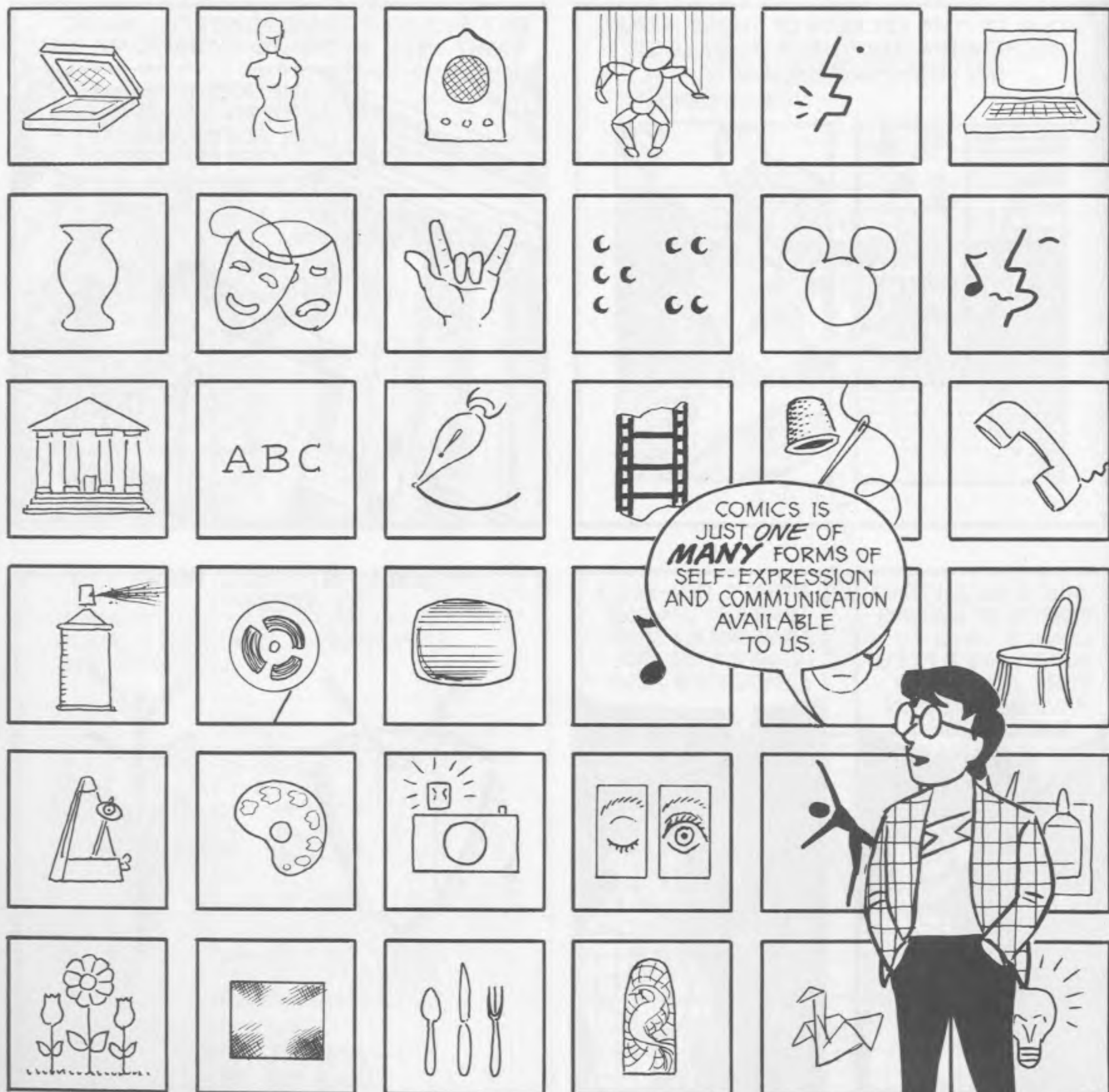


CHAPTER SEVEN

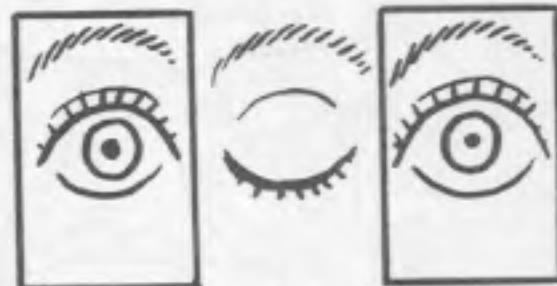
THE SIX STEPS.



COMICS IS JUST *ONE* OF *MANY* FORMS OF SELF-EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION AVAILABLE TO US.



SO FAR, WE'VE MOSTLY DEALT WITH THE *UNIQUE* PROPERTIES OF COMICS.



BUT THERE ARE PROPERTIES THAT COMICS SHARE WITH *ALL OTHER* ART FORMS.



THOUGH IT SEEMS INNOCUOUS ENOUGH *NOW*, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SUCH A SIMPLE IDEA WAS *RIDICULED*.

EVEN *TODAY*, THERE ARE THOSE WHO ASK THE QUESTION, "CAN COMICS BE *ART*?"



IT IS--

--I'M SORRY--

A REALLY *STUPID* QUESTION!



BUT IF WE *MUST* ANSWER IT, THE ANSWER IS *YES*.



ESPECIALLY IF YOUR DEFINITION OF ART IS AS *BROAD* AS *MINE*!





ART, AS I SEE IT, IS ANY HUMAN ACTIVITY WHICH **DOESN'T** GROW OUT OF **EITHER** OF OUR SPECIES' TWO BASIC INSTINCTS: **SURVIVAL** AND **REPRODUCTION!**



EXAMPLE: HERE'S A **PREHISTORIC MALE** CHASING A **PREHISTORIC FEMALE**. WITH ONLY ONE THING ON HIS MIND -- **REPRODUCTION!**



SO **STRONG** IS THIS INSTINCT THAT IT GOVERNS HIS **EVERY MOVE!** NOT ONE STEP IS WASTED IN THE **PURSUIT** OF HIS **GOAL!**



THE **FEMALE**--AFRAID FOR HER **SURVIVAL**--MANAGES TO **HIDE**. NOW, **DEPRIVED** OF HIS **GOAL**, THE MALE STANDS **INDECISIVE**.



NOW ALL OF HIS THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS ARE FOCUSED ON THAT **OTHER** VITAL HUMAN INSTINCT-- **SURVIVAL!**



AGAIN HIS LEGS PROPEL HIM FORWARD WITH **MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY!**



TRAPPED ON THE EDGE OF A **CLIFF**, HIS MIND CAN ONLY CONCEIVE OF **ONE PATH** TO **SURVIVAL!**



HE TAKES IT!



AND **SURVIVES**.



HIS **NEXT** MOVE MIGHT BE TO LOOK FOR **FOOD** (**SURVIVAL**) OR PERHAPS ANOTHER **FEMALE** (**REPRODUCTION**).



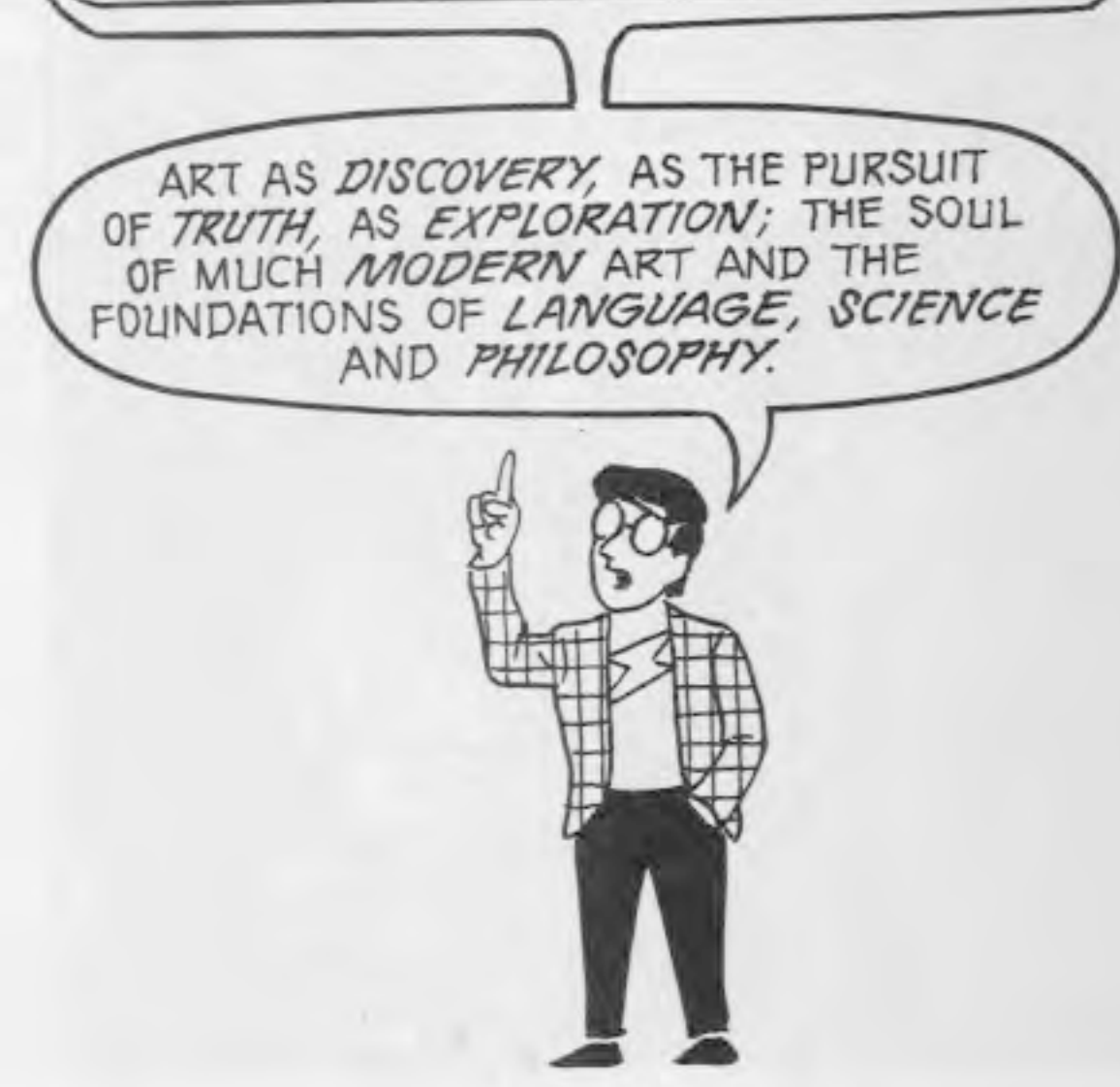
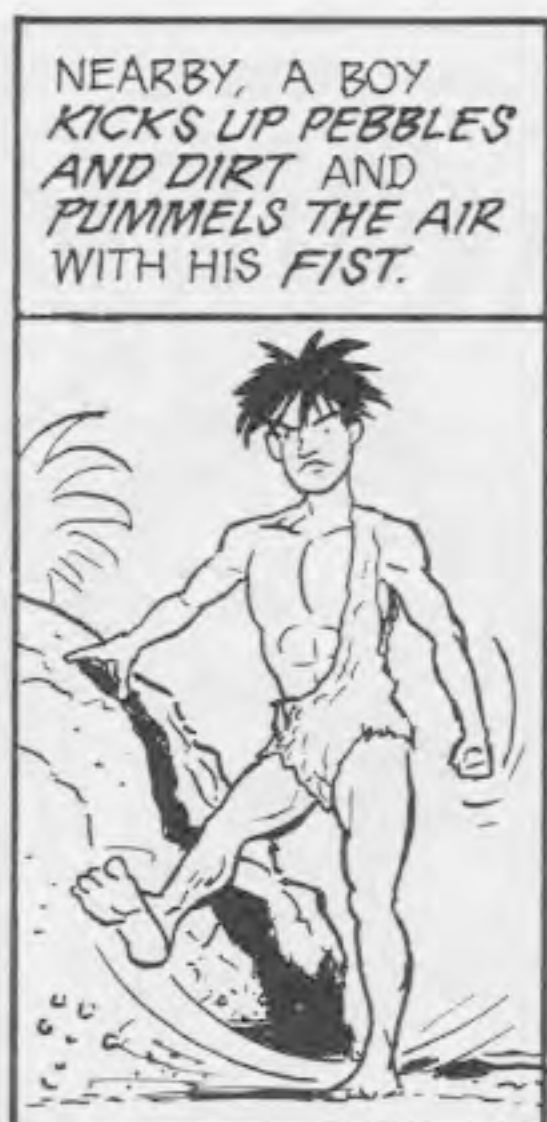
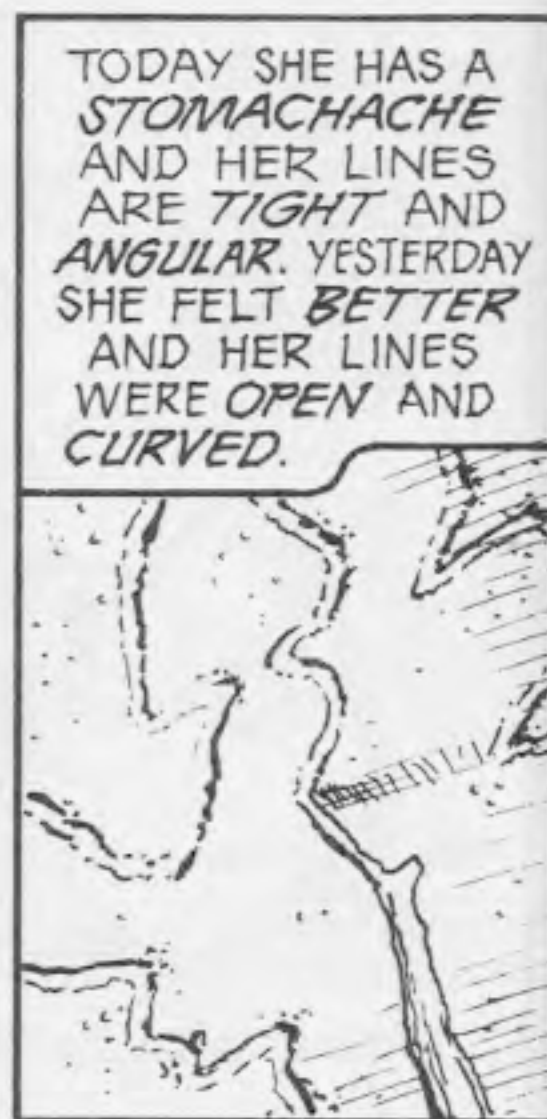
BUT **INSTEAD...**



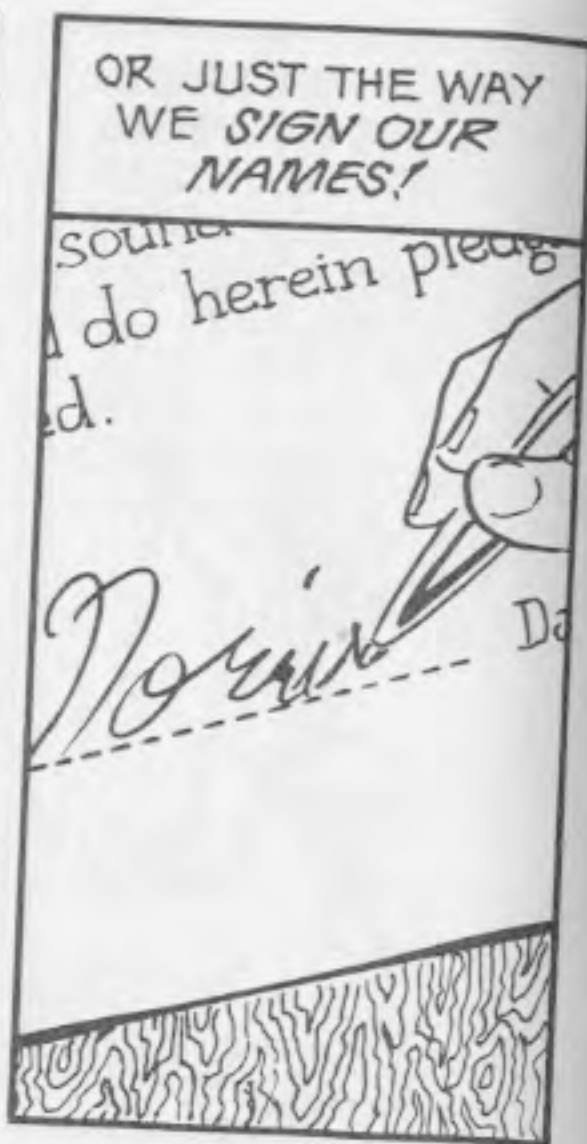
ART.

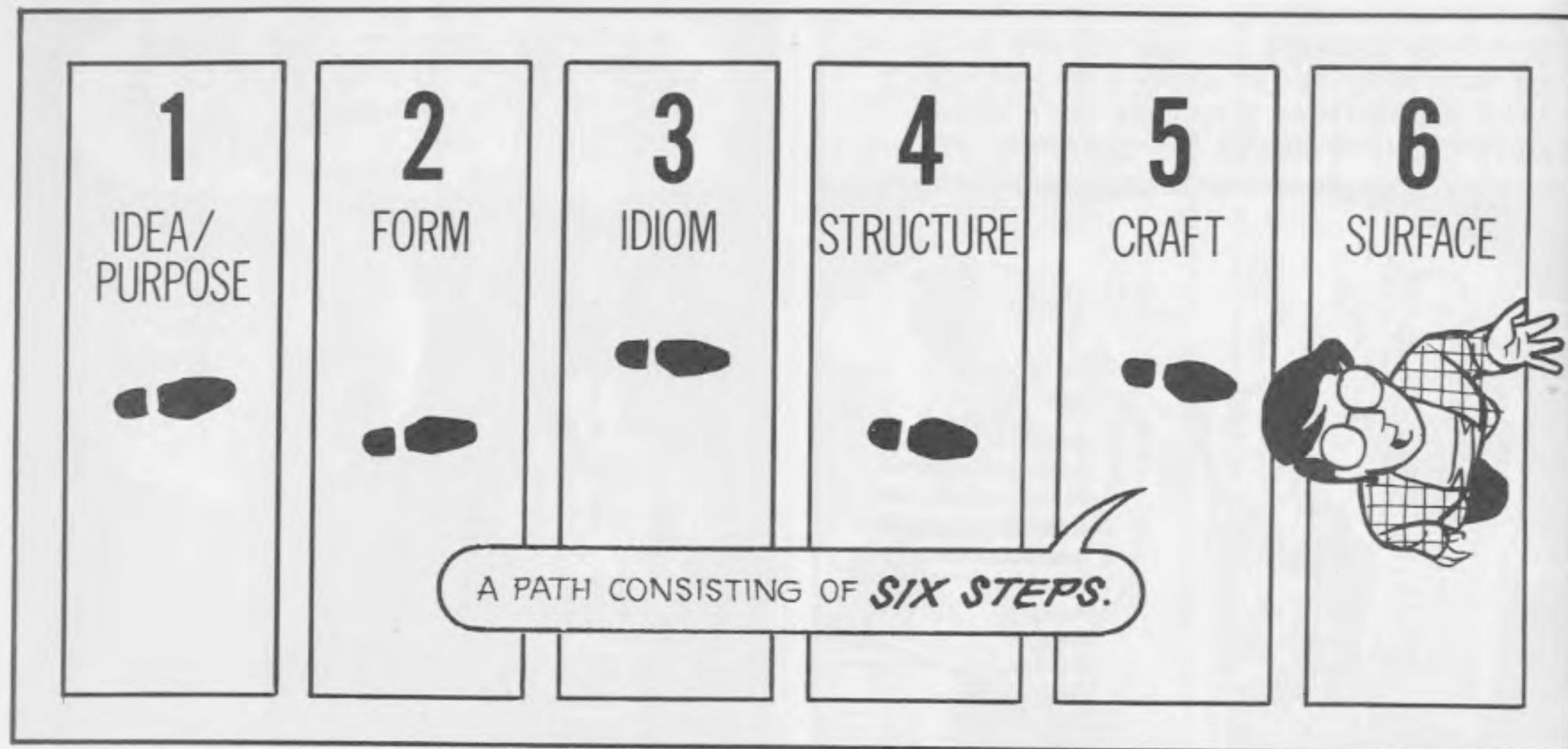


IT'S A **HAPPY** FACT OF HUMAN EXISTENCE THAT WE SIMPLY **CAN'T** SPEND OUR **EVERY** **WAKING** HOUR **EATING** AND **HAVING** **SEX!** NO MATTER HOW **FRANTICALLY** WE PURSUE OUR **GOALS**, THERE WILL **INEVITABLY** BE TIMES WHEN WE **JUST** **DON'T** **HAVE** A **THING** TO **DO!**



*ALONG WITH THEIR MANY RELATED FEELINGS AND CUSTOMS.





1
IDEA/
PURPOSE

FIRST:
THE *IMPULSES*, THE *IDEAS*, THE *EMOTIONS*, THE *PHILOSOPHIES*, THE *PURPOSES* OF THE WORK... THE WORK'S "*CONTENT*."

2
FORM

SECOND:
THE *FORM* IT WILL TAKE... WILL IT BE A *BOOK*? A *CHALK DRAWING*? A *CHAIR*? A *SONG*? A *SCULPTURE*? A *POT HOLDER*? A *COMIC BOOK*?

3
IDIOM

THIRD:
THE "*SCHOOL*" OF ART, THE *VOCABULARY* OF *STYLES* OR *GESTURES* OR *SUBJECT MATTER*, THE *GENRE* THAT THE WORK BELONGS TO... MAYBE A *GENRE* OF ITS OWN.

4
STRUCTURE

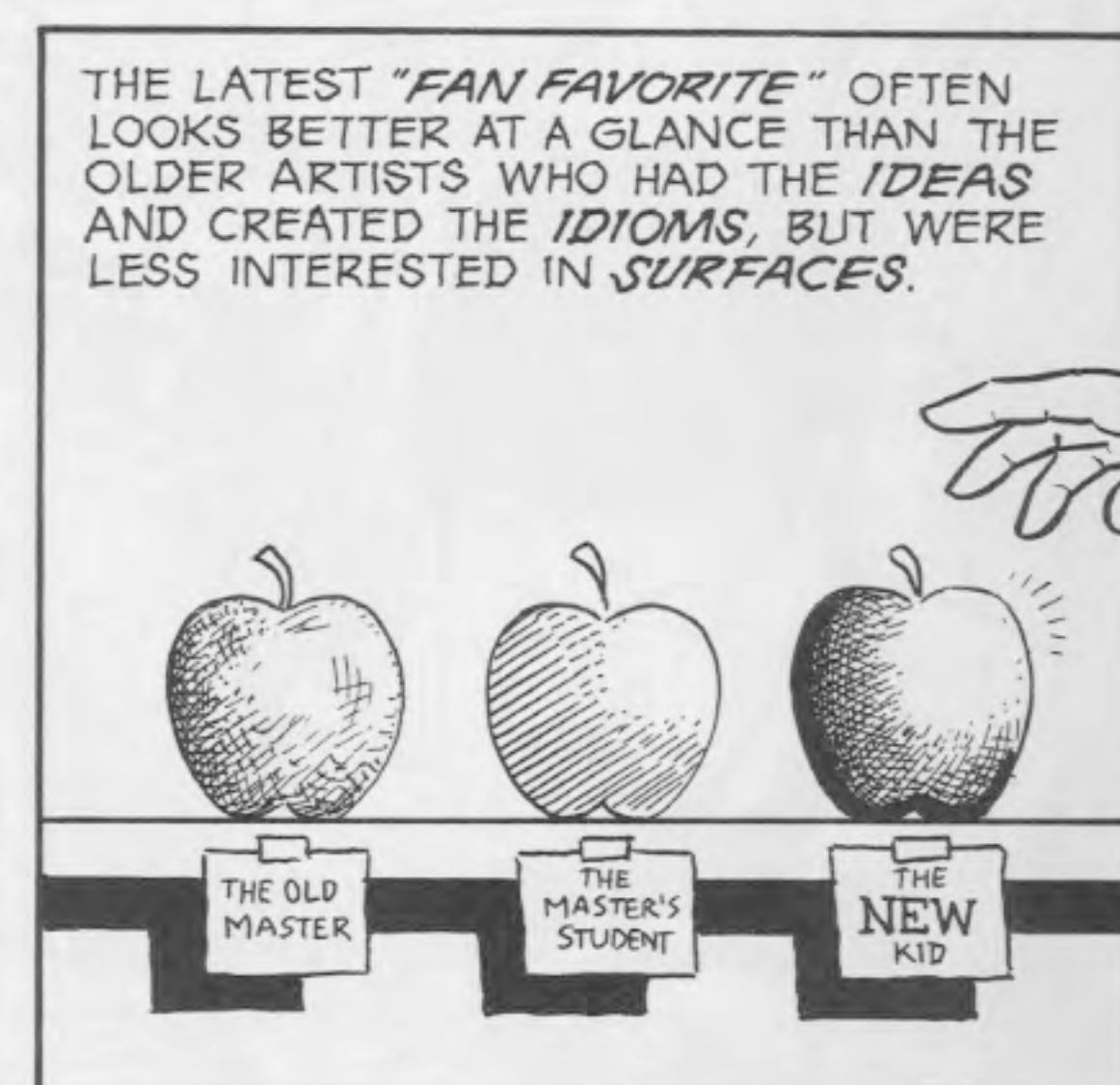
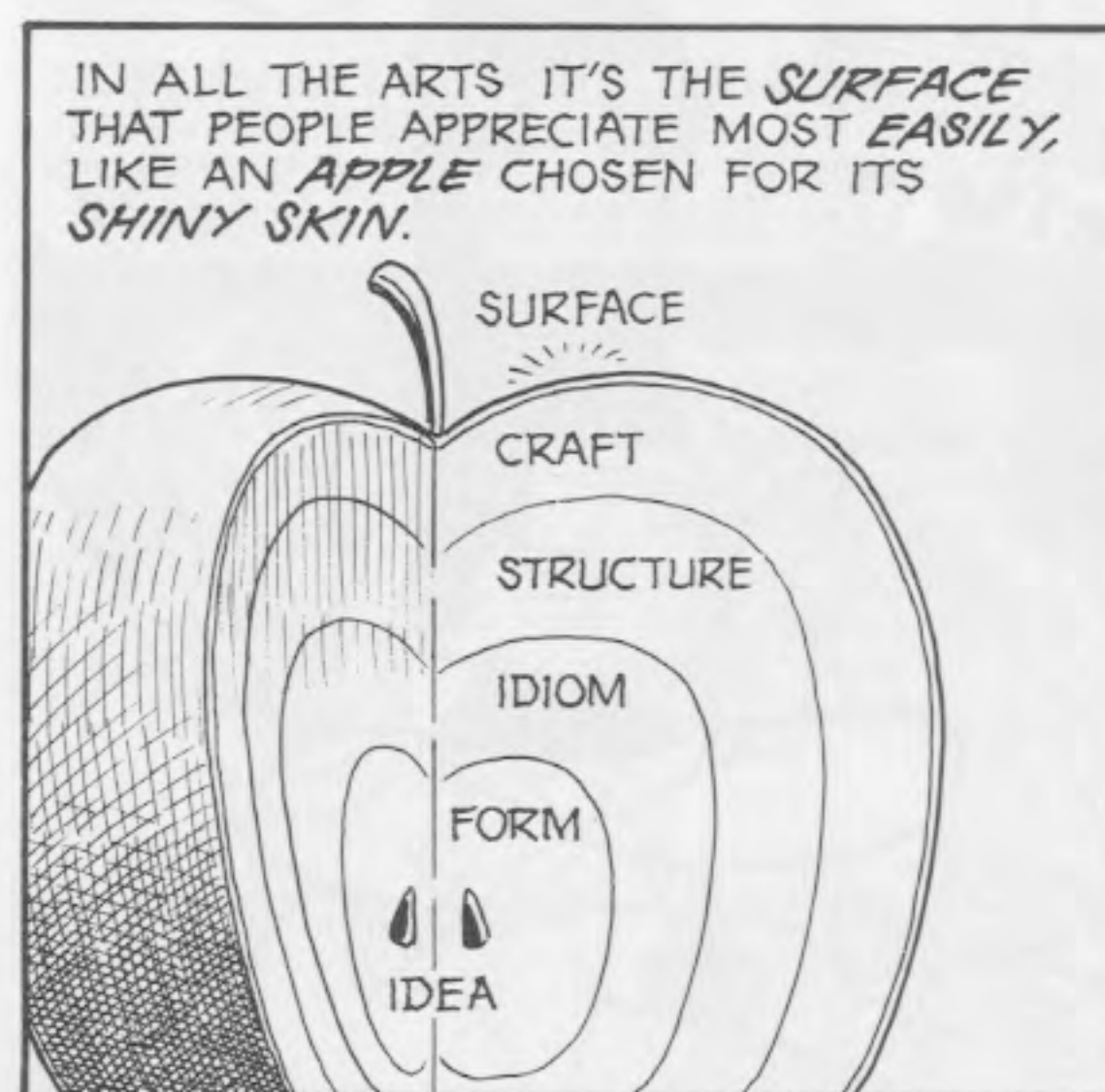
FOURTH:
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER... WHAT TO *INCLUDE*, WHAT TO *LEAVE OUT*... HOW TO *ARRANGE*, HOW TO *COMPOSE* THE WORK.

5
CRAFT

FIFTH:
CONSTRUCTING THE WORK, APPLYING *SKILLS*, *PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE*, *INVENTION*, *PROBLEM-SOLVING*, GETTING THE "*JOB*" DONE.

6
SURFACE

SIXTH:
PRODUCTION VALUES, *FINISHING*... THE ASPECTS MOST APPARENT ON FIRST *SUPERFICIAL EXPOSURE* TO THE WORK.



BUT OFTEN IF WE *BITE INTO* THAT SHINY NEW APPLE--

CRUNCH!!

HOLLOW.

IT'S A CYCLE AS OLD AS *ART ITSELF*.



IN **COMICS**, THE CYCLE BEGINS *ALL OVER THE WORLD*, AS YOUNG READERS *DISCOVER* COMICS FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IN A FEW CASES, BEGIN TO DEVELOP A *LOVE* FOR COMICS THAT WILL LAST A *LIFETIME!*

IN THIS EARLY STAGE, THESE READERS ARE EXPERIENCING THE **CHARACTERS, IDEAS, EVENTS AND EMOTIONS** OF THE STORY *DIRECTLY*

COMICS IS ACTING AS AN **INTERMEDIARY** BETWEEN **STORYTELLER** AND **AUDIENCE.**

BUT IN SOME, AN AWARENESS OF THE **FORM** BEGINS TO DEVELOP, AN AWARENESS THAT ALL COMICS ARE JUST **INK ON PAPER--**

--THAT **MAKING** THEM ONLY REQUIRES CERTAIN **SKILLS--**

--AND THAT THOSE SKILLS CAN BE **LEARNED!**

ONE OF THEM--FULL OF **BIG IDEAS**--MAKES THE **BIG DECISION.**

I'M GONNA MAKE **COMICS** WHEN I GROW UP!

HE'S OFF TO A LOGICAL START. HE HAS THE **IDEAS** AND HE'S CHOSEN **COMICS** AS HIS **FORM OF EXPRESSION.** MAYBE NOW HE'LL CONSIDER WHAT **TYPES** OF COMICS ARE RIGHT FOR HIM.

BUT PROBABLY **NOT.**

MORE LIKELY HE **POSTPONES** HIS OWN IDEAS AND BEGINS TO STUDY THE **CRAFT** OF **OTHER ARTISTS** IN HIS ATTEMPT TO BECOME A **PROFESSIONAL.**

HE BUYS THE "RIGHT" BRUSH, THE "RIGHT" PENS AND THE "RIGHT" PAPER AND BEGINS TO **PRACTICE.**

EVENTUALLY...

6 SURFACE

LOOK, JACK! I CAN DRAW AS WELL AS A PROFESSIONAL!

WOW!

BUT WHEN HE BRINGS THE WORK TO A **REAL PROFESSIONAL** AT THE LOCAL **CON:**

...ANATOMY IS VERY POOR... SEE HOW THAT MUSCLE CONNECTS?... AND THAT PERSPECTIVE, **YEESH!**... DO YOU KNOW WHAT A **VANISHING POINT** IS? ...AND AS FOR **FACES**...

:-GULP:-

SO HE BUYS SOME BOOKS ON **ANATOMY** AND **PERSPECTIVE**, STUDIES A VARIETY OF **DRAWING TECHNIQUES** AND **PRACTICES, PRACTICES, PRACTICES** FOR **MONTHS.**

BUT SOMEHOW, IT NEVER QUITE "CLICKS" FOR HIM. MAYBE HE JUST DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH SKILL... MAYBE HE LOSES INTEREST... MAYBE LIFE JUST GETS IN THE WAY... BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON--



-- HE LEAVES HIS DREAMS OF MAKING COMICS BEHIND.



BUT ALL OVER THE WORLD, OTHERS HAVE UNDERGONE SIMILAR EXPERIENCES AND HAVEN'T GIVEN UP YET!

BUT MAYBE THIS IS ENOUGH FOR THIS PARTICULAR ARTIST, ENOUGH TO JUST BE PART OF THE ART, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY OF COMICS WITHOUT NECESSARILY CALLING THE SHOTS.



BUT ELSEWHERE, ANOTHER CREATOR HAS BEEN THROUGH THE SAME SORT OF PROCESS AND HE WANTS MORE!



ONE OF THEM IS NOW READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP! SHE'S STUDIED HER CRAFT ALL THE WAY THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL AND INTO COLLEGE.



SHE'S A GOOD, HARDWORKING STUDENT.



< I THINK I'VE REALLY MADE A BREAKTHROUGH! >

< THIS IS VERY GOOD. >

HE SPENDS HIS EVERY WAKING HOUR WORKING OUT THE DIFFICULT PRINCIPLES OF COMICS COMPOSITION AND STORYTELLING, THE KIND THEY DON'T TEACH IN BOOKS!*



HE DISCOVERS THAT HIS FAVORITE ARTIST WAS ACTUALLY JUST A WATERED-DOWN VERSION OF AN OLDER, LESS-POLISHED ARTIST WHOM HE HAD ALWAYS TAKEN FOR GRANTED.



BUT WHEN SHE SHOWS HER WORK TO A SEASONED PRO... < YOU'RE A SKILLED SCRIPTER AND DRAFTSPERSON, BUT YOUR STORYTELLING ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH, YOU HAVE NO SENSE OF PACING... THESE LAYOUTS ARE VERY MUDDY... YOU HAVE TO COMPOSE YOUR STORIES... >



HER SKILLS CAN GET HER WORK AT THIS POINT, BUT ONLY AS AN ASSISTANT TO OTHERS. UNTIL SHE UNDERSTANDS THE STRUCTURE OF COMICS BENEATH THE CRAFT, THIS IS AS FAR AS SHE CAN GO.



