR APART AS GENRES GO!



AND THOSE ON THE **RIGHT** BY THE BEAUTY OF **IDEAS**.

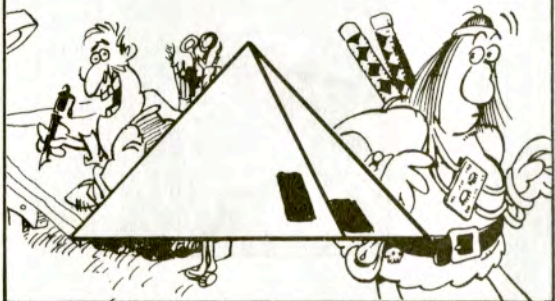


FOR COMICS TO **MATURE** AS A **MEDIUM**, IT MUST BE CAPABLE OF EXPRESSING EACH ARTIST'S **INNERMOST** **NEEDS** AND **IDEAS**.

BUT EACH ARTIST HAS **DIFFERENT** INNER NEEDS, DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW, DIFFERENT **PASSIONS**, AND SO NEEDS TO FIND DIFFERENT **FORMS** OF **EXPRESSION**.*



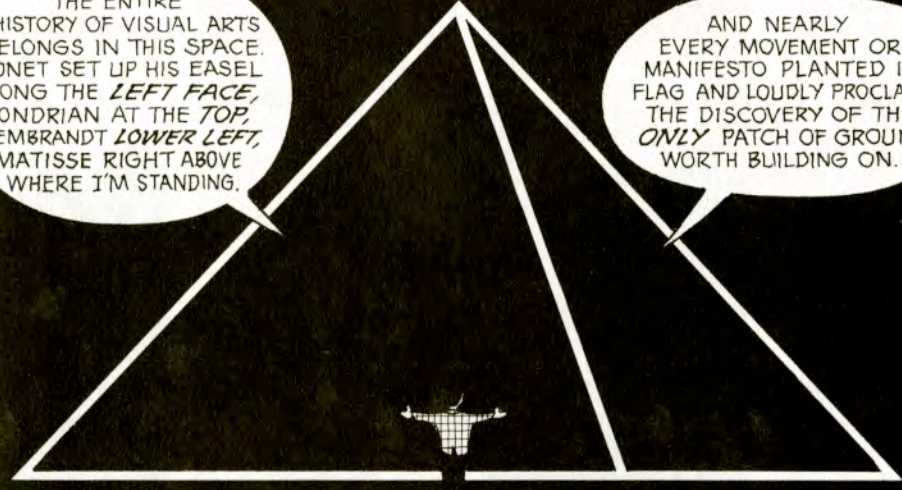
SOME ARTISTS, SUCH AS THE IRREPRESSIBLE **SERGIO ARAGONES**, STAKED THEIR CLAIM ON A PARTICULAR AREA **LONG AGO** AND HAVE BEEN QUITE HAPPY SINCE.



OTHERS, SUCH AS **DAVE MCKEAN**, ARE FOREVER **ON THE MOVE**, **EXPERIMENTING**, **TAKING CHANCES**, **NEVER SATISFIED**.



