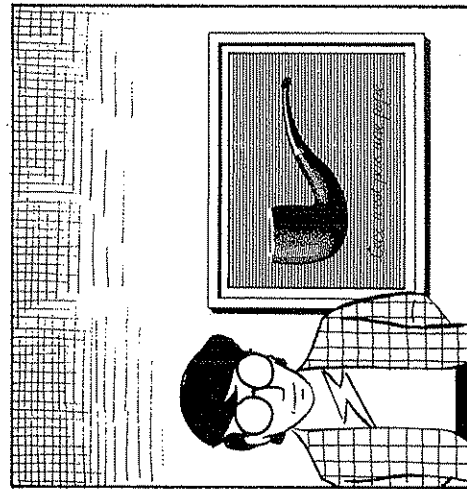
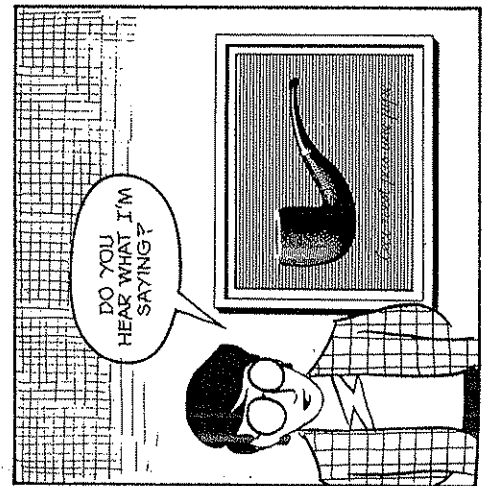
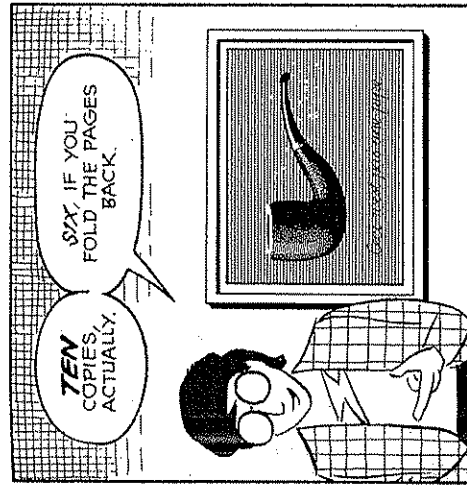
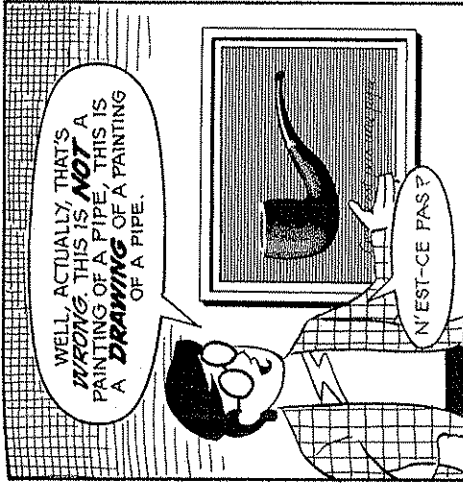
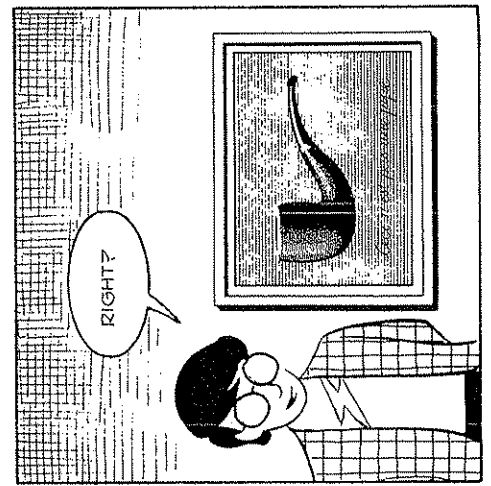
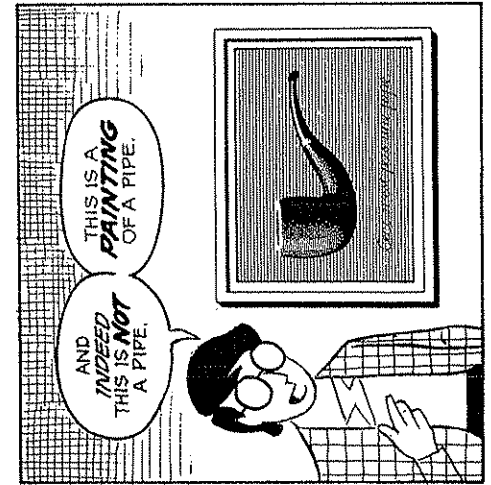
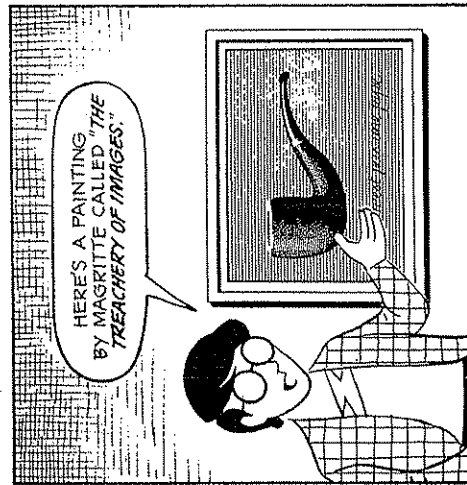


CHAPTER TWO

THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS.



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

5 5 5 5 5

M m M m m

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 **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!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REALITY THIS WAY.

WHAT IS THE **SECRET** OF THE **ICON** WE CALL--

--THE **CARTOON?**

WHY--

--ARE--

--WE--

--SO--

--INVOLVED?

WHY WOULD ANYONE, YOUNG OR OLD, RESPOND TO A CARTOON AS MUCH OR MORE THAN A REALISTIC IMAGE?

WHY IS OUR CULTURE SO IN THRALL TO THE SIMPLIFIED REALITY OF THE CARTOON?

DEFINING THE CARTOON WOULD TAKE UP AS MUCH SPACE AS DEFINING COMICS, BUT FOR NOW, I'M GOING TO EXAMINE CARTOONING AS A FORM OF AMPLIFICATION THROUGH SIMPLIFICATION.

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.

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

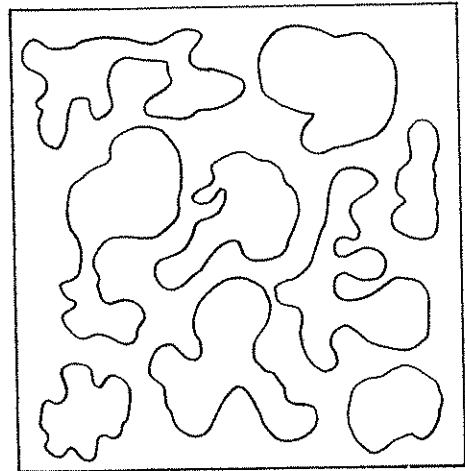
ONE
A FEW
THOUSANDS
MILLIONS
(NEARLY) ALL

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.

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!

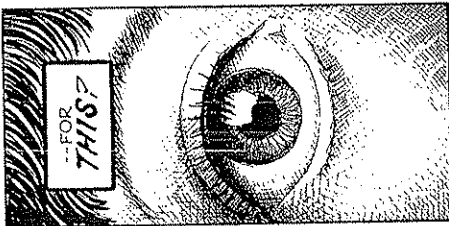
BUT STILL MORE INCREDIBLE IS THE FACT THAT YOU CANNOT AVOID SEEING A FACE HERE. LET YOU!

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.



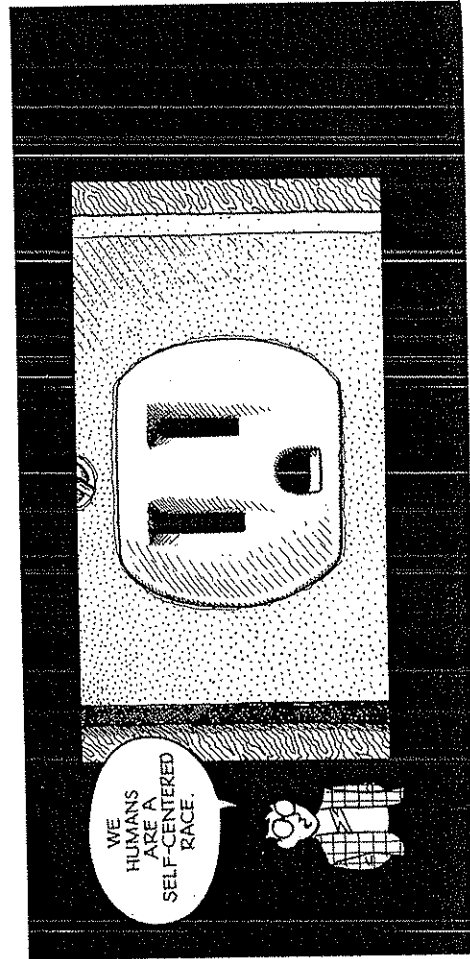
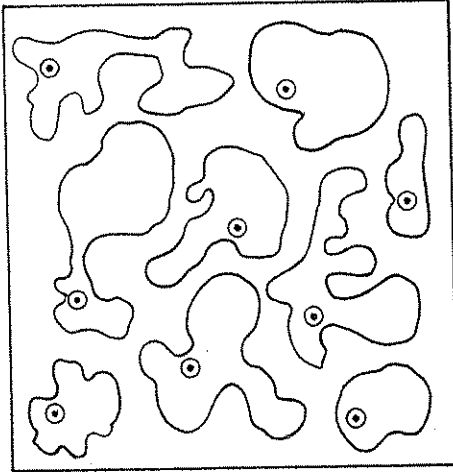
ASK A FRIEND TO DRAW YOU SOME SHAPES ON A PIECE OF PAPER. THEY SHOULD BE CLOSED-CURVES, BUT OTHERWISE CAN BE AS WEIRD AND IRREGULAR AS HE OR SHE WANTS.

