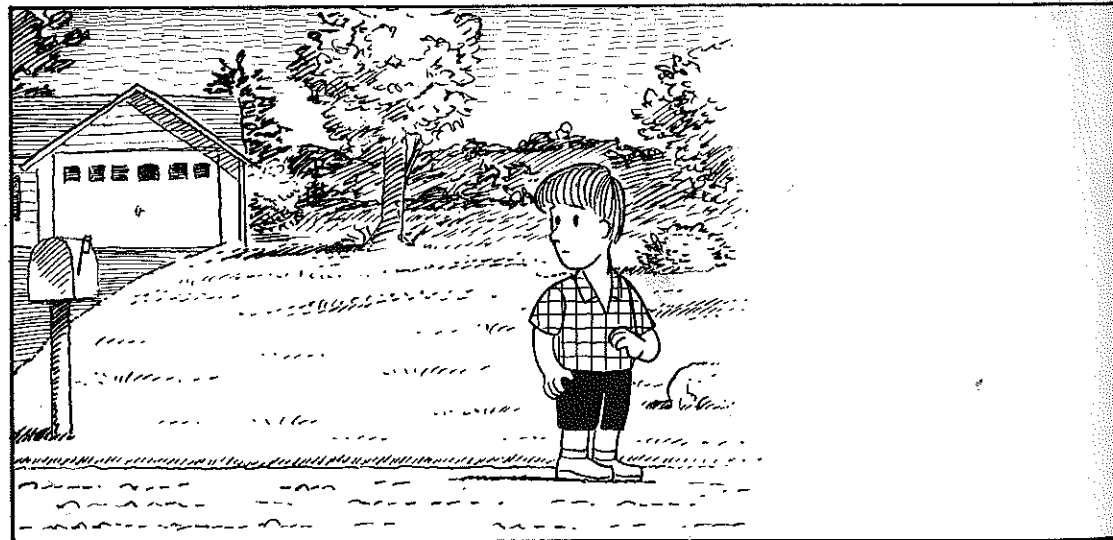
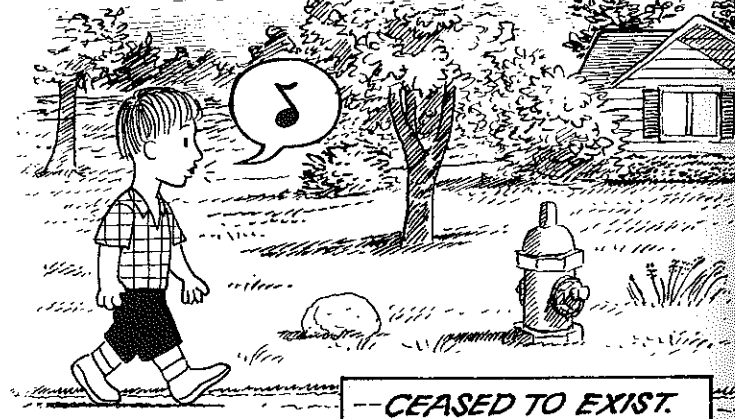


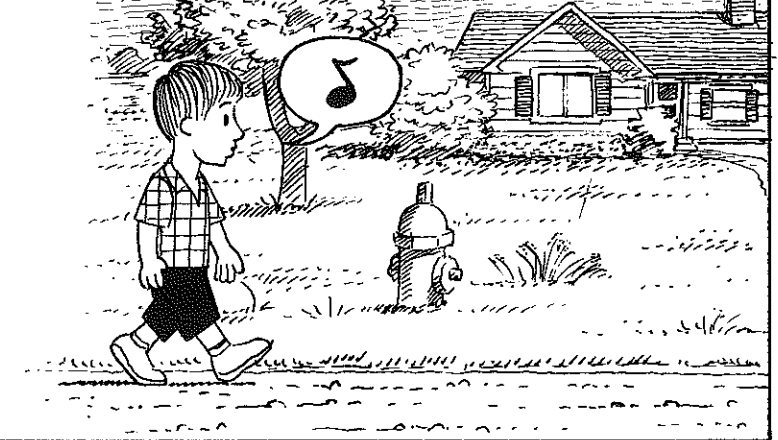
# CHAPTER THREE

## BLOOD IN THE GUTTER.

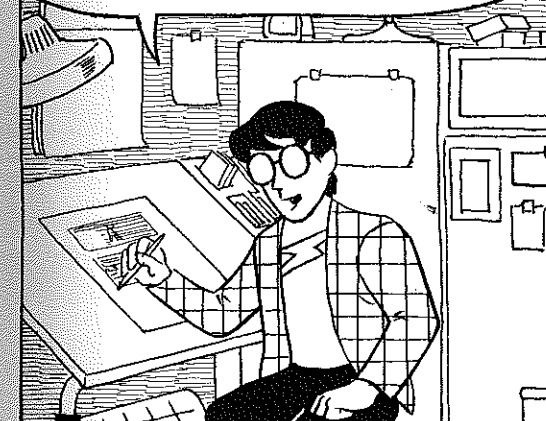
WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG, I HAD A RECURRENT *DAYDREAM* THAT THE *WHOLE WORLD* WAS JUST A *SHOW* PUT ON FOR MY *BENEFIT*, THAT UNLESS I WAS PRESENT TO *SEE* THINGS, THEY JUST--



*LATER* IN LIFE, I FOUND *OTHERS* WHO HAD *SIMILAR* DAYDREAMS AS CHILDREN. NONE OF US EVER REALLY *BELIEVED* THESE THEORIES, BUT WE HAD ALL BEEN *FASCINATED* BY THE FACT THAT THEY COULD NOT BE *DISPROVED*!



EVEN *TODAY*, AS I WRITE AND DRAW THIS PANEL, I HAVE *NO GUARANTEE* THAT ANYTHING EXISTS OUTSIDE OF WHAT MY FIVE SENSES *REPORT* TO ME.\*



I'VE NEVER BEEN TO *MOROCCO*, BUT I TAKE IT ON *FAITH* THAT THERE *IS* A *MOROCCO*!



I'VE NEVER SEEN THE EARTH FROM *SPACE* FIRSTHAND, YET I TRUST THAT THE EARTH IS *ROUND*.



I'VE NEVER BEEN IN THE *HOUSE* *ACROSS THE STREET*, YET I ASSUME IT HAS AN *INTERIOR*, THAT IT ISN'T JUST SOME BIG *MOVIE SET*!



IN THIS PANEL YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE MY *LEGS*, YET YOU *ASSUME* THAT THEY'RE *THERE*.

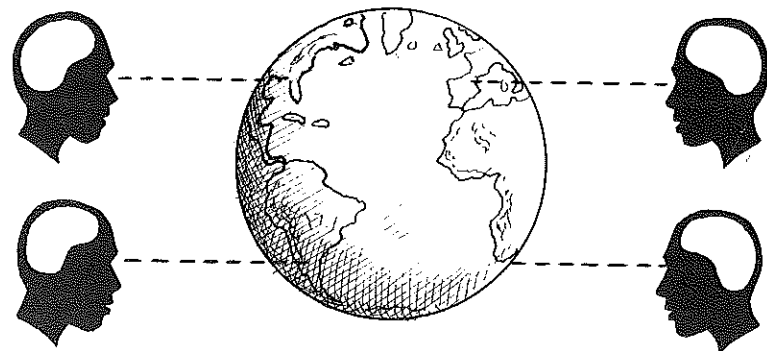


EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE *NOT*!



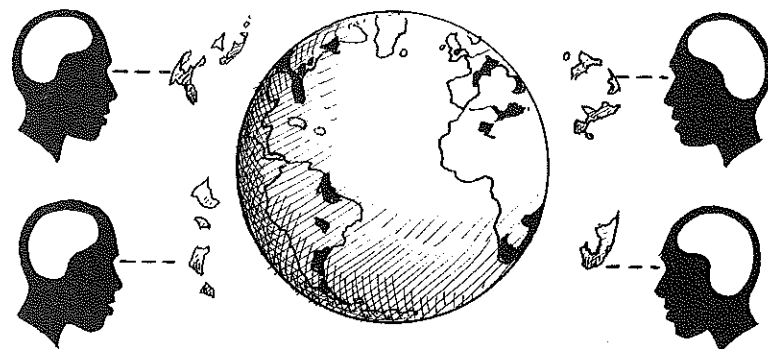
\*NOT TO SAY OUR SENSES ARE ANY KIND OF *GUARANTEE*!

ALL OF US PERCEIVE THE WORLD AS A *WHOLE* THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR *SENSES*.



YET OUR SENSES CAN ONLY REVEAL A WORLD THAT IS *FRAGMENTED* AND *INCOMPLETE*.

EVEN THE MOST *WIDELY TRAVELLED* MIND CAN ONLY SEE SO MUCH OF THE WORLD IN THE COURSE OF A LIFE.



OUR PERCEPTION OF "REALITY" IS AN ACT OF *FAITH*, BASED ON MERE *FRAGMENTS*.

AS *INFANTS*, WE'RE *UNABLE* TO COMMIT THAT ACT OF FAITH. IF WE CAN'T *SEE* IT, *HEAR* IT, *SMELL* IT, *TASTE* IT OR *TOUCH* IT, IT ISN'T *THERE*!

Peek-A-Boo!

THE GAME "*PEEK-A-BOO*" PLAYS ON THIS IDEA. GRADUALLY, WE ALL LEARN THAT EVEN THOUGH THE *SIGHT* OF MOMMY COMES AND GOES, MOMMY *REMAINS*.

Peek-A-Boo!

THIS PHENOMENON OF *OBSERVING THE PARTS* BUT *PERCEIVING THE WHOLE* HAS A NAME.

IT'S CALLED *CLOSURE*.

IN OUR DAILY LIVES, WE OFTEN COMMIT *CLOSURE*, MENTALLY COMPLETING THAT WHICH IS *INCOMPLETE* BASED ON *PAST EXPERIENCE*.

SOME FORMS OF *CLOSURE* ARE *DELIBERATE INVENTIONS* OF *STORYTELLERS* TO PRODUCE *SUSPENSE* OR TO *CHALLENGE AUDIENCES*.

OTHERS HAPPEN *AUTOMATICALLY*, WITHOUT MUCH *EFFORT*... PART OF *BUSINESS AS USUAL*.

IN *RECOGNIZING* AND *RELATING* TO *OTHER PEOPLE*, WE *ALL* DEPEND *HEAVILY* ON OUR LEARNED *ABILITY* OF *CLOSURE*.

IN AN *INCOMPLETE WORLD*, WE MUST *DEPEND* ON *CLOSURE* FOR OUR VERY *SURVIVAL*.

CLOSURE CAN TAKE MANY FORMS. SOME SIMPLE, SOME COMPLEX.

**CLOSURE**  
**CLOSURE**  
**CL S RE**  
**CLOSURE**

SOMETIMES, A MERE *SHAPE* OR *OUTLINE* IS ENOUGH TO TRIGGER CLOSURE.

THE MENTAL PROCESS DESCRIBED IN *CHAPTER TWO* WHEREBY THESE LINES BECOME A *FACE* COULD BE CONSIDERED CLOSURE.

EVERY TIME WE SEE A *PHOTOGRAPH* REPRODUCED IN A *NEWSPAPER* OR *MAGAZINE*, WE COMMIT CLOSURE.

OUR EYES TAKE IN THE *FRAGMENTED, BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGE* OF THE "*HALF-TONE*" PATTERNS--

--AND OUR MINDS TRANSFORM IT INTO THE "*REALITY*"--

--OF THE *PHOTOGRAPH!*

IN *ELECTRONIC MEDIA*, CLOSURE IS *CONSTANT*, EVEN *OVER-POWERING!*

IN *FILM*, CLOSURE TAKES PLACE *CONTINUOUSLY*-- TWENTY-FOUR TIMES PER *SECOND*, IN FACT-- AS OUR MINDS, AIDED BY THE *PERSISTENCE OF VISION*, TRANSFORM A SERIES OF *STILL PICTURES* INTO A STORY OF *CONTINUOUS MOTION*.

