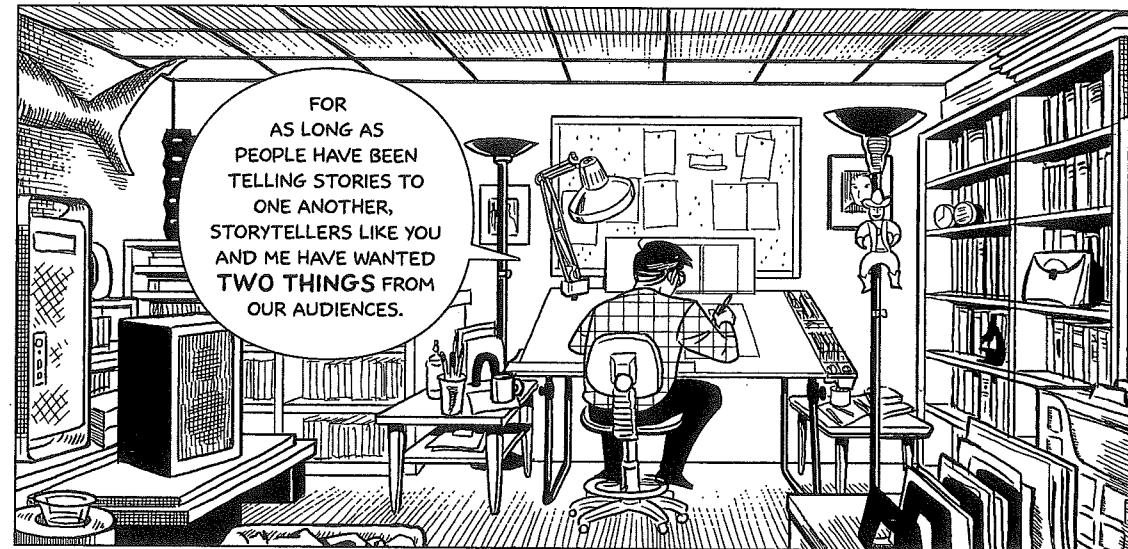
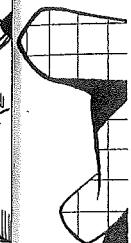
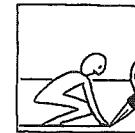
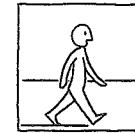
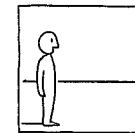
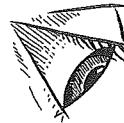


## Chapter One

# Writing with Pictures

Clarity, Persuasion and Intensity



HAY CO.  
IN AF  
THEN STRA  
MI CLARI  
ONLY YOU  
IN

It w  
and nigh

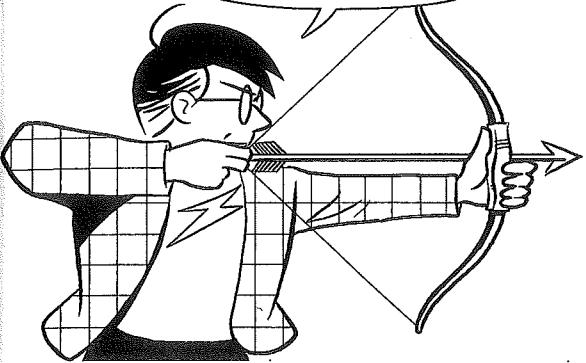


tap  
tap  
tap  
" "

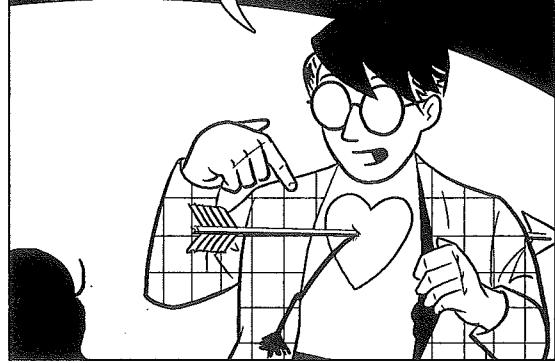
WHEEEEEE  
WHEEEEEE

APOLOGIES

TO  
ACHIEVE THAT FIRST GOAL,  
YOU'LL NEED TO LEARN THE  
PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATING  
WITH CLARITY --



-- AND TO ACHIEVE THE SECOND GOAL,  
YOU'LL NEED TO LEARN WHICH ELEMENTS OF A  
WORK CAN PERSUADE YOUR AUDIENCE TO  
STAY WITH YOU.



IF THE  
STORY YOU  
HAVE IN MIND IS  
COMPELLING,  
IN AND OF ITSELF,  
THEN TELLING IT  
STRAIGHT WITH A  
MAXIMUM OF  
CLARITY MAY BE THE  
ONLY PERSUASION  
YOUR AUDIENCE  
WILL NEED.

IN COMICS, THAT STORY WILL NEED TO TAKE  
THE FORM OF IMAGES IN SEQUENCE,  
PERHAPS WITH WORDS --

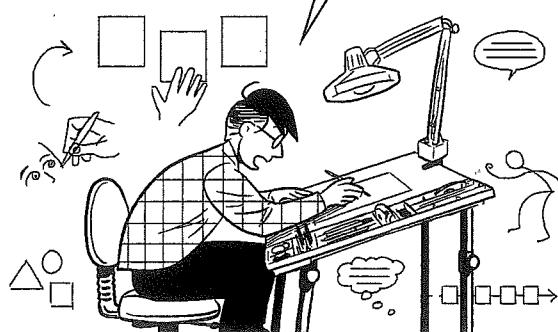


-- SO LET'S START BY  
EXAMINING HOW THAT  
CONVERSION IS DONE  
WHEN CLARITY AND  
COMMUNICATION  
ARE THE PRIMARY  
GOALS.

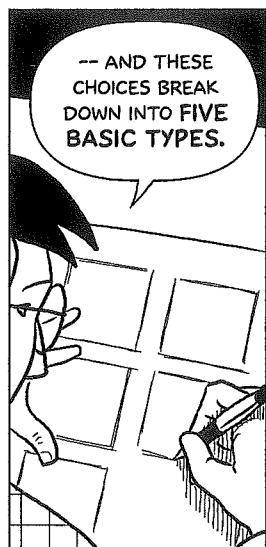
It was a dark  
and stormy  
night...



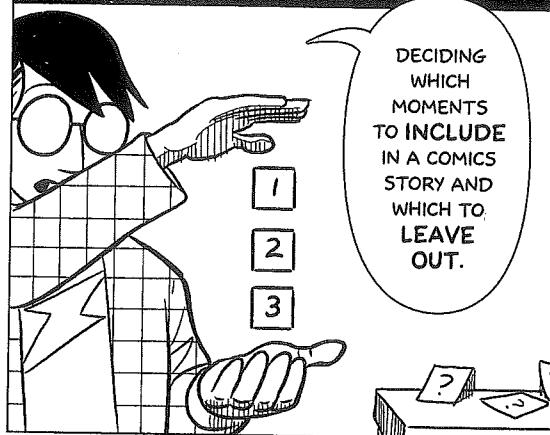
COMICS REQUIRES  
US TO MAKE A CONSTANT STREAM OF  
CHOICES REGARDING IMAGERY, PACING,  
DIALOGUE, COMPOSITION, GESTURE AND  
A TON OF OTHER OPTIONS --



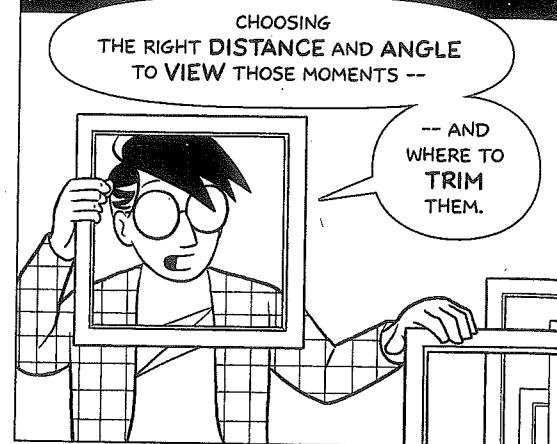
-- AND THESE  
CHOICES BREAK  
DOWN INTO FIVE  
BASIC TYPES.



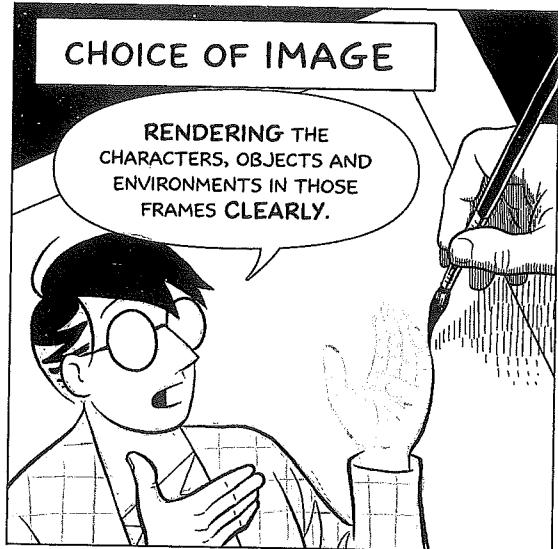
## CHOICE OF MOMENT



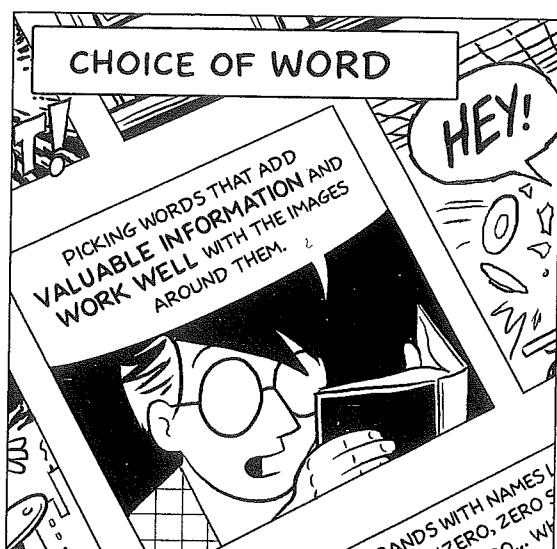
## CHOICE OF FRAME



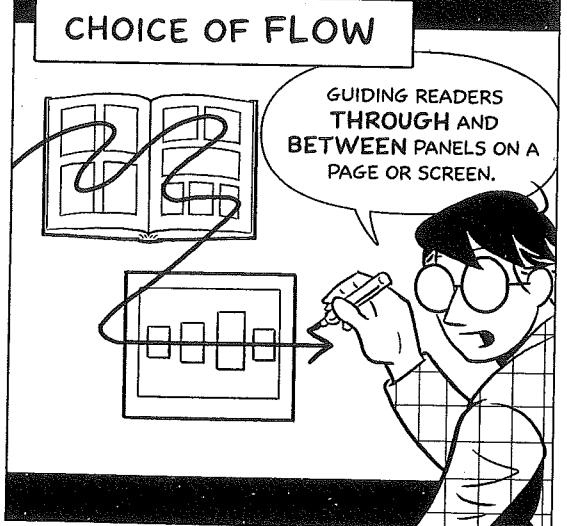
## CHOICE OF IMAGE



## CHOICE OF WORD

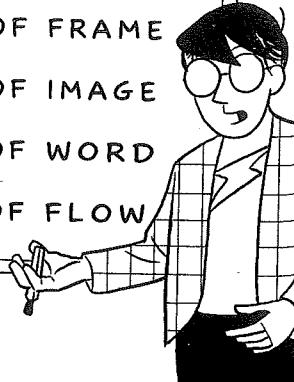


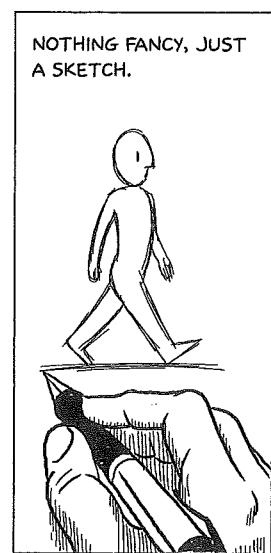
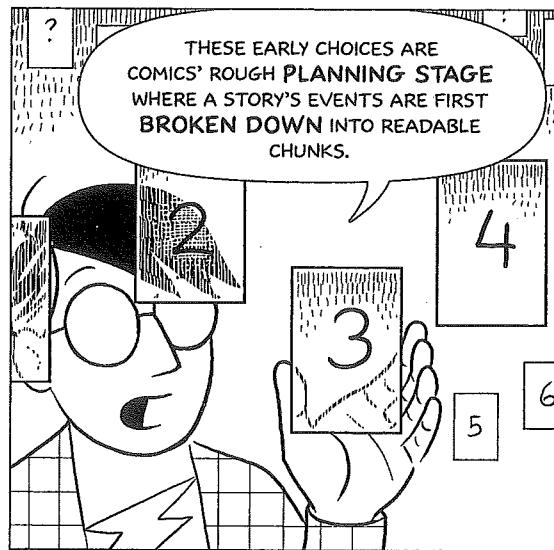
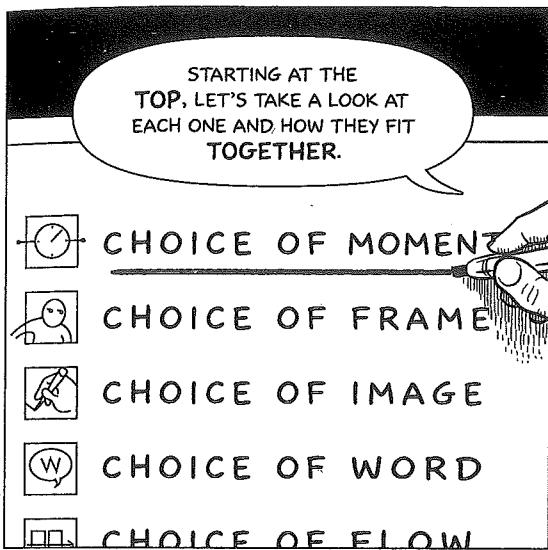
## CHOICE OF FLOW