LET'S SAY THE RESULTS LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS

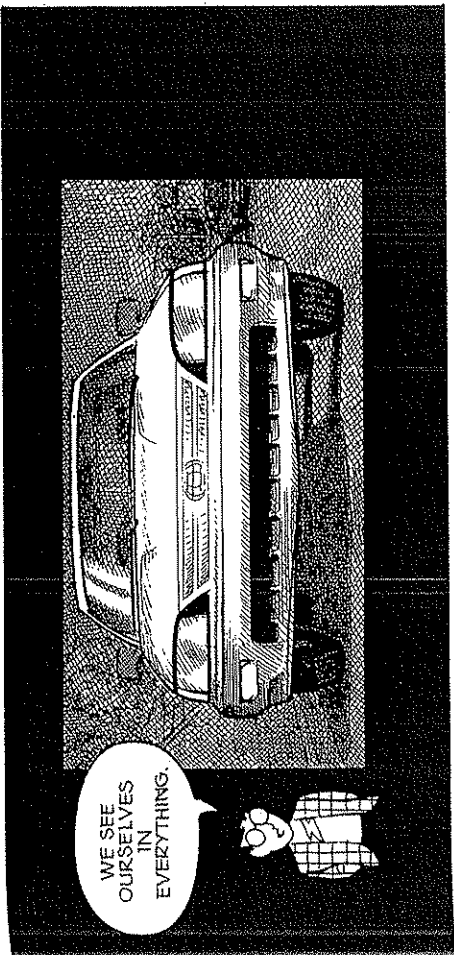


--FOR THIS?

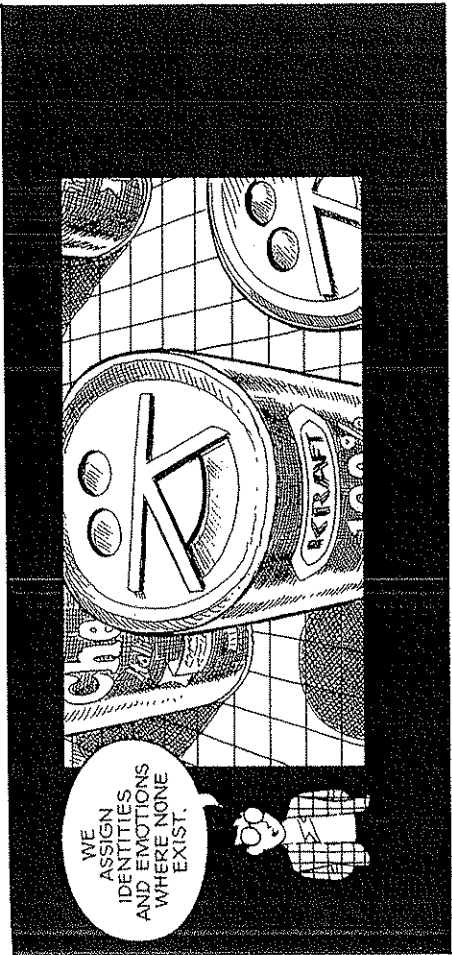
YOUR MIND HAS NO TROUBLE AT ALL CONVERTING SUCH SHAPES INTO FACES, YET WOULD IT EVER MISTAKE THIS--



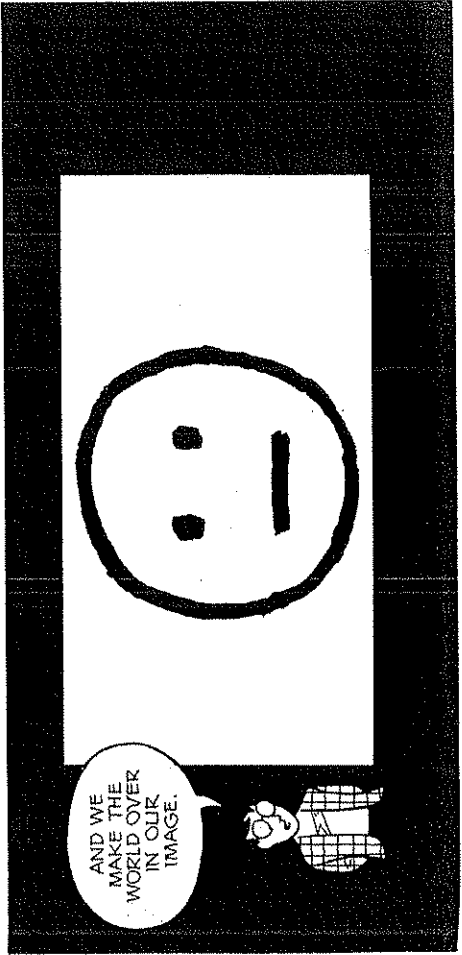
WE HUMANS ARE A SELF-CENTERED RACE.