HE LEARNS TO SEE BENEATH THE CRAFTS OF DRAFTSMANSHIP AND SCRIPTING TO SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE-- PACING, DRAMA, HUMOR, SUSPENSE, COMPOSITION, THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT, IRONY-- SOON THEY'RE ALL AT HIS COMMAND!



< I'VE DONE IT! I'VE LEARNED ALL THERE IS TO KNOW! >

4 STRUCTURE

< THIS TIME I'LL GET MY OWN BOOK, I'M SURE OF IT! >



* WELL, OKAY, ONE BOOK! EISNER'S, AGAIN.

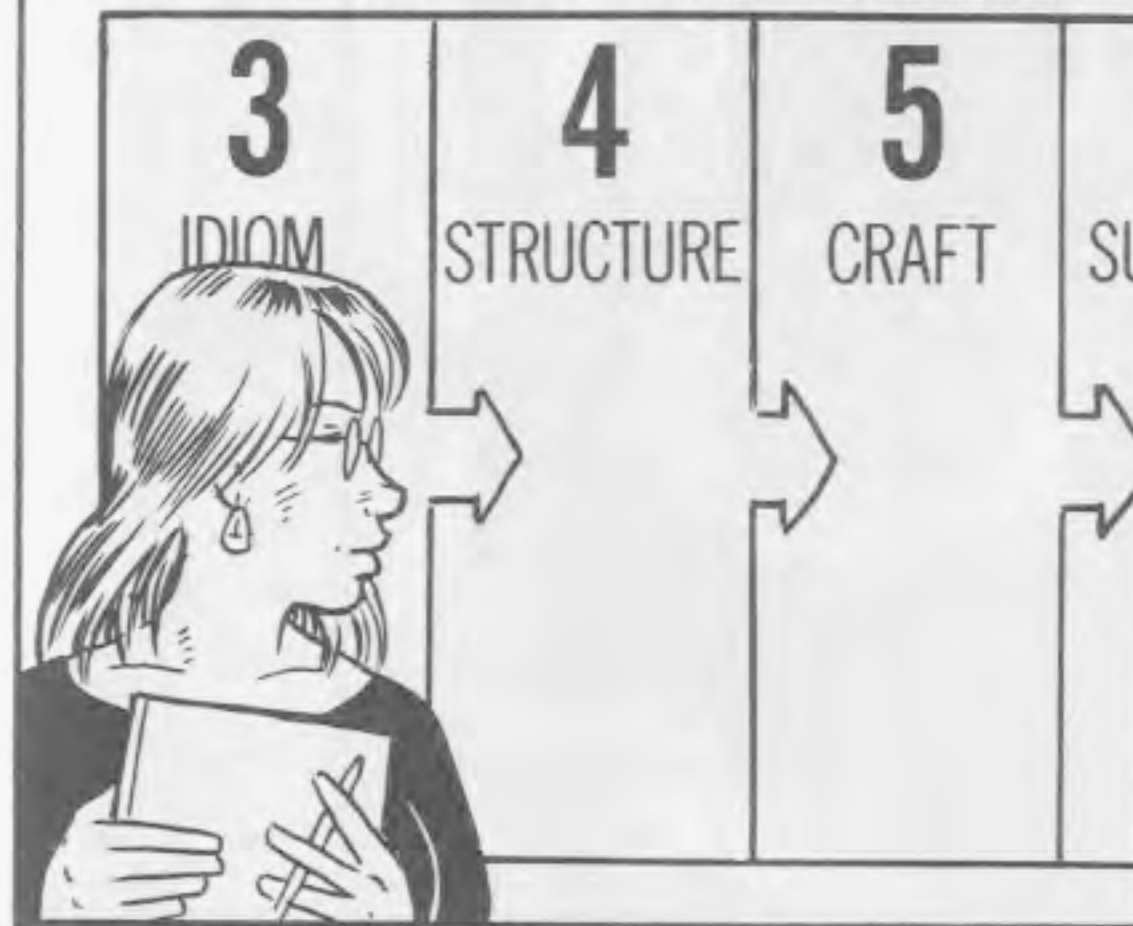
AND LET'S SAY IT **WORKS!** HE **DOES** LAND HIS OWN BOOK AND SOON IS ESTABLISHED AS A CREATOR OF **GREAT SKILL**. HE UNDERSTANDS **COMICS STORYTELLING** BETTER THAN MOST.



HIS WORK ISN'T PARTICULARLY **ORIGINAL**, THE CRITICS DON'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO HIM, BUT HE MAKES A **DECENT LIVING** FOR **HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY** AND THAT'S ENOUGH FOR HIM...



AS SHE CREATES **HER OWN PERSONAL IDIOM** OF COMICS, SHE FINDS THE WHOLE OF HER WORK CHANGING TO **SUIT** THAT IDIOM.



LET'S SAY THAT **FINANCIAL SUCCESS** AND THE **RESPECT OF HER PEERS** SOON FOLLOW.*



BUT **ANOTHER ARTIST** HAS MADE IT THROUGH THE **SAME SORTS OF HURDLES** AND REACHED THE **SAME LEVELS OF SUCCESS** AND **STILL ISN'T SATISFIED**



SHE WONDERS IF HER SUCCESS REALLY **MEANS** ANYTHING WHEN THERE ARE **SO MANY OTHERS** DOING THE **SAME THINGS** IN THE **SAME WAYS**. SHE WANTS AN **IDENTITY**.



YOUNG ARTISTS BEGIN TO **IMITATE** HER STYLE, BUT MOST OF THEM ONLY SEEM TO APPRECIATE THE **"SURFACE."**



AND MAYBE SHE'LL BE **SATISFIED** WITH THAT KIND OF SUCCESS, SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WHATEVER SHE **DOESN'T KNOW**, SHE'S ON THE RIGHT PATH TO **FIND OUT**.



SHE BELIEVES THAT THERE'S SOMETHING **MORE**-- SOME **PIECE OF THE PUZZLE**-- THAT SHE **STILL HASN'T FOUND**.



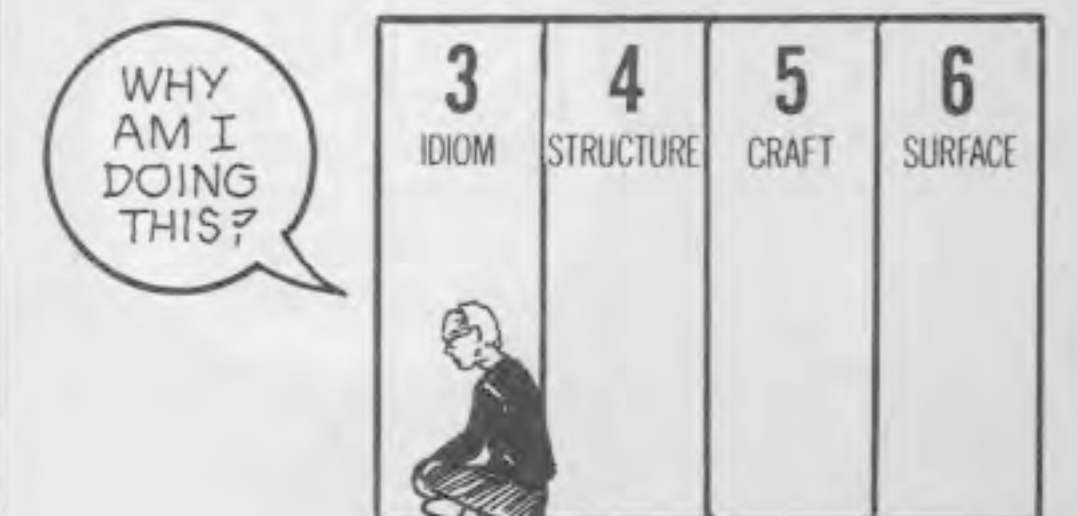
SHE BEGINS TO INVENT **NEW WAYS** OF SHOWING **"THE SAME OLD THING."** SHE DEVELOPS **INNOVATIVE NEW TECHNIQUES**, AND STARTS **DOING AWAY** WITH **"THE SAME OLD THING"** **ALTOGETHER!**

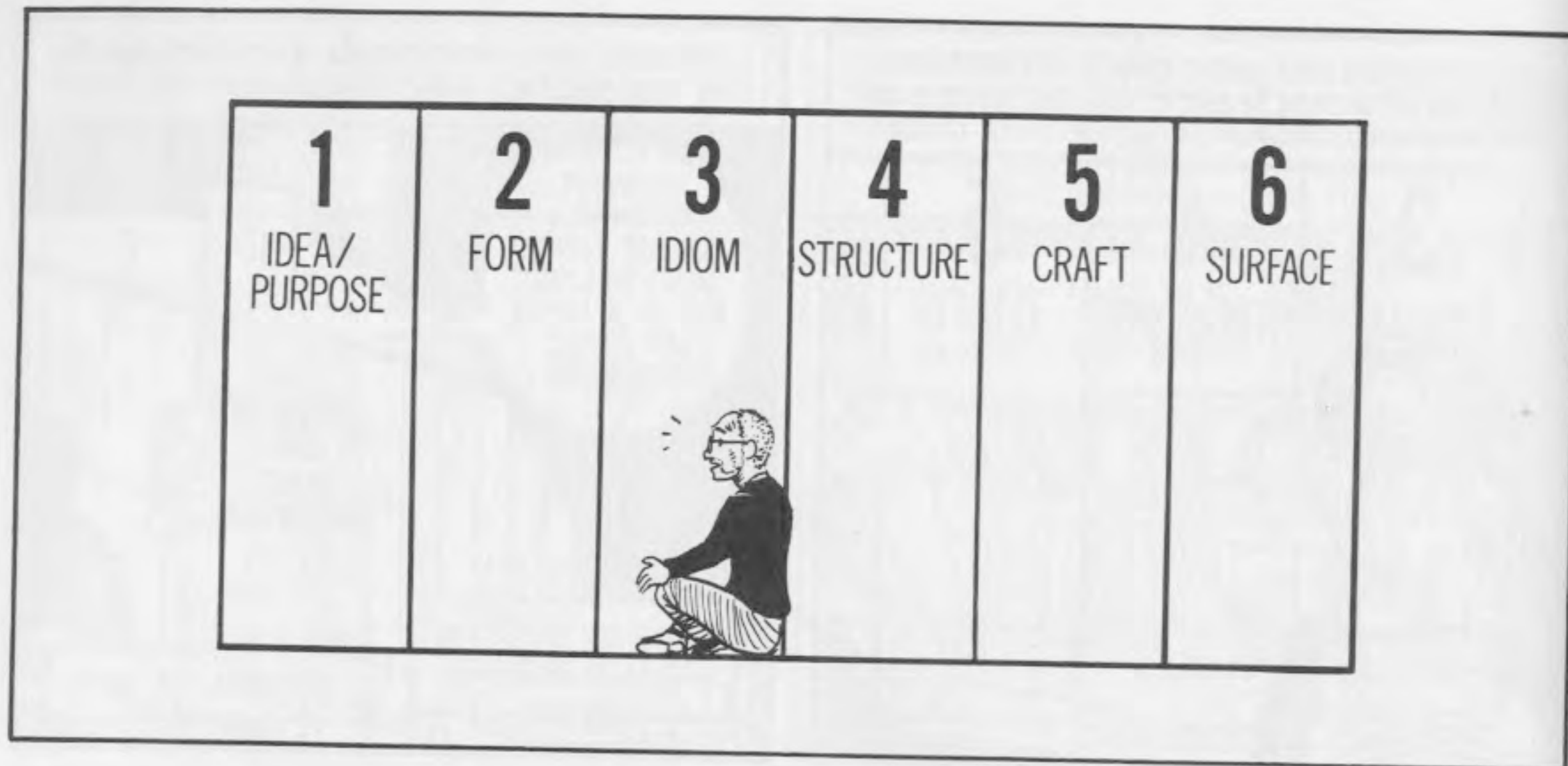


BUT **ELSEWHERE**, ANOTHER CREATOR HAS MADE IT TO THIS SAME PLACE AND STILL FEELS **DISSATISFIED**. HE FEELS THAT SOMETHING **VERY IMPORTANT** HAS BEEN **NEGLECTED...**



...SOMETHING **FUNDAMENTAL**, SOMETHING AT THE **CORE** OF WHO HE IS AS AN ARTIST. WITH THESE THOUGHTS ON HIS MIND, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF **TIME** BEFORE HE ASKS THAT ONE SIMPLE QUESTION:





AND NOW, THE BIGGEST QUESTION OF ALL: DOES THIS ARTIST WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT LIFE *THROUGH* HIS ART OR DOES HE WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT *ART ITSELF*?

1 2

AND...

DO I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY AT ALL?

PERSONALLY, I THINK WE **ALL** HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO THE WORLD.

THE **REAL** QUESTION IS "WILL ANYONE **LISTEN**?" AND **UNFORTUNATELY** THERE'S NO WAY TO KNOW THAT IN **ADVANCE**.

ASSUMING HE DOESN'T LET *THAT* STOP HIM, HERE'S WHAT THESE TWO CHOICES COULD MEAN...

1 IDEA/PURPOSE 2 FORM

2 FORM

BY CHOOSING **FORM**, HE'D BE SETTING UP TO BECOME AN **EXPLORER**.

HIS GOAL: TO **DISCOVER** ALL THAT THE ART FORM IS **CAPABLE** OF.

AND HIS ART WOULD NOT **LACK** FOR **IDEAS** OR FOR A **PURPOSE**.

1 IDEA/PURPOSE 2 FORM 3 IDIOM 4 STRUCTURE 5 CRAFT 6 SURFACE

HIS ART WOULD JUST **BECOME** HIS PURPOSE AND THE IDEAS WOULD ARRIVE IN TIME TO GIVE IT **SUBSTANCE**.

CREATORS WHO TAKE THIS PATH ARE OFTEN **PIONEERS AND REVOLUTIONARIES**--ARTISTS WHO WANT TO **SHAKE THINGS UP**, CHANGE THE WAY PEOPLE **THINK**, QUESTION THE **FUNDAMENTAL LAWS** THAT GOVERN THEIR CHOSEN ART.

MCCAY SPIEGELMAN HERRIMAN STERRETT MOEBIUS

(IN **OTHER** ART FORMS: STRAVINSKY, PICASSO, VIRGINIA WOOLF, ORSON WELLES, ETC.)

1 IDEA/PURPOSE

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF HE CHOOSES THE **FIRST** STEP AS HIS GOAL, THEN HIS ART BECOMES A **TOOL**.

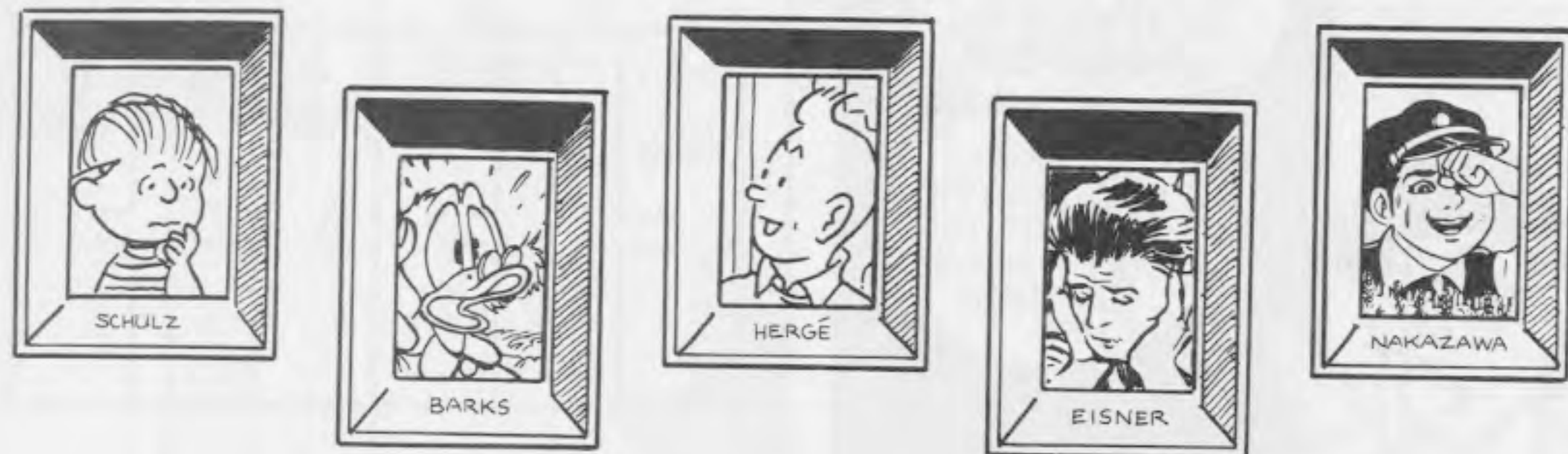
AND THE **POWERS** OF THAT ART WILL RELY ON THE POWERS OF THE IDEAS **WITHIN**.

NOW "**TELLING THE STORY**" (OR IN THE CASE OF **NON-FICTION**, "**DELIVERING THE MESSAGE**") TAKES **PRIORITY** OVER **INVENTION**.

1 IDEA/PURPOSE 2 FORM 3 IDIOM 4 STRUCTURE 5 CRAFT 6 SURFACE

BUT TELLING A STORY AS **EFFECTIVELY** AS POSSIBLE MAY **REQUIRE** SOME **INVENTION**. IT OFTEN **DOES**.

THIS IS THE PATH OF GREAT **STORYTELLERS**, CREATORS WHO HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY *THROUGH* COMICS AND DEVOTE ALL THEIR ENERGIES TO *CONTROLLING* THEIR MEDIUM, REFINING ITS ABILITY TO CONVEY MESSAGES *EFFECTIVELY*.



(IN OTHER ART FORMS: CAPRA, DICKENS, WOODY GUTHRIE, EDWARD R. MURROW, ETC.)

FORTUNATELY, THIS CHOICE NEVER HAS TO BE **PERMANENT**.

IT CAN CHANGE AS OFTEN AS AN ARTIST CHANGES **PROJECTS!**

NO WORK OF ART CAN BE **TOTALLY** WITHOUT "**CONTENT**" ANY MORE THAN IT CAN EXIST WITHOUT A **FORM!** BUT IT DOES HELP TO SET SOME **PRIORITIES**.

HEY, I'M DRIVING!

NO, I'M DRIVING!

THIS IS A PROBLEM IN MANY "**ASSEMBLY LINE**" COMICS WHERE CREATIVE SPECIALIZATION HAS "**SCRIPTERS**," "**PENCILLERS**" AND "**INKERS**" ALL WORKING AT **CROSS-PURPOSES** IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO GET **NOTICED**.

CRASH!

NOT THAT WE "**CREATOR/WRITER/ARTIST**" TYPES NEVER RUN INTO THIS PROBLEM...

DAMN! NEEDED TO HAVE SOME MORE **DIALOGUE** HERE, BUT I REALLY WANT TO DRAW THAT **SNAZZY CLOSE-UP!**

THE MORE AN ARTIST DEVOTES HIM/HERSELF TO EITHER OF THESE TWO FOCAL POINTS, THE MORE DRAMATIC THE CHANGE IF HE/SHE DECIDES TO **SWITCH!**

ART SPIEGELMAN'S AGGRESSIVELY EXPERIMENTAL WORK OF THE **SEVENTIES** AND EARLY **EIGHTIES** LEFT NO ONE PREPARED FOR THE UNASSUMING "**REPORT**" STYLE OF HIS LANDMARK BIOGRAPHY "**MAUS**."

2 FORM

...I DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE...

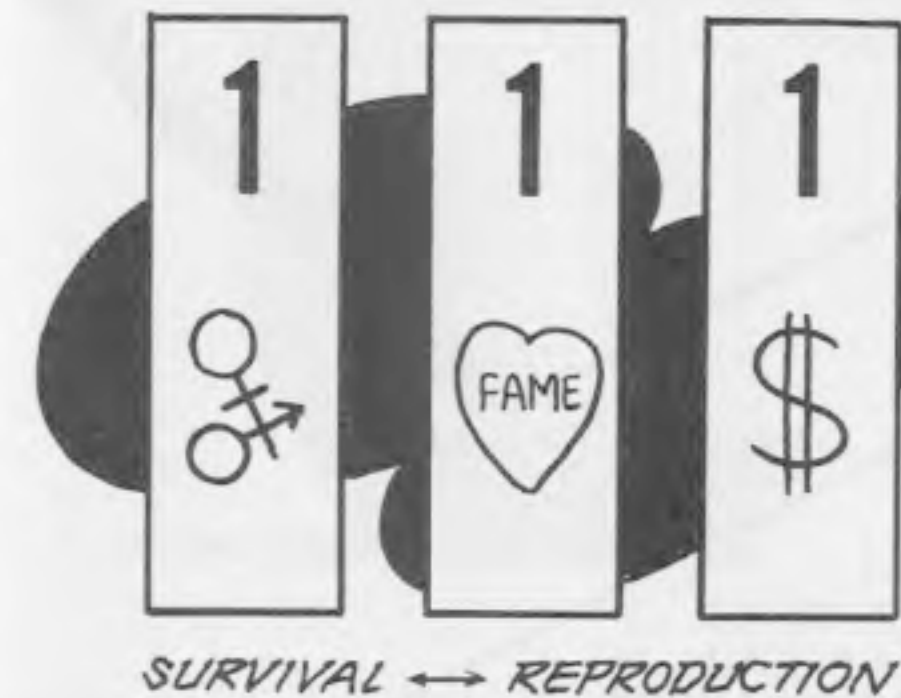
THE CRACKERS AND WRITER SHOULD KEEP ME GOING...

1 IDEA/PURPOSE

COME FIRST UP STAIRS FOR A LITTLE COFFEE.

NO... REALLY, I'D BETTER GET GOING RIGHT AWAY...

PERHAPS IF STRIPPED DOWN FAR ENOUGH, MOST ARTISTS' ULTIMATE GOALS ARE NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM ANYONE ELSE'S. EVEN FOR THOSE WITH **HIGH IDEALS**, BASIC INSTINCTS EXERT A POWERFUL ATTRACTION.



AND WHEN ART BECOMES A **JOB** OR A MATTER OF **SOCIAL STATUS** THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFUSING ONE'S GOALS GOES UP CONSIDERABLY.

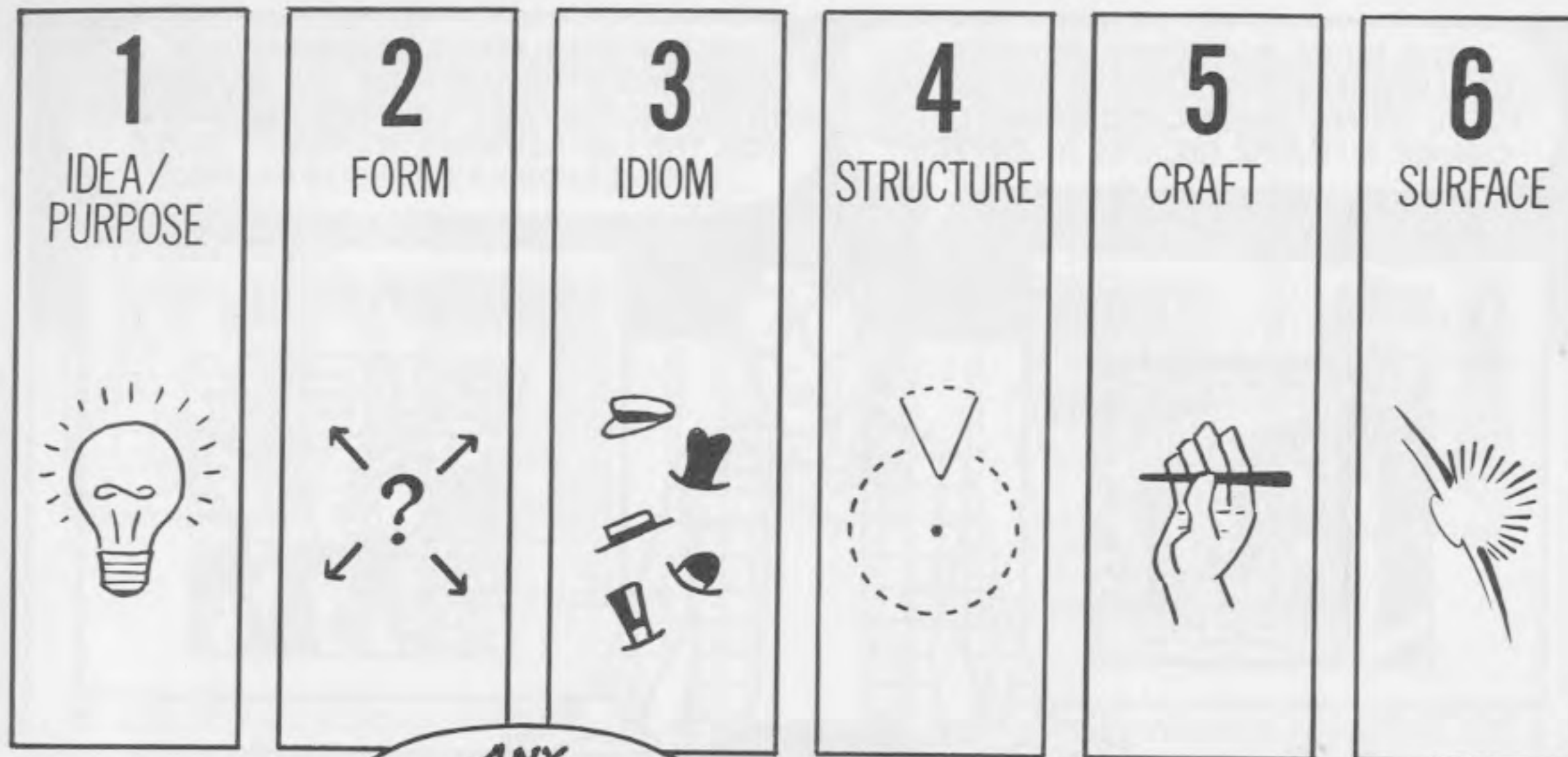
BUT EVEN IF WE TAKE LIFE'S **DISTRACTIONS** INTO ACCOUNT, IT'S STILL AMAZING HOW MUCH **TIME** AND **EFFORT** IS SPENT BY COMICS CREATORS TRYING TO GET WHAT THEY WANT OUT OF COMICS --

-- BEFORE THEY EVEN KNOW **WHAT** THEY WANT!

OF COURSE, NOT **EVERYBODY** TAKES THE **LONG** WAY AROUND. SOME ARTISTS HAVE NO TROUBLE SETTING GOALS AND **ACHIEVING** THEM WITHOUT ANY **DETOURS**...

HERE'S A STORY I DREW ABOUT MY DOG **BUSTER!**

...ESPECIALLY IF THEIR GOALS ARE **MODEST** ONES.



ANY ARTIST CREATING ANY WORK IN ANY MEDIUM WILL ALWAYS FOLLOW THESE SIX STEPS WHETHER THEY REALIZE IT OR NOT.

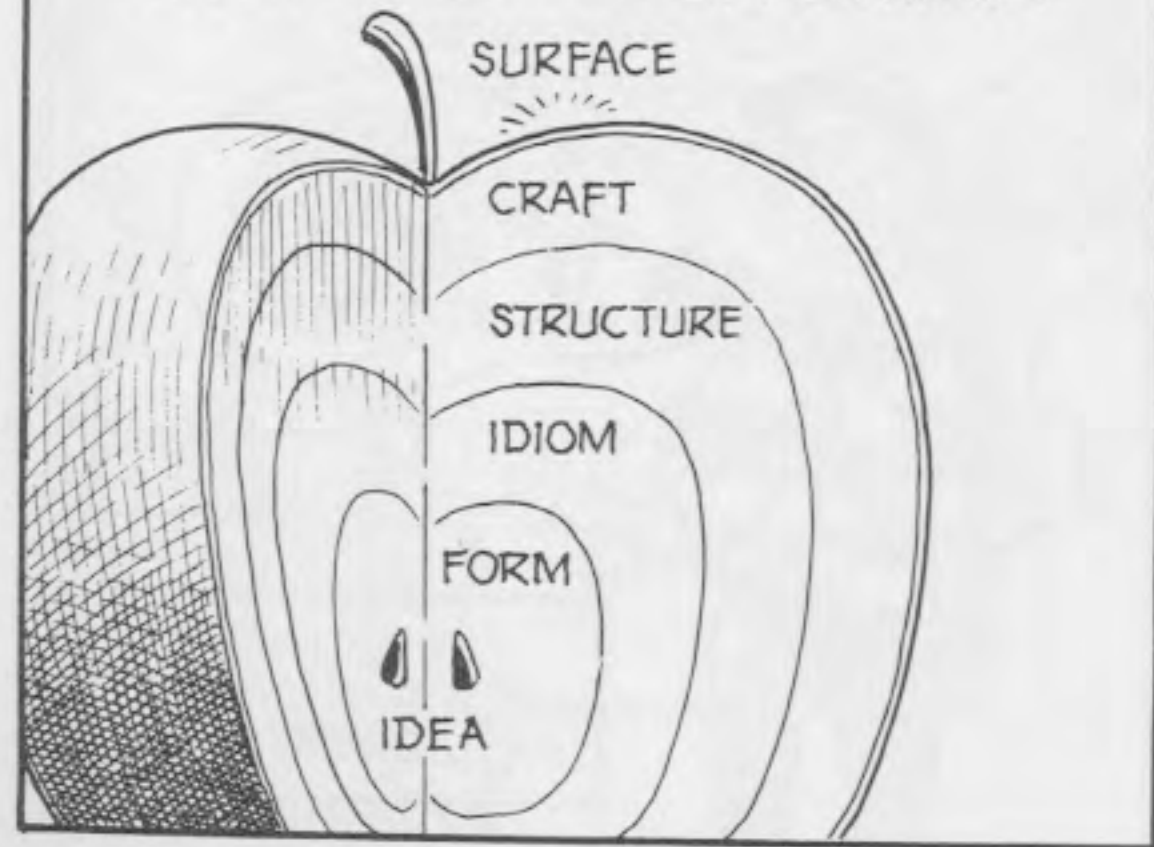
ALL WORKS BEGIN WITH A PURPOSE, HOWEVER ARBITRARY; ALL TAKE SOME FORM; ALL BELONG TO AN IDIOM (EVEN IF IT'S AN IDIOM OF ONE); ALL POSSESS A STRUCTURE; ALL REQUIRE SOME CRAFT; ALL PRESENT A SURFACE.



AND ALL ASPECTS OF COMICS HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR SELF-EXPRESSION, EVEN WHEN ECONOMIC SURVIVAL IS THE ARTIST'S MAIN CONCERN.

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF "ART."

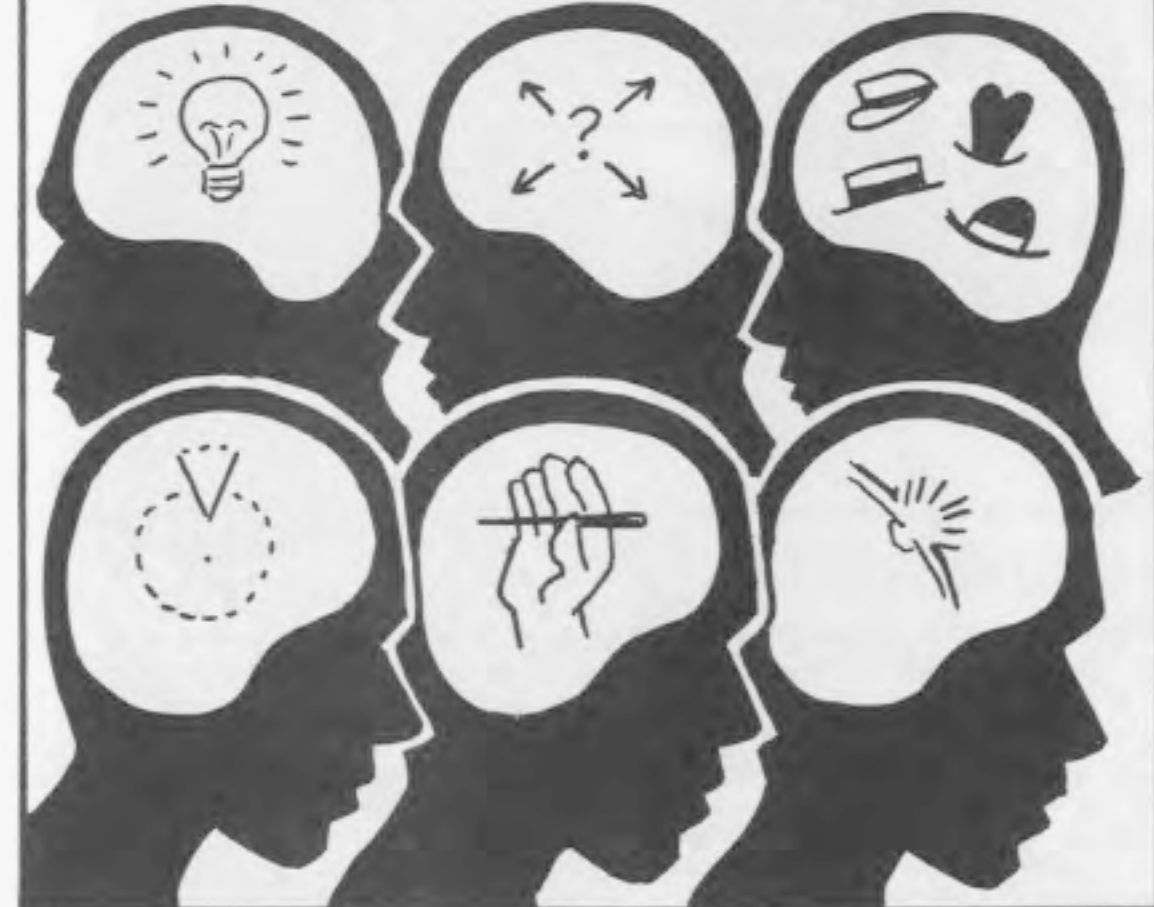
BUT THE MORE A CREATOR LEARNS TO COMMAND EVERY ASPECT OF HIS/HER ART AND TO UNDERSTAND HIS/HER RELATIONSHIP TO IT, THE MORE "ARTISTIC" CONCERNS ARE LIKELY TO GET THE UPPER HAND.