A MEDIUM REQUIRING EVEN *MORE* CLOSURE IS *TELEVISION*, WHICH, IN *REALITY*, IS JUST A *SINGLE POINT OF LIGHT*, *RACING ACROSS* THE SCREEN SO *FAST* THAT IT'S DESCRIBED MY FACE *HUNDREDS OF TIMES* BEFORE *YOU* CAN EVEN SWALLOW THAT *CORN CHIP!!*\*

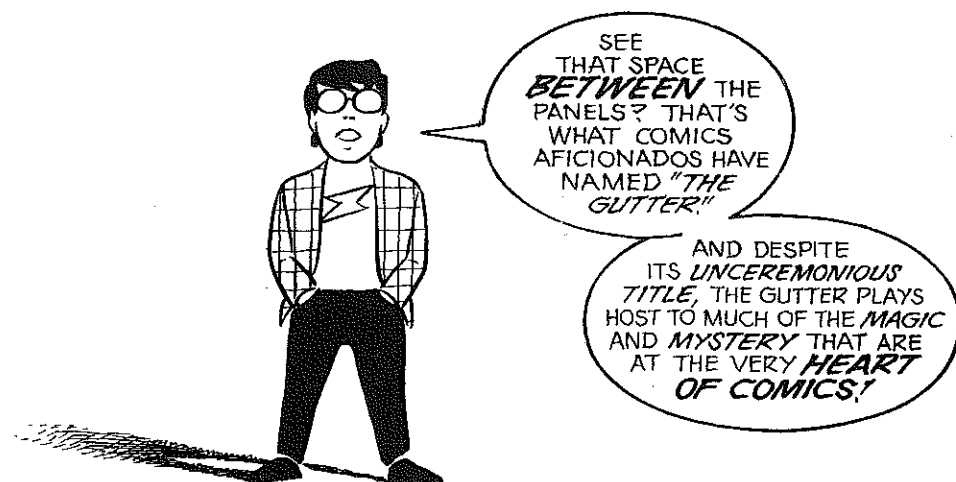
BETWEEN SUCH *AUTOMATIC ELECTRONIC* CLOSURE AND THE SIMPLER CLOSURE OF *EVERYDAY LIFE*--

--THERE LIES A MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION WHICH USES CLOSURE LIKE *NO OTHER...*

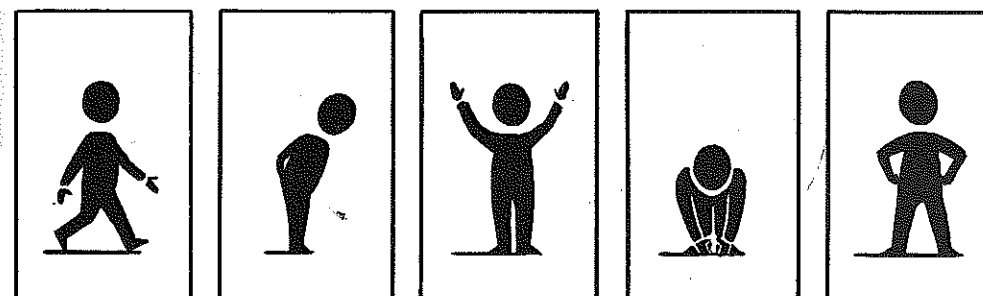
...A MEDIUM WHERE THE AUDIENCE IS A WILLING AND CONSCIOUS *COLLABORATOR* AND CLOSURE IS THE AGENT OF *CHANGE, TIME AND MOTION*.

\* MEDIA GURU TONY SCHWARTZ DESCRIBES THIS AT LENGTH IN HIS BOOK *MEDIA, THE SECOND GOD*, ANCHOR BOOKS, 1983.

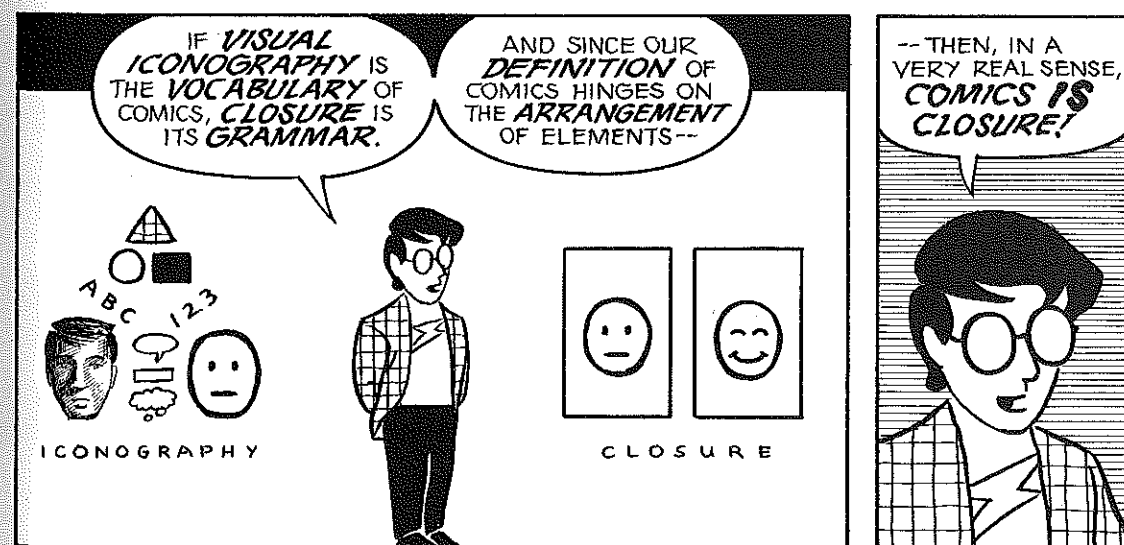


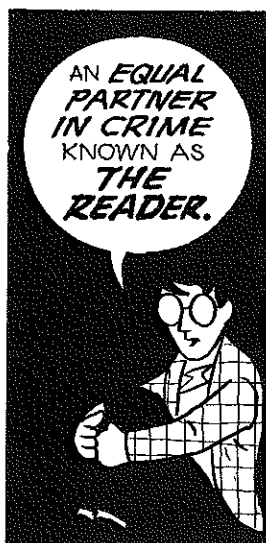
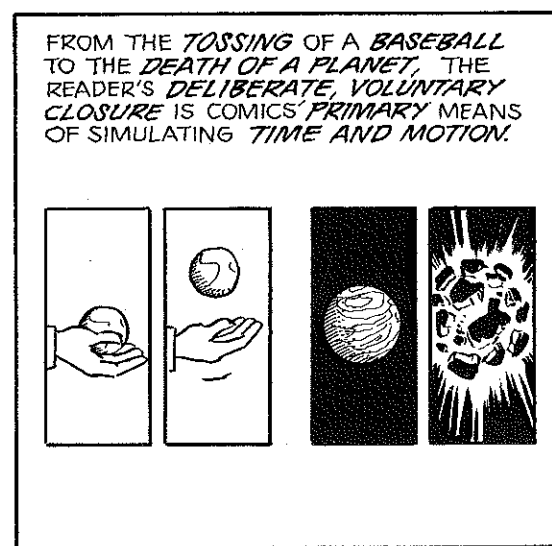
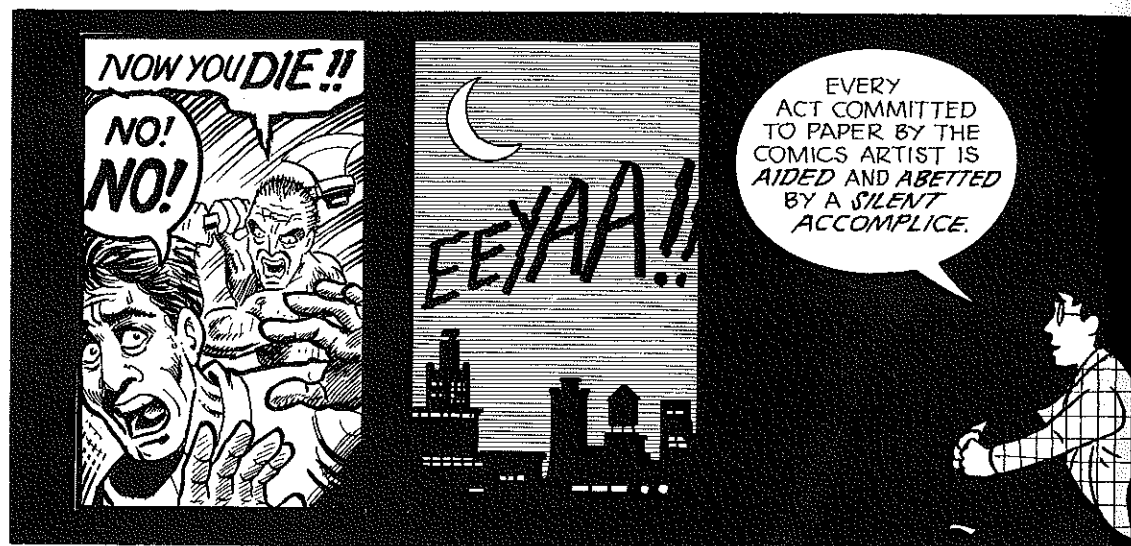
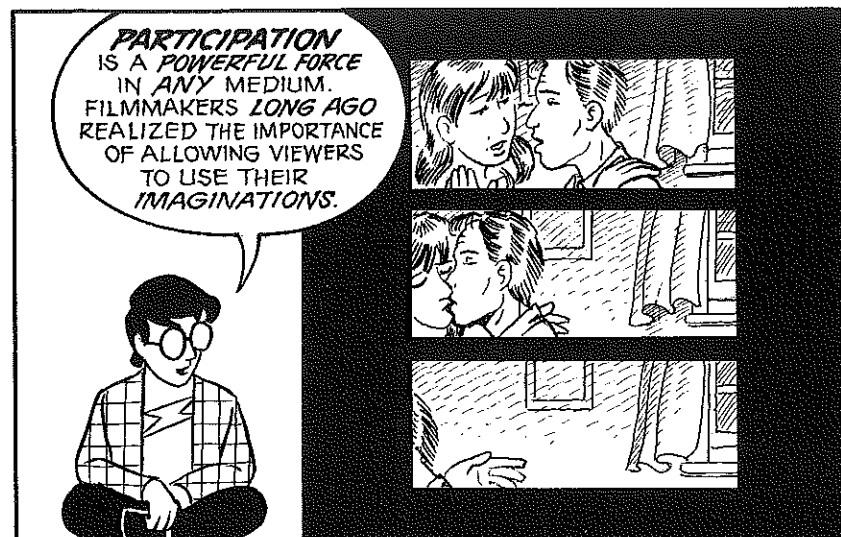
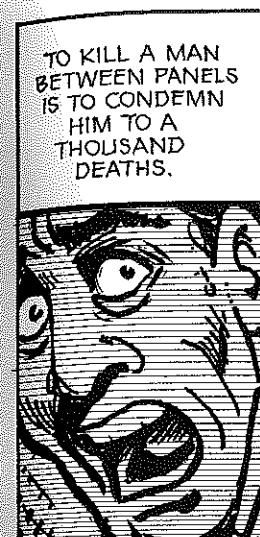
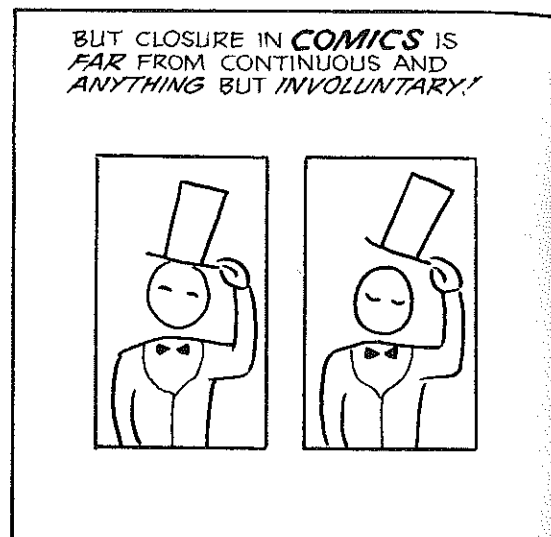
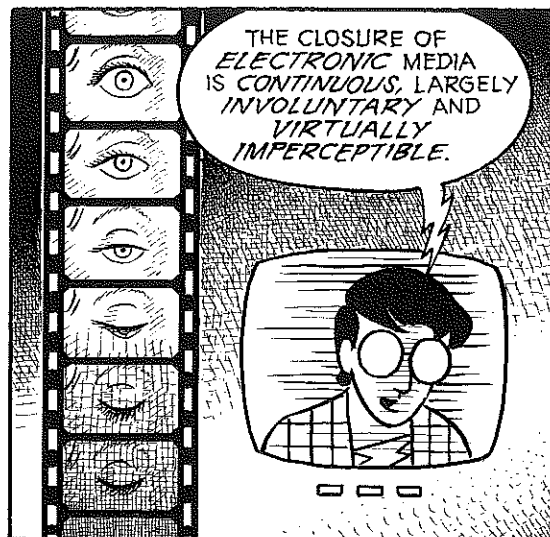


COMICS PANELS *FRACTURE* BOTH *TIME* AND *SPACE*, OFFERING A *JAGGED, STACCATO RHYTHM* OF *UNCONNECTED MOMENTS*.



BUT CLOSURE ALLOWS US TO *CONNECT* THESE MOMENTS AND *MENTALLY CONSTRUCT* A *CONTINUOUS, UNIFIED REALITY*.

