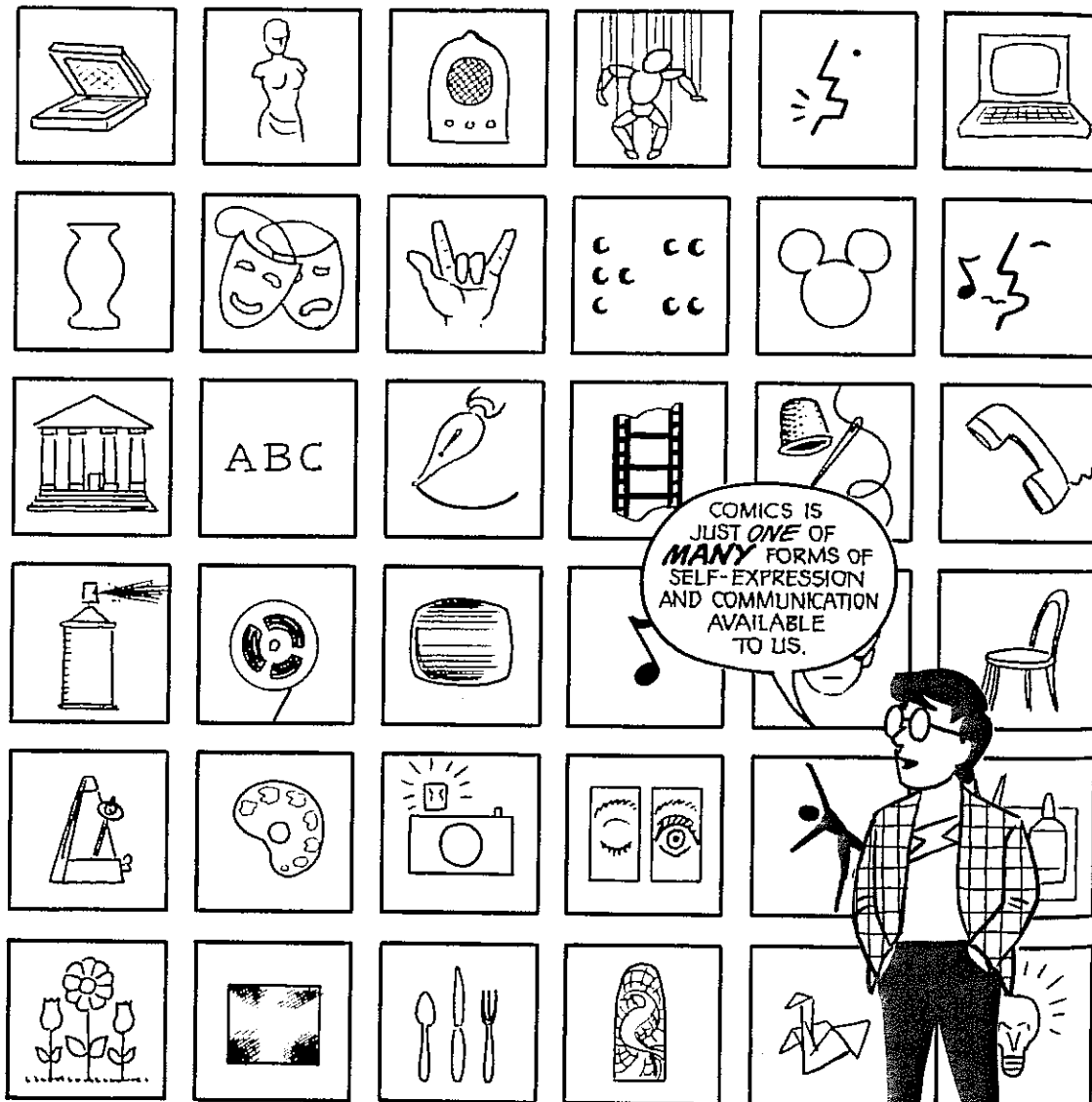


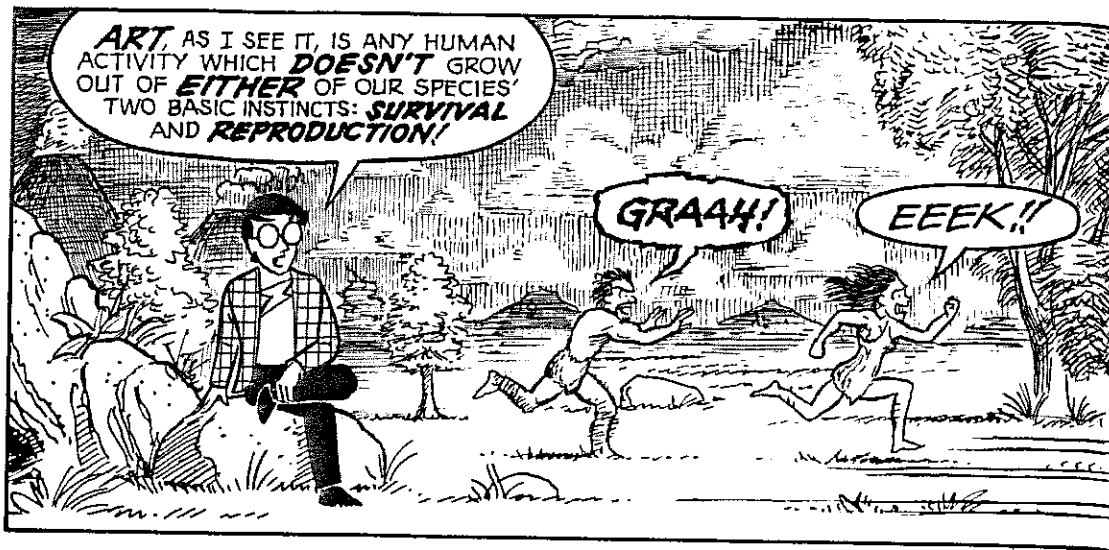
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SIX STEPS.



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





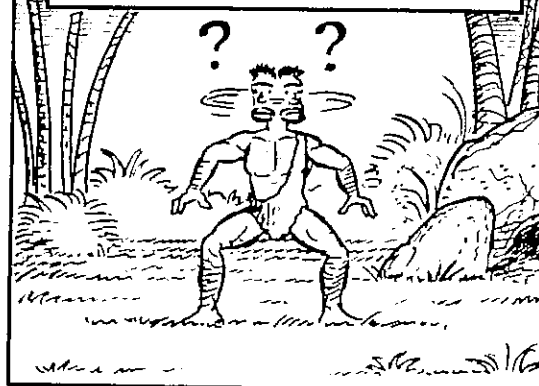
EXAMPLE: HERE'S A **PREHISTORIC MALE** CHASING A **PREHISTORIC FEMALE**. WITH ONLY ONE THING ON HIS MIND-- **REPRODUCTION**!



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



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



SUDDENLY--!

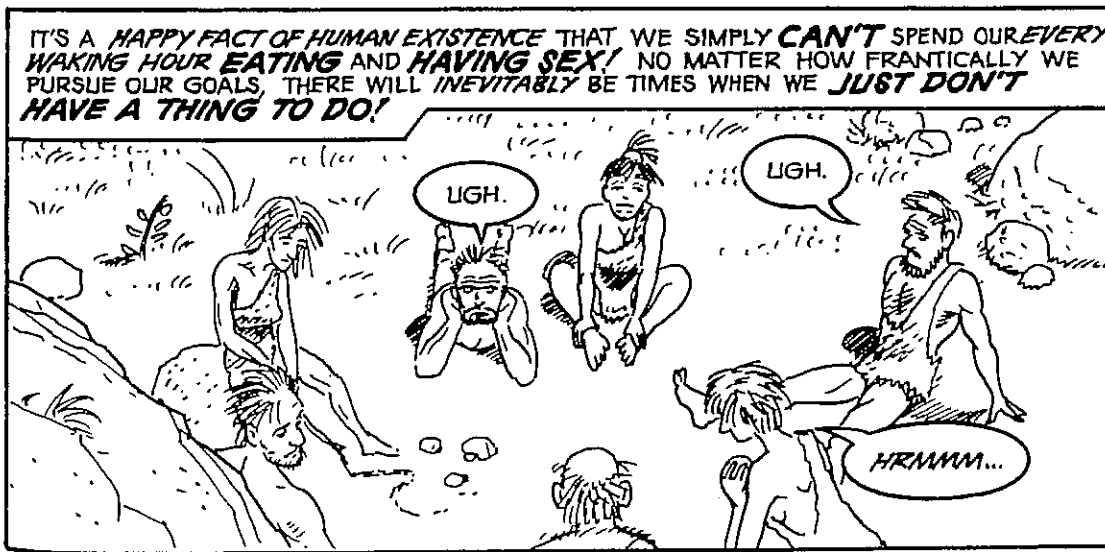
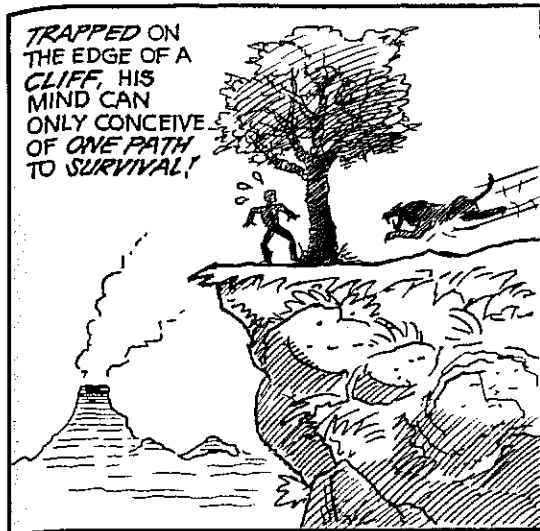