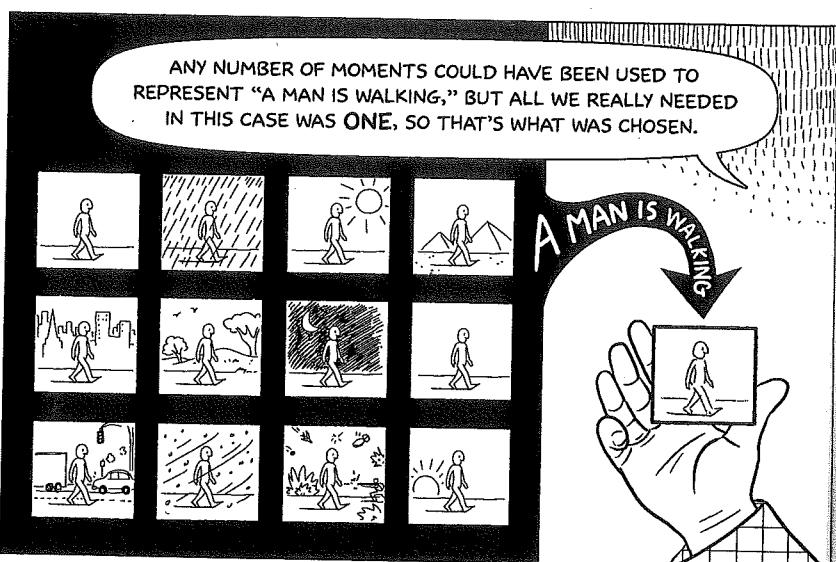
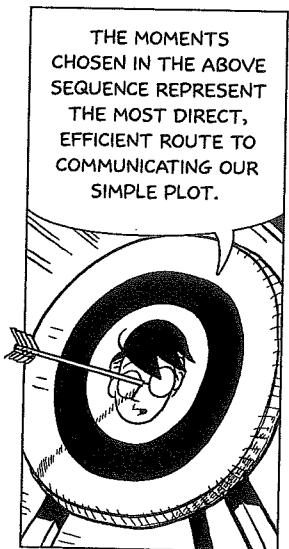
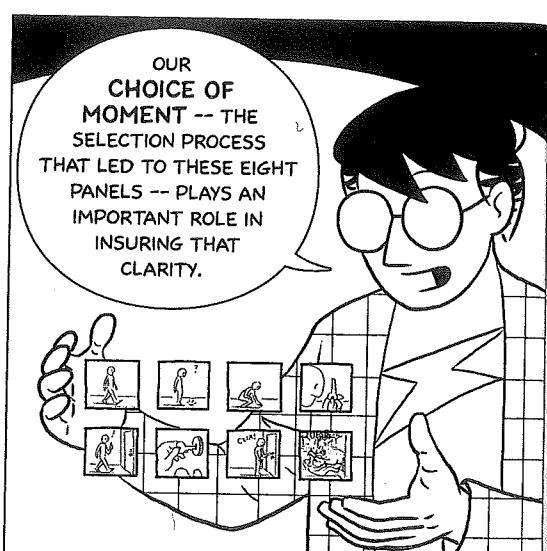
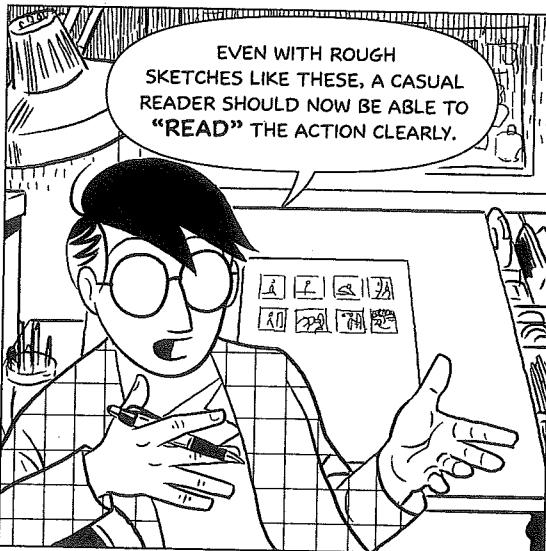
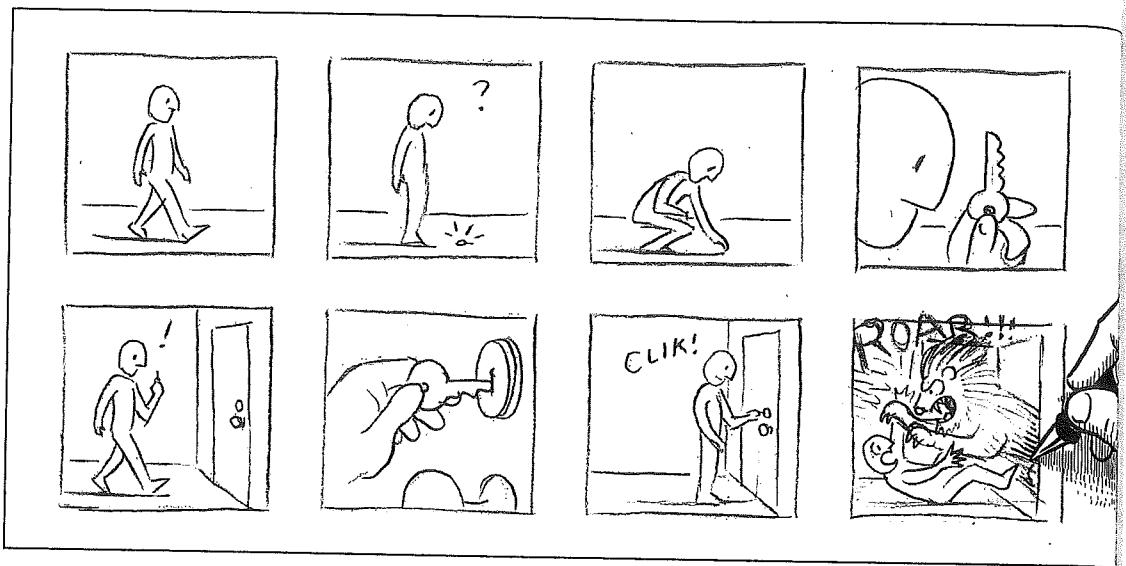


THESE ARE THE FIVE ARENAS WHERE YOUR CHOICES CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLEAR, CONVINCING STORYTELLING AND A CONFUSING MESS.

- CHOICE OF MOMENT
- CHOICE OF FRAME
- CHOICE OF IMAGE
- CHOICE OF WORD
- CHOICE OF FLOW







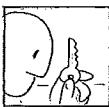
EACH PANEL FURTHERS THE "PLOT."



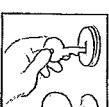
"A man is walking."



"He finds a key on the ground."



"He takes it with him, then he comes to a locked door."



"He unlocks the door."

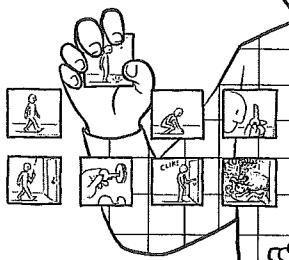


"Then a hungry lion jumps out."

AND IN THIS CASE, EIGHT PANELS IS WHAT WE NEEDED TO GET THE JOB DONE.



REMOVE ONE AND THE MEANING IS ALTERED.

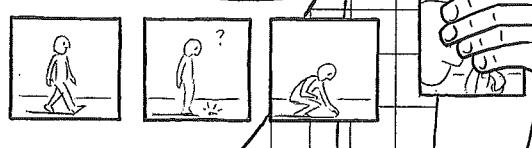


A KEY FOUND --

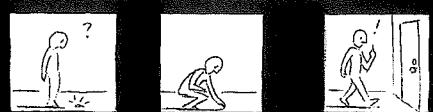
-- BECOMES A KEY RETRIEVED.

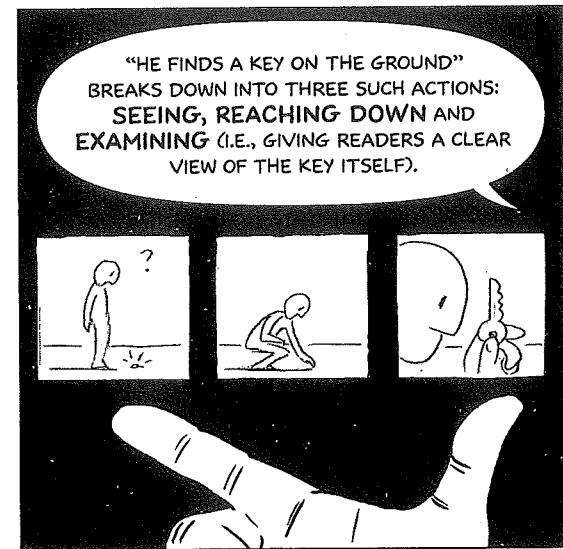
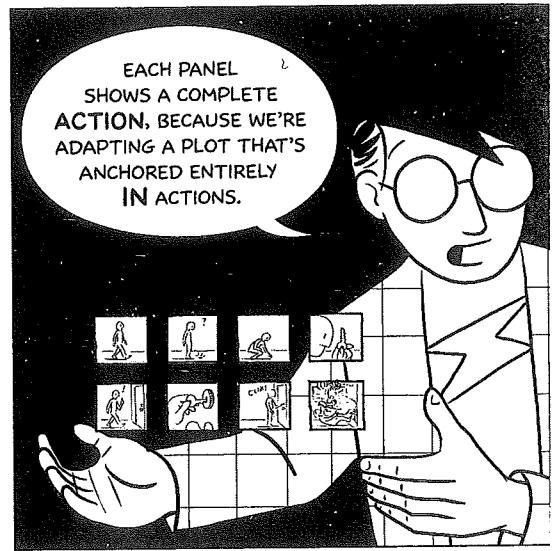
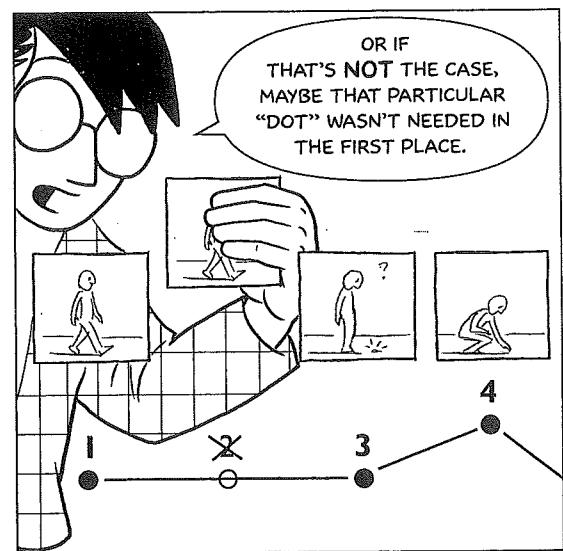
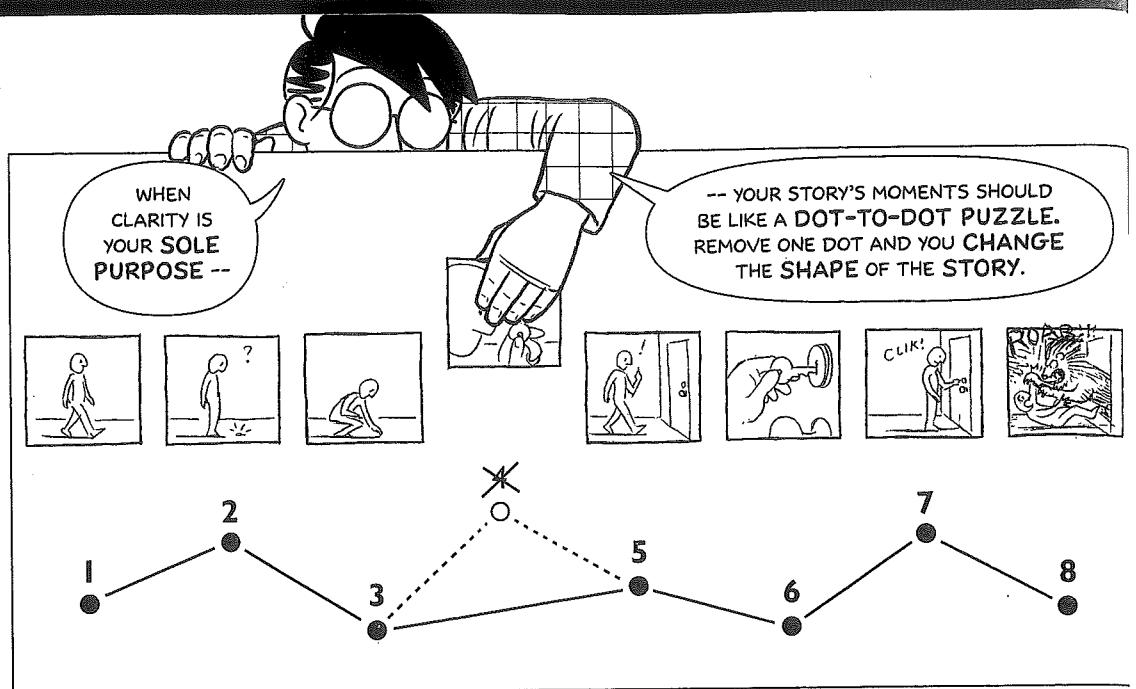


OR A KEY FOUND --

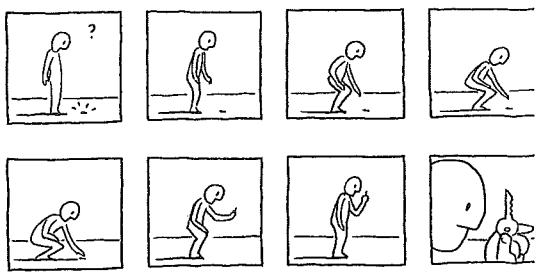


-- BECOMES THE FINDING OF AN UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT.





IF THE PLOT CALLED FOR THE MAN TO "SLOWLY" REACH DOWN, A CERTAIN NUMBER OF EXTRA "DOTS" MIGHT HAVE BEEN NECESSARY TO SHOW THE FINDING OF THE KEY --

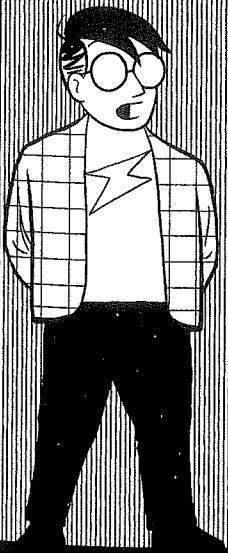


-- BUT BECAUSE WE'RE ILLUSTRATING THE FACT OF THESE ACTIONS, RATHER THAN THEIR QUALITY, ONE PANEL PER ACTION SEEMS TO BE ENOUGH.

CONSIDER  
WHAT YOU WANT  
FROM EACH PART  
OF YOUR STORY: DO  
YOU WANT TO JUMP  
AHEAD TO A KEY  
EVENT? DO YOU  
WANT TO PUT ON THE  
BRAKES AND FOCUS  
ON SMALLER  
MOMENTS? DO YOU  
WANT TO DRAW  
ATTENTION TO  
CONVERSATIONS  
AND FACES?

DEPENDING ON  
YOUR ANSWERS,  
YOU'LL FIND THAT  
CERTAIN TYPES OF  
TRANSITIONS  
BETWEEN PANELS  
MAY GET THE JOB  
DONE BETTER  
THAN OTHERS.

THESE  
PANEL TO PANEL  
TRANSITIONS  
COME IN SIX  
VARIETIES\*,  
INCLUDING:



## I. MOMENT TO MOMENT



A SINGLE ACTION PORTRAYED IN A SERIES  
OF MOMENTS.



## 2. ACTION TO ACTION



A SINGLE SUBJECT (PERSON, OBJECT, ETC...)  
IN A SERIES OF ACTIONS.



## 3. SUBJECT TO SUBJECT



A SERIES OF CHANGING SUBJECTS WITHIN A  
SINGLE SCENE.



## 4. SCENE TO SCENE



TRANSITIONS ACROSS SIGNIFICANT  
DISTANCES OF TIME AND/OR SPACE.



