

CHAPTER NINE

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.

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...



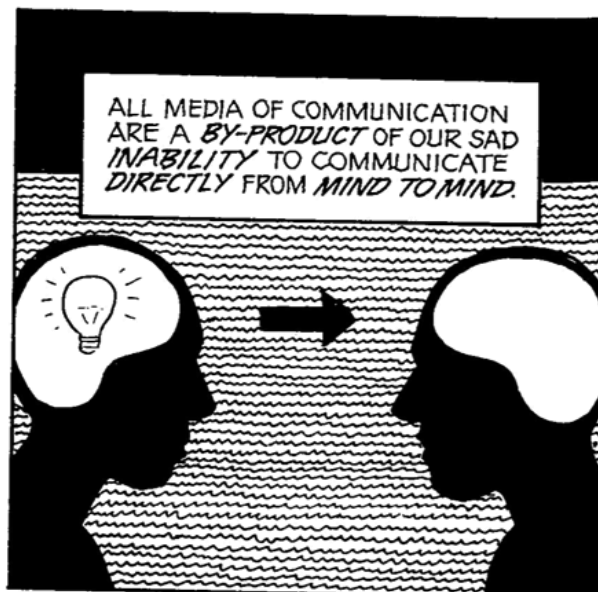
WE ALL LIVE IN A STATE OF
PROFOUND ISOLATION.



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.

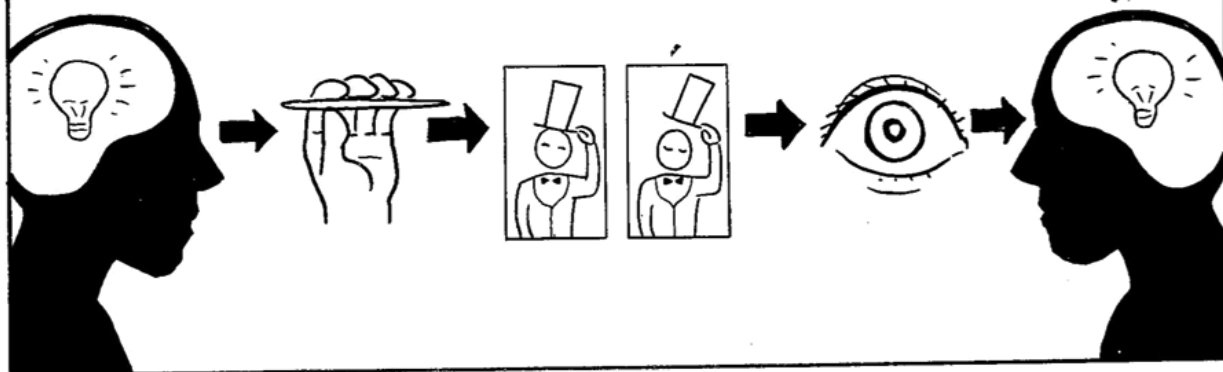


MEDIA CONVERT THOUGHTS INTO FORMS THAT CAN TRAVERSE THE *PHYSICAL WORLD* AND BE *RE-CONVERTED* BY ONE OR MORE SENSES *BACK* INTO THOUGHTS.

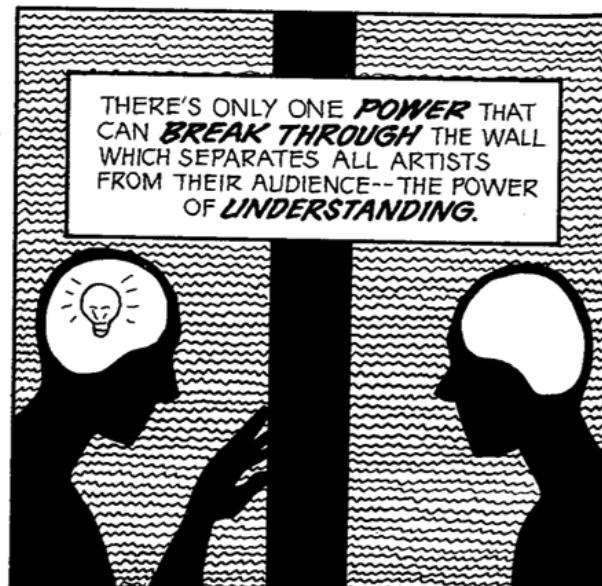
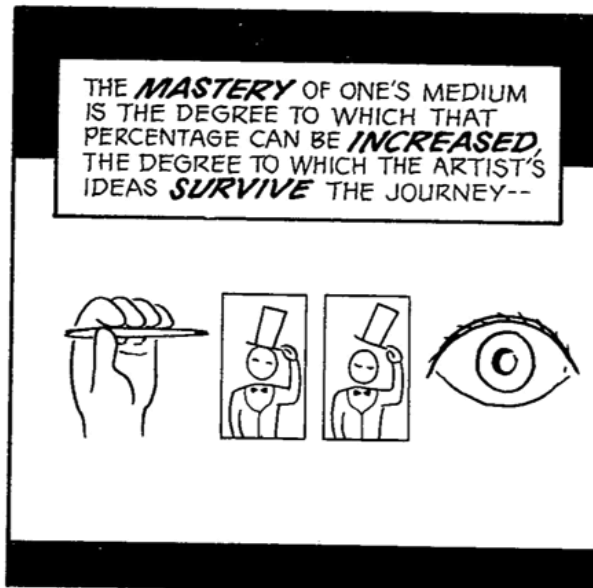
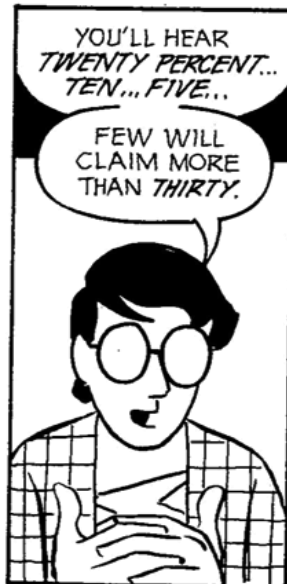


IN *COMICS* THE CONVERSION FOLLOWS A PATH FROM *MIND* TO *HAND* TO *PAPER* TO *EYE* TO *MIND*.

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



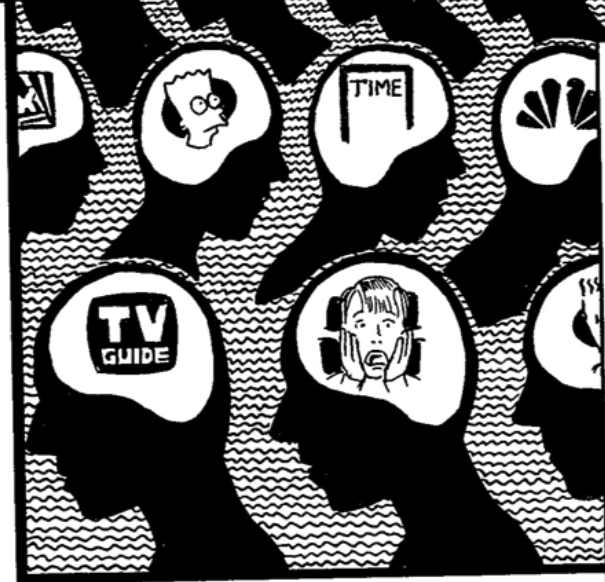
- _____1. Each new medium begins by imitating its _____.
a) predecessors
b) patients
c) successors
d) descendants
- _____2. What aspect do comics and film share in their potential imagery?
a) Range and versatility
b) Intimacy
c) Control
d) Faithfulness
- _____3. What aspect do comics and written word share?
a) Range and versatility
b) Intimacy
c) Control
d) Faithfulness
- _____4. Comics rely on _____ sense(s) to convey a world of experience.
a) One
b) Six
c) Five
d) Three





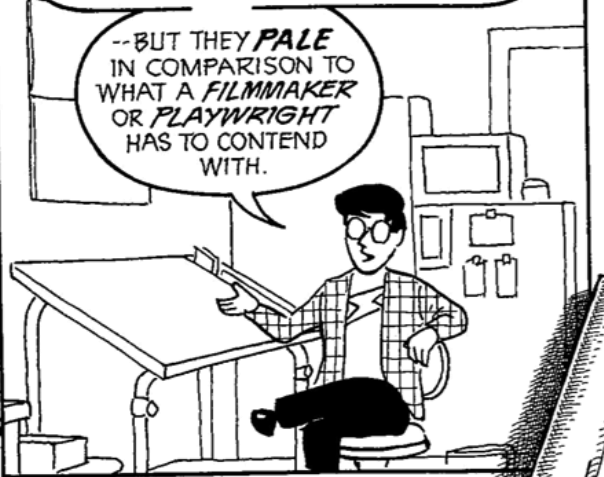
UNDERSTANDING COMICS IS *SERIOUS BUSINESS*.