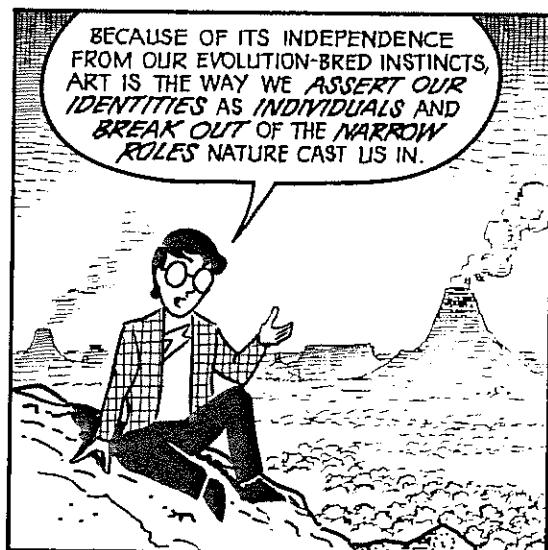
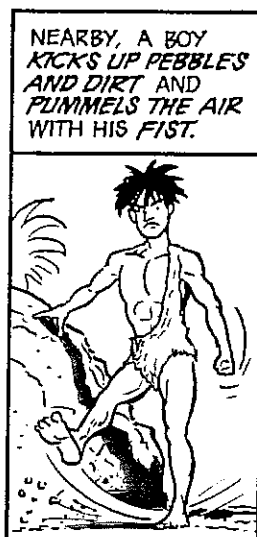
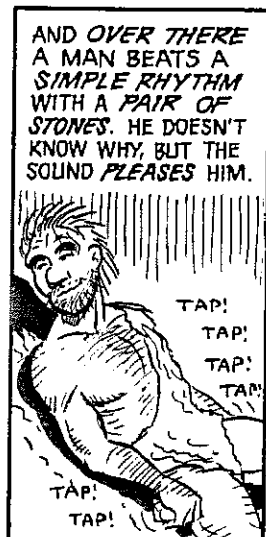
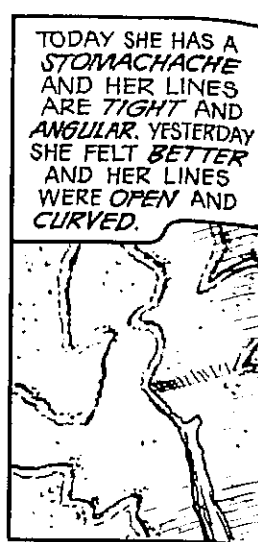
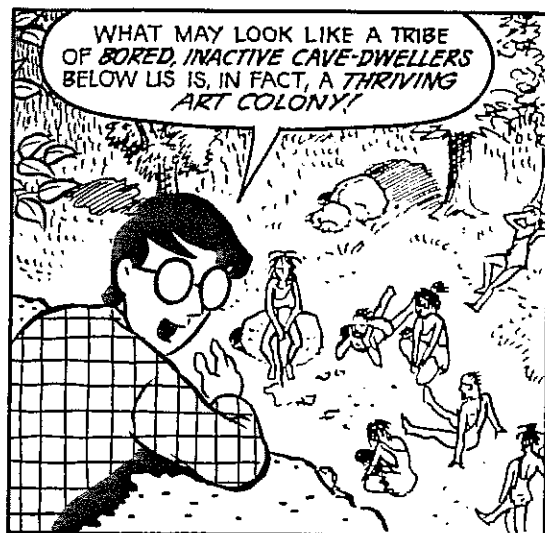
NOW ALL OF HIS THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS ARE FOCUSED ON THAT **OTHER VITAL HUMAN INSTINCT-- SURVIVAL**!



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



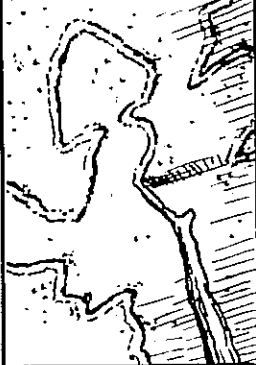




FIRST, THEY PROVIDE EXERCISE FOR MINDS AND BODIES NOT RECEIVING *OUTSIDE STIMULUS*.



SECOND, THEY PROVIDE AN *OUTLET* FOR *EMOTIONAL IMBALANCES*, AIDING IN THE RACE'S *MENTAL SURVIVAL*.



THIRD AND PERHAPS MOST *IMPORTANTLY* TO OUR SURVIVAL AS A RACE, SUCH RANDOM ACTIVITIES OFTEN LEAD—



—TO *USEFUL DISCOVERIES!*



THIS FUNCTION WOULD ALSO BE PERFORMED IN *LATER CENTURIES* BY *SPORTS AND GAMES*.



ART AS *SELF EXPRESSION*, THE ARTIST AS *HERO*; FOR MANY, ITS *HIGHEST PURPOSE*.



ART AS *DISCOVERY*, AS THE PURSUIT OF *TRUTH*, AS *EXPLORATION*; THE SOUL OF MUCH *MODERN ART* AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF *LANGUAGE, SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY*.



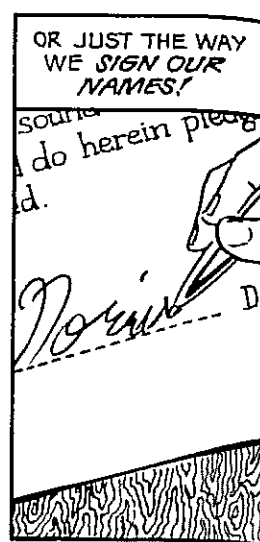
A LOT HAS *CHANGED* IN HALF A MILLION YEARS, BUT SOME THINGS *NEVER CHANGE*.



THE PROCESSES ARE MORE *COMPLEX* NOW, BUT THE INSTINCTS* REMAIN THE *SAME*. *SURVIVAL AND REPRODUCTION* STILL HOLD THE *UPPER HAND*.



*ALONG WITH THEIR MANY RELATED FEELINGS AND CUSTOMS.



BUT THE **IDEAL** OF THE LATTER IS ALIVE IN THE HEARTS OF MANY ARTISTS WHO MAY **HOPE** FOR SUCCESS, BUT WON'T ALTER THEIR WORK TO **OBTAIN** IT.



THE "**FINE ARTIST**"--THE **PURE ARTIST**-- SAYS TO THE WORLD: "I DIDN'T DO THIS FOR **MONEY!** I DIDN'T DO THIS TO MATCH THE COLOR OF YOUR **COUCHES!**"



"I DIDN'T DO THIS TO GET **LAI!** I DIDN'T DO THIS FOR **FAME** OR **POWER** OR **GREED** OR **ANYTHING ELSE!** I DID THIS FOR **ART!**"

IN OTHER WORDS: "**MY ART HAS NO PRACTICAL VALUE WHATSOEVER!**"



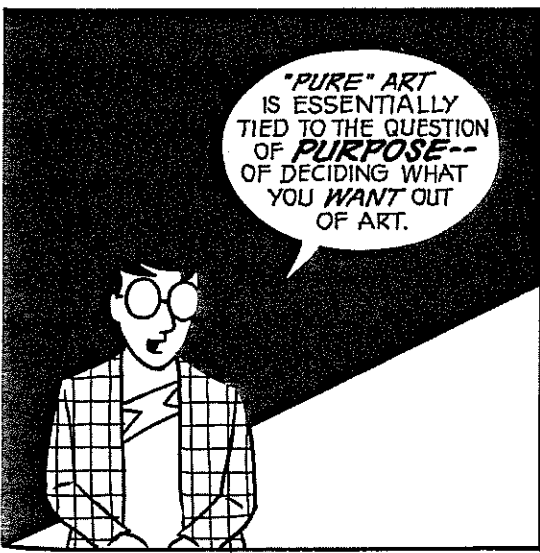
"BUT IT'S **IMPORTANT!**"



AND SOMETIMES IT **IS**, THOUGH IT MIGHT TAKE A **CENTURY** OR TWO FOR THE **REST** OF THE WORLD TO FIND OUT!