## 5. ASPECT TO ASPECT



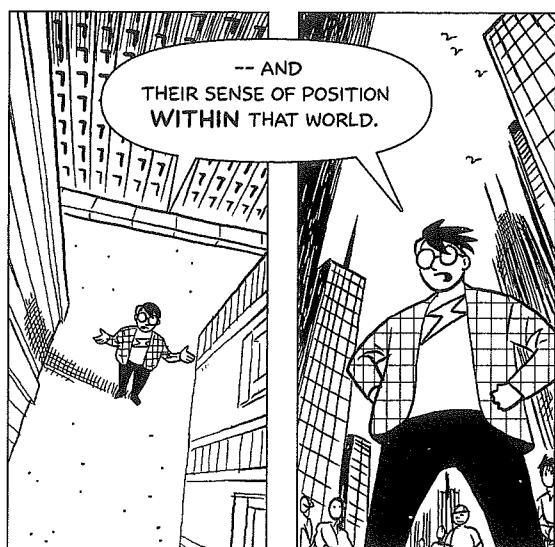
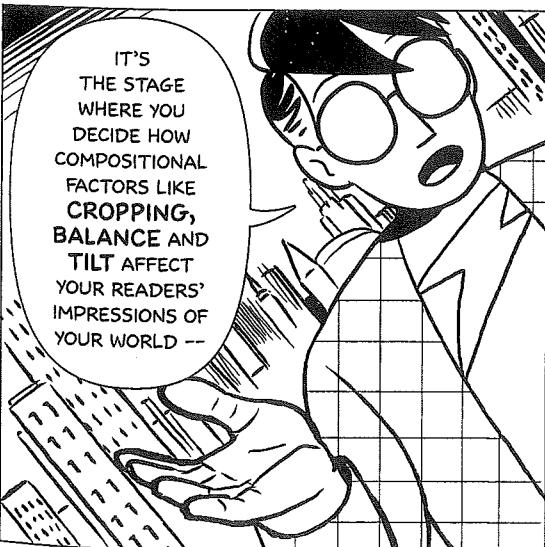
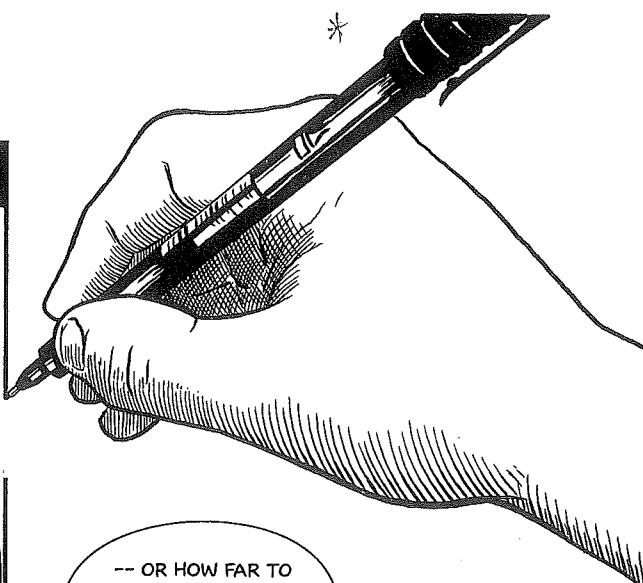
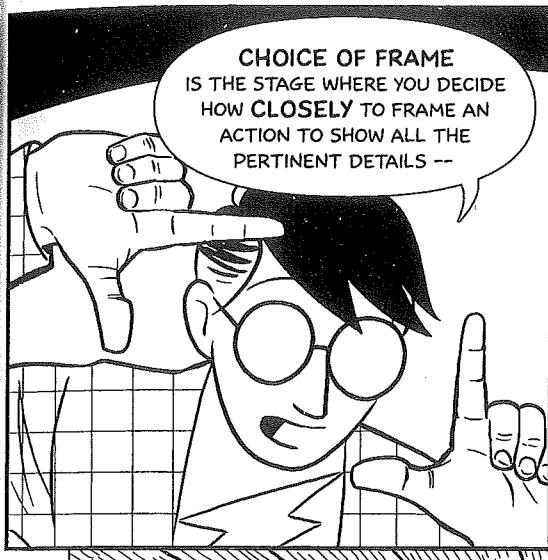
TRANSITIONS FROM ONE ASPECT OF A PLACE,  
IDEA OR MOOD TO ANOTHER.



## 6. NON SEQUITUR

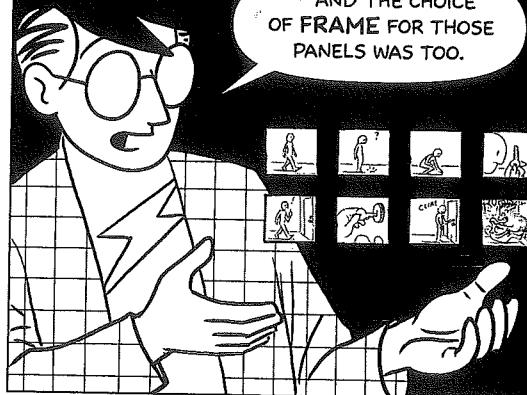


A SERIES OF SEEMINGLY NONSENICAL,  
UNRELATED IMAGES AND/OR WORDS.

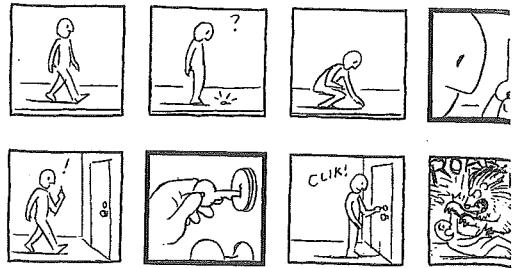


THE CHOICE OF MOMENT FOR OUR ORIGINAL EXAMPLE WAS PRETTY SIMPLE (JUST STRAIGHT ACTION TO ACTION) --

-- AND THE CHOICE OF FRAME FOR THOSE PANELS WAS TOO.

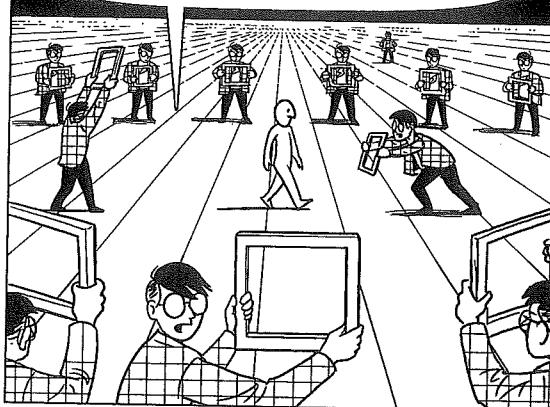


TWO OUT OF THE EIGHT PANELS FEATURED CLOSE-UPS TO SHOW A FEW IMPORTANT DETAILS --

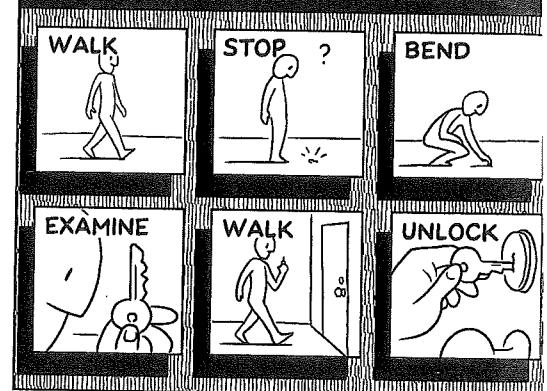


-- BUT OTHERWISE, THE ACTION WAS SHOWN FROM A FIXED MIDDLE DISTANCE AND FIXED VIEWING ANGLE.

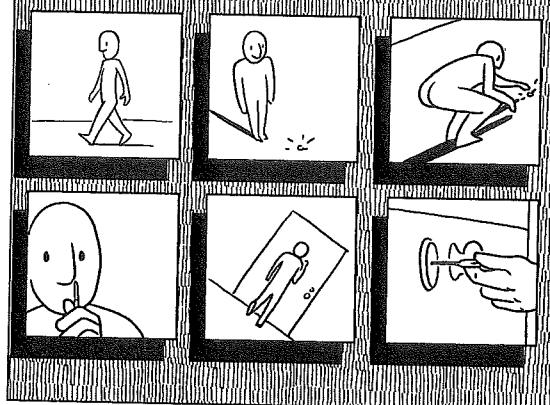
OUR TALE COULD HAVE BEEN SHOT FROM MANY ANGLES AND DISTANCES, BUT BY OFFERING A VIEW OF THE ACTION THAT BARELY CHANGES --



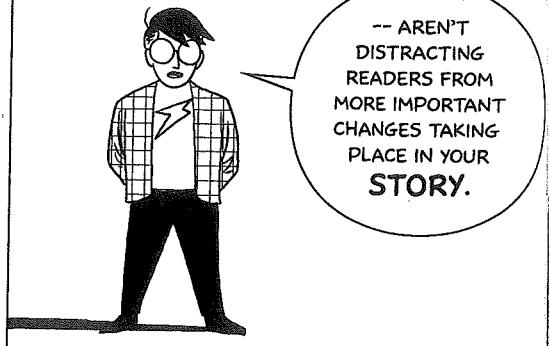
-- THE READER IS ENCOURAGED TO FOCUS ON WHAT DOES CHANGE, SUCH AS THE POSITION AND ATTITUDE OF THE CHARACTER, AS WELL AS HIS UNCHANGING FORWARD STANCE --



-- INSTEAD OF BEING DISTRACTED BY NEEDLESSLY VARYING SHOTS, IRRELEVANT TO THE NARRATIVE.

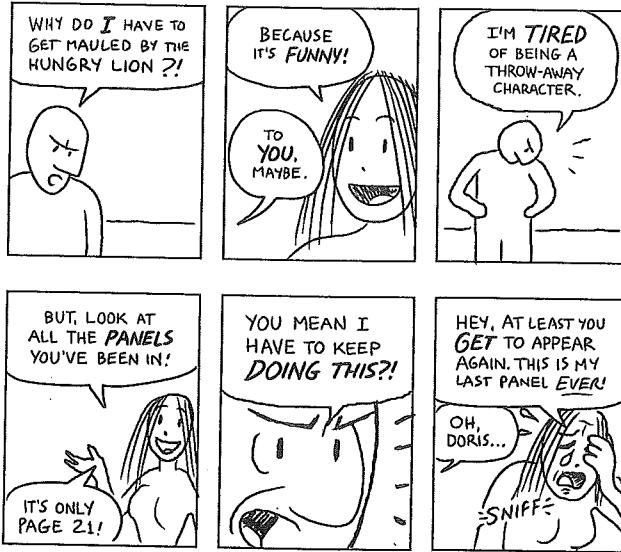


READERS LIKE CHANGE AND VARIETY, SO IT'S TEMPTING TO VARY ANGLES A LOT. JUST MAKE SURE THAT THE CHANGES IN YOUR ARTWORK --

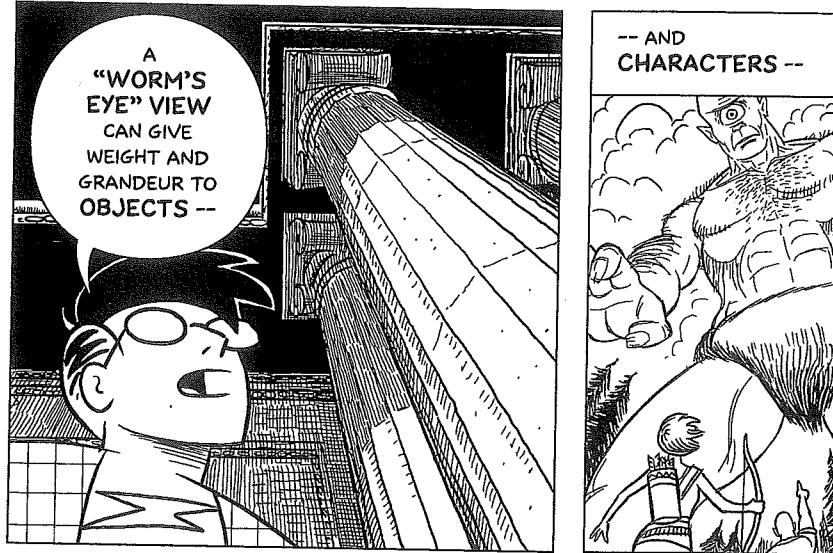


-- AREN'T DISTRACTING READERS FROM MORE IMPORTANT CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN YOUR STORY.

THAT SAID, SOME SCENES REQUIRE FREQUENT CHANGES OF FRAME, SUCH AS THE FLIP-FLOPPING ANGLES OF SUBJECT TO SUBJECT TRANSITIONS USED TO CAPTURE THE RHYTHM OF TWO PEOPLE IN CONVERSATION.



AND THERE'S NO NEED TO KEEP EVERY PANEL AT EYE LEVEL.

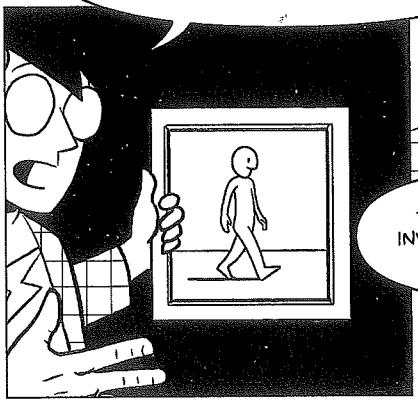


-- WHILE GETTING ABOVE A SCENE CAN GIVE READERS ACCESS TO A WEALTH OF INFO ABOUT A SETTING --

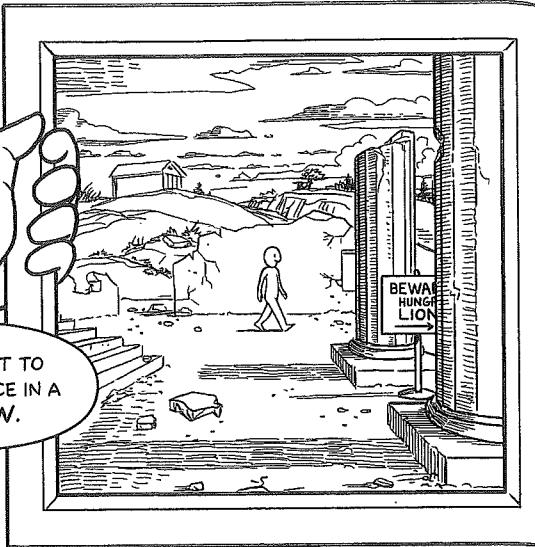
-- AND A SENSE OF "RISING ABOVE IT ALL" EMOTIONALLY AS WELL.



CONCEPTS LIKE  
“A MAN IS WALKING” DON’T REQUIRE  
PULLING BACK THE FRAME MUCH, BUT IF YOU  
WANT YOUR READERS TO KNOW WHERE  
THAT MAN IS WALKING --

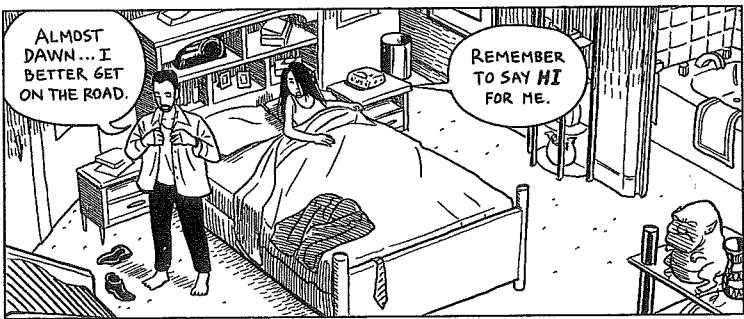


-- YOU MAY WANT TO  
INVEST SOME SPACE IN A  
WIDER VIEW.



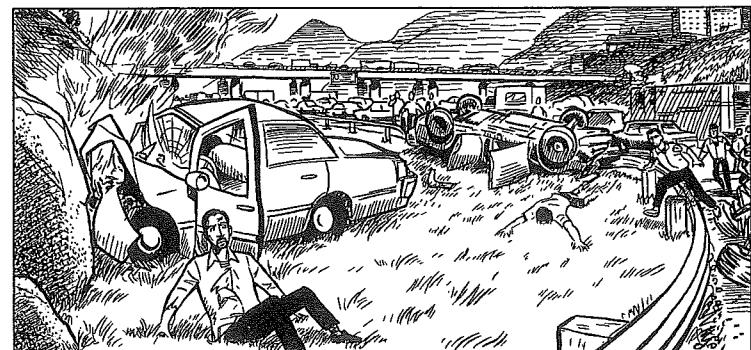
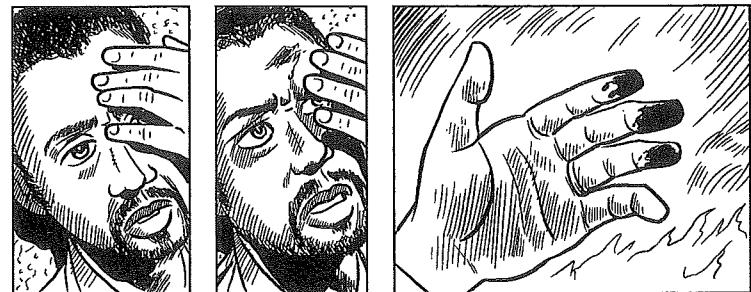
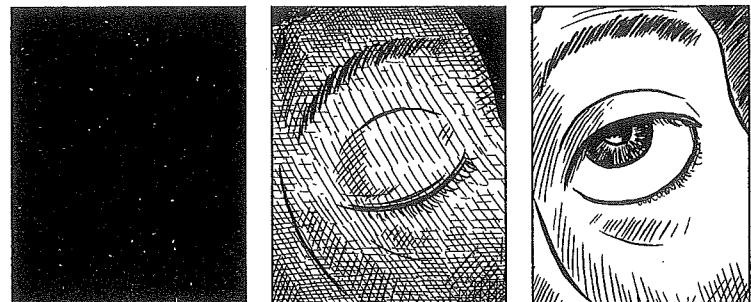
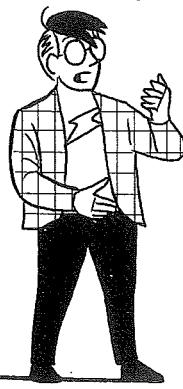
READERS  
NEED THAT  
INFORMATION  
ESPECIALLY WHEN  
MOVING FROM  
SCENE TO  
SCENE --

-- HENCE  
THE TRADITION  
OF THE  
ESTABLISHING  
SHOT: A BIG  
LONG-SHOT PANEL  
OR TWO AT THE  
BEGINNING OF EACH  
NEW SCENE, USUALLY  
FOLLOWED BY SOME  
MIDDLE GROUND AND  
CLOSE-UP PANELS  
OF INDIVIDUAL  
CHARACTERS.