TODAY, COMICS IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW FORMS OF *MASS COMMUNICATION* IN WHICH *INDIVIDUAL VOICES* STILL HAVE A CHANCE TO BE *HEARD*.

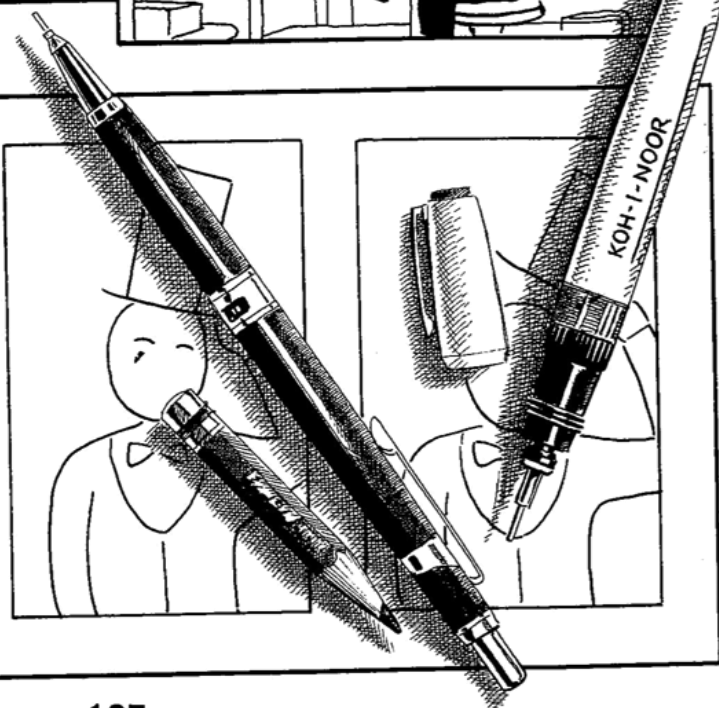


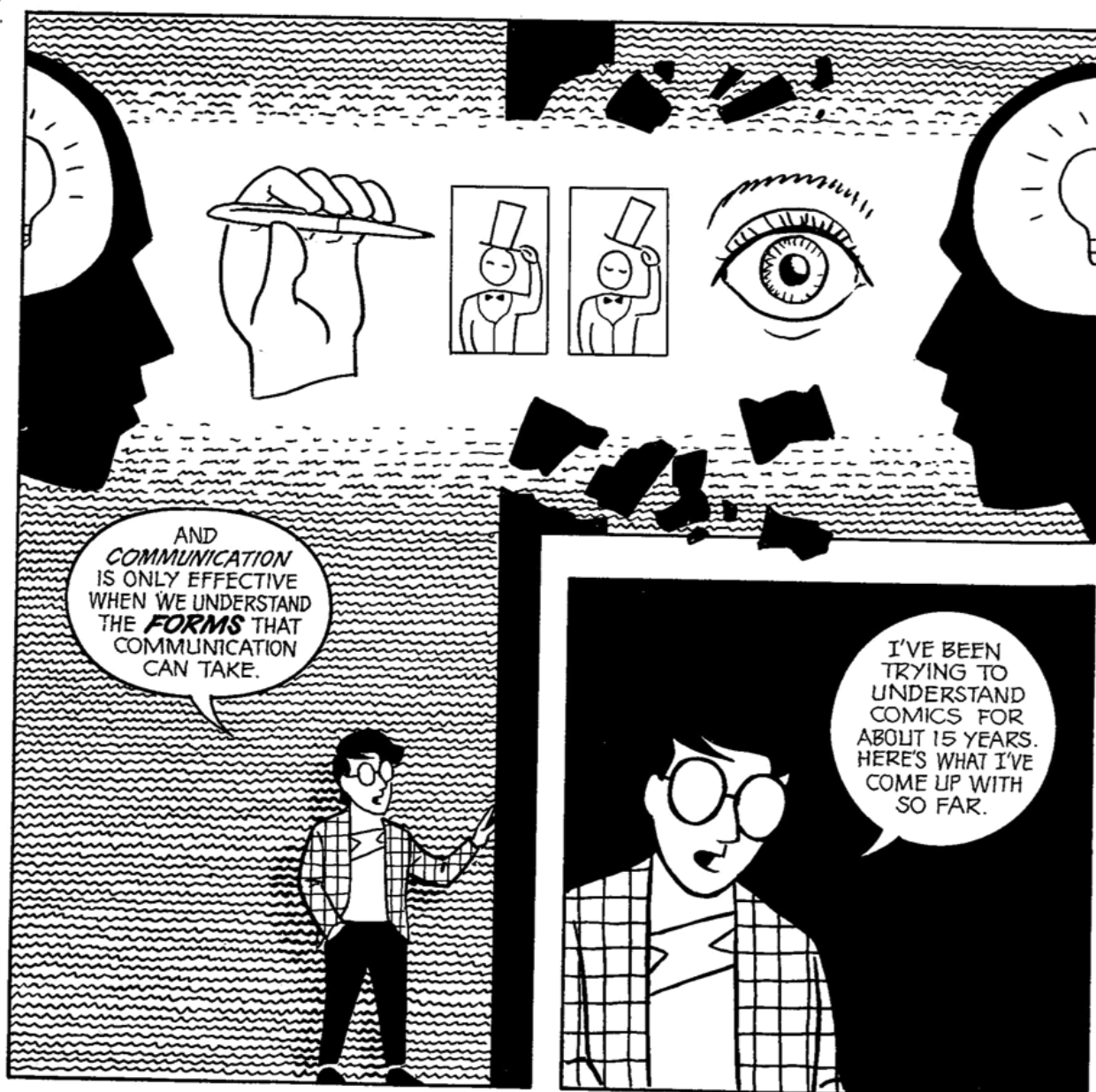
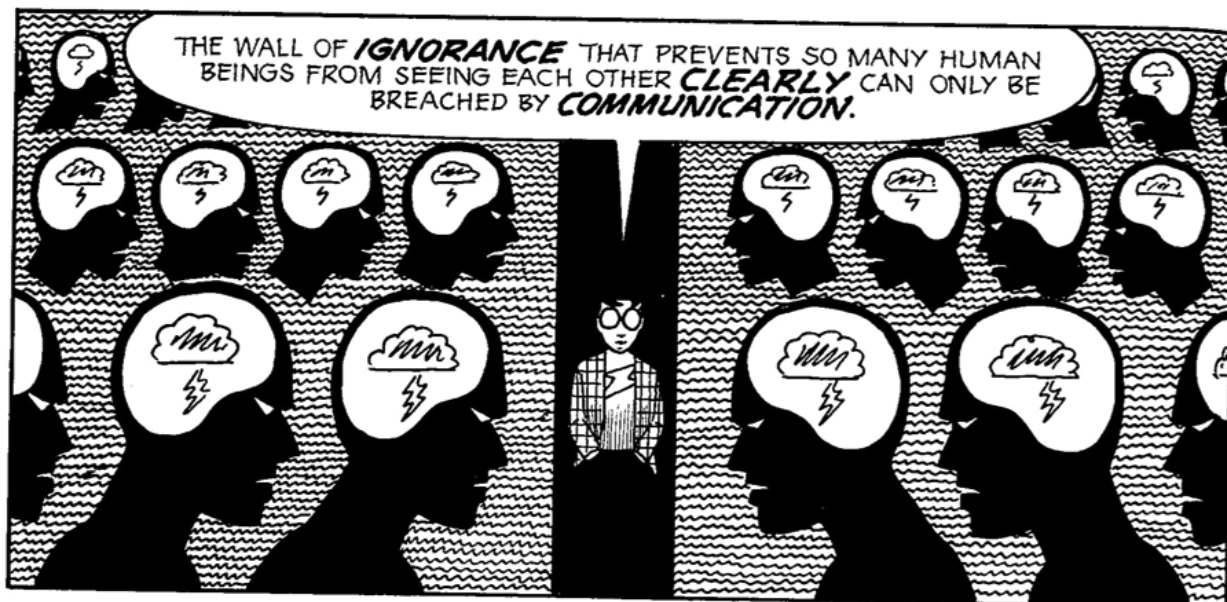
THOSE OF US WHO TACKLE THE *BUSINESS* OF COMICS HAVE MANY OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME--

--BUT THEY *PALE* IN COMPARISON TO WHAT A *FILMMAKER* OR *PLAYWRIGHT* HAS TO CONTEND WITH.