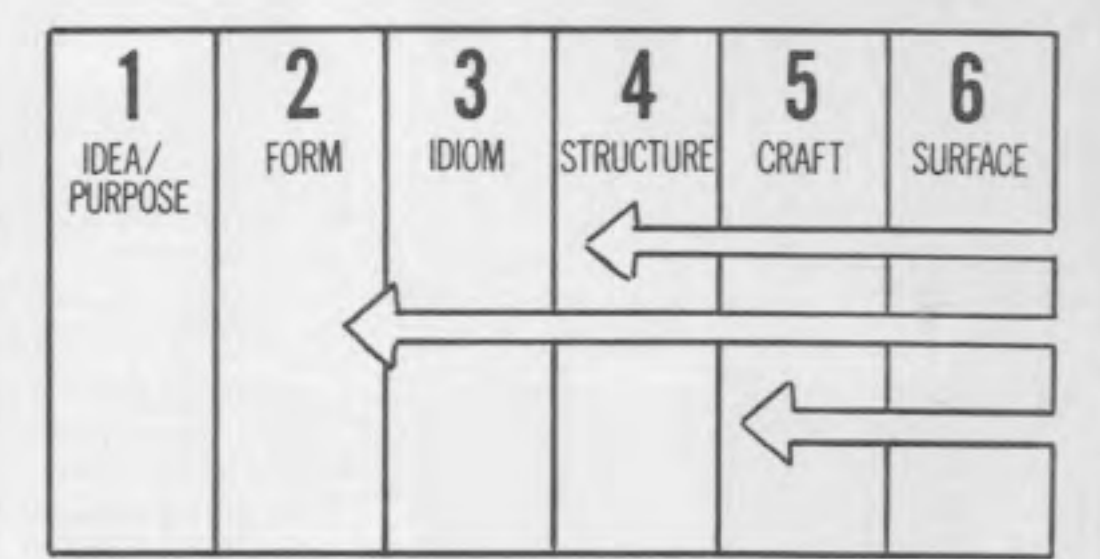
THE ORDER OF THE SIX STEPS IS INNATE. LIKE THE ARRANGEMENT OF BONES IN A DINOSAUR'S SKELETON, THEY CAN BE DISCOVERED IN ANY ORDER, BUT WHEN BROUGHT TOGETHER, THEY WILL ALWAYS FALL INTO PLACE!



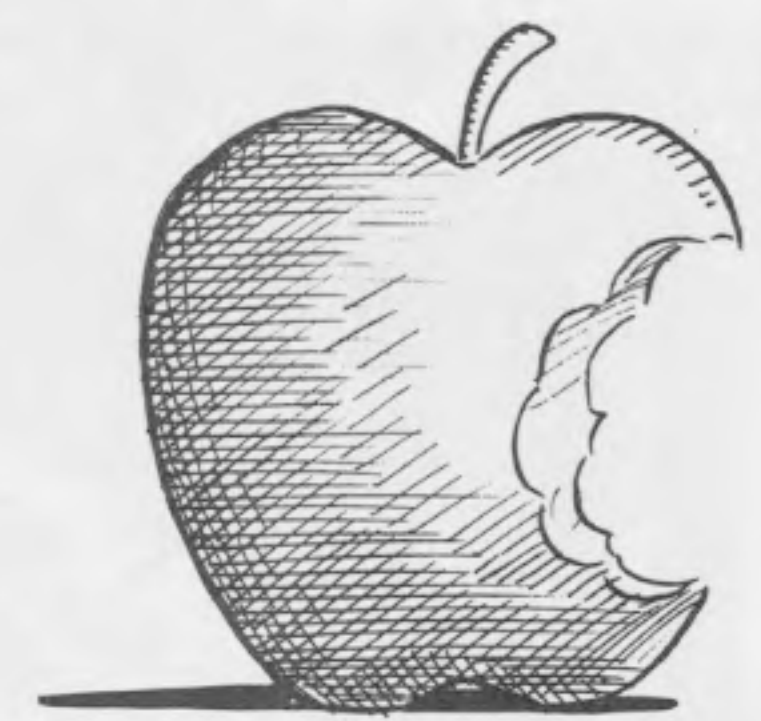
IN PRACTICE, ANY ASPECT OF COMICS MAY BE THE ONE WHICH FIRST DRAWS AN ARTIST INTO ITS ORBIT.



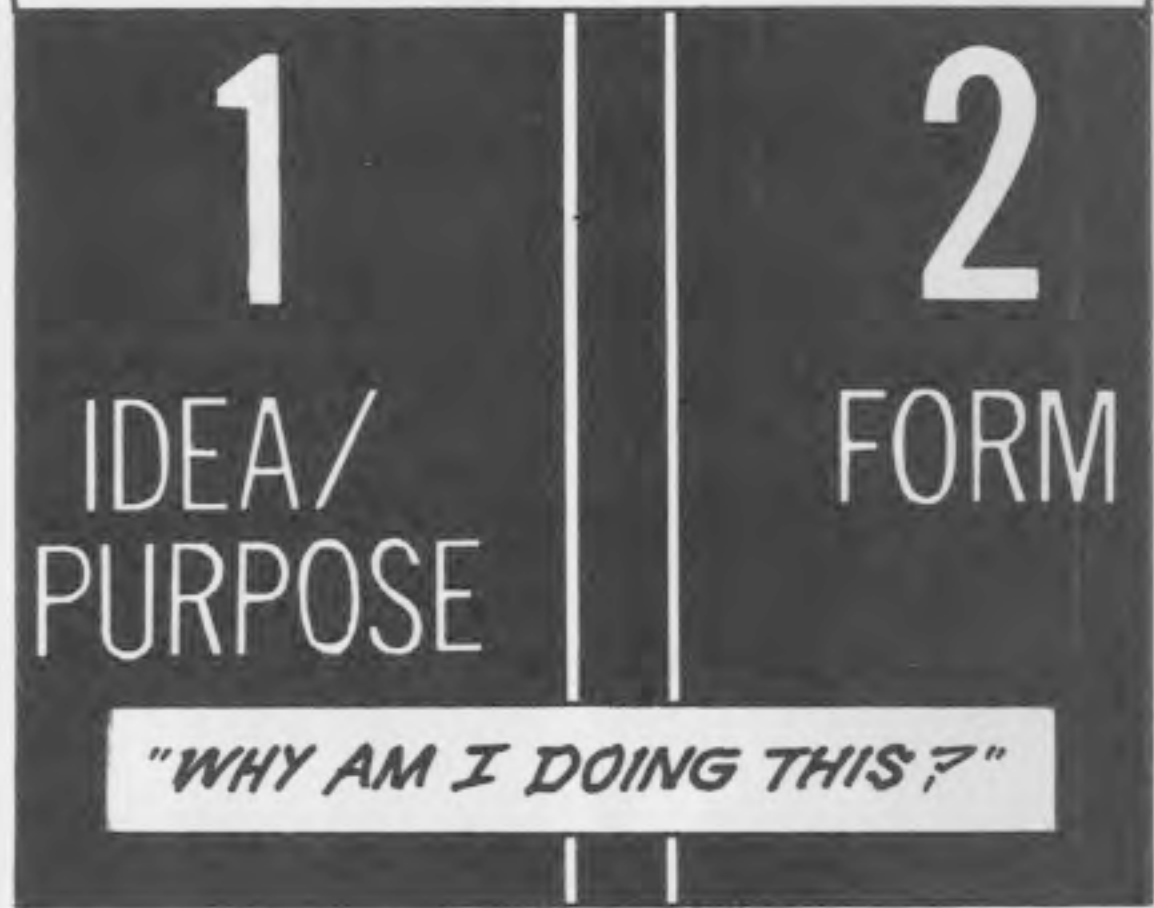
STILL, THE LEARNING PROCESS FOR MOST ARTISTS IS A SLOW AND STEADY JOURNEY FROM END TO BEGINNING,



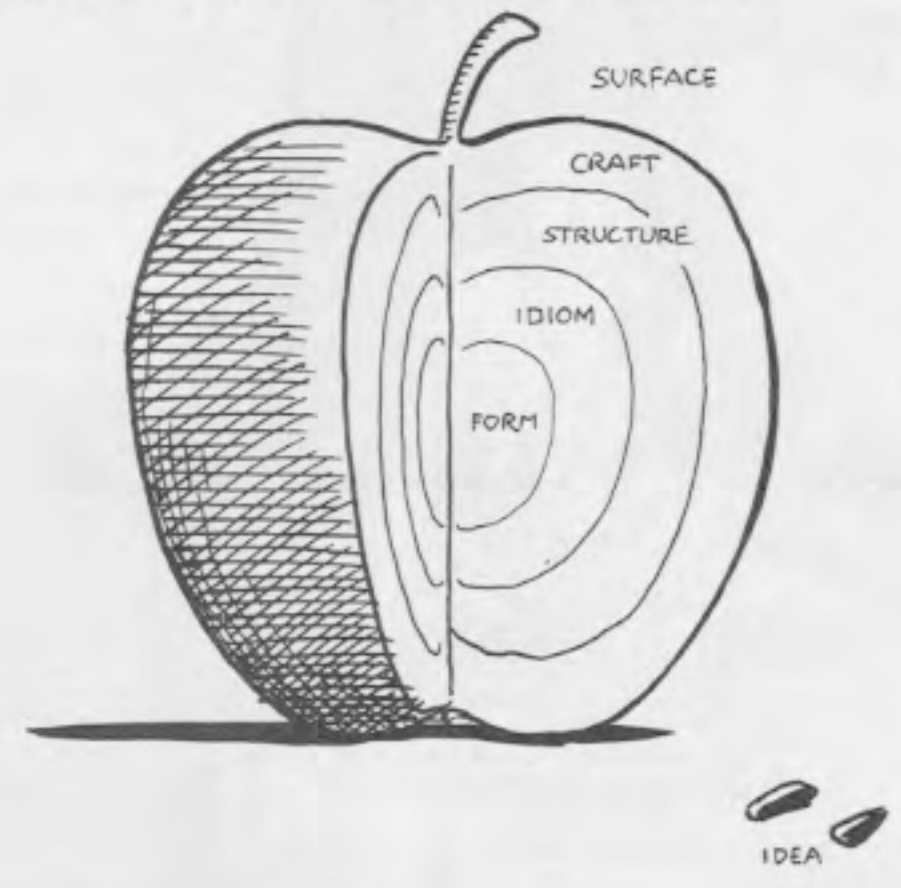
FROM SURFACE TO CORE.



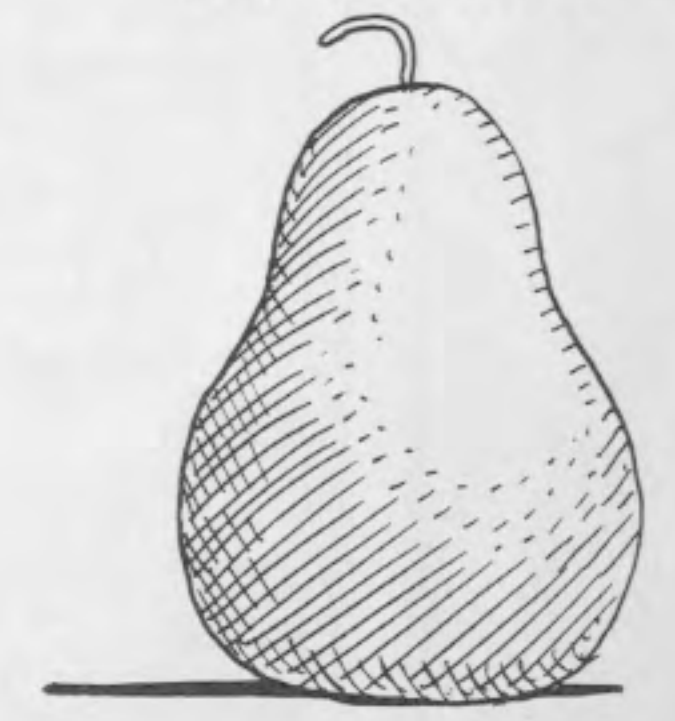
AND IT'S AT THE CORE OF ART THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IS FINALLY ASKED:

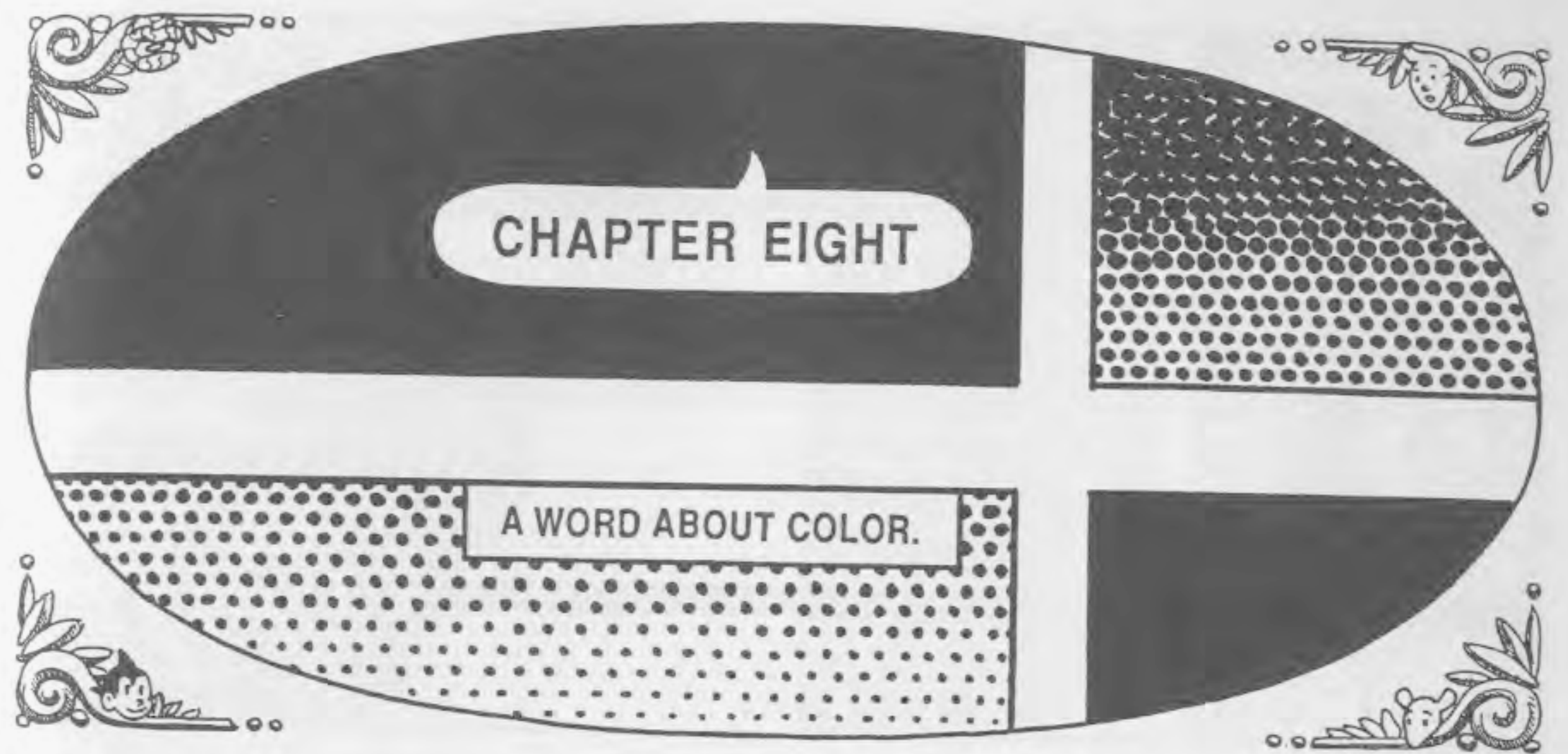
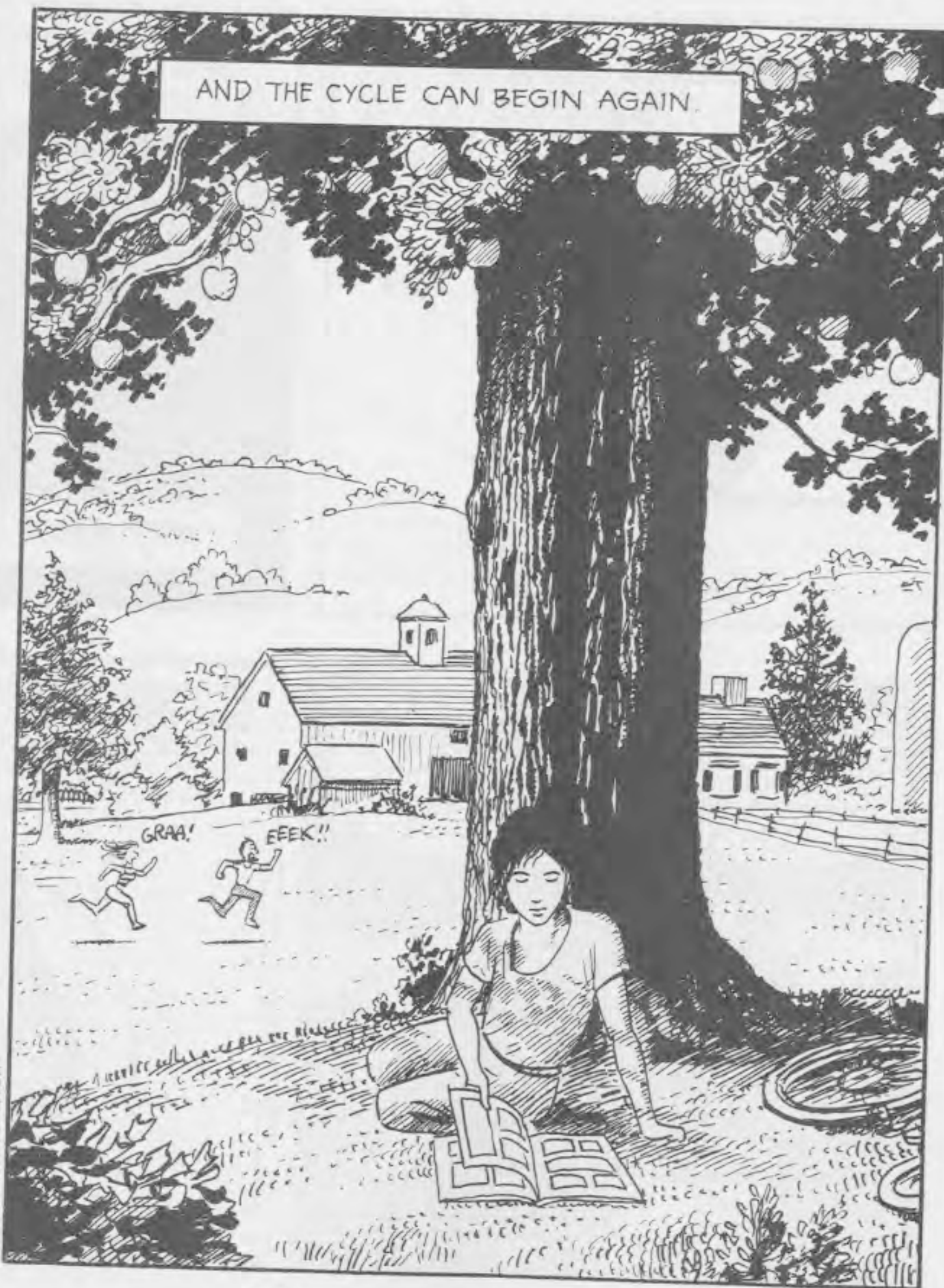
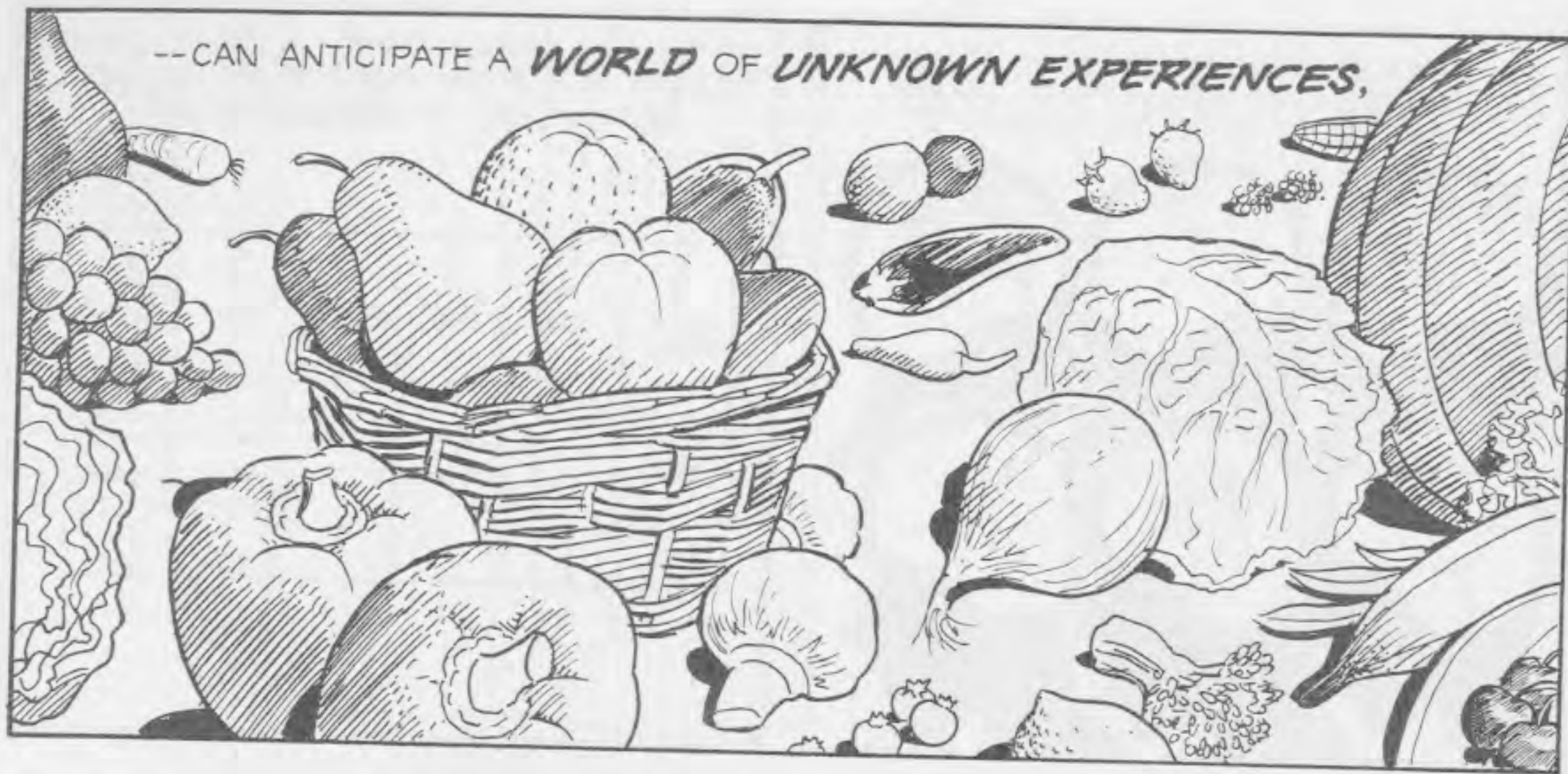


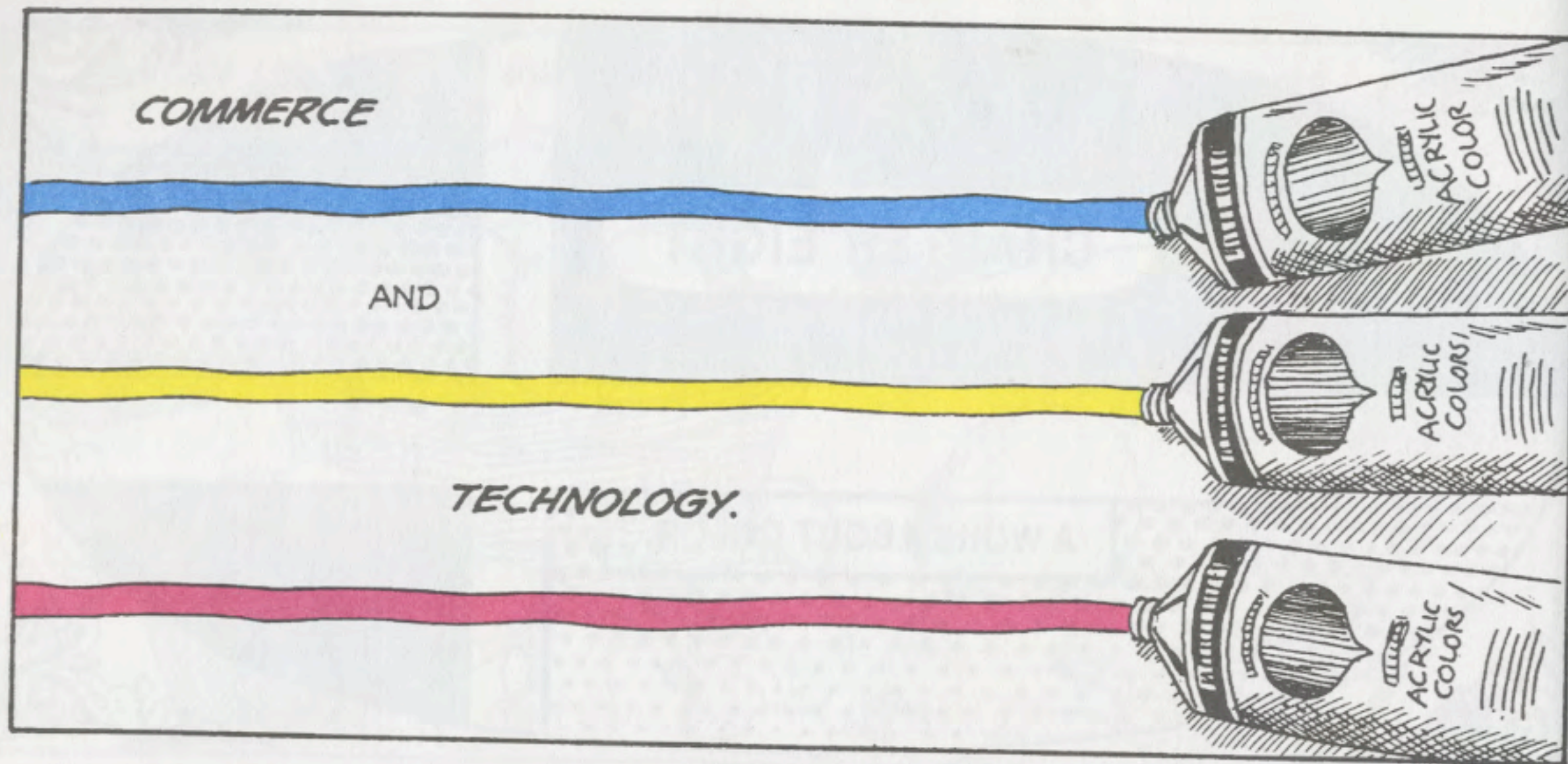
WHEN FORM RULES THE WORK, IT MAY SEEM SOMEWHAT ARTIFICIAL AT THE CORE, LIKE A SEEDLESS FRUIT.



BUT SUCH WORKS DON'T TAKE THE SHAPE OF ART FOR GRANTED AND BY QUESTIONING OUR FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS--







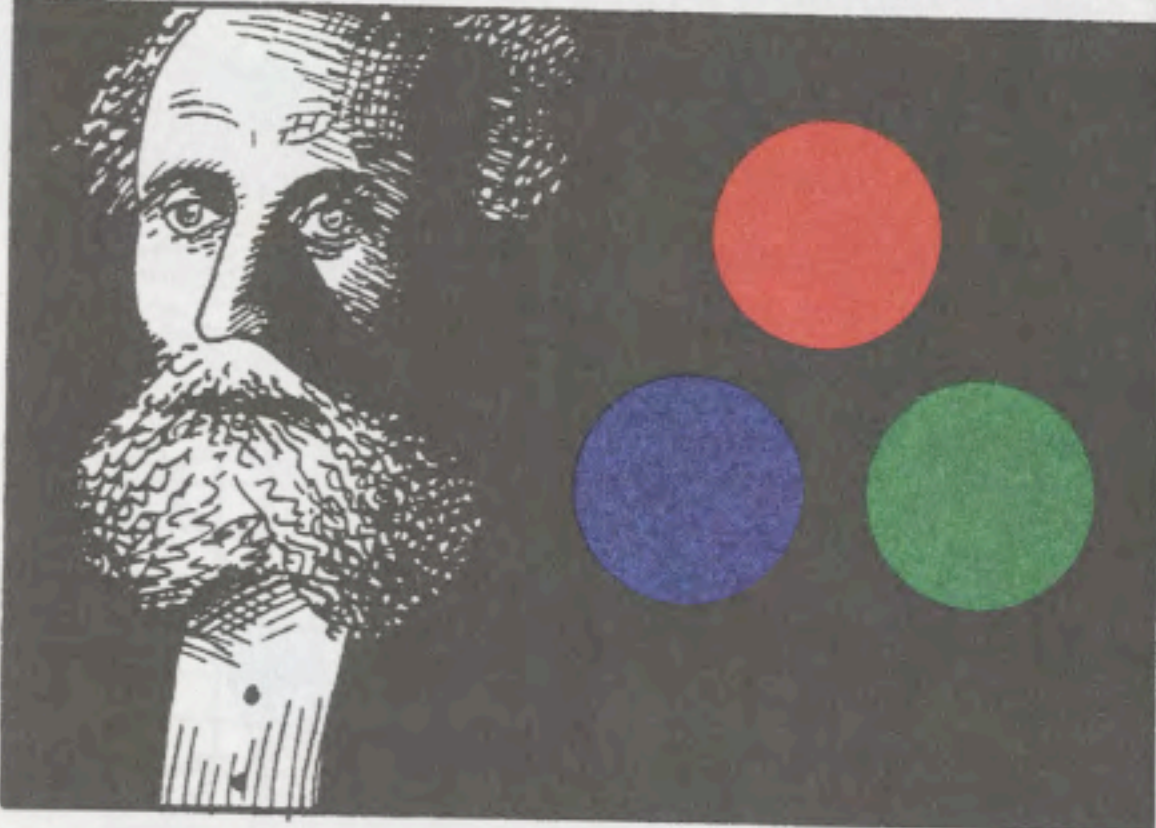
NOW **ALL** ASPECTS OF COMICS HISTORY HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY **COMMERCE**. MONEY HAS A TREMENDOUS EFFECT ON WHAT IS AND **ISN'T** SEEN.



BUT **COLOR** IN COMICS HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNUSUALLY **SENSITIVE** TO THE **SHIFTING TIDES OF TECHNOLOGY.**



THE TECHNOLOGY OF COLOR REPRODUCTION WAS FIRST ANTICIPATED IN **1861** WHEN SCOTTISH PHYSICIST **SIR JAMES CLERK-MAXWELL** ISOLATED WHAT WE NOW CALL **THE THREE ADDITIVE PRIMARIES.**



THESE COLORS -- ROUGHLY, **RED, BLUE** AND **GREEN**-- WHEN PROJECTED TOGETHER ON A SCREEN IN **VARIOUS COMBINATIONS**, COULD REPRODUCE EVERY COLOR IN THE **VISIBLE SPECTRUM.**



THEY WERE CALLED **ADDITIVE** BECAUSE THEY LITERALLY **ADDED UP** TO PURE **WHITE LIGHT.**

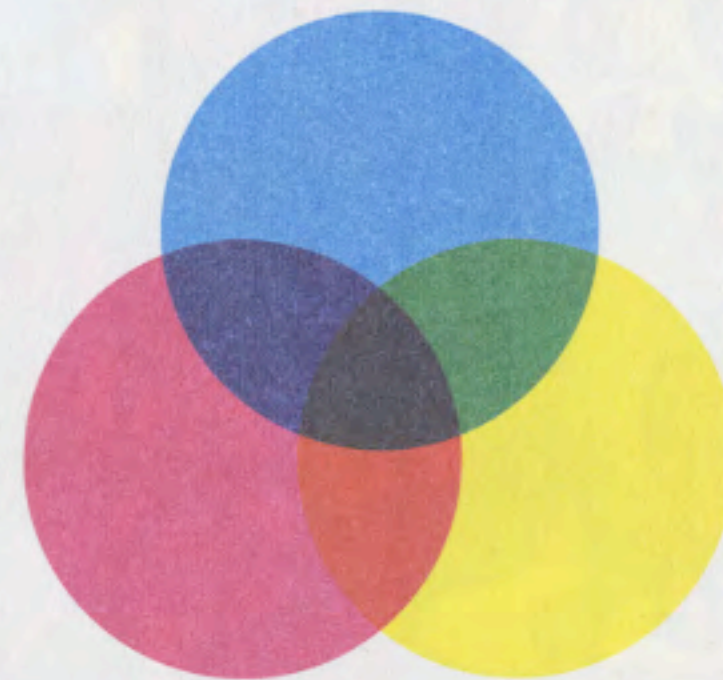


EIGHT YEARS LATER, FRENCH PIANIST **LOUIS DUCOS DU HAURON*** DEvised THE IDEA OF THREE **SUBTRACTIVE** PRIMARIES.



*WHOM I **DON'T** HAVE A PICTURE OF.