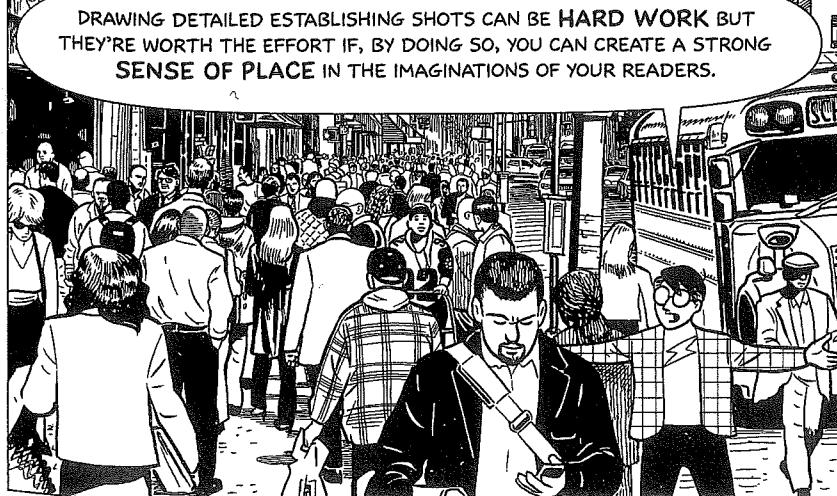
ON THE OTHER HAND, BECAUSE READERS WANT AND EXPECT THAT SENSE OF PLACE, A CLEVER STORYTELLER CAN CHOOSE TO DELAY THE ESTABLISHING SHOT TO INCREASE SUSPENSE --

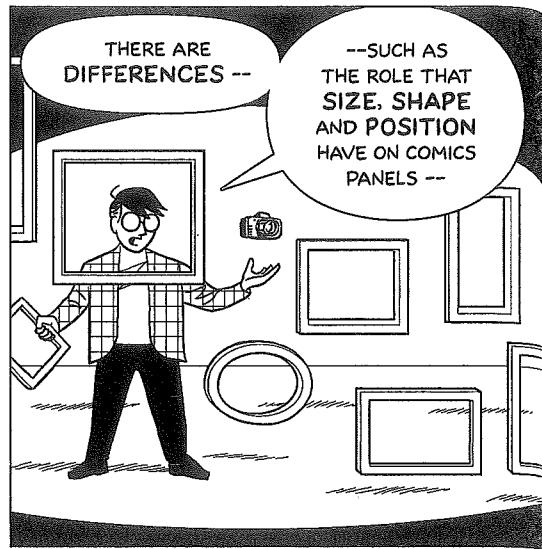
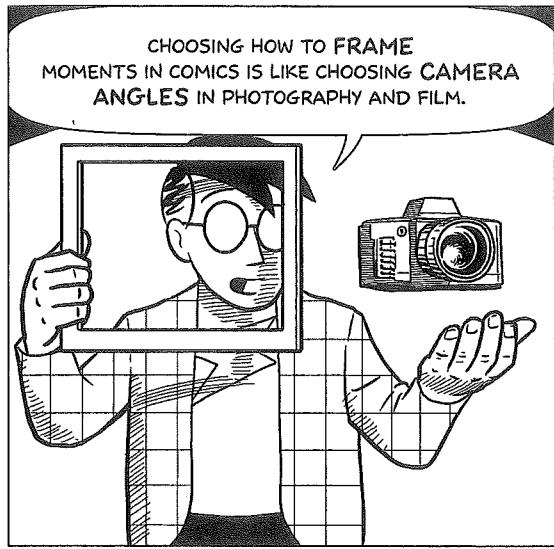
-- OR TO MIRROR THE THOUGHTS OF A CHARACTER WHO'S TEMPORARILY UNAWARE OF HIS OR HER SURROUNDINGS.



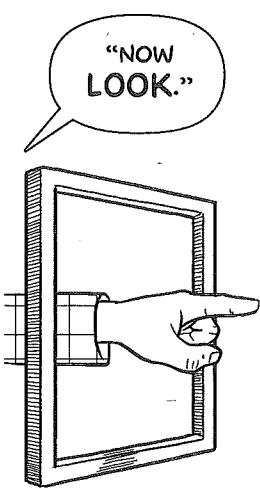
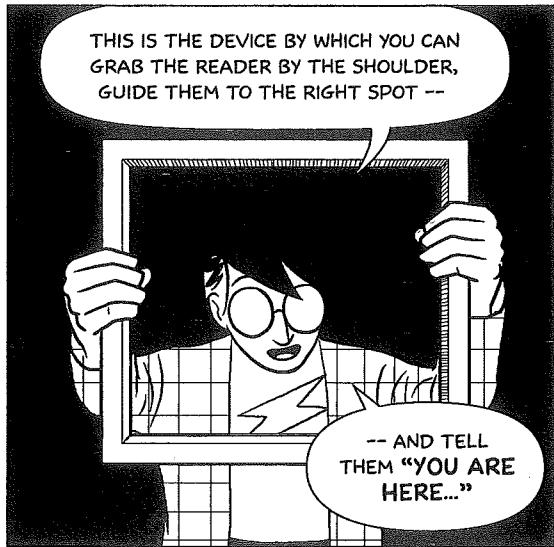
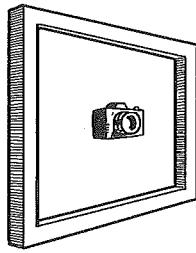
DRAWING DETAILED ESTABLISHING SHOTS CAN BE HARD WORK BUT THEY'RE WORTH THE EFFORT IF, BY DOING SO, YOU CAN CREATE A STRONG SENSE OF PLACE IN THE IMAGINATIONS OF YOUR READERS.

LOOK FOR MORE ON THIS TOPIC IN CHAPTER FOUR.



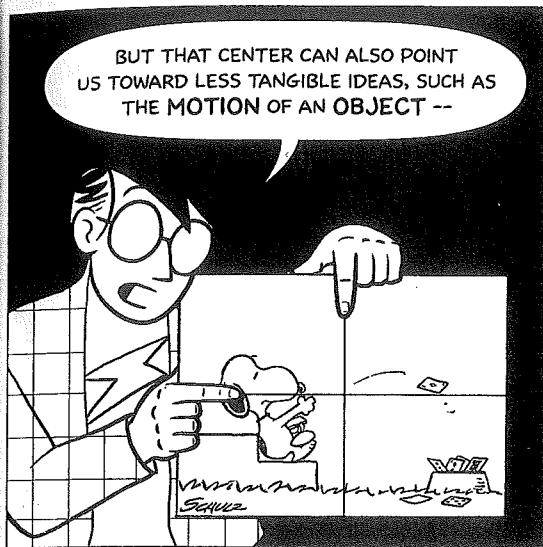


-- BUT TO THINK OF THAT FRAME AS THE READER'S CAMERA IS A USEFUL METAPHOR.

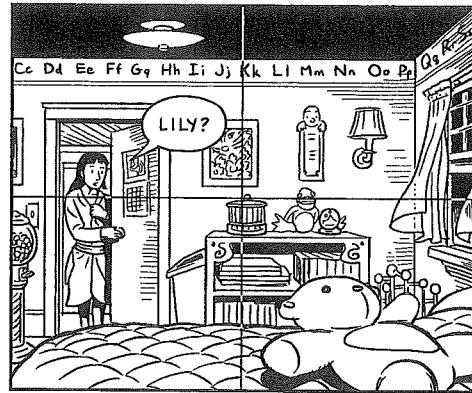


READERS WILL ASSIGN IMPORTANCE TO CHARACTERS AND OBJECTS PLACED IN THE CENTER --

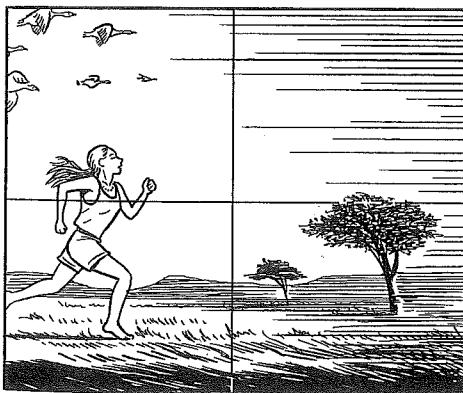




-- A MYSTERIOUS ABSENCE --



-- A DISTANCE ABOUT TO BE CROSSED --



-- A DISTANCE CROSSED ALREADY --



-- OR THE UNSEEN OBJECT OF A CHARACTER'S ATTENTION.

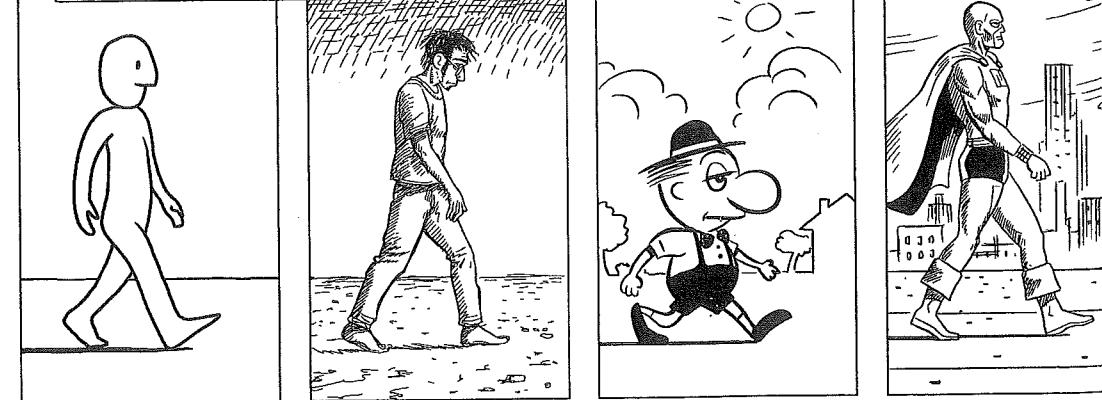


NEXT UP IS YOUR  
**CHOICE OF IMAGE:**  
CREATING PICTURES TO FILL  
THOSE FRAMES AND BRING THE  
WORLD OF YOUR STORY TO  
LIFE VISUALLY.

AFTER ALL  
THAT PLANNING,  
CHOOSING, ARRANGING  
AND SKETCHING THINGS OUT,  
HERE'S THE PART OF THE PROCESS  
WHERE YOU GET TO PICK UP YOUR  
PEN, BRUSH OR DIGITAL STYLUS  
AND FINALLY **DRAW**  
SOMETHING!

- CHOICE OF MEDIUM
- CHOICE OF FRAME
- CHOICE OF IMAGE
- CHOICE OF WORD
- CHOICE OF FLOW

NO MATTER WHAT **STYLE** OF IMAGE YOU CHOOSE, YOUR PICTURES' FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT JOB IS TO COMMUNICATE QUICKLY, CLEARLY AND COMPELLINGLY WITH THE READER.

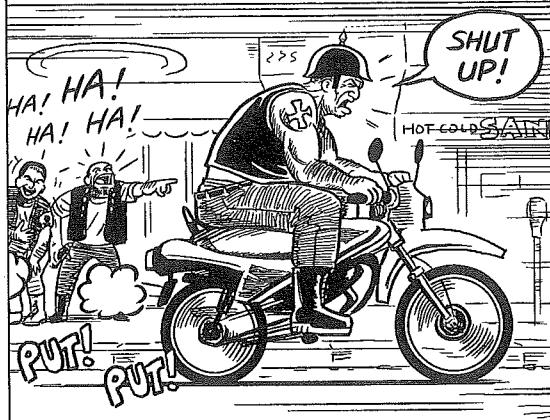
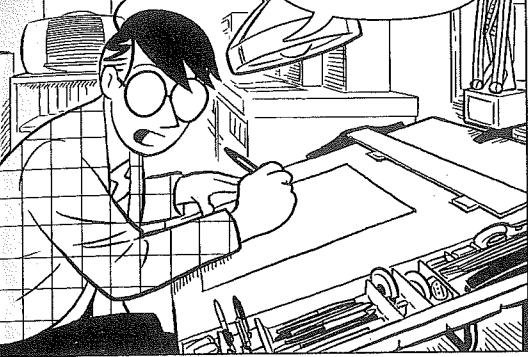


DON'T JUST RELY  
ON STOCK GENERIC  
FEATURES; A DRESS,  
A CAR, A SMILE...

GET  
READY TO GET  
SPECIFIC.

CAN YOU DRAW A MOPED CLEARLY ENOUGH THAT  
READERS CAN TELL THEY'RE NOT LOOKING AT A  
MOTORCYCLE OR A BICYCLE?

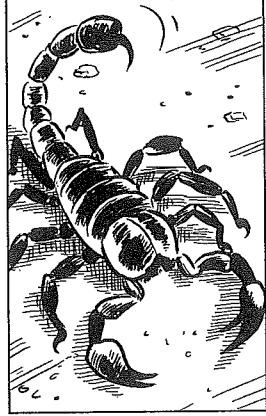
SHUT  
UP!



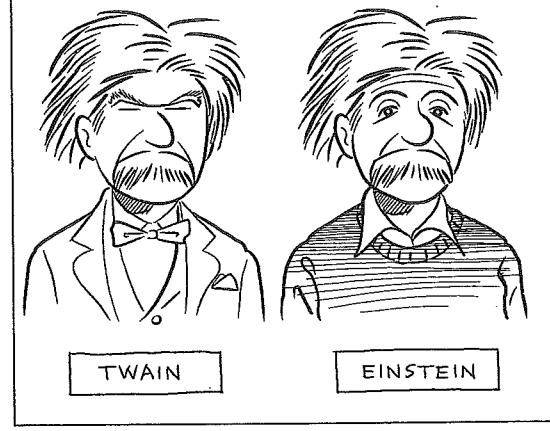
CAN YOU DRAW AN  
EXPRESSION OF MOCK  
DISAPPROVAL THAT  
WON'T BE MISTAKEN  
FOR THE REAL  
THING?



CAN YOU DRAW A  
SCORPION THAT'S  
CLEARLY ABOUT TO  
STRIKE?