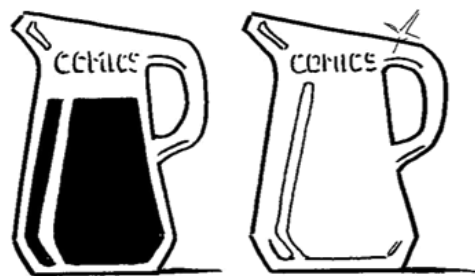
COMICS WELCOMES *ANY* WRITER OR ARTIST TO STEP INTO ITS WORLD, A WORLD AS CLOSE AS *PEN* OR *PENCIL* AND *PAPER*.



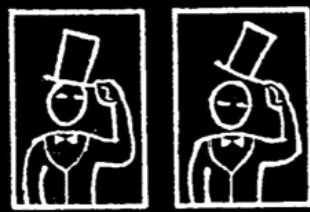




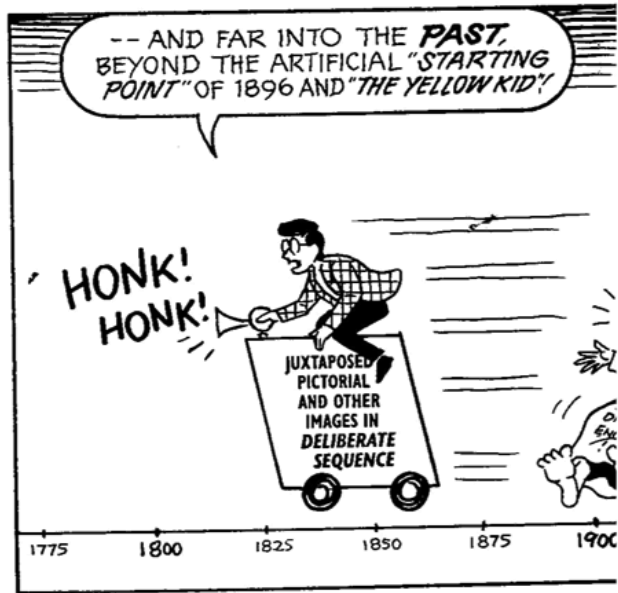
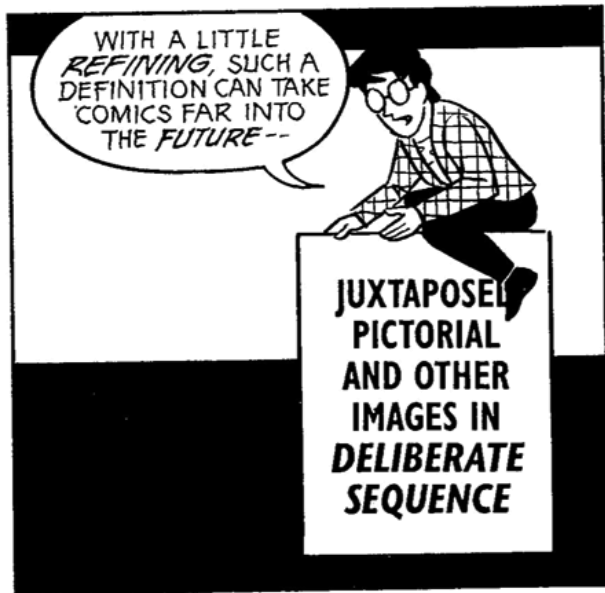
THIS MEANS LEARNING TO SEPARATE THE *FORM* OF COMICS FROM ITS OFTEN INCONSISTENT *CONTENTS*.



THE BEST *DEFINITION* FOR COMICS WILL, I THINK, BE THE MOST *EXPANSIVE*.



SEQUENTIAL ART





OVER
THREE THOUSAND
YEARS BEYOND!

THERE'S AN
INCREDIBLE WEALTH
OF ANCIENT COMICS
AND SOME MAY YET
HOLD THE **KEY**
TO COMICS'
FUTURE!

DISCOVERING
AND CATALOGUING
THIS WORK HAS
ALREADY **BEGUN**.*
BUT THERE'S MUCH
MORE THAT **NEEDS**
TO BE DONE!

THERE'S
A **BIG GAPING**
HOLE IN THE
OFFICIAL HISTORY
OF ART AND IT'S HIGH
TIME SOMEBODY
FILLED
IT!

Juxtaposition
of Pictorial
and Other
Images in
Deliberate
Sequence

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!

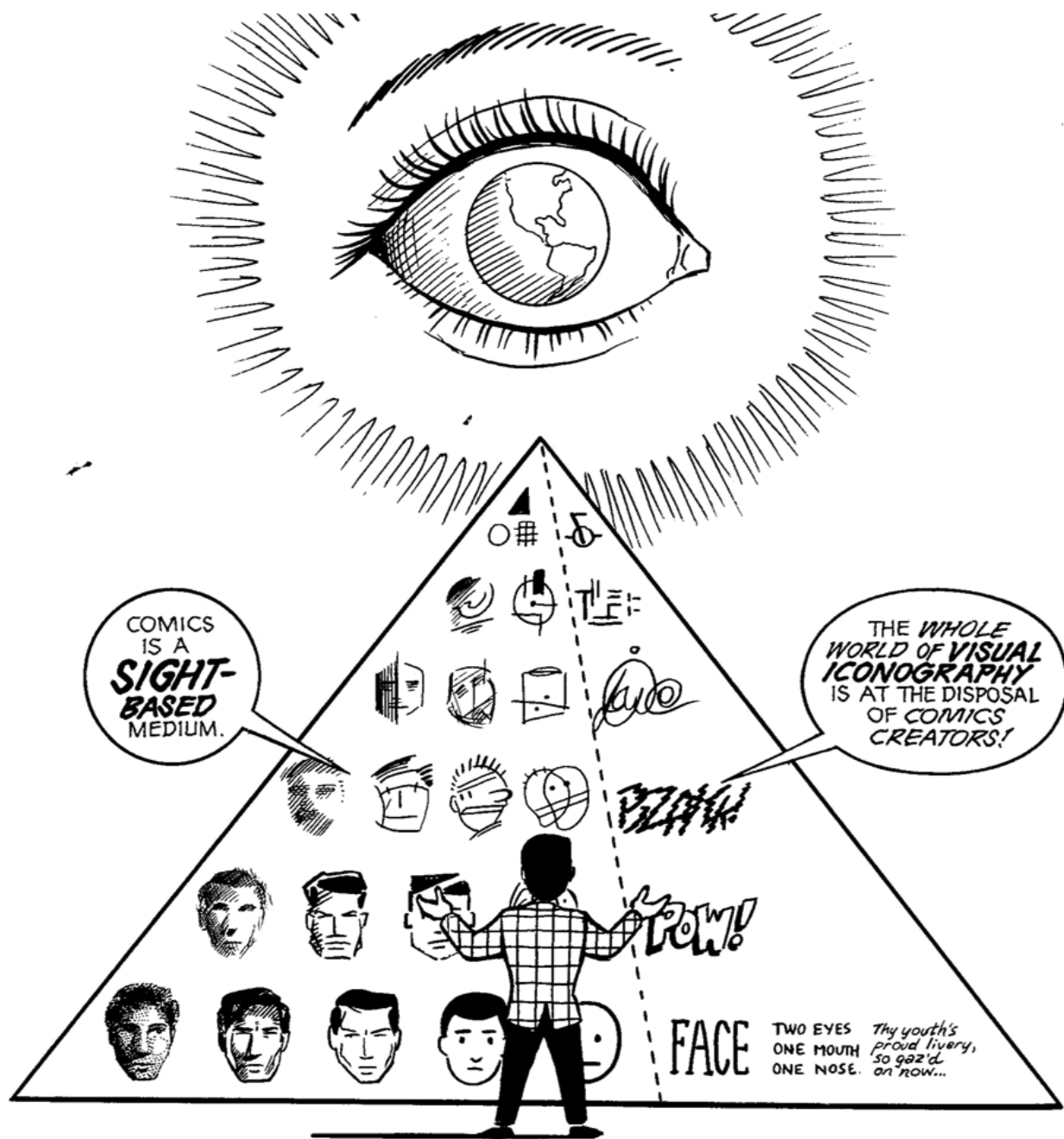


"...in
addition, the
picture-story
appeals
mainly to
children and
the lower
classes..."

Rudolphe Topffer
1845

TRANSLATION BY E. WIESE.