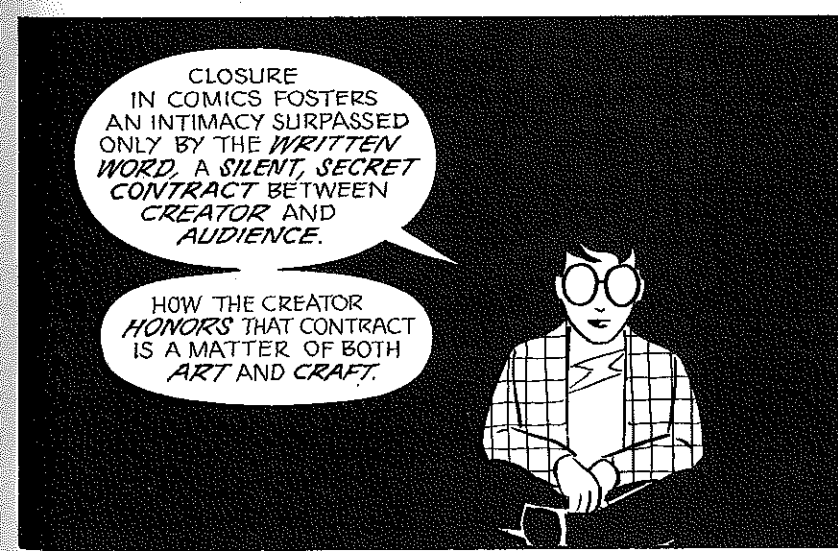




I MAY HAVE DRAWN AN AXE BEING RAISED IN THIS EXAMPLE, BUT I'M NOT THE ONE WHO LET IT DROP OR DECIDED HOW HARD THE BLOW, OR WHO SCREAMED, OR WHY.



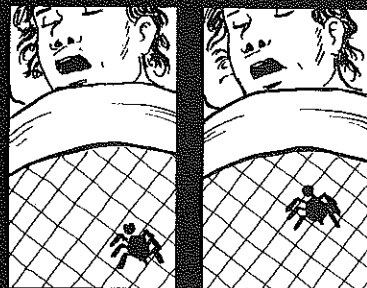
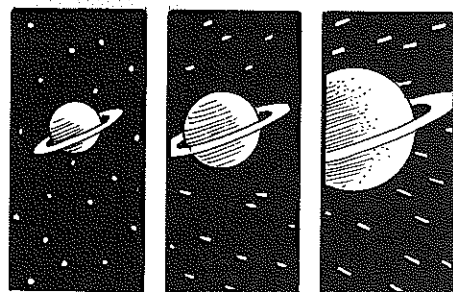
THAT, DEAR READER, WAS YOUR SPECIAL CRIME. EACH OF YOU COMMITTING IT IN YOUR OWN STYLE.



MOST  
**PANEL-TO-PANEL**  
TRANSITIONS IN COMICS  
CAN BE PLACED IN ONE  
OF SEVERAL DISTINCT  
CATEGORIES. THE FIRST  
CATEGORY--WHICH WE'LL  
CALL **MOMENT-TO-  
MOMENT**--REQUIRES  
VERY LITTLE  
CLOSURE.



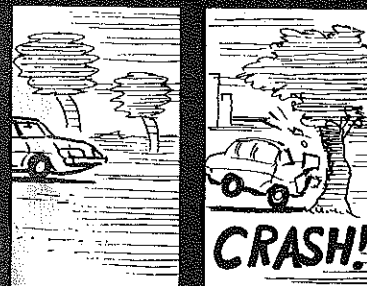
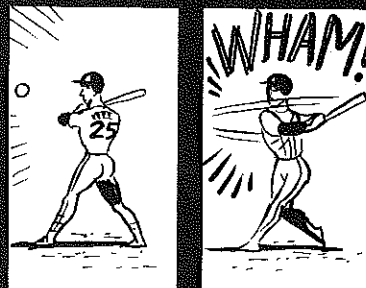
1.



NEXT  
ARE THOSE  
TRANSITIONS  
FEATURING A SINGLE  
**SUBJECT** IN DISTINCT  
**ACTION-TO-ACTION**  
PROGRESSIONS.



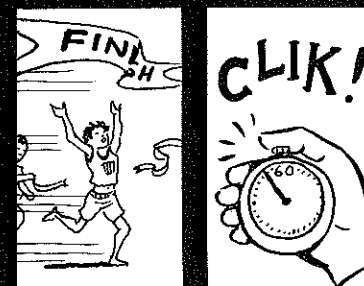
2.



THE NEXT  
TYPE TAKES US FROM  
**SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT**  
WHILE STAYING WITHIN A  
SCENE OR IDEA. NOTE  
THE DEGREE OF **READER  
INVOLVEMENT** NECESSARY  
TO RENDER THESE  
TRANSITIONS  
**MEANINGFUL**.



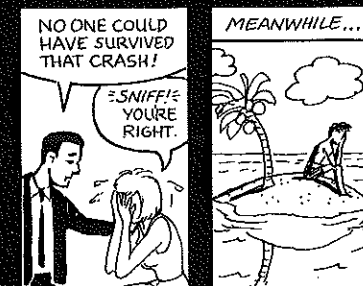
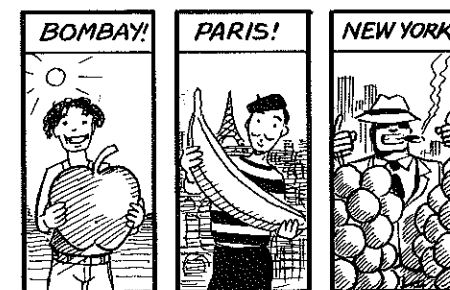
3.



**DEDUCTIVE  
REASONING** IS  
OFTEN REQUIRED IN  
READING COMICS SUCH  
AS IN THESE **SCENE-  
TO-SCENE** TRANSITIONS,  
WHICH TRANSPORT US  
ACROSS **SIGNIFICANT  
DISTANCES OF TIME  
AND SPACE**.



4.

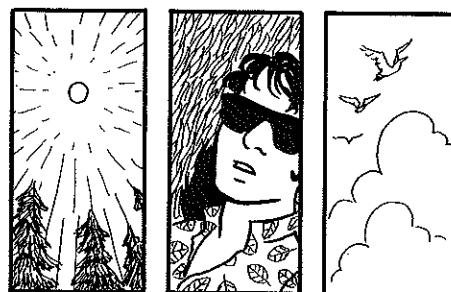
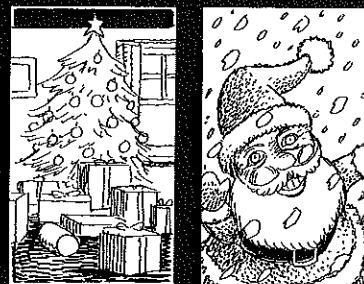




A FIFTH TYPE OF TRANSITION, WHICH WE'LL CALL **ASPECT-TO-ASPECT**, BYPASSES TIME FOR THE MOST PART AND SETS A **WANDERING EYE** ON DIFFERENT **ASPECTS** OF A PLACE, IDEA OR MOOD.



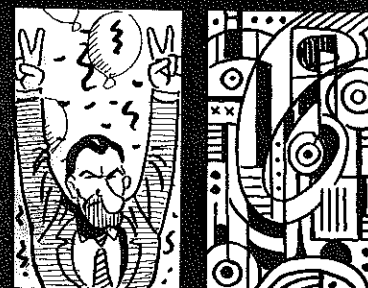
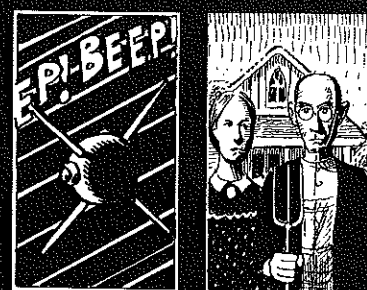
5.



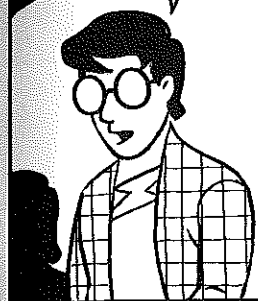
AND FINALLY, THERE'S THE **NON-SEQUITUR**, WHICH OFFERS NO LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANELS **WHATSOEVER!**



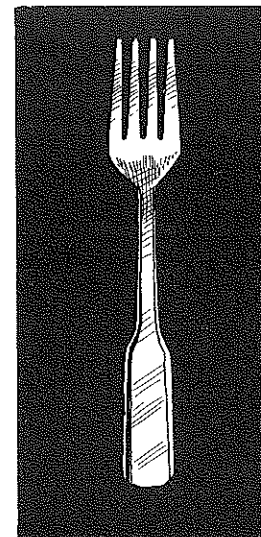
6.



THIS LAST CATEGORY SUGGESTS AN INTERESTING QUESTION. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ANY SEQUENCE OF PANELS TO BE **TOTALLY UNRELATED** TO EACH OTHER?



PERSONALLY, I DON'T **THINK** SO.



--**ALCHEMY** AT WORK IN THE SPACE BETWEEN PANELS WHICH CAN HELP US FIND **MEANING** OR **RESONANCE** IN EVEN THE MOST **JARRING** OF COMBINATIONS.



SUCH TRANSITIONS MAY NOT MAKE "**SENSE**" IN ANY TRADITIONAL WAY, BUT STILL A RELATIONSHIP OF **SOME SORT** WILL INEVITABLY **DEVELOP**.



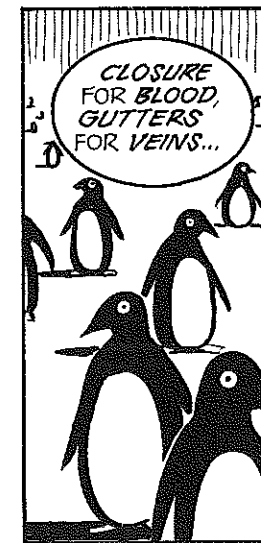
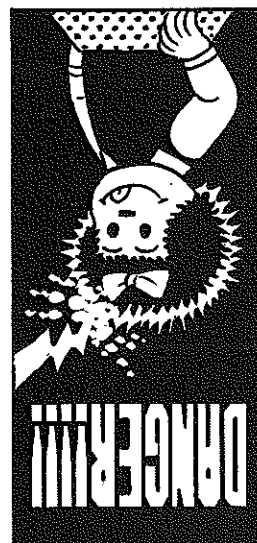
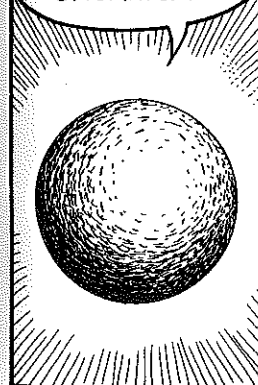
BY CREATING A **SEQUENCE** WITH TWO OR MORE IMAGES, WE ARE **ENDOWING** THEM WITH A **SINGLE**--



--**OVERRIDING IDENTITY**, AND **FORCING** THE VIEWER TO CONSIDER THEM AS A **WHOLE**.



HOWEVER **DIFFERENT** THEY HAD BEEN, THEY NOW BELONG TO A **SINGLE ORGANISM**.





1.  
MOMENT-  
TO-  
MOMENT



2.  
ACTION-  
TO-  
ACTION



3.  
SUBJECT-  
TO-  
SUBJECT



4.  
SCENE-  
TO-  
SCENE



5.  
ASPECT-  
TO-  
ASPECT



6.  
NON-  
SEQUITUR

THIS SORT OF  
CATEGORIZATION  
IS AN *INEXACT SCIENCE*  
AT *BEST*, BUT BY USING  
OUR TRANSITION SCALE  
AS A *TOOL* --

-- WE  
CAN BEGIN  
TO UNRAVEL SOME  
OF THE MYSTERIES  
SURROUNDING THE  
*INVISIBLE ART*  
OF *COMICS*  
STORYTELLING!

MOST *MAINSTREAM*  
*COMICS* IN AMERICA  
EMPLOY STORYTELLING  
TECHNIQUES FIRST  
INTRODUCED BY  
**JACK KIRBY**, SO  
LET'S START BY  
EXAMINING THIS  
LEE-KIRBY COMIC  
FROM 1966.

ALTOGETHER, I COUNT  
*NINETY-FIVE*  
PANEL-TO-PANEL  
TRANSITIONS.  
LET'S SEE HOW  
THEY BREAK DOWN  
*PROPORTIONATELY*.

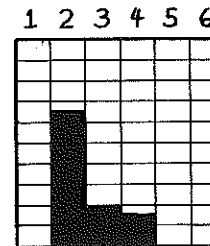


AND SINCE *ALL*  
OF THE REMAINING  
TRANSITIONS ARE FROM  
*SCENE-TO-SCENE*,  
WE HAVE THE  
FOLLOWING  
*BREAKDOWN*.

1	—
2	65%
3	20%
4	15%
5	—
6	—



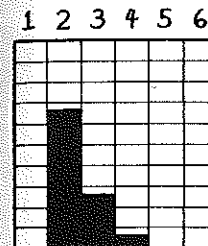
AS A *BAR GRAPH*  
IT WOULD LOOK  
SOMETHING LIKE  
*THIS*.