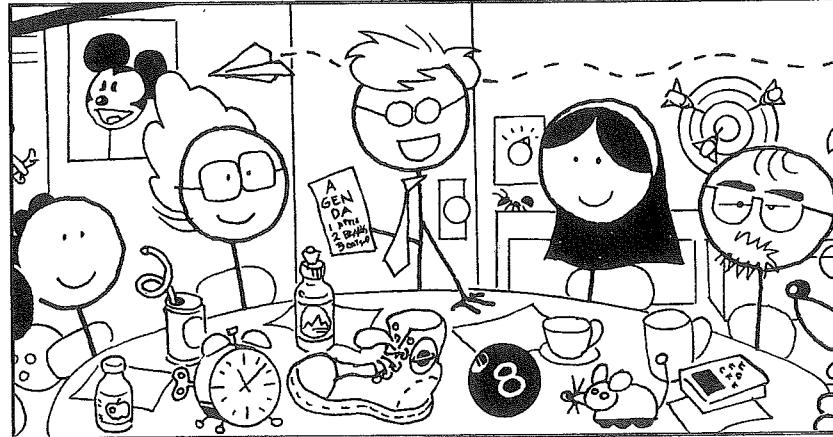


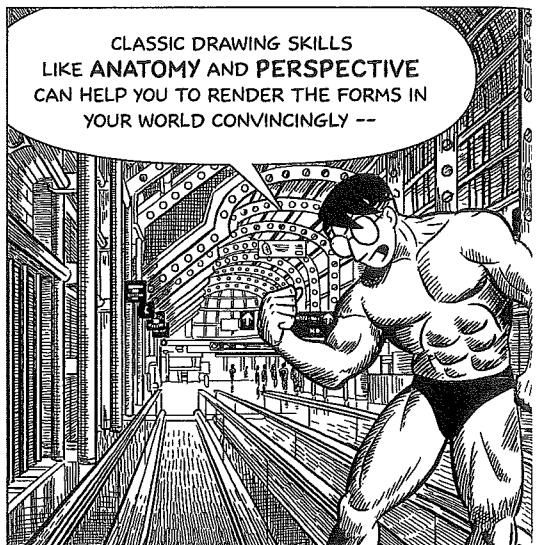
CAN YOU DRAW A PICTURE OF MARK  
TWAIN THAT DOESN'T WIND UP LOOKING  
LIKE ALBERT EINSTEIN?



EVEN WHEN WORKING IN A MINIMAL STYLE LIKE STICK FIGURE MASTER MATT FEAZELL,  
YOUR PICTURES CAN STILL INCORPORATE A WEALTH OF REAL LIFE DETAILS.

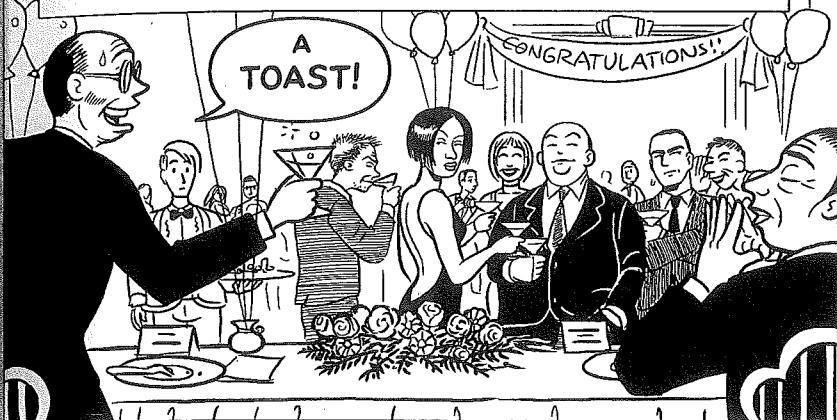
IF I ASKED YOU  
TO DRAW A CLOCK, A  
WATER BOTTLE OR A  
SHOE IN JUST A FEW  
LINES, HOW SPECIFIC  
COULD YOU GET?



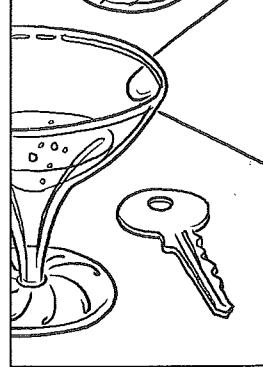


PANEL FOUR: ART BY JASON LUTES  
(SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

THE STANCES AND EXPRESSIONS OF CHARACTERS -- EVEN WHEN SILENT AND IN THE BACKGROUND -- CAN GIVE READERS A WEALTH OF INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR EMOTIONS AND ATTITUDES.



A MINOR DETAIL IN THE ART CAN FORESHADOW MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN A STORY.



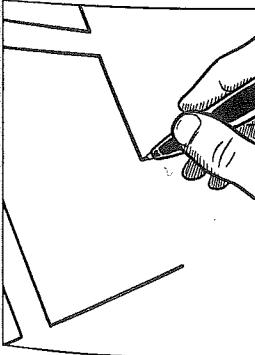
AN ABSTRACT, EXPRESSIONISTIC OR SYMBOLIC IMAGE CAN STRENGTHEN THE RECOUNTING OF AN INTENSELY FELT EMOTION.



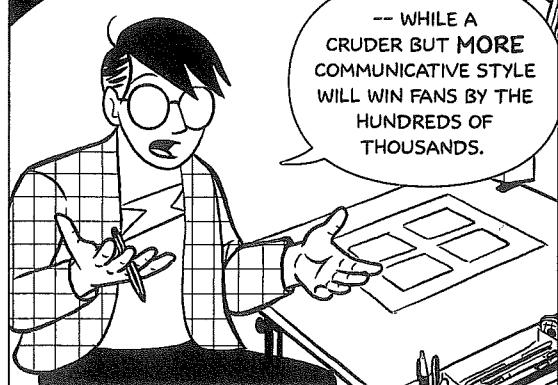
AN EXTREME STYLISTIC CHOICE CAN INVEST EVERY MOMENT OF A STORY WITH AN OVERRIDING MOOD.



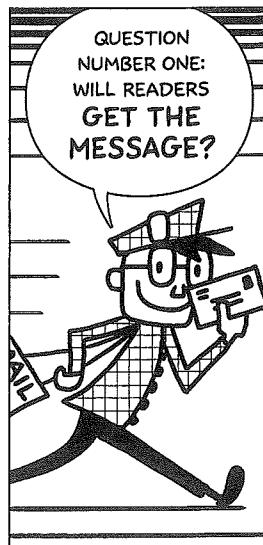
THE ULTIMATE TEST OF CLARITY IN COMICS ARTWORK IS IN HOW WELL IT DELIVERS ON THE BASIC INTENT OF EACH PANEL.

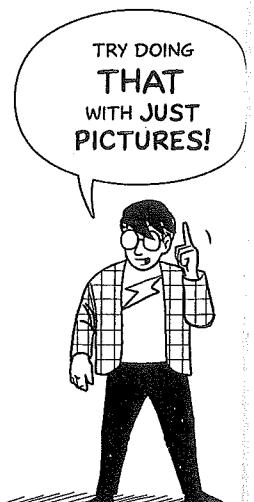
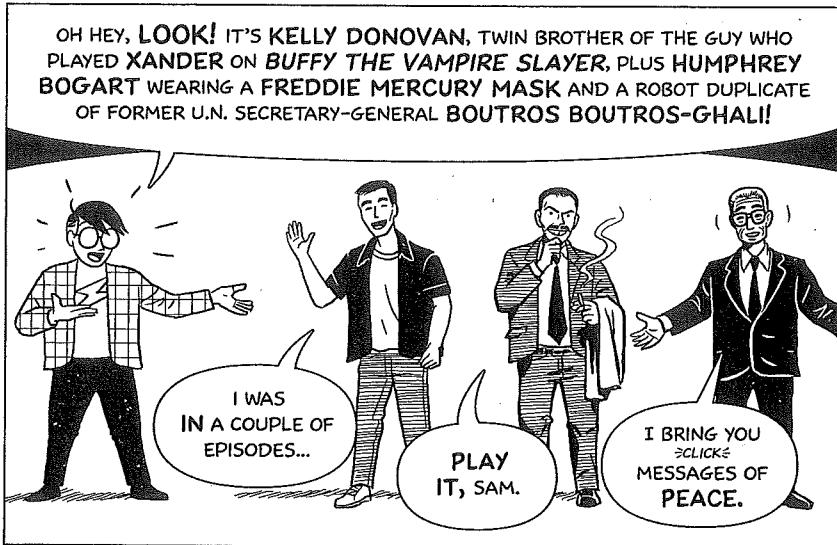
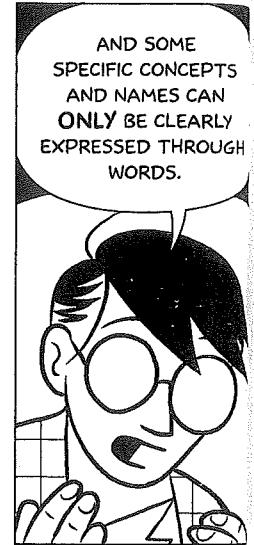
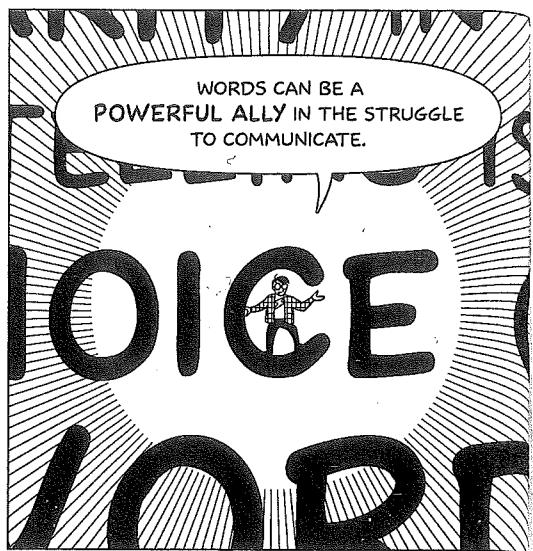
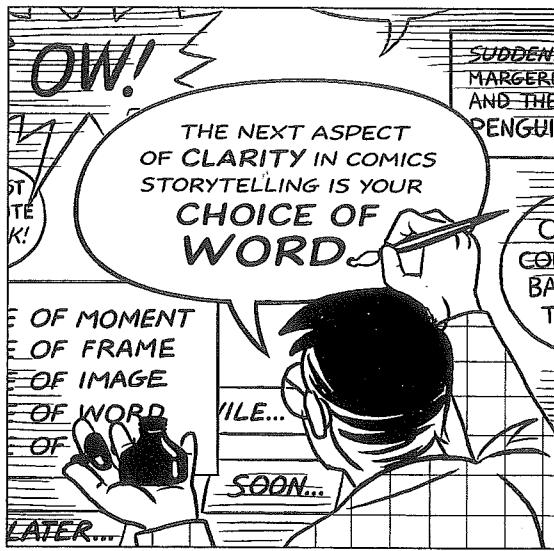


YOU MIGHT ALREADY BE ABLE TO DRAW LIKE MICHELANGELO, BUT IF IT DOESN'T COMMUNICATE, IT'LL JUST DIE ON THE PAGE --



QUESTION NUMBER ONE:  
WILL READERS  
GET THE MESSAGE?





SPECIAL THANKS TO KELLY DONOVAN  
(SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

WORDS CAN BE USED TO COMPRESS A STORY, SUMMING UP VAST CHANGES IN A SINGLE CAPTION AS SEEN IN SCENE-TO-SCENE TRANSITIONS.

TEN YEARS LATER...

MEANWHILE...

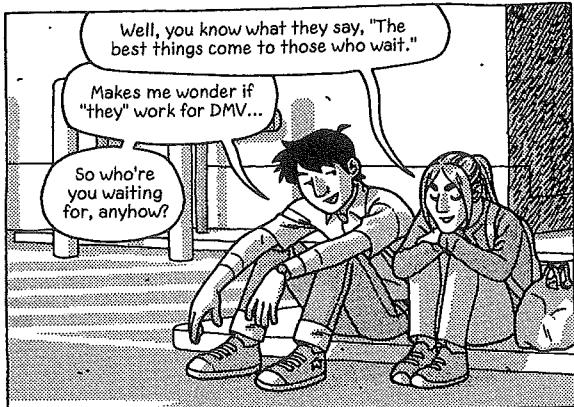
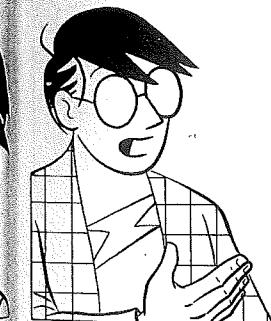
YOU BET!

CAN WE AFFORD THIS?

A LONG TIME AGO, IN A GALAXY FAR FAR AWAY...

A LONG TIME LATER, AND MUCH MUCH CLOSER...

AND OF COURSE, WORDS TAKE CENTER STAGE WHEN REPRODUCING THE FINE ART OF CONVERSATION.



Words alone have been telling stories clearly for millennia. They've done just fine without pictures...

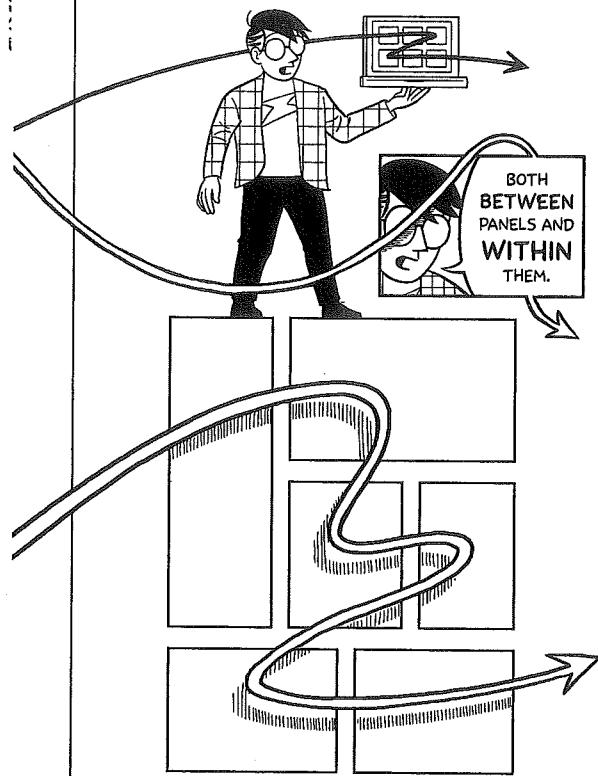
BUT IN COMICS, THE TWO HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER SEAMLESSLY ENOUGH THAT READERS BARELY NOTICE WHEN SWITCHING FROM ONE TO ANOTHER.



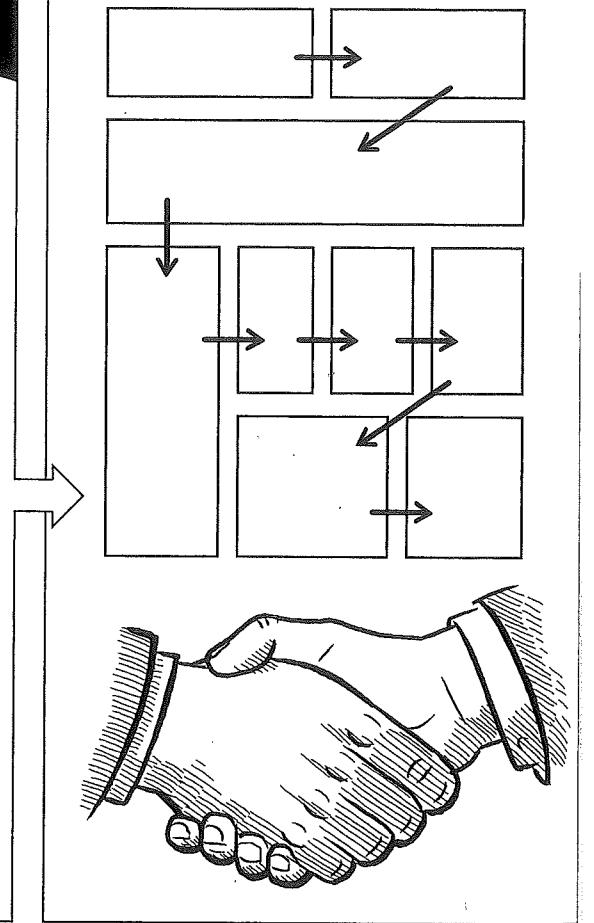
I HAVE A WHOLE CHAPTER ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT FOR NOW, SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT THE SECRET OF COMMUNICATING CLEARLY WITH WORDS IS JUST TO LET WORDS DO WHAT WORDS DO BEST --

-- AND WHEN A PICTURE IS THE BETTER SOLUTION, TO LET THEM GET OUT OF THE WAY.