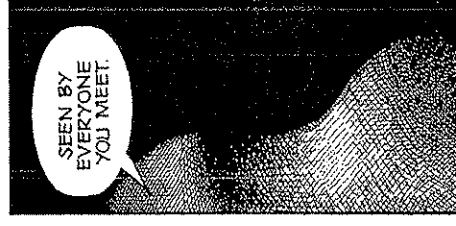
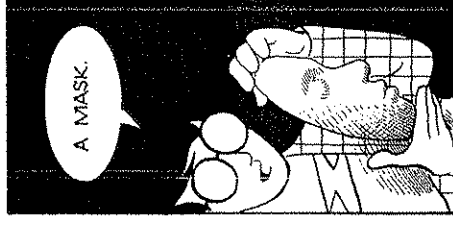
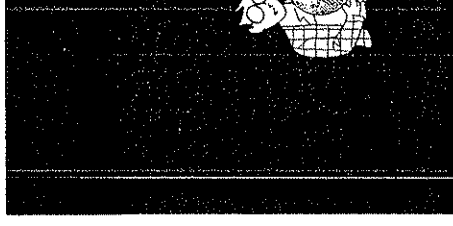
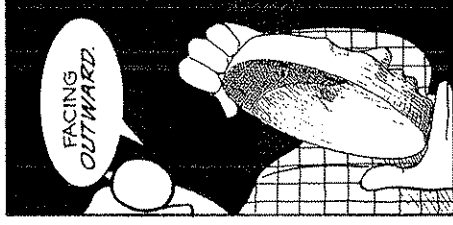
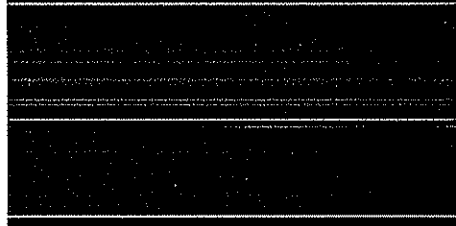
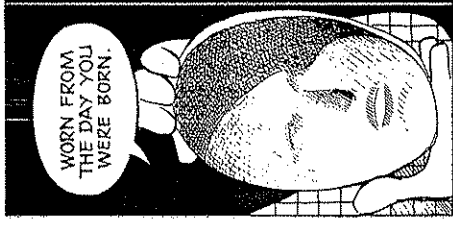
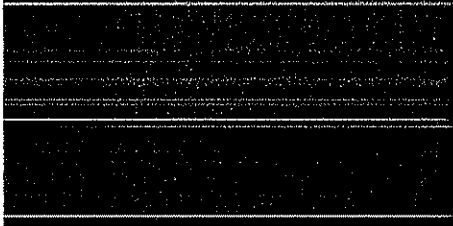
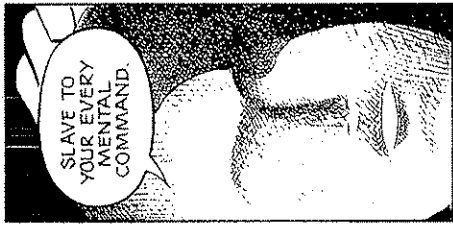
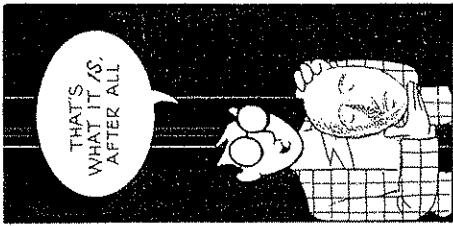
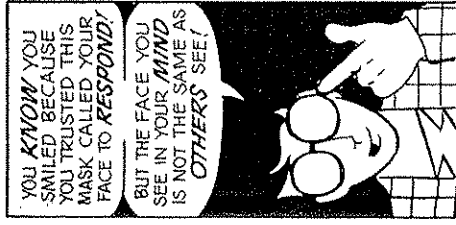
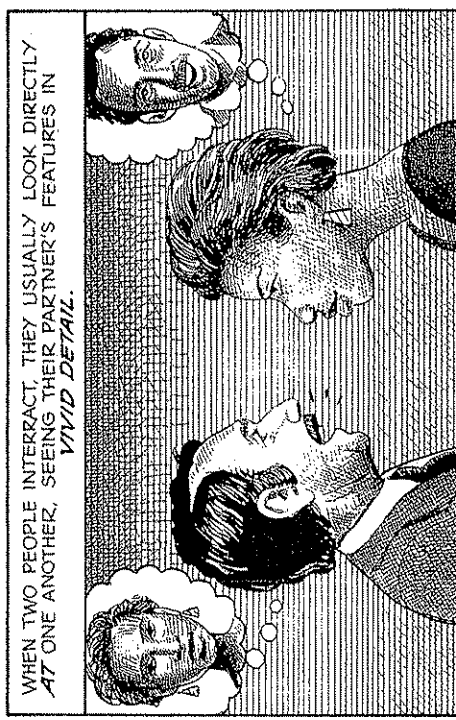
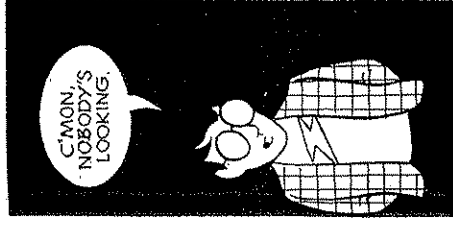
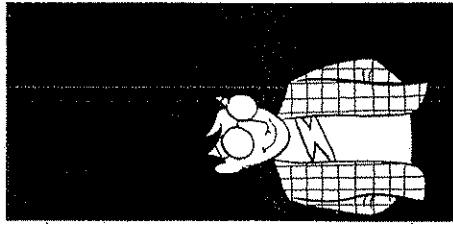
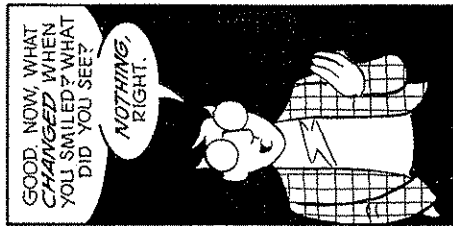
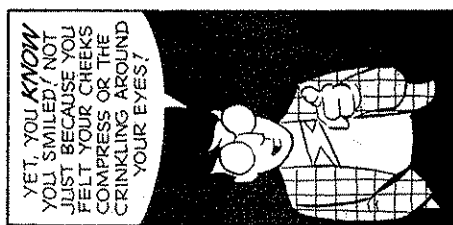
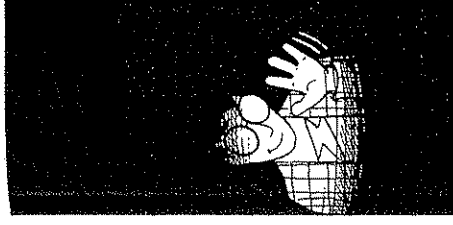
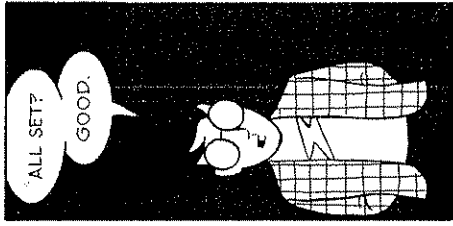
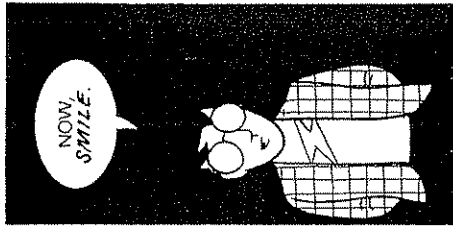
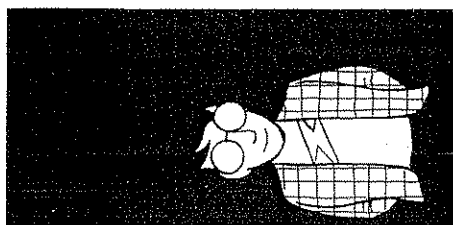
WE SEE OURSELVES IN EVERYTHING.

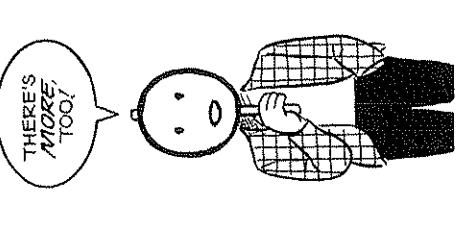
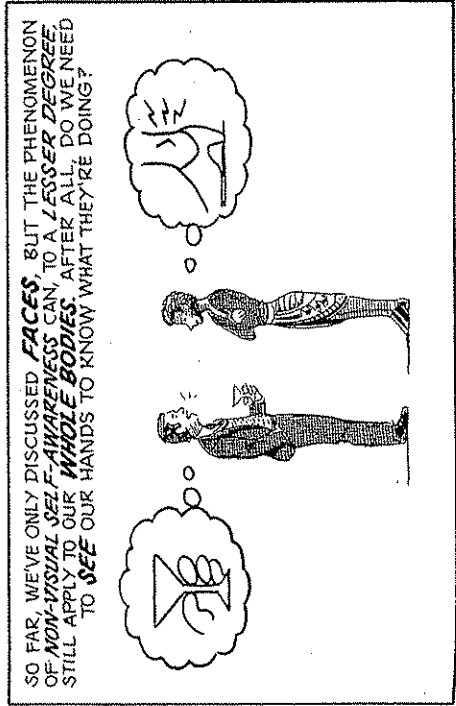
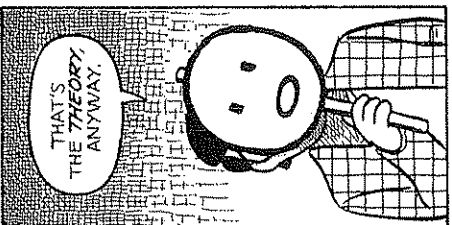
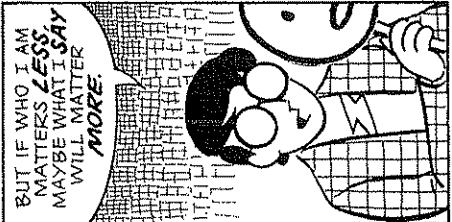
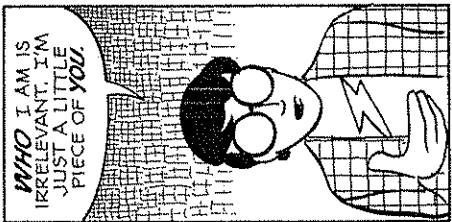
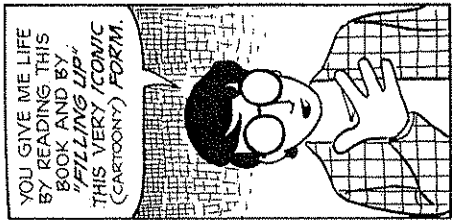
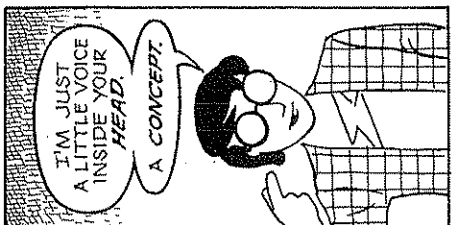
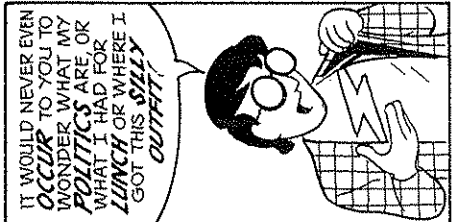
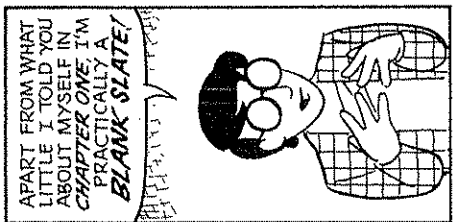
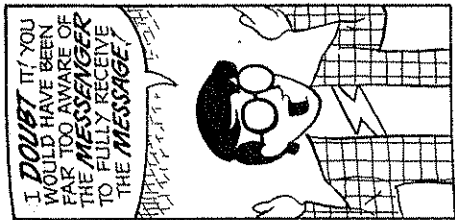
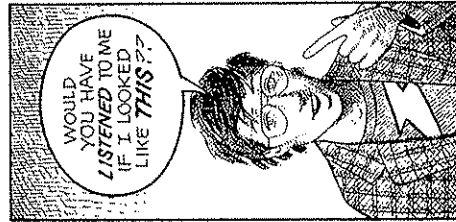
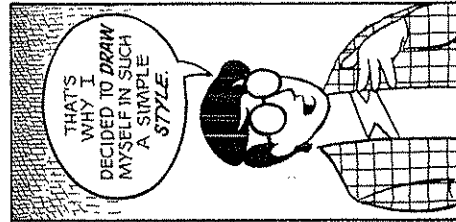
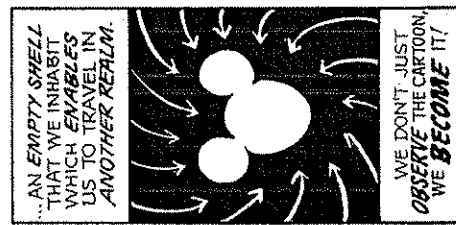
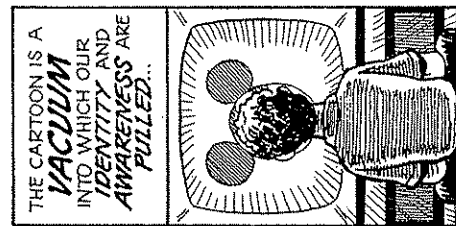
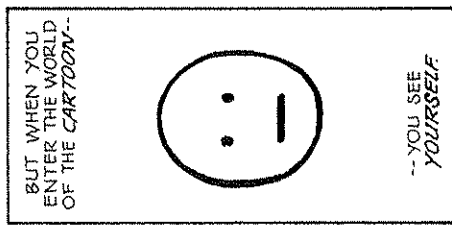
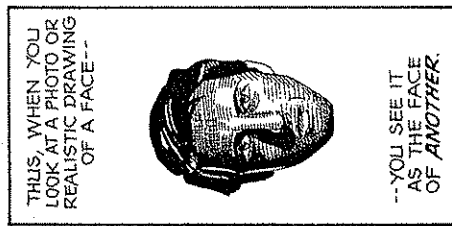
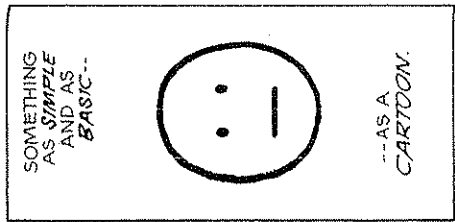