THESE COLORS -- **CYAN, MAGENTA** AND **YELLOW***-- CAN **ALSO** MIX TO PRODUCE ANY HUE IN THE **VISIBLE SPECTRUM**, BUT RATHER THAN **ADDING** LIGHT, THESE THREE DO IT BY **FILTERING IT OUT!**



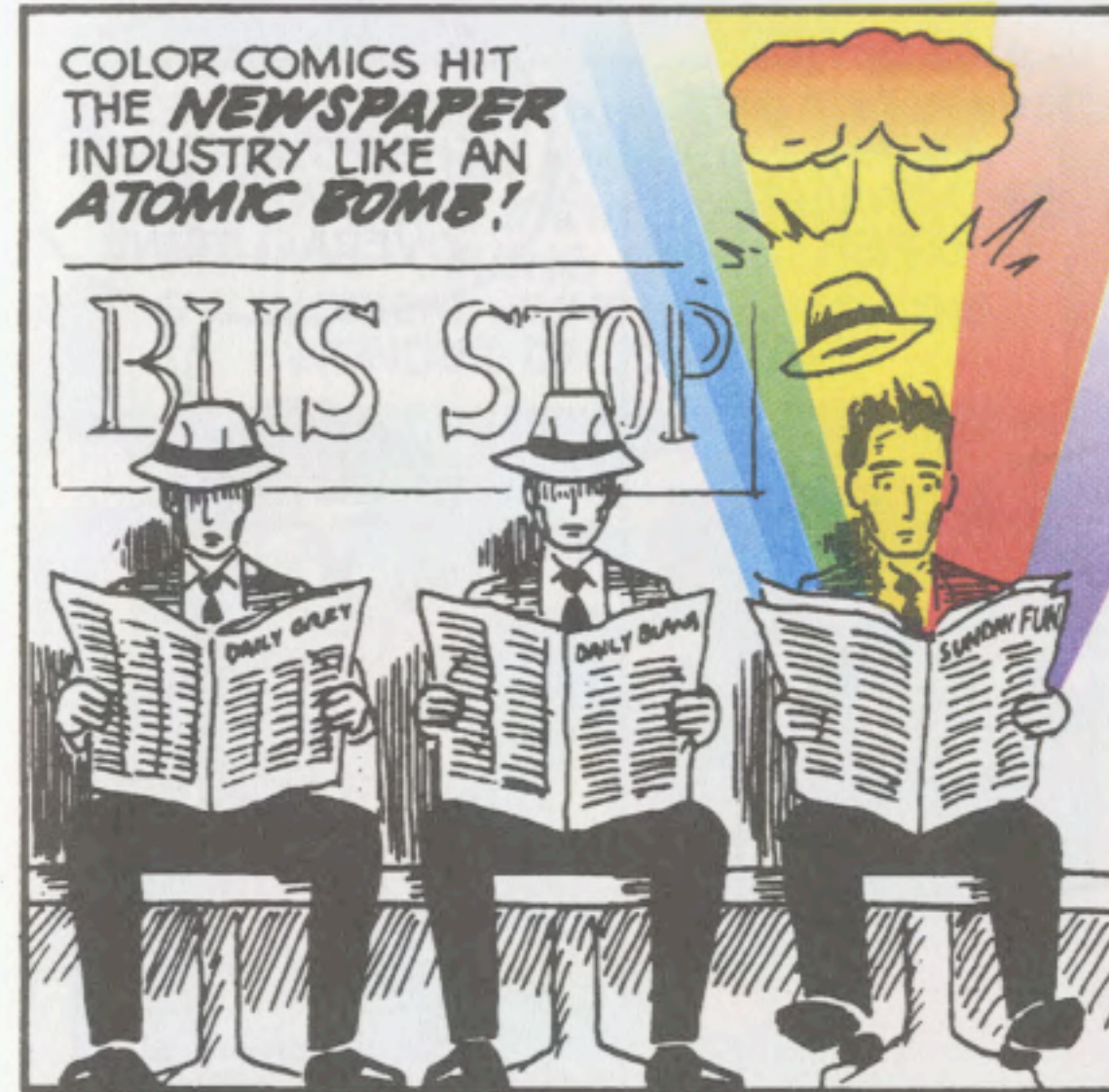
THIS **SUBTRACTIVE** EFFECT WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH **TRANSPARENT SUBSTANCES** SUCH AS **CELLOPHANE, COLORED GLASS, WATER COLORS**--



--OR **PRINTERS' INK!**



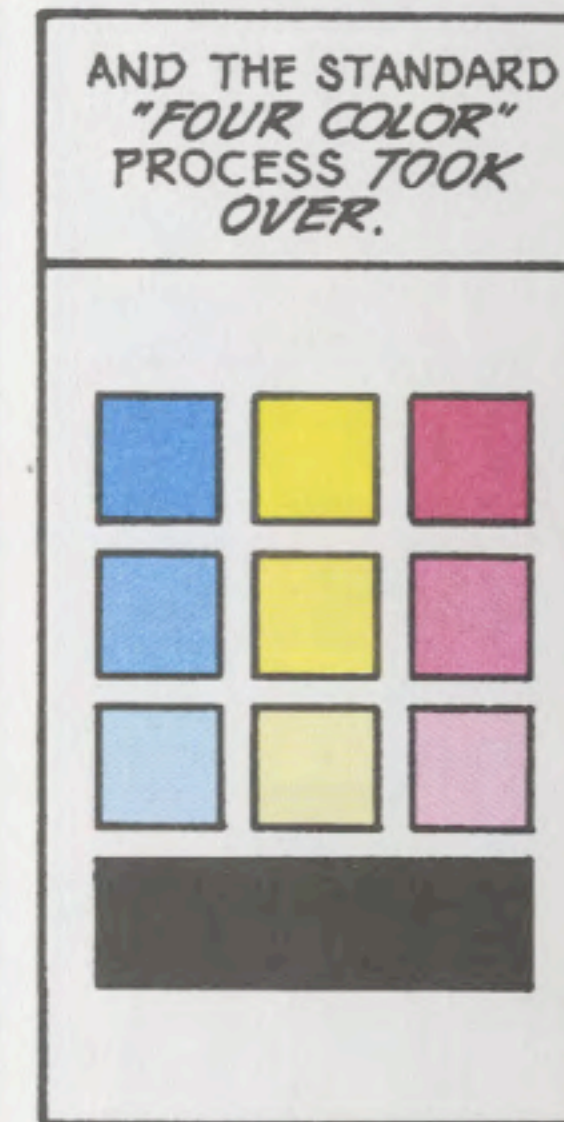
COLOR COMICS HIT THE **NEWSPAPER** INDUSTRY LIKE AN **ATOMIC BOMB!**



COLOR BOOSTED **SALES**, BUT IT ALSO BOOSTED **COSTS!** MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO **STREAMLINE** THE PROCESS AND MAKE IT MORE **COST-EFFECTIVE.**



AND THE STANDARD **"FOUR COLOR"** PROCESS TOOK OVER.



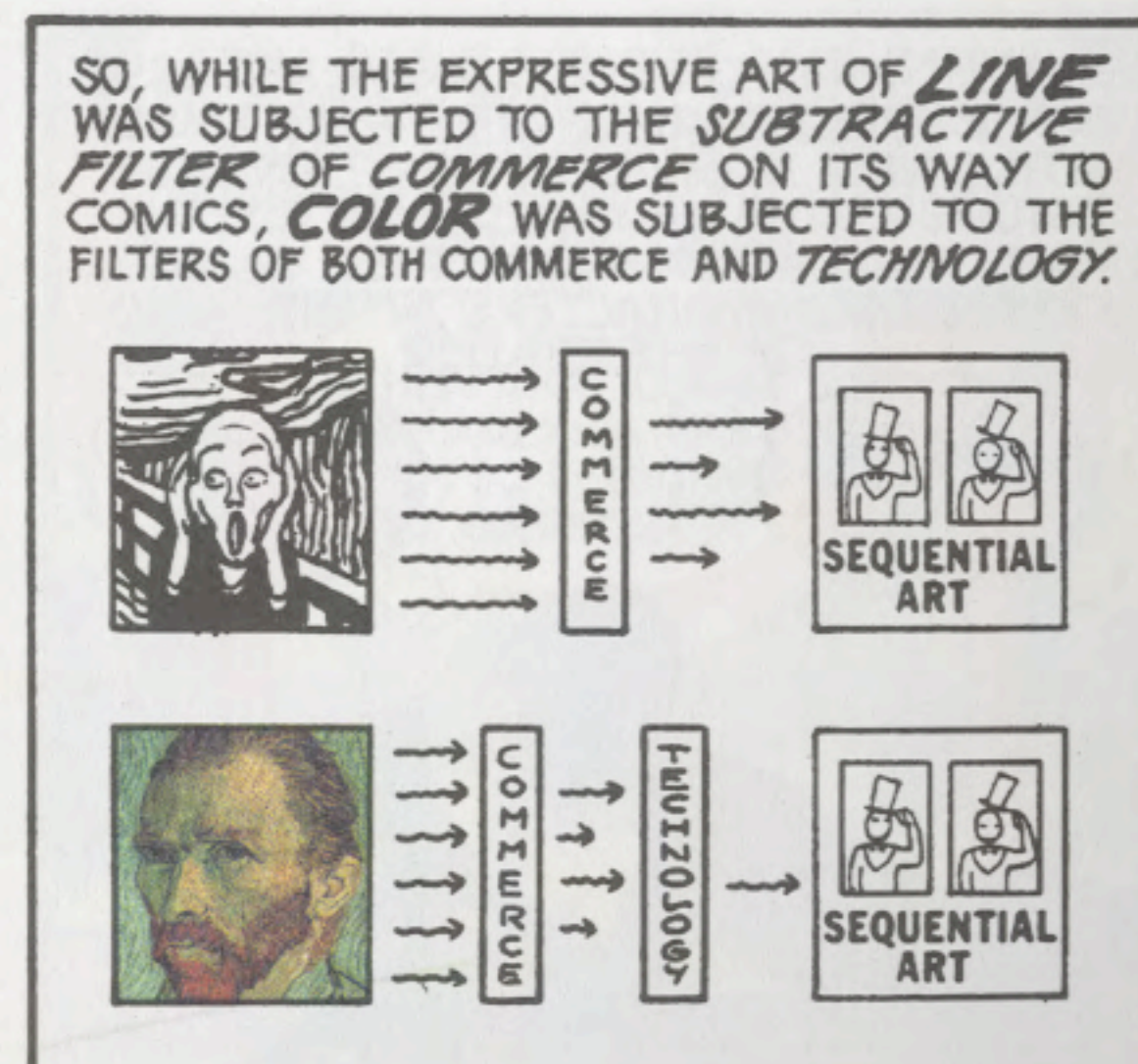
THIS PROCESS RESTRICTED THE INTENSITY OF THE THREE PRIMARIES TO **100%, 50% AND 20%**, USING **BLACK INK** FOR THE LINE WORK.



THE LOOK OF THESE COLORS, HELD BY **BOLD, SIMPLE OUTLINES**, AND REPRODUCED ON **CHEAP NEWSPRINT** EVENTUALLY BECAME THE LOOK OF COMICS IN AMERICA.



SO, WHILE THE EXPRESSIVE ART OF **LINE** WAS SUBJECTED TO THE **SUBTRACTIVE FILTER** OF **COMMERCE** ON ITS WAY TO COMICS, **COLOR** WAS SUBJECTED TO THE FILTERS OF BOTH **COMMERCE** AND **TECHNOLOGY.**



*FOR OPAQUE PIGMENTS: **RED, YELLOW** AND **BLUE**. I KNOW, IT'S TOTALLY WEIRD.



TO COUNTERACT THE DULLING EFFECTS OF NEWSPRINT AND TO STAND OUT FROM THE COMPETITION, COSTUMED HEROES WERE CLAD IN **BRIGHT, PRIMARY COLORS** AND FOUGHT IN A **BRIGHT PRIMARY WORLD!**

THE COLORS WERE PICKED FOR **STRENGTH** AND CONTRASTED STRONGLY WITH ONE ANOTHER, BUT ON MOST PAGES NO ONE COLOR **DOMINATED**.



WITHOUT THE **EMOTIONAL IMPACT** OF **SINGLE-COLOR SATURATION**, THE **EXPRESSIVE POTENTIAL** OF AMERICAN COLOR COMICS --



-- WAS OFTEN **CANCELLED OUT** TO AN **EMOTIONAL GREY**.



AS ALWAYS, THERE WERE SOME **EXCEPTIONS**, BUT THIS WAS THE OVERALL TREND.



HOWEVER, WHILE COMICS COLORS WERE LESS THAN **EXPRESSIONISTIC**, THEY WERE FIXED WITH A NEW **ICONIC** POWER. BECAUSE COSTUME COLORS REMAINED EXACTLY THE SAME, PANEL AFTER PANEL, THEY CAME TO **SYMBOLIZE** CHARACTERS IN THE MIND OF THE READER.

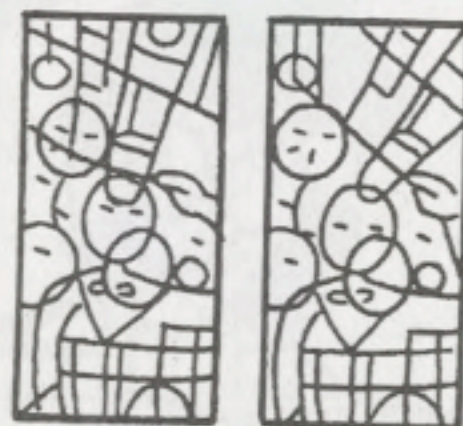


MANY SEE THE SUPERHERO AS A FORM OF **MODERN MYTHOLOGY**. IF SO, THIS ASPECT OF COLOR MAY PLAY A PART.

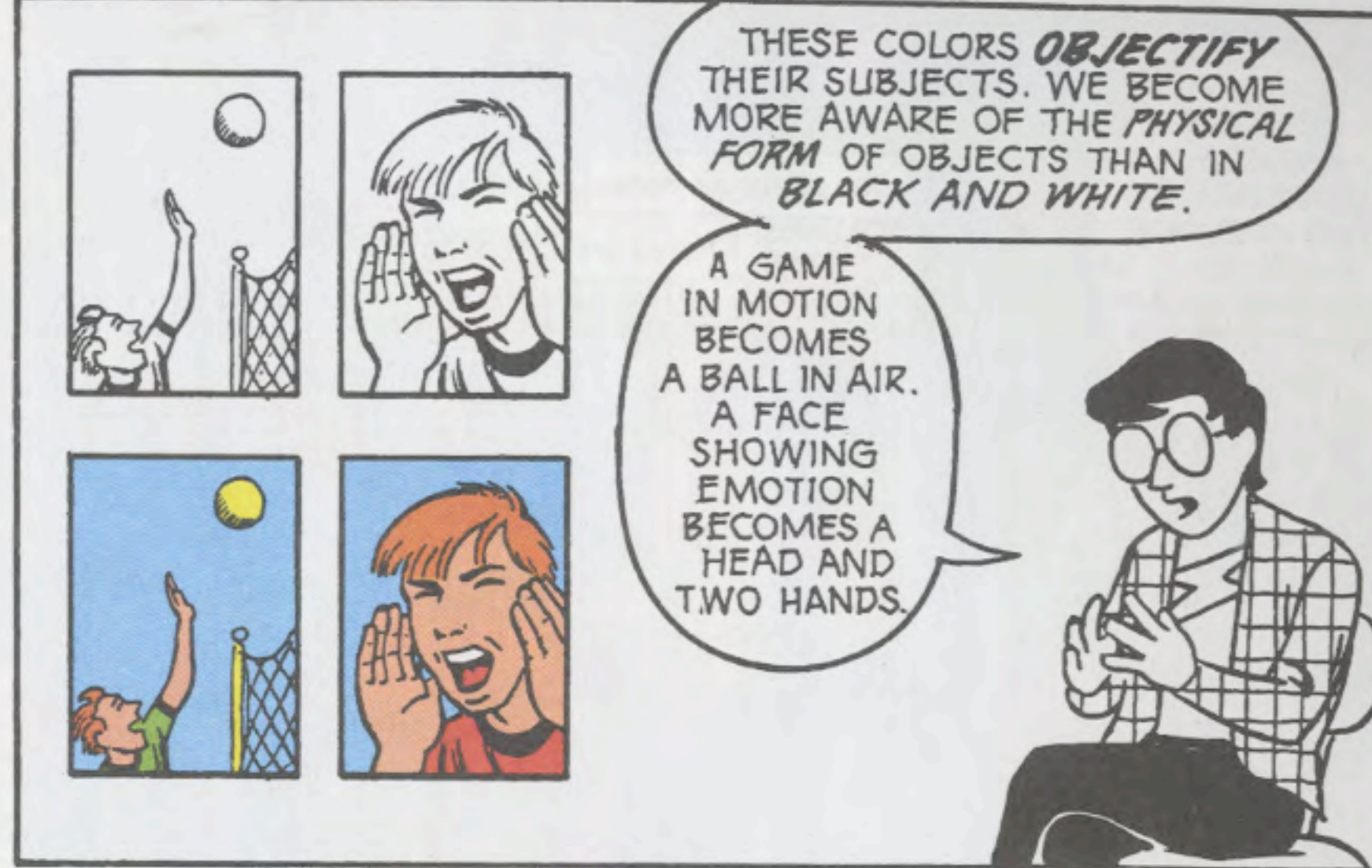
SYMBOLS ARE THE STUFF OF WHICH **GODS** ARE MADE.



ANOTHER PROPERTY OF FLAT COLORS IS THEIR TENDENCY TO EMPHASIZE THE **SHAPE** OF OBJECTS, BOTH **ANIMATE** AND **INANIMATE**--

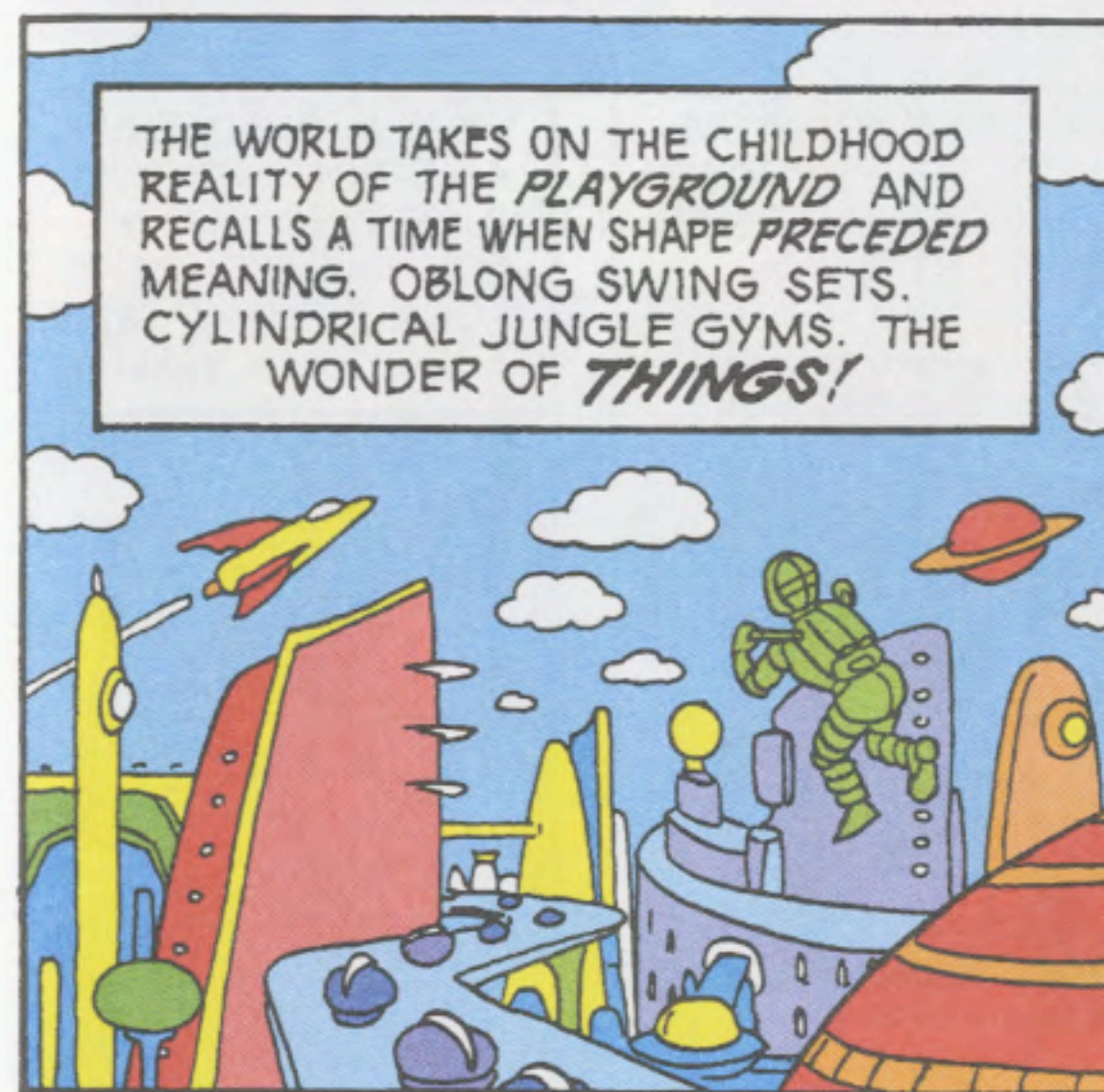


-- AS ANY CHILD WHO HAS EVER "**COLORED-BY-NUMBERS**" KNOWS INSTINCTIVELY.



THESE COLORS **OBJECTIFY** THEIR SUBJECTS. WE BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE **PHYSICAL FORM** OF OBJECTS THAN IN **BLACK AND WHITE**.

A GAME IN MOTION BECOMES A BALL IN AIR. A FACE SHOWING EMOTION BECOMES A HEAD AND TWO HANDS.



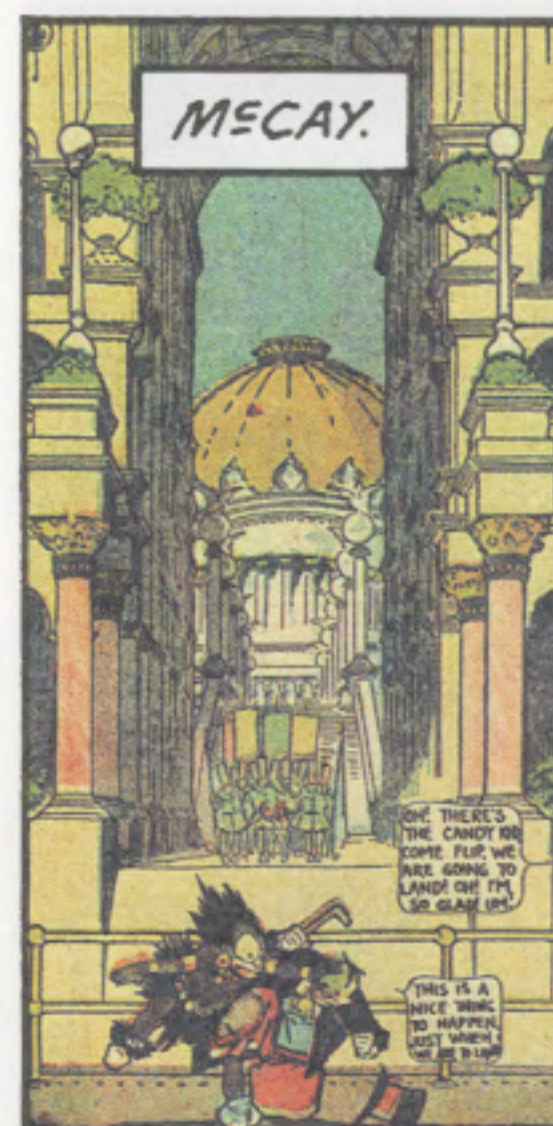
THE WORLD TAKES ON THE CHILDHOOD REALITY OF THE **PLAYGROUND** AND RECALLS A TIME WHEN **SHAPE PRECEDED** MEANING. **OBLONG** SWING SETS. **CYLINDRICAL** JUNGLE GYMS. THE WONDER OF **THINGS!**



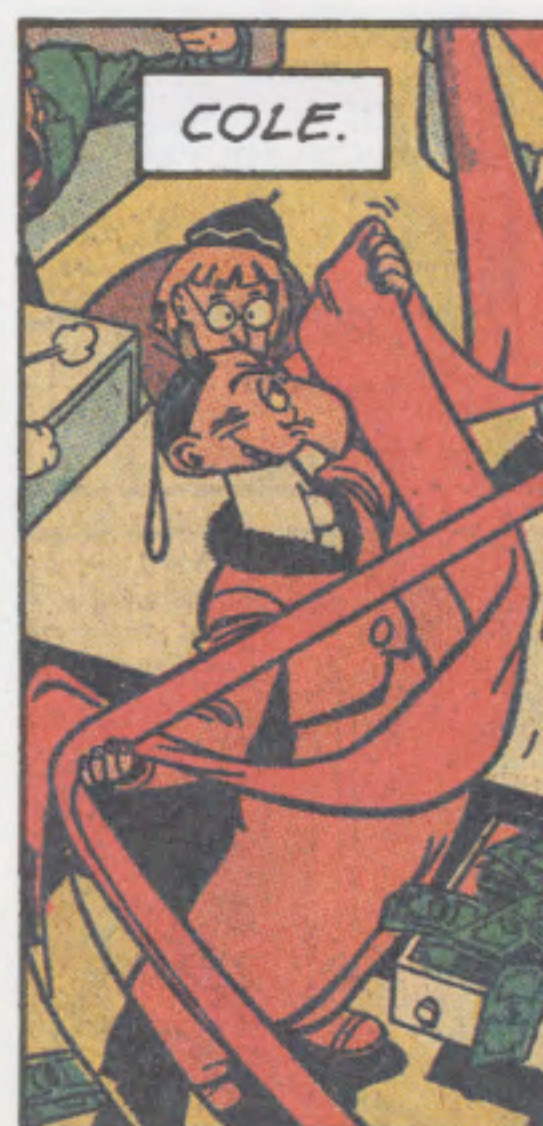
DOESN'T IT **FOLLOW** THEN THAT THE MASTERS OF **FLAT-COLOR** COMICS ARE, ABOVE ALL, MASTERS OF **FORM** AND **COMPOSITION?**



KIRBY.



MCCAY.



COLE.



FROM **STEVE DITKO** TO **CARL BARKS** TO **P. CRAIG RUSSELL**, THAT LOVE OF SHAPES PERSISTS IN WORLDS FAIRLY **GLOWING** WITH THE MYSTERY OF **FIRST ENCOUNTERS**.

ANY WONDER THEN THAT COMICS IN AMERICA HAS BEEN SO RELUCTANT TO "**GROW UP**"?

IN EUROPE HERGE CAPTURED THE MAGIC OF SUCH FLAT COLORS WITH UNPRECEDENTED SUBTLETY.

The signora's room.
Ravishing!

HERGE CREATED A KIND OF DEMOCRACY OF FORM IN WHICH NO SHAPE WAS ANY LESS IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER-- A COMPLETELY OBJECTIVE WORLD.

COMICS PRINTING WAS SUPERIOR IN EUROPE AND FOR HERGE, FLAT COLORS WERE A PREFERENCE, NOT A NECESSITY.

BUT OTHERS SUCH AS CLAVELOUX, CAZA AND MOEBIUS SAW IN THEIR SUPERIOR PRINTING AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES THROUGH A MORE INTENSE SUBJECTIVE PALETTE.

SOME OF THIS WORK BEGAN REACHING AMERICA IN THE 70's, INSPIRING MANY YOUNG ARTISTS TO LOOK BEYOND THEIR FOUR-COLOR WALLS.

COLOR AS SENSATION, COLOR AS ENVIRONMENT.

COLOR AS COLOR!

SINCE THE LATE 70's, MORE AND MORE "UPSCALE" COLOR PROJECTS HAVE BEGUN APPEARING IN AMERICA.

SOME PUBLISHERS AT THE BEGINNING TRIED APPLYING THE TRADITIONAL "FOUR-COLOR" PROCESS TO BETTER PAPER WITH GARISH RESULTS.

TAKE THAT!

WHEN MODELLING AND MORE SUBTLE HUES WERE APPLIED, THOUGH, THEY SEEMED OUT OF PLACE ON THE OLD SHAPE-SENSITIVE LINE DRAWINGS.

TAKE THAT!

THE SURFACE WAS CHANGING, BUT NOT THE CORE. FOR ALL THEIR SUBTLE HUES, COMICS WERE STILL BEING WRITTEN IN PRIMARY COLORS!

SUDDENLY IT SEEMED POSSIBLE FOR COLOR TO TAKE ON A CENTRAL ROLE.

COLORS COULD EXPRESS A DOMINANT MOOD.

TONES AND MODELLING COULD ADD DEPTH.

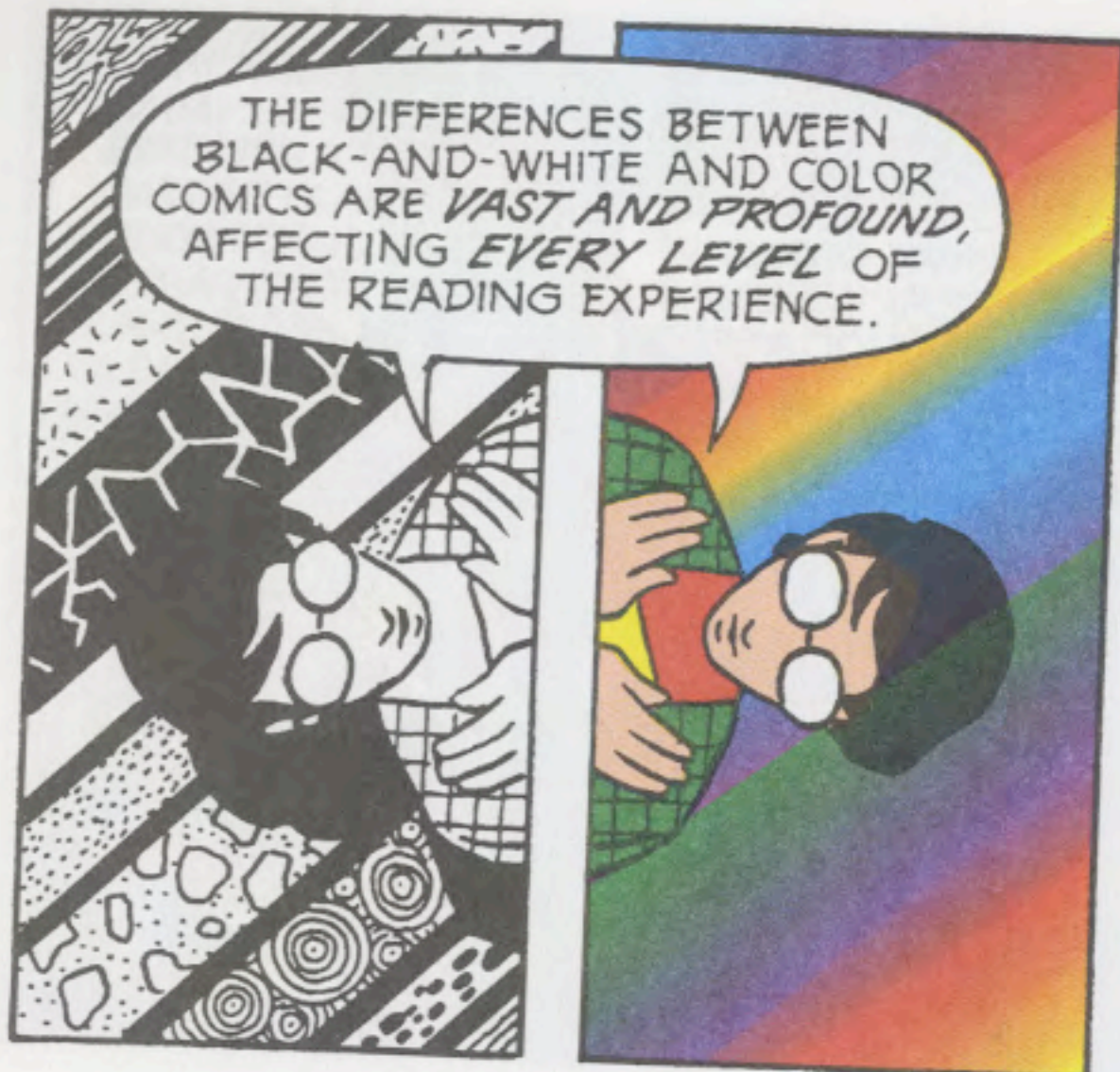
WHOLE SCENES COULD BE VIRTUALLY ABOUT COLOR!

THE NEW FORM REQUIRED THE CREATION OF NEW IDIOMS!

UNFORTUNATELY, COLOR IS STILL AN EXPENSIVE OPTION AND HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN IN THE HANDS OF LARGER, MORE CONSERVATIVE PUBLISHERS.

THIS IS BEGINNING TO CHANGE AS I WRITE THIS, BUT IT'S STILL THE EXCEPTION, NOT THE RULE. COMIC ARTISTS WANTING TO CONDUCT BOLD NEW EXPERIMENTS IN COMICS ART--

-- STILL HAVE TO LEARN IN MOST CASES TO BE BOLD IN BLACK AND WHITE!



THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BLACK-AND-WHITE AND COLOR COMICS ARE *VAST AND PROFOUND*, AFFECTING *EVERY LEVEL* OF THE READING EXPERIENCE.



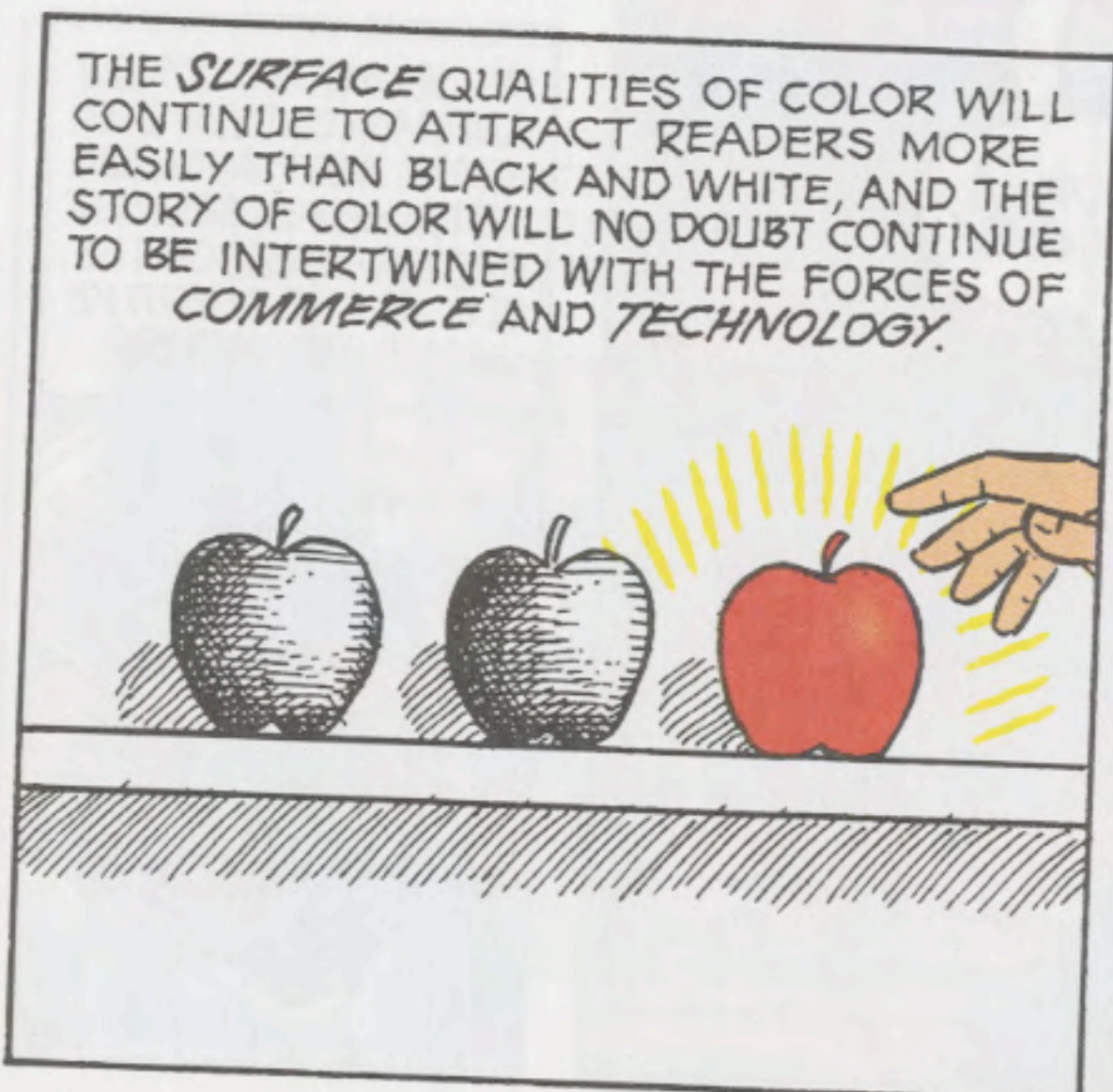
IN BLACK AND WHITE, THE IDEAS *BEHIND* THE ART ARE COMMUNICATED MORE *DIRECTLY*. MEANING TRANSCENDS FORM. ART APPROACHES *LANGUAGE*.