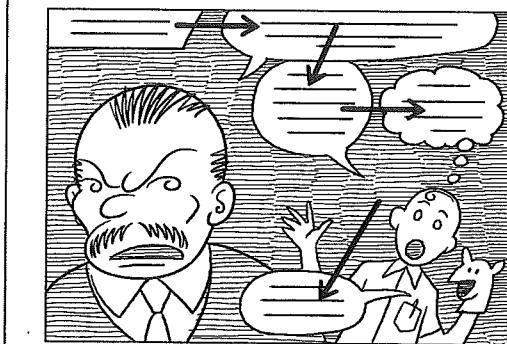
FINALLY, AFTER CHOOSING JUST THE RIGHT MOMENTS, FRAMES, IMAGES AND WORDS, ALL THAT'S LEFT IS YOUR **CHOICE OF FLOW**: HOW YOU GUIDE YOUR AUDIENCE **THROUGH** YOUR WORK FROM BEGINNING TO END.



BETWEEN PANELS, YOUR CHOICE OF FLOW WILL RELY ON THE UNWRITTEN CONTRACT BETWEEN ARTISTS AND READERS WHICH STATES THAT PANELS ARE READ **LEFT-TO-RIGHT FIRST, THEN UP-TO-DOWN\*** --

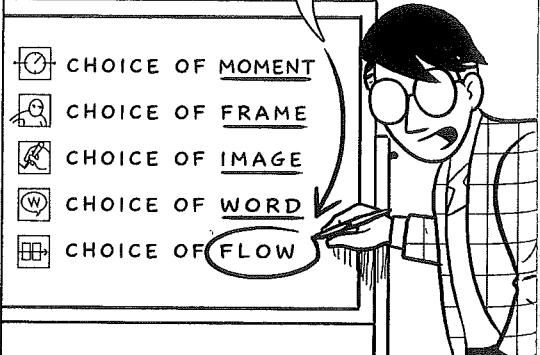


-- AND THAT **WITHIN** EACH PANEL, THE SAME PRINCIPLES WILL APPLY TO CAPTIONS AND WORD BALLOONS.



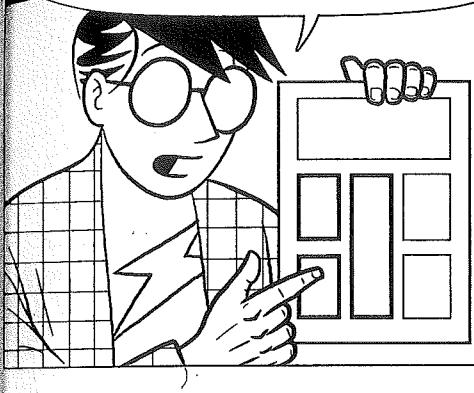
IT ALSO MEANS BEING ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ANY PART OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS THAT CAN **HELP** -- OR **HINDER** -- THAT FLOW.

- CHOICE OF MOMENT
- CHOICE OF FRAME
- CHOICE OF IMAGE
- CHOICE OF WORD
- CHOICE OF FLOW

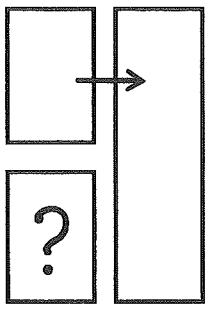


\* OR RIGHT-TO-LEFT IN SOME CULTURES, OF COURSE.

THE EASIEST WAY  
TO AVOID PANEL-TO-PANEL CONFUSION IS  
TO JUST KEEP IT SIMPLE, BUT IF YOU LIKE TO  
MIX THINGS UP, KEEP A LOOK OUT FOR CERTAIN  
INHERENTLY CONFUSING ARRANGEMENTS  
LIKE THIS ONE --



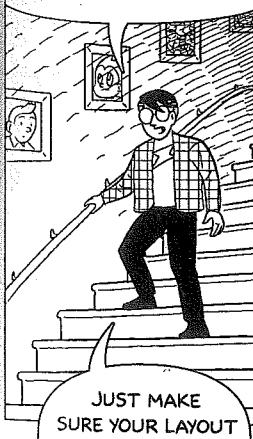
-- IN WHICH HABIT  
WILL SEND YOUR  
READERS LEFT TO  
RIGHT, LEAVING  
THE LOWER LEFT-  
HAND PANEL  
UNREAD --



-- AND PRODUCING  
JUST ENOUGH  
SPLIT-SECOND  
CONFUSION TO YANK  
READERS OUT OF  
THE WORLD OF THE  
STORY.



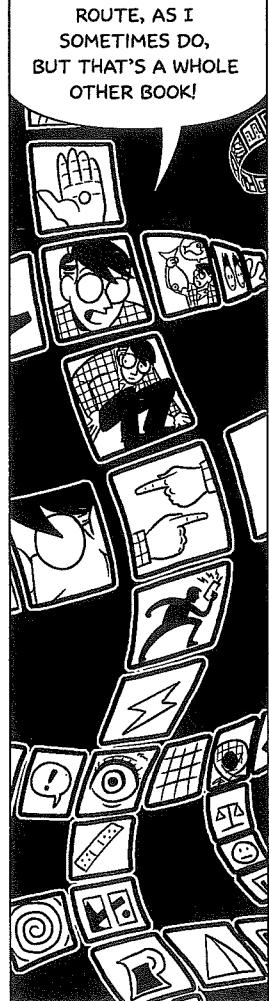
SURE, THERE ARE WAYS  
TO COMPEL READERS'  
EYES TO MOVE IN THE  
RIGHT DIRECTION.



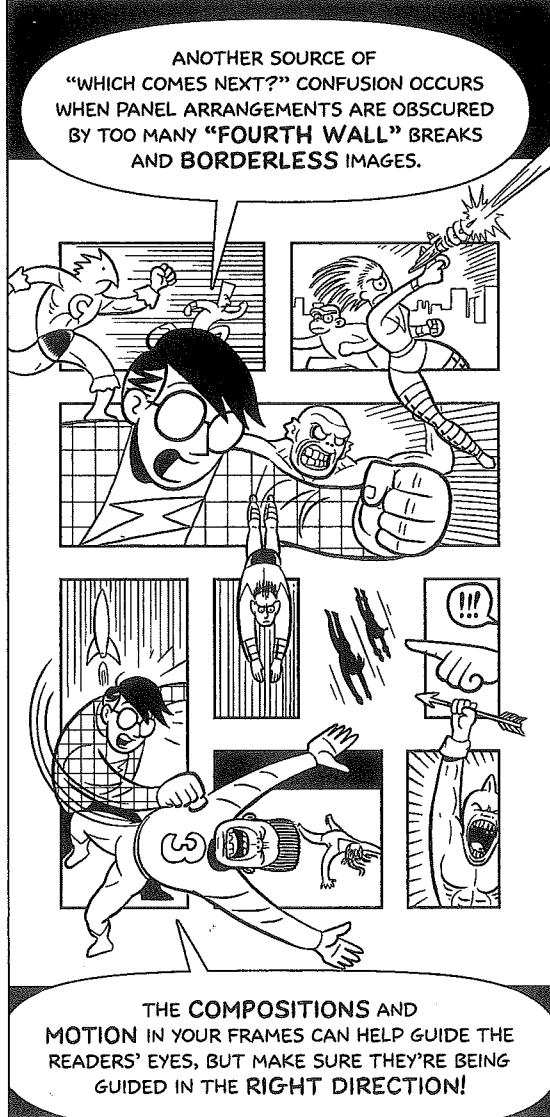
-- INSTEAD OF  
THE OTHER WAY  
AROUND --



-- UNLESS, OF  
COURSE, YOU WANT  
TO GO THE  
EXPERIMENTAL  
ROUTE, AS I  
SOMETIMES DO,  
BUT THAT'S A WHOLE  
OTHER BOOK!

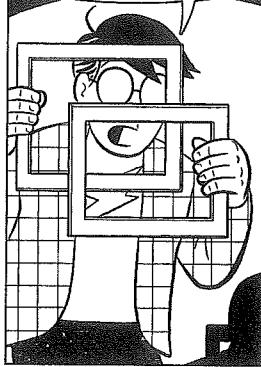


ANOTHER SOURCE OF  
“WHICH COMES NEXT?” CONFUSION OCCURS  
WHEN PANEL ARRANGEMENTS ARE OBSCURED  
BY TOO MANY “FOURTH WALL” BREAKS  
AND BORDERLESS IMAGES.



THE COMPOSITIONS AND  
MOTION IN YOUR FRAMES CAN HELP GUIDE THE  
READERS’ EYES, BUT MAKE SURE THEY’RE BEING  
GUIDED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!

HOW YOUR CHOICE OF FRAME CHANGES FROM PANEL TO PANEL CAN ALSO AFFECT THE READING FLOW.



BY ROTATING THE VIEWING ANGLE TOO FAR BETWEEN PANELS, CHARACTERS CAN SEEM TO SWITCH PLACES, CREATING CONFUSION.

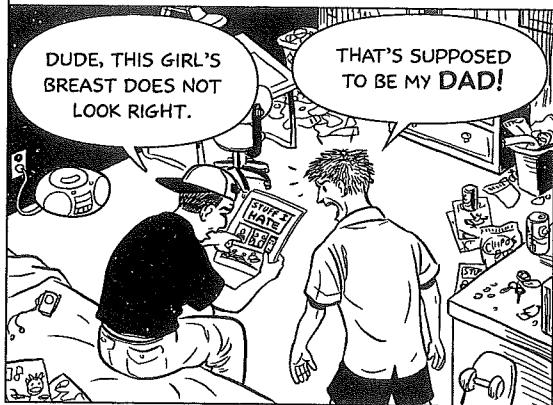


I'LL TELL THE CAPTAIN!  
AND I'LL START THE TANK!



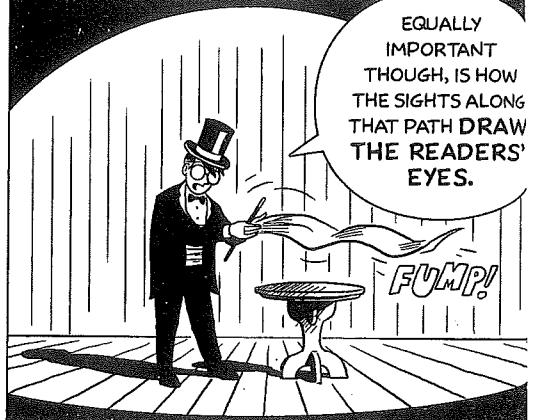
WAIT!! WHO SAID THAT?!  
YOU DID, YOU MORON!

CONSIDER SHOWING YOUR WORK-IN-PROGRESS TO A FRIEND TO CATCH SUCH MIX-UPS IN THE ROUGH PLANNING STAGE -- AND IN THE FINISHED ART, OF COURSE.



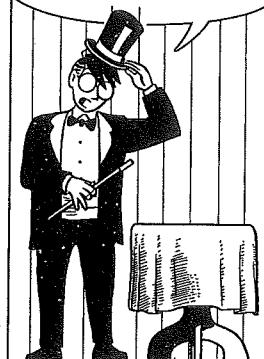
CHOICE OF FLOW IS PARTIALLY ABOUT CLEARING YOUR READERS' PATHS OF OBSTACLES TO A SMOOTH READING EXPERIENCE.

EQUALLY IMPORTANT THOUGH, IS HOW THE SIGHTS ALONG THAT PATH DRAW THE READERS' EYES.

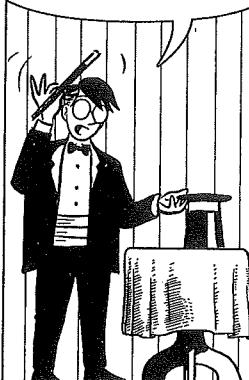


DIDN'T THINK SO.

NOT ALL PICTURES ARE CREATED EQUAL. READERS FOCUS ON AREAS OF CHANGE AND RELEVANCE TO THE STORY--

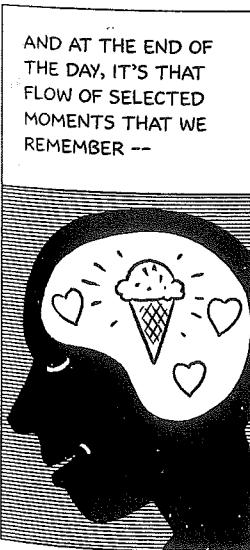
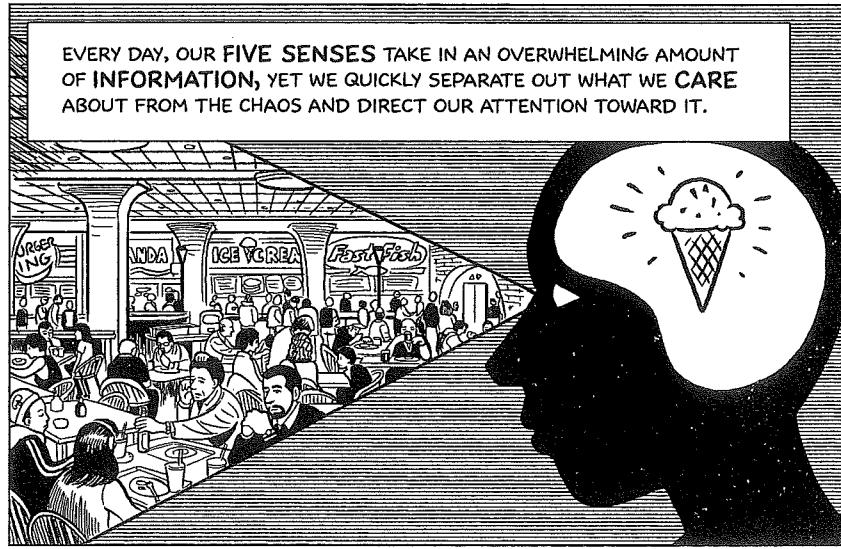
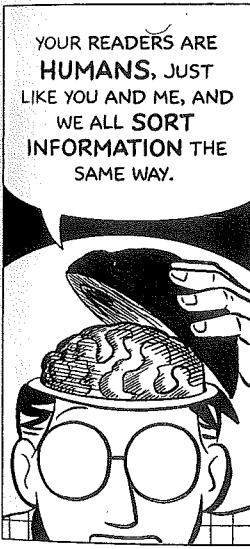
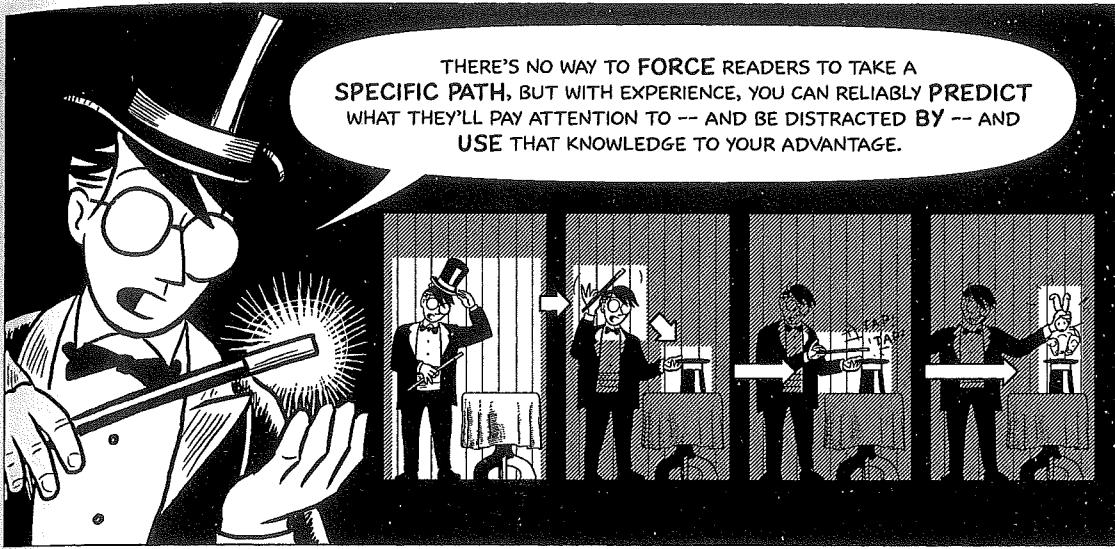


-- WHILE BACKGROUND DETAILS AND REPEATED ELEMENTS JUST FADE FROM VIEW AND ARE IGNORED.