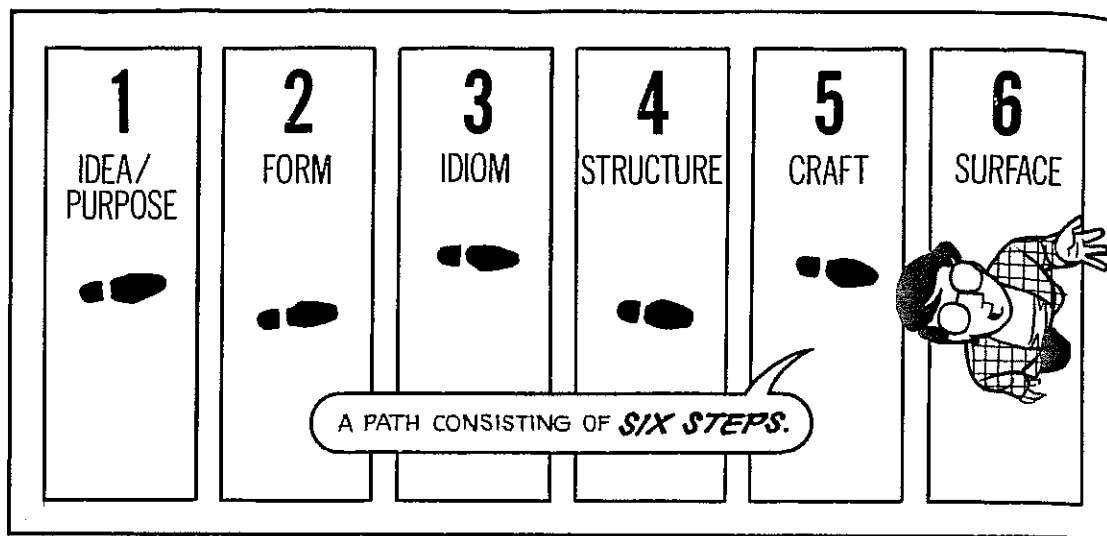
"**PURE**" ART IS ESSENTIALLY TIED TO THE QUESTION OF **PURPOSE**-- OF DECIDING WHAT YOU **WANT** OUT OF ART.




THIS IS AS TRUE IN **COMICS** AS IT IS IN **PAINTING, WRITING, THEATRE, FILM, SCULPTURE,** OR **ANY OTHER FORM...**




...BECAUSE THE CREATION OF **ANY** WORK IN **ANY** MEDIUM WILL ALWAYS FOLLOW A CERTAIN **PATH.**




1
IDEA/
PURPOSE




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




2
FORM




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




3
IDIOM




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

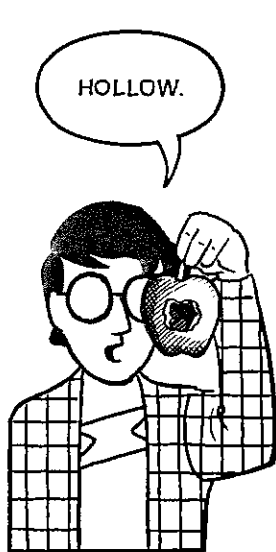
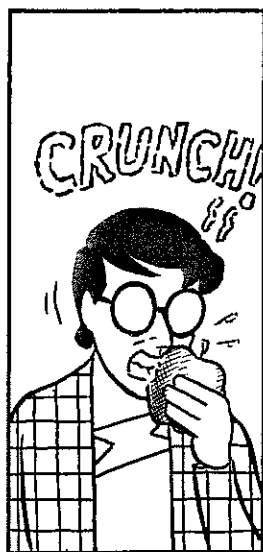
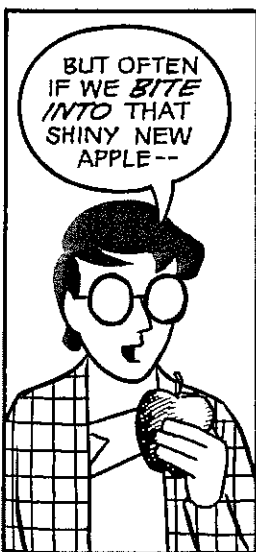
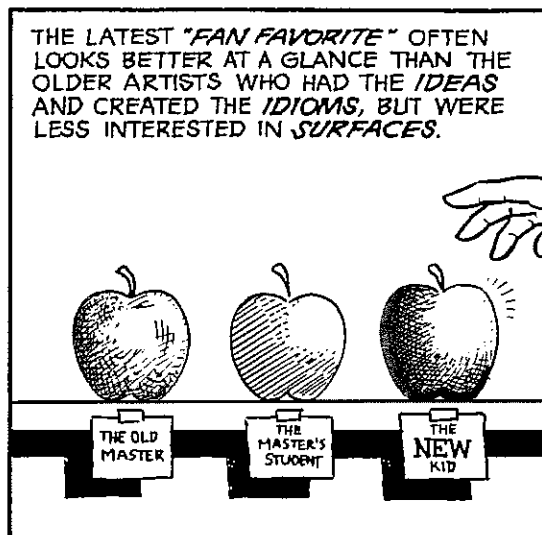
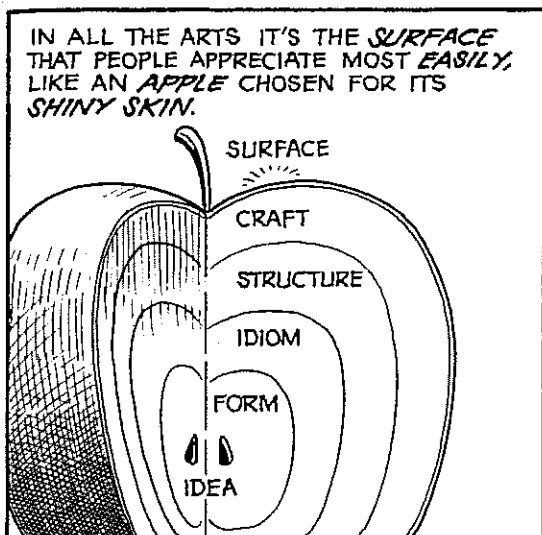
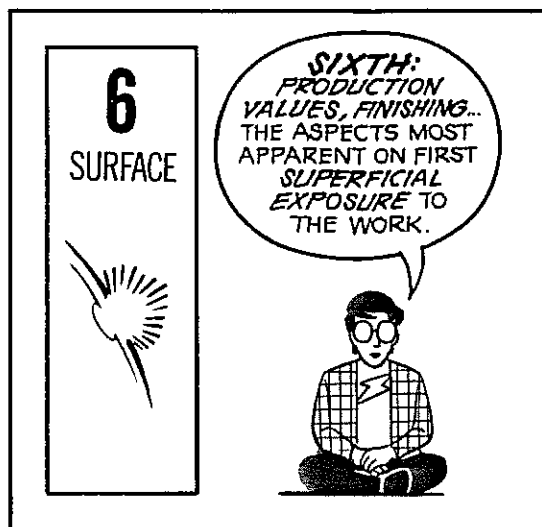
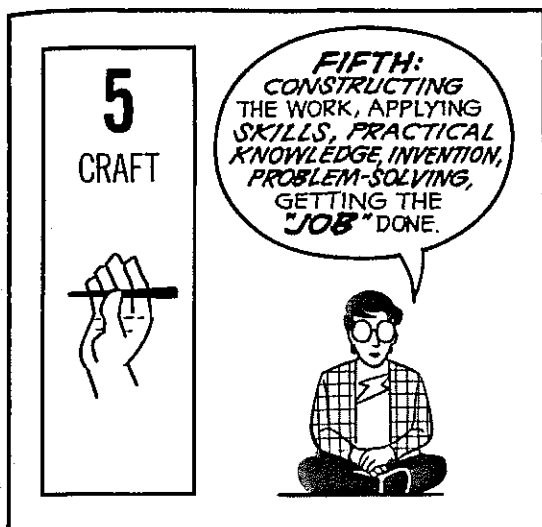


4
STRUCTURE



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



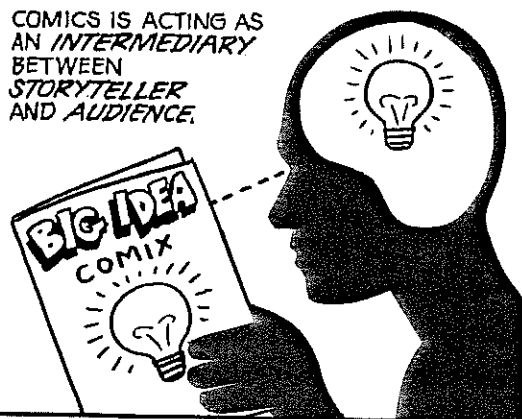




IN **COMICS**, THE CYCLE BEGINS *ALL OVER THE WORLD*, AS YOUNG READERS *DISCOVER* COMICS FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IN A FEW CASES, BEGIN TO DEVELOP A *LOVE* FOR COMICS THAT WILL LAST A *LIFETIME!*

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

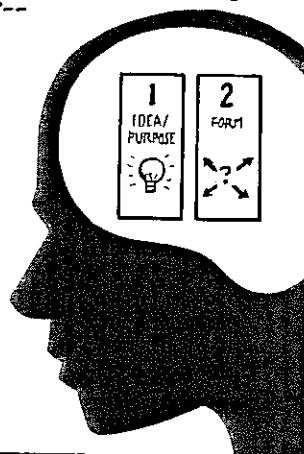
COMICS IS ACTING AS AN *INTERMEDIARY* BETWEEN *STORYTELLER* AND *AUDIENCE*.