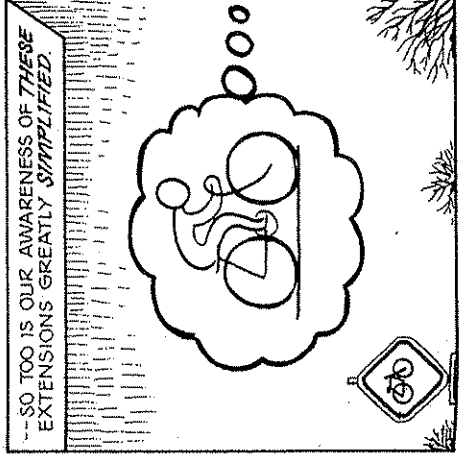
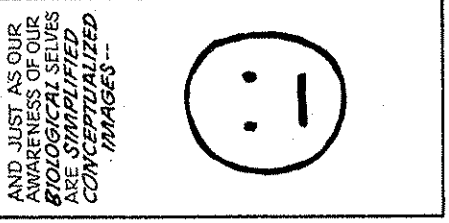
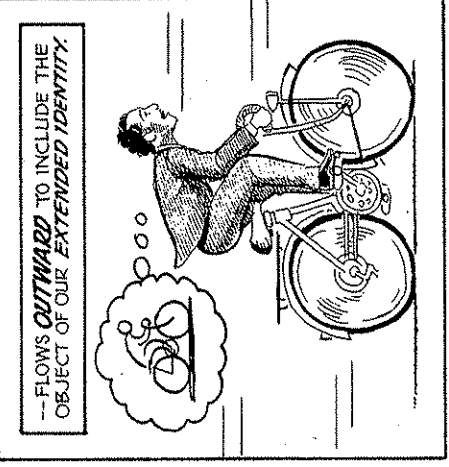
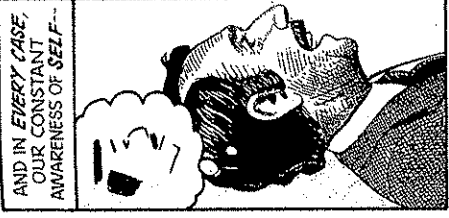
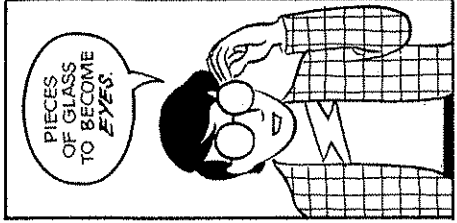
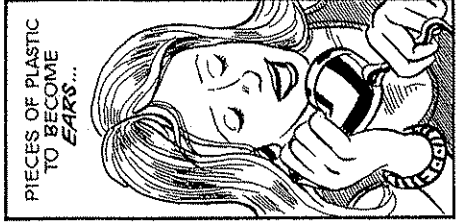
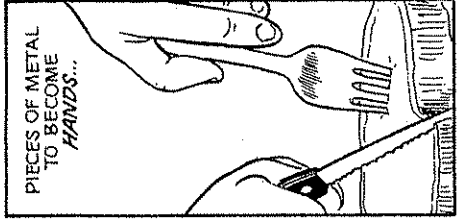
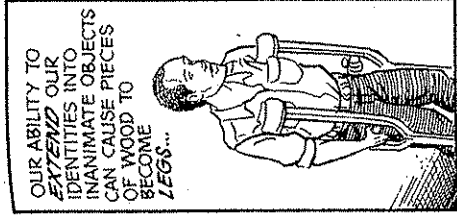
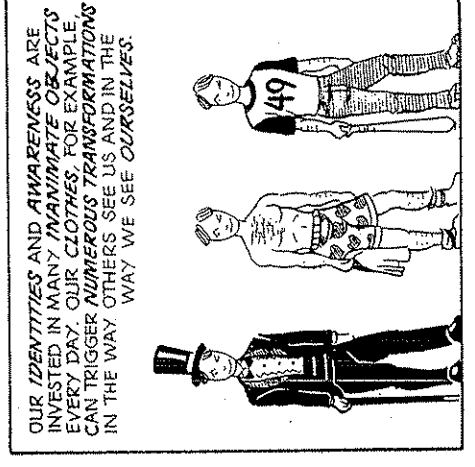
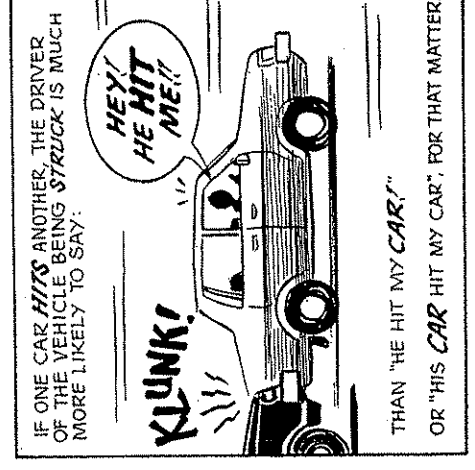
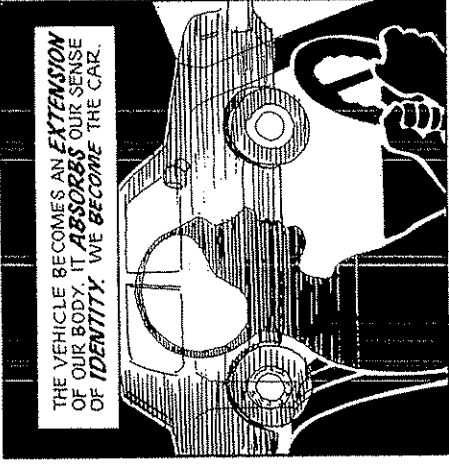
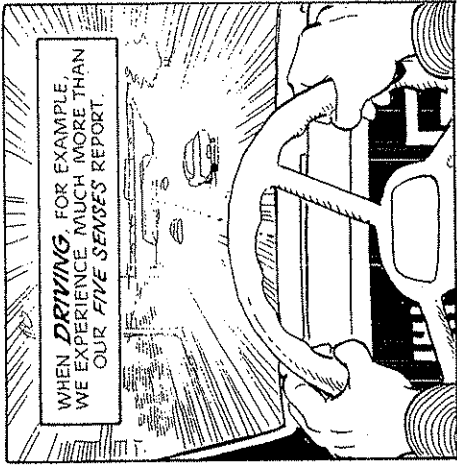
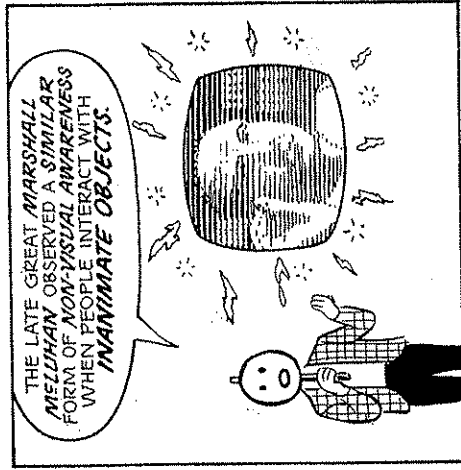
WE ASSIGN IDENTITIES AND EMOTIONS WHERE NONE EXIST.



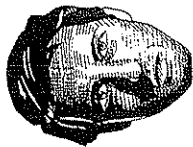
AND WE MAKE THE WORLD OVER IN OUR IMAGE.