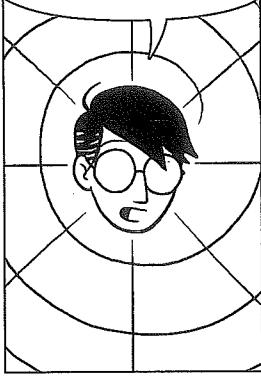


LOOKING AT THE TABLE-CLOTH IN THAT LAST PANEL?

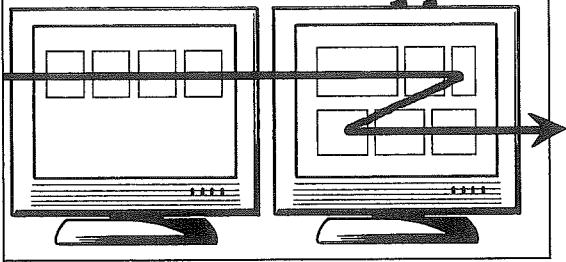




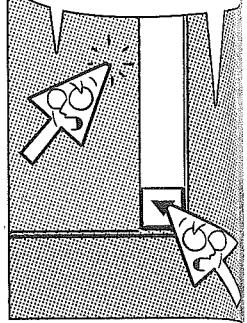
WEBCOMICS HAVE INTRODUCED NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR -- AND POTENTIAL OBSTACLES TO -- FLOW.



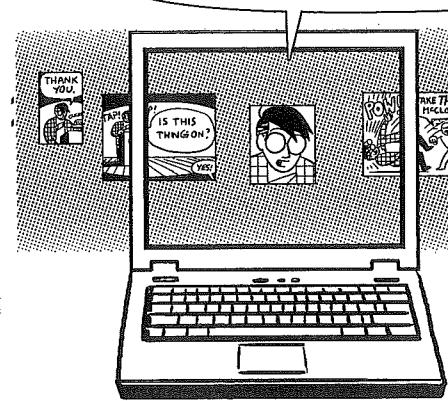
DAILY STRIPS AND SCREEN-FITTING COMICS PAGES FLOW IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS THEIR PAPER AND INK COUSINS, AND READING THEM IS A PRETTY INTUITIVE PROCESS.



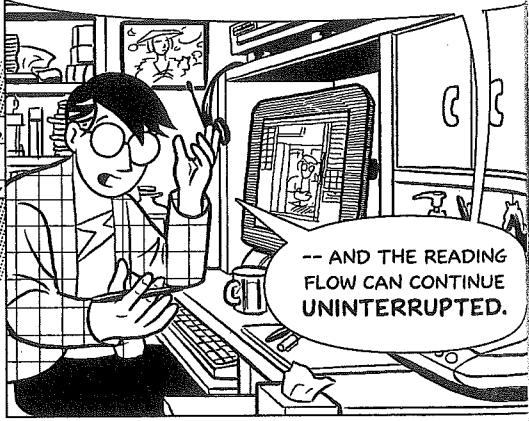
BUT MANY MULTI-PAGE WEBCOMICS YANK READERS OUT OF THE STORY BY CONSTANTLY FORCING THEM TO SCROLL, THEN HUNT, THEN CLICK, THEN SCROLL.



SOME NEW EXPERIMENTAL FORMATS ARE DISTRACTING BY THEIR NATURE, OF COURSE, BUT EVEN THESE CAN ALLOW FOR SMOOTH READING IF ALL THE NAVIGATING IS DONE WITH A SINGLE CONTROL LIKE AN ARROW KEY.



NO MATTER WHAT SHAPE YOUR COMICS TAKE, AS LONG AS NAVIGATING THROUGH THEM IS A SIMPLE, INTUITIVE PROCESS, THAT PROCESS WILL BE TRANSPARENT TO THE READER --

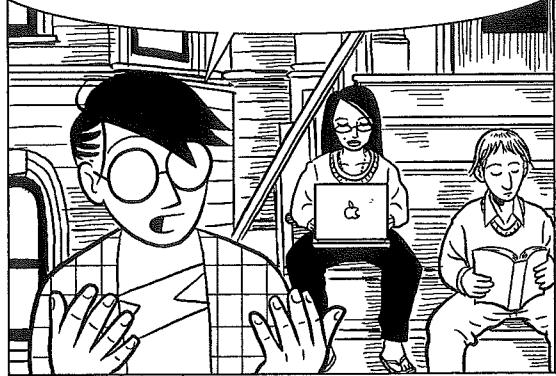


-- AND THE READING FLOW CAN CONTINUE UNINTERRUPTED.

WE'LL GET DOWN TO SOME NUTS AND BOLTS REGARDING THIS TOPIC IN CHAPTER FIVE, AND ITS ONLINE EXTENSION, "CHAPTER FIVE AND A HALF."



FOR NOW, THOUGH, WHETHER YOU WORK IN PRINT, THE WEB OR BOTH: IMPROVING FLOW CAN HELP YOUR AUDIENCE ENTER THE WORLD OF YOUR STORY AND PASS FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER WITHOUT EVER BEING TORN AWAY BY THE WORLD OUTSIDE.



DO THAT, AND YOUR STORYTELLING CAN PUT ITS FULL WEIGHT BEHIND THE "STORY" WITHOUT THE "TELLING" GETTING IN THE WAY.



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TOGETHER THESE FIVE  
KINDS OF CHOICES ARE WHAT  
COMMUNICATING THROUGH  
COMICS REQUIRES --



## CLARITY

-- AND COMMUNICATING  
WITH CLARITY MEANS MAKING  
READER COMPREHENSION YOUR  
ULTIMATE GOAL.



### CHOICE OF MOMENT

#### GOALS:

"CONNECTING THE DOTS," SHOWING  
THE MOMENTS  
THAT MATTER AND  
CUTTING THOSE  
THAT DON'T.

#### TOOLS:

1. MOMENT TO MOMENT
2. ACTION TO ACTION
3. SUBJECT TO SUBJECT
4. SCENE TO SCENE
5. ASPECT TO ASPECT
6. NON SEQUITUR

MINIMIZING PANEL  
COUNT FOR  
EFFICIENCY, OR  
ADDING PANELS  
FOR EMPHASIS.  
CHARACTER OF  
MOMENT, MOOD  
AND IDEA.

### CHOICE OF FRAME

#### GOALS:

SHOWING READERS  
WHAT THEY NEED  
TO SEE. CREATING  
A SENSE OF PLACE,  
POSITION AND  
FOCUS.

#### TOOLS:

- FRAME SIZE AND  
SHAPE.
- CHOICE OF  
"CAMERA" ANGLES,  
DISTANCE, HEIGHT,  
BALANCE AND  
CENTERING.
- THE "ESTABLISHING  
SHOT." REVEALING  
AND WITHHOLDING  
INFORMATION.  
DIRECTING READER  
FOCUS.

### CHOICE OF IMAGE

#### GOALS:

CLEARLY AND  
QUICKLY EVOKING  
THE APPEARANCE  
OF CHARACTERS,  
OBJECTS,  
ENVIRONMENTS  
AND SYMBOLS.

#### TOOLS:

- EVERY ARTISTIC/  
GRAPHIC DEVICE  
EVER INVENTED.
- RESEMBLANCE,  
SPECIFICITY,  
EXPRESSION, BODY  
LANGUAGE AND  
THE NATURAL  
WORLD.
- STYLISTIC AND  
EXPRESSIONISTIC  
DEVICES TO  
AFFECT MOOD AND  
EMOTION.

### CHOICE OF WORD

#### GOALS:

CLEARLY AND  
PERSUASIVELY  
COMMUNICATING  
IDEAS, VOICES  
AND SOUNDS IN  
SEAMLESS  
COMBINATION WITH  
IMAGES.

#### TOOLS:

- EVERY LITERARY  
AND LINGUISTIC  
DEVICE EVER  
INVENTED.
- RANGE, SPECIFICITY,  
THE HUMAN VOICE,  
ABSTRACT  
CONCEPTS, THE  
EVOCATION OF  
OTHER SENSES.
- BALLOONS, SOUND  
EFFECTS AND  
WORD / PICTURE  
INTEGRATION\*

### CHOICE OF FLOW

#### GOALS:

GUIDING READERS  
BETWEEN AND  
WITHIN PANELS,  
AND CREATING A  
TRANSPARENT AND  
INTUITIVE READING  
EXPERIENCE.

#### TOOLS:

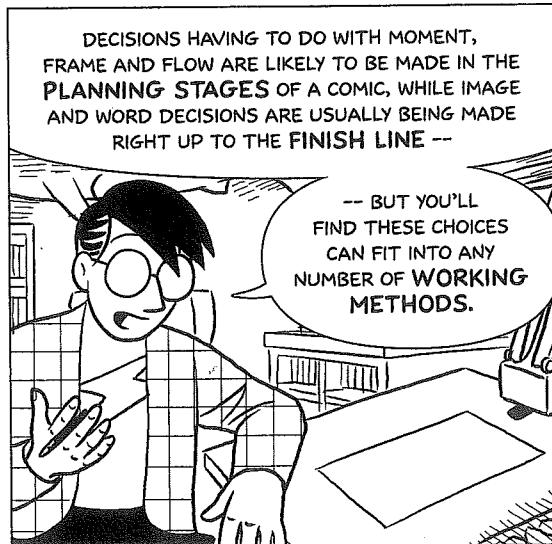
- THE ARRANGE-  
MENT OF PANELS  
ON A PAGE OR  
SCREEN, AND THE  
ARRANGEMENT OF  
ELEMENTS WITHIN  
A PANEL.
- DIRECTING THE EYE  
THROUGH READER  
EXPECTATIONS  
AND CONTENT.
- USING MOMENT,  
FRAME, IMAGE AND  
WORD IN TANDEM.

THESE AREN'T "STEPS" THAT HAVE TO BE  
TAKEN IN SOME PREDETERMINED ORDER.

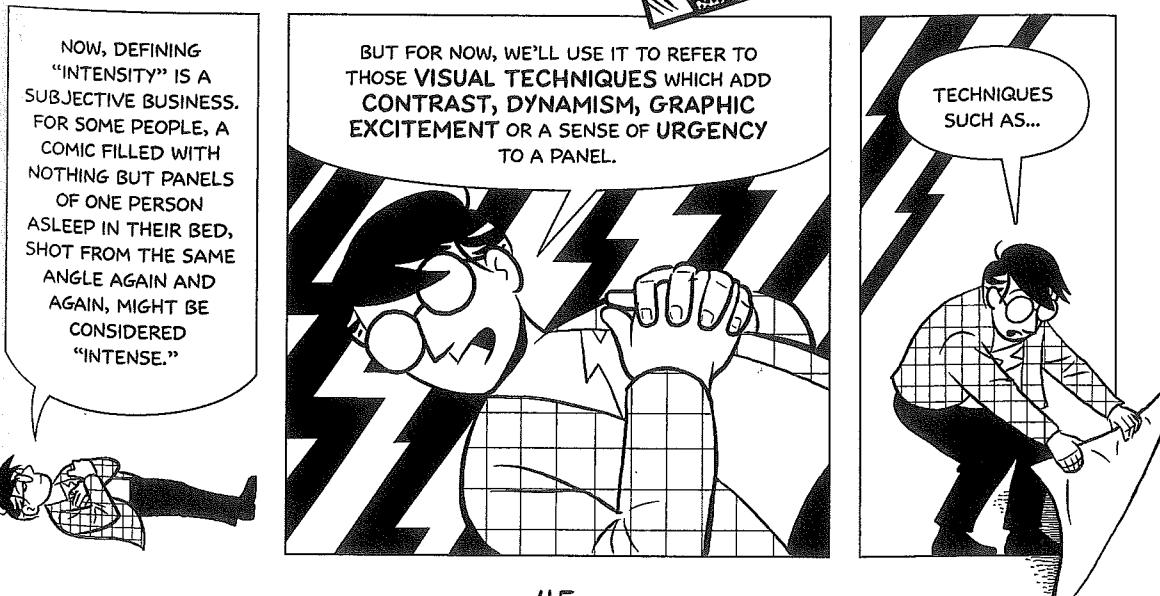
DECISIONS HAVING TO DO WITH MOMENT,  
FRAME AND FLOW ARE LIKELY TO BE MADE IN THE  
PLANNING STAGES OF A COMIC, WHILE IMAGE  
AND WORD DECISIONS ARE USUALLY BEING MADE  
RIGHT UP TO THE FINISH LINE --



MOST COMICS  
ARTISTS JUGGLE  
ALL FIVE AS  
NEEDED.

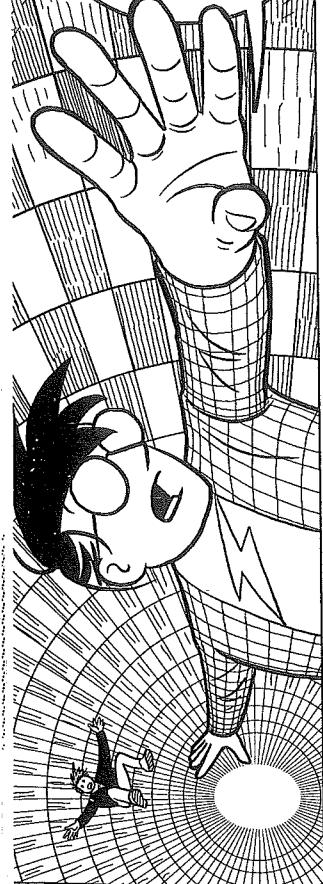


-- BUT YOU'LL  
FIND THESE CHOICES  
CAN FIT INTO ANY  
NUMBER OF WORKING  
METHODS.



### EXTREME DEPTH CUES.

THE SENSE OF GREAT DISTANCES, EXTREME CLOSENESS AND THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THEM.

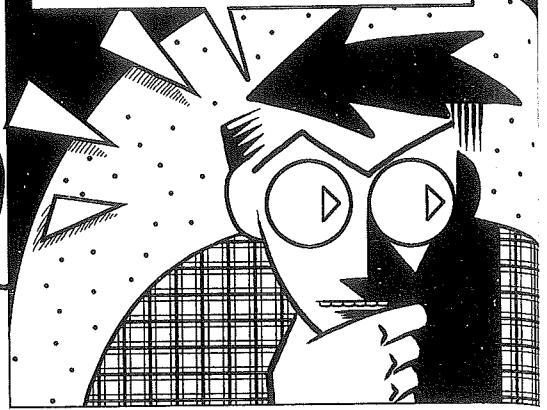


WILD VARIATIONS OF FRAME SIZE AND SHAPE.



### GRAPHIC CONTRAST.

BOLD JUXTAPOSITIONS OF COLOR, SHAPE AND BRIGHTNESS.



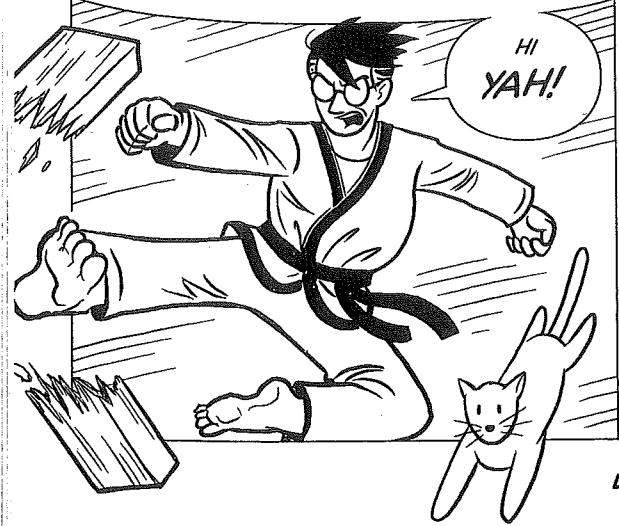
EXAGGERATED POSES AND EXPRESSIONS!!