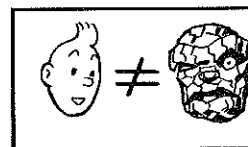
THIS EMPHASIS ON  
*ACTION-TO-ACTION*  
STORYTELLING SUITS  
MOST PEOPLE'S IDEAS  
ABOUT *KIRBY*, BUT  
IS HE *UNIQUE*  
IN THIS RESPECT?



APPARENTLY *NOT*! HERE'S A GRAPH OF  
PANEL TRANSITIONS IN HERGE'S *TINTIN*  
AND THE PROPORTION ARE VERY  
*SIMILAR* TO KIRBY'S



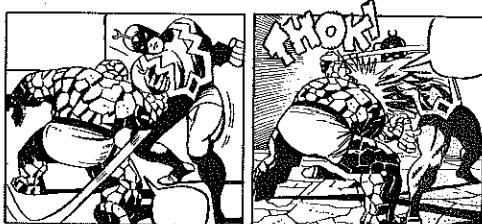
NOW, HERGE'S AND  
KIRBY'S STYLES  
ARE *NOT* SIMILAR!  
IN FACT, THEY'RE  
*RADICALLY*  
*DIFFERENT!!*



IS THERE SOME KIND  
OF *UNIVERSAL*  
*PROPORTION* AT  
WORK HERE, OR  
IS THERE ANOTHER  
*COMMON LINK*?  
MAYBE A SIMILARITY  
OF *GENRES*?

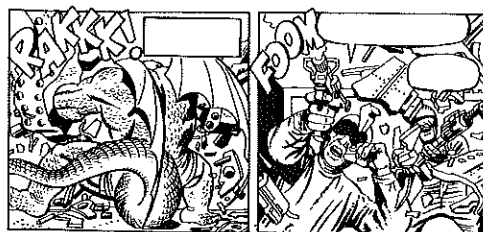


BY *FAR*, THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF  
TRANSITION IN KIRBY'S ART IS *ACTION-  
TO-ACTION*. I COUNT *SIXTY-TWO* OF  
THEM IN THIS STORY-- ABOUT *SIXTY-  
FIVE PERCENT* OF THE TOTAL NUMBER.



[TRACED AND SIMPLIFIED FOR CLARITY'S SAKE.]

*SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT* TRANSITIONS  
ACCOUNT FOR AN ADDITIONAL *NINETEEN--*  
ABOUT *TWENTY PERCENT* OF THE TOTAL NUMBER.

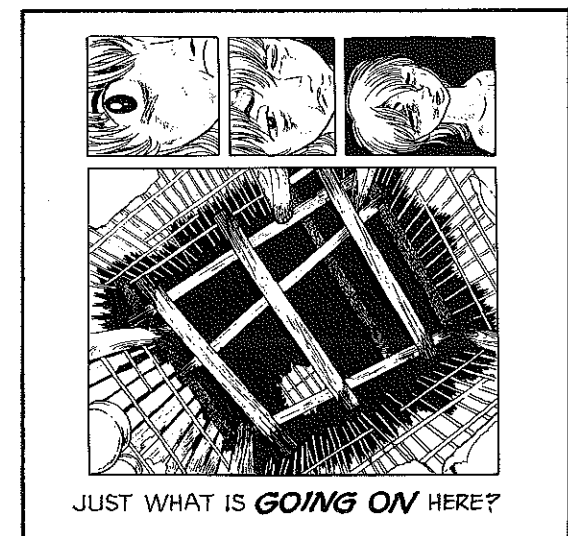
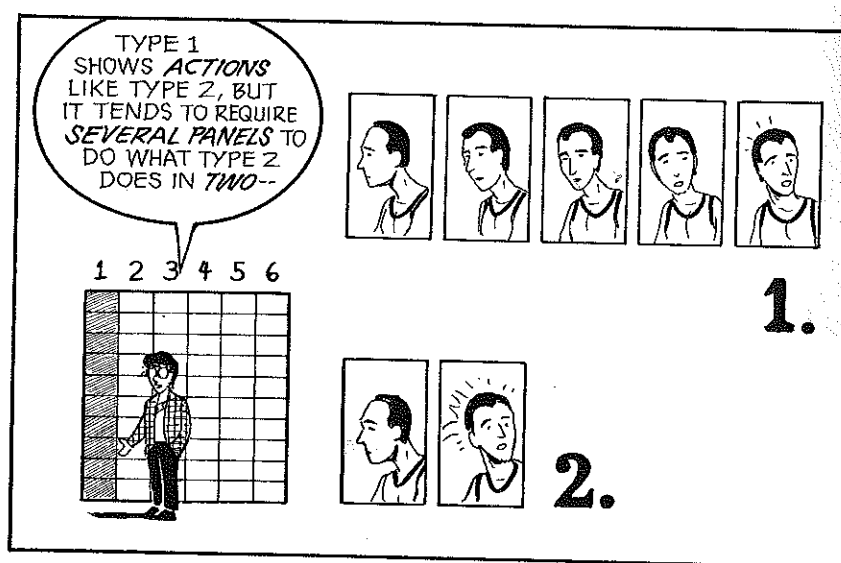
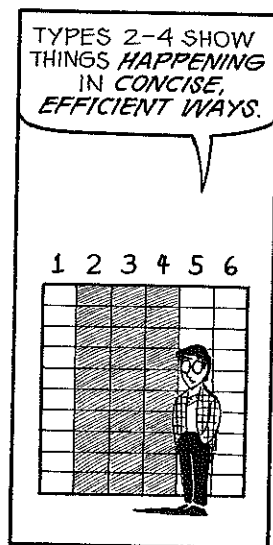
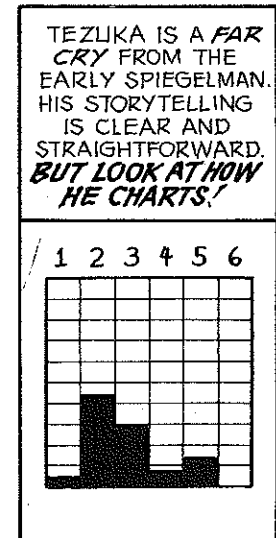
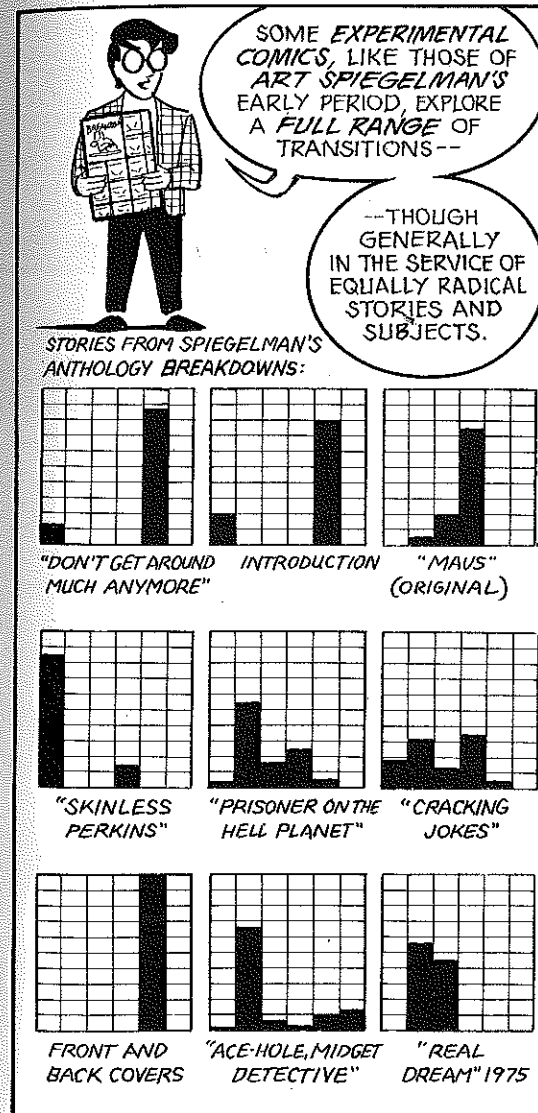
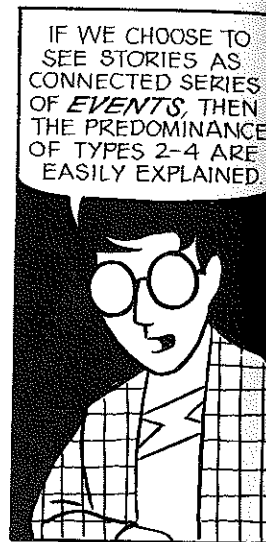
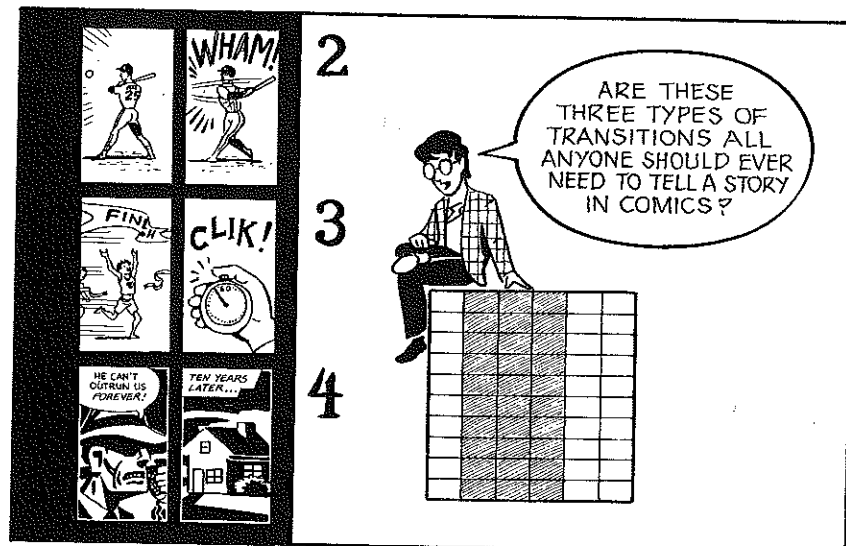
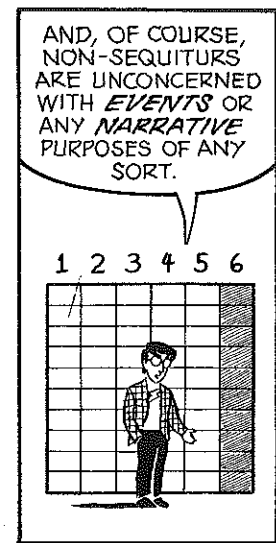
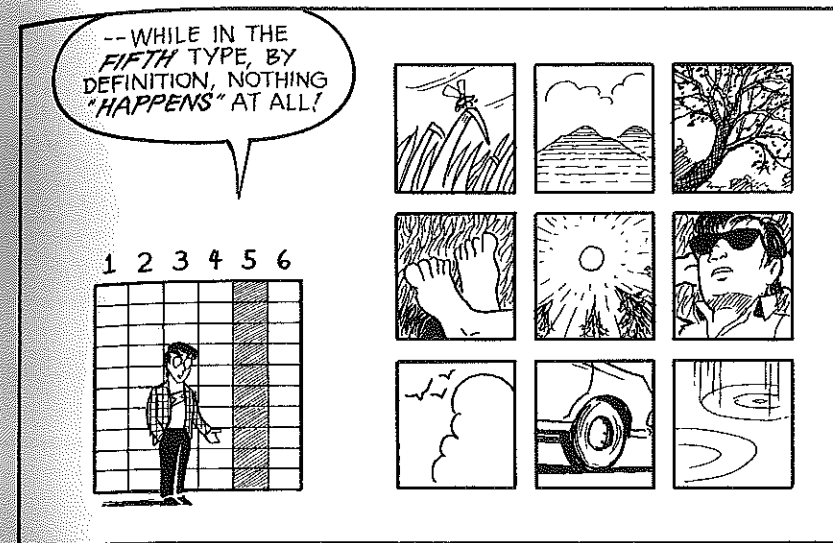
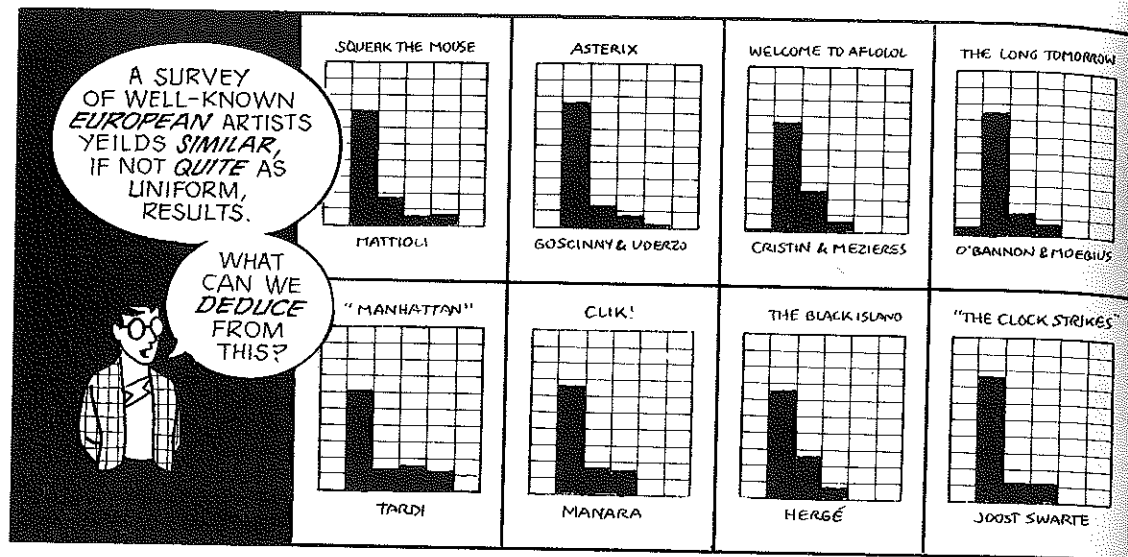


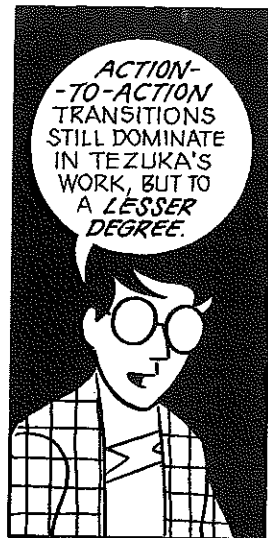
A RANDOM  
SAMPLING OF  
VARIOUS AMERICAN  
COMICS SHOWS THIS  
SAME PROPORTION  
PRETTY  
*CONSISTENTLY*.