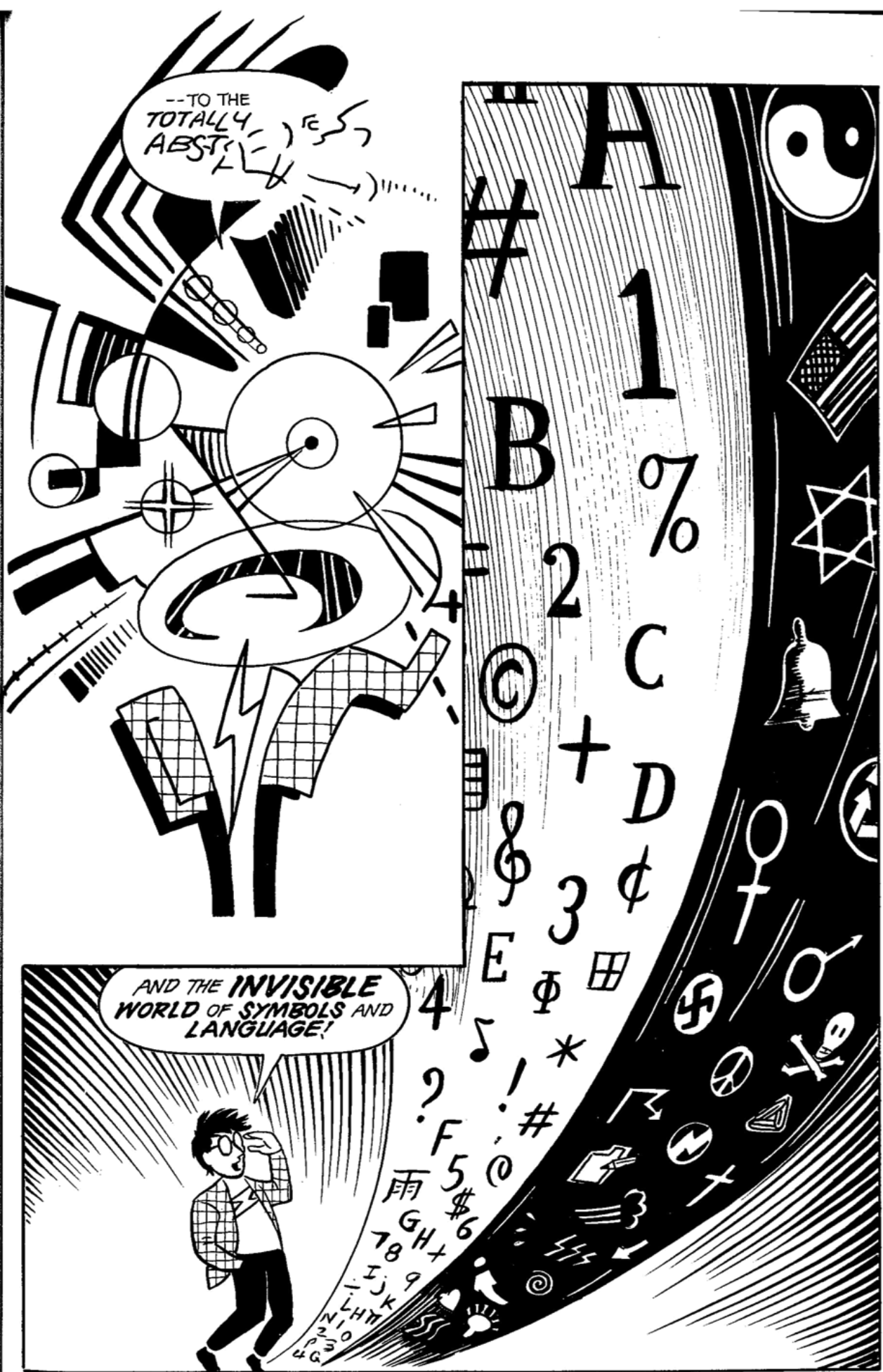


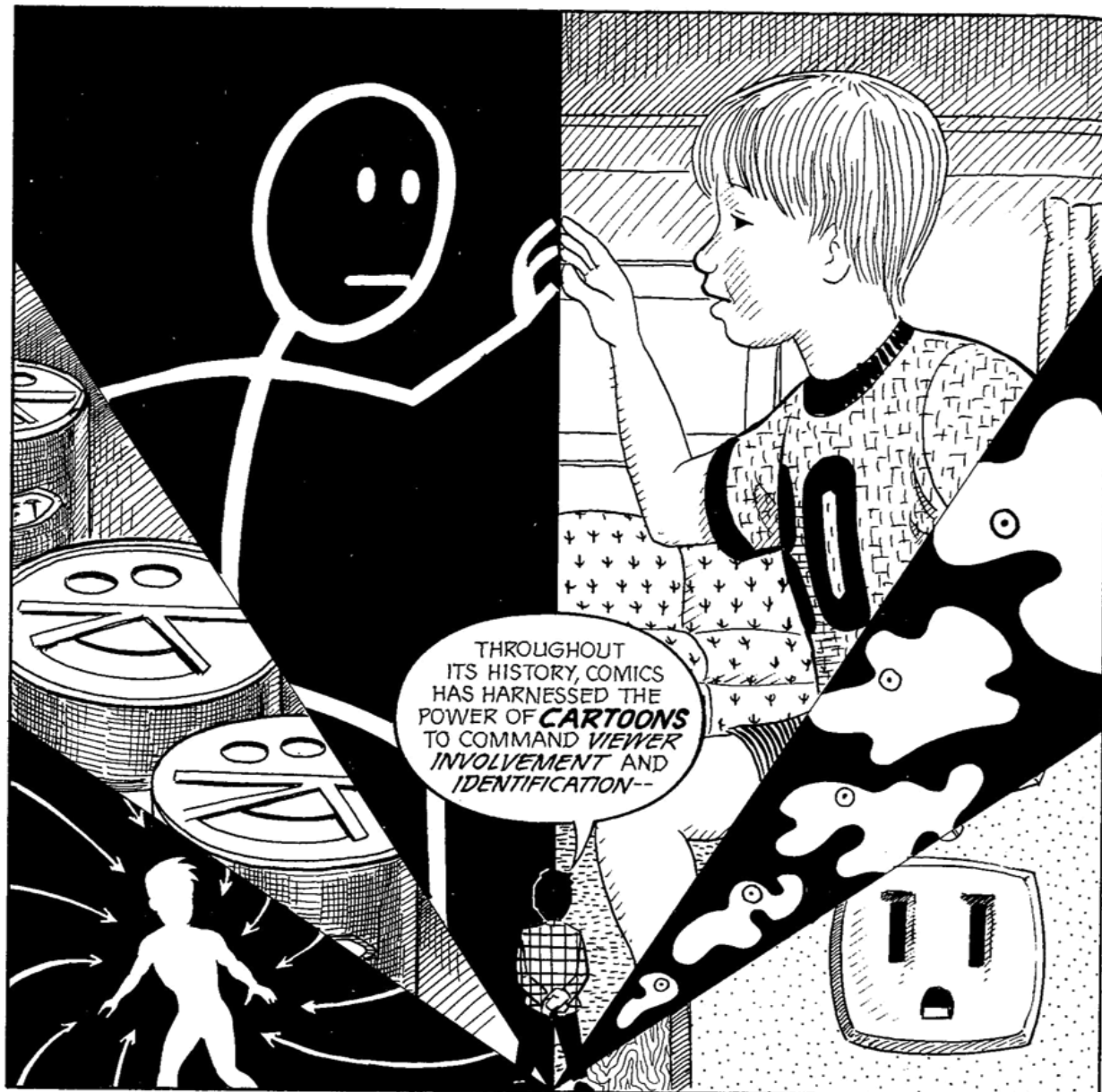


5. Correctly label each of the three corners of the Pictorial Plane with the following terms:

- Reality
- Language
- The Abstract

(If completing the test on an answer sheet or on your own sheet of notebook paper, then draw and properly label the Pictorial Plane.)