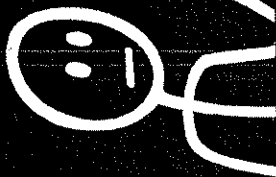




THROUGH TRADITIONAL
REALISM, THE COMICS
ARTIST CAN PORTRAY
THE WORLD
WITHOUT--



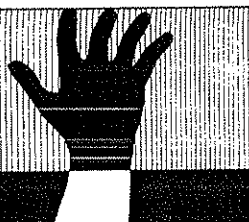
BY DE-EMPHASIZING THE APPEARANCE
OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD IN FAVOR OF
THE IDEA OF FORM, THE CARTOON
PLACES ITSELF IN THE WORLD OF CONCEPTS



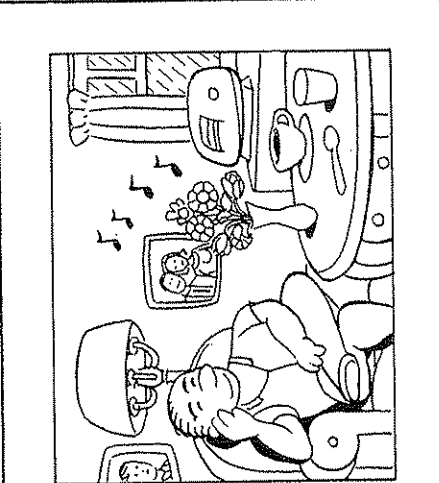
--WE LEND
TO THEM.



GRADUALLY
WE REACH
BEYOND
OURSELVES.



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.



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

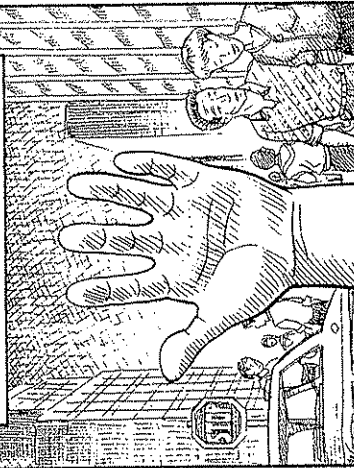


--AND THROUGH
THE CARTOON,
THE WORLD
WITHIN.

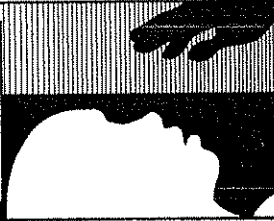
AND SOON WE
DISCOVER THAT
THE OBJECTS OF THE
PHYSICAL
WORLD CAN
ALSO
CROSS OVER--



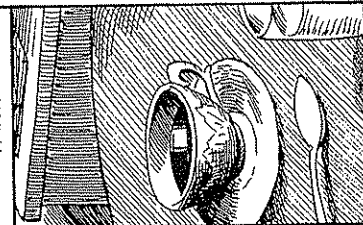
AND OF THE WORLD AROUND US.



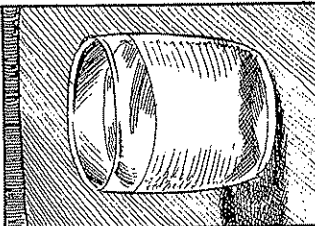
WE ENCOUNTER
THE SIGHT, SMELL,
TOUCH, TASTE AND
SOUND OF OUR
OWN BODIES.



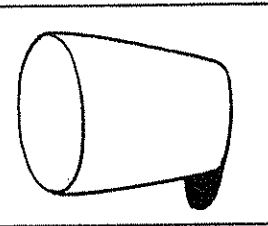
--REALISM OF
SOME SORT IS
GOING TO PLAY A
PART.



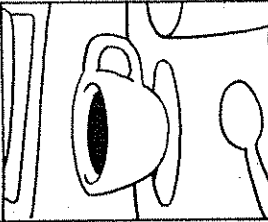
IF AN ARTIST
WANTS TO PORTRAY
THE BEAUTY AND
COMPLEXITY OF THE
PHYSICAL
WORLD--



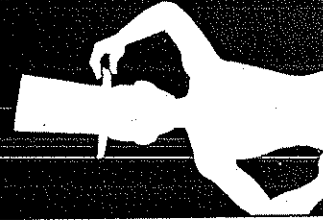
BUT IN EMPHASIZING
THE CONCEPTS OF
OBJECTS OVER THEIR
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE,
MUCH HAS TO BE
OMITTED.



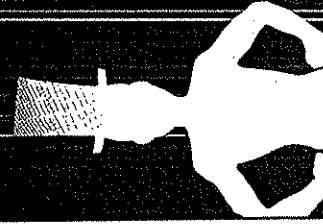
INANIMATE OBJECTS
MAY SEEM TO POSSESS
SEPARATE IDENTITIES
SO THAT IF ONE
JUMPED UP AND
STARTED SINGING
IT WOULDN'T FEEL
OUT OF PLACE.



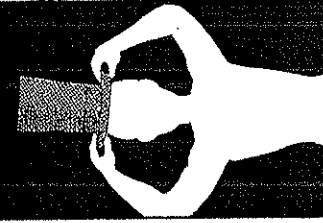
--WITH THE
LIFE--



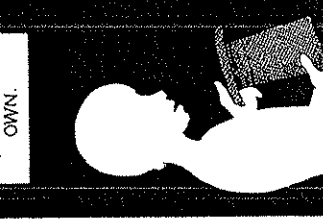
--BEGIN TO
GLOW--

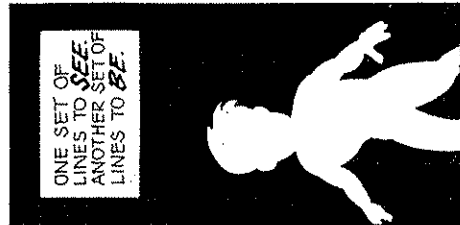


OR, AS OUR
EXTENSIONS--



--AND POSSESS
IDENTITIES
OF THEIR
OWN.





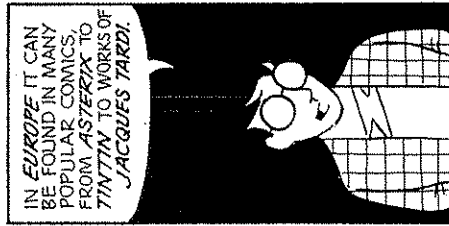
ONE SET OF LINES TO **SEE**.
ANOTHER SET OF LINES TO **BE**.



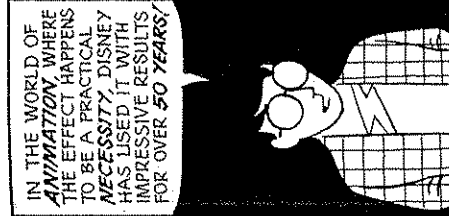
THIS COMBINATION ALLOWS READERS TO **MASK** THEMSELVES IN A CHARACTER AND SAFELY ENTER A SENSUALLY STIMULATING WORLD.



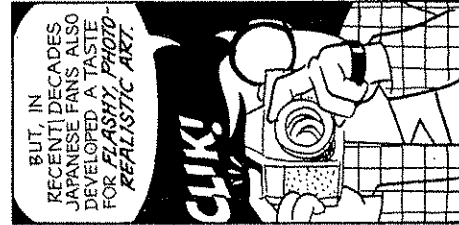
IN **AMERICAN** COMICS, THE EFFECT IS USED FAR LESS **OFTEN**, ALTHOUGH IT HAS CREPT UP IN THE WORKS OF ARTISTS AS DIVERSE AS **CARL BARKS**, **JAMIE HERNANDEZ** AND IN THE TEAM OF **DAVE SIM** AND **GERHARD**.



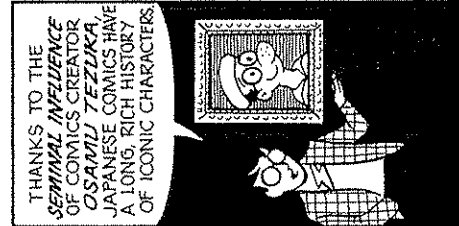
IN **EUROPE** IT CAN BE FOUND IN MANY POPULAR COMICS, FROM **ASTERIX** TO **TINTIN** TO WORKS OF **JACQUES TARDI**.



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**.



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



THANKS TO THE **SEMI-ANNUAL INFLUENCE** OF COMICS CREATOR **OSAMU TEZUKA**, JAPANESE COMICS HAVE A LONG, RICH HISTORY OF **ICONIC CHARACTERS**.



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



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



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



IN **SOME** COMICS, THIS SPLIT IS FAR MORE **PROMINENT**, THE BELGIAN "**CLEAR-LINE**" STYLE OF HERGES. **TINTIN** COMBINES VERY **ICONIC CHARACTERS** WITH **UNUSUALLY REALISTIC BACKGROUNDS**.