IN FLAT COLORS FORMS *THEMSELVES* TAKE ON MORE SIGNIFICANCE. THE WORLD BECOMES A PLAYGROUND OF *SHAPES AND SPACE*.



AND THROUGH MORE *EXPRESSIVE* COLORS, COMICS CAN BECOME AN *INTOXICATING ENVIRONMENT* OF SENSATIONS THAT ONLY COLOR CAN GIVE.



THE *SURFACE* QUALITIES OF COLOR WILL CONTINUE TO ATTRACT READERS MORE EASILY THAN BLACK AND WHITE, AND THE STORY OF COLOR WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE TO BE INTERTWINED WITH THE FORCES OF *COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY*.



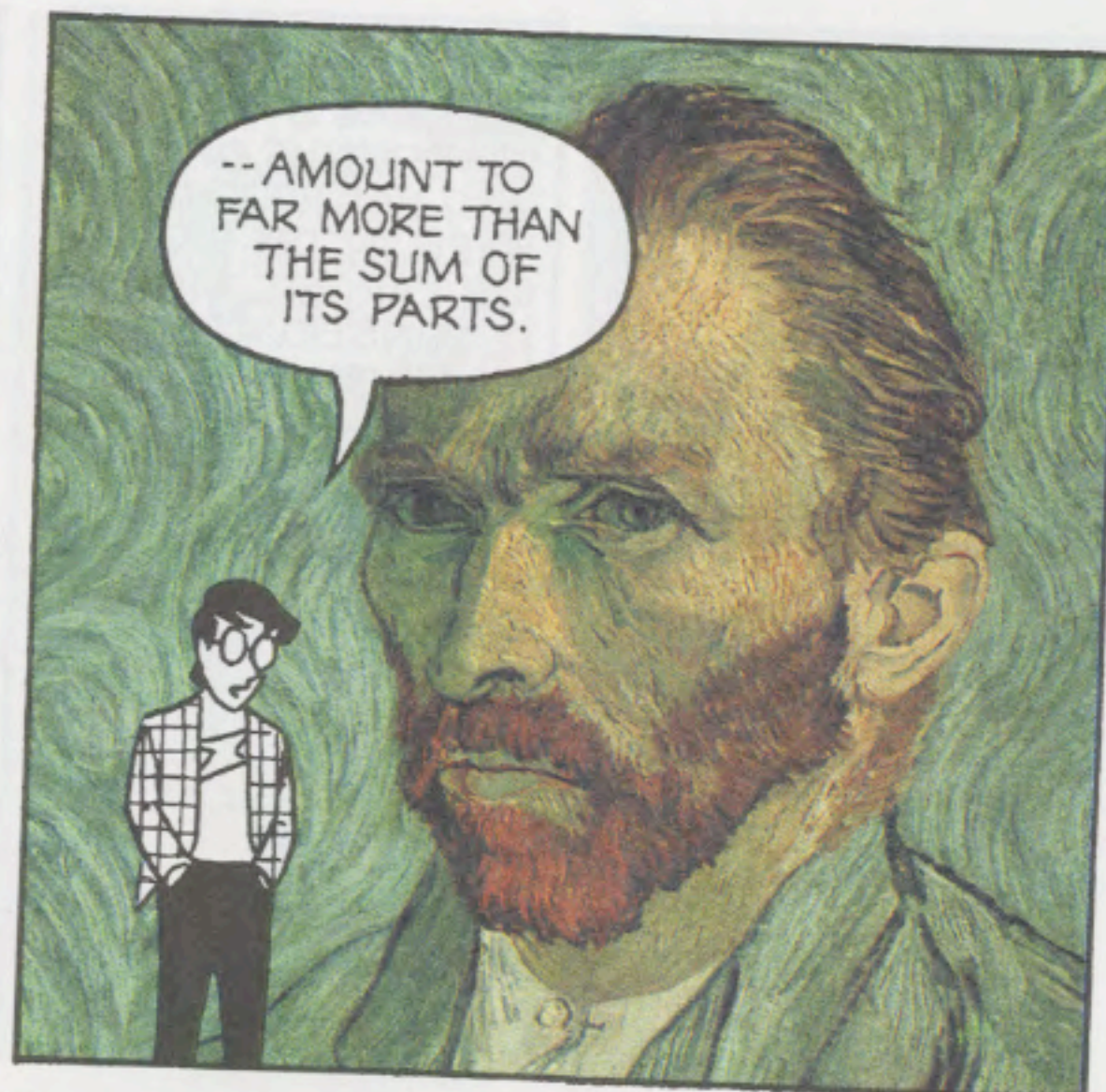
WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF *COLORS*, NOT JUST *BLACK AND WHITE*. COLOR COMICS WILL ALWAYS SEEM MORE "*REAL*" AT FIRST GLANCE.



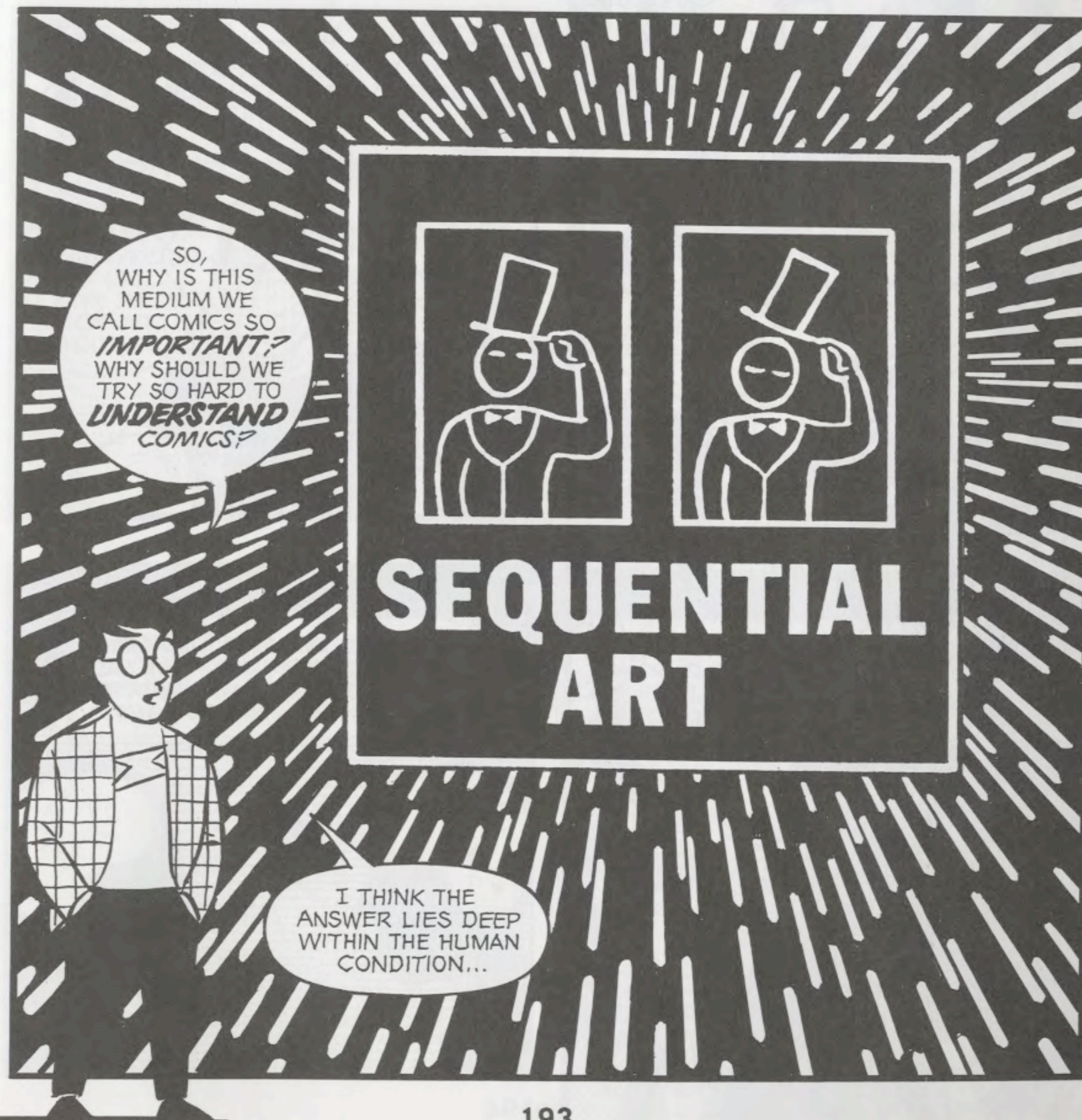
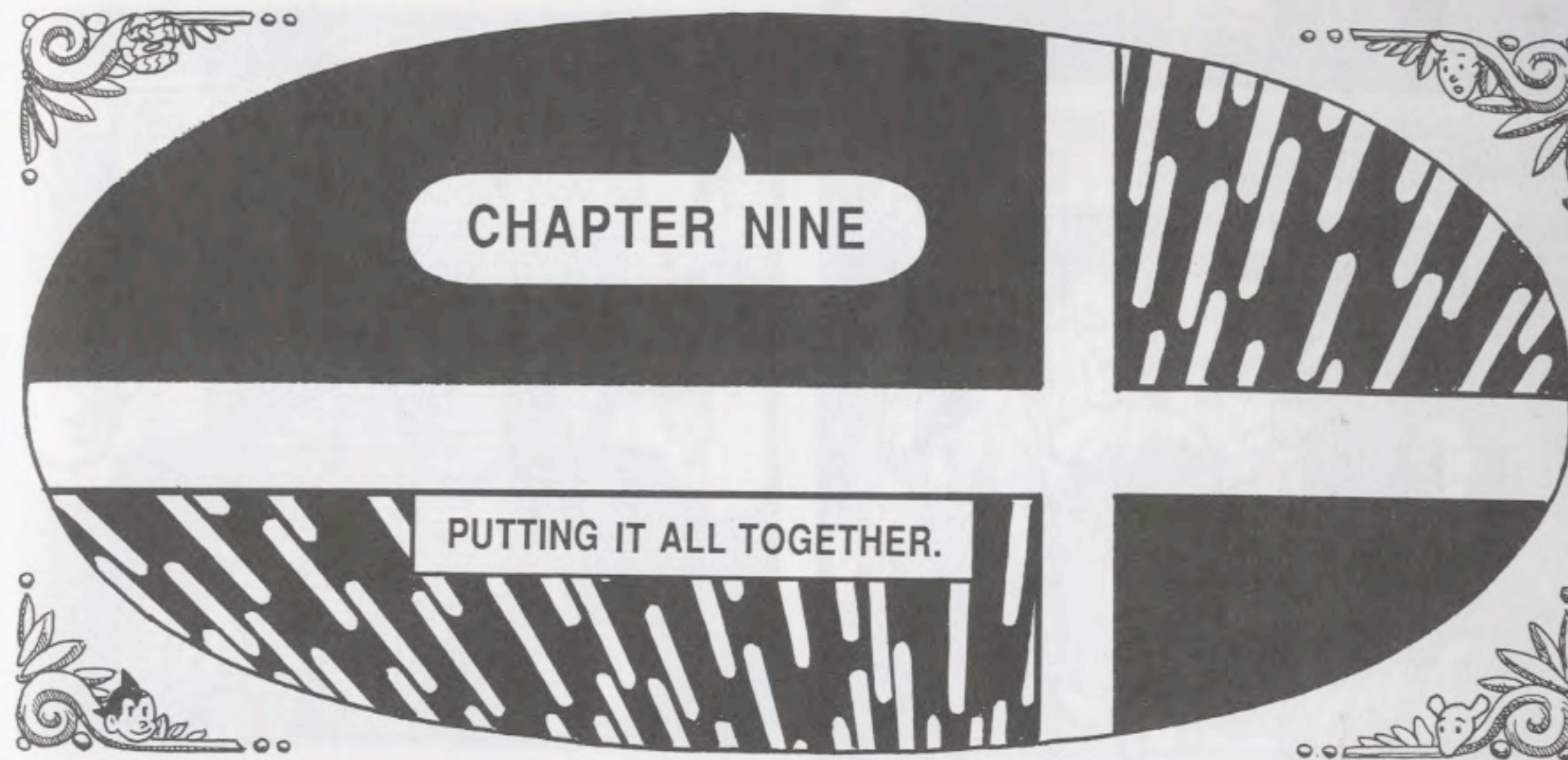
BUT COMICS READERS LOOK FOR *MANY THINGS* BESIDES "*REALITY*" AND, TECHNOLOGY NOTWITHSTANDING, COLOR WILL NEVER REPLACE BLACK AND WHITE ENTIRELY.



ONE THING'S FOR *SURE*, THOUGH. WHEN USED WELL, COLOR IN COMICS CAN -- LIKE COMICS ITSELF --



-- AMOUNT TO FAR MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS.



SO, WHY IS THIS MEDIUM WE CALL COMICS SO *IMPORTANT*? WHY SHOULD WE TRY SO HARD TO *UNDERSTAND* COMICS?

SEQUENTIAL ART

I THINK THE ANSWER LIES DEEP WITHIN THE HUMAN CONDITION...



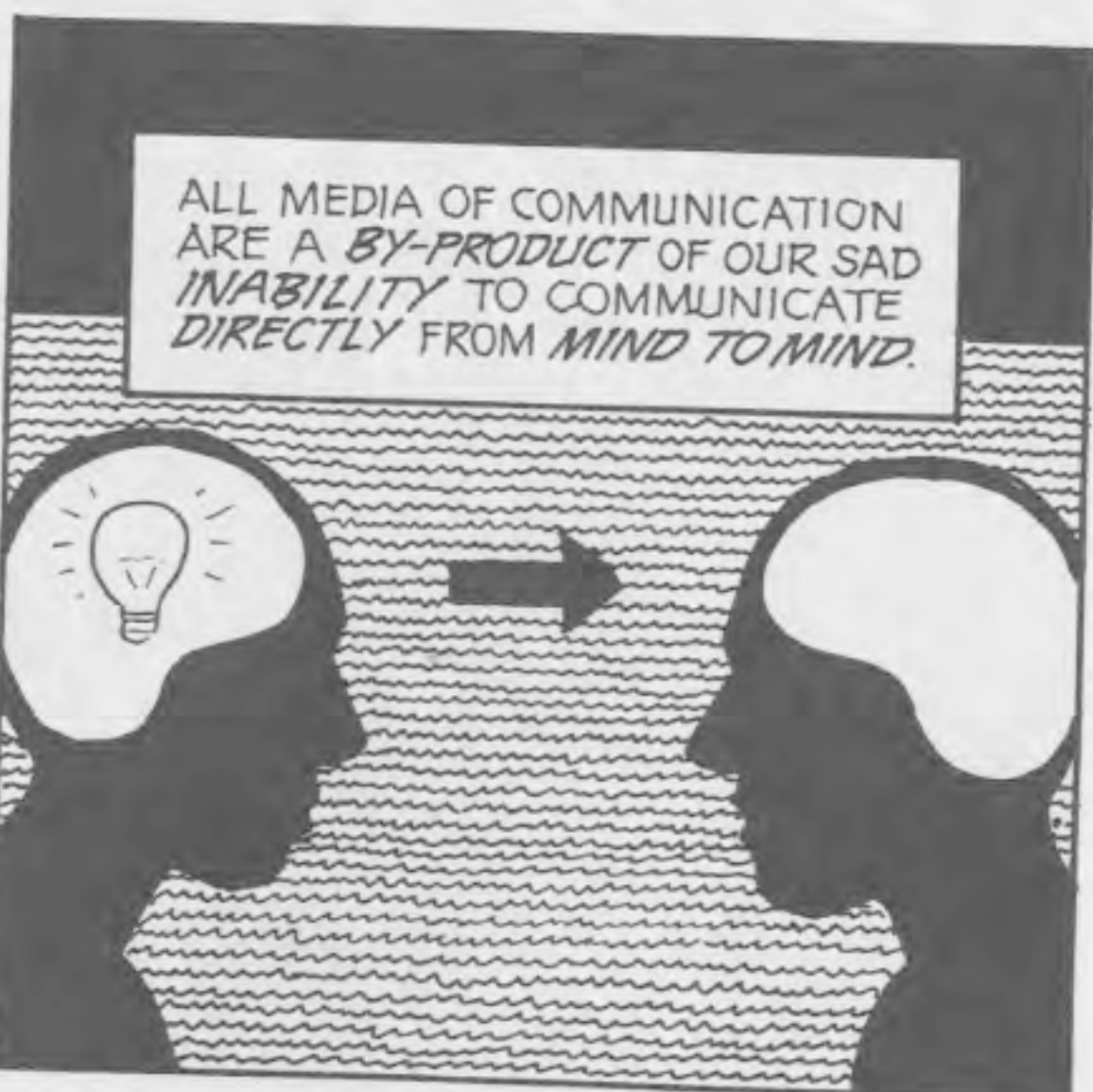
WE ALL LIVE IN A STATE OF *PROFOUND ISOLATION.*



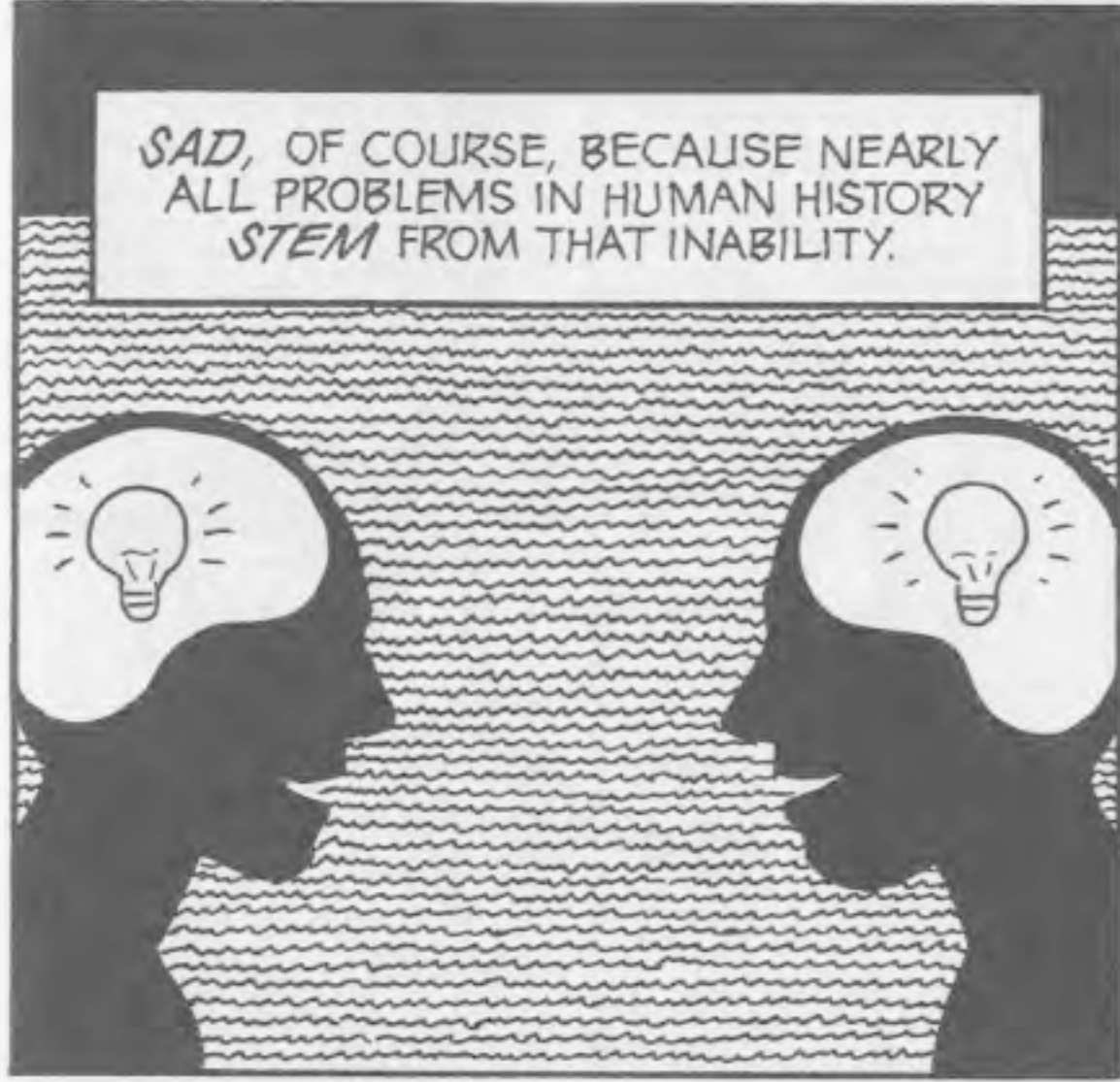
NO OTHER HUMAN BEING CAN EVER KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE YOU FROM THE *INSIDE.*



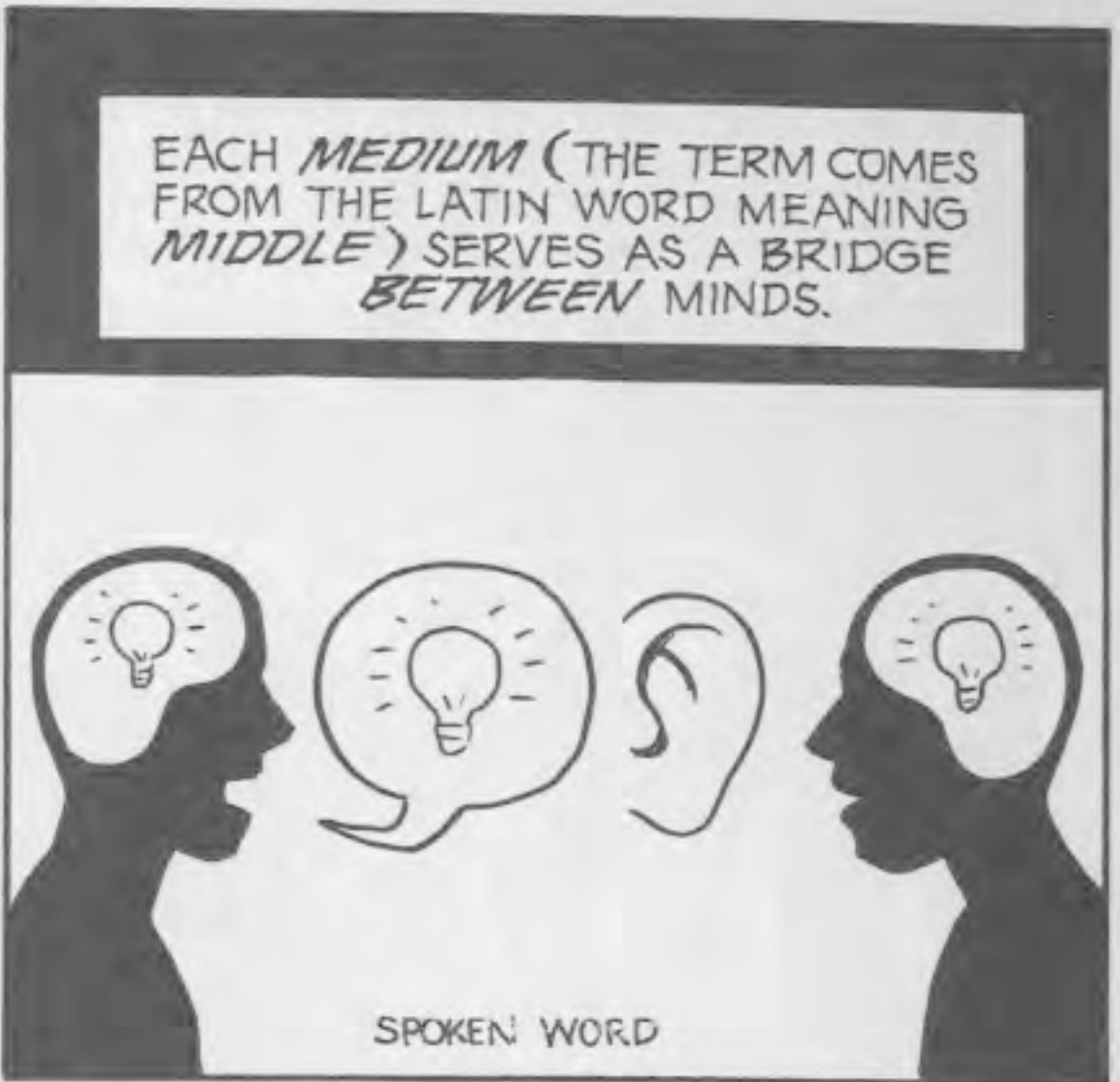
AND NO AMOUNT OF *REACHING OUT TO OTHERS* CAN EVER MAKE THEM FEEL EXACTLY WHAT *YOU* FEEL.



ALL MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION ARE A *BY-PRODUCT* OF OUR SAD *INABILITY* TO COMMUNICATE *DIRECTLY* FROM *MIND TO MIND.*

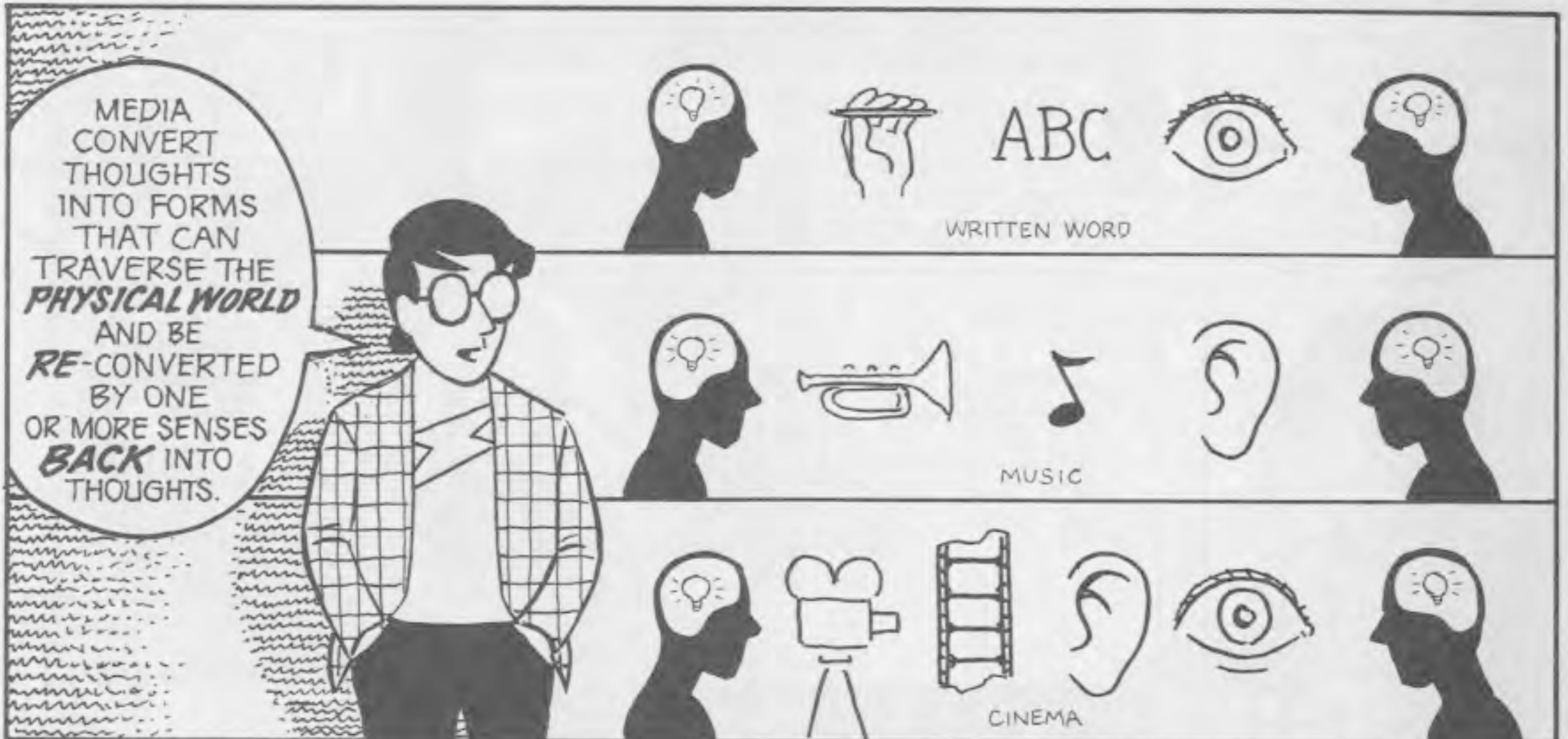


SAD, OF COURSE, BECAUSE NEARLY ALL PROBLEMS IN HUMAN HISTORY *STEM* FROM THAT INABILITY.



EACH *MEDIUM* (THE TERM COMES FROM THE LATIN WORD MEANING *MIDDLE*) SERVES AS A BRIDGE *BETWEEN* MINDS.

SPOKEN WORD

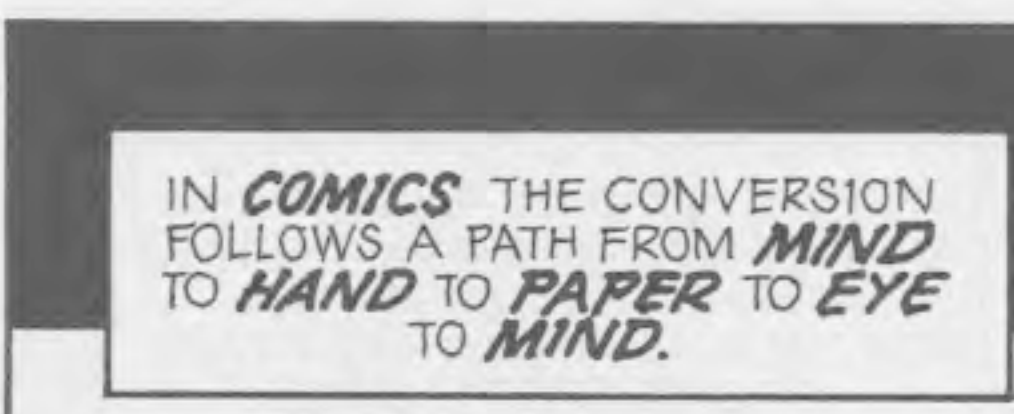


MEDIA CONVERT THOUGHTS INTO FORMS THAT CAN TRAVERSE THE *PHYSICAL WORLD* AND BE *RE-CONVERTED* BY ONE OR MORE SENSES *BACK* INTO THOUGHTS.

