

CHAPTER TWO

THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS.

HERE'S A PAINTING
BY MAGRITTE CALLED "THE
TREACHERY OF IMAGES."



THE INSCRIPTION IS IN
FRENCH. *TRANSLATED*, IT MEANS
"THIS IS NOT A PIPE."



AND
INDEED
THIS IS **NOT**
A PIPE.

THIS IS A
PAINTING
OF A PIPE.



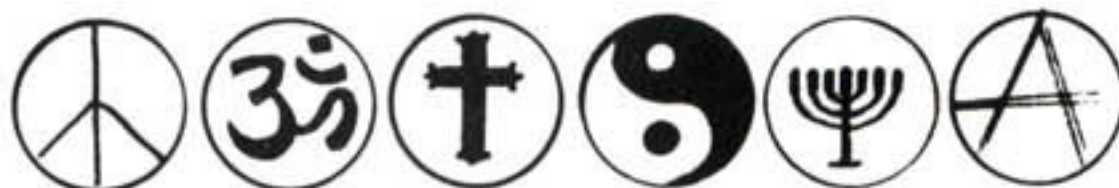
RIGHT?







THIS IS NOT A MAN.



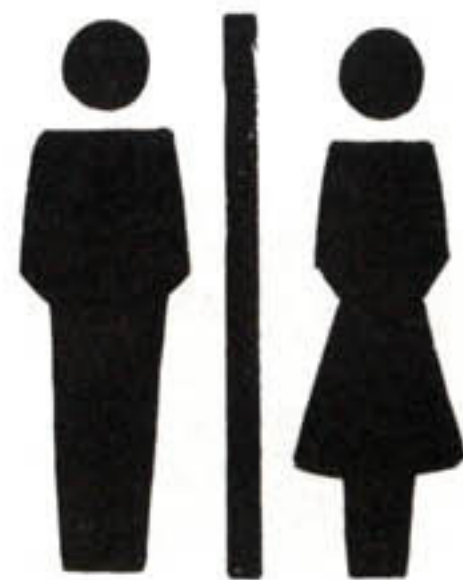
THESE ARE NOT IDEAS.



THIS IS NOT A COUNTRY.



THIS IS NOT A LEAF



THESE ARE NOT PEOPLE.



THIS IS NOT A COW.



THIS IS NOT MY VOICE.



THIS IS NOT MUSIC.



THESE ARE NOT FLOWERS.



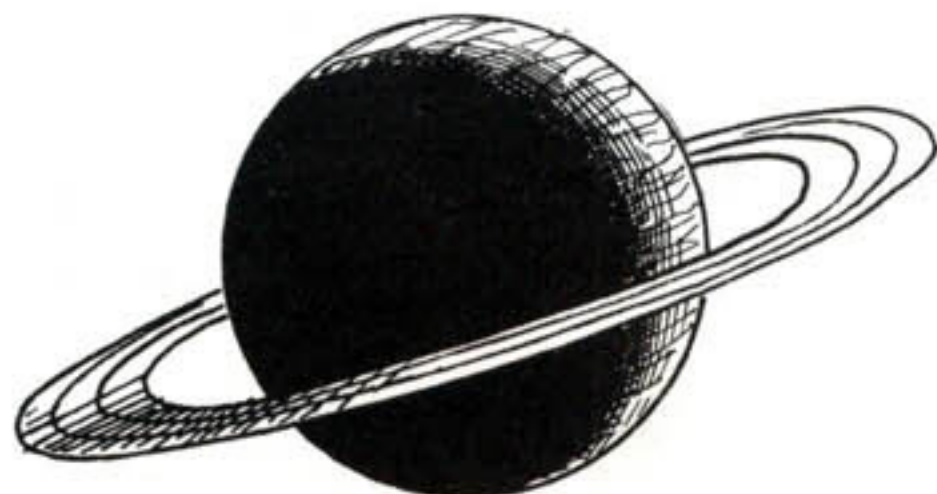
THIS IS NOT SOUND.



THIS IS NOT ME.



THIS IS NOT LAW.



THIS IS NOT A PLANET.



THIS IS NOT FOOD.



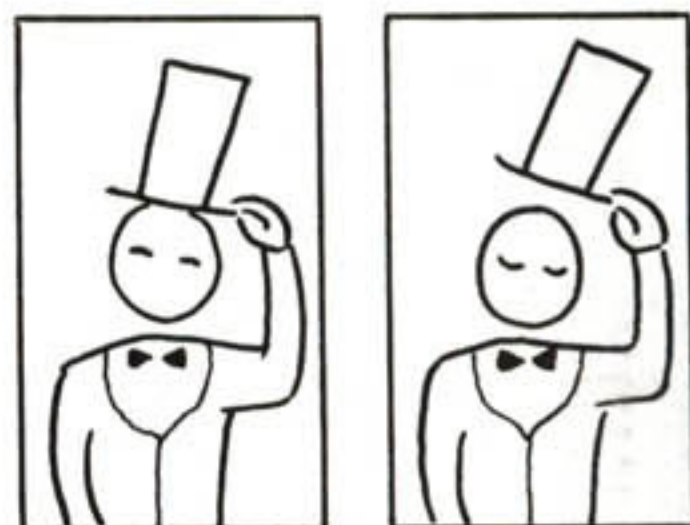
THIS IS NOT A CAR.



THIS IS NOT A COMPANY.



THIS IS NOT A FACE.



THESE ARE NOT SEPARATE MOMENTS.

NOW, THE WORD *ICON* MEANS MANY THINGS.

THIS IS PAPER

THIS IS *INK* ON PAPER



FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS CHAPTER, I'M USING THE WORD "*ICON*" TO MEAN ANY IMAGE USED TO REPRESENT A PERSON, PLACE, THING OR *IDEA*.

ICON



THAT'S A BIT BROADER THAN THE DEFINITION IN MY DICTIONARY, BUT IT'S THE CLOSEST THING TO WHAT I NEED HERE.

"SYMBOL" IS A BIT TOO *LOADED* FOR ME.



THE SORTS OF IMAGES WE USUALLY *CALL* SYMBOLS ARE ONE *CATEGORY* OF *ICON*, HOWEVER.



THESE ARE THE IMAGES WE USE TO REPRESENT *CONCEPTS*, *IDEAS* AND *PHILOSOPHIES*.



THEN THERE ARE THE *ICONS* OF *LANGUAGE*, *SCIENCE* AND *COMMUNICATION*.



ICONS OF THE *PRACTICAL* REALM.



AND FINALLY, THE *ICONS* WE *CALL* *PICTURES*: IMAGES DESIGNED TO ACTUALLY *RESEMBLE* THEIR SUBJECTS.



BUT AS *RESEMBLANCE* VARIES, SO DOES THE *LEVEL* OF *ICONIC* CONTENT.

OR TO PUT IT SOMEWHAT *CLUMSILY*, SOME *PICTURES* ARE JUST MORE *ICONIC* THAN OTHERS.



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*.



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

EYE



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!



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



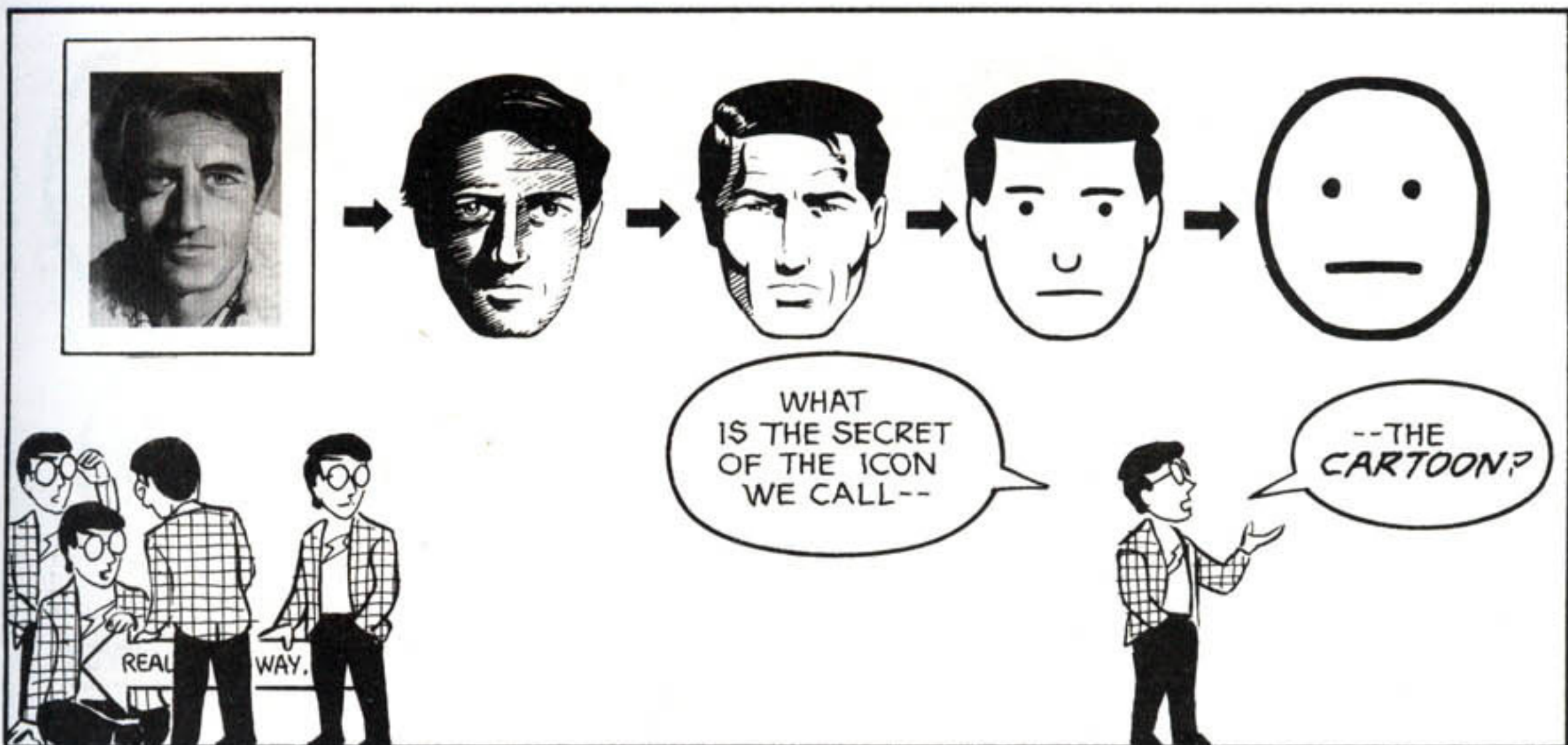
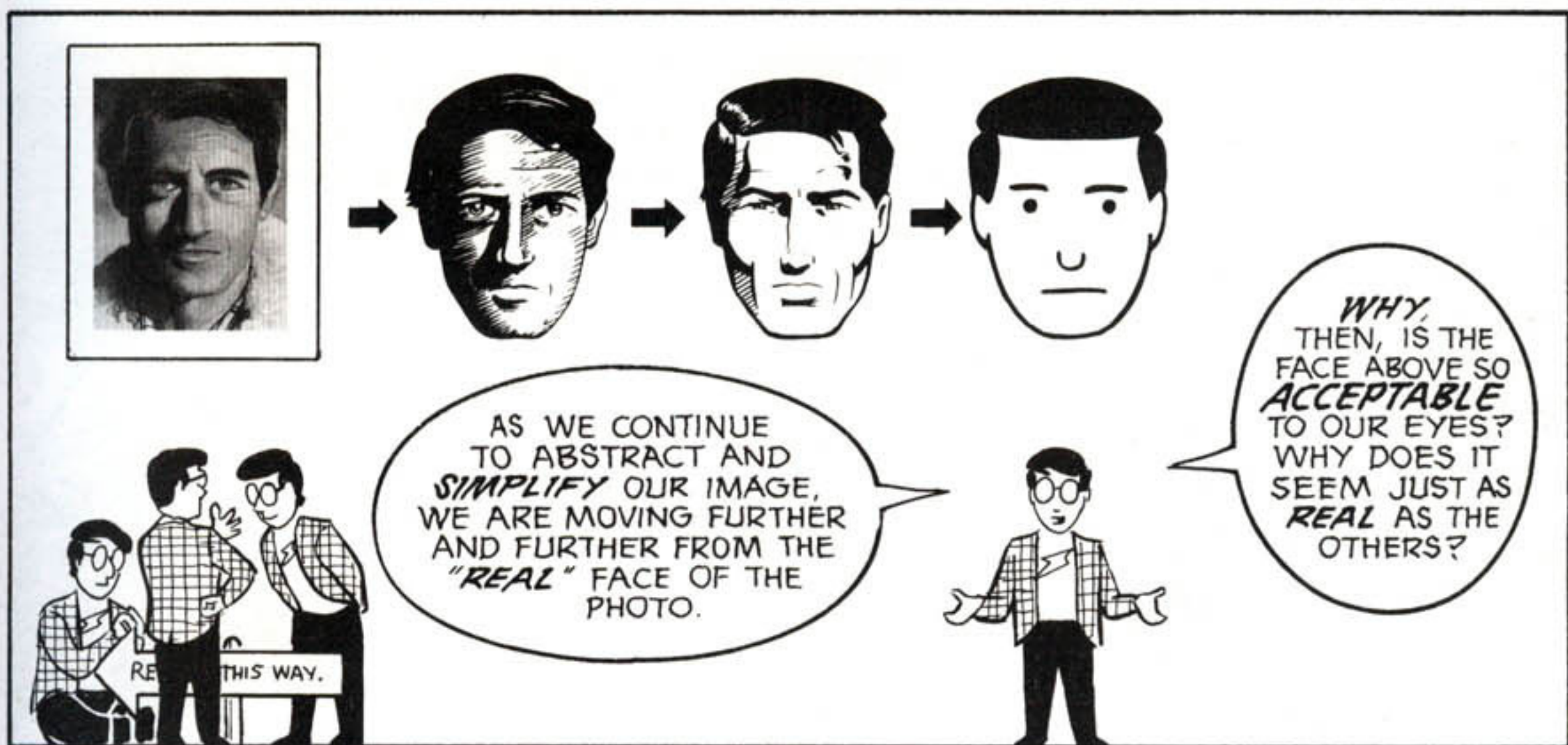
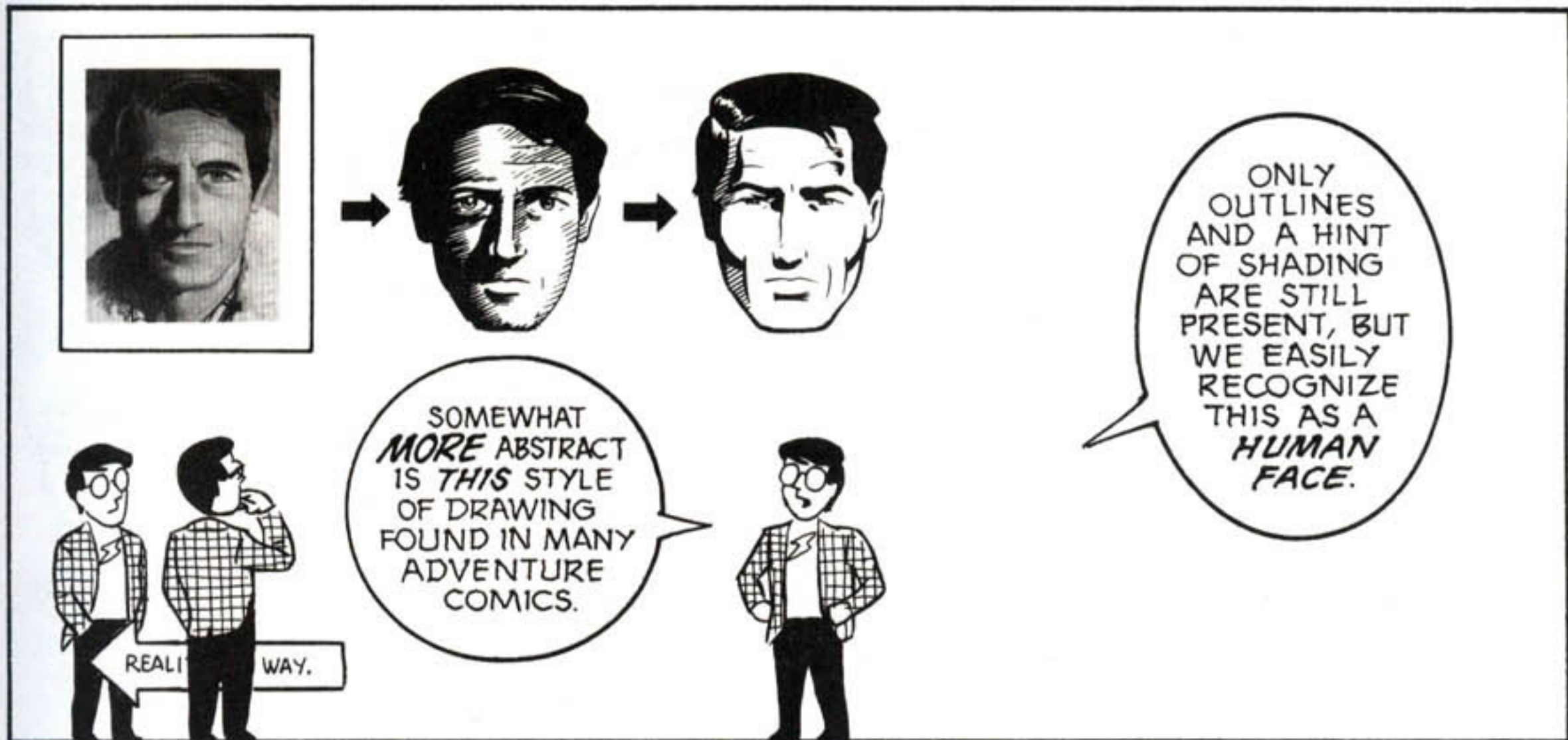
THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT SET THESE APART FROM ACTUAL *FACES*--THEY'RE SMALLER, FLATTER, LESS *DETAILED*, THEY DON'T MOVE. THEY LACK COLOR--BUT AS PICTORIAL ICONS GO, THEY ARE PRETTY "*REALISTIC*."

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



REALITY THIS WAY.





FILM CRITICS WILL SOMETIMES DESCRIBE A *LIVE-ACTION* FILM AS A "CARTOON" TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE STRIPPED-DOWN *INTENSITY* OF A SIMPLE STORY OR VISUAL STYLE.