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

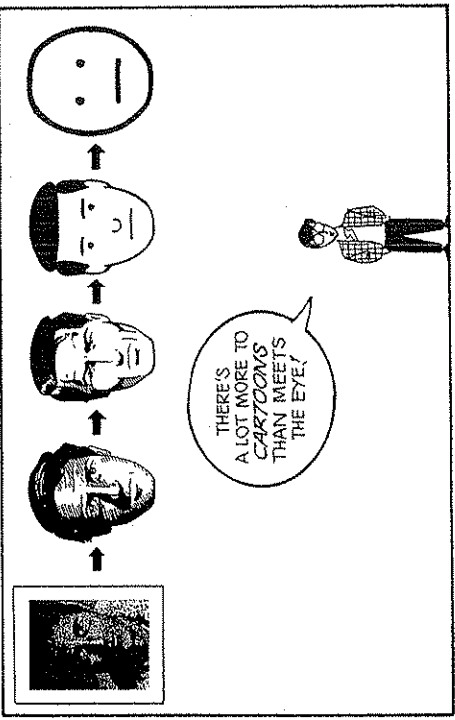
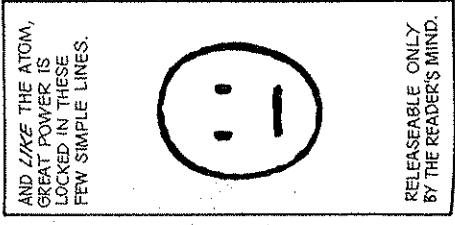
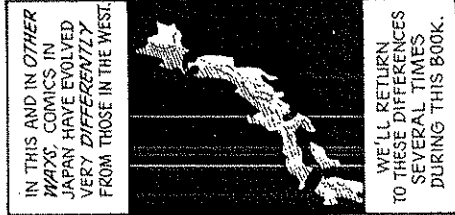
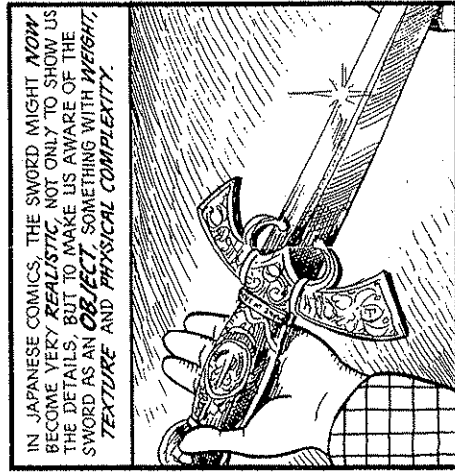
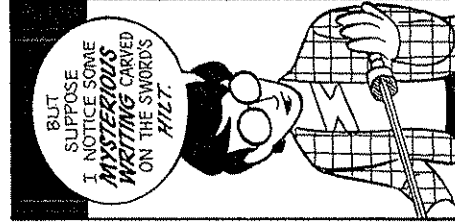
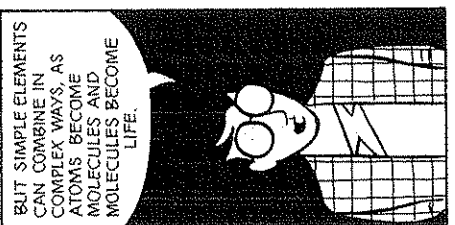
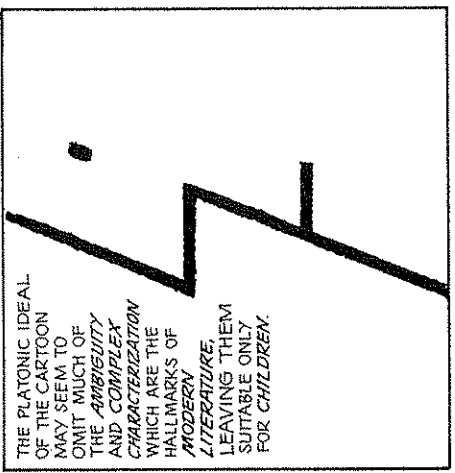
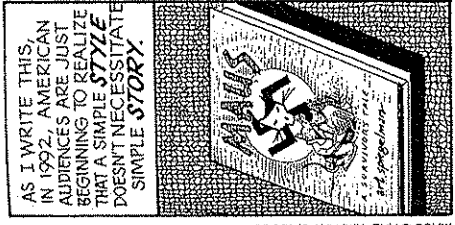
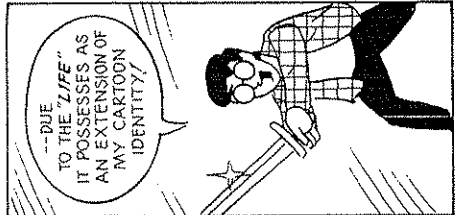
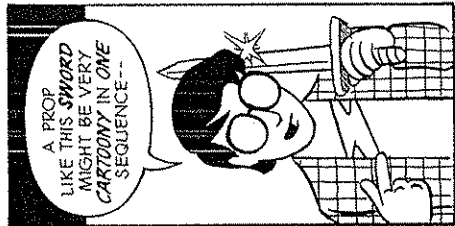
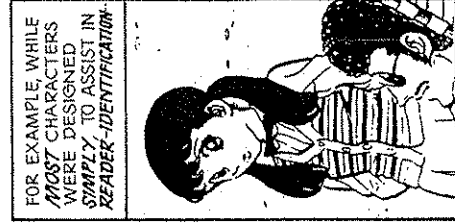
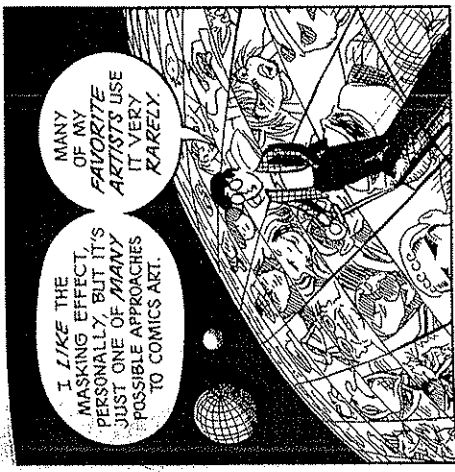
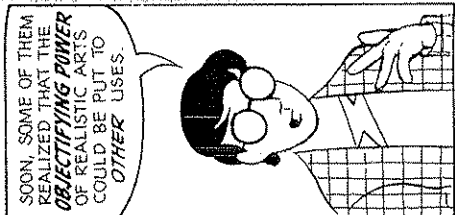
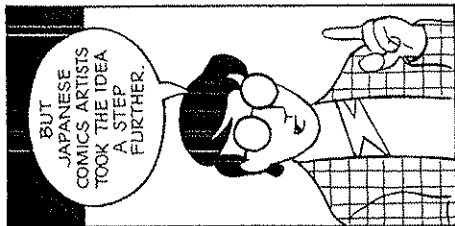


STORYTELLERS IN **ALL** MEDIA KNOW THAT A SURE INDICATOR OF **AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT**--

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



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



"REALITY"

WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

WE'VE REDUCED THIS FACE TO TWO DOTS AND TWO LINES: IS OUR ICONIC ABSTRACTION SCALE COMPLETE?

CAN ANY CONFIGURATION OF **INK ON PAPER** BE **MORE ABSTRACTED** FROM "REALITY"?

THE SCALE SHOWS SEVERAL SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT PROGRESSIONS. LET'S CONCENTRATE ON ONE AND SEE IF WE CAN TAKE IT ANY FURTHER.

REALISTIC -> COMPLEX -> SIMPLE -> ICONIC

OBJECTIVE -> SUBJECTIVE

SPECIFIC -> UNIVERSAL

--YET STILL REPRESENT A FACE AS CLEARLY AS **THIS** ONE?

THE SCALE SHOWS SEVERAL SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT PROGRESSIONS. LET'S CONCENTRATE ON ONE AND SEE IF WE CAN TAKE IT ANY FURTHER.

REALISTIC -> COMPLEX -> SIMPLE -> ICONIC

OBJECTIVE -> SUBJECTIVE

SPECIFIC -> UNIVERSAL

--YET STILL REPRESENT A FACE AS CLEARLY AS **THIS** ONE?

MEANING RETAINED.

RESEMBLANCE GONE.

MOST AMERICAN COMICS, NOTABLY COMIC BOOKS, HAVE LONG EMPHASIZED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORDS AND PICTURES.

WRITING AND DRAWING ARE SEEN AS SEPARATE DISCIPLINES, WRITERS AND ARTISTS AS SEPARATE BREEDS.

BUT JUST HOW "DIFFERENT" ARE THEY?

WORDS, PICTURES AND OTHER ICONS ARE THE VOCABULARY OF THE LANGUAGE CALLED COMICS.

A SINGLE UNIFIED LANGUAGE DESERVES A SINGLE UNIFIED VOCABULARY.

WITHOUT IT, COMICS WILL CONTINUE TO LIMP ALONG AS THE "BASTARD CHILD" OF WORDS AND PICTURES.

SEVERAL FACTORS HAVE CONSPIRED AGAINST COMICS RECEIVING THE UNIFIED IDENTITY IT NEEDS.

AND AMONG THEM LIE SOME OF OUR VERY BEST INSTINCTS.

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

"ARTIST" "WRITER"

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! 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 HER OWN.

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.

The words are so large, so large, on now...

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

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

RECEIVED

FACE

TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH.

The words are so large, so large, on now...

PERCEIVED

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

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

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

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

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

CAN THEY BE RECONCILED?

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

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

TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH. The picture is a picture, not a face.

USUALLY THE WORD "ABSTRACTION" REFERS TO THE **NON-COMIC** 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.

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.