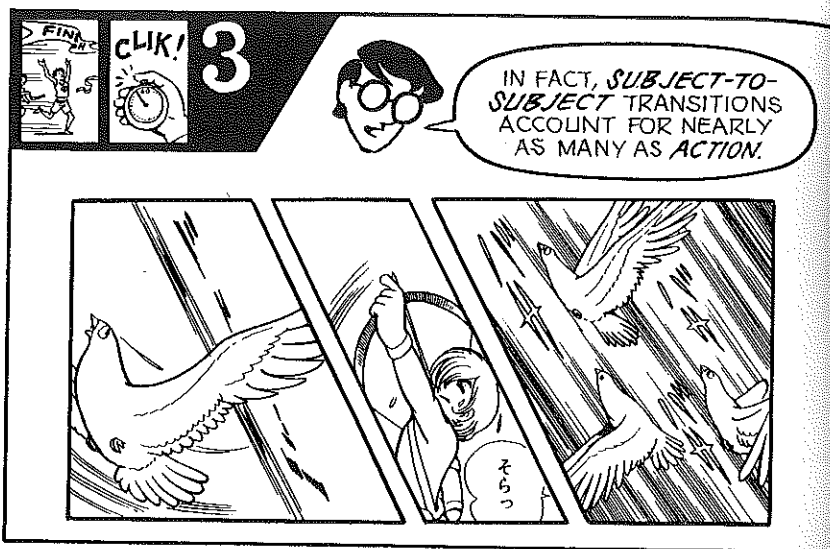
X-MEN #1  CLAREMONT & LEE	"HEARTBREAK SOUP"  G. HERNANDEZ	BETTY & VERONICA  DOYLE & DECARLO	NAUGHTY BITS  GREGORY
FRANK IN THE RIVER  WOODRING	A CONTRACT WITH GOD  EISNER	MAUS  SPIEGELMAN	DONALD DUCK  BARKS



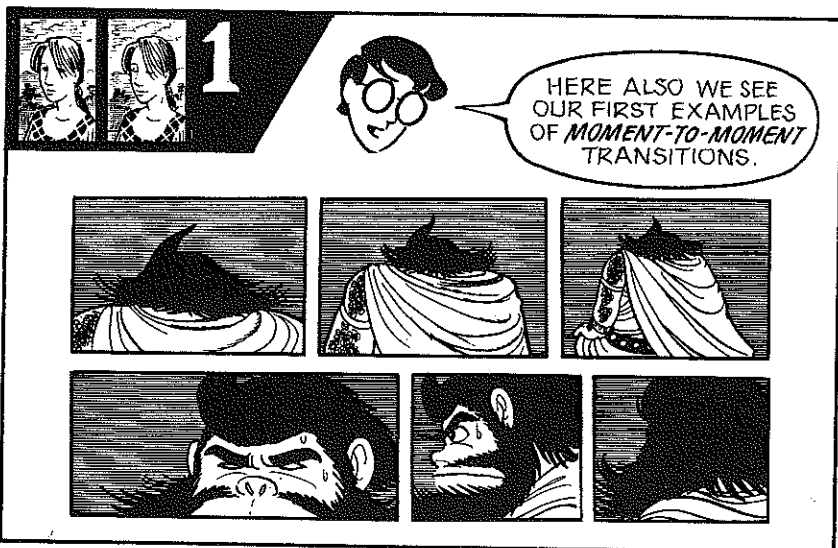
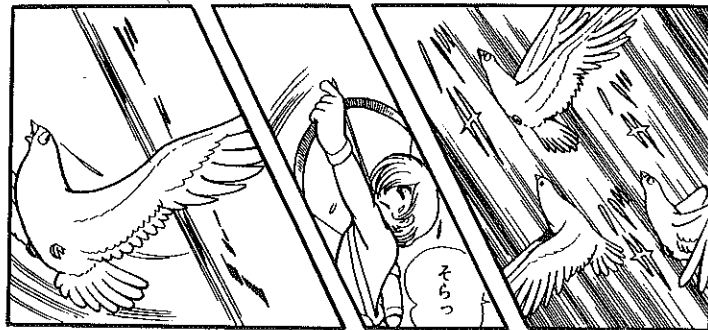




ACTION-TO-ACTION TRANSITIONS STILL DOMINATE IN TEZUKA'S WORK, BUT TO A LESSER DEGREE.



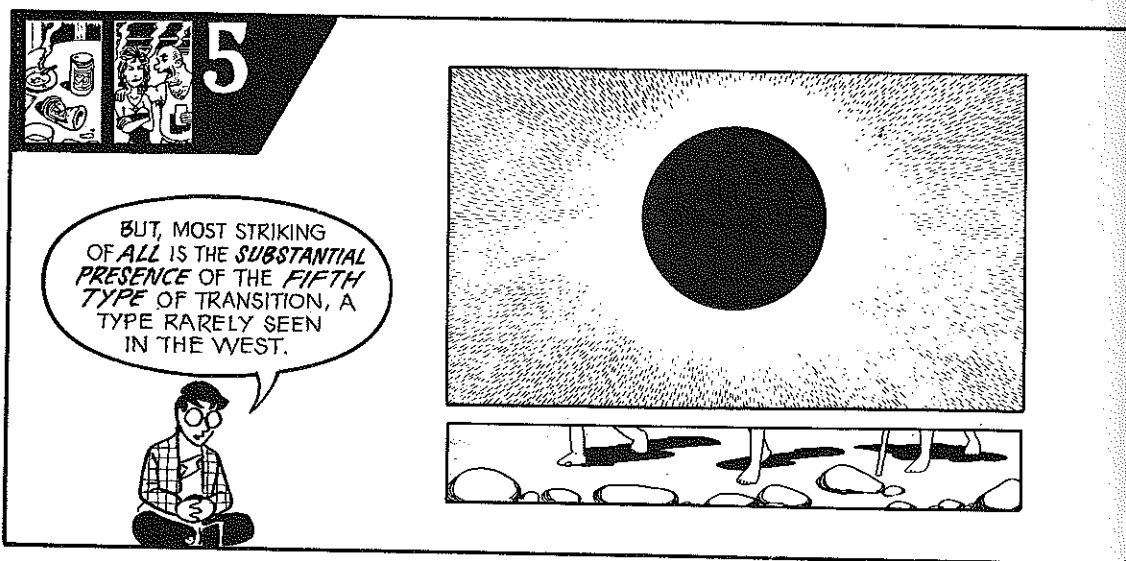
IN FACT, *SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT* TRANSITIONS ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY AS MANY AS *ACTION*.



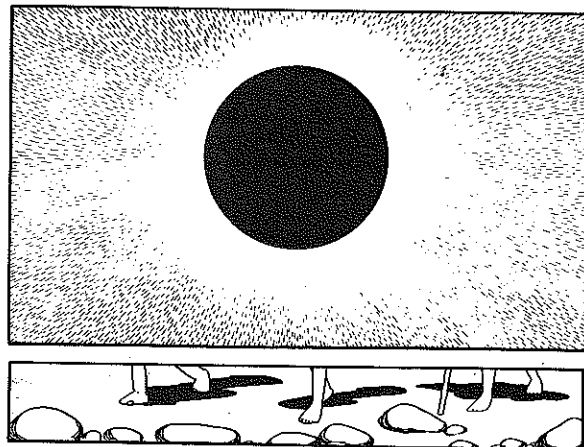
HERE ALSO WE SEE OUR FIRST EXAMPLES OF *MOMENT-TO-MOMENT* TRANSITIONS.



THOUGH THE LATTER TYPE ONLY ACCOUNTS FOR *FOUR PERCENT* OF THE TOTAL, SUCH SEQUENCES CONTRAST STRIKINGLY WITH THE WESTERN TRADITIONS EXEMPLIFIED BY KIRBY AND HERGE.

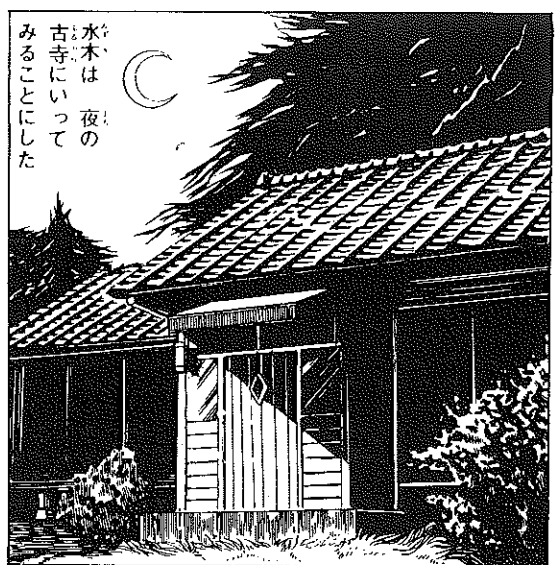
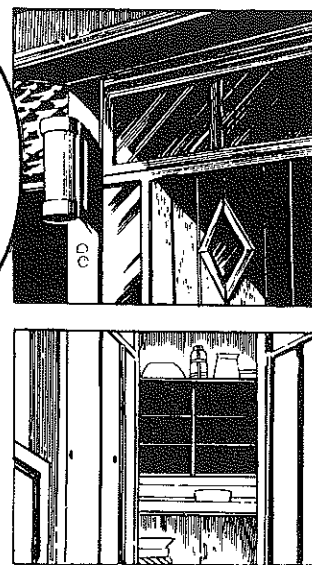


BUT, MOST STRIKING OF ALL IS THE *SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE* OF THE *FIFTH* TYPE OF TRANSITION, A TYPE RARELY SEEN IN THE WEST.



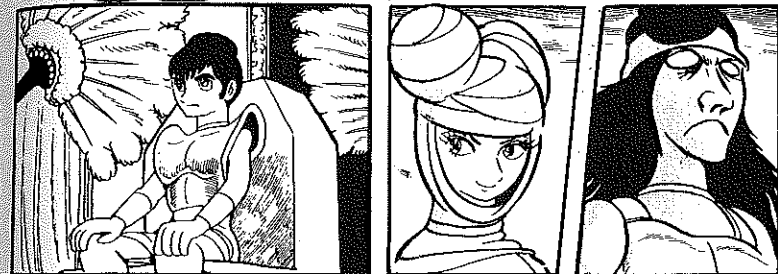
ART © OSAMU TEZUKA.

*ASPECT-TO-ASPECT* TRANSITIONS HAVE BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF *JAPANESE MAINSTREAM COMICS* ALMOST FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.



ART © SHIGERU MIZUKI.