THOUGH THE TERM IS OFTEN USED *DISPARAGINGLY*, IT CAN BE EQUALLY WELL APPLIED TO MANY *TIME-TESTED CLASSICS*. SIMPLIFYING CHARACTERS AND IMAGES TOWARD A *PURPOSE* CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR STORYTELLING IN *ANY* MEDIUM.



THE ABILITY OF CARTOONS TO *FOCUS* OUR ATTENTION ON AN IDEA IS, I THINK, AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR SPECIAL POWER, BOTH IN COMICS AND IN DRAWING GENERALLY.



ONE



A FEW



THOUSANDS



MILLIONS

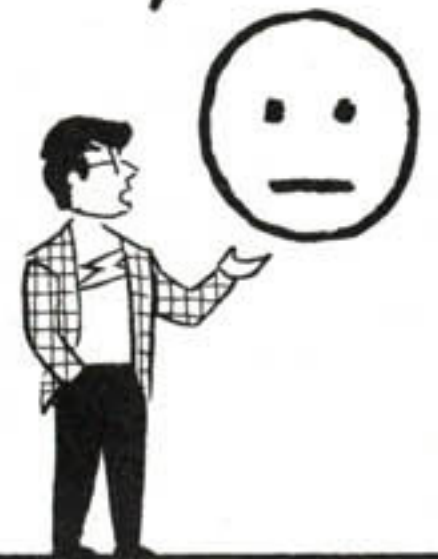


(NEARLY) ALL

ANOTHER IS THE *UNIVERSALITY* OF CARTOON IMAGERY. THE MORE CARTOONY A FACE IS, FOR INSTANCE, THE MORE PEOPLE IT COULD BE SAID TO *DESCRIBE*.

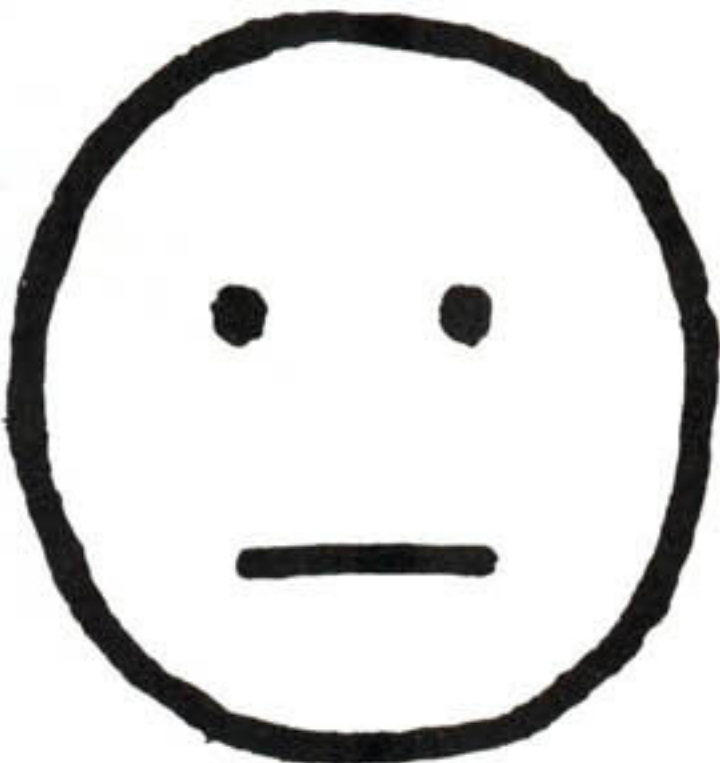


BUT I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMETHING *MORE* AT WORK IN OUR MINDS WHEN WE VIEW A CARTOON--ESPECIALLY OF A HUMAN FACE--WHICH WARRANTS FURTHER INVESTIGATION.



WHAT

ARE YOU



REALLY

SEEING?

THE FACT THAT YOUR MIND IS *CAPABLE* OF TAKING A *CIRCLE*, *TWO DOTS* AND A *LINE* AND TURNING THEM INTO A *FACE* IS NOTHING SHORT OF *INCREDIBLE!*

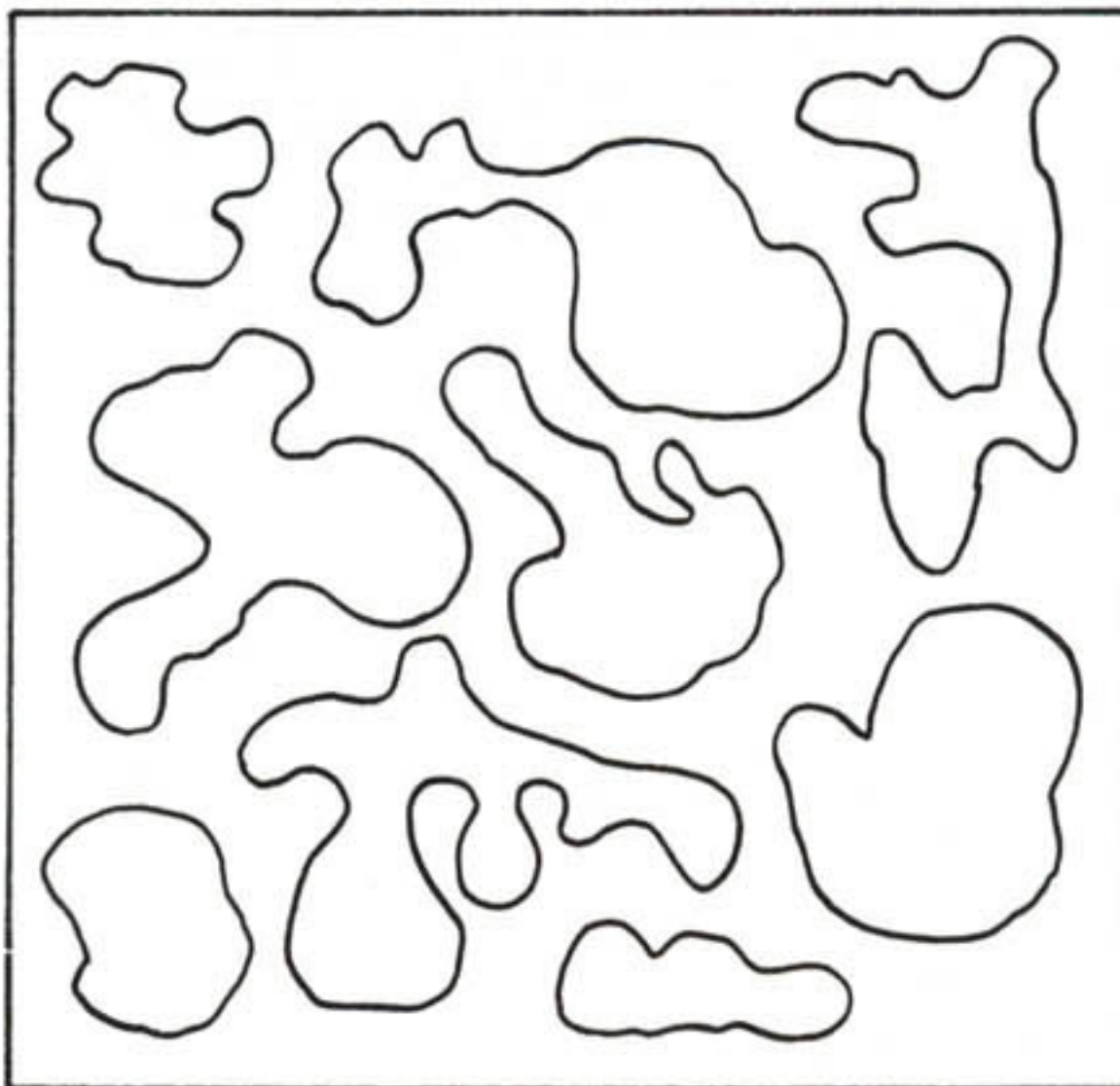


BUT STILL *MORE* INCREDIBLE IS THE FACT THAT YOU CANNOT *AVOID* SEEING A FACE HERE. YOUR MIND WON'T *LET* YOU!

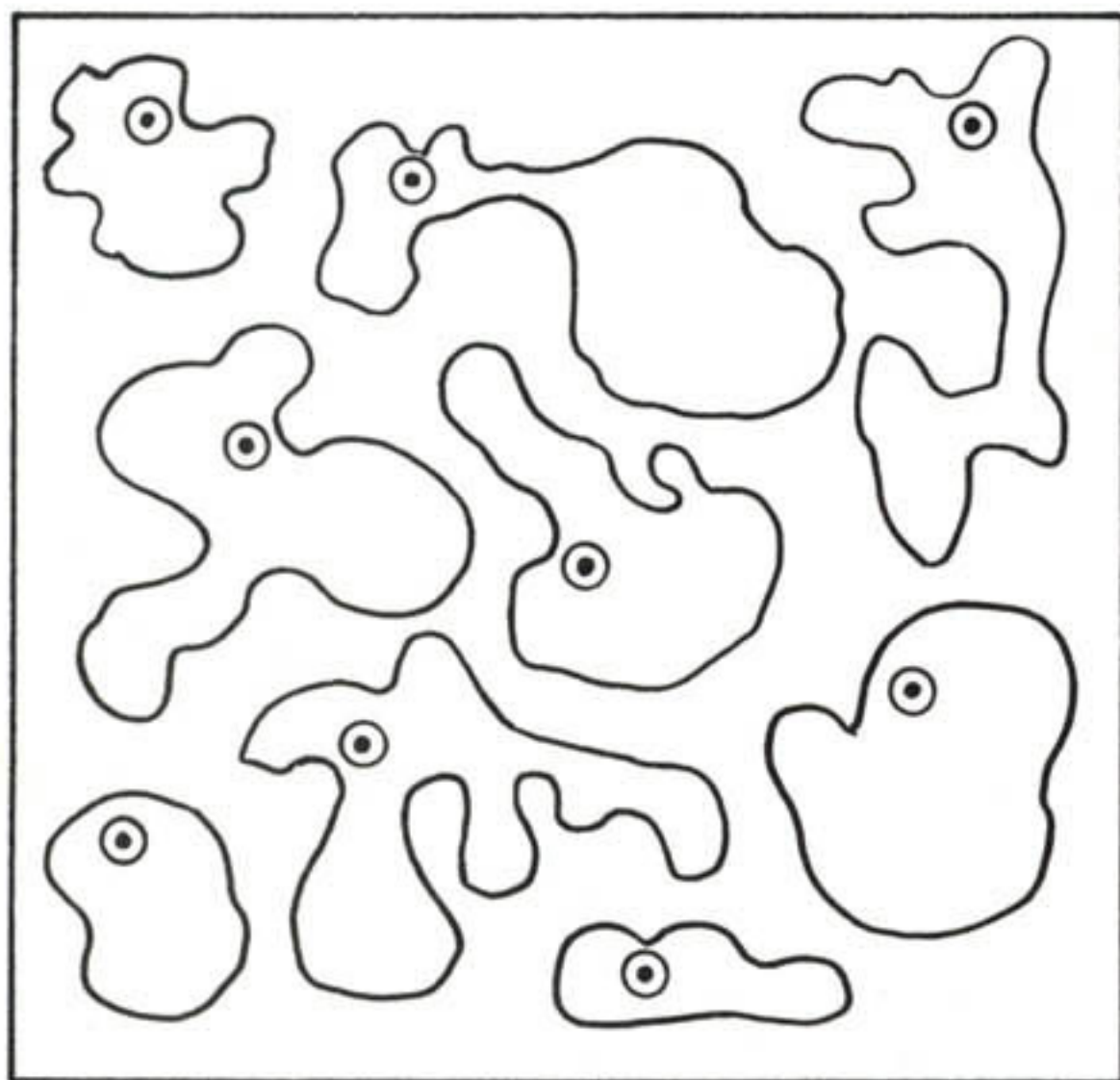


ASK A FRIEND TO DRAW YOU SOME SHAPES ON A PIECE OF PAPER. THEY SHOULD BE **CLOSED CURVES**, BUT **OTHERWISE** CAN BE AS **WEIRD** AND **IRREGULAR** AS HE OR SHE **WANTS**.

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.



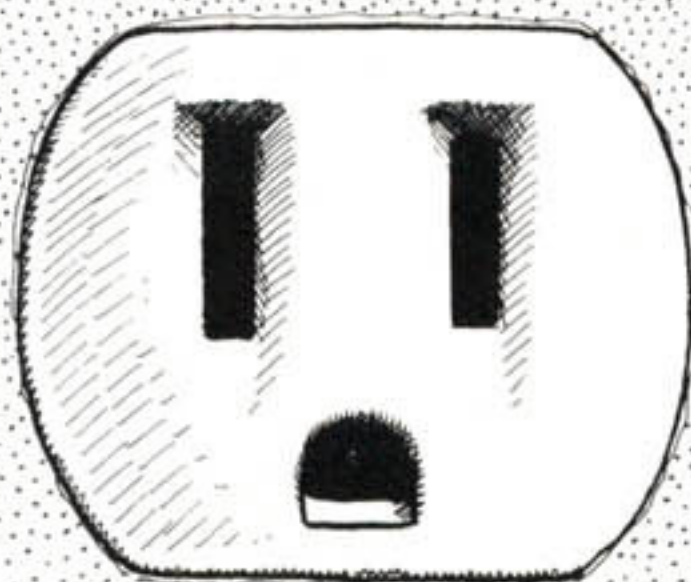
YOUR MIND HAS NO TROUBLE AT ALL CONVERTING SUCH SHAPES INTO FACES, YET WOULD IT EVER MISTAKE **THIS**--



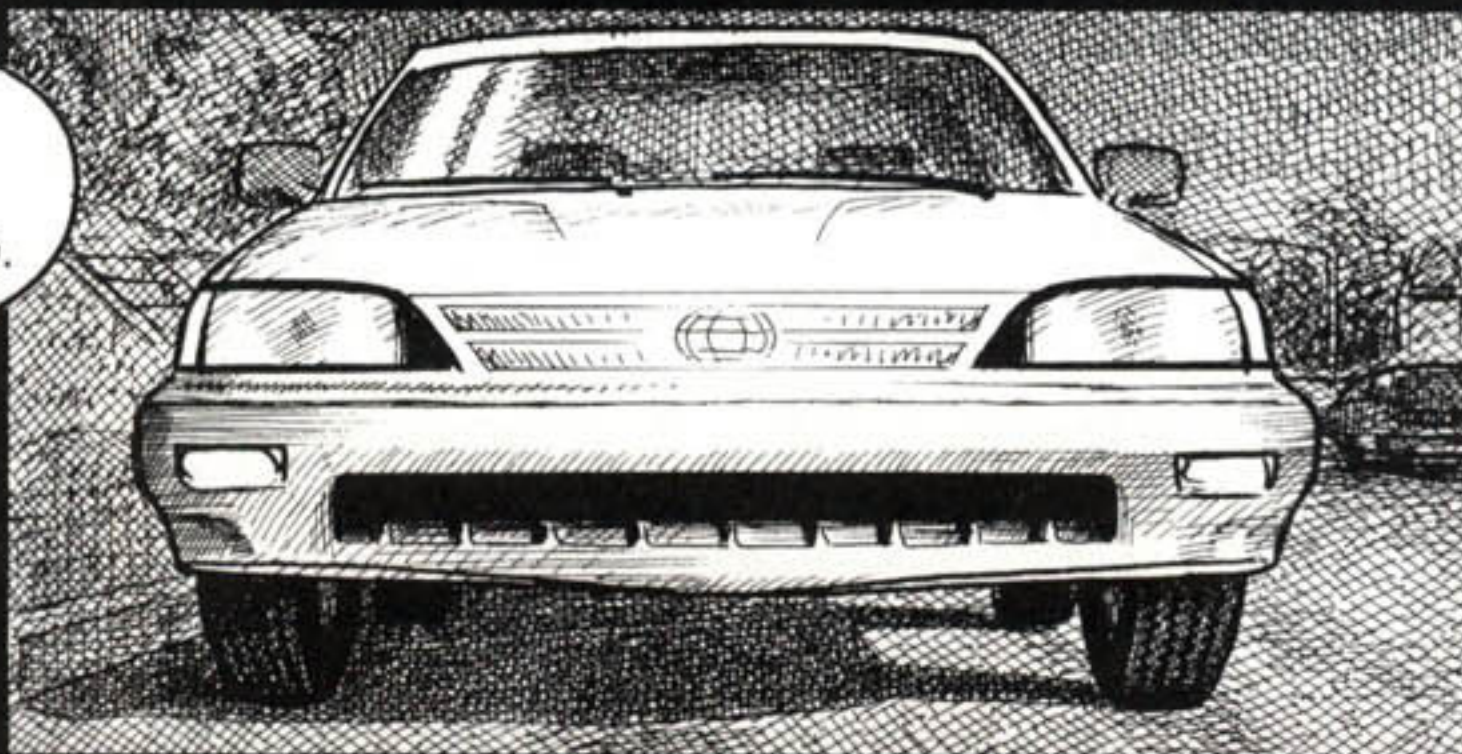
--FOR **THIS?**



WE HUMANS ARE A SELF-CENTERED RACE.



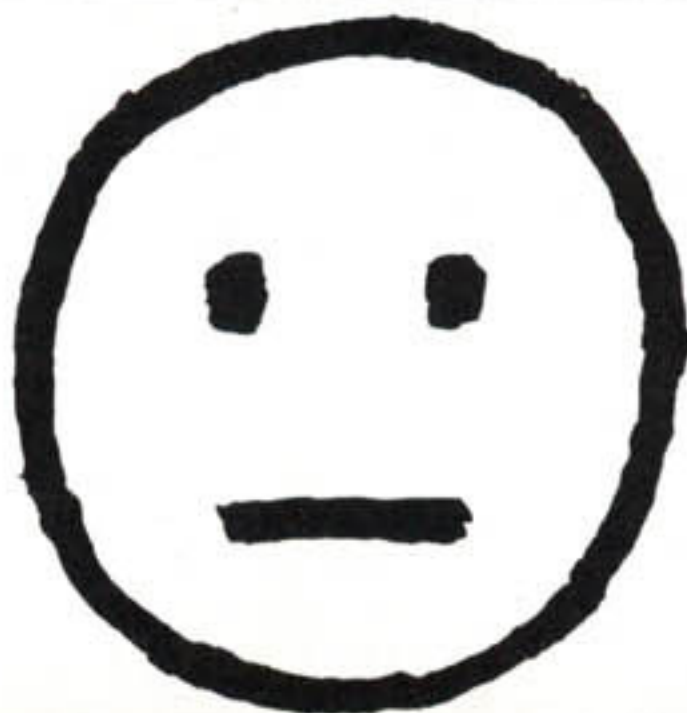
WE SEE
OURSELVES
IN
EVERYTHING.