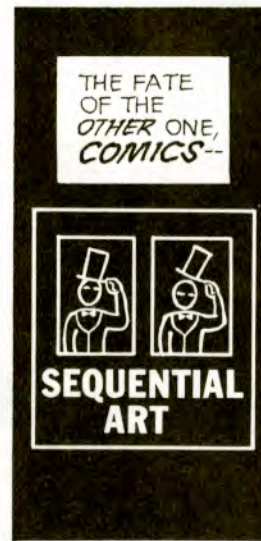
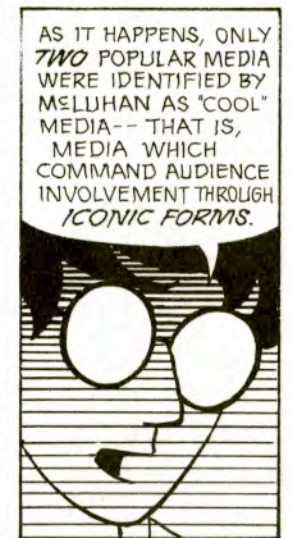
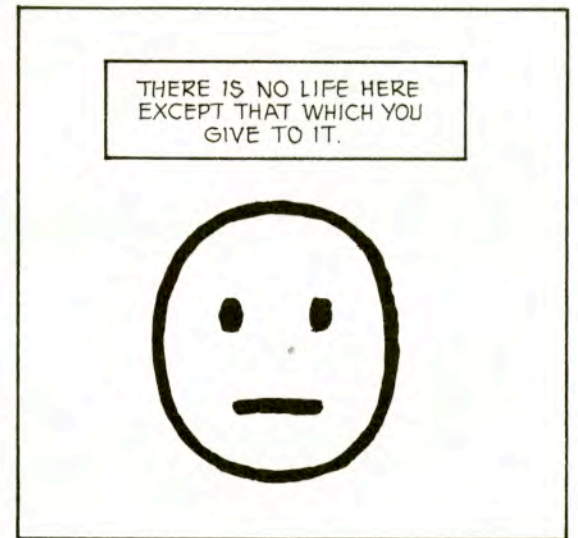
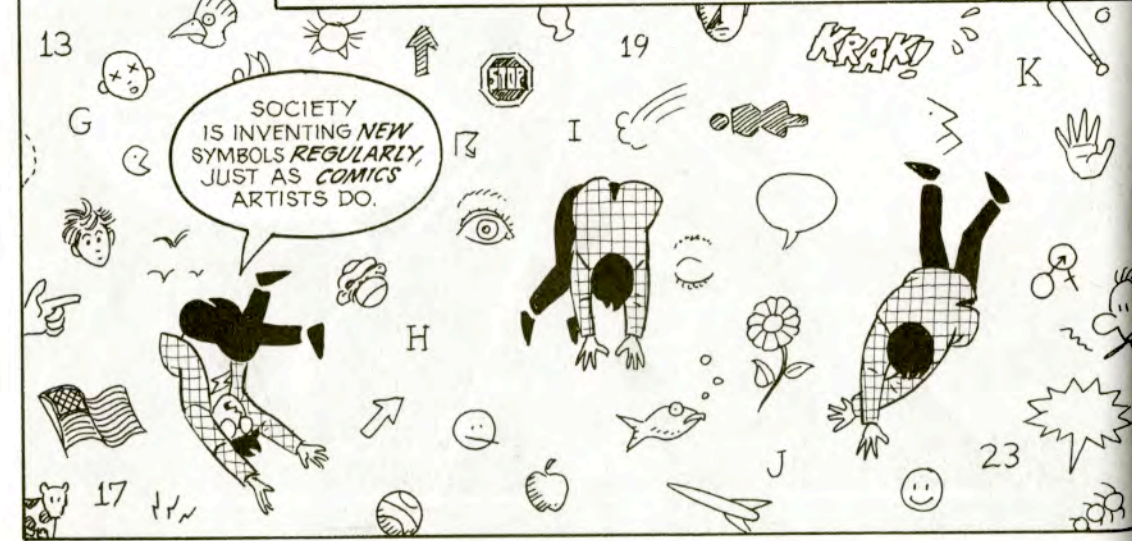
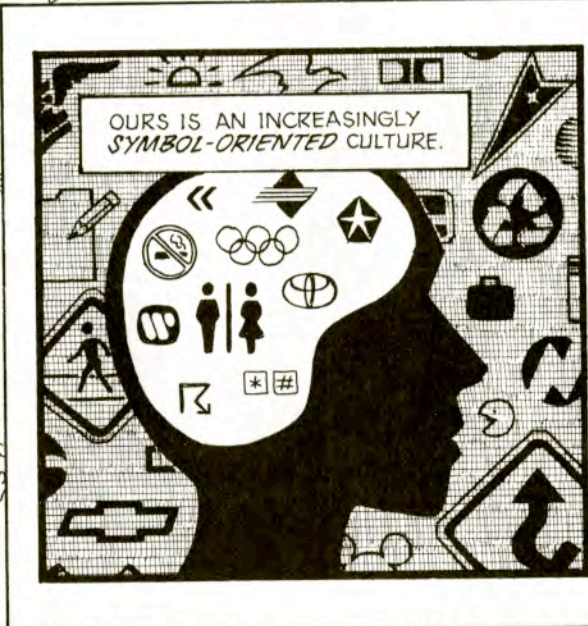
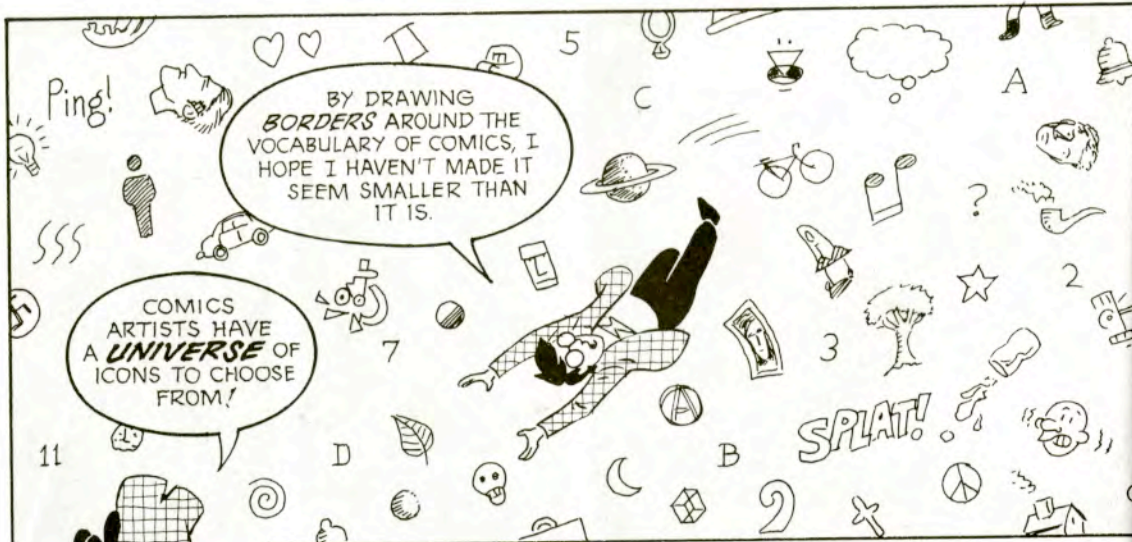
THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF VISUAL ARTS BELONGS IN THIS SPACE. MONET SET UP HIS EASEL ALONG THE **LEFT FACE**, MONDRIAN AT THE **TOP**, REMBRANDT **LOWER LEFT**, MATISSE RIGHT ABOVE WHERE I'M STANDING.