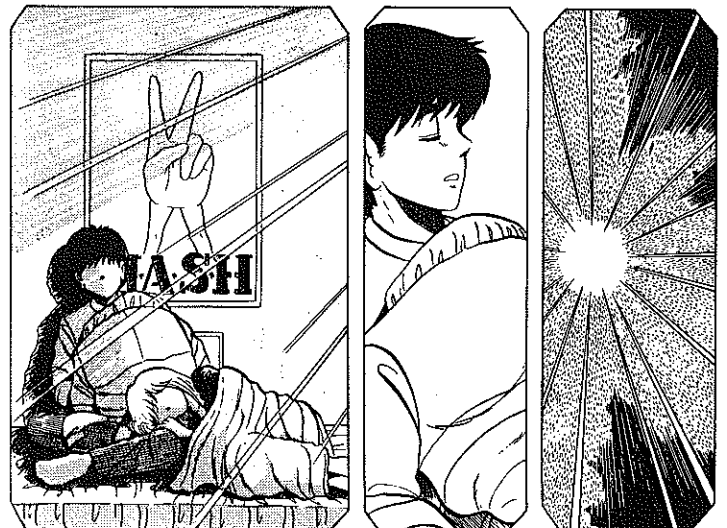
MOST OFTEN USED TO ESTABLISH A *MOOD* OR A *SENSE OF PLACE*, TIME SEEMS TO *STAND STILL* IN THESE QUIET, CONTEMPLATIVE COMBINATIONS.



EVEN *SEQUENCE*, WHILE STILL AN ISSUE, SEEMS FAR LESS IMPORTANT HERE THAN IN OTHER TRANSITIONS.



RATHER THAN ACTING AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN *SEPARATE* MOMENTS, THE READER *HERE* MUST ASSEMBLE A *SINGLE* MOMENT USING *SCATTERED* FRAGMENTS.



ART © H. SATO.

IN EXAMINING SEVERAL JAPANESE ARTISTS, WE FIND SIMILAR PROPORTIONS TO TEZUKA'S, INCLUDING A HIGH INCIDENCE OF THE FIFTH TYPE.

WHY?

Artist	Feature 1	Feature 2	Feature 3	Feature 4	Feature 5
750 RIDER (石川誠?)	2	1	1	1	1
FATHER & SON HAYASHI & OSIMA	2	1	1	1	1
WOLF & CUB KOIKE & KOJIMA	2	1	1	1	1
AKIRA KATSUHIRO OTOMO	2	1	1	1	1
CYBORG 009 SHOTARO ISHIMORI	2	1	1	1	1
PHOENIX OSAMU TEZUKA	2	1	1	1	1

LENGTH MAY BE ONE OF THE FACTORS AT WORK HERE. MOST JAPANESE COMICS FIRST APPEAR IN ENORMOUS ANTHOLOGY TITLES WHERE THE PRESSURE ISN'T AS GREAT ON ANY ONE INSTALLMENT TO SHOW A LOT "HAPPENING."

WHEN INDIVIDUAL FEATURES ARE COLLECTED, THEY MAY RUN FOR THOUSANDS OF PAGES.

AS SUCH, DOZENS OF PANELS CAN BE DEVOTED TO PORTRAYING SLOW CINEMATIC MOVEMENT OR TO SETTING A MOOD.

BUT I DON'T THINK LONGER STORIES ARE THE ONLY FACTOR, OR EVEN THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE.

I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMETHING A BIT MORE FUNDAMENTAL TO THIS PARTICULAR EAST/WEST SPLIT.

Artist	Feature 1	Feature 2	Feature 3	Feature 4	Feature 5
HERGE	2	1	1	1	1
KIRBY	2	1	1	1	1
TEZUKA	2	1	1	1	1



MMM... WHERE WAS I?

OH, YES...

TRADITIONAL WESTERN ART AND LITERATURE DON'T WANDER MUCH. ON THE WHOLE, WE'RE A PRETTY GOAL-ORIENTED CULTURE.

BUT, IN THE EAST, THERE'S A RICH TRADITION OF CYCLICAL AND LABYRINTHINE WORKS OF ART.

JAPANESE COMICS MAY BE HEIRS TO THIS TRADITION, IN THE WAY THEY SO OFTEN EMPHASIZE BEING THERE OVER GETTING THERE.

THROUGH THESE AND OTHER STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES, THE JAPANESE OFFER A VISION OF COMICS VERY DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN.

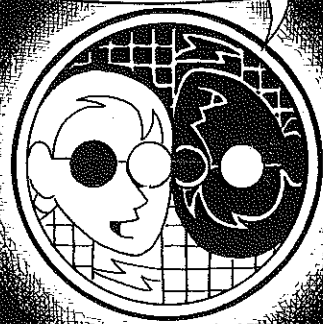
FOR IN JAPAN MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, COMICS IS AN ART--



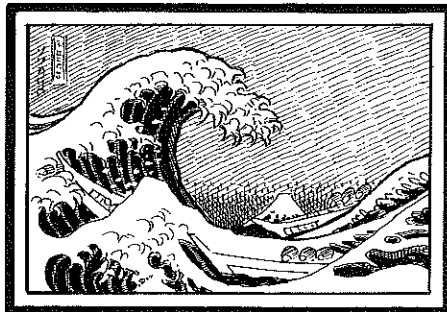


--OF  
INTERVALS.

THE IDEA THAT ELEMENTS  
*OMITTED* FROM A WORK OF ART  
ARE AS MUCH A PART OF THAT WORK  
AS THOSE *INCLUDED* HAS BEEN  
A SPECIALTY OF THE *EAST* FOR  
*CENTURIES.*

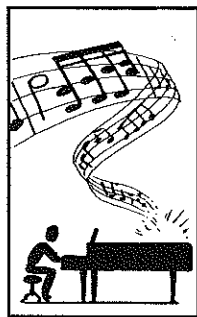


IN THE GRAPHIC ARTS THIS HAS MEANT  
A GREATER FOCUS ON *FIGURE/GROUND*  
RELATIONSHIPS AND "NEGATIVE SPACE."

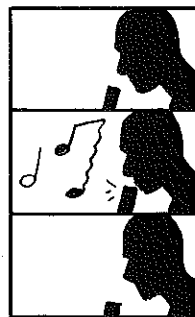


"THE GREAT WAVE OFF KANAGAWA" BY HOKUSAI (c.1829)  
(TURN THIS PICTURE UPSIDE DOWN TO SEE THE OTHER  
WAVE OF NEGATIVE SPACE...NATURE'S YIN AND YANG.)

IN MUSIC TOO, WHILE THE WESTERN CLASSICAL TRADITION WAS EMPHASIZING THE *CONTINUOUS, CONNECTED* WORLDS OF MELODY AND HARMONY, EASTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC WAS EQUALLY CONCERNED WITH THE ROLE OF *SILENCE!*



WEST



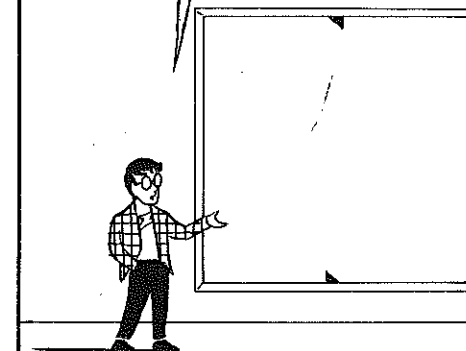
EAST

THE TRADITIONAL EMPHASIS IN WESTERN ART UPON THE PRIMACY OF *FOREGROUND* SUBJECTS AND *CONTINUOUSNESS* OF *TONES* GAVE WAY TO *FRAGMENTATION* AND A NEW AWARENESS OF THE *PICTURE PLANE*.

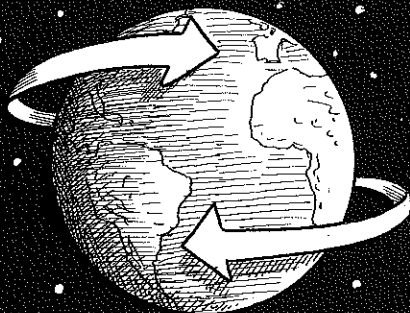


FACSIMILE  
OF "FIGURE"  
BY PABLO PICASSO  
1948

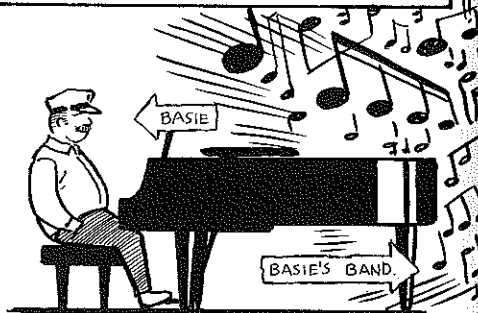
WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS  
PAINTING BY AL HELD  
IS CALLED? \*



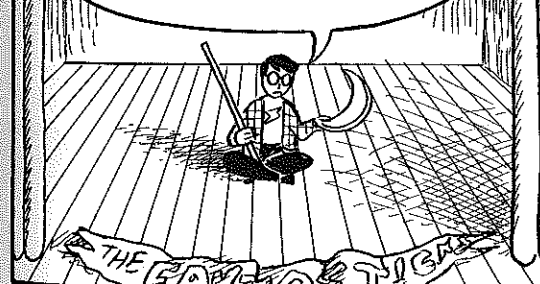
IN THE LAST CENTURY OR TWO, AS WESTERN CULTURAL INFLUENCES SWEEP THE EAST, SO TOO HAVE EASTERN AND AFRICAN IDEAS OF FRAGMENTATION AND RHYTHM SWEEP THE WEST.



FROM *DEBUSSY* TO *STRAVINSKY* TO *COUNT BASIE*, WESTERN MUSIC HAS GRADUALLY INCORPORATED A STRONG AWARENESS OF THE POWER OF *FRAGMENTATION* AND *INTERVALS*.



IN THEATRE, THE IDEA THAT "LESS IS MORE" HAS REAL PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS. ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SHOWS IN HISTORY IS THE FANTASTICKS-- A PLAY WHOSE ENTIRE SET CAME IN THREE PIECES-- A TATTERED BANNER, A STICK AND A CARDBOARD MOON.



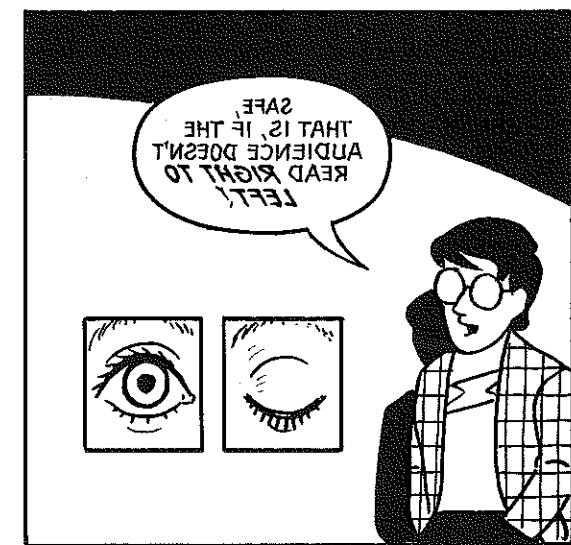
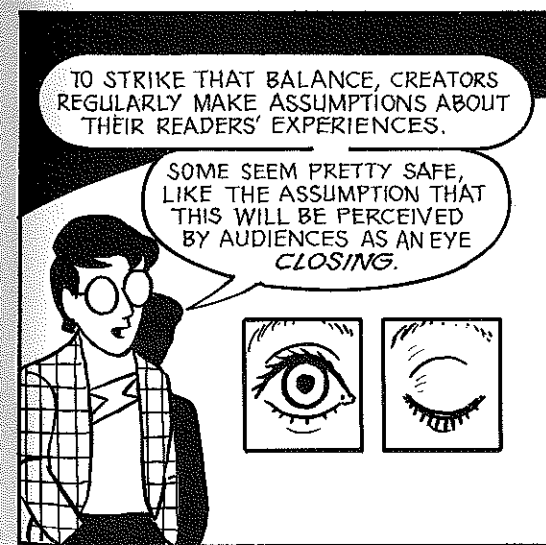
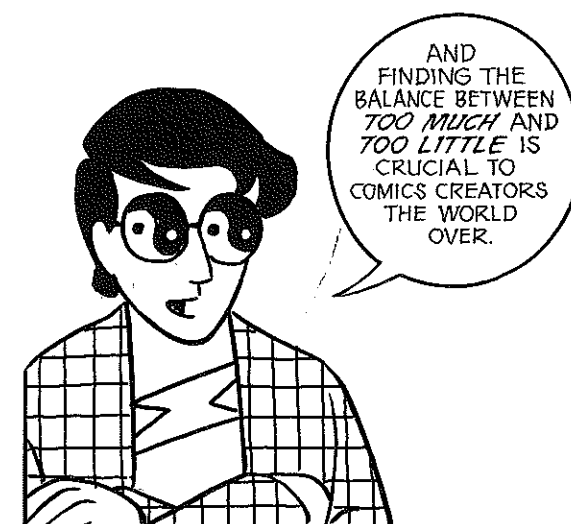
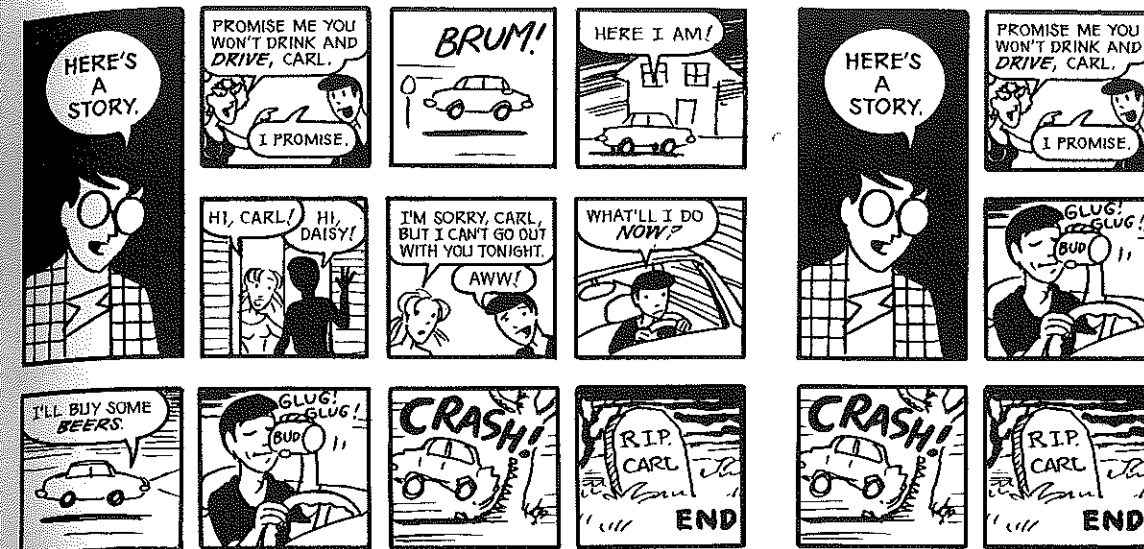
\*ANSWER: "THE BIG 'N'"  
[SEE PAGE 216]