The Picture Plane

FACE

Reality

Language

MOST COMICS ART LIES NEAR THE **BOTTOM**-- THAT IS, ALONG THE /COMIC 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 Pher. 3. DAVE McKEAN employing one of the many styles found in his series GAGES. 4. MARC HEMPEL's GREGORY. 5. MARK BEYER. 6. LARRY BEANWORLD. "Resembling" nothing ever seen (hence all the way to the right). 7. SAUL STERNBERG. 8. PENNY MORAN VAN-HORN from THE LIBRARIAN. 9. LORENZO MATTOTI in FIRES (© Editions Abin 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-CHUMB. 11. PETER BAGGE's Chuckie-Boy from NEAT STUFF. Compare to 39. 12. KRISTINE KEATYRE. 13. REA IRVIN. THE SMITHS & FAD Newspaper Syndicate. 14. BLANK WILLIS's Mory. 15. PHIL YER's BLANK THE UNICORN. 16. JERRY MORIARTY's "Jack Survives". Based closely on the rough light and shadow, but decomposed into no-els shapes. 17. JEFF WONGS art for Scott Rudin's JIZZ. 18. ROLF STARK's TRASHMAN. 19. SPAIN's FRANK MILLER's THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS. Batman © D.C. Comics. Batman created by Bob Kane. 21. WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEB's Wolverine Macalistrat from JOURNAN. 22. DON SIMPSON's NEGATON 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 THUDEAU's DOONESBURY. 27. LYNDA BARRY. 28. SAMPEI SHIRATO. 29. CHARLES BURNS's BIG BABY. 30. 1/2. (Whoops) C.L.I.F.F. STERRETT. The character pictured here from POLLY AND HER PALS might belong to a 60-year-old woman, but Sterrett's art, like Fleener's often trends upward toward the wildly abstract. P.A.R.T.I. by SERGIO FAGONES's GREGO. THE WANDERER. Simple, straightforward, but with a strong gestural quality that always leads us to the hand that holds the pen. 31. ROBERTA GREGORY's BECKY BUCHHELI from BATMAN: YEAR ONE. 32. DAVID MALLON from GORDON © D.C. Comics. 33. JOSE MUÑOZ from "Water Control. Mister Wilcox". © Munoz and Sampaio. 34. CAROL

The Picture Plane

SWAIN. 35. CHESTER GOULD's DICK TRACY © Chicago Tribune-New York Syndicate, Inc. 36. JACK KIRBY's MARVEL. 37. BOB BURDEN. 38. DANIEL TORRES's Rocio Vegas 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 King'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. GOSSEKI KOJIMA from KOZURE OKAMI

(Wolf and Cub) © Kojima and Kojima. 46. EDDIE CAMPBELL's ALEC. Realistic in tone, but also gestural and expressive. 47. ALEX TOTH. Zorro © Zorro Productions, Inc. Art © John McQuillan. (Zorro created by Johnston McCullum). 48. HUGO PRATT's CORTO MALTESE © Castaman, Paris-Tourmal. 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 Popeye © King Features Syndicate, Inc. 57. GEORGE HERRIMAN's "Offissa Puppi" from KAZZY KAT. © International Feature Service, Inc. 58. JIM WOODRING's FRANK. 60. NEAL ADAMS from X-MEN © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. (X-Men created by Lee & 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 Shuster). 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. THINA ROBBINS's

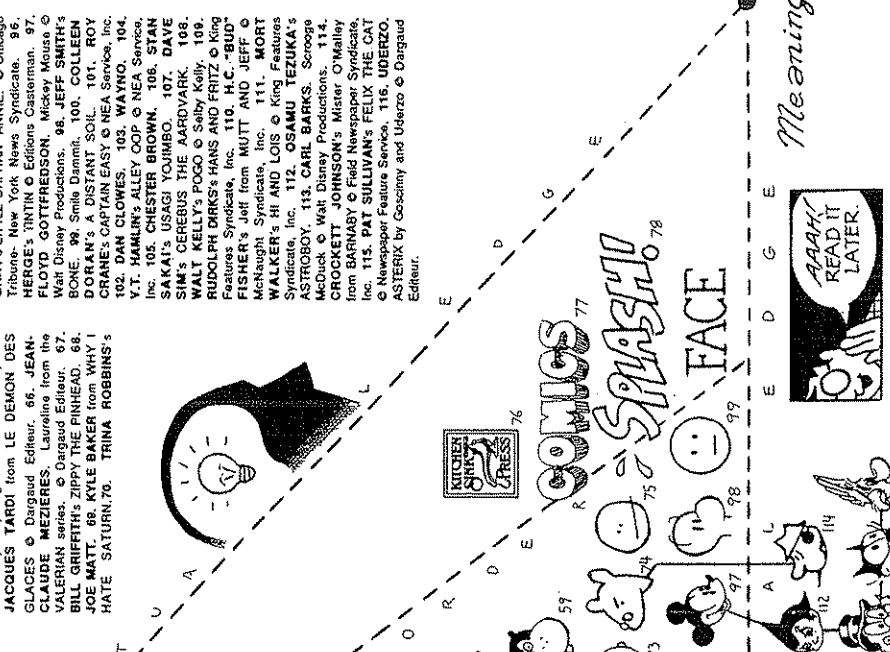
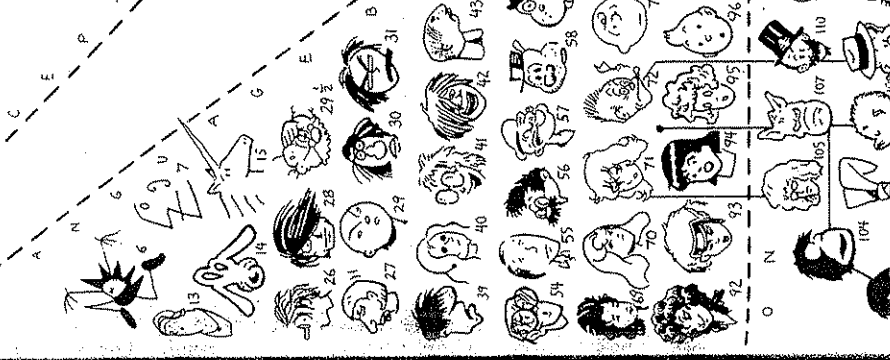
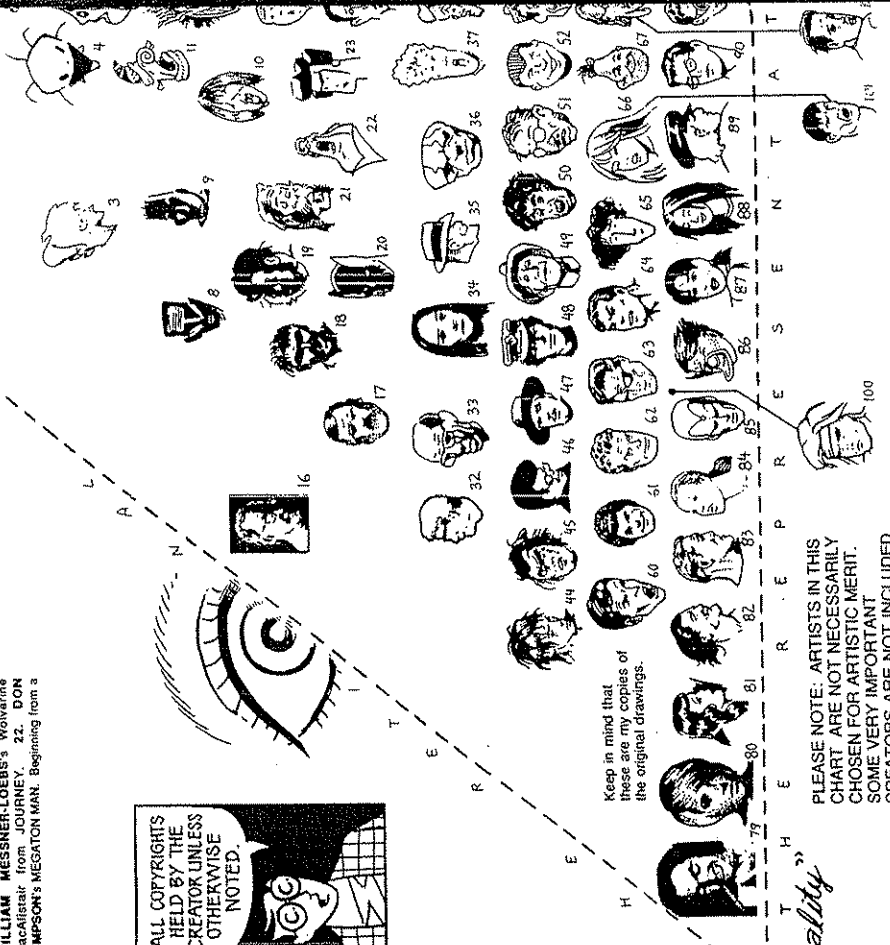
ALL COPYRIGHTS HELD BY THE CREATOR UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

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

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

"Reality"

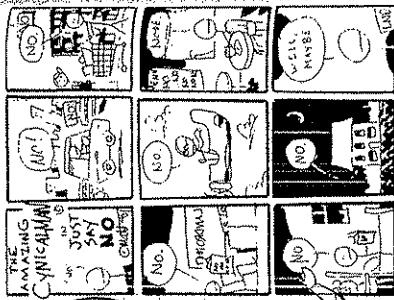
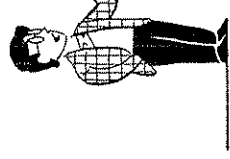
Meaning



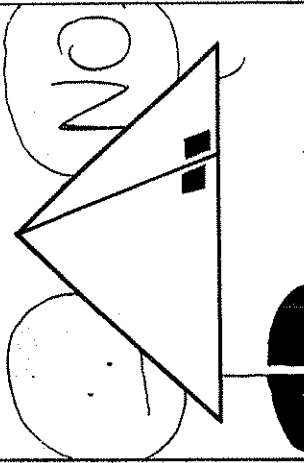
MOST OF THE PRECEDING EXAMPLES WERE BASED ON OUR CHART BASED ON THE DRAWING STYLES USED ON SPECIFIC CHARACTERS.