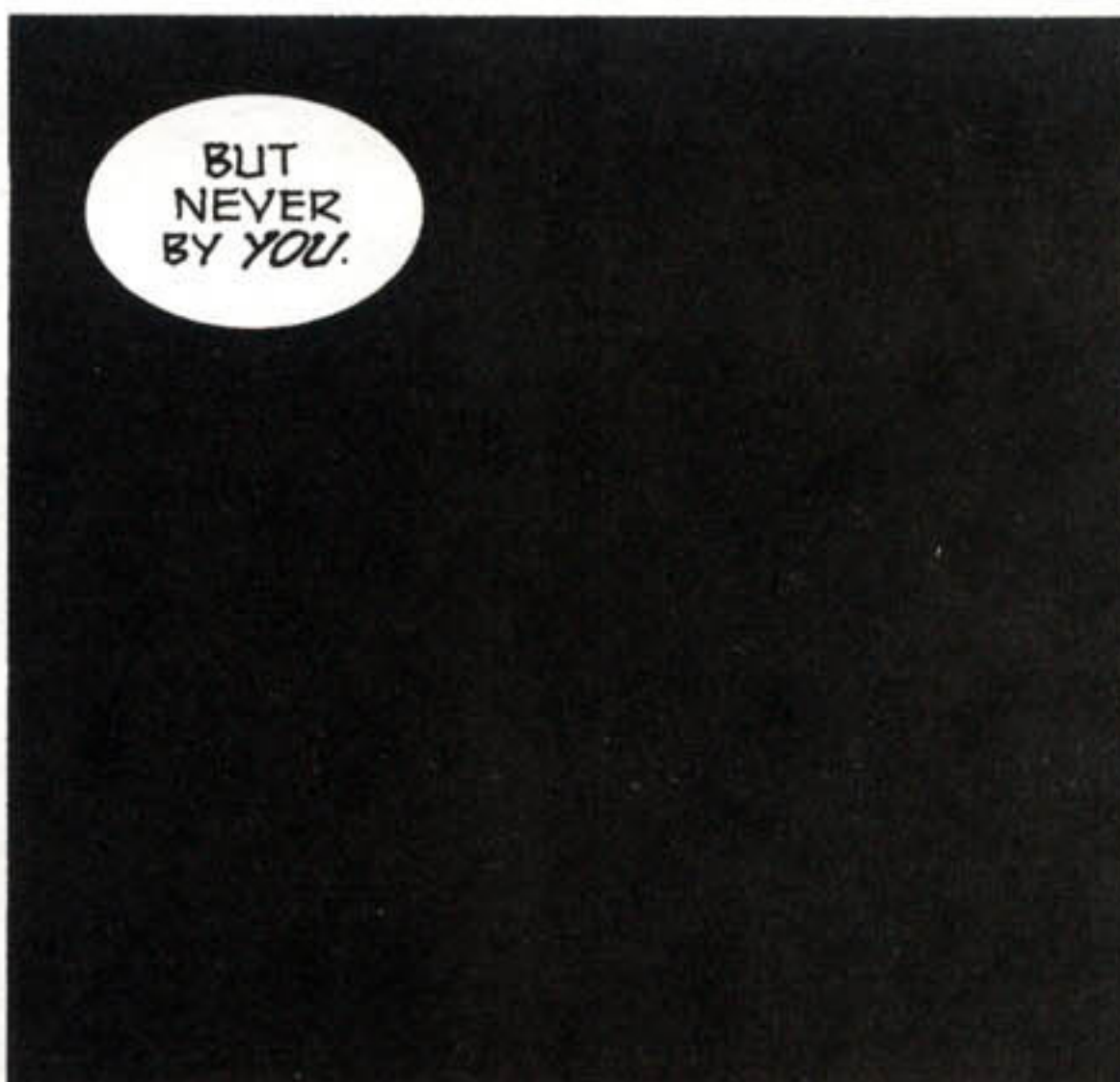


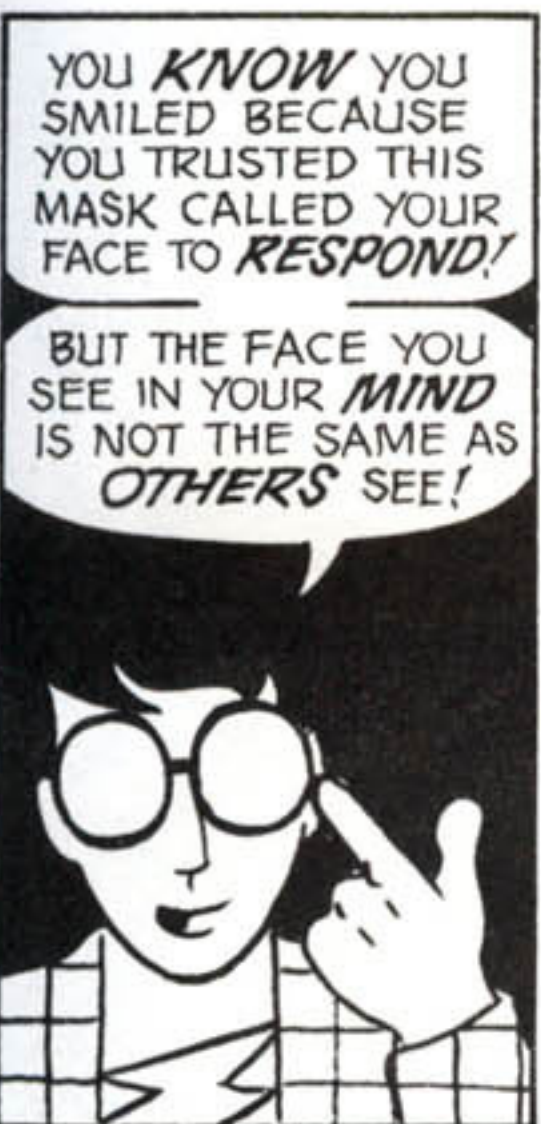
WE
ASSIGN
IDENTITIES
AND EMOTIONS
WHERE NONE
EXIST.



AND WE
MAKE THE
WORLD OVER
IN OUR
IMAGE.







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*.

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



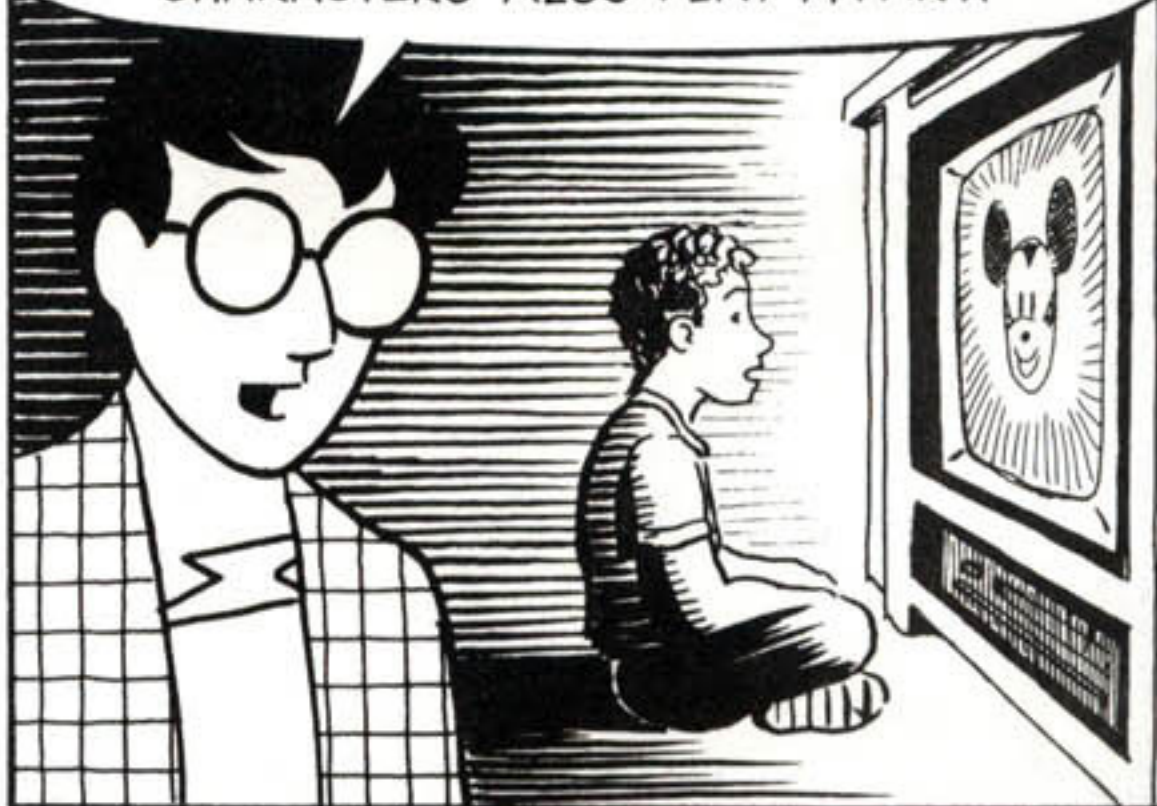
--YOU SEE IT AS THE FACE OF *ANOTHER*.

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



--YOU SEE *YOURSELF*.

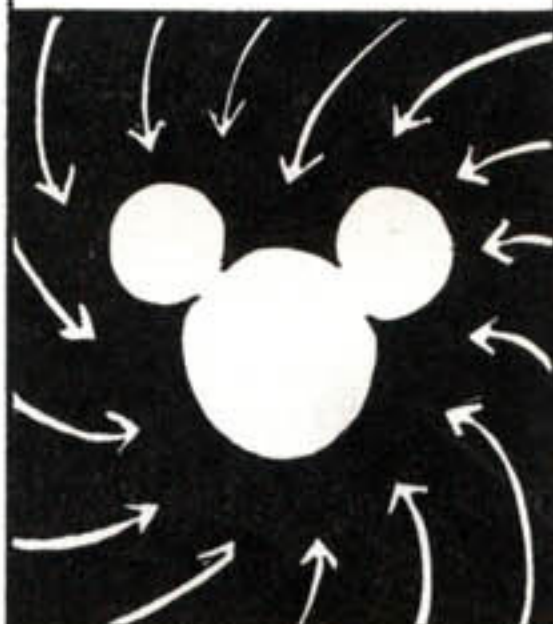
I BELIEVE THIS IS THE *PRIMARY CAUSE* OF OUR CHILDHOOD FASCINATION WITH *CARTOONS*, THOUGH OTHER FACTORS SUCH AS *UNIVERSAL IDENTIFICATION*, *SIMPLICITY* AND THE *CHILDLIKE FEATURES* OF MANY CARTOON CHARACTERS ALSO PLAY A PART.



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*??





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



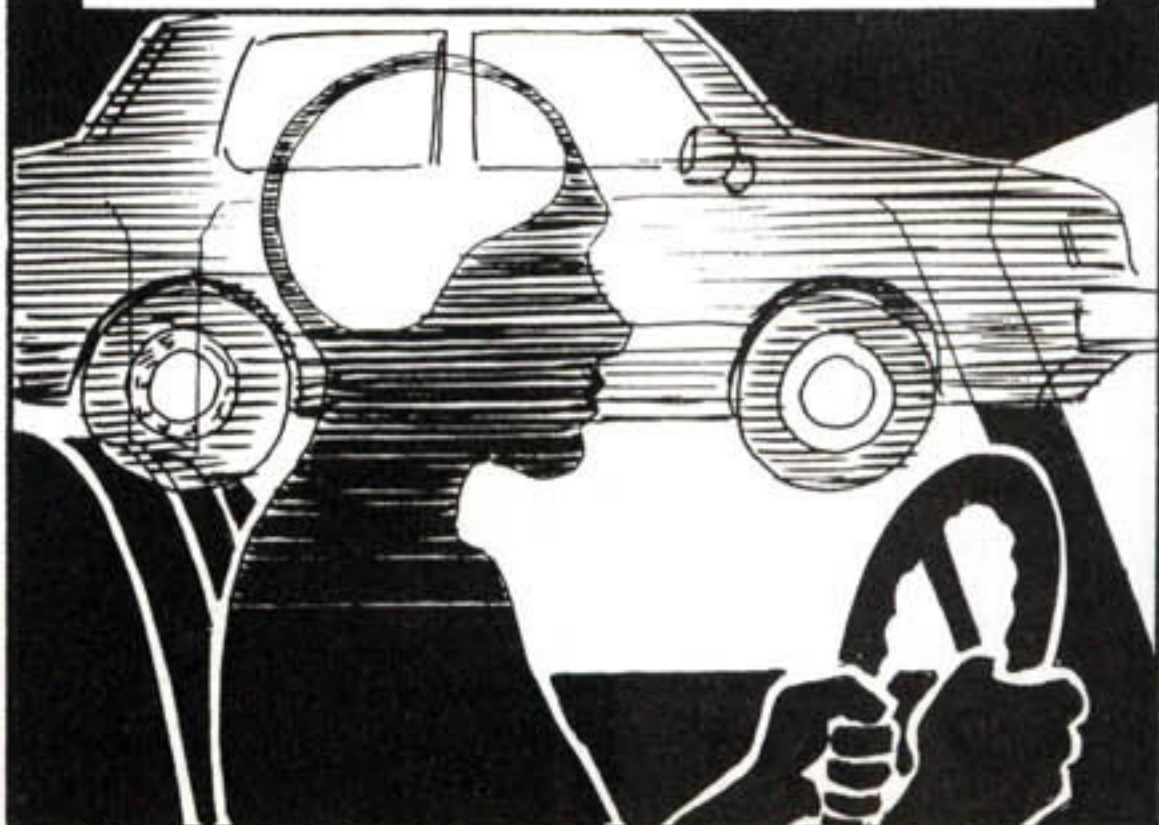
WHEN **DRIVING**, FOR EXAMPLE, WE EXPERIENCE MUCH MORE THAN OUR **FIVE SENSES** REPORT.



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.



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

KLUNK!

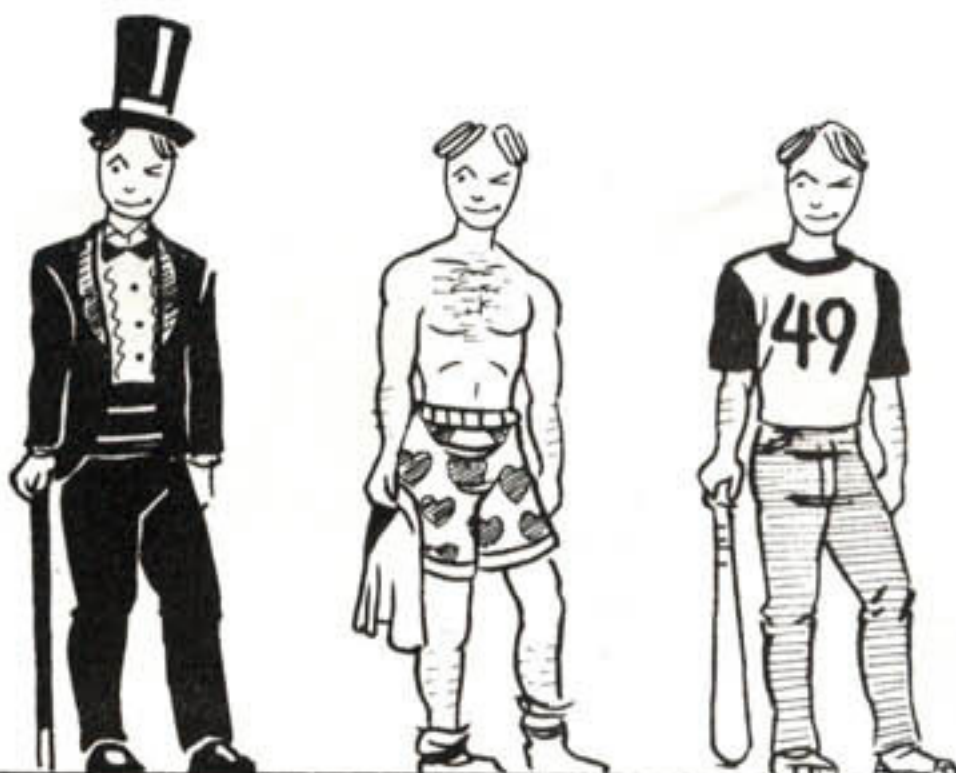
**HEY!
HE HIT
ME!!**



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**.



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.**



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**--

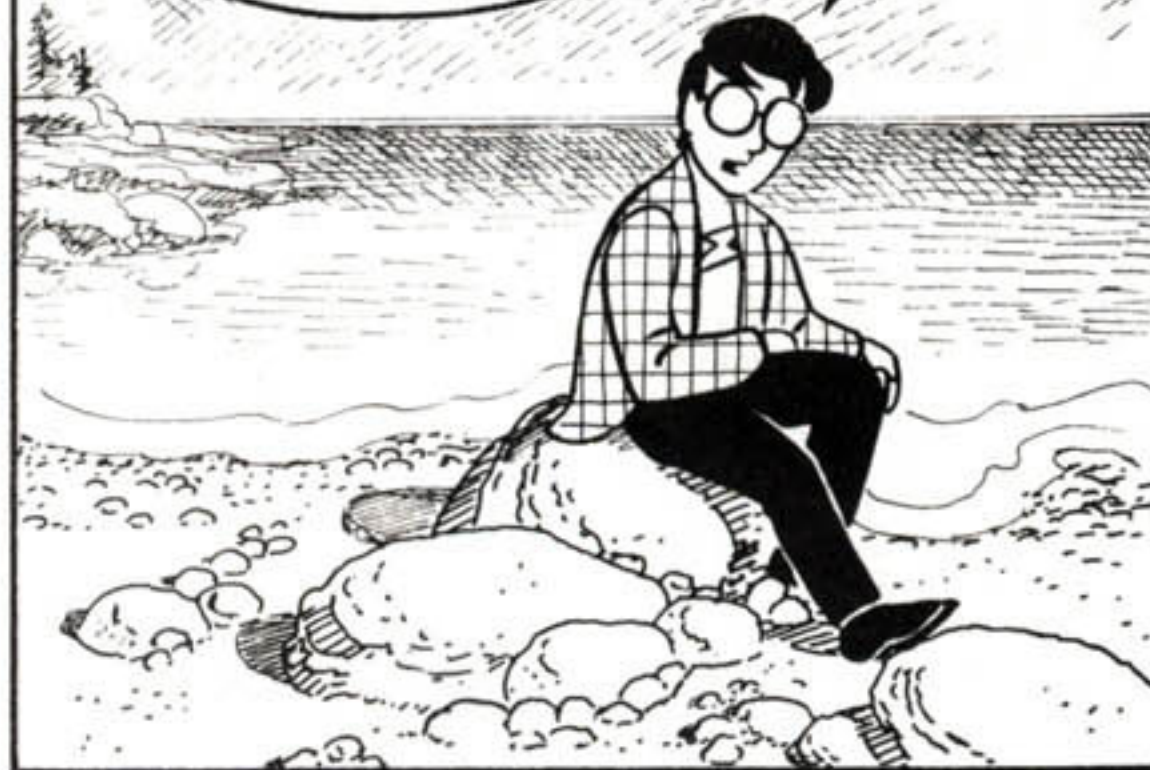


-- SO TOO IS OUR AWARENESS OF **THESE** EXTENSIONS GREATLY **SIMPLIFIED.**



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 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 POSSESS IDENTITIES OF THEIR OWN.