THE MASTERY OF *ANY* MEDIUM  
USING MINIMAL ELEMENTS HAS  
LONG BEEN CONSIDERED A *NOBLE*  
*ASPIRATION.*



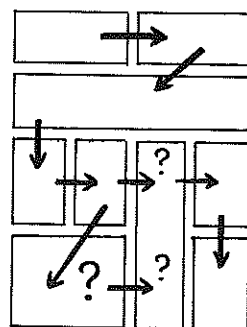


\* "BRUM" APPEARS COURTESY OF M. FEZZELL



WE ASSUME AS **READERS** THAT WE WILL KNOW WHAT ORDER TO READ PANELS IN, BUT THE BUSINESS OF **ARRANGING** THOSE PANELS IS ACTUALLY QUITE **COMPLEX**.

SO COMPLEX, IN FACT, THAT EVEN **SEASONED PROS** WILL SOMETIMES **BLOW IT**.



AS CLOSURE **BETWEEN** PANELS BECOMES MORE INTENSE, READER INTERPRETATION BECOMES FAR MORE **ELASTIC**.



AND **MANAGING** IT BECOMES MORE COMPLICATED FOR THE **CREATOR**.

READERS FACED WITH PANELS LIKE **THESE** WILL HAVE **SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT** INTERPRETATIONS.

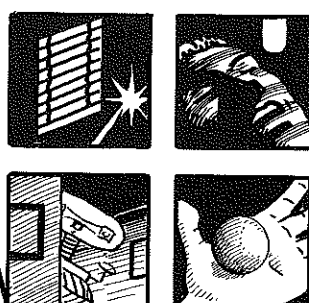
CLAK! CLAK! CLAK!

BY CONSTRUCTING **WHOLE IMAGES** BASED ON THESE **FRAGMENTS**, READERS ARE **PERFORMING CLOSURE**, JUST AS --

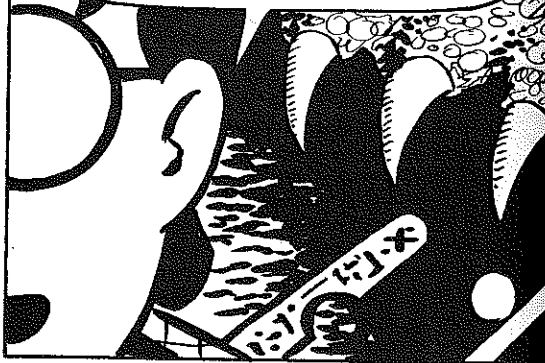
**WHOOSH!**

≡ Splip Splip ≡

SOME ARTISTS CAN BE **DELIBERATELY AMBIGUOUS**, OF COURSE, AND OFFER US NO STRICT INTERPRETATION TO GO ON.



CLOSURE CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE **WITHIN** PANELS AS WELL AS **BETWEEN** THEM, WHEN ARTISTS CHOOSE TO SHOW ONLY A SMALL **PIECE** OF THE PICTURE.



?

Ding! Ding!

UH-- JUST AS READERS COMPLETE AN ACTION OR IDEA **BETWEEN--**

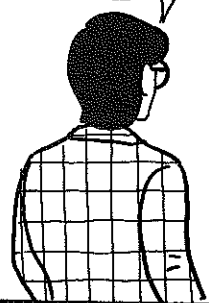
OW!

OW!

Ding! Ding!

≡ **AHEM!** ≡ I SAY, JUST AS READERS COMPLETE --

COMICS CAN BE **MADDENINGLY VAGUE** ABOUT WHAT IT SHOWS US.



BY SHOWING LITTLE OR NOTHING OF A GIVEN SCENE--



--AND OFFERING ONLY **CLUES** TO THE READER--



--THE ARTIST CAN TRIGGER ANY NUMBER OF IMAGES IN THE READER'S IMAGINATION.



-- AN ACTION OR--  
**OW! OW!**

STOP THAT!

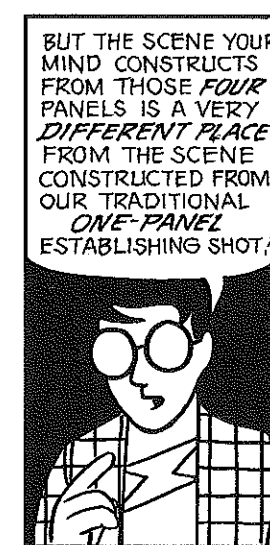
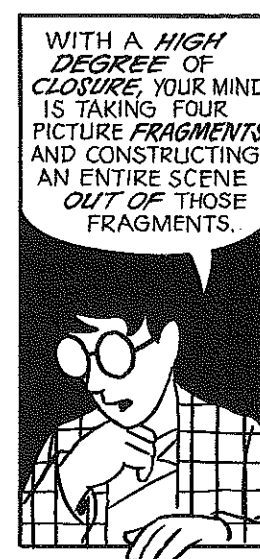
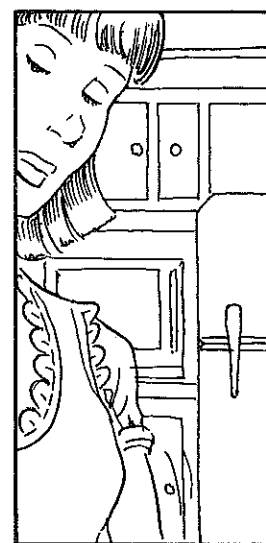
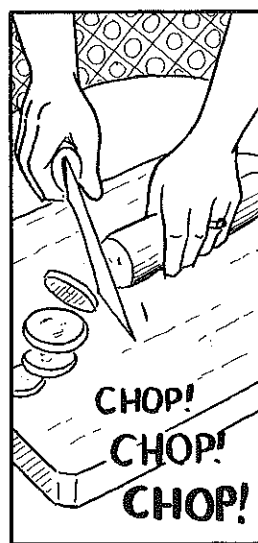
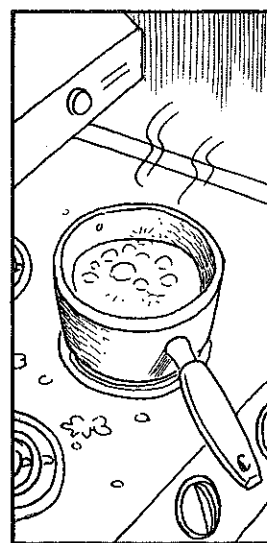
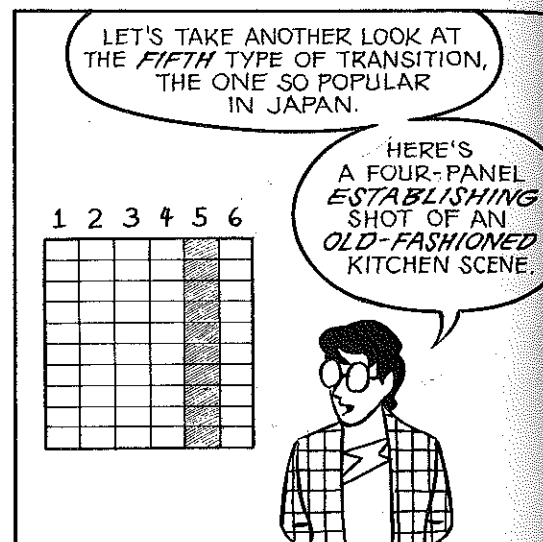
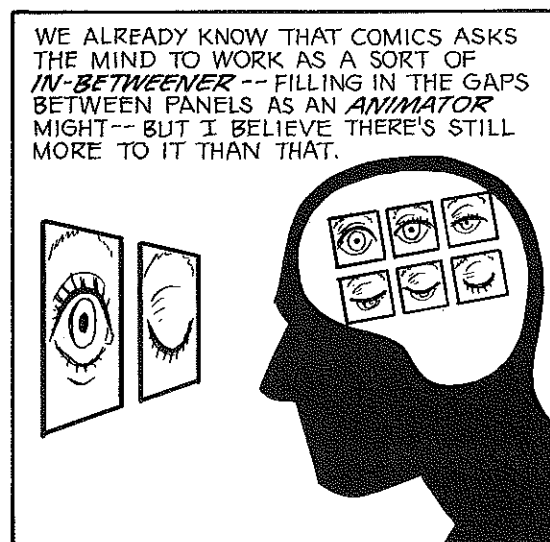
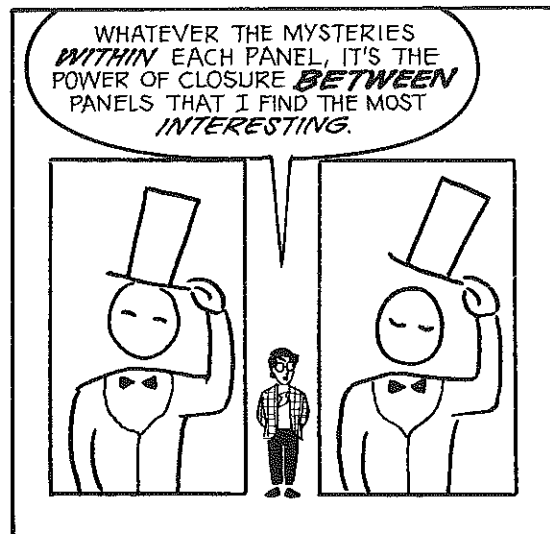
Ding! Ding!

OW!

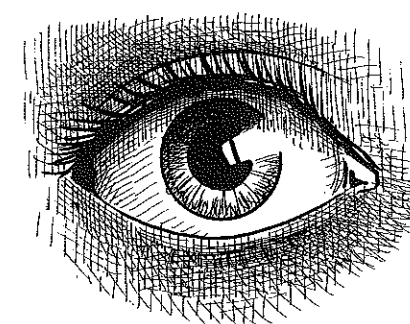
Ding! Ding!

OW!

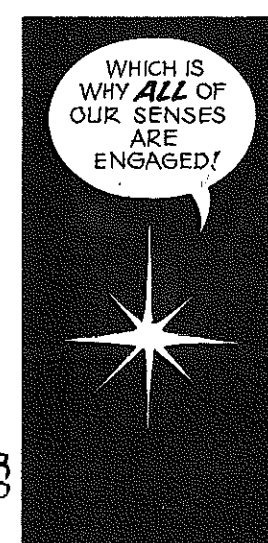
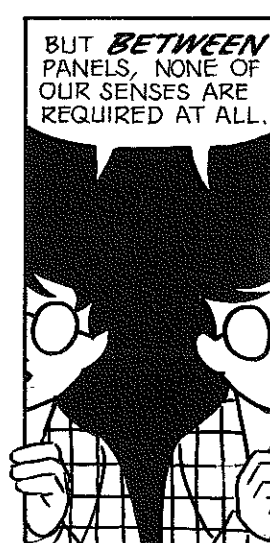




COMICS IS A *MONO-SENSORY* MEDIUM. IT RELIES ON ONLY *ONE* OF THE SENSES TO CONVEY A *WORLD* OF EXPERIENCE.



BUT WHAT OF THE OTHER *FOUR*?



SEVERAL TIMES ON EVERY PAGE THE READER IS RELEASED--LIKE A TRAPEZE ARTIST--INTO THE OPEN AIR OF IMAGINATION...