AND NEARLY EVERY MOVEMENT OR MANIFESTO PLANTED ITS FLAG AND LOUDLY PROCLAIMED THE DISCOVERY OF THE **ONLY** PATCH OF GROUND WORTH BUILDING ON.

SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION.

* CHECK OUT WASSILY KANDINSKY'S TERRIFIC 1912 ESSAY, "ON THE PROBLEM OF FORM!"



CHAPTER FOUR

TIME FRAMES.

SO! LET'S SEE: EACH PANEL OF A COMIC SHOWS A SINGLE MOMENT IN TIME.



AND BETWEEN THOSE FROZEN MOMENTS-- BETWEEN THE PANELS-- OUR MINDS FILL IN THE INTERVENING MOMENTS, CREATING THE ILLUSION OF TIME AND MOTION.



LIKE A LINE DRAWN BETWEEN TWO POINTS.

RIGHT?



CLIK



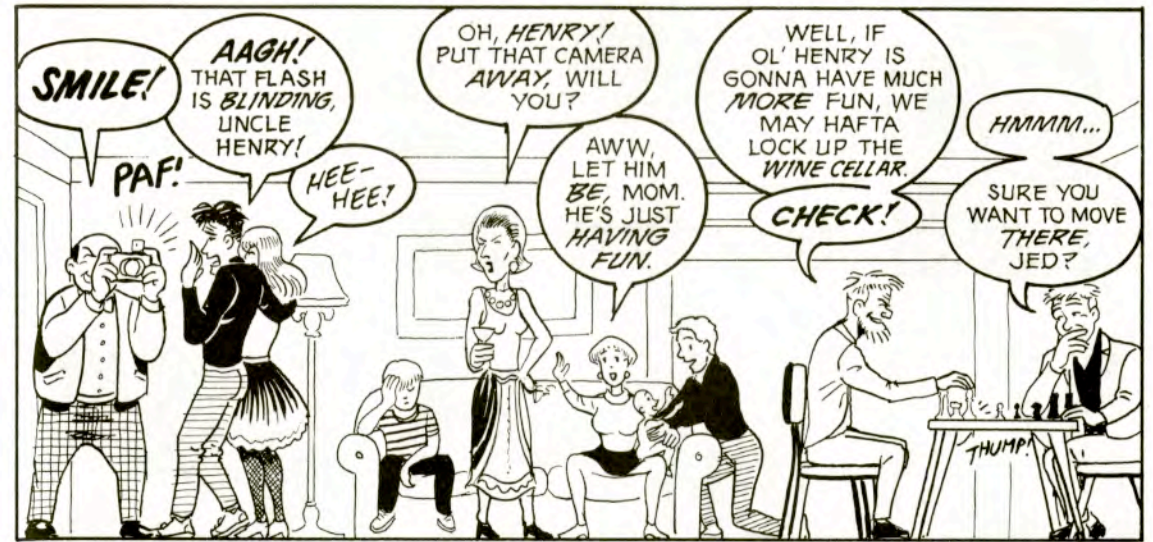
NAAH! OF COURSE NOT!



TIME IN COMICS IS INFINITELY WEIRDER THAN THAT!



LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK!

SINGLE MOMENT?

HARDLY!

WHIRRRRR



EVEN THE BRIEF SOUND OF A FLASH-BULB HAS A CERTAIN DURATION, SHORT TO BE SURE, BUT NOT INSTANTANEOUS!

PAF!



FAR SLOWER IS THE DURATION OF THE AVERAGE WORD. UNCLE HENRY ALONE BURNS UP A GOOD SECOND IN THIS PANEL, ESPECIALLY SINCE "SMILE!" UNDOUBTEDLY PRECEDED THE FLASH.

SMILE!


PAF!



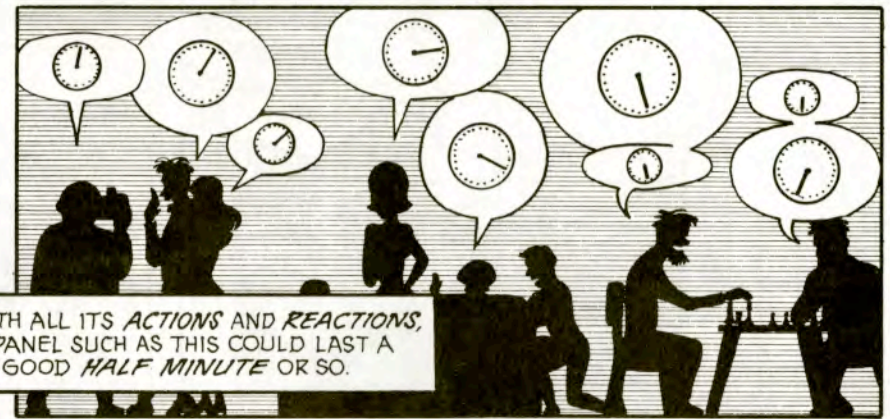
LIKewise, THE NEXT BALLOONS COULD HAVE ONLY FOLLOWED THE BURST OF THE FLASHBULB, THUS ADDING STILL MORE TIME.

AAGH! THAT FLASH IS BLINDING, UNCLE HENRY!

HEE-HEE!



JUST AS PICTURES AND THE INTERVALS BETWEEN THEM CREATE THE ILLUSION OF TIME THROUGH CLOSURE, WORDS INTRODUCE TIME BY REPRESENTING THAT WHICH CAN ONLY EXIST IN TIME -- SOUND.



WITH ALL ITS ACTIONS AND REACTIONS, A PANEL SUCH AS THIS COULD LAST A GOOD HALF MINUTE OR SO.