OR, AS OUR **EXTENSIONS**--



--BEGIN TO GLOW--



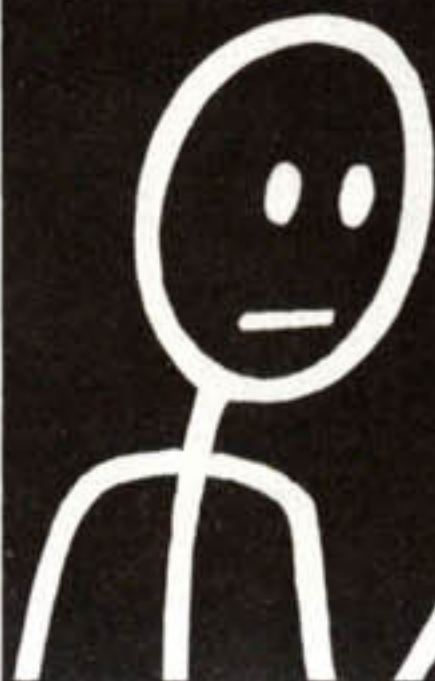
--WITH THE LIFE--



--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--



--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.



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--

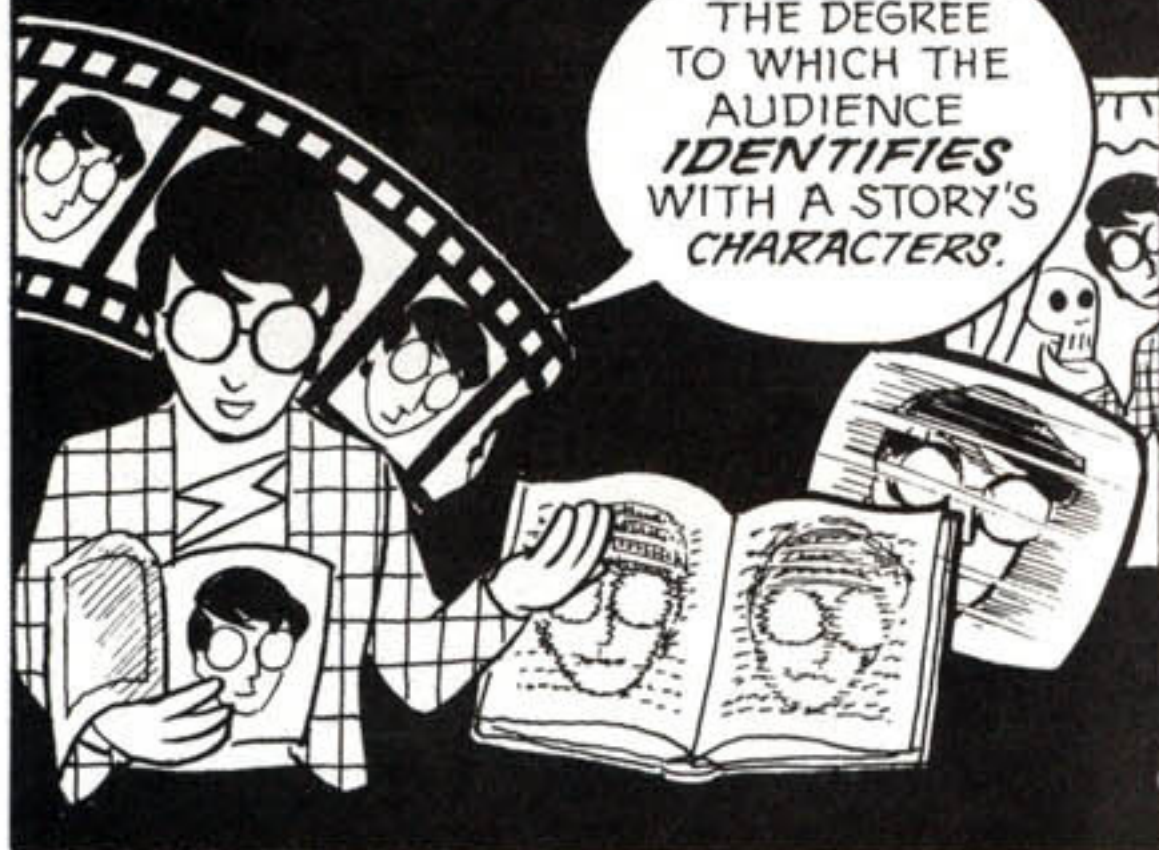


--ARE A FAR CRY FROM *PHOTO-REALISTS*!

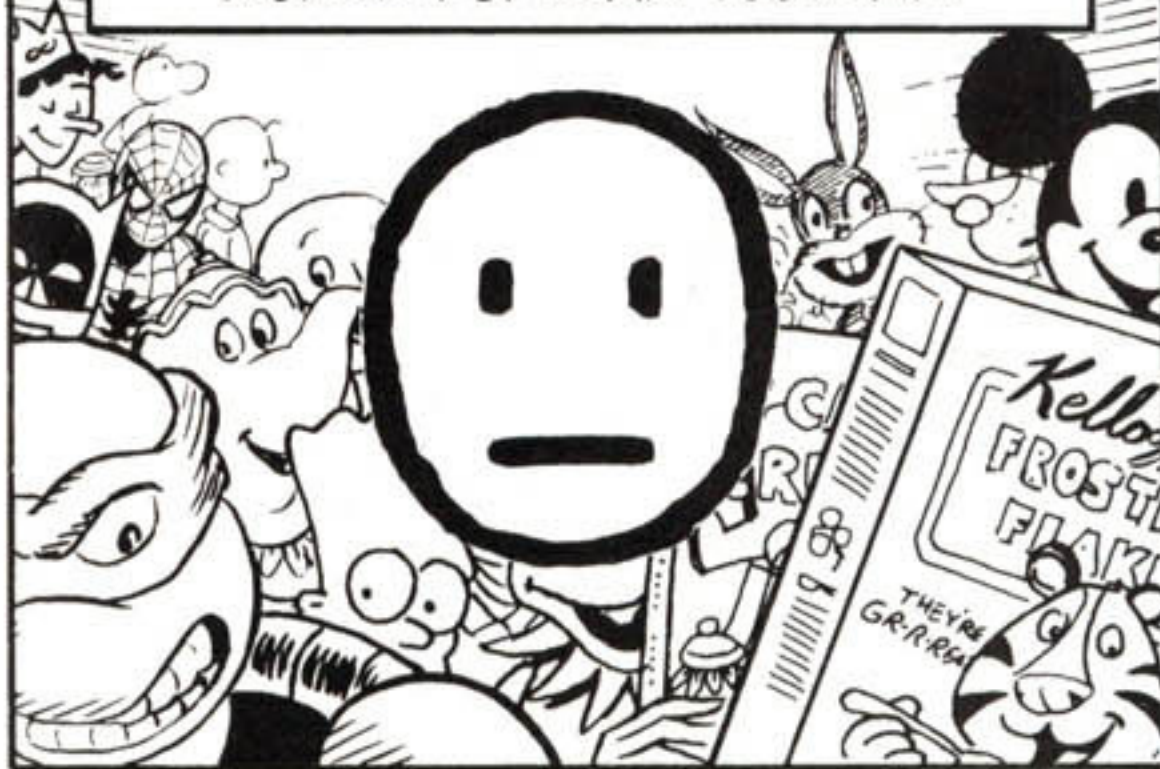


STORYTELLERS IN *ALL* MEDIA KNOW THAT A SURE INDICATOR OF *AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT*--

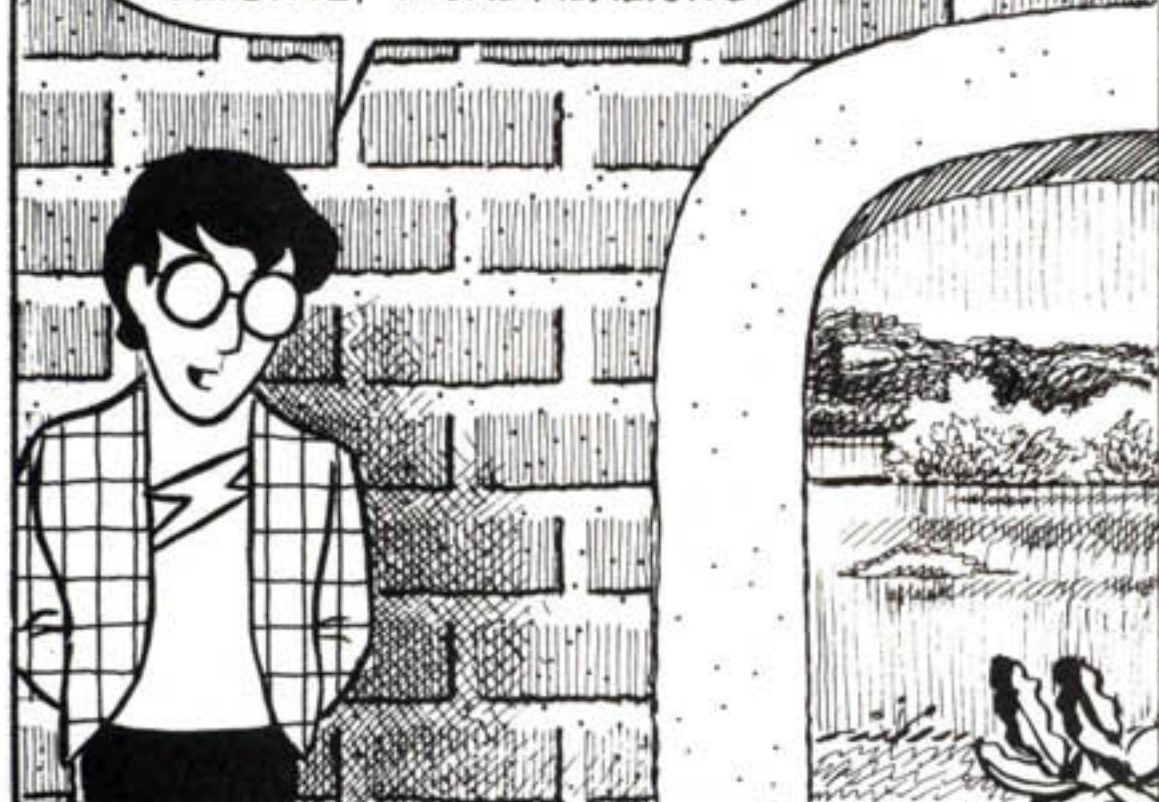
--IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE AUDIENCE *IDENTIFIES* WITH A STORY'S *CHARACTERS*.



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.



ONE SET OF LINES TO *SEE*. ANOTHER SET OF LINES TO *BE*.



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*.



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.

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--

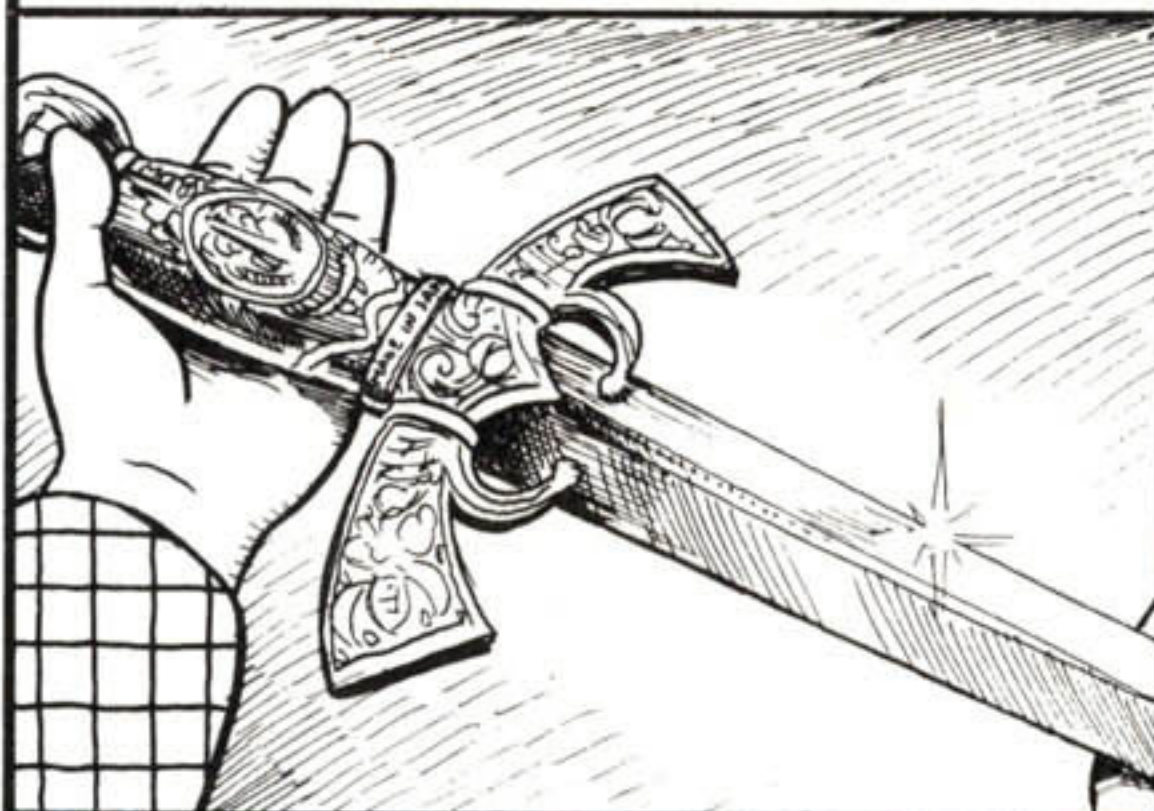
--DUE TO THE "*LIFE*" IT POSSESSES AS AN EXTENSION OF MY CARTOON IDENTITY!