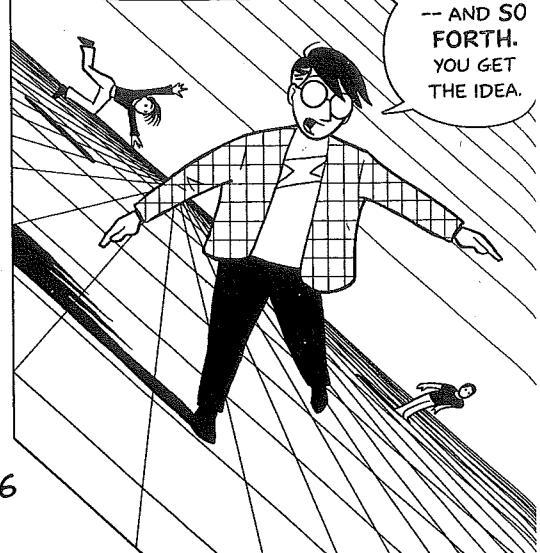
VIRTUOSO  
DRAWING  
TECHNIQUE.



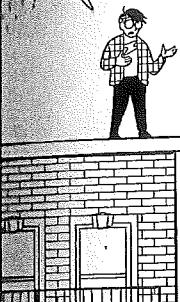
BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL.  
BORDERLESS AND BORDER-BREAKING CHARACTERS AND OBJECTS.



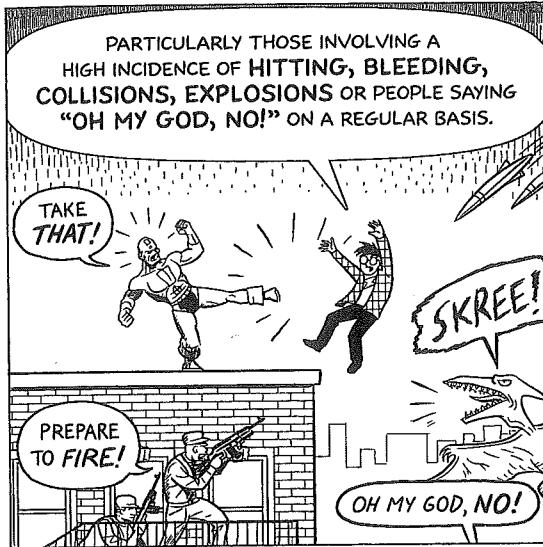
DIAGONALS.  
TILED SUBJECTS, ANGLES --



NOW, THE WAY I'VE ILLUSTRATED THEM HERE, THESE QUALITIES MAY RECALL CERTAIN GENRES OF COMICS.



PARTICULARLY THOSE INVOLVING A HIGH INCIDENCE OF HITTING, BLEEDING, COLLISIONS, EXPLOSIONS OR PEOPLE SAYING "OH MY GOD, NO!" ON A REGULAR BASIS.



BUT WHILE THE "EXAGGERATED POSES AND EXPRESSIONS" --



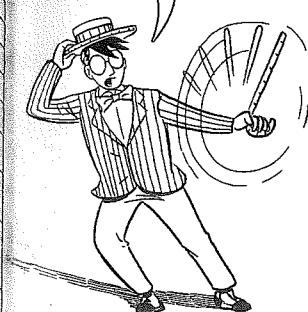
-- OR "VIRTUOSO DRAWING TECHNIQUES" OF OTHER GENRES MIGHT TAKE ON DIFFERENT FLAVORS --



-- THE BASIC EFFECT OF SUCH TECHNIQUES STAYS CONSTANT: ATTRACTING AND/OR EXCITING READERS AS SOON AS THEY PICK A COMIC OFF THE SHELF OR LOAD IT INTO THEIR BROWSER.



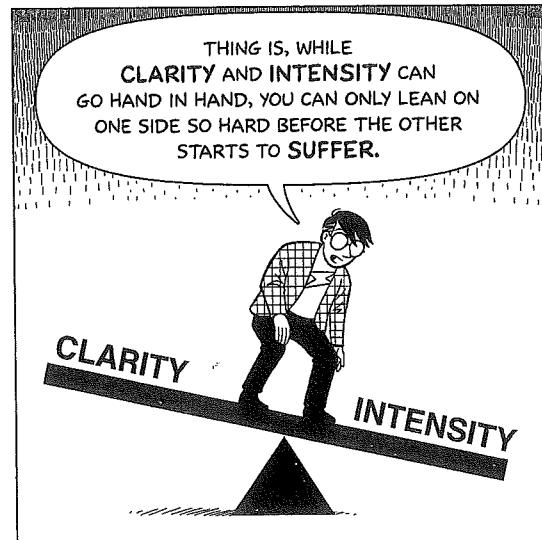
THIS IDEA OF ADDING A LITTLE PIZAZZ TO A STORYTELLER'S STYLE IS A TIME-HONORED TRADITION.



CLARITY WITHOUT ANY PRESENTATIONAL FLAIR WHATSOEVER CAN BE A BITTER PILL FOR SOME TO SWALLOW.

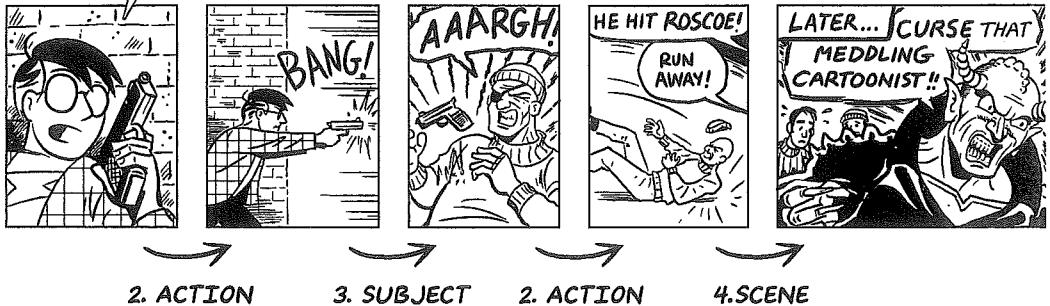


THING IS, WHILE CLARITY AND INTENSITY CAN GO HAND IN HAND, YOU CAN ONLY LEAN ON ONE SIDE SO HARD BEFORE THE OTHER STARTS TO SUFFER.



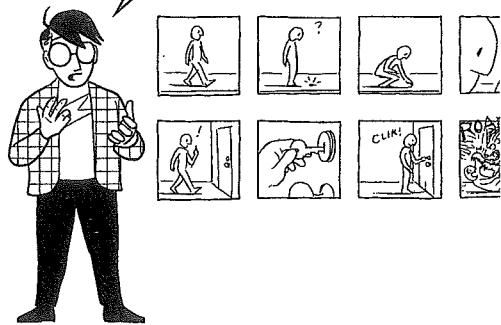
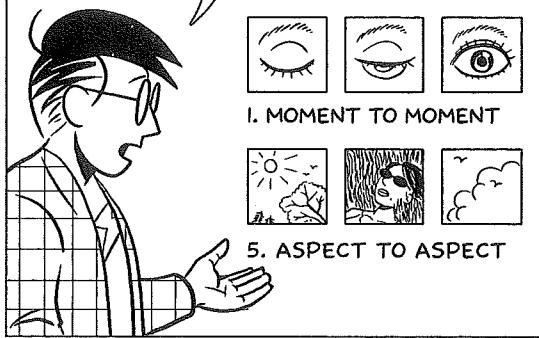
IF YOU HAVE A STORY THAT'S VERY PLOT-DRIVEN, YOU MAY FIND THAT A LOT OF ACTION TO ACTION TRANSITIONS WITH A FEW SUBJECT TO SUBJECTS AND SCENE TO SCENES ARE ALL YOU NEED.

THESE TEND TO CLARIFY THE FACTS OF A SCENE: WHO DOES WHAT, WHERE IT'S DONE, HOW IT'S DONE AND SO FORTH.



TRANSITIONS ONE AND FIVE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HELP CLARIFY THE NATURE OF AN ACTION, IDEA OR MOOD, AND WORK WELL IN MORE NUANCED OR EMOTIONALLY-DRIVEN STORIES.

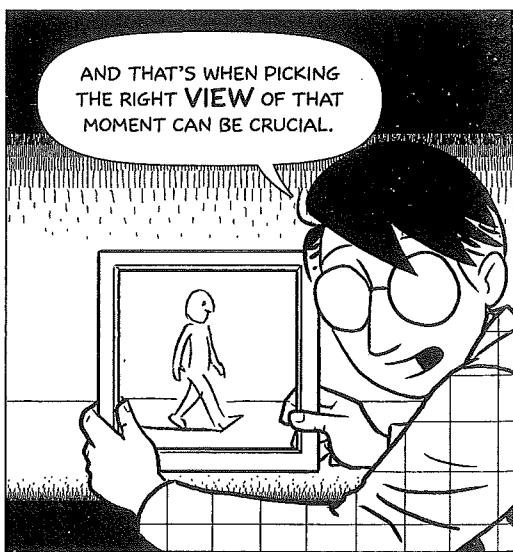
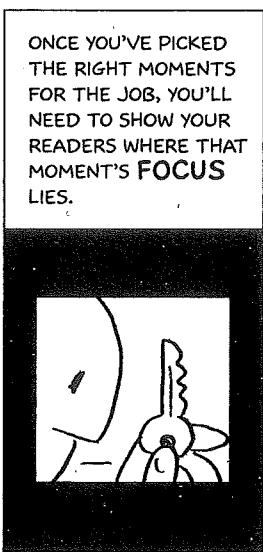
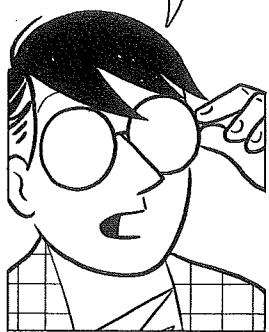
WHATEVER YOUR CHOICE OF MOMENT, THOUGH, CLARITY MEANS LETTING THESE TECHNIQUES OPERATE QUIETLY IN THE BACKGROUND AND LETTING THE CONTENT OF THE WORK SPEAK FOR ITSELF.



OF COURSE, CHOOSING THE RIGHT MOMENT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

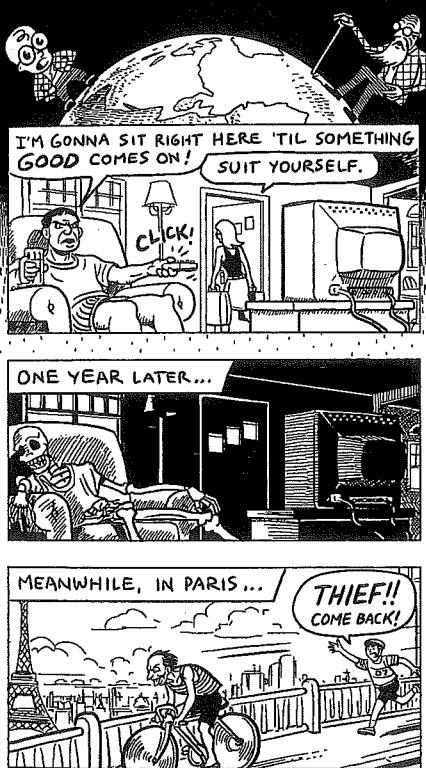
ONCE YOU'VE PICKED THE RIGHT MOMENTS FOR THE JOB, YOU'LL NEED TO SHOW YOUR READERS WHERE THAT MOMENT'S FOCUS LIES.

AND THAT'S WHEN PICKING THE RIGHT VIEW OF THAT MOMENT CAN BE CRUCIAL.



4

**SCENE TO SCENE JUMPS**  
CAN HELP COMPRESS A STORY DOWN  
TO A MANAGEABLE LENGTH, WHILE STILL  
ALLOWING FOR A RANGE OF TIME-SPANS AND  
A BREADTH OF LOCATIONS. LOOK HARD AT  
YOUR STORIES AND YOU MAY FIND YOU  
CAN CUT A LOT OUT.



5

SOMETIMES  
IT MAY SUIT YOUR NARRATIVE TO  
HAVE TIME STAND STILL AND LET  
THE EYE WANDER.

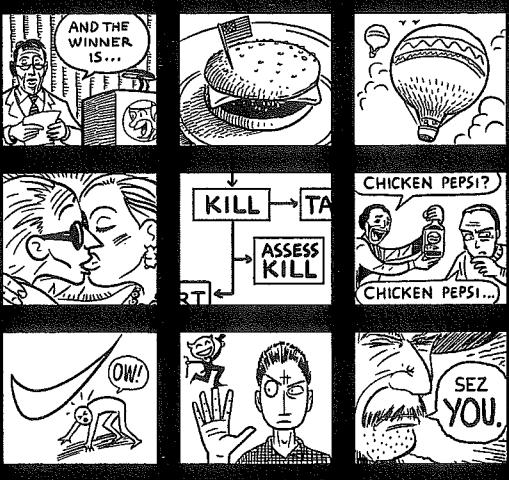
**ASPECT TO ASPECT**  
TRANSITIONS DO JUST THAT, AND  
THEY'VE BEEN USED SUCCESSFULLY IN  
JAPAN -- AND RECENTLY, IN NORTH  
AMERICA -- TO CREATE A STRONG  
SENSE OF PLACE AND MOOD.



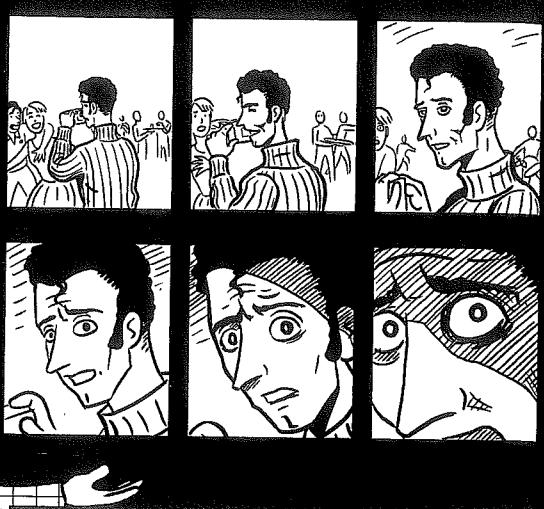
6

AND FINALLY THE NON SEQUITUR,  
WHICH, THOUGH IT MAY NOT DO ANYTHING  
TO ADVANCE A STORY --

-- HAS  
PLAYED A ROLE  
IN EXPERIMENTAL  
COMICS, PROVIDING  
THE OCCASIONAL  
NONSENSE GAG IN  
OTHERWISE  
RATIONAL  
STORIES.

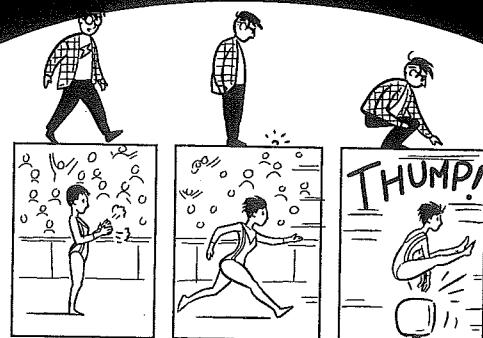


MOMENT TO MOMENT TRANSITIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE USEFUL FOR SLOWING THE ACTION DOWN, INCREASING SUSPENSE, CATCHING SMALL CHANGES AND CREATING MOVIE-LIKE MOTION ON THE PAGE.



2

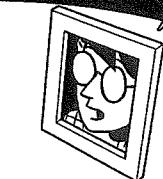
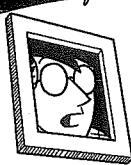
ACTION TO ACTION TYPES ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR EFFICIENCY. THE CARTOONIST ONLY PICKS ONE MOMENT PER ACTION, SO EACH PANEL HELPS FURTHER THE PLOT AND KEEP THE PACE BRISK.



3

SUBJECT TO SUBJECT TRANSITIONS ARE EQUALY EFFICIENT AT MOVING THE STORY FORWARD --

-- WHILE CHANGING ANGLES TO DIRECT READER ATTENTION AS NEEDED.\*



\* ALTHOUGH THEY PRIMARILY RELATE TO CHOICE OF MOMENT, TRANSITIONS THREE AND FIVE ALSO TOUCH ON THE UPCOMING TOPIC CHOICE OF FRAME.