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

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

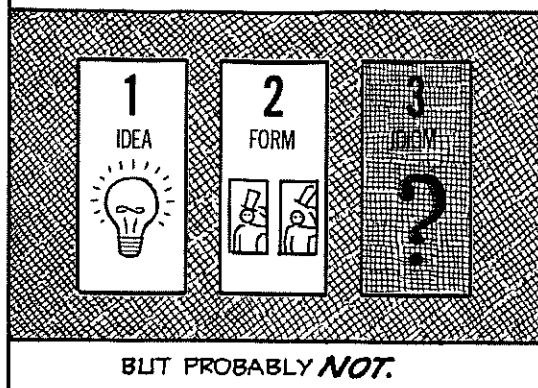
--AND THAT THOSE SKILLS CAN BE **LEARNED!**



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



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



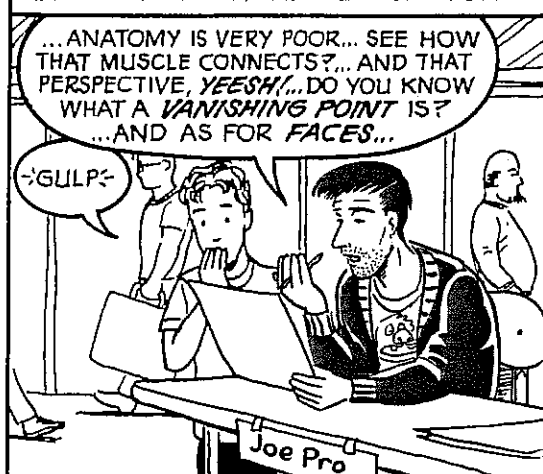
MORE LIKELY HE **POSTPONES** HIS OWN IDEAS AND BEGINS TO STUDY THE **CRAFT** OF **OTHER ARTISTS** IN HIS ATTEMPT TO BECOME A **PROFESSIONAL**.



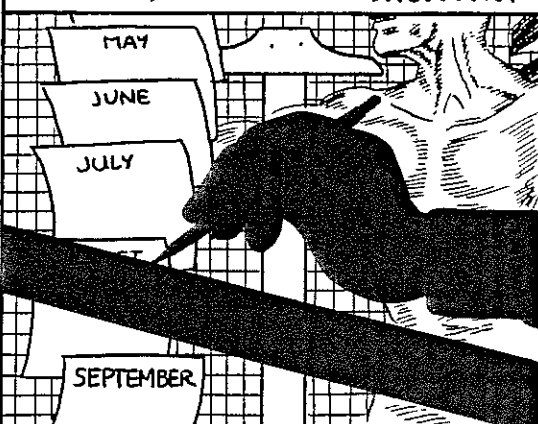
EVENTUALLY...



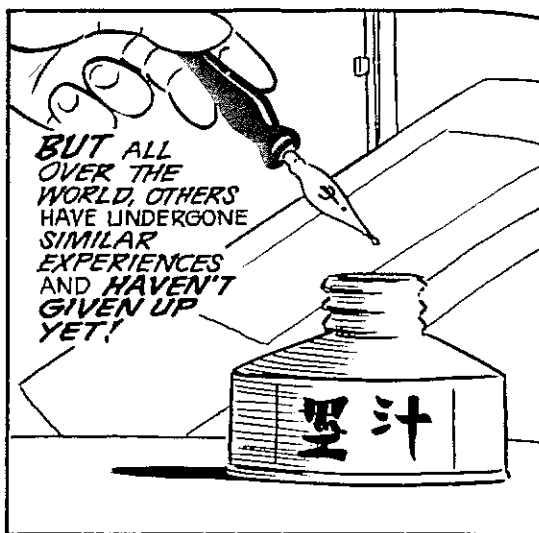
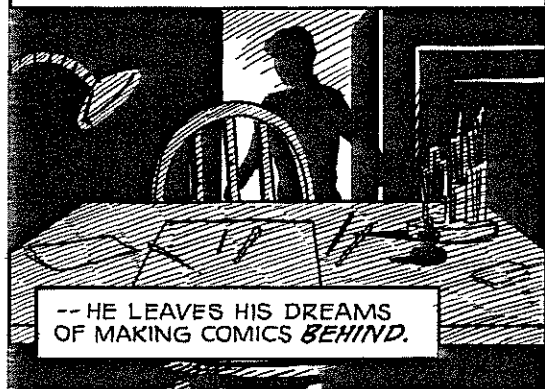
BUT WHEN HE BRINGS THE WORK TO A **REAL PROFESSIONAL** AT THE LOCAL **CON**:



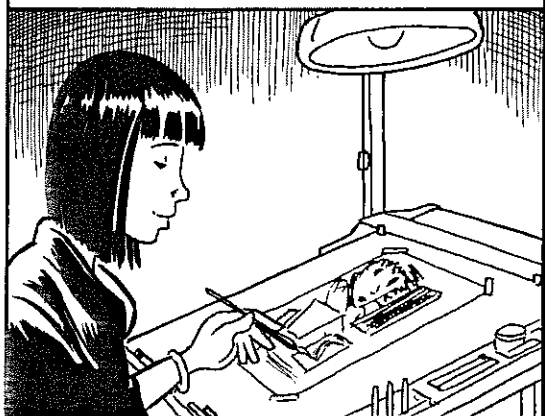
SO HE BUYS SOME BOOKS ON **ANATOMY** AND **PERSPECTIVE**, STUDIES A VARIETY OF **DRAWING TECHNIQUES** AND **PRACTICES**, **PRACTICES, PRACTICES** FOR **MONTHS**.



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



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



SHE'S A *GOOD, HARDWORKING* STUDENT.



BUT WHEN SHE SHOWS HER WORK TO A *SEASONED PRO*...

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

<GULP!>



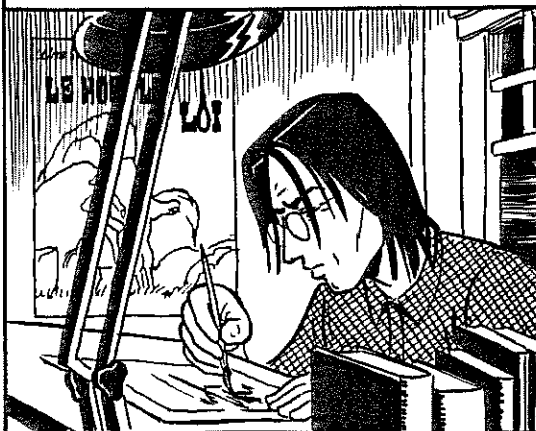
HER *SKILLS CAN* GET HER *WORK* AT THIS POINT, BUT ONLY AS AN *ASSISTANT* TO OTHERS. UNTIL SHE UNDERSTANDS THE *STRUCTURE* OF COMICS *BENEATH* THE *CRAFT*, THIS IS AS FAR AS SHE CAN GO.



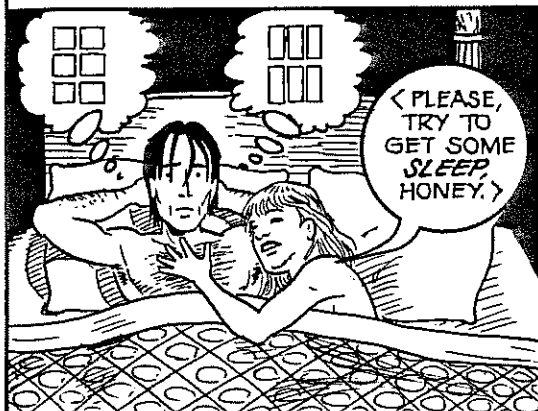
BUT MAYBE THIS IS **ENOUGH** FOR THIS PARTICULAR ARTIST, ENOUGH TO JUST BE PART OF THE **ART, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY** OF COMICS WITHOUT NECESSARILY **CALLING THE SHOTS**.