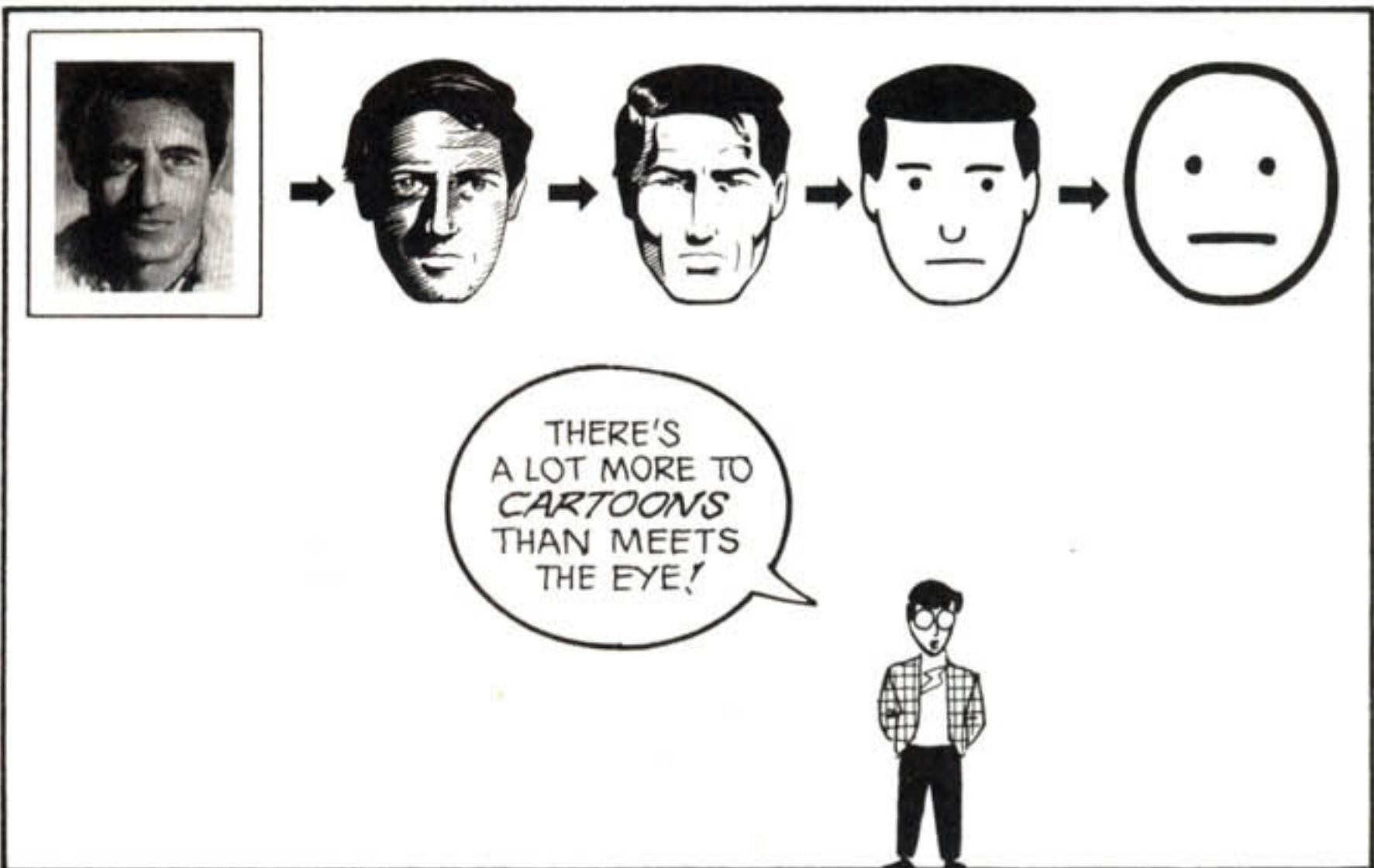
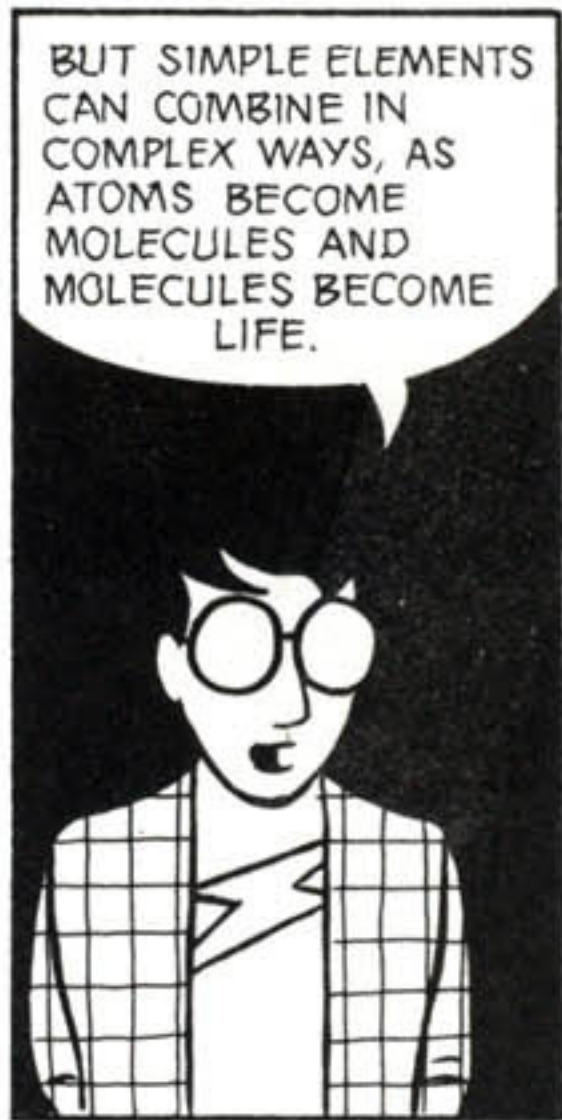
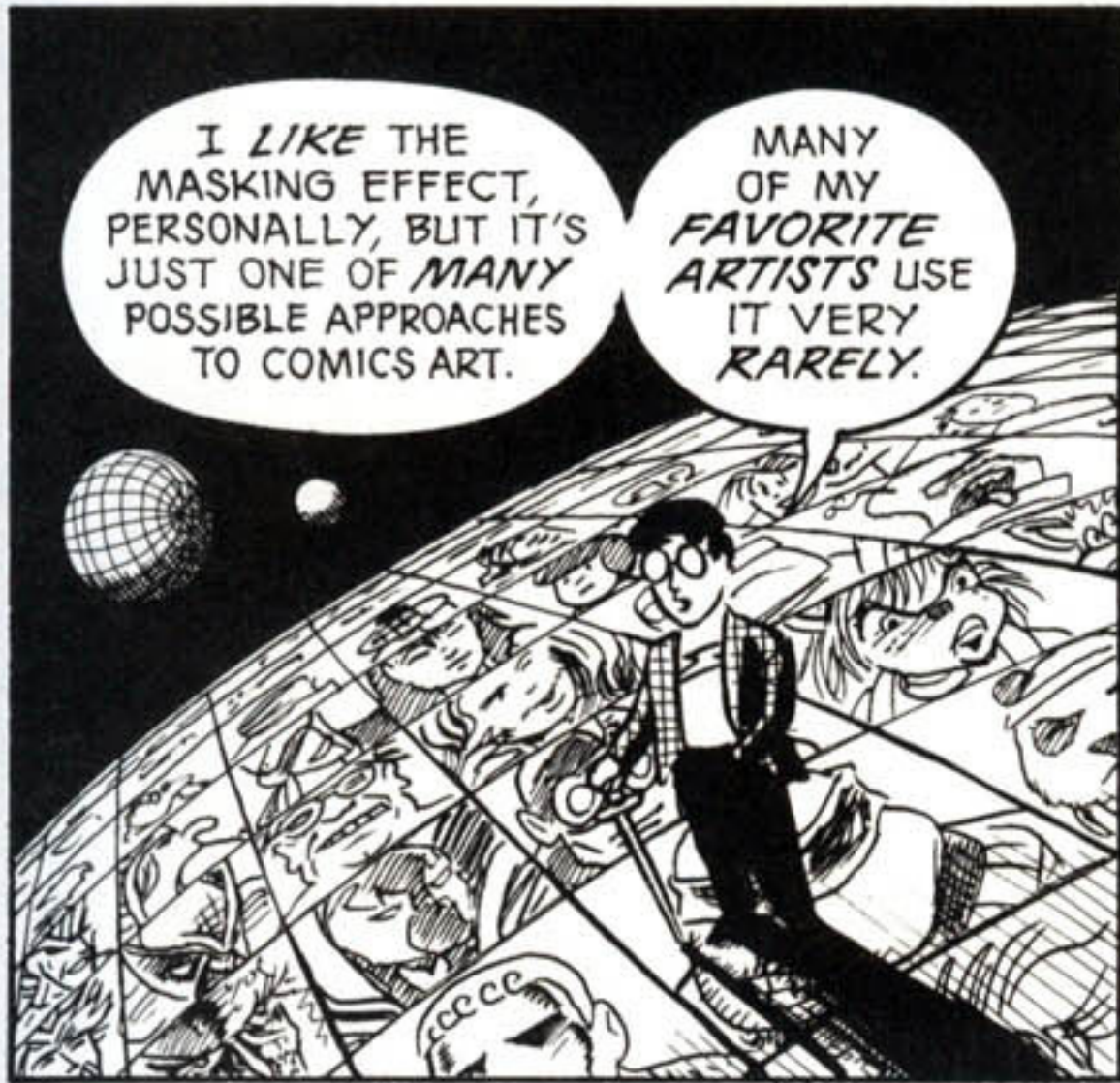
BUT SUPPOSE I NOTICE SOME *MYSTERIOUS WRITING* CARVED ON THE SWORD'S *HILT*.

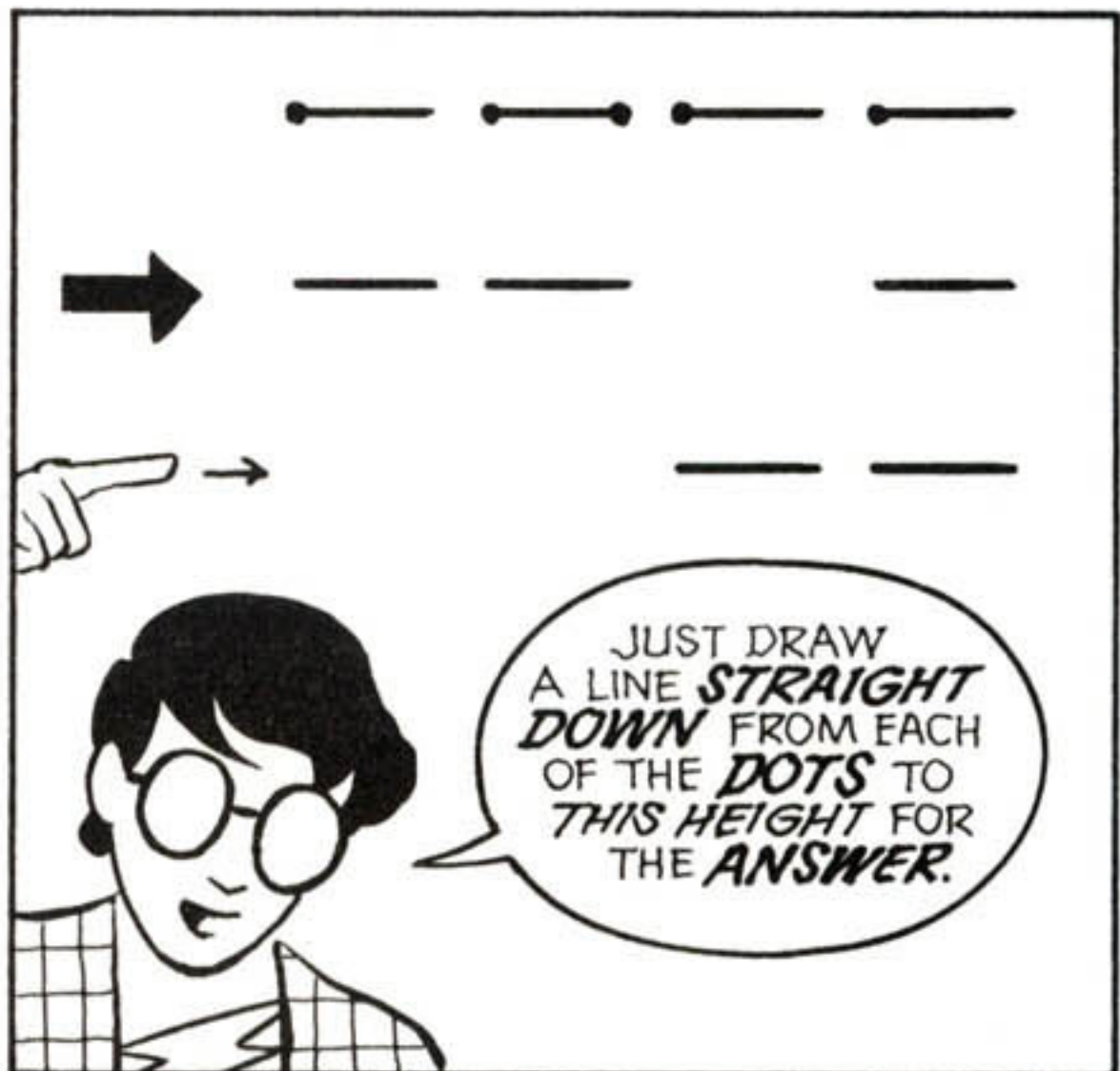
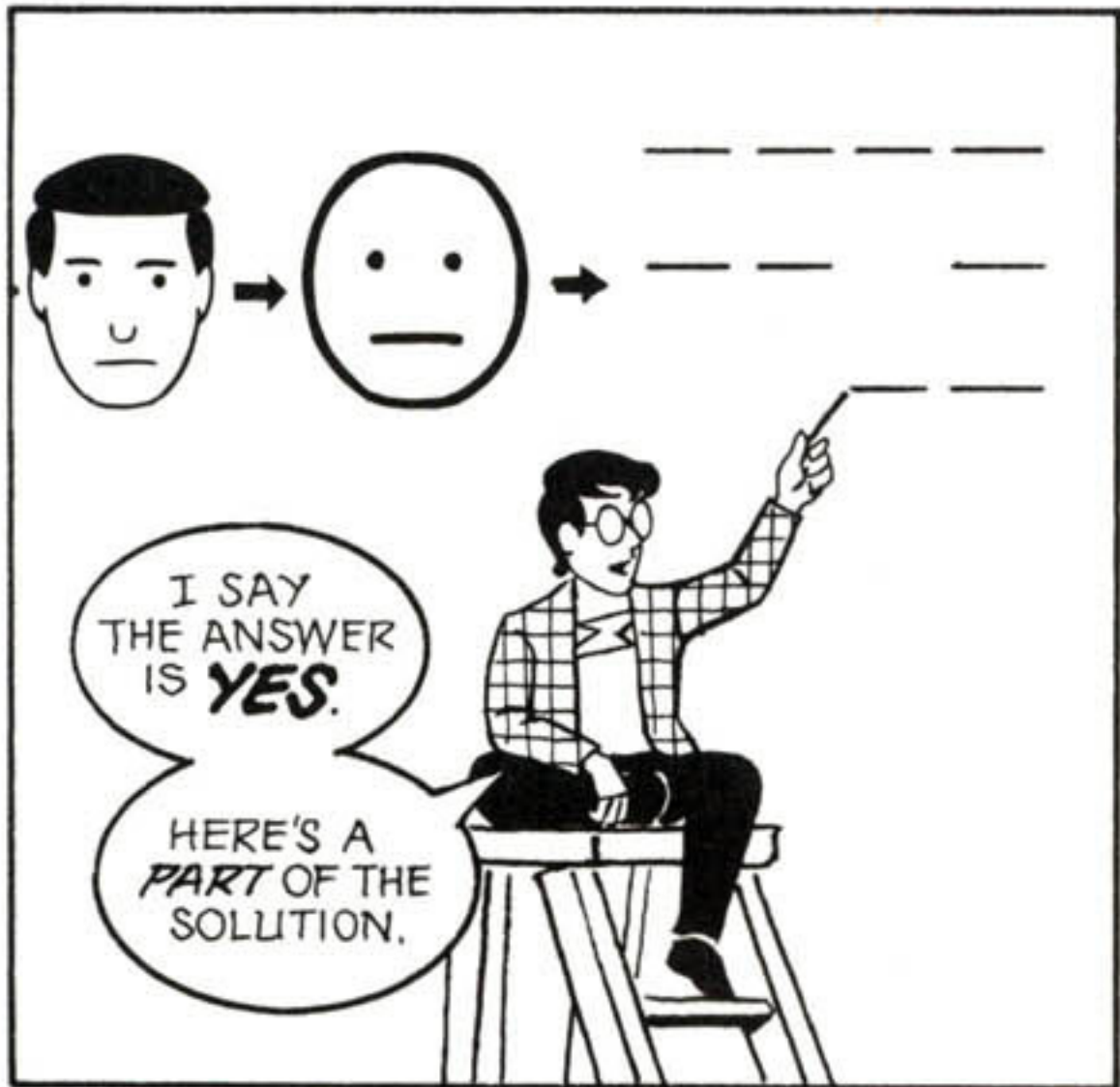
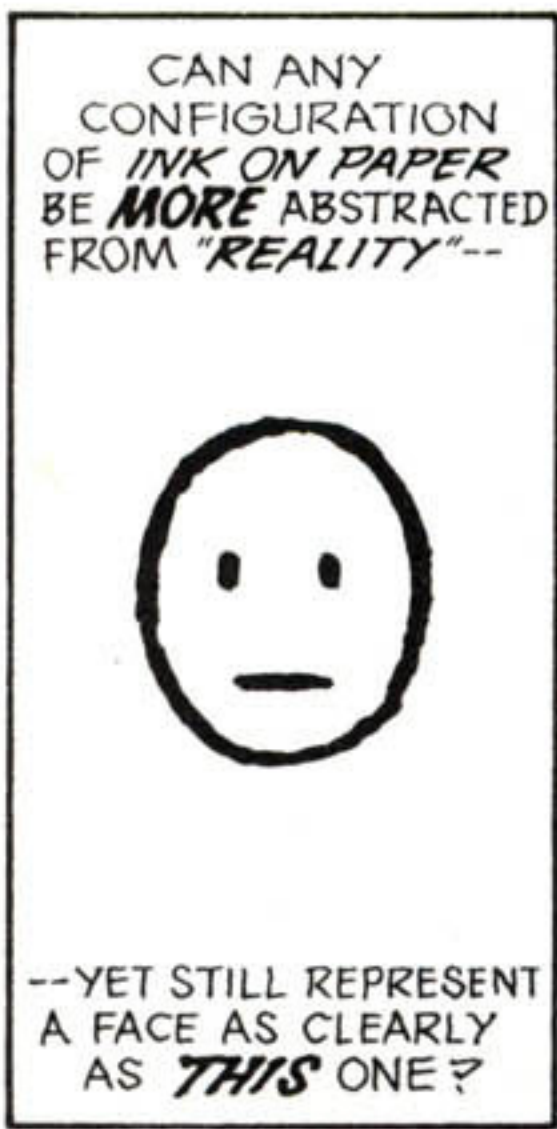
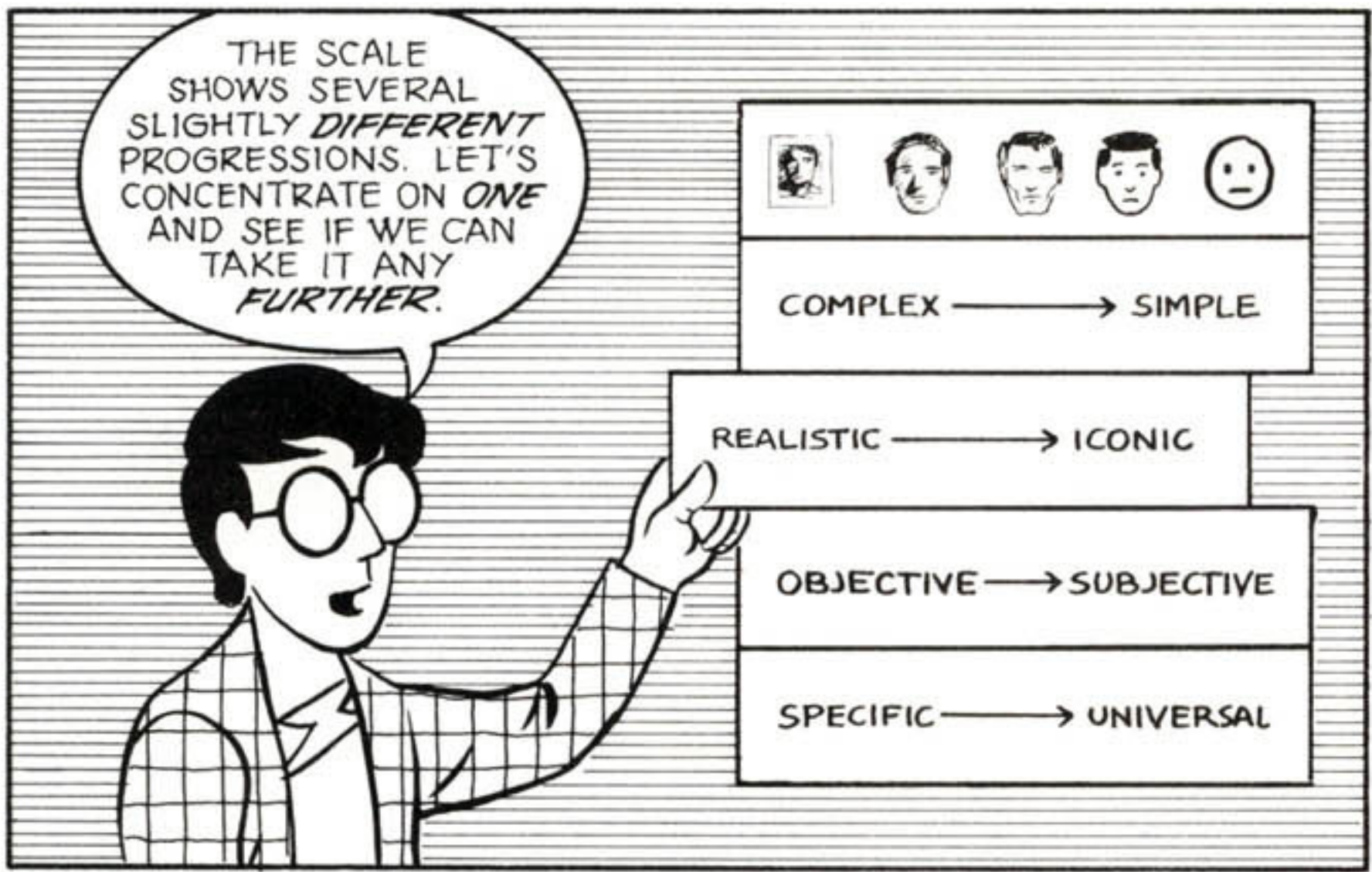
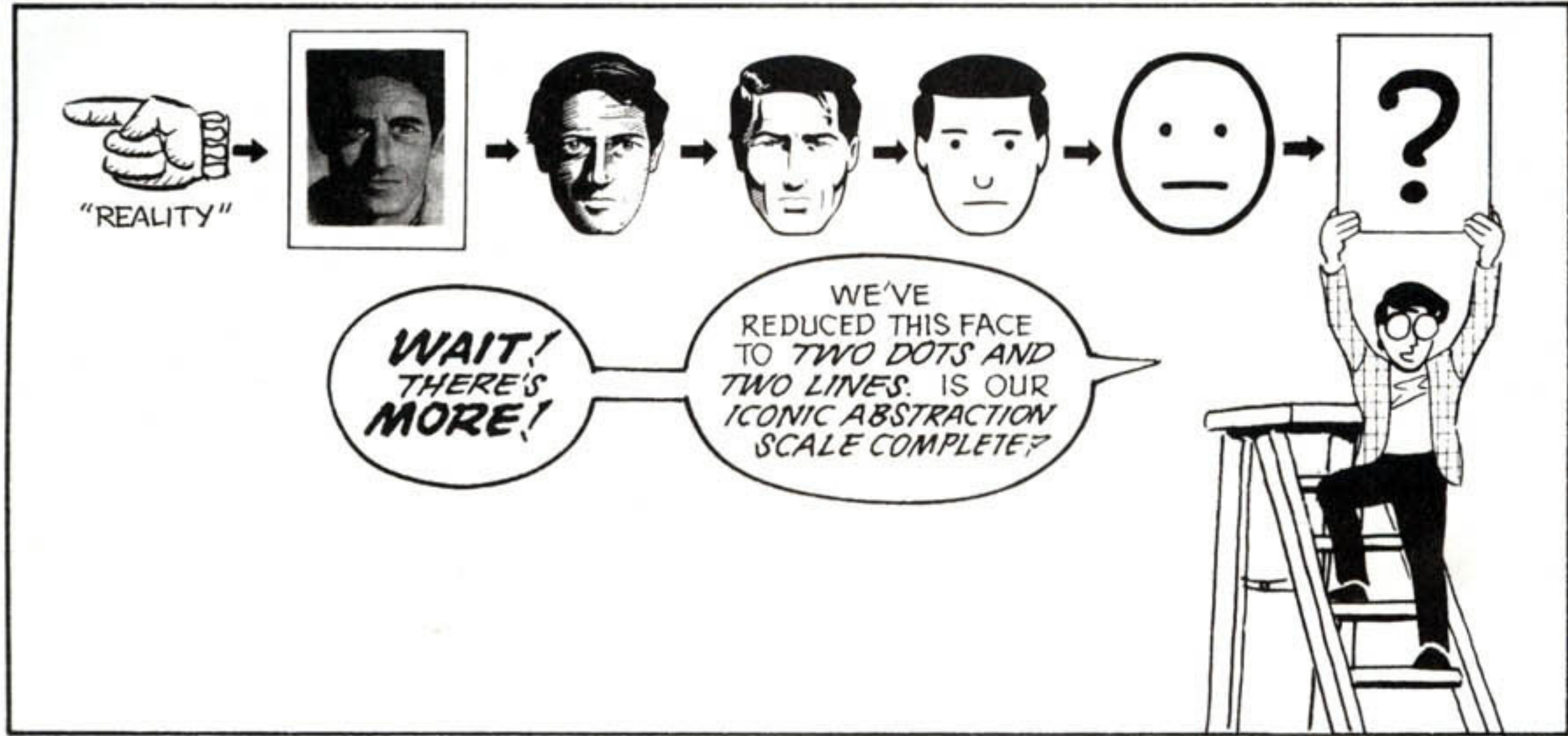
IN JAPANESE COMICS, THE SWORD MIGHT *NOW* BECOME VERY *REALISTIC*, NOT ONLY TO SHOW US THE DETAILS, BUT TO MAKE US AWARE OF THE SWORD AS AN *OBJECT*, SOMETHING WITH *WEIGHT*, *TEXTURE* AND *PHYSICAL COMPLEXITY*.