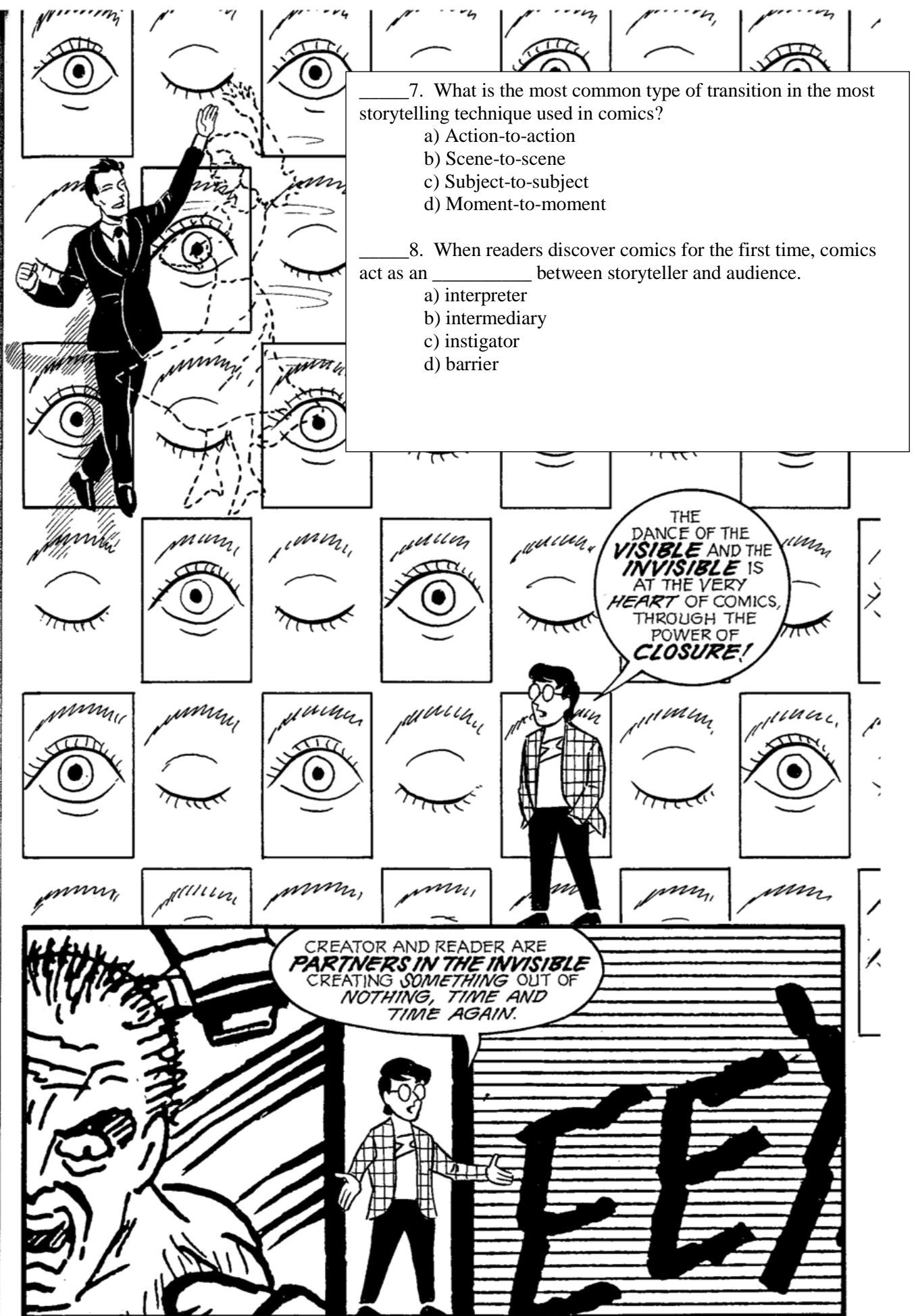


--AND **REALISM** TO CAPTURE THE **BEAUTY** AND **COMPLEXITY** OF THE **VISIBLE WORLD**.



6. What style captures the beauty and complexity of the visible world?

- a) Cartoons
- b) Moment-to-moment
- c) Abstraction
- d) Realism



____ 7. What is the most common type of transition in the most storytelling technique used in comics?

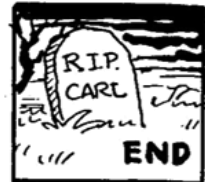
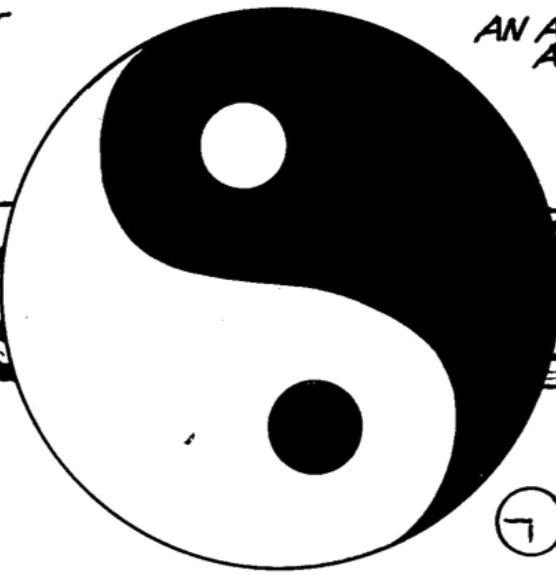
- a) Action-to-action
- b) Scene-to-scene
- c) Subject-to-subject
- d) Moment-to-moment

____ 8. When readers discover comics for the first time, comics act as an _____ between storyteller and audience.

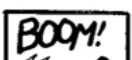
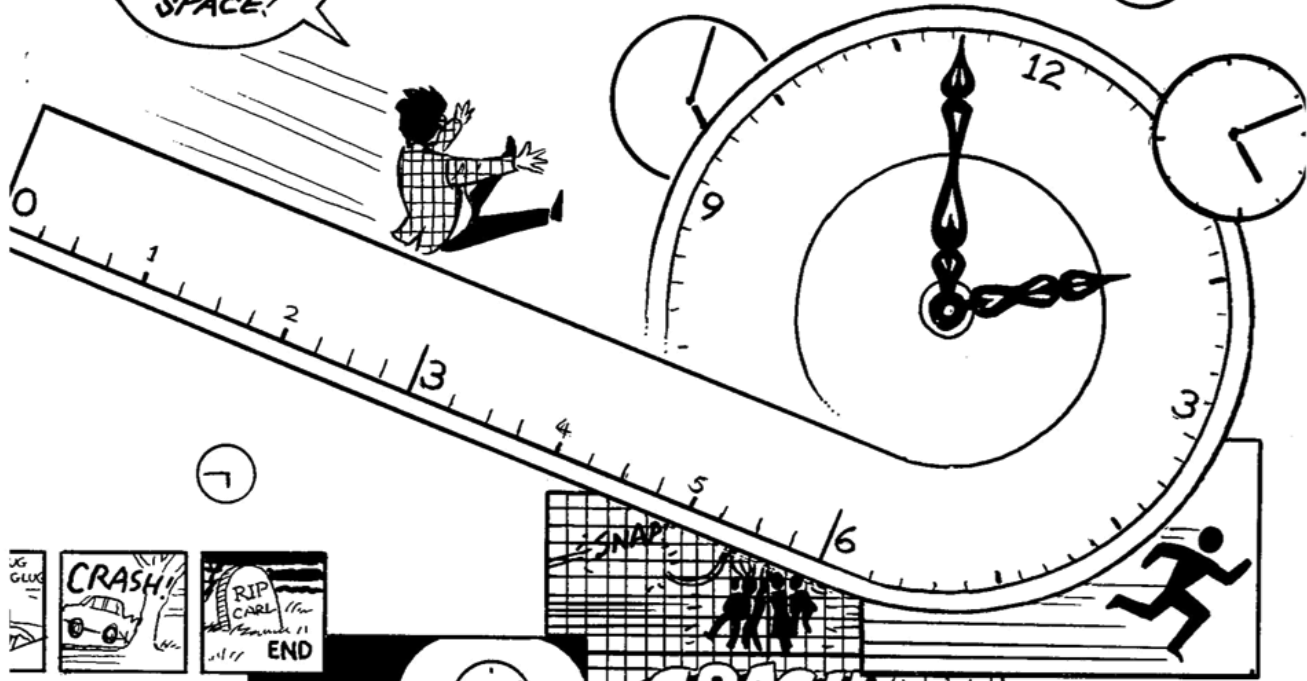
- a) interpreter
- b) intermediary
- c) instigator
- d) barrier

COMICS IS A GREAT
BALANCING ACT.