...THEN *CAUGHT* BY THE OUTSTRETCHED ARMS OF THE *EVER-PRESENT NEXT PANEL!*

CAUGHT *QUICKLY* SO AS NOT TO LET THE READER *FALL* INTO CONFUSION OR *BOREDOM*.



BUT IS IT POSSIBLE THAT CLOSURE CAN BE SO MANAGED IN SOME CASES--

BUT *REALISTIC* IMAGES HAVE A BUMPIER RIDE. THEIRS IS A PRIMARILY *VISUAL* EXISTENCE WHICH DOESN'T PASS EASILY INTO THE REALM OF IDEAS.

AND SO, WHAT SEEMED LIKE A CONTINUOUS SERIES OF MOMENTS IN THE LAST EXAMPLE, HERE LOOKS A LITTLE MORE LIKE A SERIES OF *STILL PICTURES*...

...TO *ME* ANYWAY. THESE THINGS ARE ALL *SUBJECTIVE!*

--THAT THE READER MIGHT LEARN TO *FLY?*

IN CHAPTER TWO, WE DISCUSSED VARIOUS TYPES OF ICONIC AND NON-ICONIC DRAWING STYLES.

DO THESE AFFECT CLOSURE?

SIMILARLY, I THINK WHEN COMICS ART VEERS CLOSER TO CONCERNS OF THE *PICTURE PLANE*, CLOSURE CAN BE MORE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, THOUGH FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.

NOW IT'S THE *UNIFYING PROPERTIES* OF *DESIGN* THAT MAKE US MORE AWARE OF THE PAGE AS A *WHOLE*, RATHER THAN ITS INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS, THE *PANELS*.

A GOOD RULE OF THUMB IS THAT IF READERS ARE PARTICULARLY *AWARE* OF THE ART IN A GIVEN STORY--

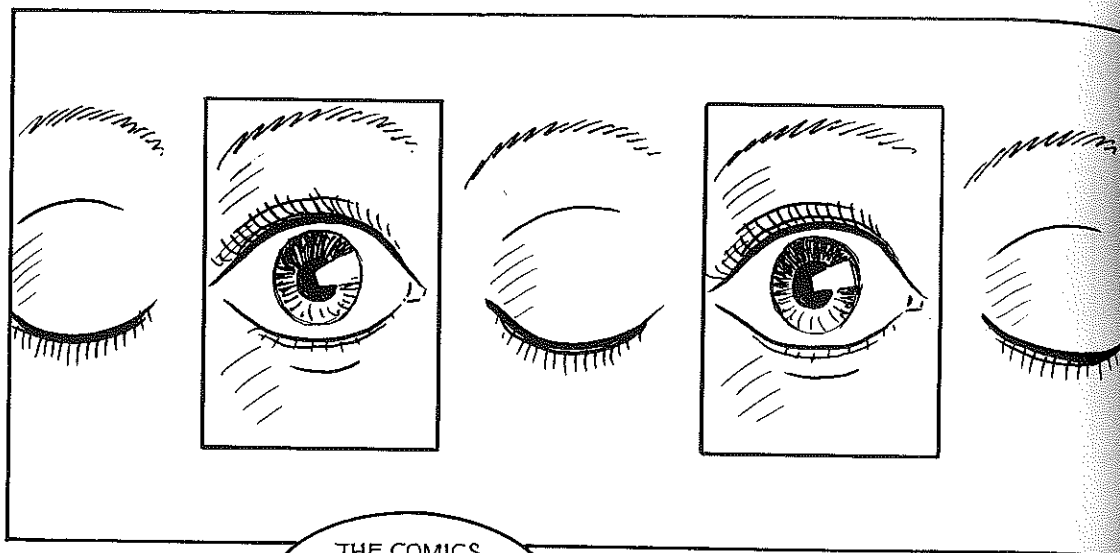
I THINK THE ANSWER IS *YES*.

SINCE CARTOONS ALREADY EXIST AS CONCEPTS FOR THE READER, THEY TEND TO FLOW EASILY THROUGH THE CONCEPTUAL TERRITORY *BETWEEN* PANELS.

IDEAS FLOWING INTO ONE ANOTHER *SEAMLESSLY*.

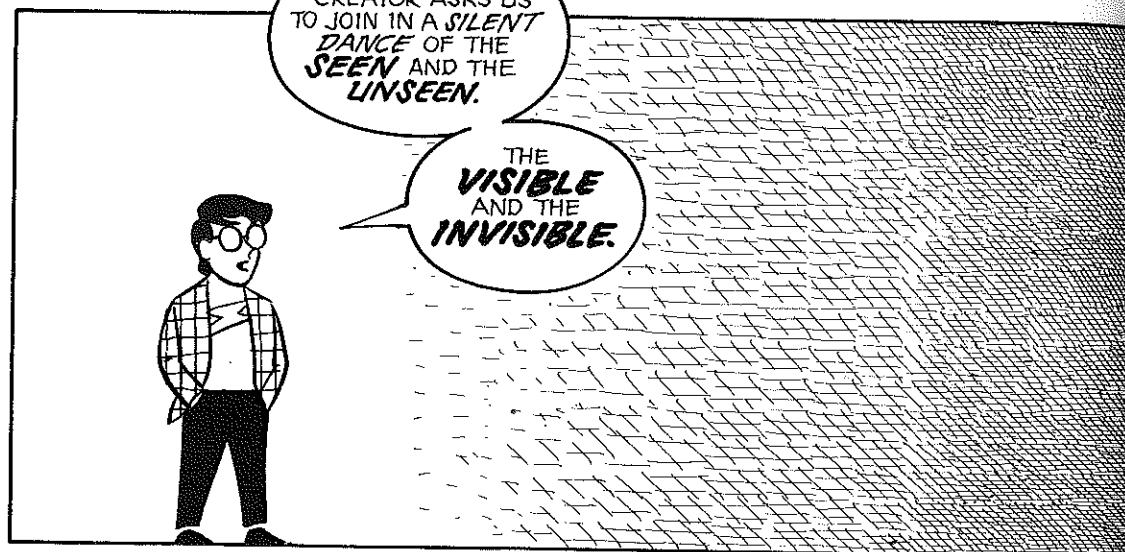
--THEN CLOSURE IS PROBABLY NOT HAPPENING WITHOUT SOME *EFFORT*.

OF COURSE, MAKING THE READER *WORK* A LITTLE MAY BE JUST WHAT THE ARTIST IS *TRYING* TO DO. ONCE AGAIN, IT'S ALL A MATTER OF *PERSONAL TASTE*.

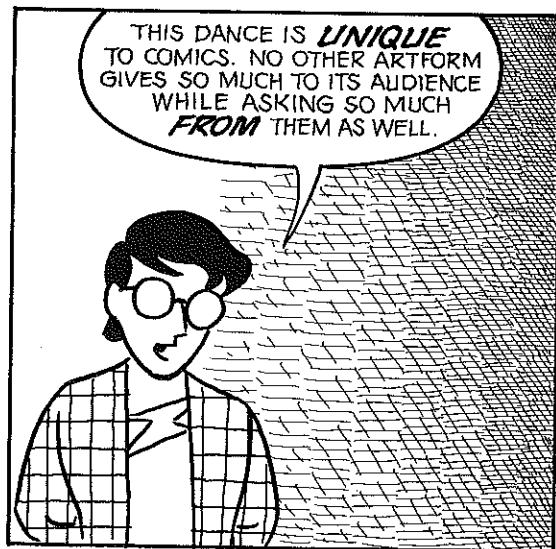


THE COMICS  
CREATOR ASKS US  
TO JOIN IN A SILENT  
DANCE OF THE  
**SEEN** AND THE  
**UNSEEN.**

THE  
**VISIBLE**  
AND THE  
**INVISIBLE.**

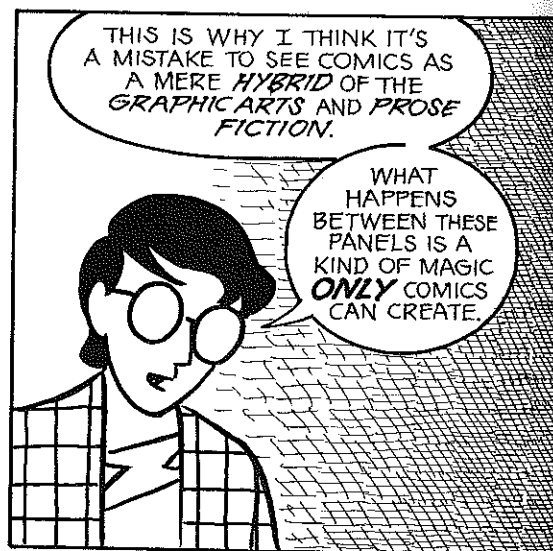


THIS DANCE IS **UNIQUE**  
TO COMICS. NO OTHER ARTFORM  
GIVES SO MUCH TO ITS AUDIENCE  
WHILE ASKING SO MUCH  
**FROM** THEM AS WELL.



THIS IS WHY I THINK IT'S  
A MISTAKE TO SEE COMICS AS  
A MERE **HYBRID** OF THE  
**GRAPHIC ARTS** AND **PROSE**  
**FICTION.**

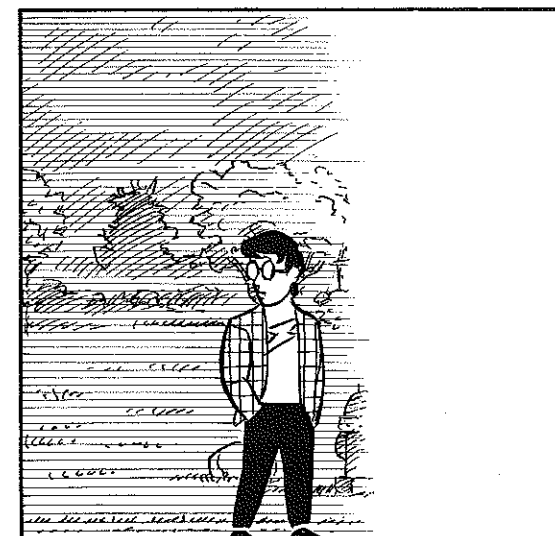
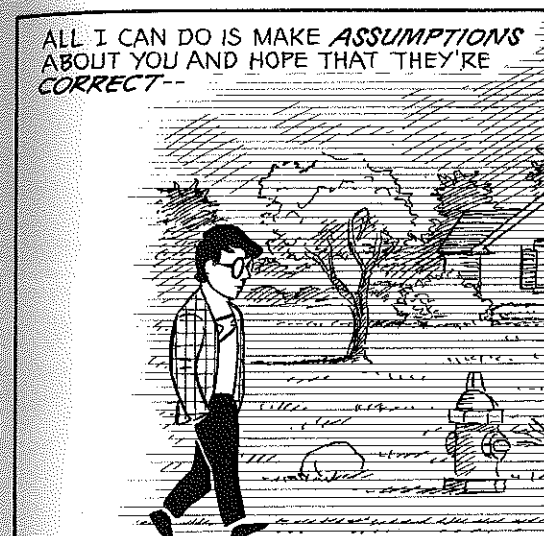
WHAT  
HAPPENS  
BETWEEN THESE  
PANELS IS A  
KIND OF MAGIC  
**ONLY** COMICS  
CAN CREATE.



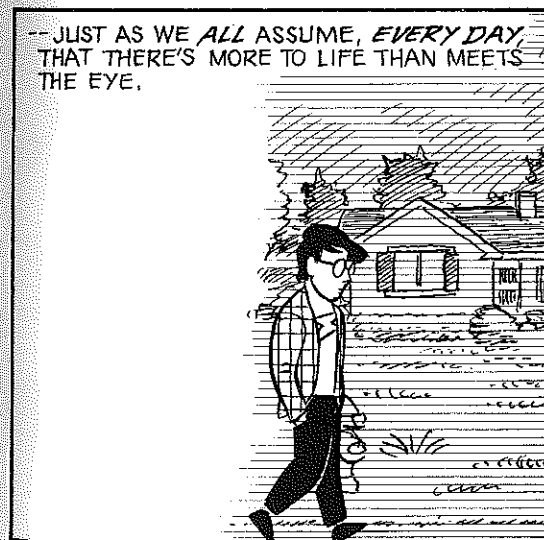
HERE IN  
THIS STUDIO, I'VE  
TRIED TO **CONTROL**  
THAT PROCESS AND  
USE IT TO MAKE  
MY CASE.

BUT I  
CAN ONLY **POINT**  
**THE WAY.** I  
CAN'T TAKE YOU  
**ANYWHERE** YOU  
DON'T WANT TO  
**GO.**

ALL I CAN DO IS MAKE **ASSUMPTIONS**  
ABOUT YOU AND HOPE THAT THEY'RE  
**CORRECT--**



--JUST AS WE **ALL** ASSUME, **EVERY DAY**,  
THAT THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN MEETS  
THE EYE.



ALL I ASK OF YOU  
IS A LITTLE  
**FAITH--**

--AND A **WORLD**  
OF **IMAGINATION.**