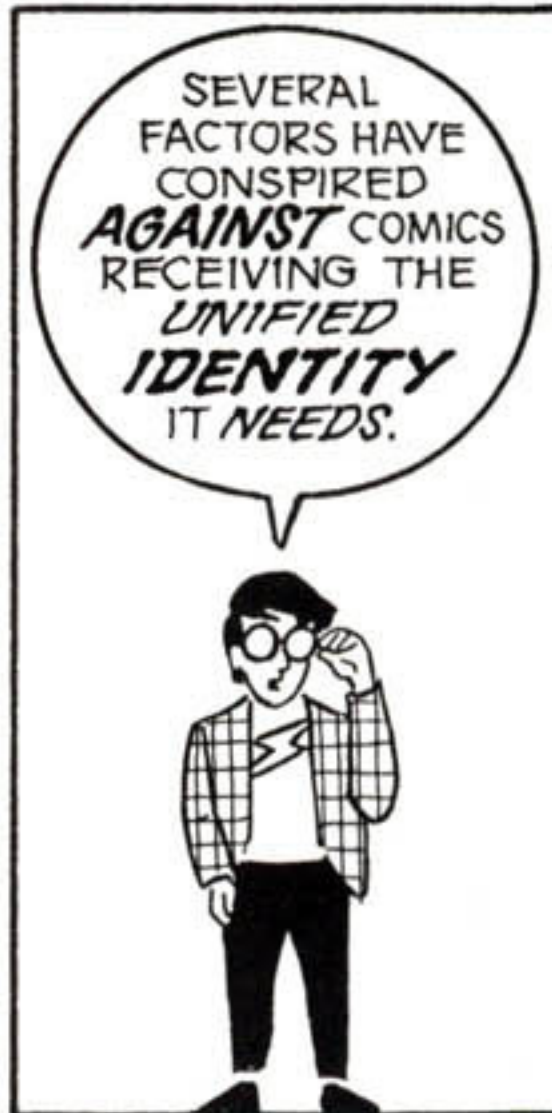
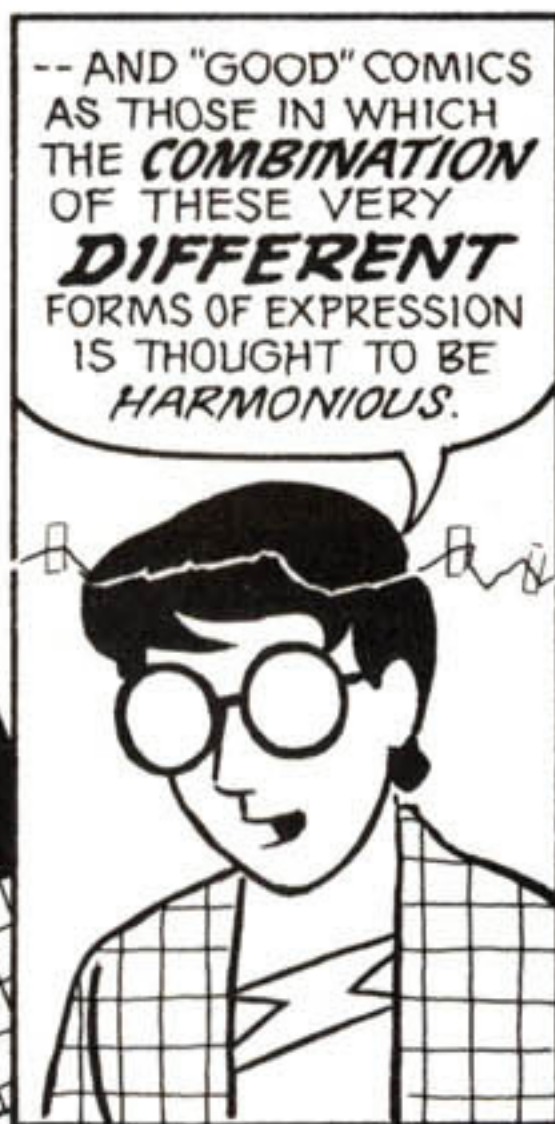
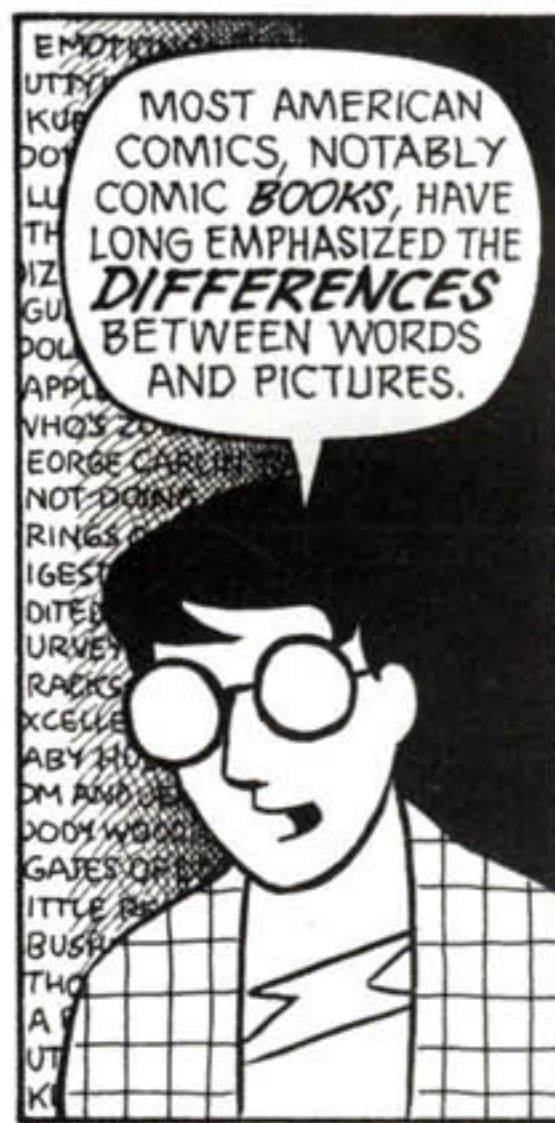
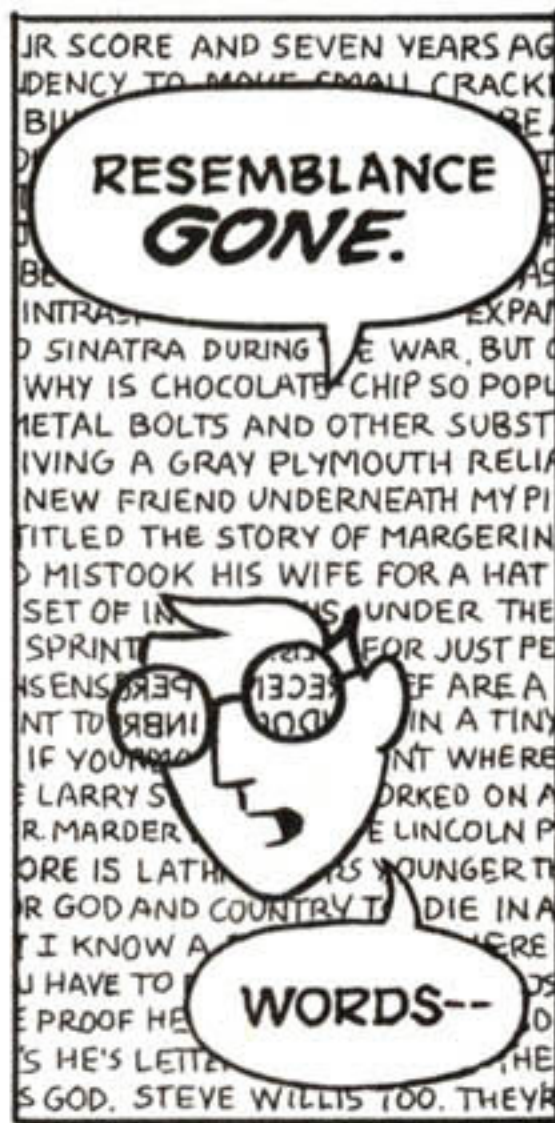
IN THIS AND IN *OTHER WAYS*, COMICS IN JAPAN HAVE EVOLVED VERY *DIFFERENTLY* FROM THOSE IN THE WEST.



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





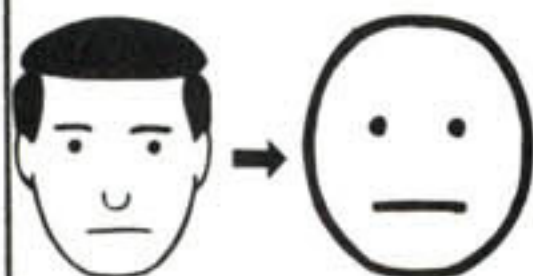


BOTH ARTIST AND WRITER BEGIN, HANDS JOINED ACROSS THE GAP, WITH A COMMON PURPOSE: TO MAKE COMICS OF **"QUALITY"**



"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**.



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**.

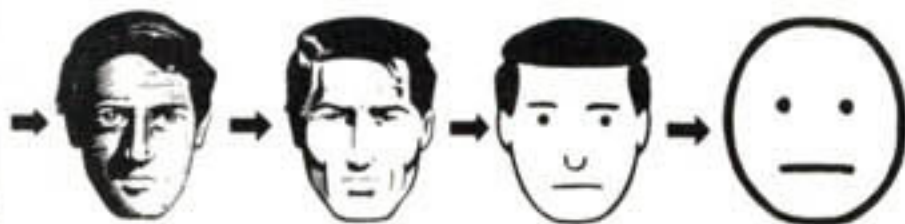


SHE **TOO** FINDS WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR, IN THE GREAT MASTERS OF **WESTERN LITERATURE**. SHE READS AND WRITES **CONSTANTLY**. SHE SEARCHES FOR A VOICE **UNIQUELY HERS**.



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**.