AN ART AS SUBTRACTIVE
AS IT IS ADDITIVE--



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



- _____ 9. Widening the shape of a panel can affect the _____ of time.
- a) romanticization
 - b) perception
 - c) characterization
 - d) depiction
- _____ 10. Each panel of a comic shows a _____.
- a) Single moment in time
 - b) several motions in time
 - c) illusion of time and motion
 - d) multiple moments in time
- _____ 11. Which of the following point in time of the panel is represented by where your eyes are focused?
- a) Present
 - b) Depends
 - c) Past
 - d) Future
- _____ 12. Which of the following is an assumption that comics artists make about the reader?
- a) They read the panels in correct order.
 - b) They read the comics in one sitting.
 - c) They will like the story.
 - d) They have read the previous stories in the series.
- _____ 13. In comics, words represent that which can only exist in time, _____.
- a) action
 - b) sound
 - c) smell
 - d) movement

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



ero genuit lu
ini 7 nepchu
challuim d
ipm 7 capth
uit lrdonem



ill unravished
ild of sibeca
n, who const
re sweetly the
d legend hau
mortals, of bo
or the dales o
gods are thes

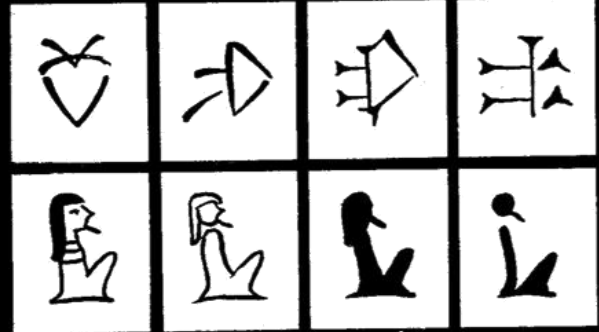


FACE

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

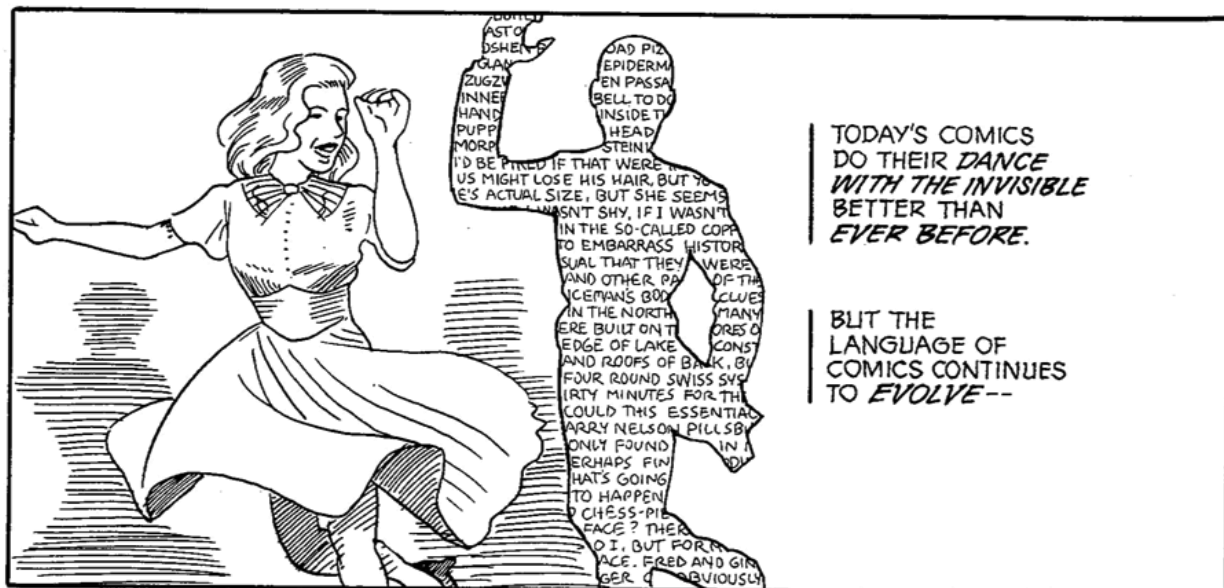


-- BEGUN
IN EARNEST
OVER *5,000*
YEARS AGO--



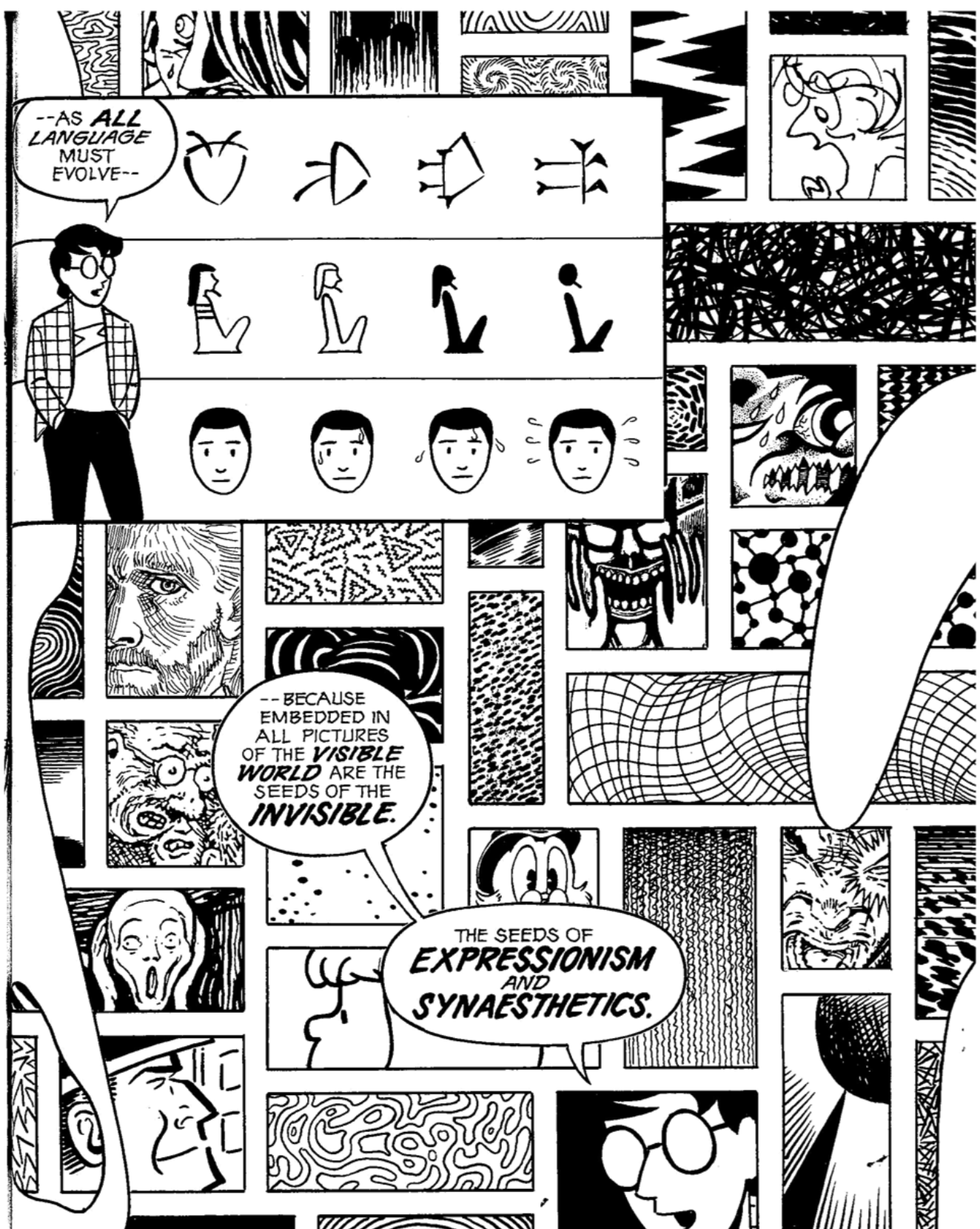
-- AND GROWN *WIDER AND WIDER* FOR
CENTURIES UNTIL EVENTUALLY, ALL
CONNECTION WAS LOST--





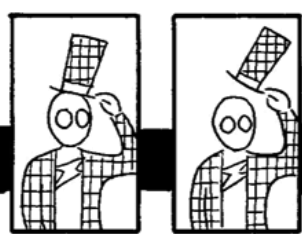
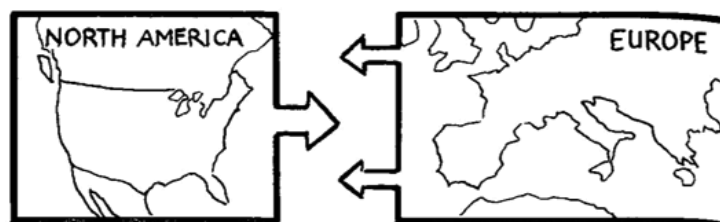
TODAY'S COMICS
DO THEIR *DANCE*
WITH THE *INVISIBLE*
BETTER THAN
EVER BEFORE.