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



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



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

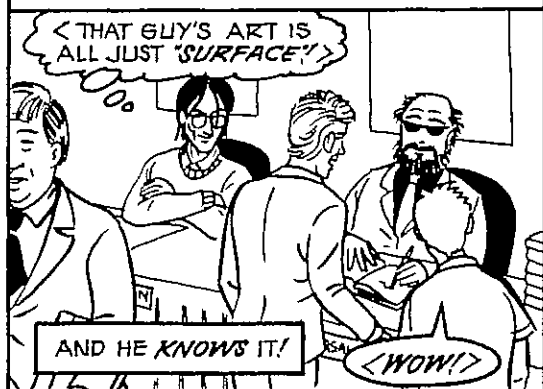


HE LEARNS TO SEE **BENEATH** THE CRAFTS OF **DRAFTSMANSHIP** AND **SCRIPTING** TO SEE THE **WHOLE PICTURE**-- **PACING, DRAMA, HUMOR, SUSPENSE, COMPOSITION, THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT, IRONY**-- SOON THEY'RE ALL AT HIS **COMMAND!**

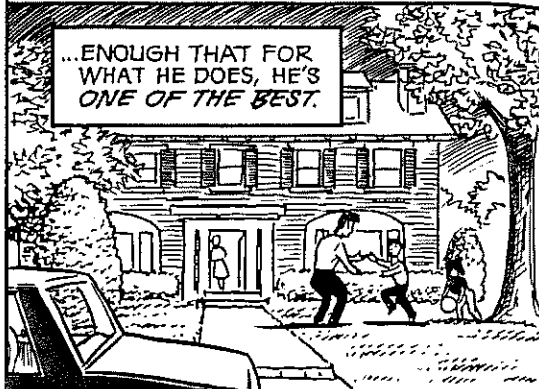


* WELL, OKAY, ONE BOOK! EISNER'S, AGAIN.

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



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



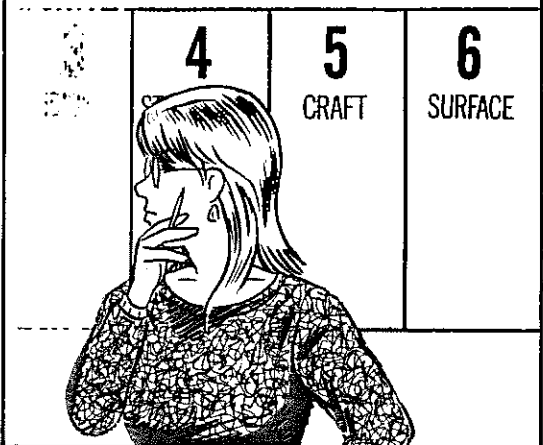
BUT *ANOTHER ARTIST* HAS MADE IT THROUGH THE *SAME SORTS OF HURDLES* AND REACHED THE *SAME LEVELS OF SUCCESS* AND *STILL ISN'T SATISFIED*



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



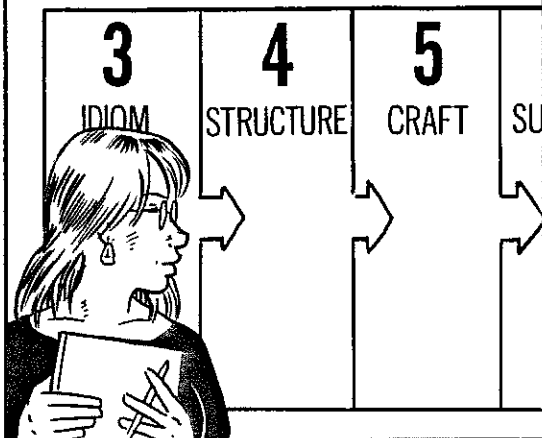
SHE BELIEVES THAT THERE'S SOMETHING *MORE*--SOME *PIECE OF THE PUZZLE*--THAT SHE *STILL HASN'T FOUND*.



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



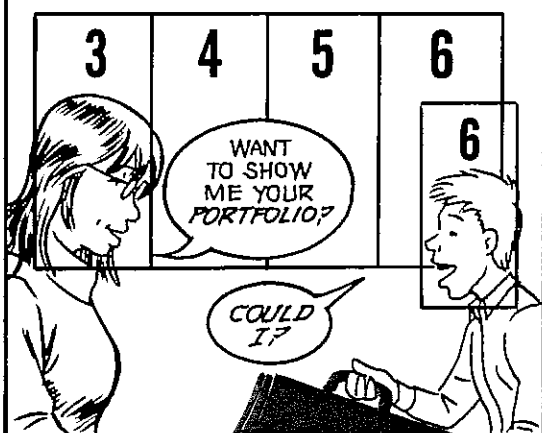
AS SHE CREATES *HER OWN PERSONAL IDIOM* OF COMICS, SHE FINDS THE WHOLE OF HER WORK CHANGING TO *SUIT* THAT IDIOM.



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



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



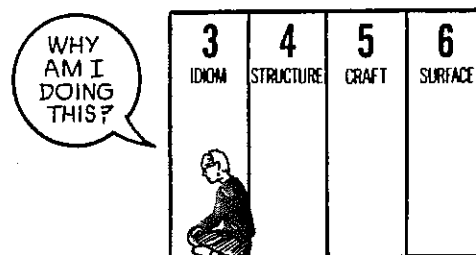
AND MAYBE SHE'LL BE *SATISFIED* WITH THAT KIND OF SUCCESS, SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WHATEVER SHE *DOESN'T* KNOW, SHE'S ON THE RIGHT PATH TO *FIND OUT.*

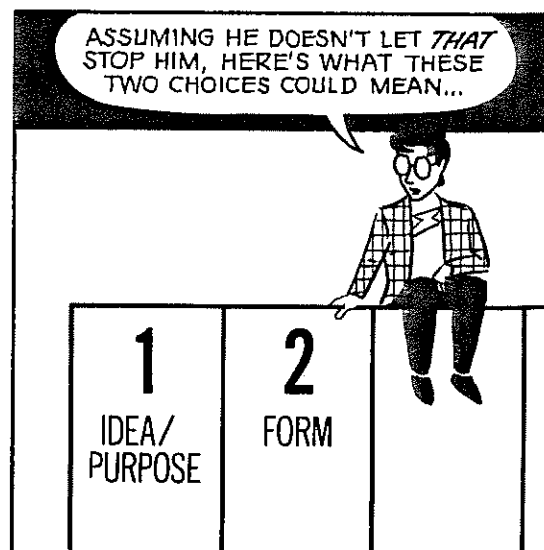
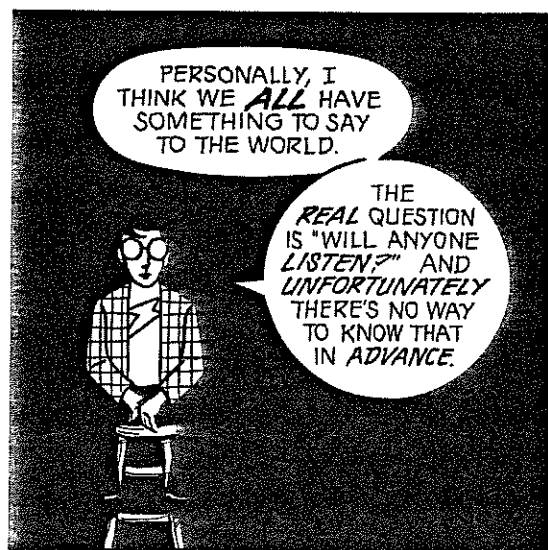
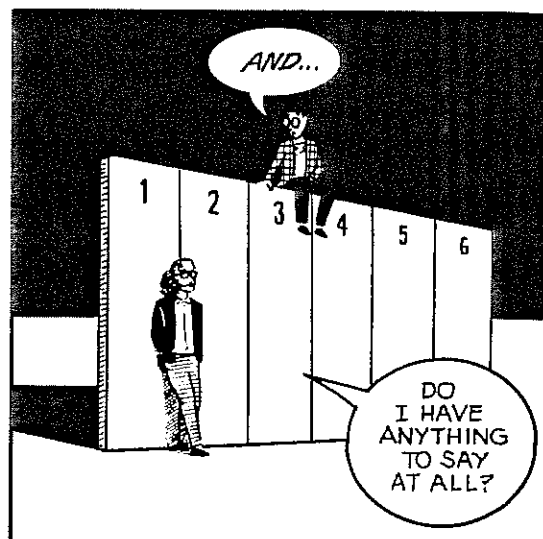
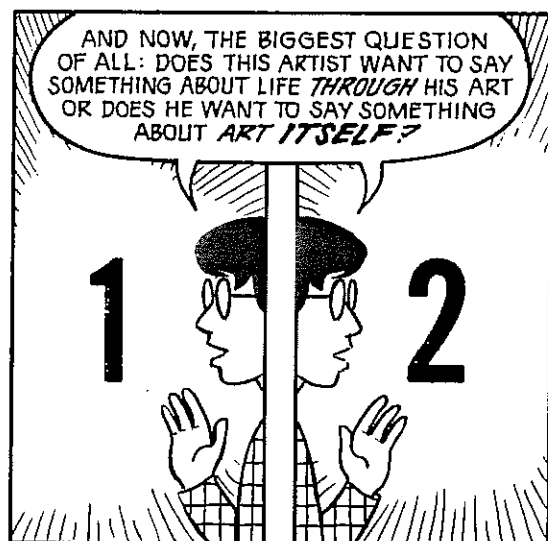
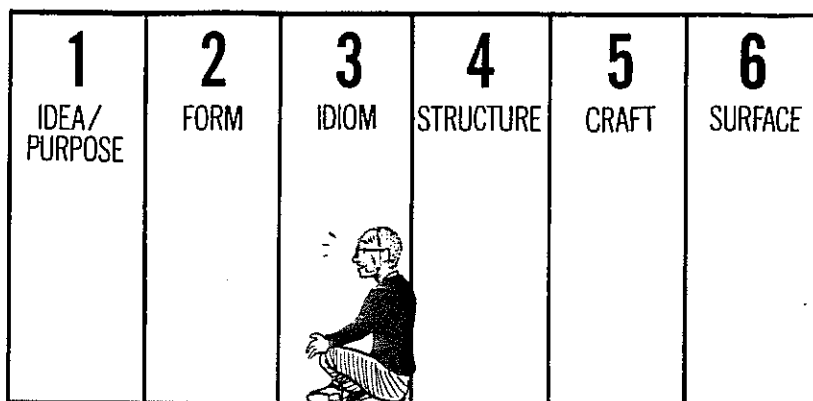