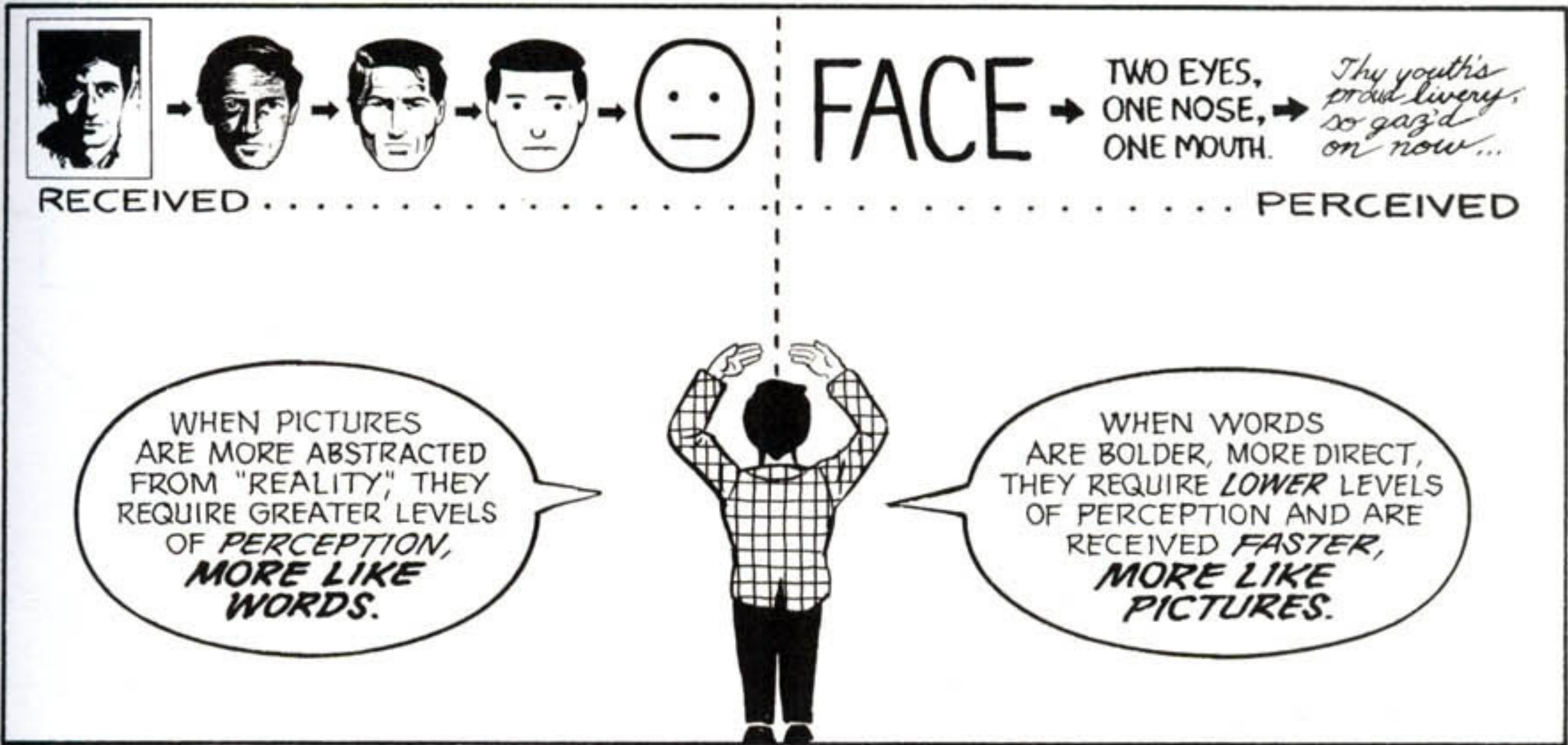
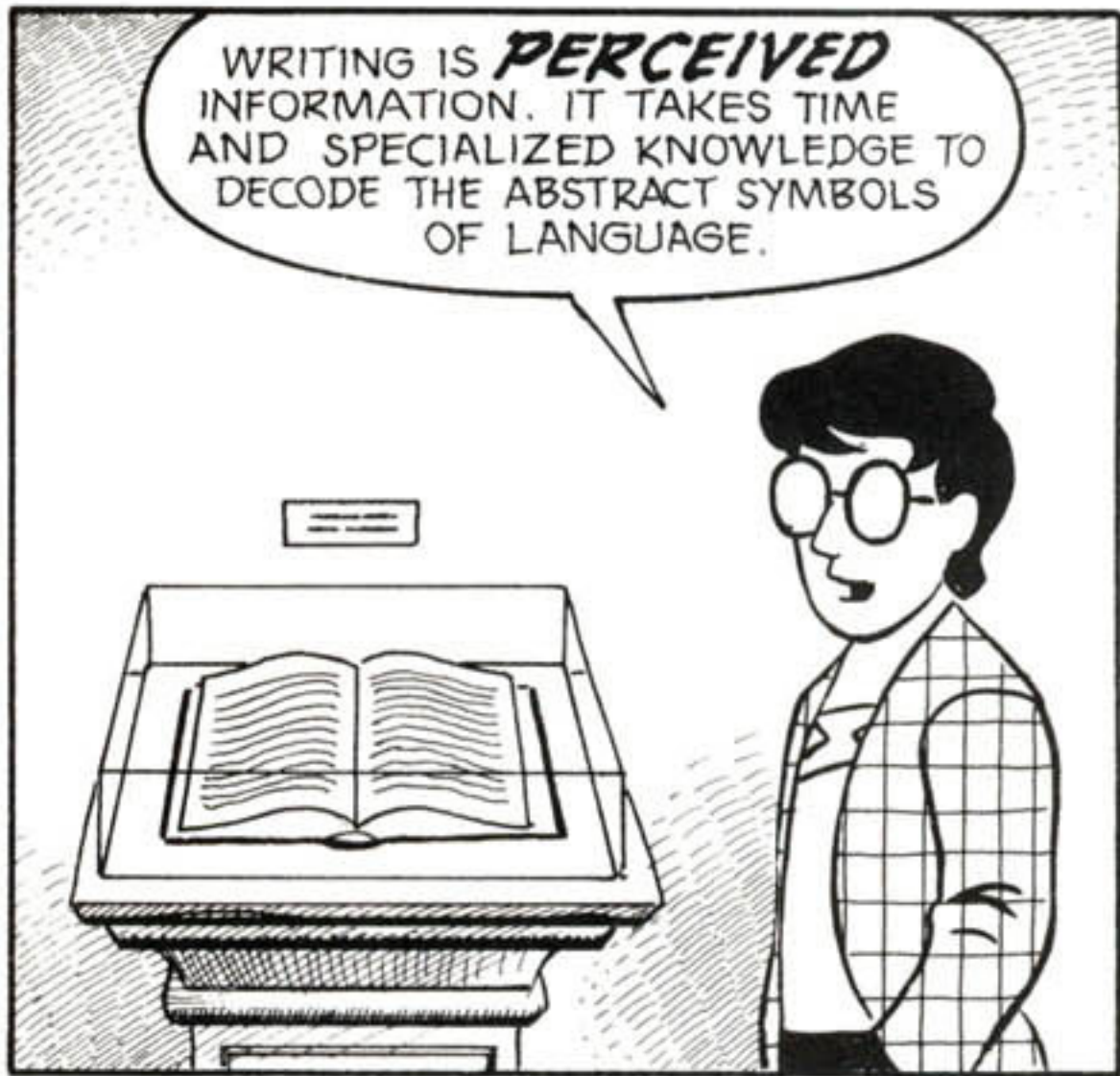
THEY'RE READY TO **JOIN HANDS** ONCE MORE AND CREATE A **COMICS MASTERPIECE**.



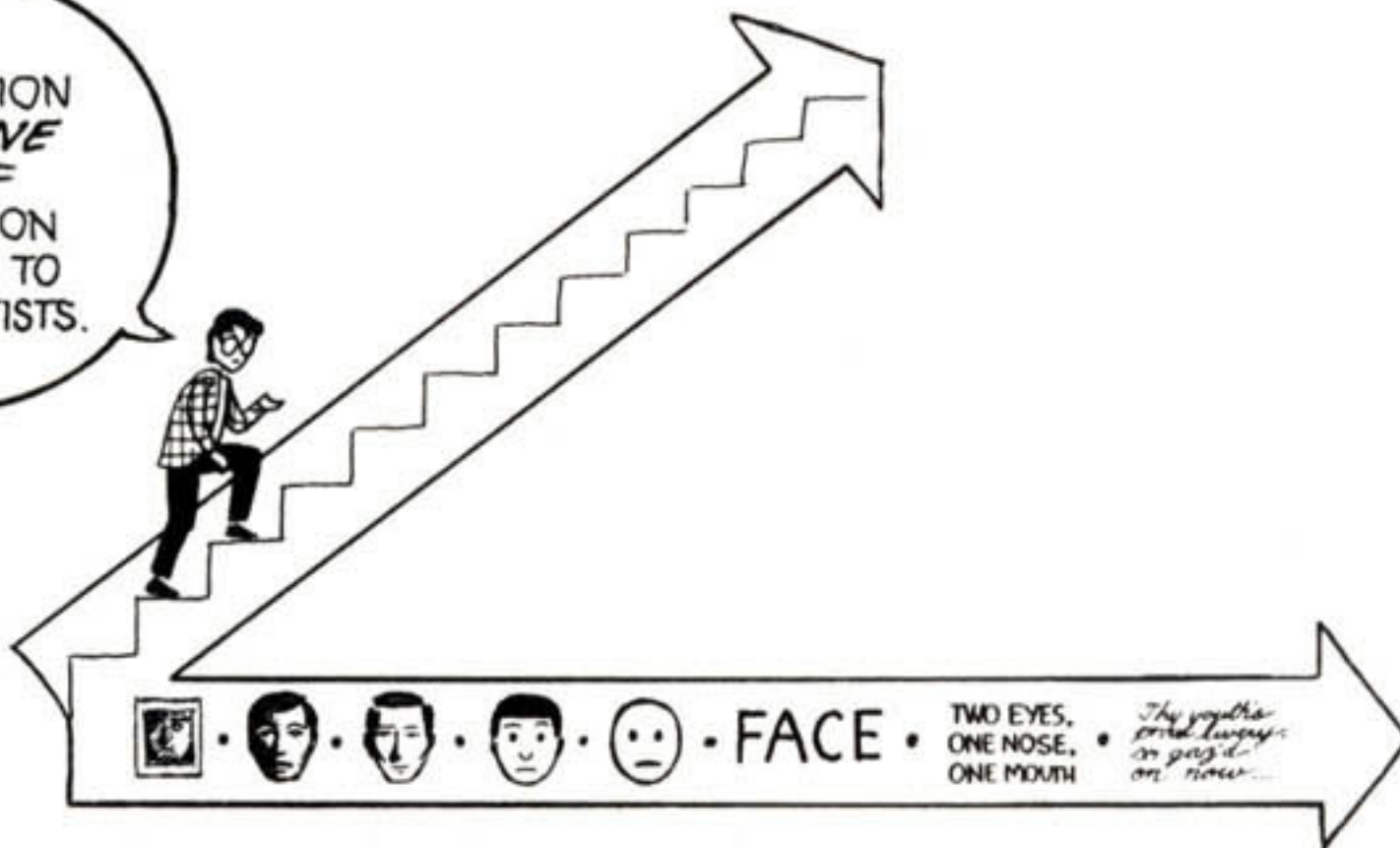
FACE

TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH.

Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now...



ICONIC
ABSTRACTION
IS ONLY *ONE*
FORM OF
ABSTRACTION
AVAILABLE TO
COMICS ARTISTS.



USUALLY THE WORD
"ABSTRACTION" REFERS TO THE
NON-ICONIC VARIETY, WHERE
NO ATTEMPT IS MADE TO CLING
TO RESEMBLANCE *OR* MEANING.



THE TYPE OF
ART WHICH OFTEN
PROMPTS THE QUESTION:
"*WHAT DOES IT
MEAN?*"

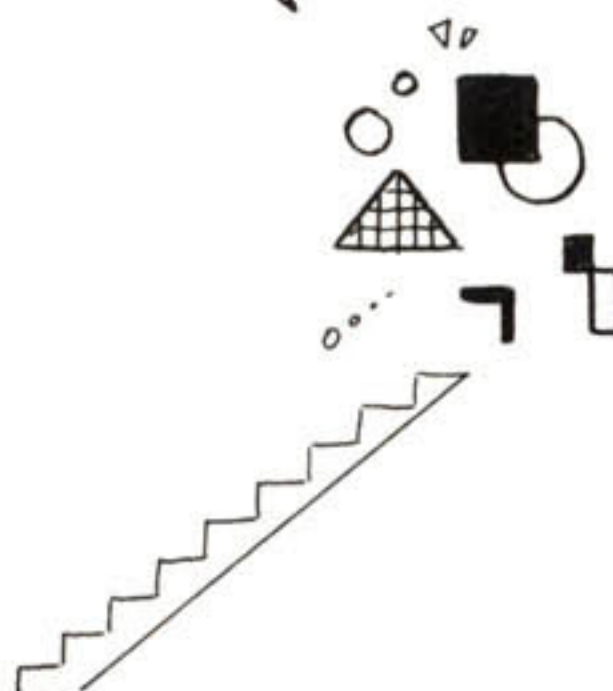


EARNING
THE REPLY
"IT '*MEANS*'
WHAT IT
IS!"

IN
THIS
CASE---



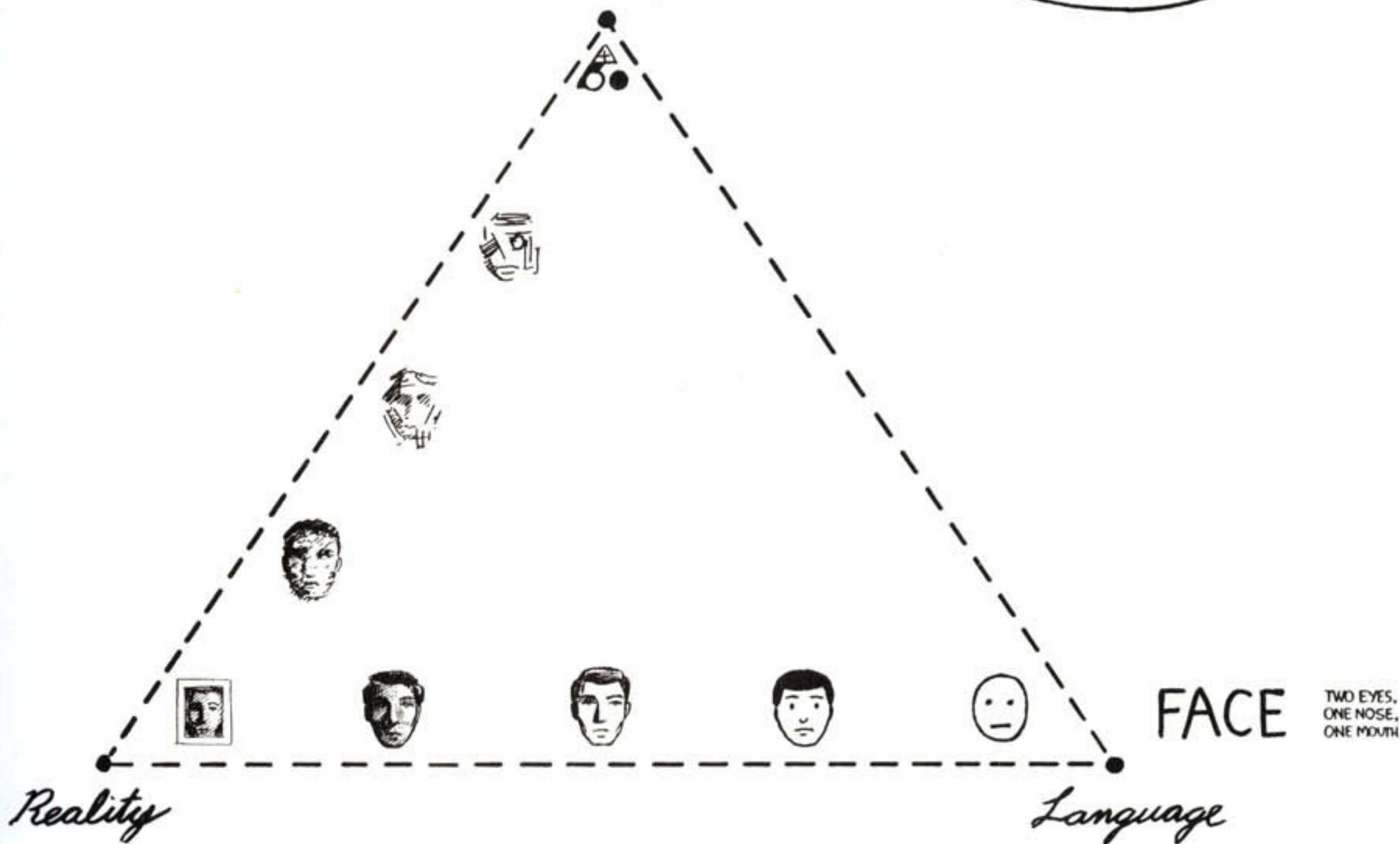
--INK
ON
PAPER.



THIS IS
THE REALM OF THE
ART **OBJECT**, THE
PICTURE PLANE, WHERE
SHAPES, LINES AND
COLORS CAN BE
THEMSELVES AND
NOT PRETEND
OTHERWISE.

The Picture Plane

BELOW ME,
THE AREA DESCRIBED
BY THESE 3 VERTICES--
"REALITY", LANGUAGE AND
THE PICTURE PLANE--
REPRESENTS THE TOTAL
PICTORIAL VOCABULARY
OF COMICS OR OF ANY
OF THE VISUAL
ARTS.



MOST COMICS ART
LIES NEAR THE
BOTTOM--THAT IS,
ALONG THE **ICONIC**
ABSTRACTION SIDE
WHERE EVERY LINE
HAS A **MEANING**.

NEAR THE LINE, BUT
NOT NECESSARILY
ON IT! FOR EVEN
THE MOST **STRAIGHT-**
FORWARD LITTLE
CARTOON CHARACTER
HAS A "**MEANINGLESS**"
LINE OR TWO!

WATCH THAT **NOSE!**

IF WE INCORPORATE
LANGUAGE AND
OTHER ICONS **INTO**
THE CHART, WE CAN
BEGIN TO BUILD A
COMPREHENSIVE
MAP--

-- OF THE
UNIVERSE
CALLED
COMICS.

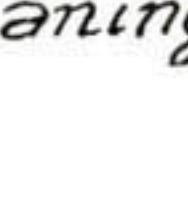
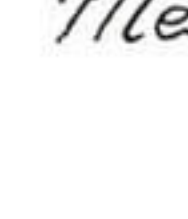
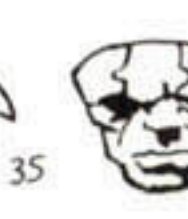
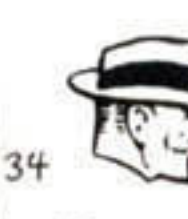
1. MARY FLEENER at her most abstract. 2. MARISCAL's Piker. 3. DAVE MCKEAN employing one of the many styles found in his series CAGES. 4. MARC HEMPEL's GREGORY. 5. MARK BEYER. 6. LARRY MARDER's Beanish from TALES OF THE BEANWORLD. "Resembling" nothing ever seen (hence all the way to the right), Marder's beans walk the line from design to meaning. 7. SAUL STIENBERG. 8. PENNY MORAN VAN-HORN 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 no.s 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

SWAIN. 35. CHESTER GOULD's DICK TRACY © Chicago Tribune-New York Syndicate, Inc. 36. JACK KIRBY's Darkseid, © 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.



COMICS

SPLASH!

FACE




Meaning

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

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.




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*:



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




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



Sound on!
O.K...Let's roll!
Vision on!



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



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.

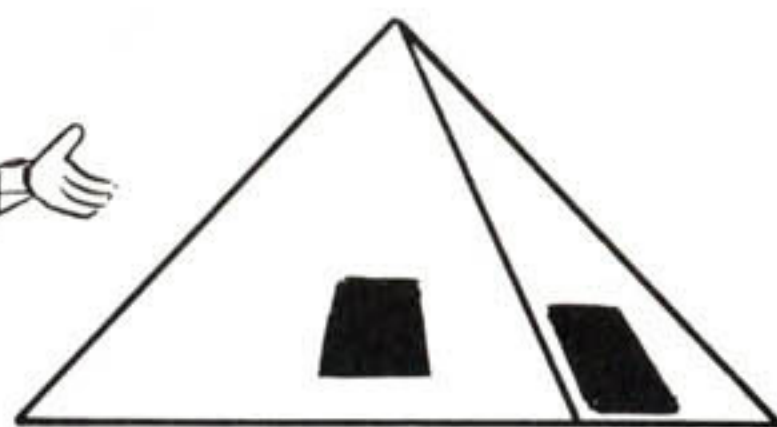
HEY!! COME TA THINK OF IT... WHAT ABOUT THAT WALKIN' TIME BOMB??