BUT THE
LANGUAGE OF
COMICS CONTINUES
TO *EVOLVE*--



- ____ 14. What is the most widely-used, most complex, and most versatile synesthetic icon?
- Motion line
 - Word balloon
 - Sound effects
 - Aspect-to-aspect
- ____ 15. Who came up with the first symbols to record certain commodities?
- Roman rulers
 - Ancient Greeks
 - Egyptian accountants
 - Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia

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



16. What combination has words that amplify or elaborate on an image, or vice versa?
- a) Montage
 - b) Duo-specific
 - c) Additive
 - d) Inter-dependent
17. Most mainstream comics in American employ storytelling techniques first introduced by _____ in 1966?
- a) Jack Kirby
 - b) Frank Miller
 - c) Stan Lee
 - d) Jim Steranko
18. Most Japanese comics first appear published in _____.
- a) thin publications
 - b) enormous anthology titles
 - c) parts
 - d) manga magazines
19. Comics printing was superior on which continent?
- a) Asia
 - b) Africa
 - c) Europe
 - d) North America

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



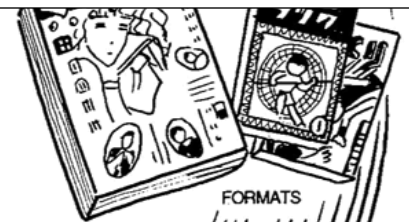
EXPRESSIONISM



WORD-PICTURE LINKAGE



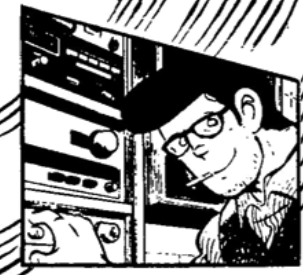
SUBJECTIVE MOTION



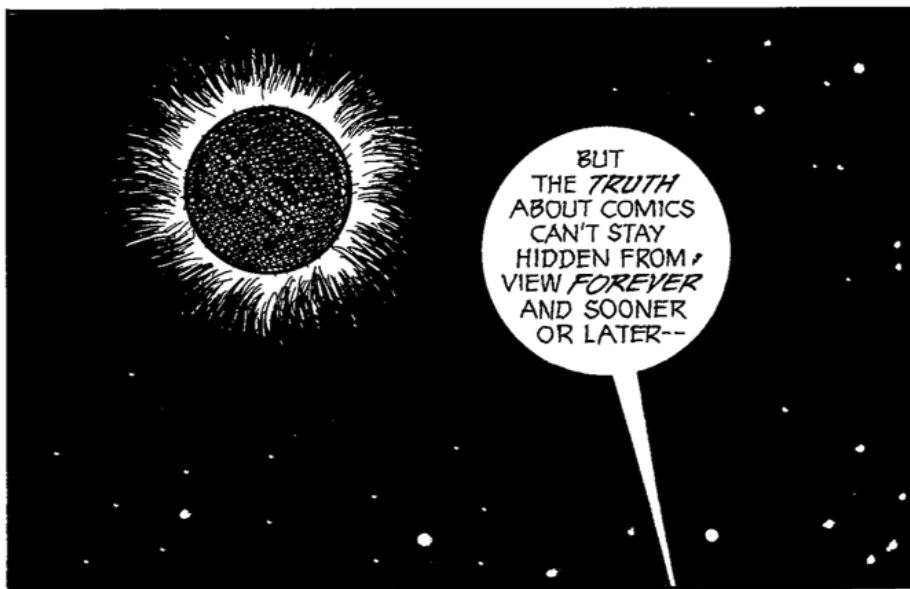
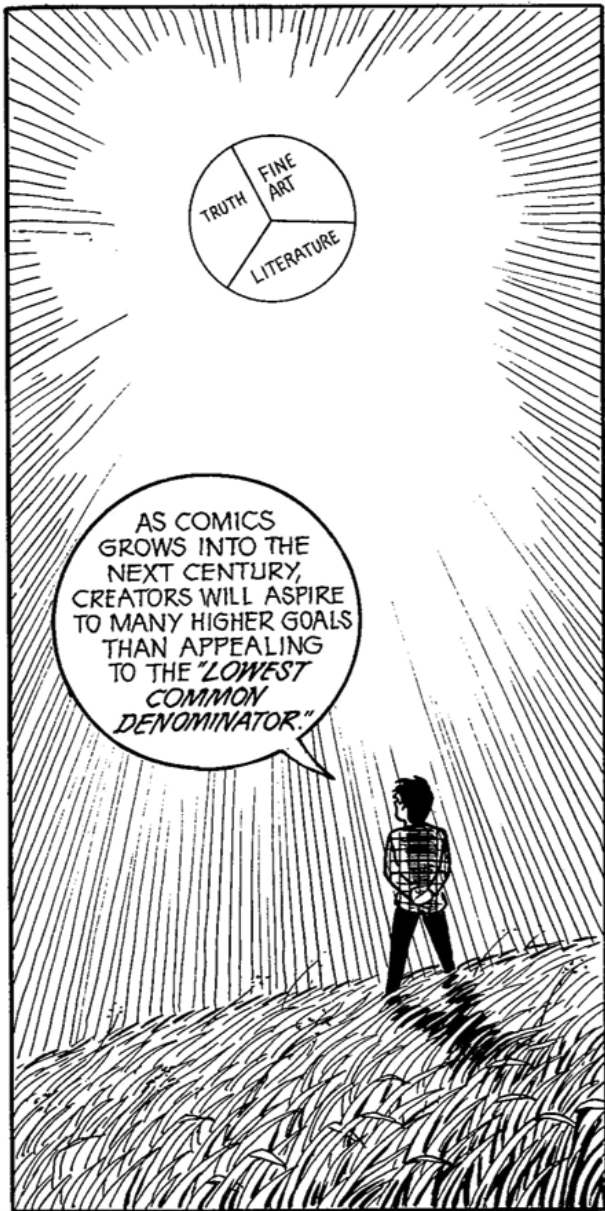
FORMATS