BUT *ELSEWHERE*, ANOTHER CREATOR HAS MADE IT TO THIS SAME PLACE AND STILL FEELS *DISSATISFIED*. HE FEELS THAT SOMETHING VERY *IMPORTANT* HAS BEEN NEGLECTED...

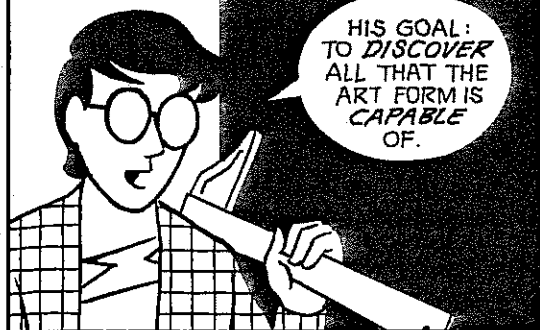


...SOMETHING *FUNDAMENTAL*, SOMETHING AT THE *CORE* OF WHO HE IS AS AN ARTIST. WITH THESE THOUGHTS ON HIS MIND, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF *TIME* BEFORE HE ASKS THAT ONE SIMPLE QUESTION:





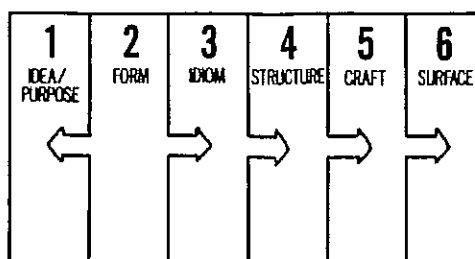
2 FORM



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

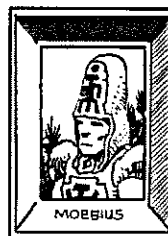
HIS GOAL: TO **DISCOVER** ALL THAT THE ART FORM IS **CAPABLE** OF.

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



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

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



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

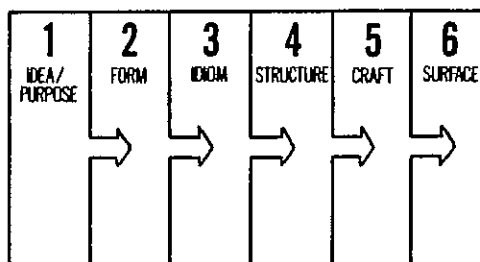
1 IDEA/ PURPOSE



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

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

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



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

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



SCHULZ



BARKS



HERGÉ

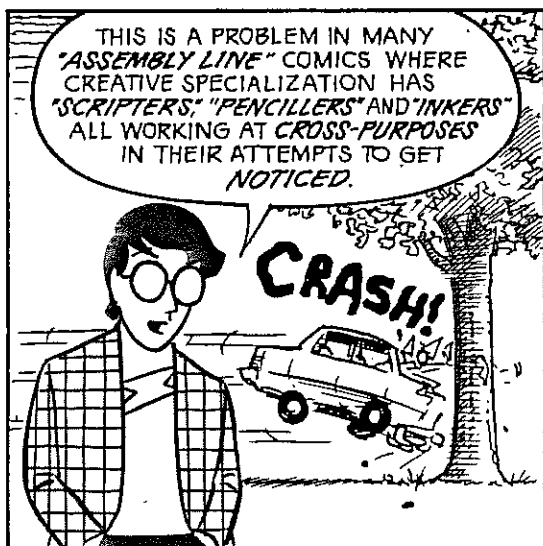
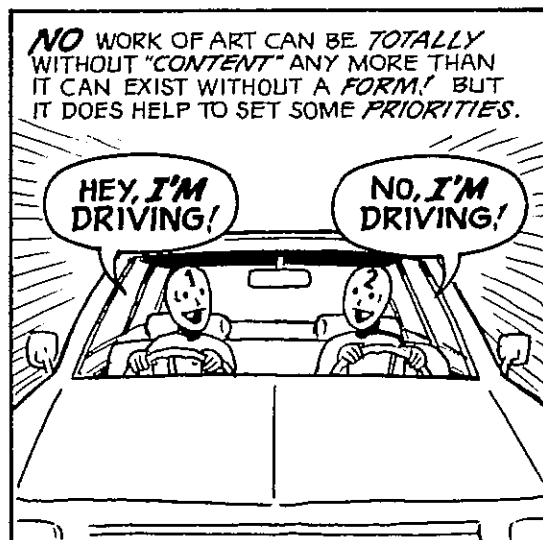
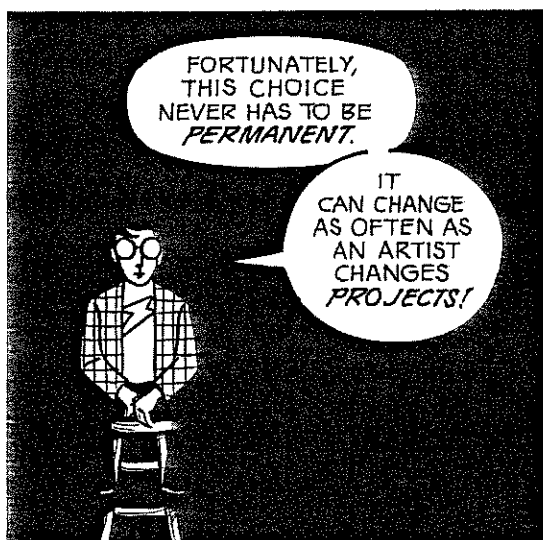


EISNER



NAKAZAWA

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



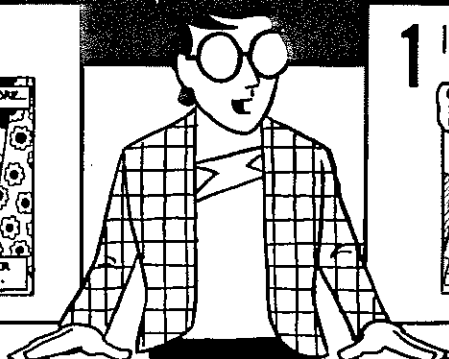
THE MORE AN ARTIST DEVOTES HIM/HERSELF TO EITHER OF THESE TWO FOCAL POINTS, THE MORE DRAMATIC THE CHANGE IF HE/SHE DECIDES TO *SWITCH!*