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

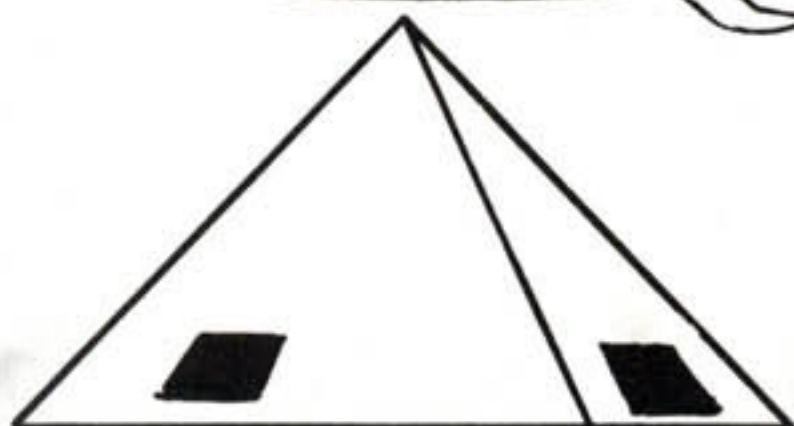


ART: JACK KIRBY AND JOE SINNOTT (MY FACSIMILE)
SCRIPT: STAN LEE.

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.



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.



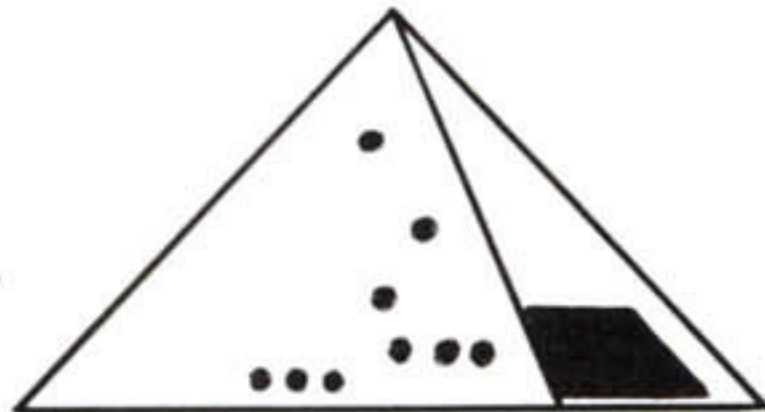
A FIGHT STARTED ON HIS DOORSTEP, HE PUT A STOP TO IT. FAR AS ANYONE KNOWS, ALL THE SURVIVORS ARE PRETTY MUCH OKAY.

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

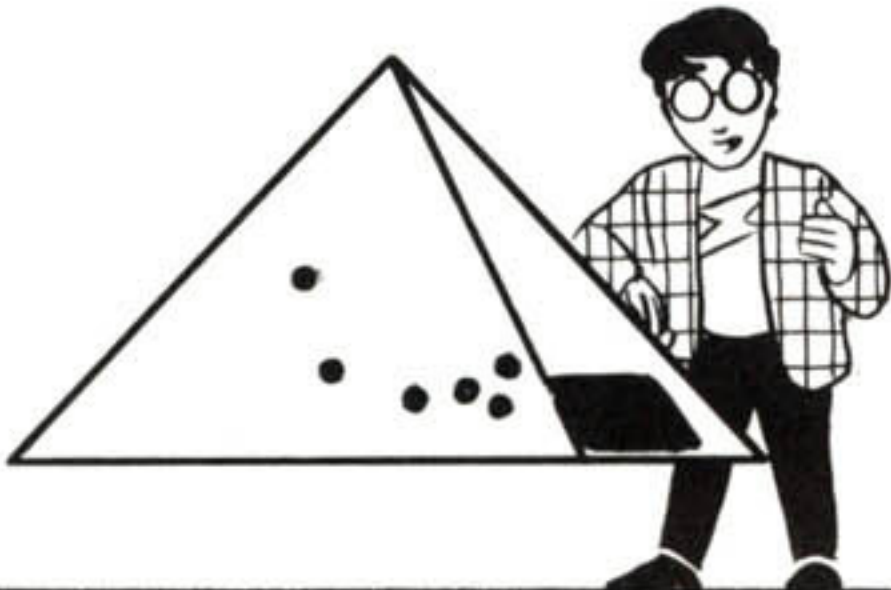




IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES, MOST OF THE COUNTERCULTURE OF INDEPENDENT CREATORS, WORKING MOSTLY IN BLACK AND WHITE, STAYED TO THE *RIGHT* OF MAINSTREAM COMICS ART WHILE COVERING A BROAD RANGE OF WRITING STYLES.



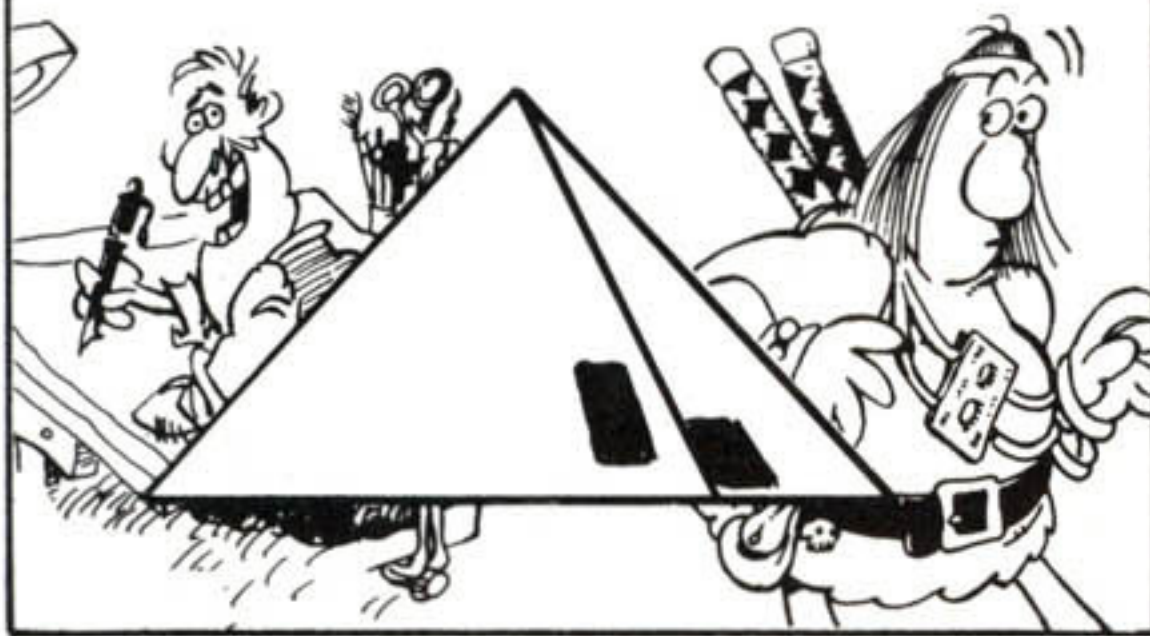
THIS FOLLOWS THE LEAD OF THE POST-KURTZMAN GENERATION OF *UNDERGROUND* CARTOONISTS WHO USED CARTOONY STYLES TO PORTRAY ADULT THEMES AND SUBJECT MATTER.



IRONIC THAT THE TWO BASTIONS OF *CARTOONY* ART ARE *UNDERGROUND* AND *CHILDREN'S* COMICS! PRETTY FAR APART AS GENRES GO!



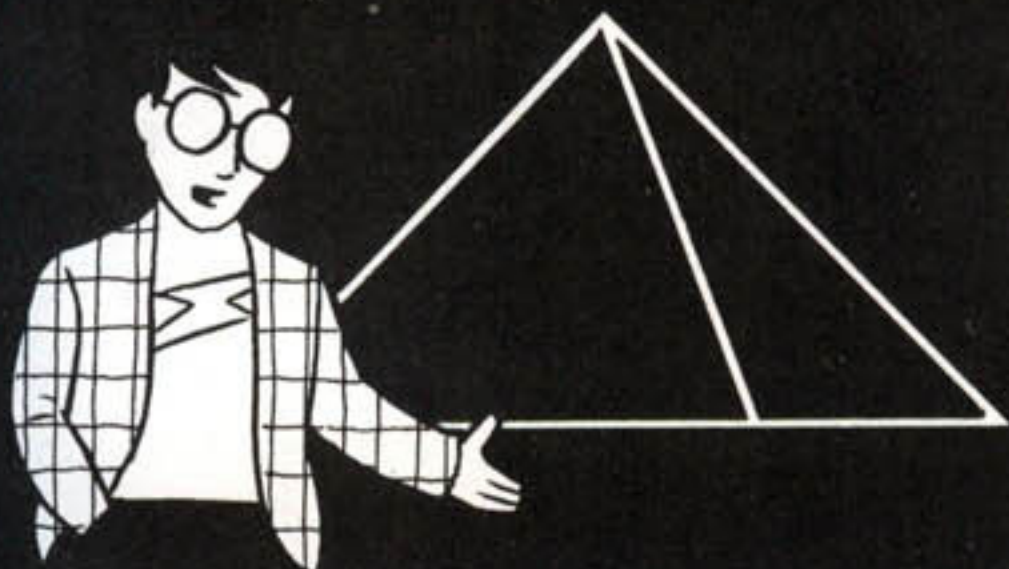
SOME ARTISTS, SUCH AS THE IRREPRESSIBLE *SERGIO ARAGONES*, STAKED THEIR CLAIM ON A PARTICULAR AREA *LONG AGO* AND HAVE BEEN QUITE HAPPY SINCE.



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



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*.



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



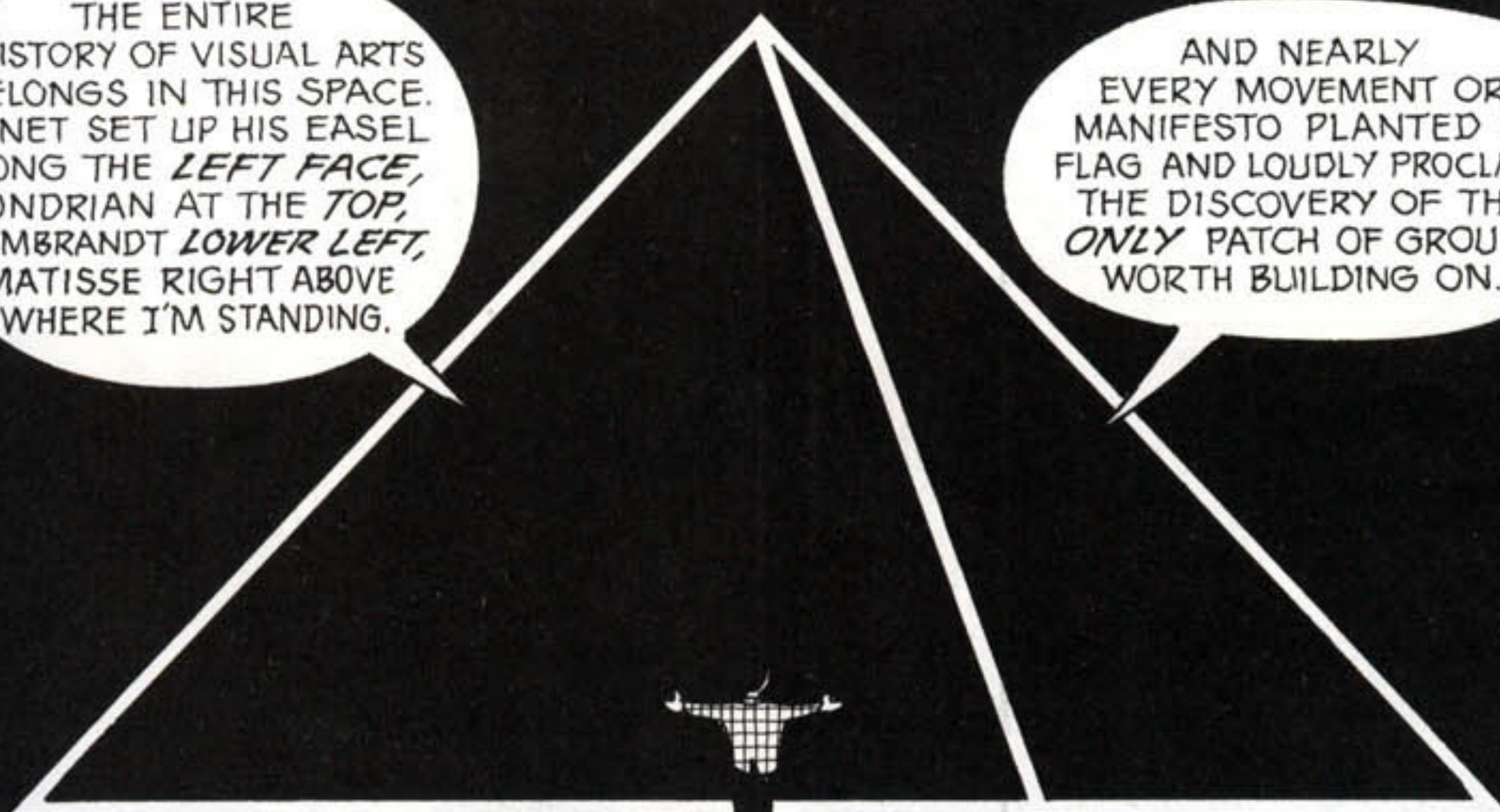
FOR COMICS TO *MATURE* AS A *MEDIUM*, IT MUST BE CAPABLE OF EXPRESSING EACH ARTIST'S *INNERMOST NEEDS* AND *IDEAS*.

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



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.



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

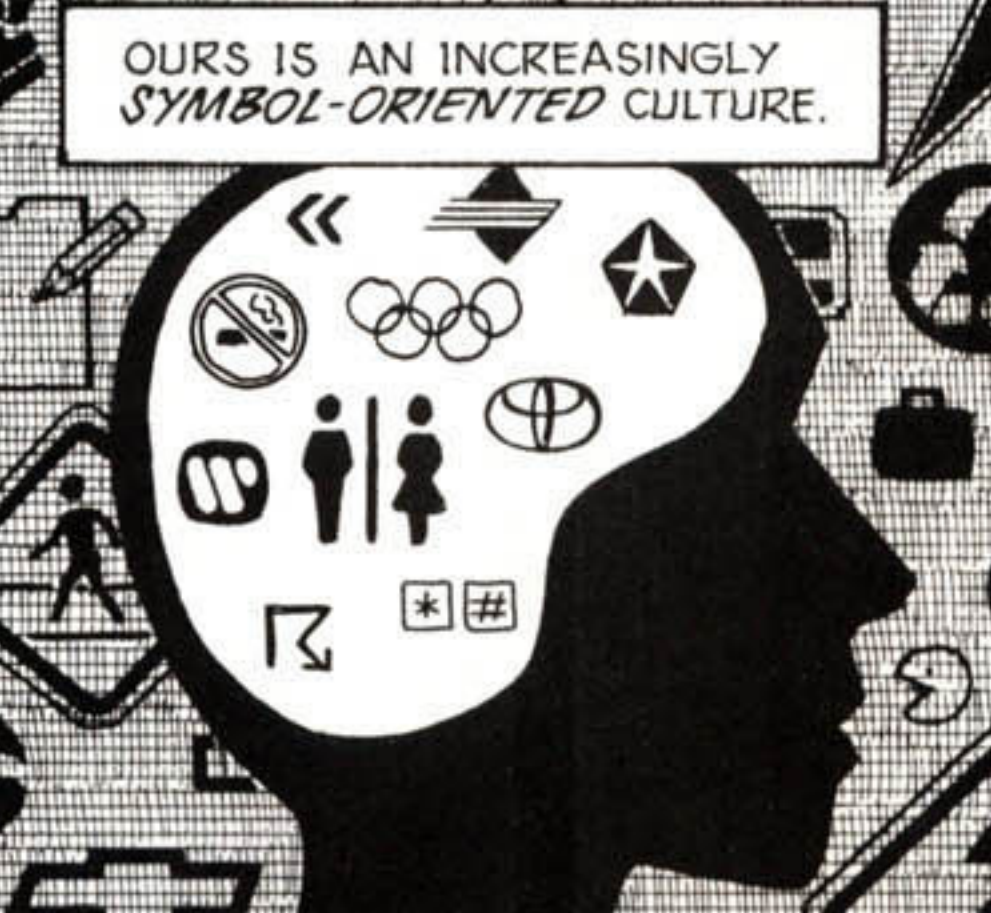
Ping!

BY DRAWING
BORDERS AROUND THE
VOCABULARY OF COMICS, I
HOPE I HAVEN'T MADE IT
SEEM SMALLER THAN
IT IS.

COMICS
ARTISTS HAVE
A **UNIVERSE** OF
ICONS TO CHOOSE
FROM!

SPLAT!

OURS IS AN INCREASINGLY
SYMBOL-ORIENTED CULTURE.



AS THE *TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY* APPROACHES, *VISUAL ICONOGRAPHY* MAY FINALLY HELP US REALIZE A FORM OF *UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATION.*

[illegible]

58

ICONS
DEMAND OUR
PARTICIPATION
TO MAKE THEM
WORK.

THERE IS NO LIFE HERE
EXCEPT THAT WHICH YOU
GIVE TO IT.

IT'S *YOUR* JOB TO
CREATE AND *RECREATE*
ME MOMENT BY
MOMENT, NOT JUST
THE CARTOONIST'S.

IT'S BEEN OVER *TWENTY YEARS* SINCE
MELUHAN FIRST OBSERVED THAT THOSE PEOPLE
GROWING UP IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY
DIDN'T WANT *GOALS* SO MUCH AS THEY
WANTED *ROLES*, AND THAT'S WHAT VISUAL
ICONOGRAPHY IS ALL ABOUT.

AS IT HAPPENS, ONLY
TWO POPULAR MEDIA
WERE IDENTIFIED BY
MELUHAN AS "COOL"
MEDIA-- THAT IS,
MEDIA WHICH
COMMAND AUDIENCE
INVOLVEMENT THROUGH
ICONIC FORMS.

SMILE!

PAF!

ONE OF THEM,
TELEVISION,
HAS REACHED INTO
THE LIVES OF EVERY
HUMAN BEING ON
EARTH--

--AND FOR BETTER
OR WORSE, ALTERED
THE COURSE OF
HUMAN AFFAIRS
FROM HERE 'TIL
DOOMSDAY.

THE FATE
OF THE
OTHER ONE,
COMICS--

-- IS
ANYONE'S
GUESS.

SEQUENTIAL
ART