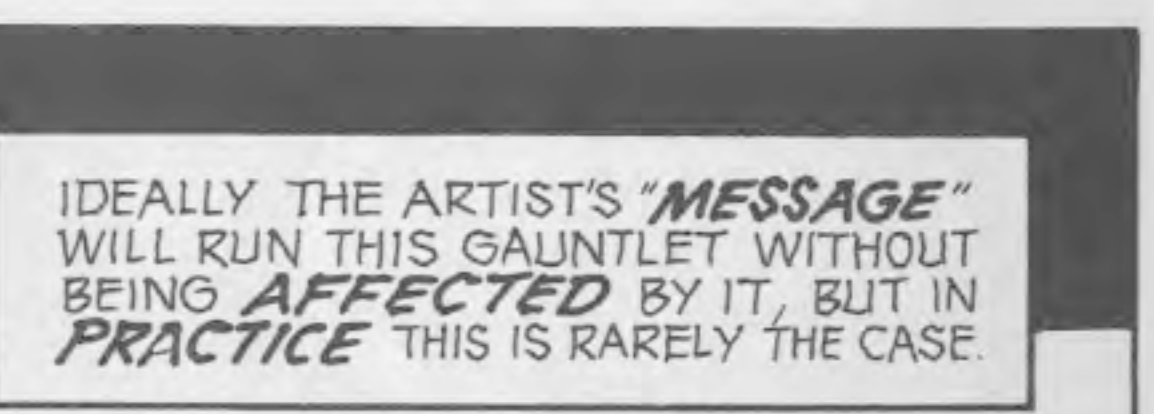
WRITTEN WORD

MUSIC

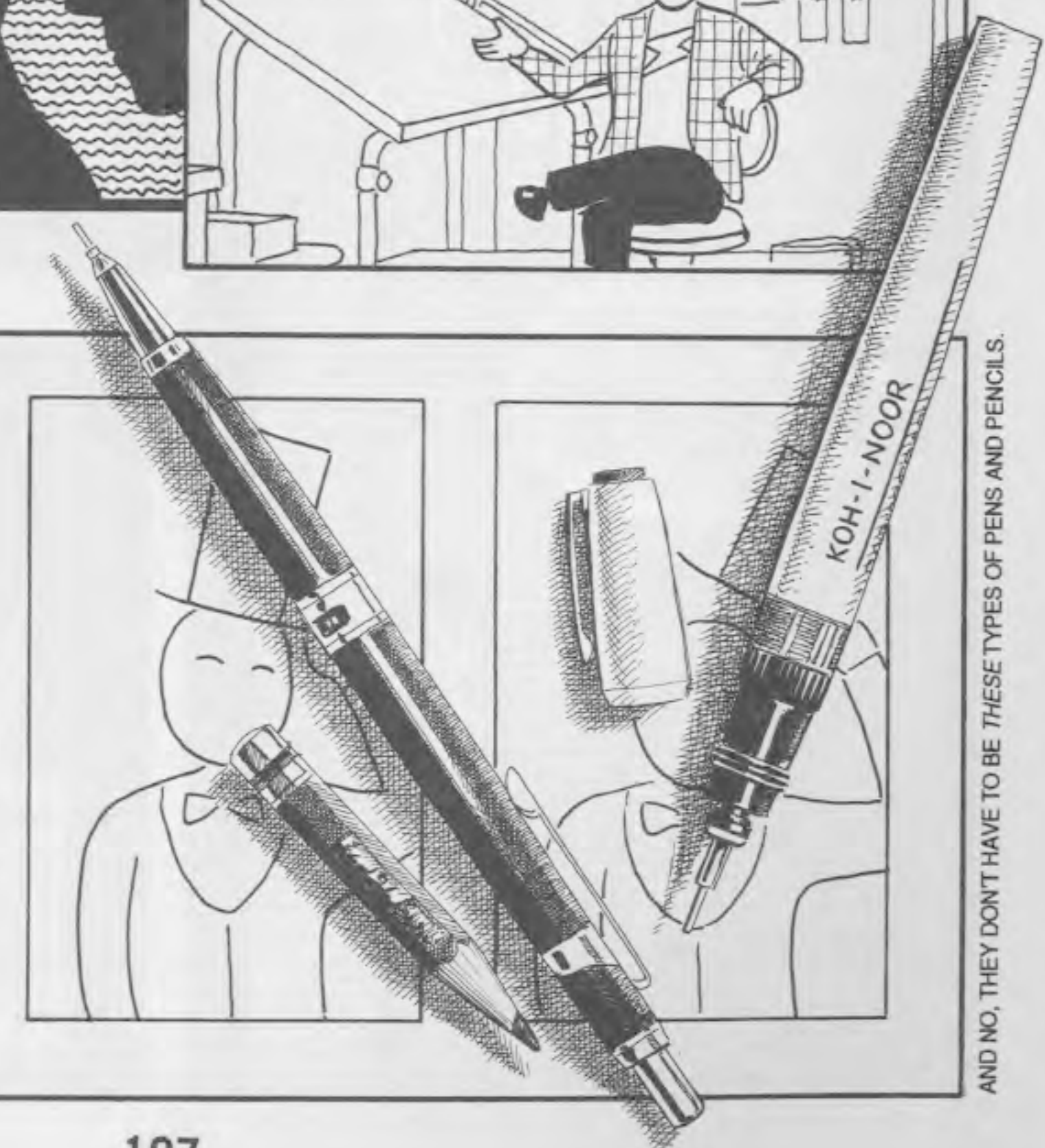
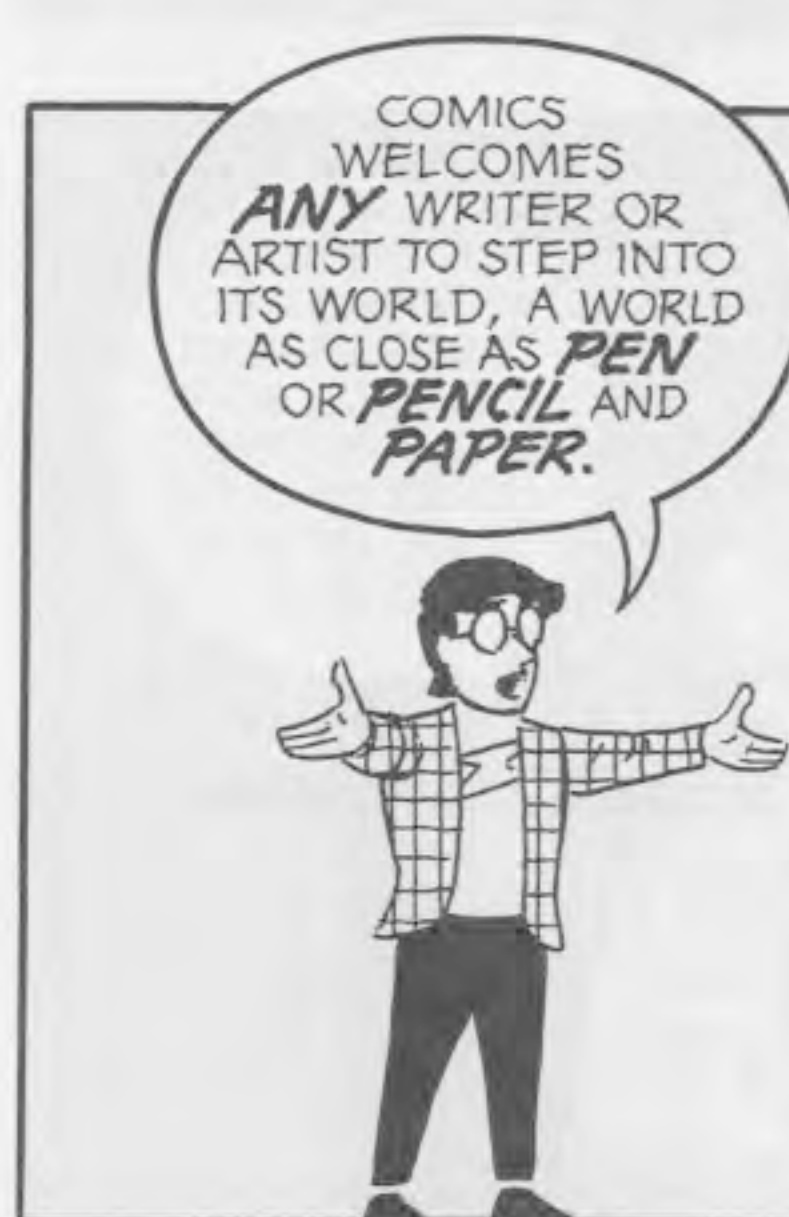
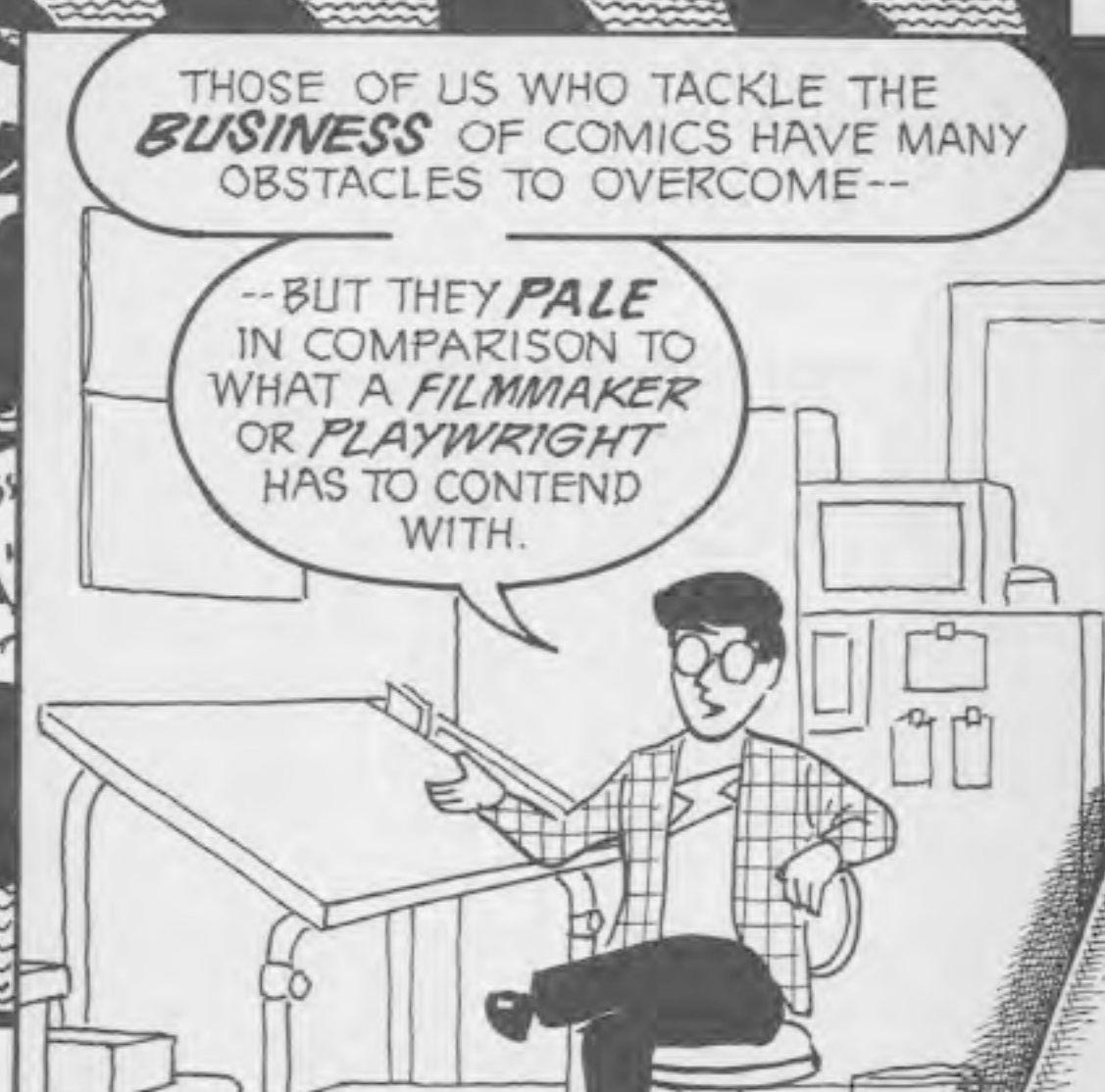
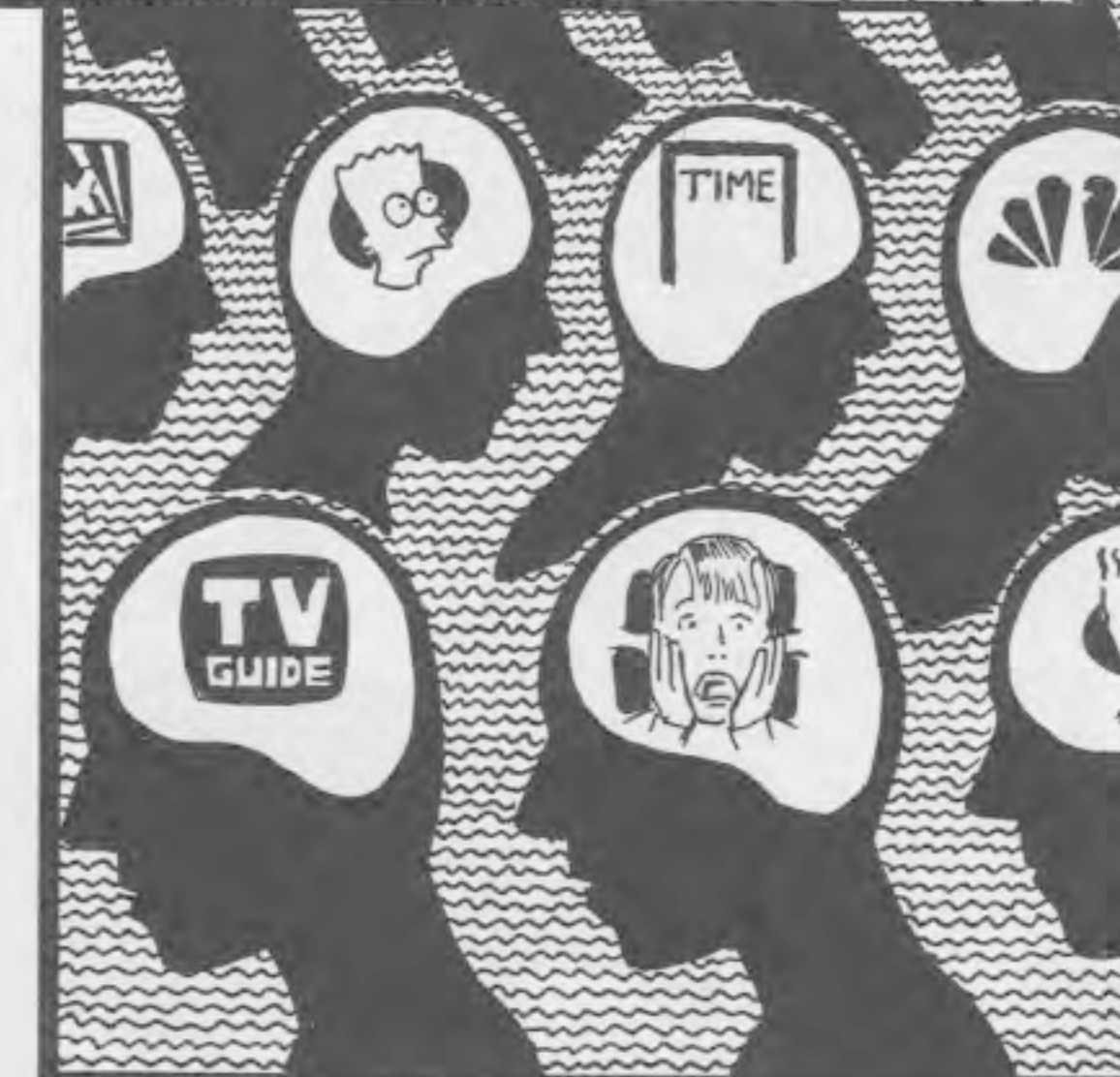
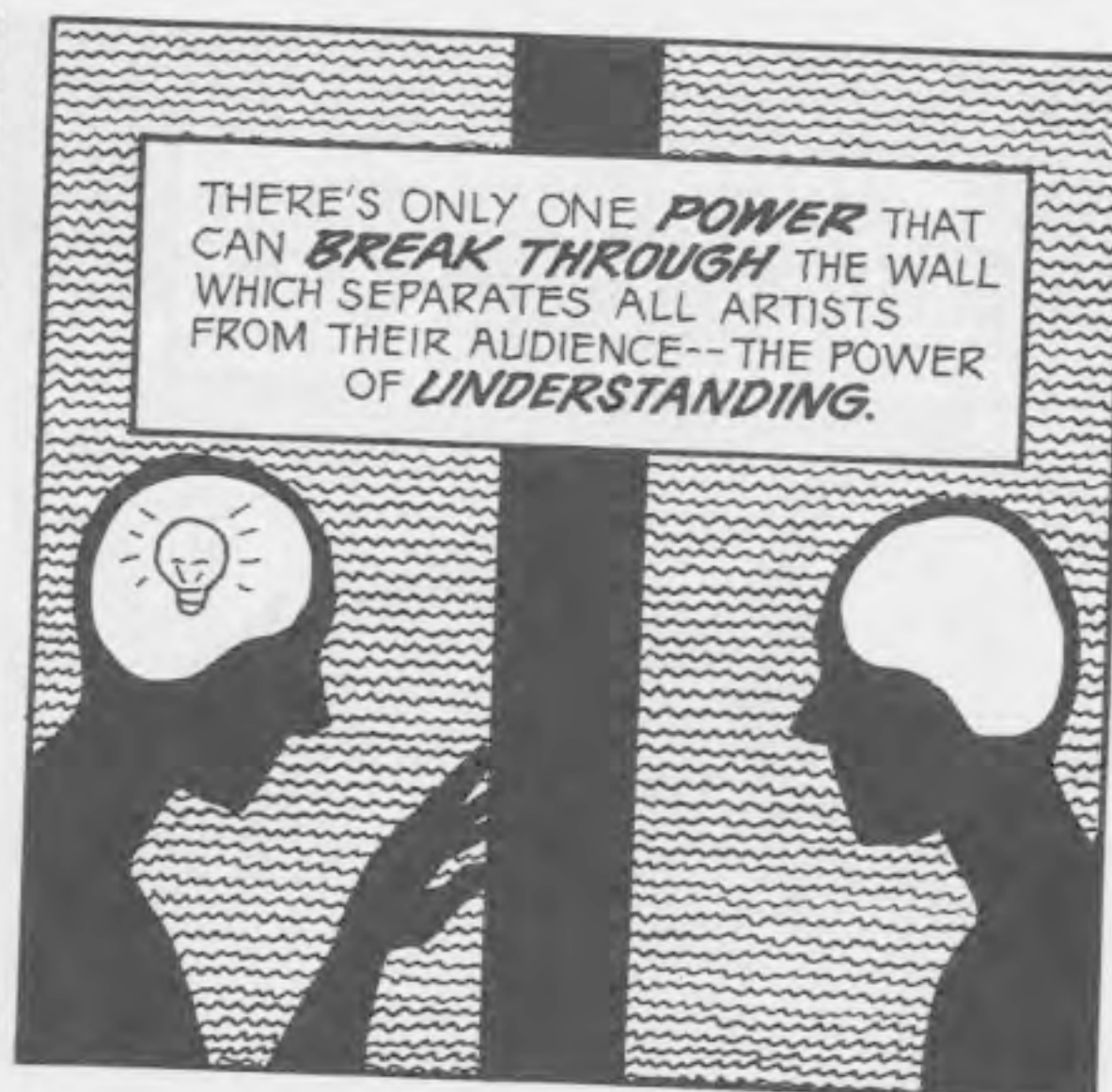
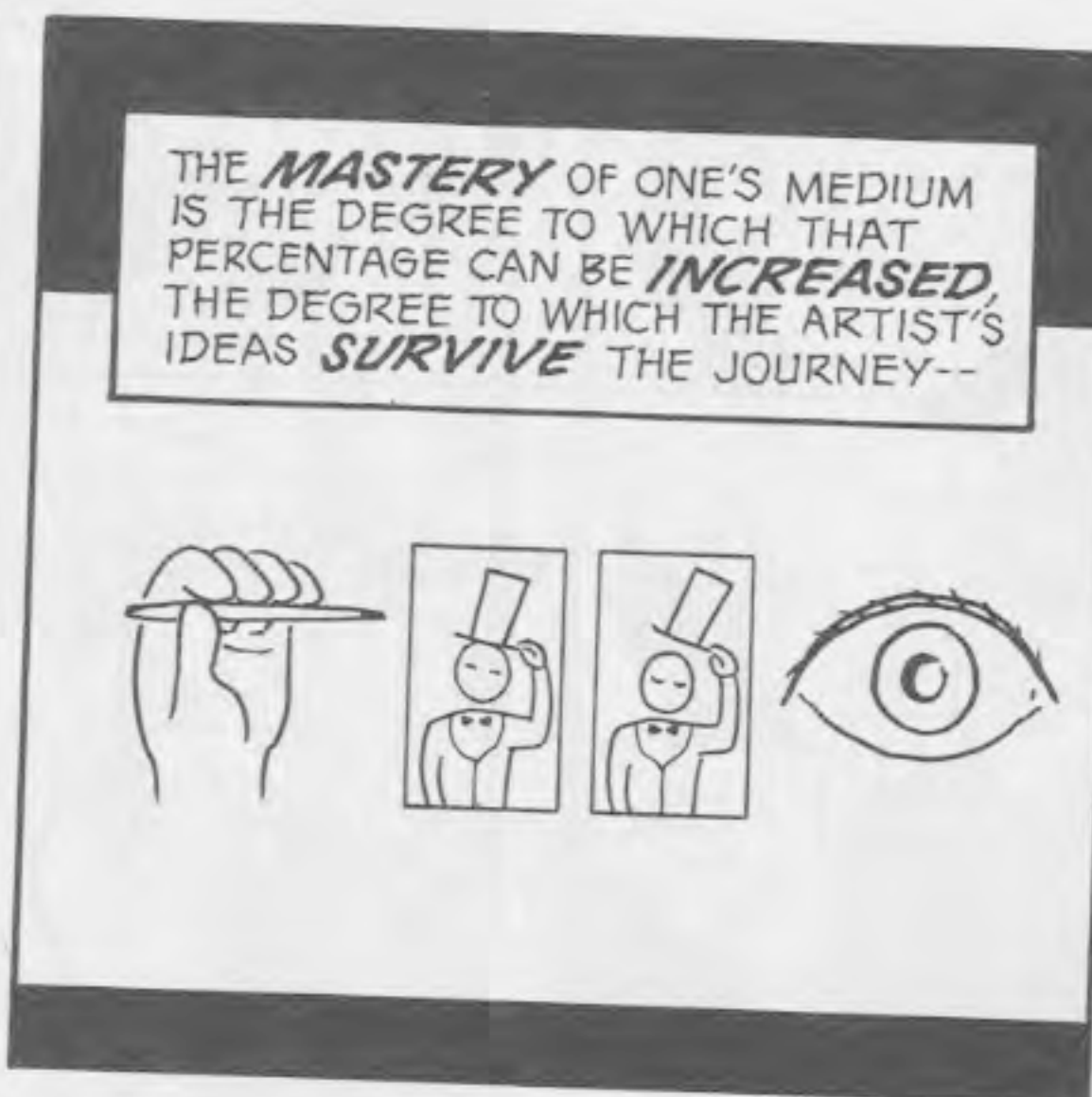
CINEMA



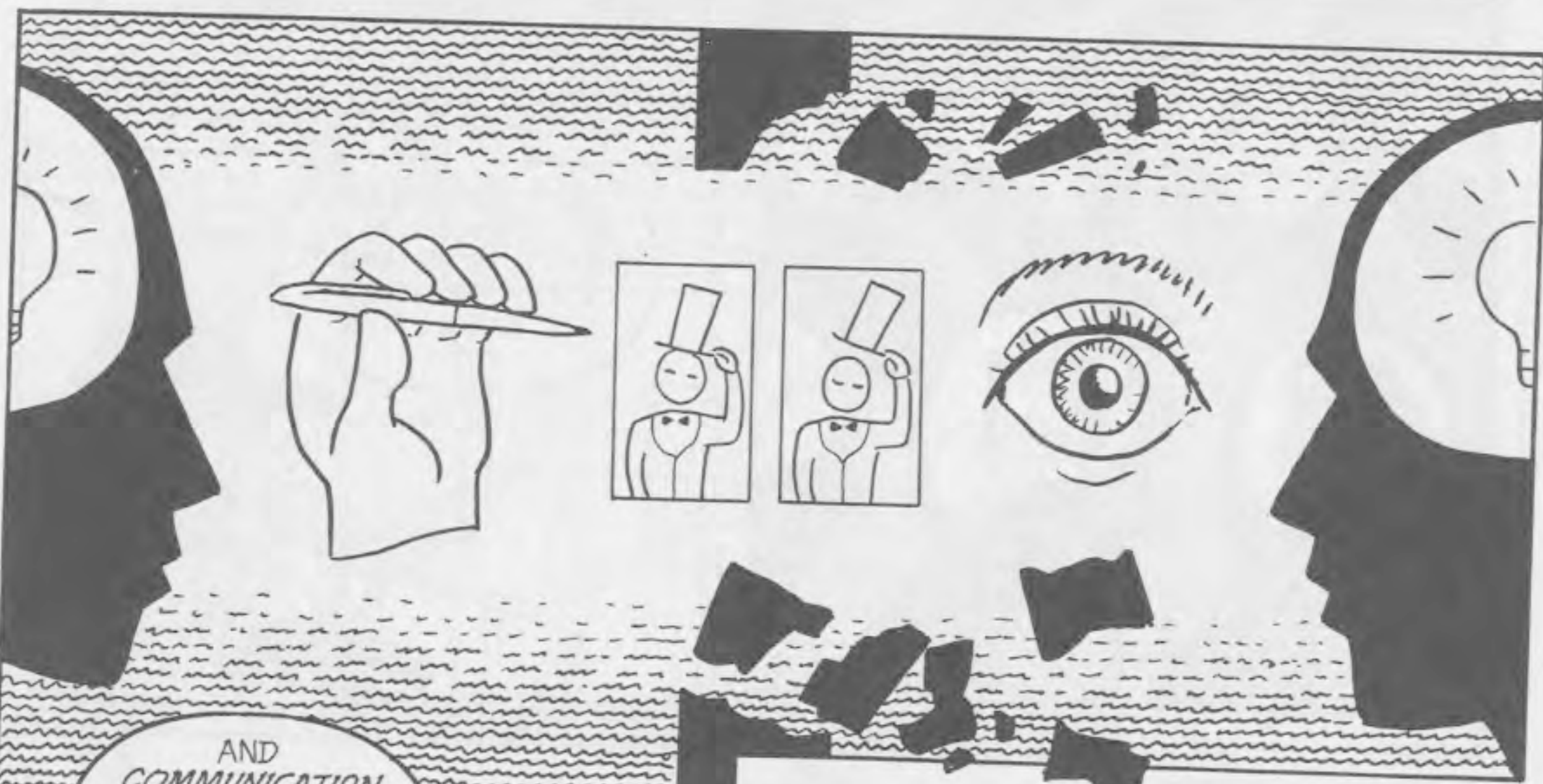
IN *COMICS* THE CONVERSION FOLLOWS A PATH FROM *MIND* TO *HAND* TO *PAPER* TO *EYE* TO *MIND.*



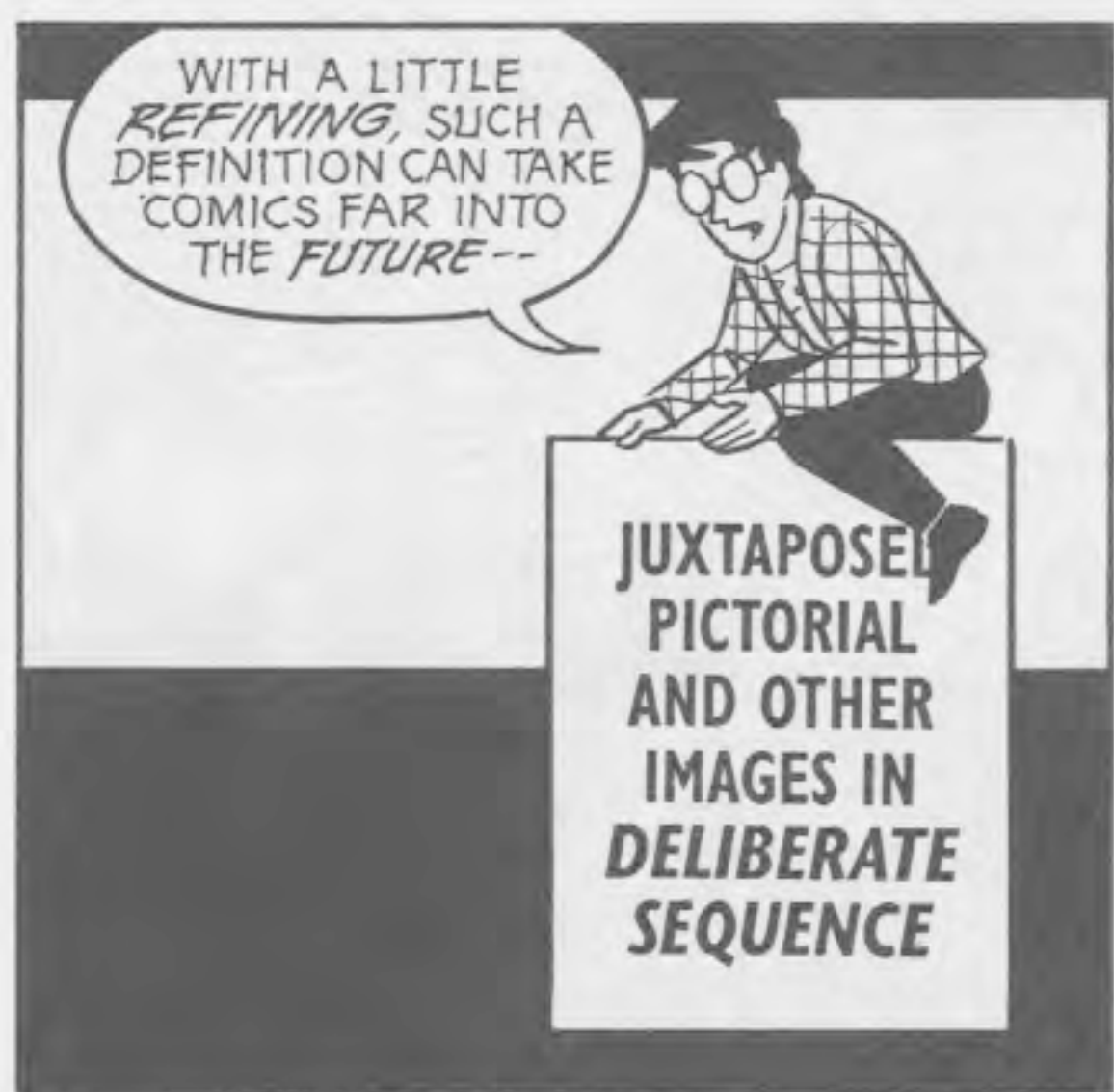
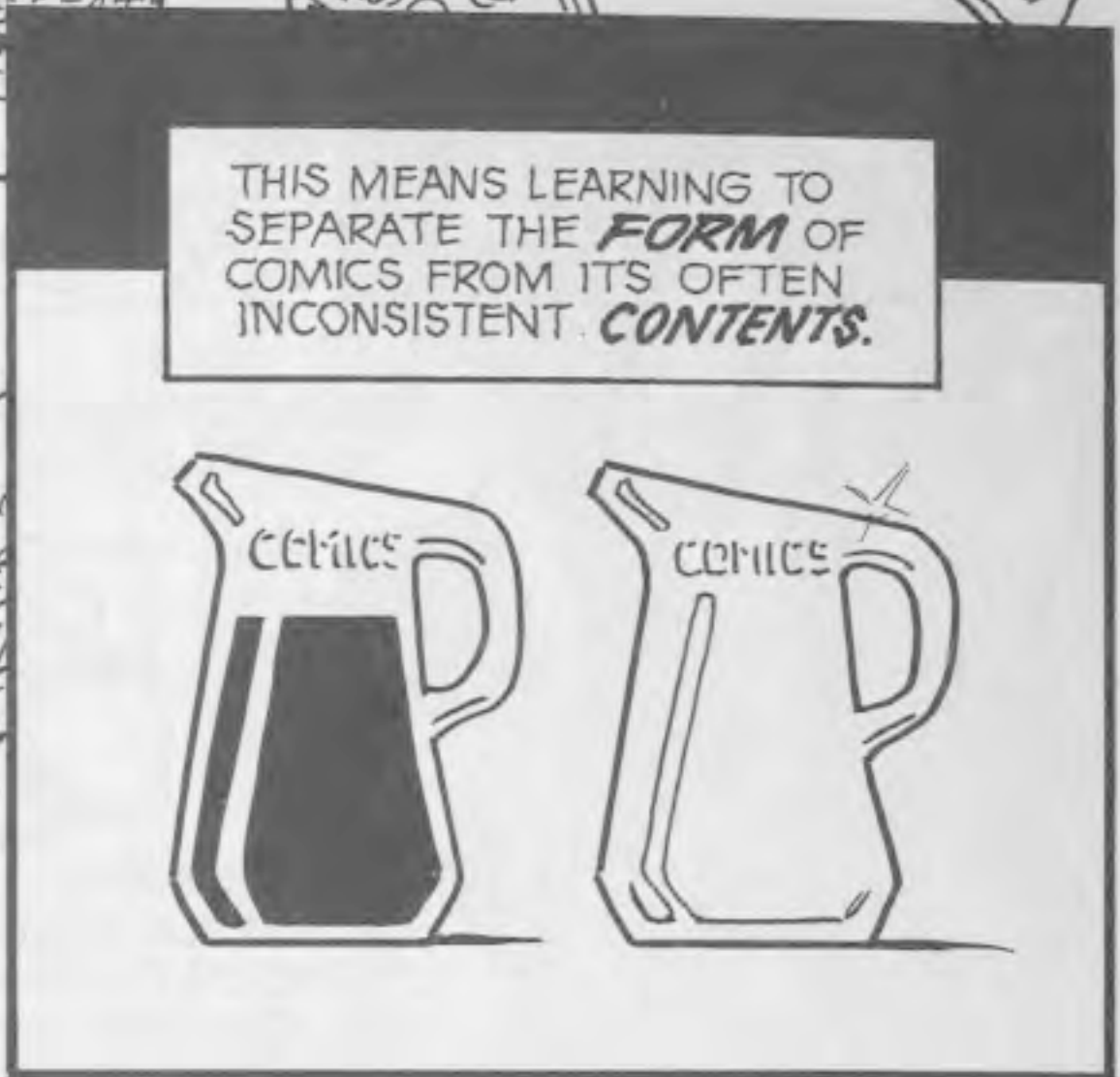
IDEALLY THE ARTIST'S "*MESSAGE*" WILL RUN THIS GAUNTLET WITHOUT BEING *AFFECTED* BY IT, BUT IN *PRACTICE* THIS IS RARELY THE CASE.



AND NO, THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE THESE TYPES OF PENS AND PENCILS.



AND **COMMUNICATION** IS ONLY EFFECTIVE WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THE **FORMS** THAT COMMUNICATION CAN TAKE.





THROUGH THE *WORKS* AND *WRITINGS* OF THESE NEGLECTED MASTERS, WE SEE THE *FIRST GLIMPSES* OF COMICS' *LIMITLESS POTENTIAL* AS AN ART FORM--



"...the picture-story, which critics disregard and scholars scarcely notice, has had great influence at all times, perhaps even more than written literature."