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

2 FORM

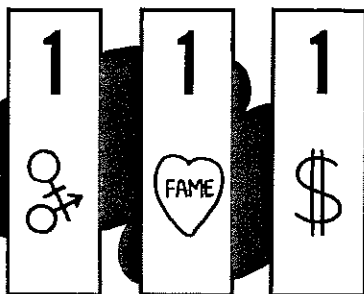


1 IDEA/ PURPOSE



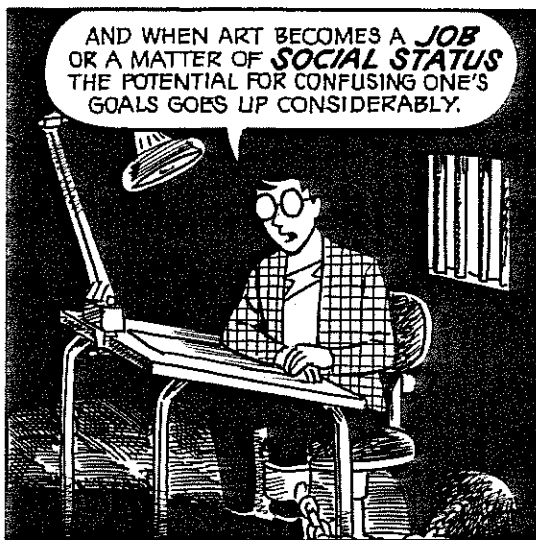
ART AND SCRIPT © ART SPIEGELMAN

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



SURVIVAL ↔ REPRODUCTION

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

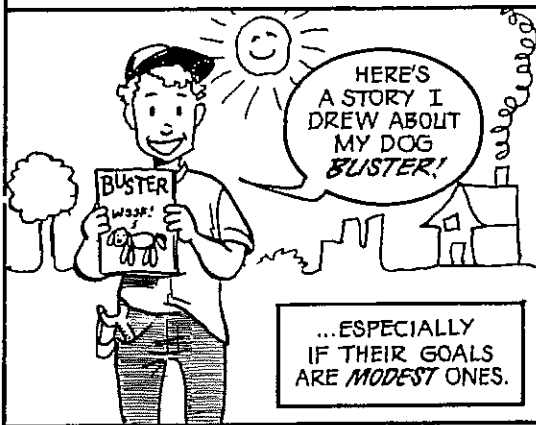


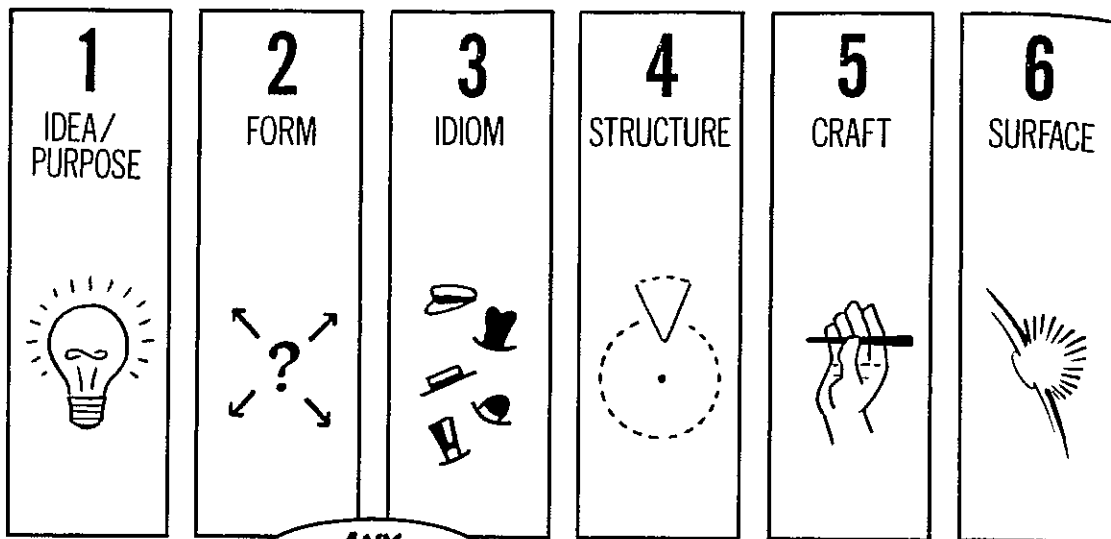
BUT EVEN IF WE TAKE LIFE'S *DISTRACTIONS* INTO ACCOUNT, IT'S STILL AMAZING HOW MUCH *TIME* AND *EFFORT* IS SPENT BY COMICS CREATORS TRYING TO GET WHAT THEY WANT OUT OF COMICS --

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



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





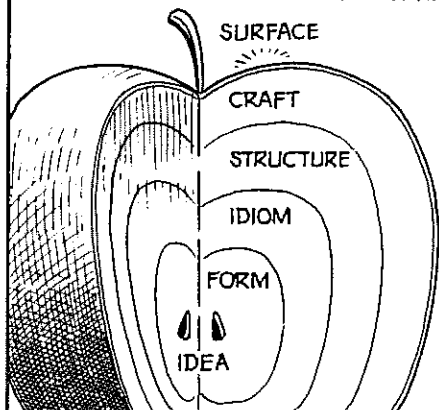
ANY
ARTIST CREATING
ANY WORK IN **ANY**
MEDIUM WILL ALWAYS
FOLLOW THESE **SIX STEPS**
WHETHER THEY REALIZE
IT OR **NOT**.

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

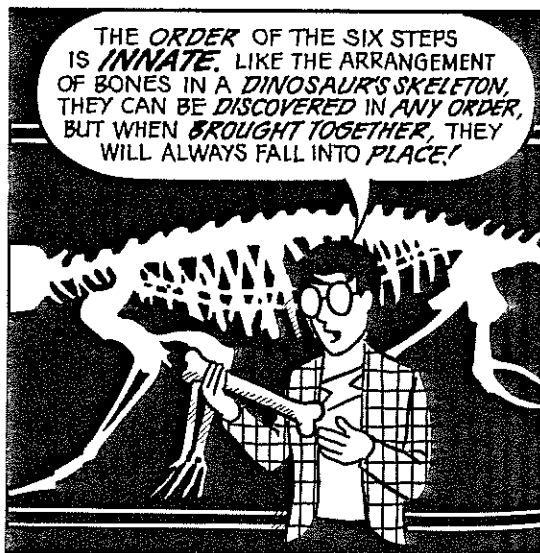
AND **ALL** ASPECTS OF COMICS
HAVE THE **POTENTIAL**
FOR **SELF-EXPRESSION**,
EVEN WHEN **ECONOMIC**
SURVIVAL IS THE
ARTIST'S MAIN
CONCERN.

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

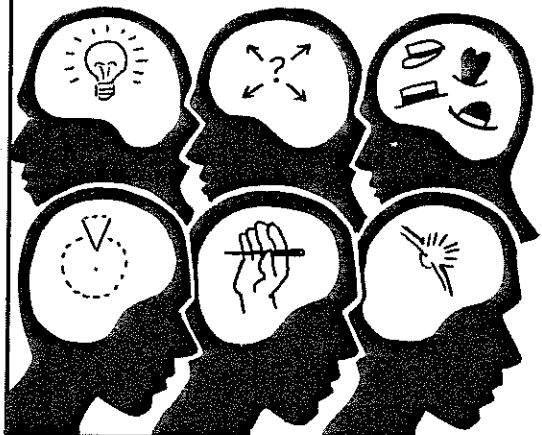
BUT THE MORE A CREATOR LEARNS TO COMMAND
EVERY ASPECT OF HIS/HER ART AND TO
UNDERSTAND HIS/HER RELATIONSHIP **TO** IT,
THE MORE **"ARTISTIC"** CONCERNS ARE
LIKELY TO GET THE **UPPER HAND**.



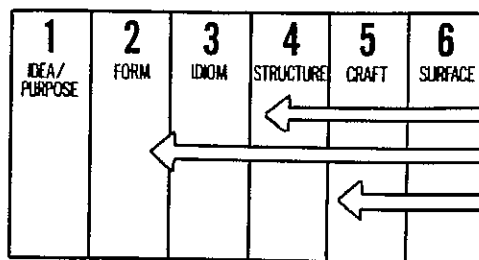
THE **ORDER** OF THE SIX STEPS
IS **INNATE**. LIKE THE ARRANGEMENT
OF BONES IN A **DINOSAUR'S SKELETON**,
THEY CAN BE **DISCOVERED** IN **ANY ORDER**,
BUT WHEN **BROUGHT TOGETHER**, THEY
WILL ALWAYS FALL INTO **PLACE**!



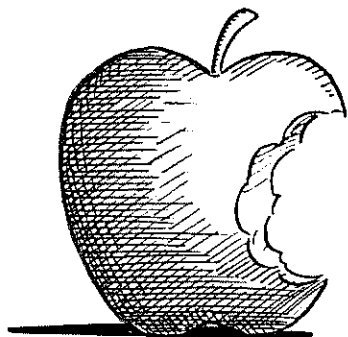
IN *PRACTICE*, **ANY** ASPECT OF COMICS MAY BE THE ONE WHICH FIRST DRAWS AN ARTIST INTO ITS ORBIT.



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



FROM *SURFACE* TO *CORE*.

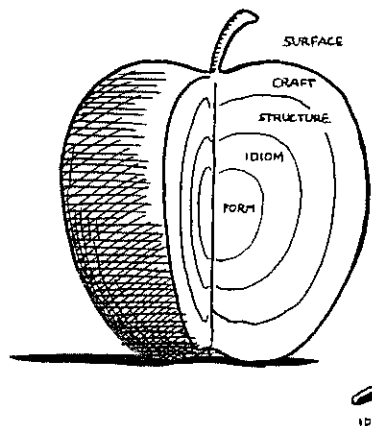


AND IT'S AT THE **CORE** OF ART THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IS FINALLY ASKED:

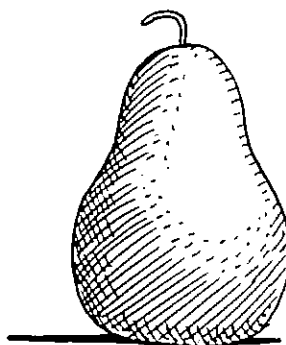


"WHY AM I DOING THIS?"