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.

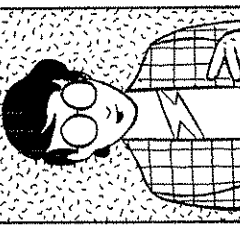
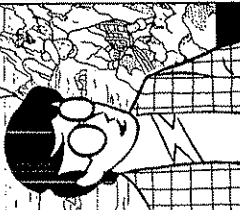



THE COMBINATION OF EXTREMELY ICONIC CHARACTERS AND ENVIRONMENTS, MIXED WITH SIMPLE, DIRECT LANGUAGE AND A SOUND EFFECT OR TWO, WOULD GIVE US A SHAPE SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

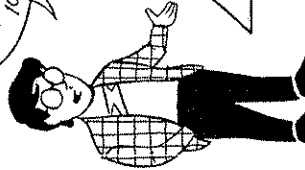
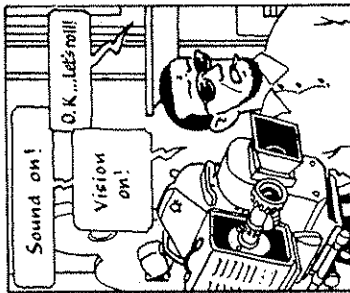


BUT OTHERS RANGE CONSIDERABLY FROM ONE END OF THE CHART TO THE OTHER.

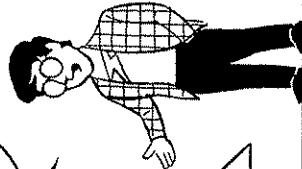
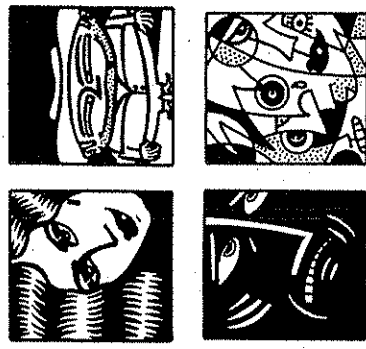
WE'VE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE RANGE OF HERGE AND OTHERS WHO CONTRAST ICONIC CHARACTERS WITH REALISTIC BACKGROUNDS.

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!

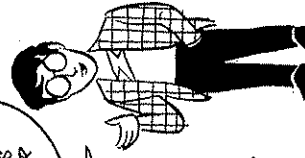
HEY!! COME TO THINK OF IT, I'M STILL A THINK OF LOOSE... THERE'S NO TELLING ABOUT THAT WALKIN' TIME BOMB??

THAT'S RIGHT!! IF HE'S STILL A THINK OF LOOSE... THERE'S NO TELLING ABOUT THAT WALKIN' TIME BOMB??

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

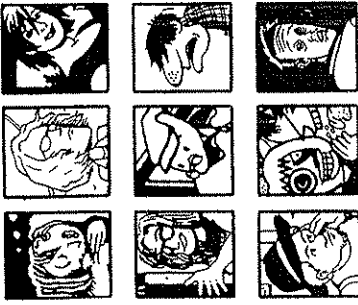
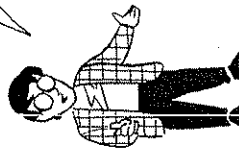



TODAY, MANY AMERICAN MAINSTREAM COMICS STILL FOLLOW KIRBY'S LEAD FOR STORYTELLING, BUT THE DESIRE FOR MORE REALISTIC ART AND MORE ELABORATE SCRIPTS HAS PUSHED ART AND STORY FURTHER APART IN MANY CASES.

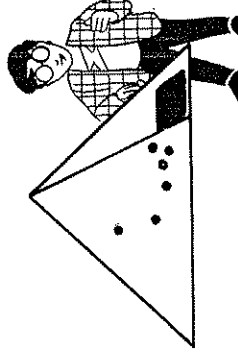



A FIGHT STARTED ON HIS TO CONSIDER HE PUT A STOP TO THE FIGHT. HE KNOWS ALL THE SURVIVORS ARE PRETTY MUCH OKAY. WHY YOU TALK, NICHOLAS? YOU EXPECT HIM TO START NUKIN' MAMA RUSSIA ANY MOMENT.

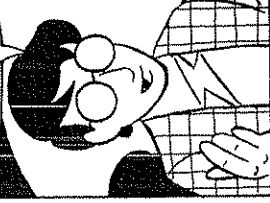
IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES, MOST OF THE COUNTERCULTURE OF INDEPENDENT CREATORS, WORKING MOSTLY IN BLACK AND WHITE, STAYED TO THE *RIGHT* OF MAINSTREAM COMICS ART WHILE COVERING A BROAD RANGE OF WRITING STYLES.

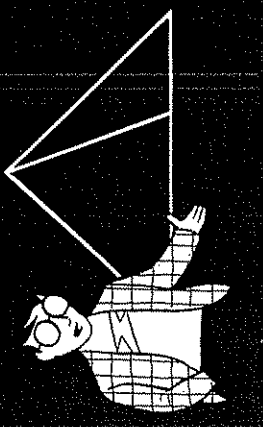
THIS FOLLOWS THE LEAD OF THE POST-KURTZMAN GENERATION OF UNDERGROUND CARTOONISTS WHO USED CARTOONY STYLES TO PORTRAY ADULT THEMES AND SUBJECT MATTER.



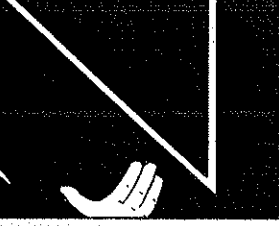

IRONIC THAT THE TWO BASICS OF CARTOONY ART ARE UNDERGROUND AND CHILDREN'S COMICS! PRETTY FAR APART AS GENRES GO!



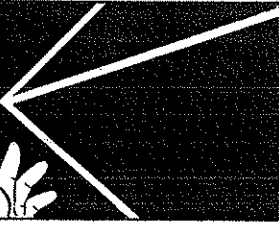
WHEN AN ARTIST IS DRAWN TO ONE END OF THE CHART OR ANOTHER, THAT ARTIST MAY BE REVEALING SOMETHING ABOUT HIS OR HER STRONGEST *VALUES* AND *LOYALTIES* IN ART.



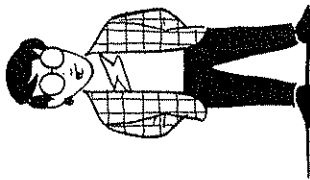
THOSE WHO APPROACH THE *LOWER LEFT*, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE PROBABLY ATTRACTED BY A SENSE OF THE BEAUTY OF *NATURE*.



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



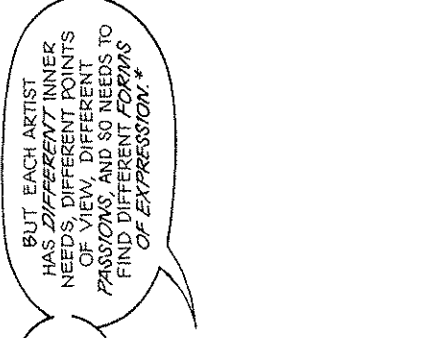
FOR COMICS TO *MATURE* AS A *MEDIUM*, IT MUST BE CAPABLE OF EXPRESSING EACH ARTIST'S *INNERMOST* NEEDS AND *IDEAS*.



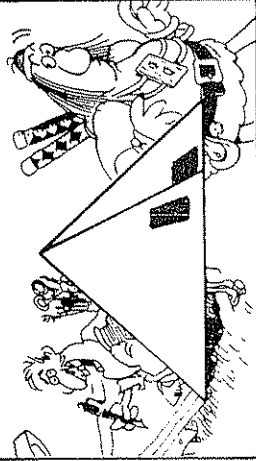
AND THOSE ON THE RIGHT BY THE BEAUTY OF *IDEAS*.



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



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



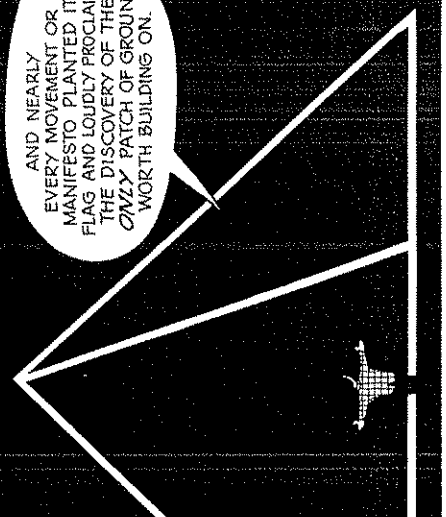
OTHERS, SUCH AS *DAVE McKEAN*, ARE FOREVER *ON THE MOVE*, *EXPERIMENTING*, *TAKING CHANCES*, *NEVER SATISFIED*.



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



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



SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION.