Rudolphe Topffer
1845

--*AND* THE ATTITUDES THAT WERE TO *OBSCURE* THAT POTENTIAL FOR *MANY YEARS TO COME!*

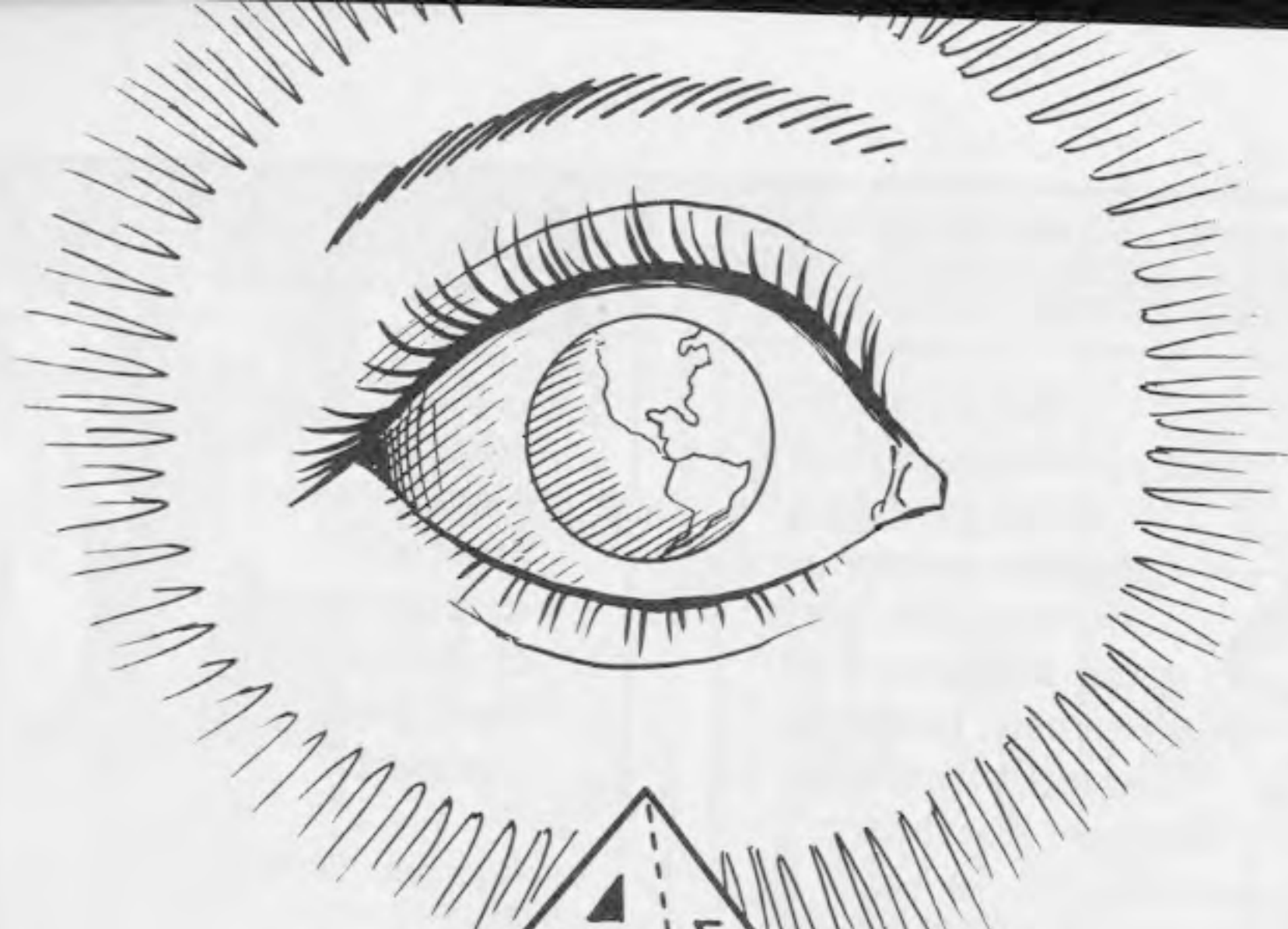


"...in addition, the picture-story appeals mainly to children and the lower classes..."

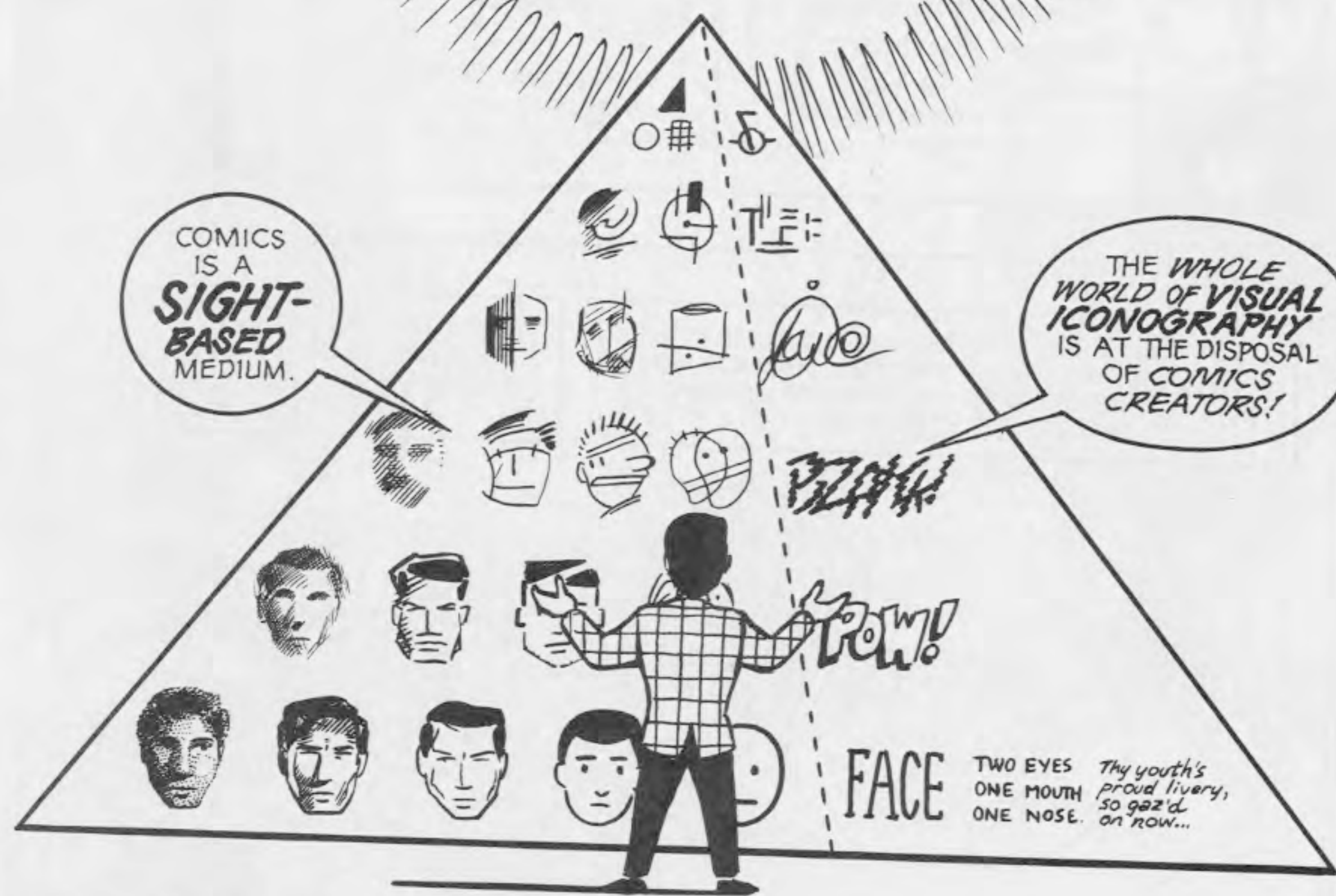
Rudolphe Topffer
1845

TRANSLATION BY E. WIESE.



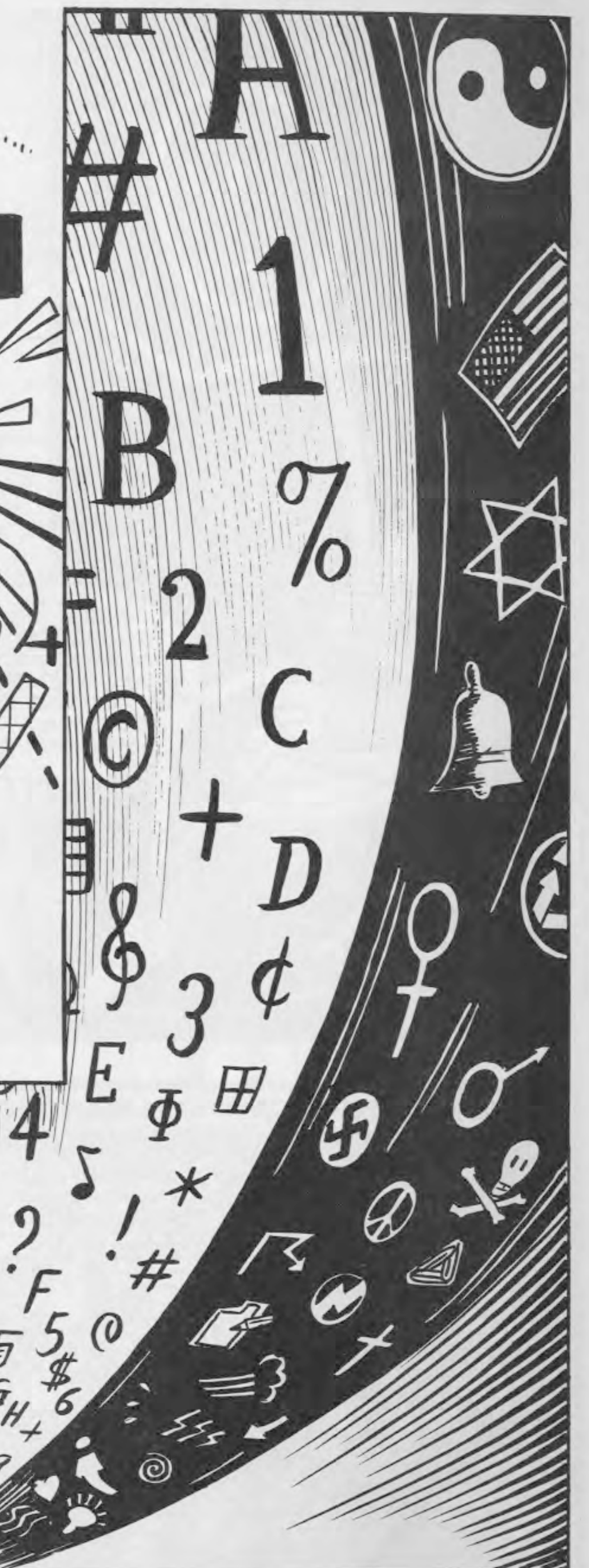
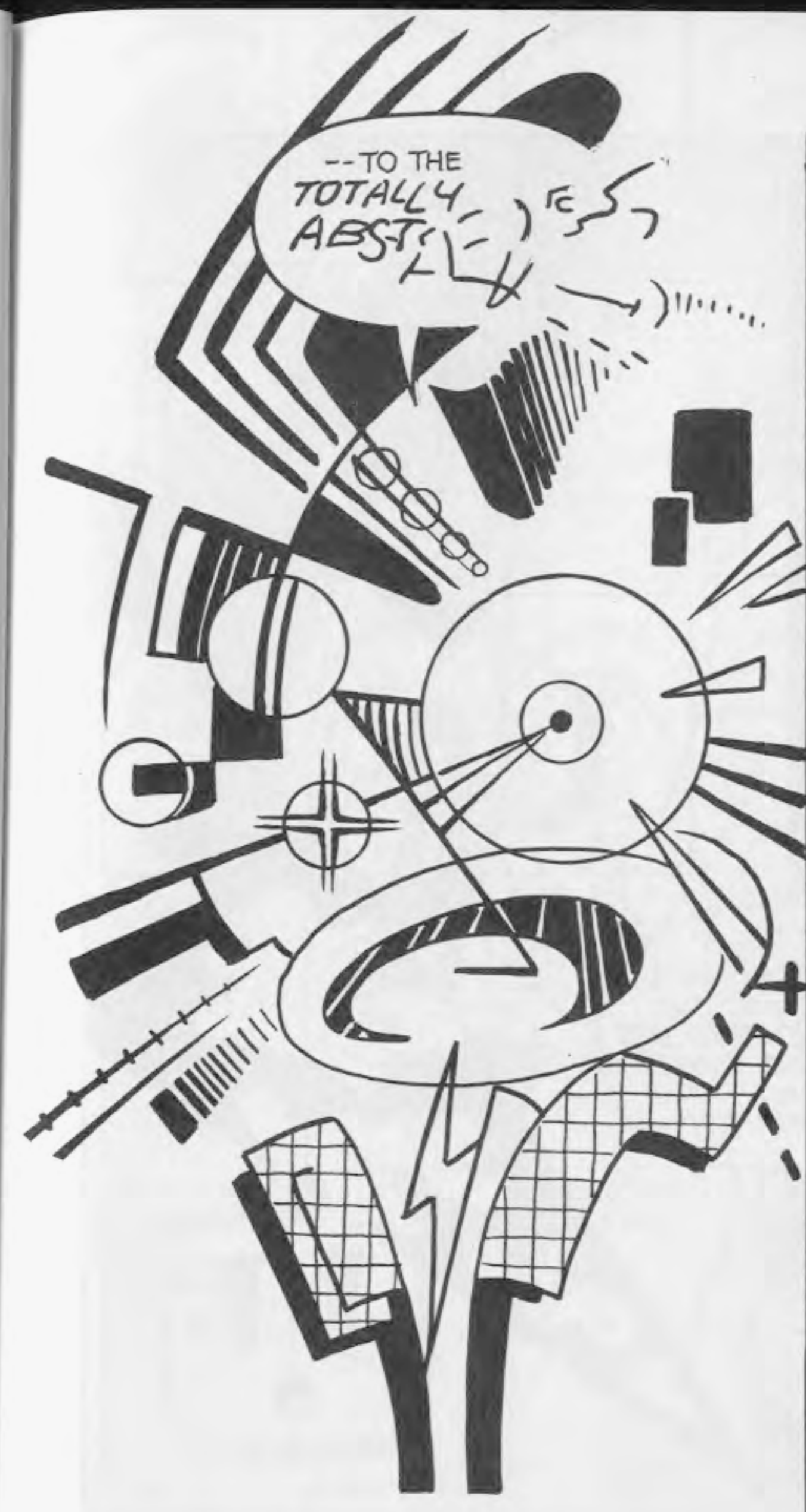


COMICS IS A SIGHT-BASED MEDIUM.



THE WHOLE WORLD OF VISUAL ICONOGRAPHY IS AT THE DISPOSAL OF COMICS CREATORS!

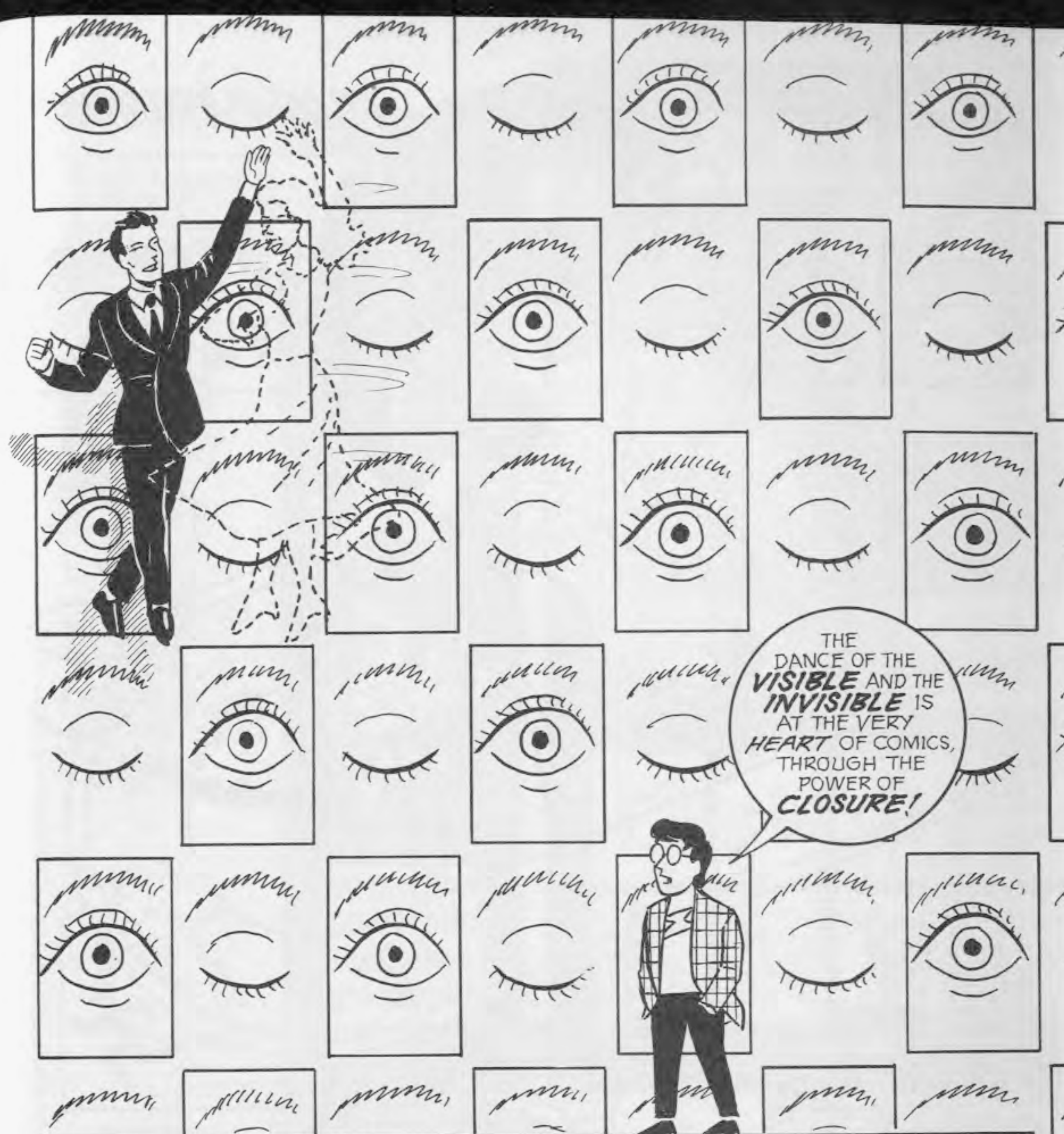
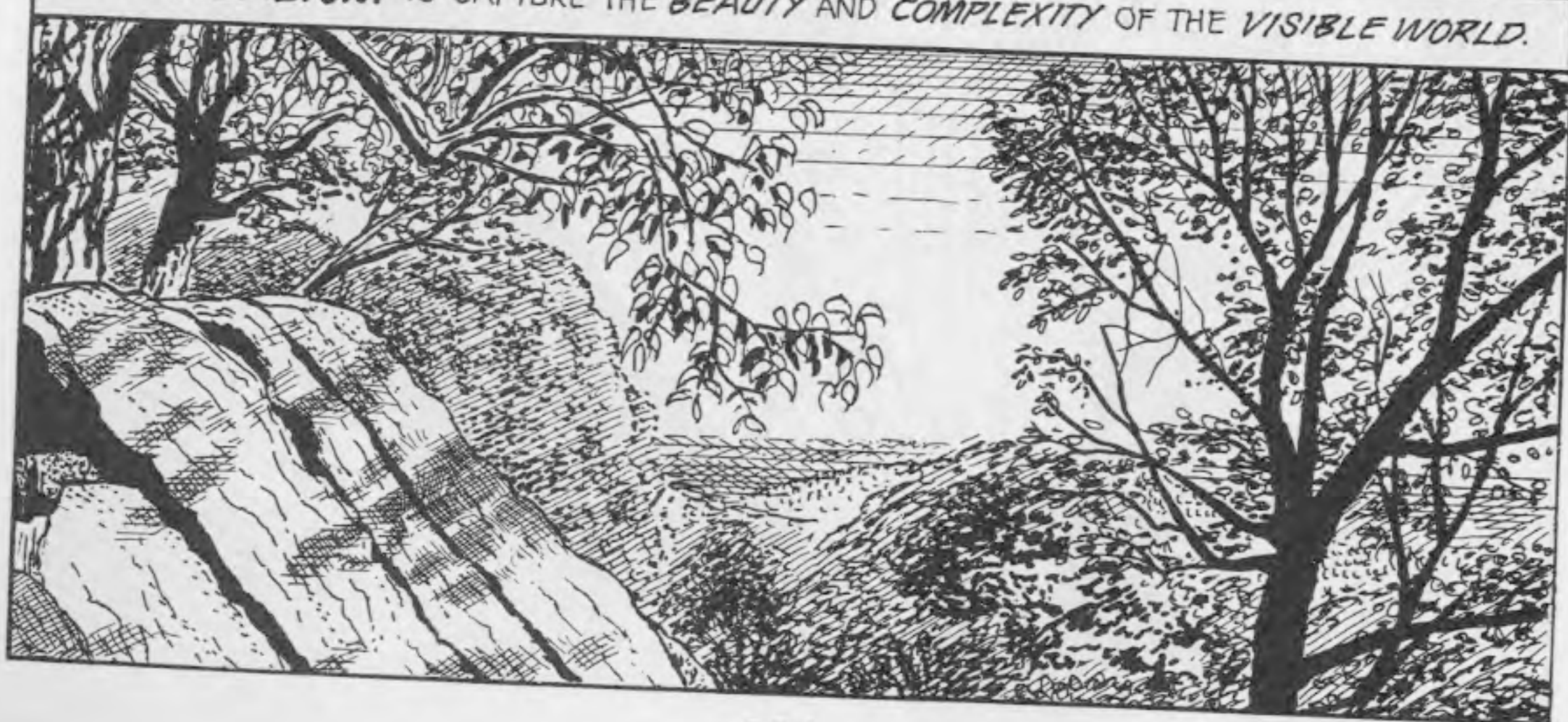
FACE TWO EYES ONE MOUTH ONE NOSE. Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on 'now...





THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, COMICS HAS HARNESSSED THE POWER OF **CARTOONS** TO COMMAND VIEWER INVOLVEMENT AND IDENTIFICATION--

--AND **REALISM** TO CAPTURE THE **BEAUTY** AND **COMPLEXITY** OF THE **VISIBLE** WORLD.



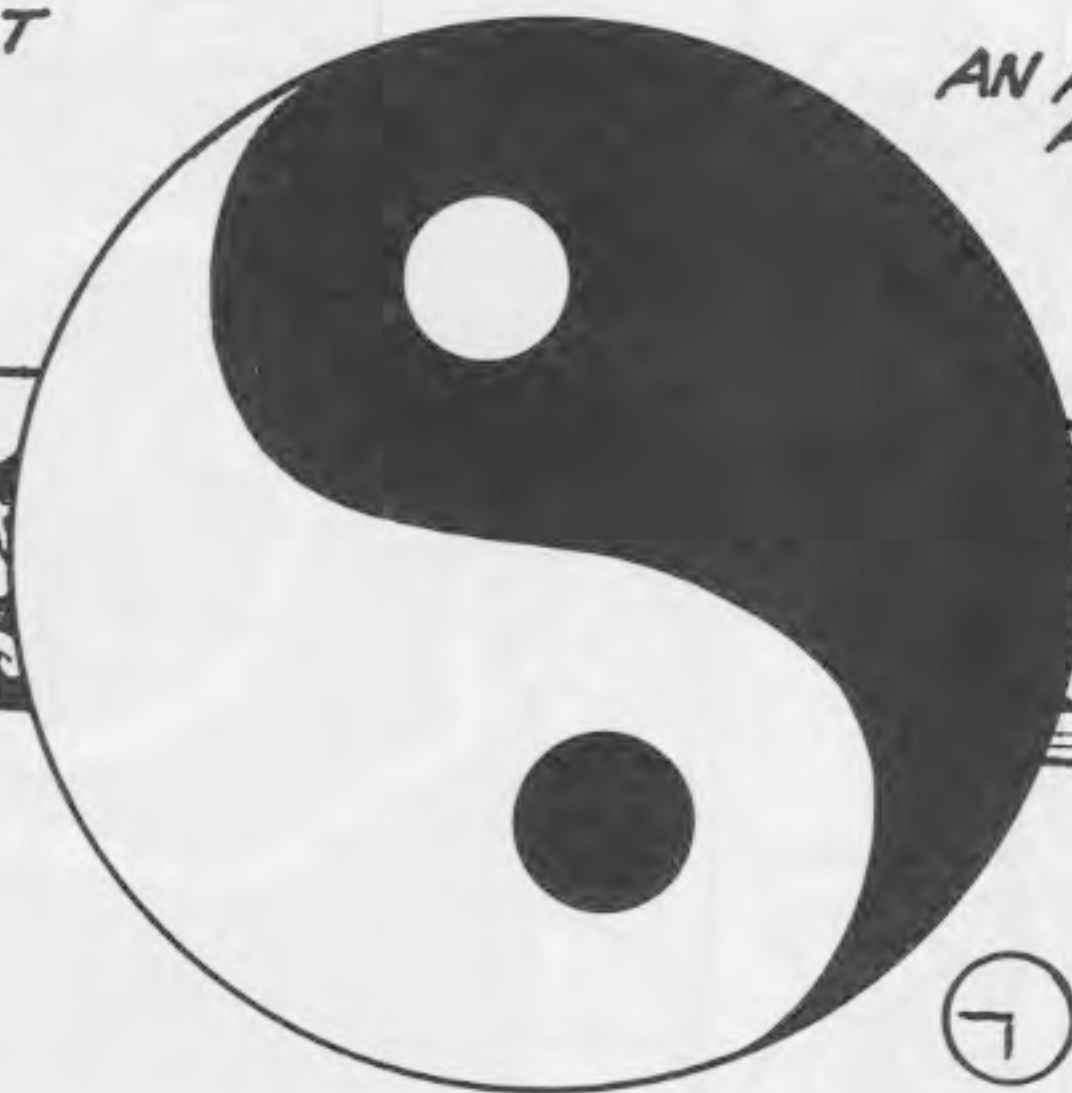
THE DANCE OF THE **VISIBLE** AND THE **INVISIBLE** IS AT THE VERY HEART OF COMICS, THROUGH THE POWER OF **CLOSURE!**



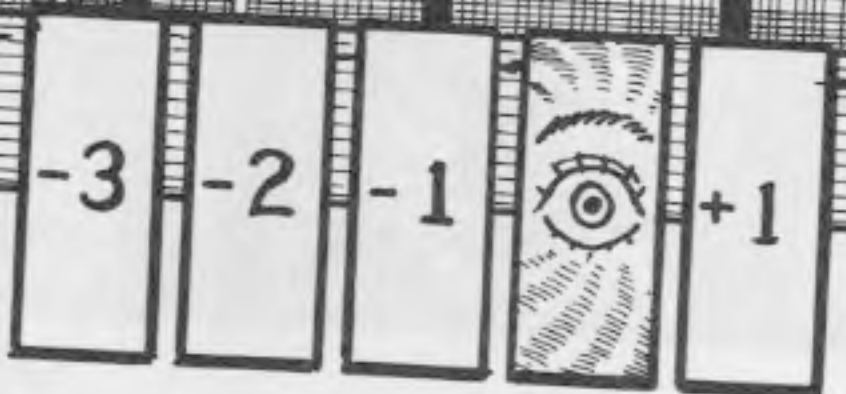
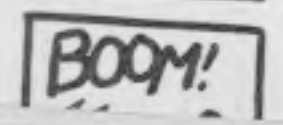
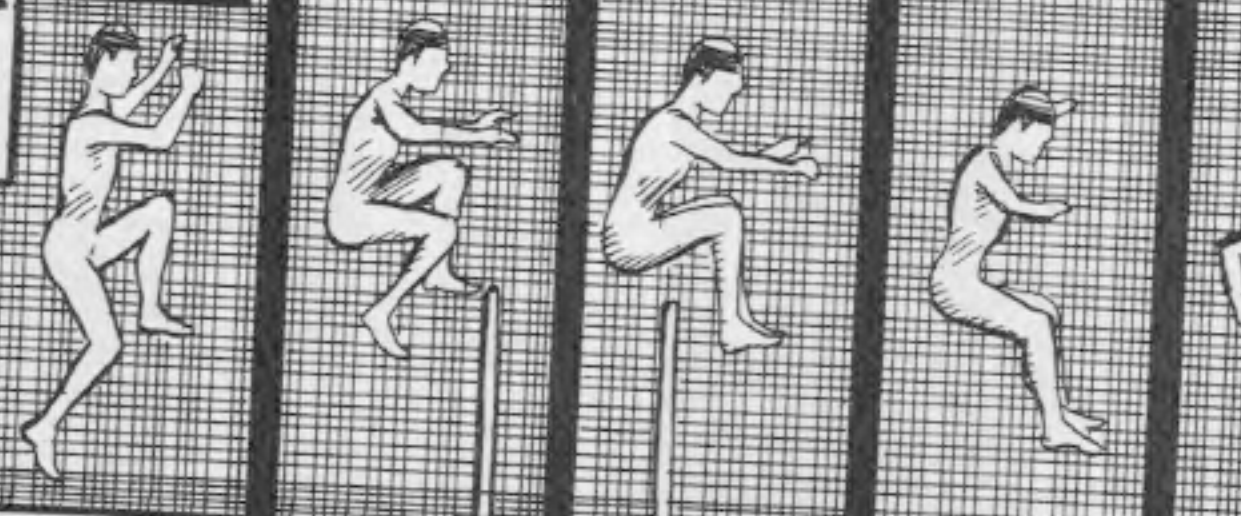
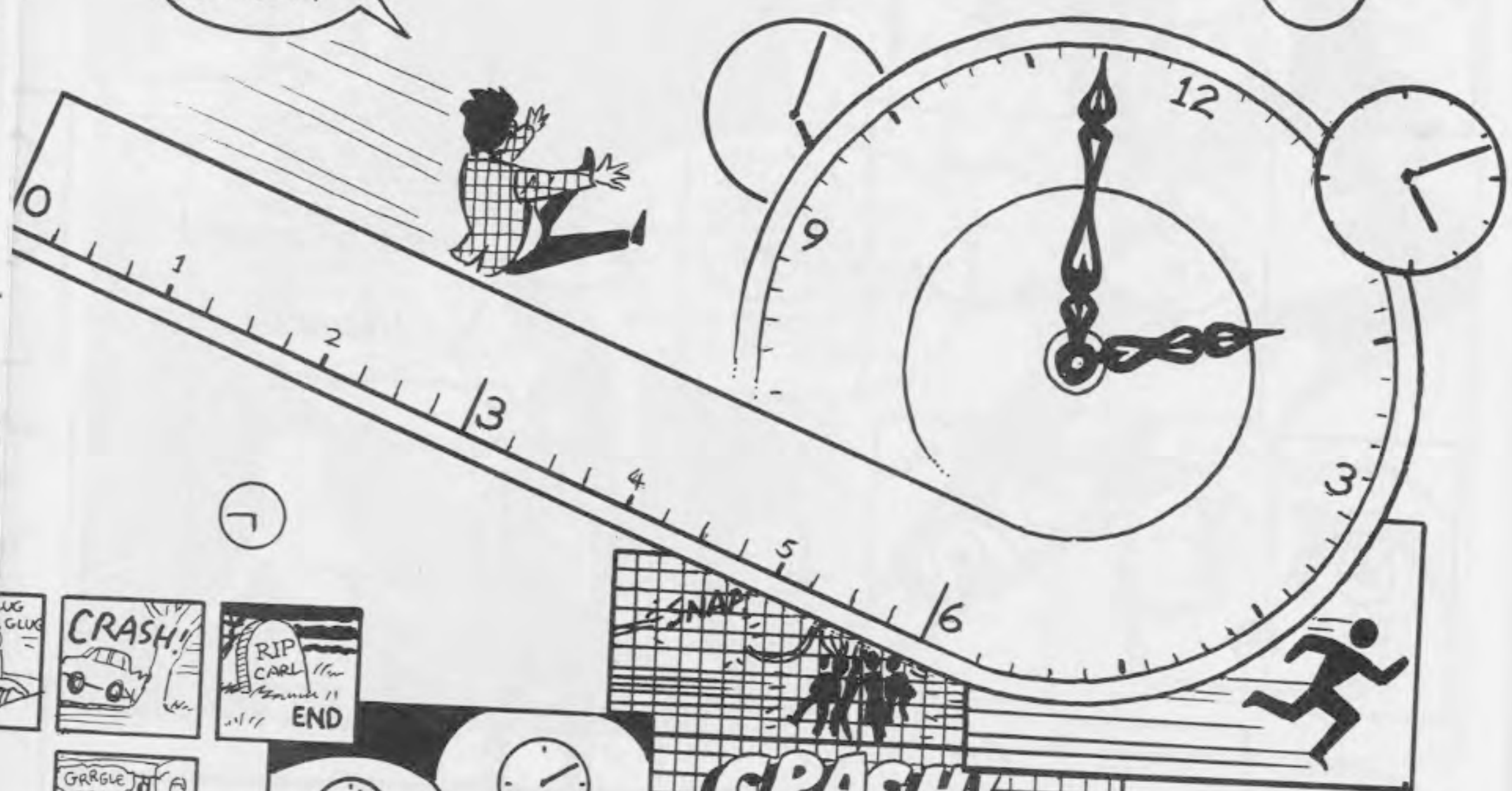
CREATOR AND READER ARE **PARTNERS IN THE INVISIBLE** CREATING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING, TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

COMICS IS A GREAT
BALANCING ACT.

AN ART AS SUBTRACTIVE
AS IT IS ADDITIVE--



--AND A
BAFFLING
TWO-STEP OF
TIME AND
SPACE!