ICONIC CHARACTERS

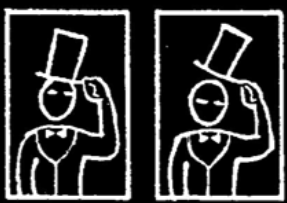


THE "MASKING" EFFECT





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



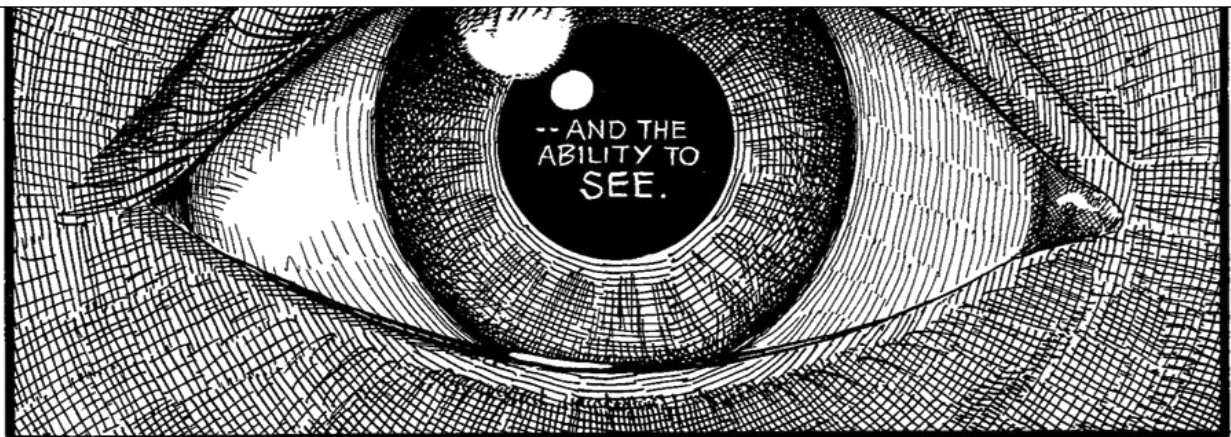
**SEQUENTIAL
ART**

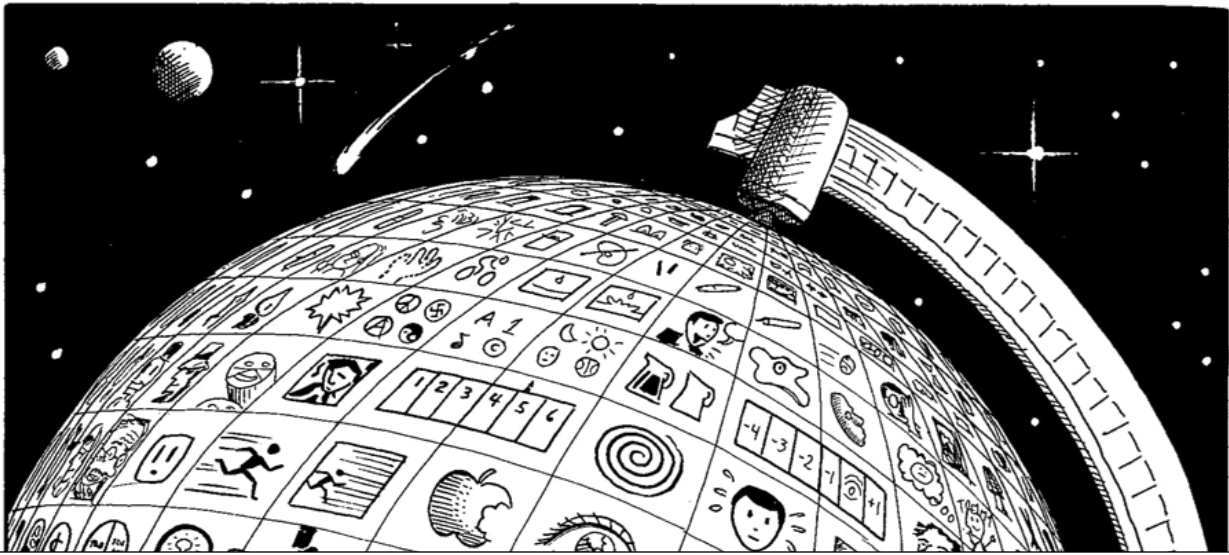
IT OFFERS
*RANGE AND
VERSATILITY
WITH ALL THE
POTENTIAL IMAGERY
OF FILM AND
PAINTING
PLUS THE
INTIMACY
OF THE
WRITTEN
WORD.*

AND ALL THAT'S NEEDED IS THE DESIRE TO BE HEARD--

| | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

- ____ 20. What step determines whether the art will be a book, a sculpture or a song?
- a) surface
 - b) structure
 - c) idea/purpose
 - d) form
- ____ 21. What is the first step of art creation, the one that contains the work's content, emotions and philosophies?
- a) Idea/Purpose
 - b) Craft
 - c) Structure
 - d) Idiom
22. What are the 6 steps? Label the 6 steps in their correct order above in the boxes provided. *(If completing the test on an answer sheet or your own sheet of notebook paper, simply number 1 – 6 and record the steps next to the number in the order they would appear.)*
- ____ 23. What famous comic book artist was responsible for bringing surrealism, pop art, and graphic design to comics in the 1960's with his comics *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*?
- a) Jack Kirby
 - b) Frank Miller
 - c) Stan Lee
 - d) Jim Steranko



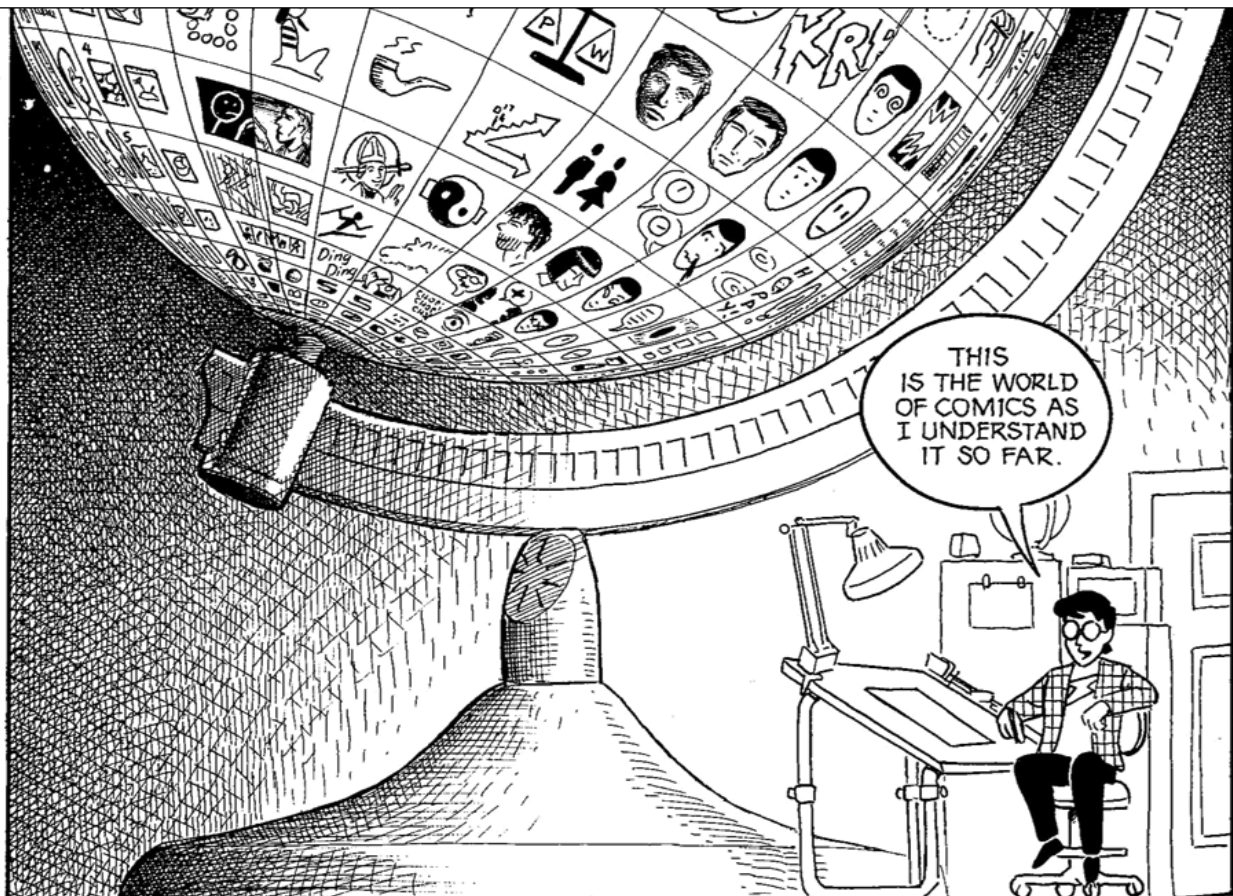


24. Which of the following statements is NOT true about comics?

- a) Comics is additive
- b) Comics is a great balancing act
- c) Comics is subtractive
- d) Comics is passive

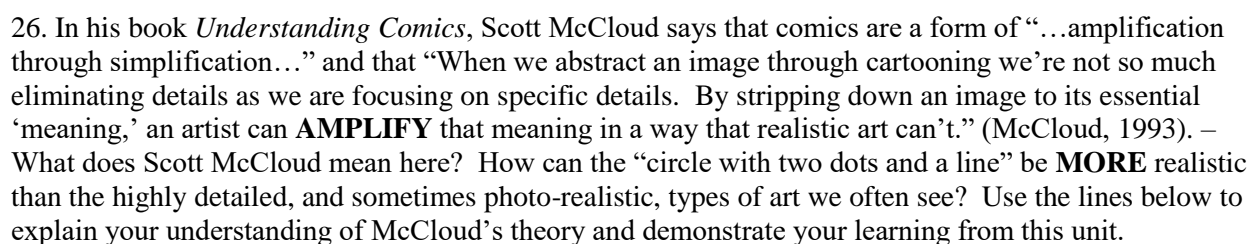
25. The author thinks that the best definition for comics is the one that is most _____.

- a) Descriptive
- b) Restrictive
- c) Expansive
- d) Short





col
'92

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal black lines spaced evenly apart, typical of notebook paper. The lines extend across the entire width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical lines, text, or other markings present.

wordswordswordswordswordswordswordswordswordswor

Selected Bibliography.

Chip, Herschel B., editor: *Theories of Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

Eisner, Will: *Comics and Sequential Art* (Princeton, WI: Kitchen Sink Press, Inc., 1992).

Kunzle, David: *The Early Comic Strip* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

McLuhan, Marshall: *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964).

Schwartz, Tony: *Media: The Second God* (New York: Anchor Books, 1983).

Wiese, E., editor, translator: *Enter: The Comics--Rodolphe Topffer's Essay on Physiognomy and the True Story of Monsieur Crepin* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1965).

Special note: Kunzle's book (see above) has gone virtually unnoticed by the comics community but is an enormously important work, covering nearly 400 years of forgotten European comics. Check it out!

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Page 83: AL HELD. The Big N. (My facsimile). The original is synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 9 3/8" x 9". Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mrs. Armand P. Bartos Fund.

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For information on original art, write to: Scott McCloud, Box 798, Amherst, MA 01004.

Letters of comment are appreciated (if seldom answered due to overwhelming commitments), but I would especially appreciate a *public* discussion of these issues in comics' trade journals, art magazines, computer nets and any other forum. This book is meant to stimulate debate, not settle it.

I've had my say.
Now, it's *your* turn.