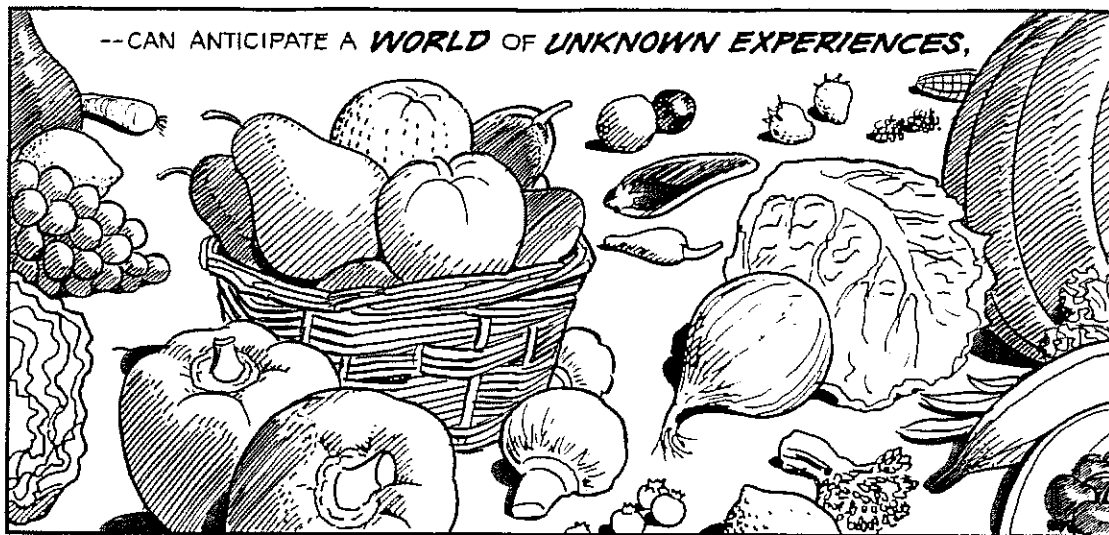
WHEN **FORM** RULES THE WORK, IT MAY SEEM SOMEWHAT **ARTIFICIAL** AT THE CORE, LIKE A **SEEDLESS FRUIT**.



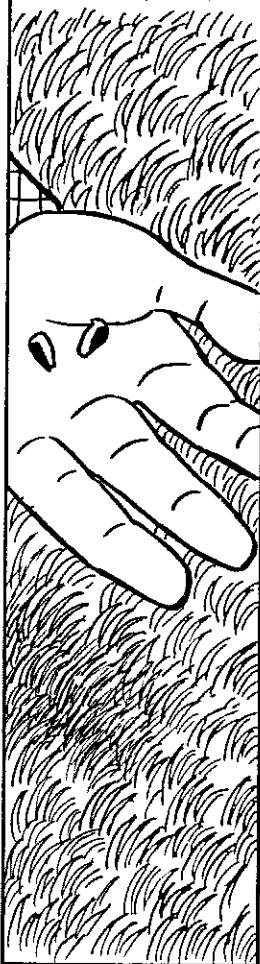
BUT SUCH WORKS DON'T TAKE THE **SHAPE** OF ART FOR GRANTED AND BY QUESTIONING OUR **FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS**--



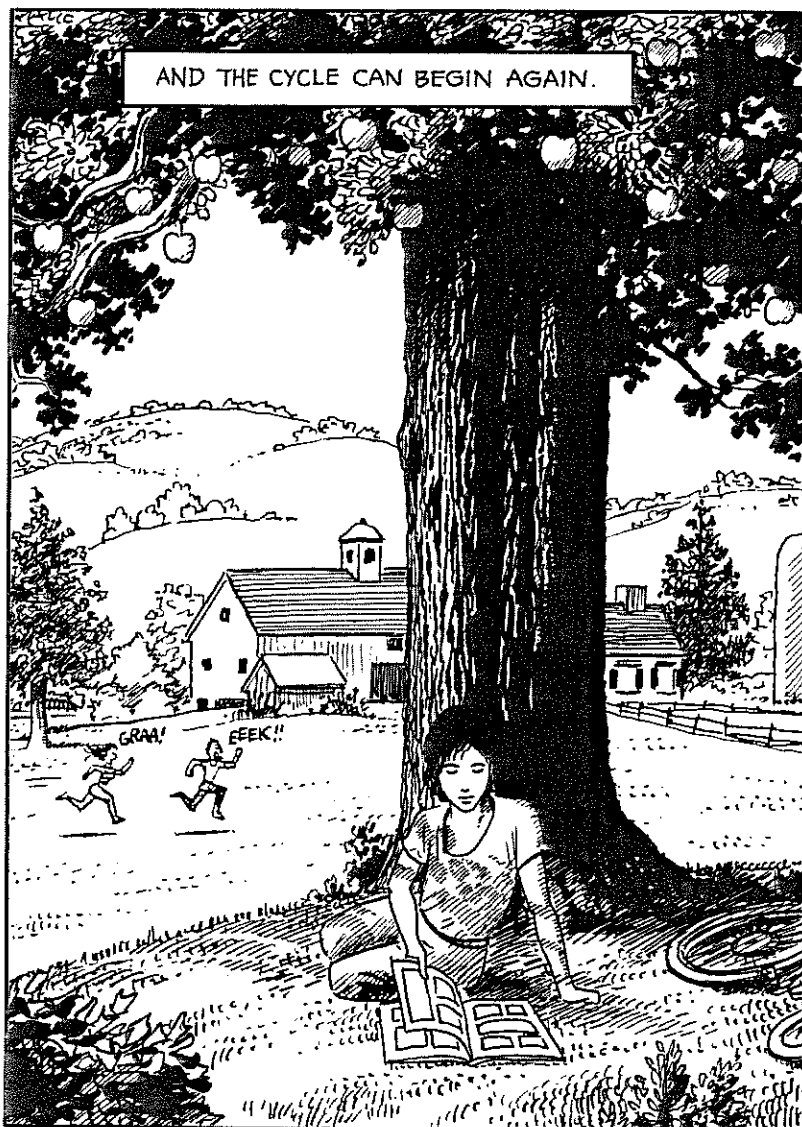
--CAN ANTICIPATE A **WORLD** OF **UNKNOWN EXPERIENCES**,



WHILE IF **IDEAS**
RULE THE WORK AND
DETERMINE ITS
SHAPE, COMICS CAN
HELP **PLANT** THOSE
IDEAS **FAR AND WIDE**.



AND THE CYCLE CAN BEGIN AGAIN.



APLOGIES TO M. PARISH

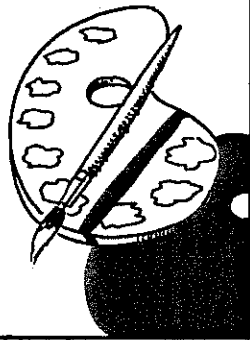
CHAPTER EIGHT

A WORD ABOUT COLOR.

IN CHAPTER FIVE WE DEALT WITH THE EXPRESSIONISTIC POTENTIAL OF *LINES* AS ANTICIPATED BY ARTISTS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, BUT OF COURSE IT WAS *COLOR* WHICH MOST CAPTIVATED ARTISTS OF THAT ERA.



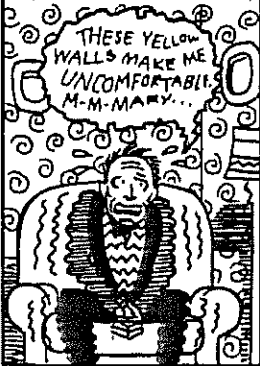
THROUGHOUT ART HISTORY, COLOR HAS BEEN A *POWERFUL*, EVEN *PREDOMINANT*, CONCERN OF FINE ARTISTS EVERYWHERE.



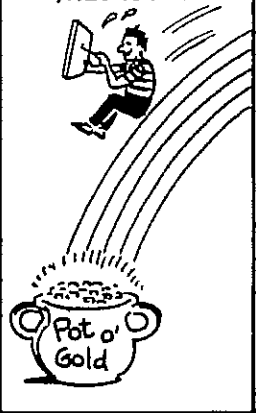
SOME, LIKE *GEORGES SEURAT*, DEVOTED THEIR *LIVES* TO ITS STUDY.



OTHERS, LIKE *KANDINSKY*, BELIEVED THAT COLORS COULD HAVE PROFOUND *PHYSICAL* AND *EMOTIONAL* EFFECTS ON PEOPLE.



COLOR CAN BE A *FORMIDABLE ALLY* FOR ARTISTS IN ANY VISUAL MEDIUM.



YET IN *COMICS* THE CAREER OF COLOR HAS BEEN, WELL... A BIT *"SPOTTY."*



THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR THE *STORMY RELATIONSHIP* BETWEEN COMICS AND COLOR, BUT MOST CAN BE SUMMED UP IN *TWO WORDS*...