BUT NOWHERE IS THE BALANCE
BETWEEN THE *VISIBLE* AND THE
INVISIBLE MORE *CONSPICUOUS*
THAN IN *PICTURES* AND *WORDS*...



eto genuit li
im 2 nepthu
challum d
ijn 2 capth
uit frdonem



with unravished
ild of silorca
n, who canst to
re sweetly the
id legend have
mortale, of lo
or the dales o
gods are the



FACE

...A SPLIT FORETOLD IN THE
BIRTH OF ART ITSELF--

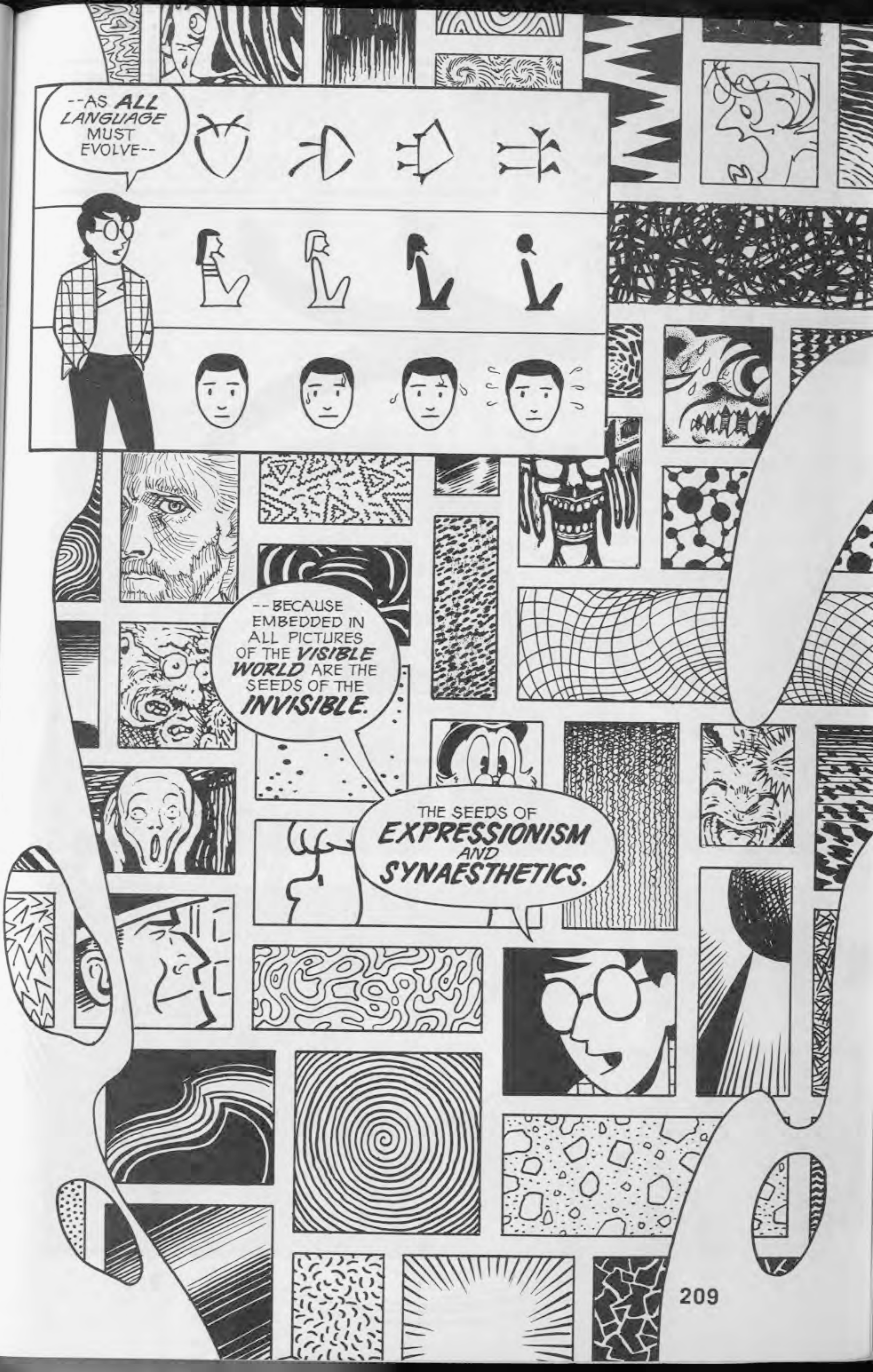
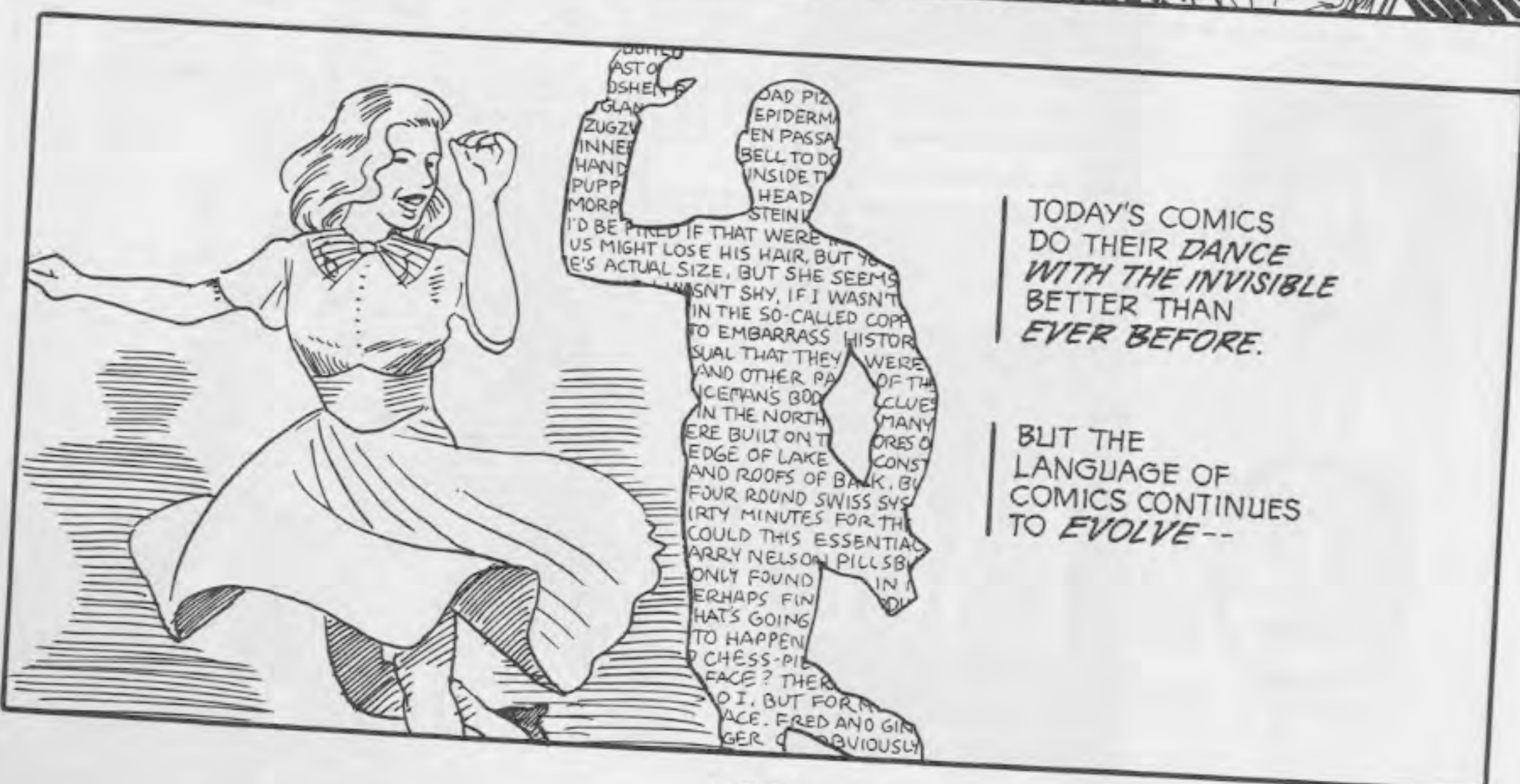


--BEGIN
IN EARNEST
OVER *5,000*
YEARS AGO--

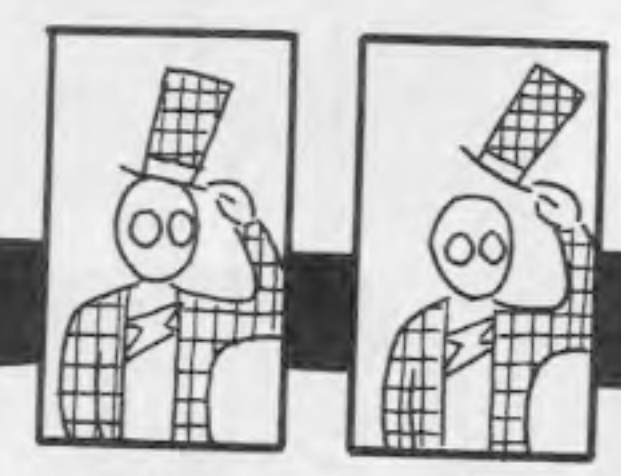
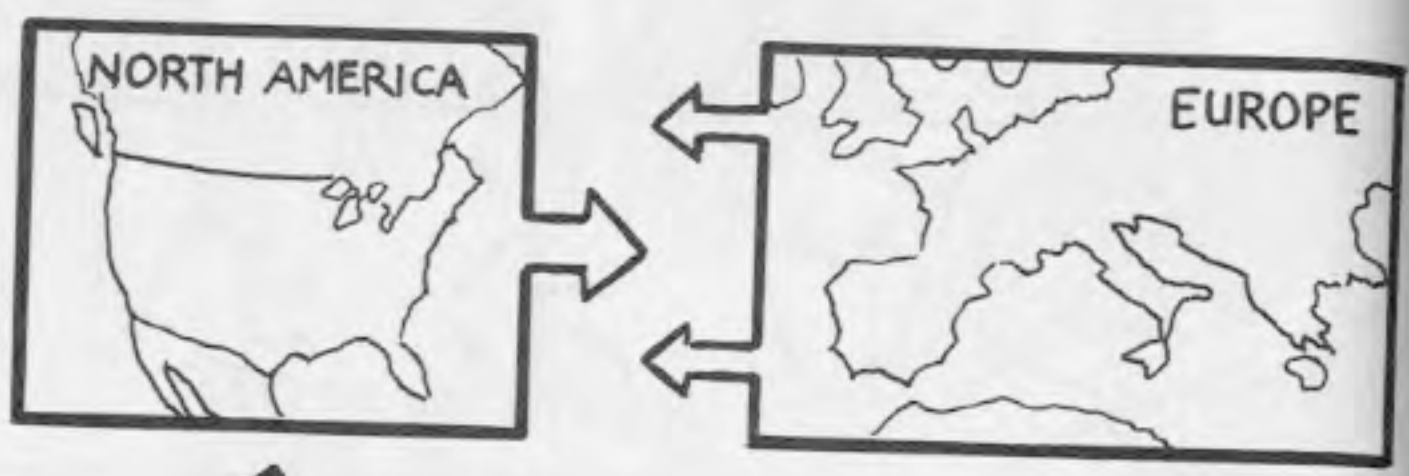


-- AND GROWN *WIDER AND WIDER* FOR
CENTURIES UNTIL EVENTUALLY, ALL
CONNECTION WAS LOST--





BUT EVOLUTION IS A TRICKY THING. SPECIES EVOLVE DIFFERENTLY IN DIFFERENT CLIMATES.



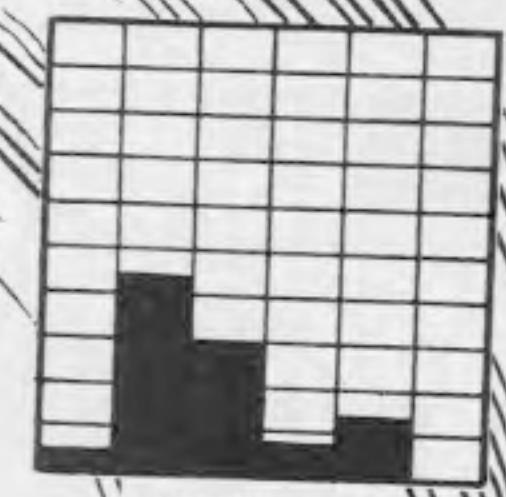
SO IT WAS IN JAPAN WHERE COMICS DEVELOPED IN RELATIVE ISOLATION, SPAWNING A HOST OF UNIQUE APPROACHES TO MAKING COMICS.



COLLAGE



EXPRESSIONISM



STORYTELLING



WORD-PICTURE LINKAGE



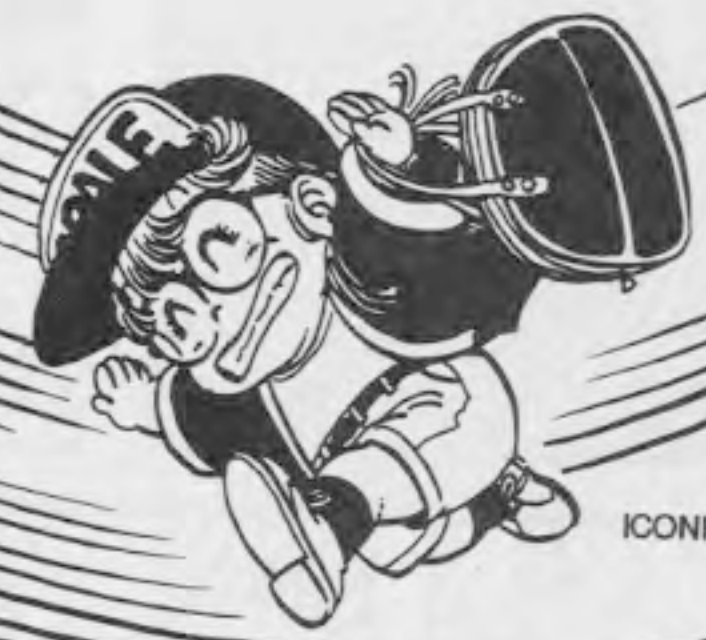
JAPAN



FORMATS



SUBJECTIVE MOTION



ICONIC CHARACTERS



THE "MASKING" EFFECT



AS COMICS GROWS INTO THE NEXT CENTURY, CREATORS WILL ASPIRE TO MANY HIGHER GOALS THAN APPEALING TO THE "LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR."



IGNORANCE AND SHORT-SIGHTED BUSINESS PRACTICES WILL NO DOUBT OBSCURE THE POSSIBILITIES OF COMICS FROM TIME TO TIME AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE.



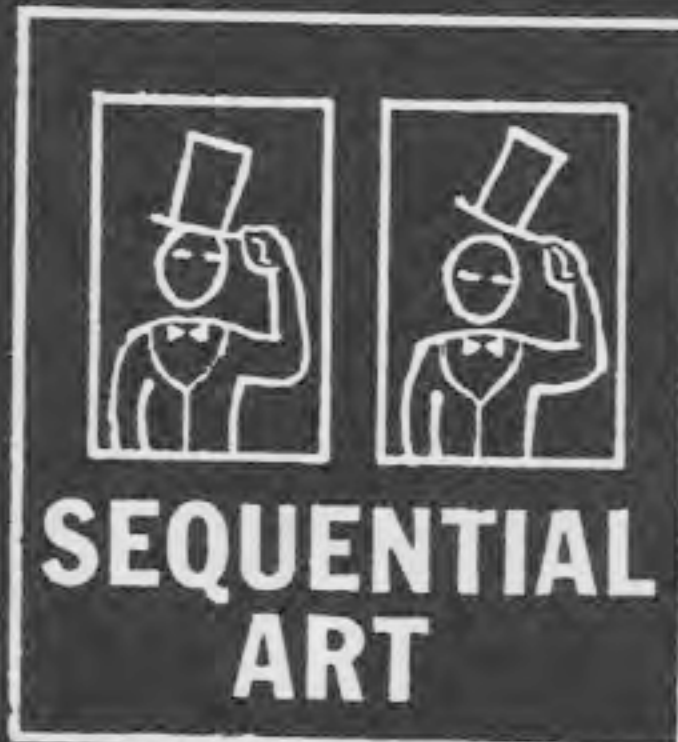
BUT THE TRUTH ABOUT COMICS CAN'T STAY HIDDEN FROM VIEW FOREVER AND SOONER OR LATER--



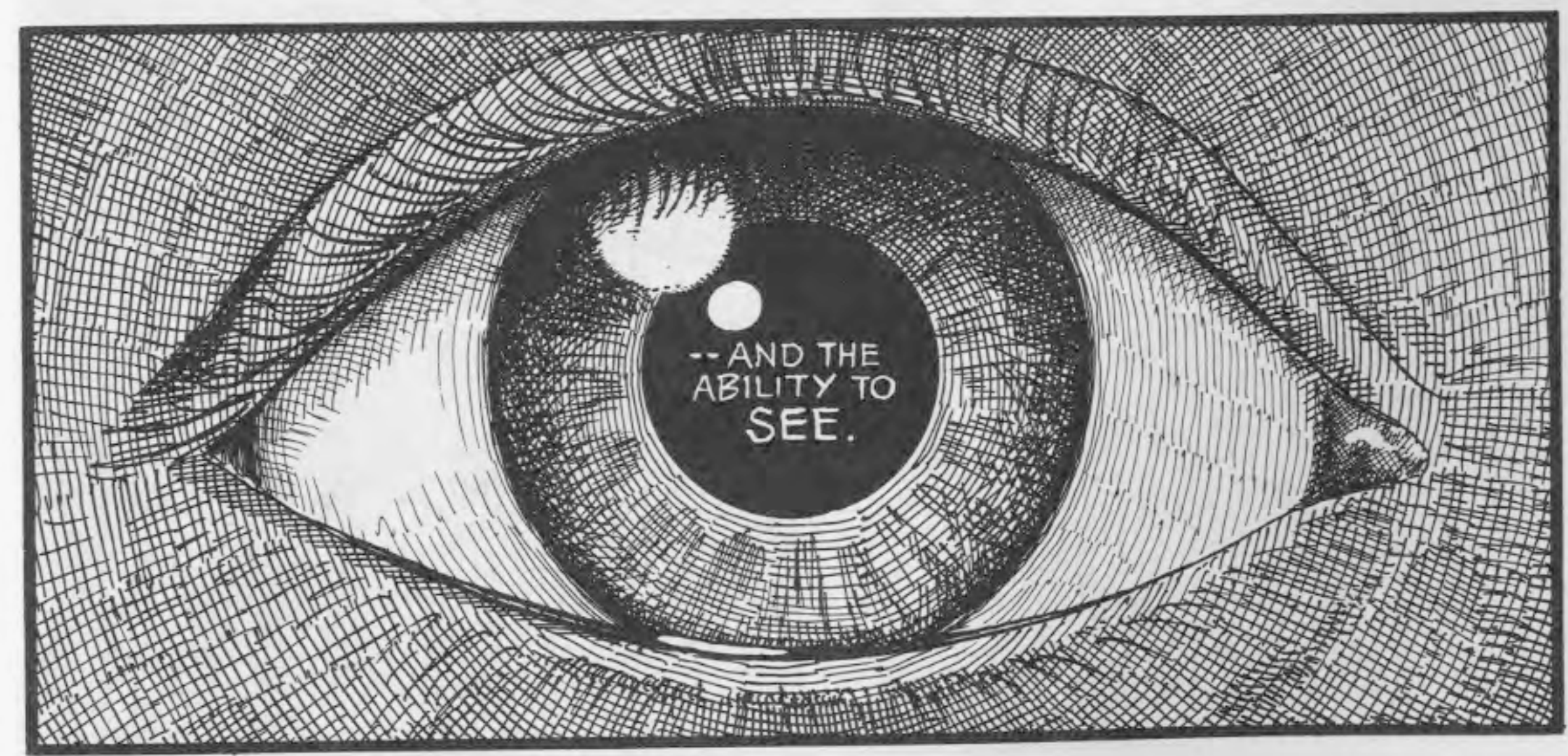
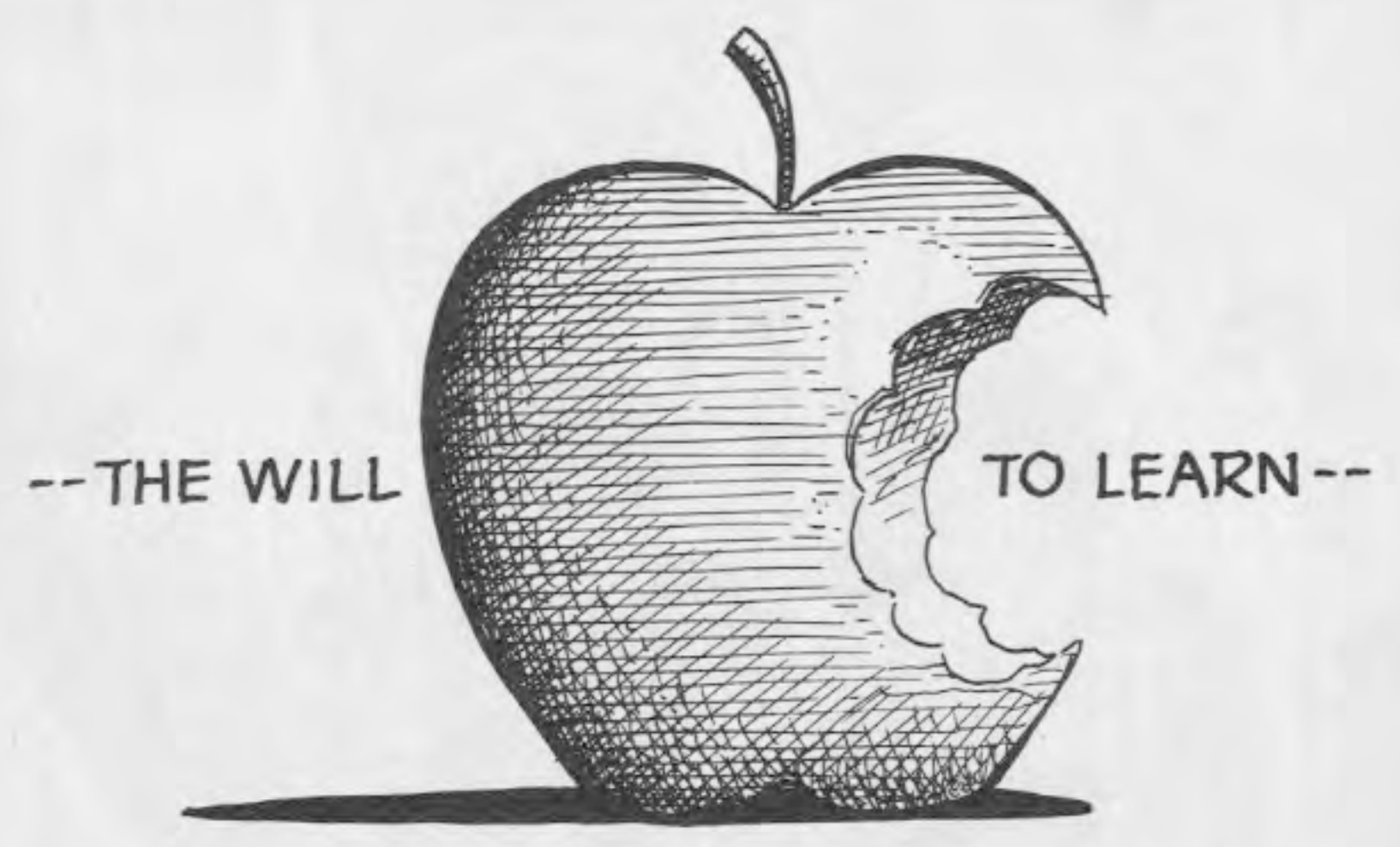
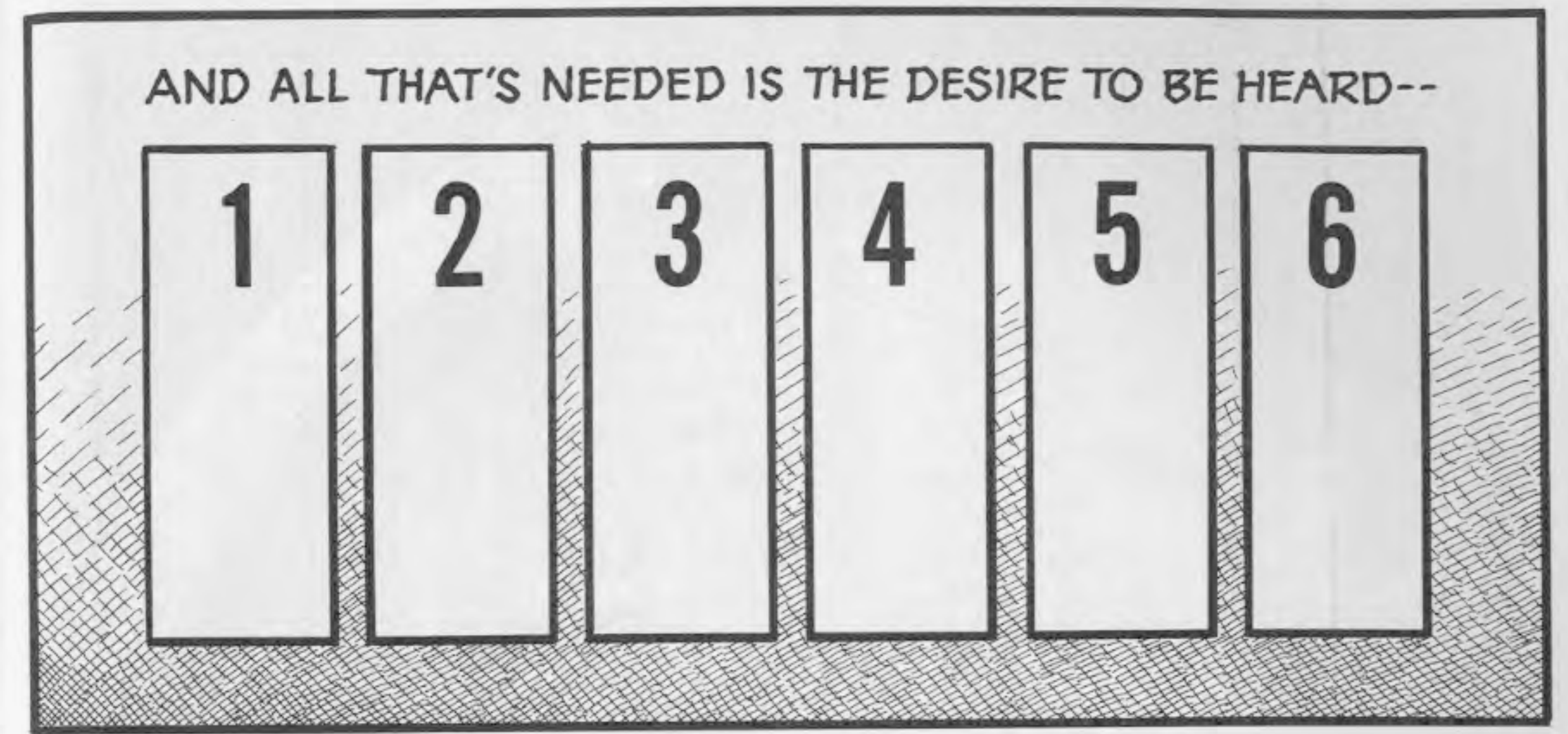
--THE TRUTH WILL SHINE THROUGH!

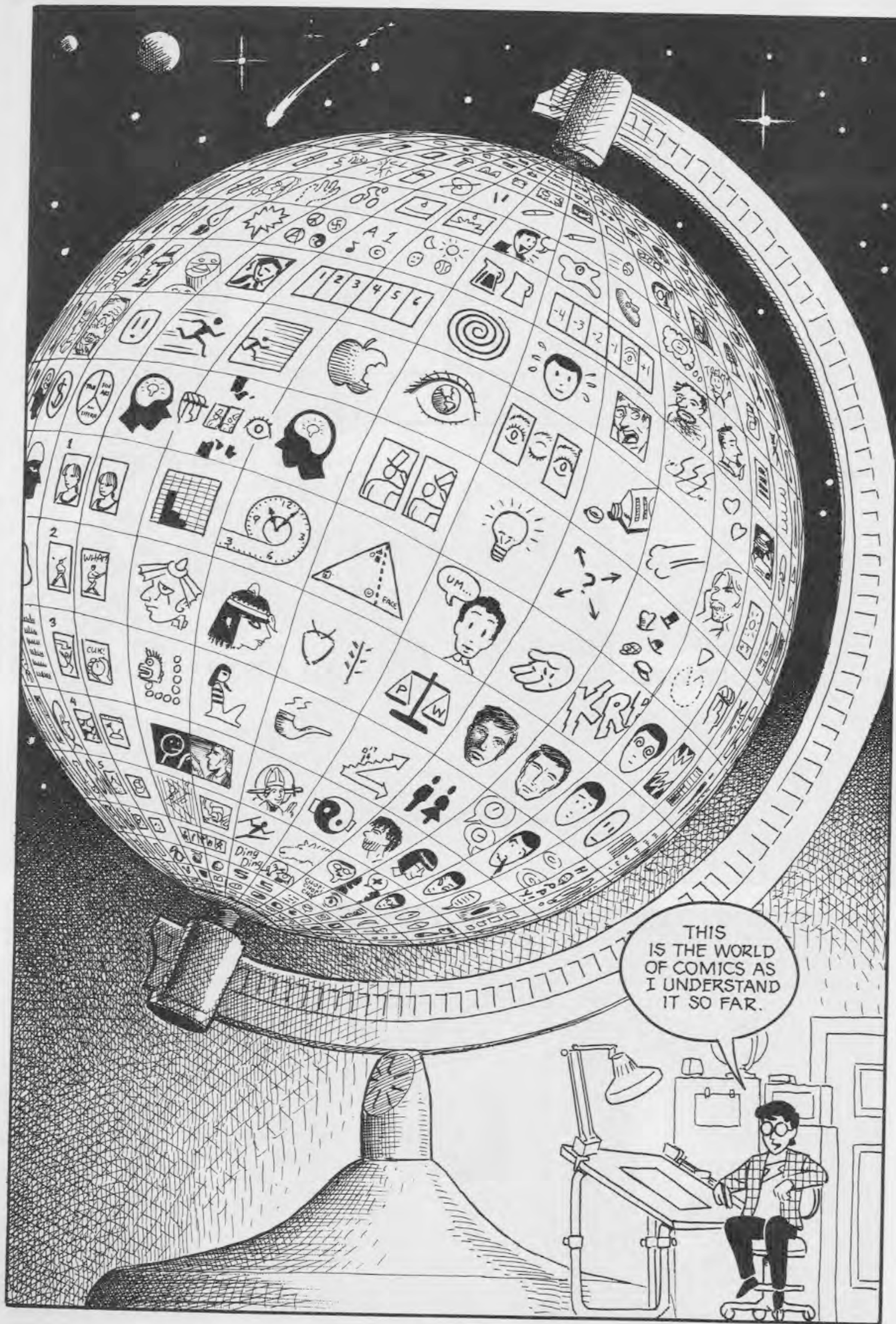


COMICS OFFERS
TREMENDOUS
RESOURCES TO
ALL WRITERS
AND ARTISTS:
FAITHFULNESS,
CONTROL, A
CHANCE TO BE
HEARD FAR AND
WIDE WITHOUT
FEAR OF
COMPROMISE...



IT OFFERS
RANGE AND
VERSATILITY
WITH ALL THE
POTENTIAL IMAGERY
OF FILM AND
PAINTING
PLUS THE
INTIMACY
OF THE
WRITTEN
WORD.





col
'92

"In one lucid, well-designed chapter after another, he guides us through the elements of comics style, and . . . how words combine with pictures to work their singular magic. When the 215-page journey is finally over, most readers will find it difficult to look at comics in quite the same way ever again."

—GARRY TRUDEAU

NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

TAKE A MAGIC CARPET RIDE THROUGH THE HIDDEN WORLDS OF COMICS STORYTELLING.

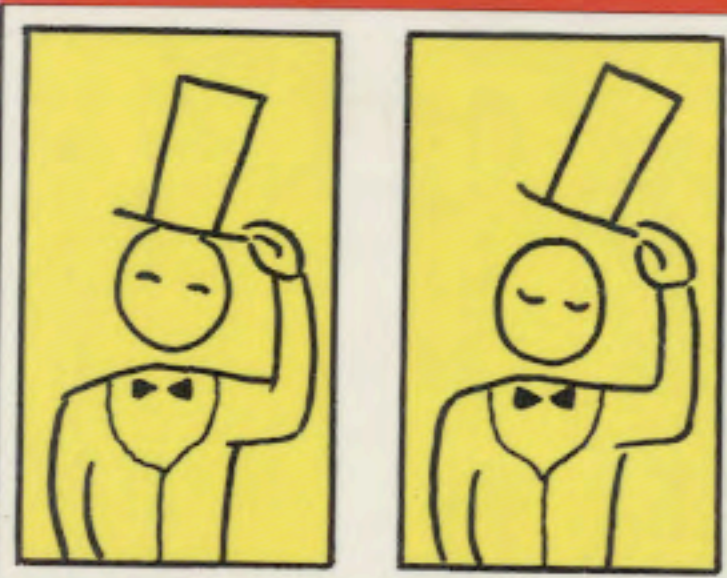
"AFTER COLLEGE, I PURSUED A CAREER IN HIGH FINANCE."



WITNESS A HISTORY MORE THAN 3,000 YEARS OLD.



EXPLORE THE SECRETS BETWEEN THE PANELS.



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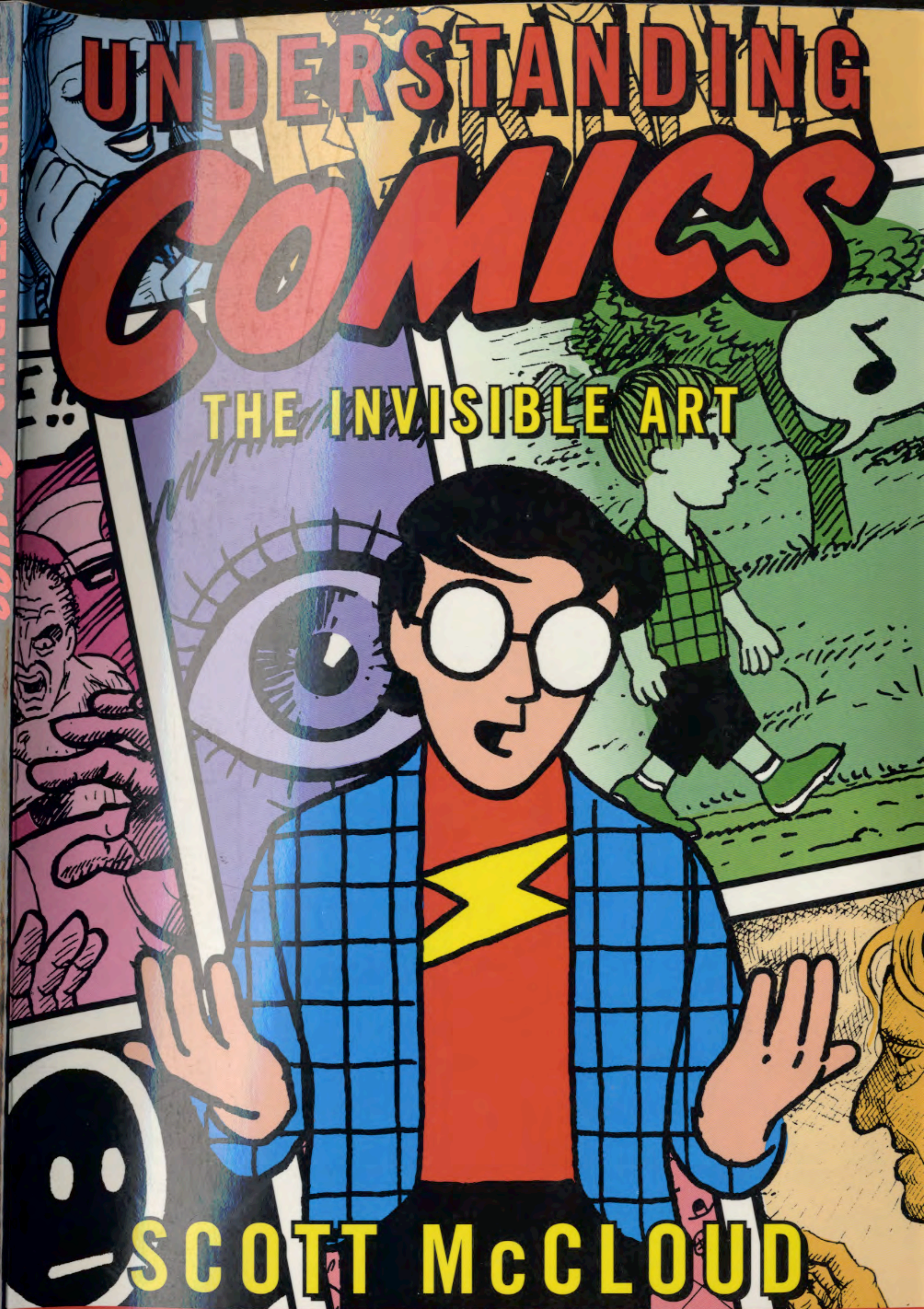
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