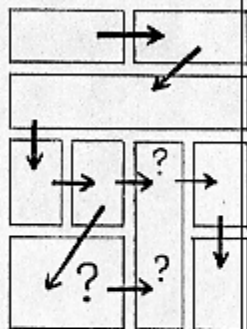




WE ASSUME AS *READERS* THAT WE WILL KNOW WHAT ORDER TO READ PANELS IN, BUT THE BUSINESS OF *ARRANGING* THOSE PANELS IS ACTUALLY QUITE *COMPLEX*.

SO COMPLEX, IN FACT, THAT EVEN *SEASONED PROS* WILL SOMETIMES *BLOW IT*.



AS CLOSURE *BETWEEN* PANELS BECOMES MORE INTENSE, READER INTERPRETATION BECOMES FAR MORE *ELASTIC*.



AND *MANAGING* IT BECOMES MORE COMPLICATED FOR THE *CREATOR*.

SOME ARTISTS CAN BE *DELIBERATELY AMBIGUOUS*, OF COURSE, AND OFFER US NO STRICT INTERPRETATION TO GO ON.



CLOSURE CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE *WITHIN* PANELS AS WELL AS *BETWEEN* THEM, WHEN ARTISTS CHOOSE TO SHOW ONLY A SMALL *PIECE* OF THE PICTURE.



COMICS CAN BE *MADDENINGLY VAGUE* ABOUT WHAT IT SHOWS US.



BY SHOWING LITTLE OR NOTHING OF A GIVEN SCENE--



--AND OFFERING ONLY *CLUES* TO THE READER--



--THE ARTIST CAN TRIGGER ANY NUMBER OF IMAGES IN THE READER'S IMAGINATION.



READERS FACED
WITH PANELS LIKE *THESE*
WILL HAVE *SUBSTANTIALLY*
DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS.

CLAK! CLAK! CLAK!

BY CONSTRUCTING *WHOLE*
IMAGES BASED ON THESE
FRAGMENTS, READERS ARE
PERFORMING CLOSURE,
JUST AS --

WHOOSH!

≡ Splip Splip ≡

?

Ding! Ding!

UH-- JUST AS
READERS COMPLETE
AN ACTION OR
IDEA *BETWEEN--*

OW!

OW!

Ding! Ding!

AHEM! I SAY,
JUST AS READERS
COMPLETE --

-- AN
ACTION OR --
OW! OW!

STOP THAT!

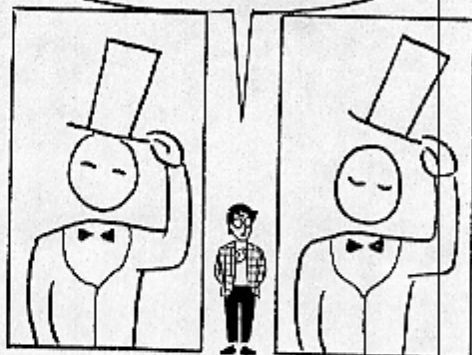
Ding! Ding!

OW!

Ding! Ding!

OW!

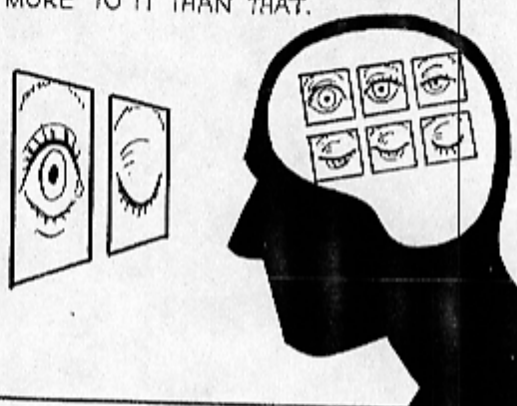
WHATEVER THE MYSTERIES
WITHIN EACH PANEL, IT'S THE
POWER OF CLOSURE *BETWEEN*
PANELS THAT I FIND THE MOST
INTERESTING.



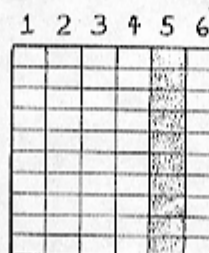
THERE'S SOMETHING
STRANGE AND WONDERFUL
THAT HAPPENS IN THIS
BLANK RIBBON OF
PAPER.



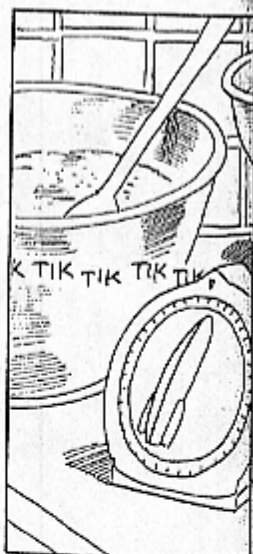
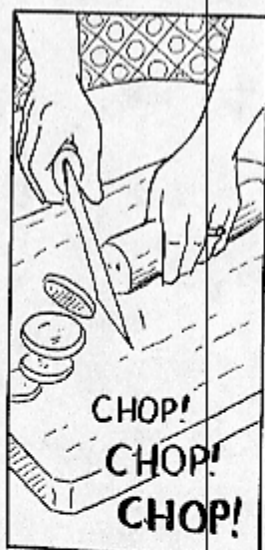
WE ALREADY KNOW THAT COMICS ASKS
THE MIND TO WORK AS A SORT OF
IN-BETWEENER -- FILLING IN THE GAPS
BETWEEN PANELS AS AN *ANIMATOR*
MIGHT-- BUT I BELIEVE THERE'S STILL
MORE TO IT THAN THAT.



LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT
THE *FIFTH* TYPE OF TRANSITION,
THE ONE SO POPULAR
IN JAPAN.



HERE'S
A FOUR-PANEL
ESTABLISHING
SHOT OF AN
OLD-FASHIONED
KITCHEN SCENE.



NOW, MOST OF YOU SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE **PERCEIVING** THAT YOU'RE IN A KITCHEN FROM THOSE FOUR PANELS **ALONE**.



WITH A **HIGH DEGREE OF CLOSURE**, YOUR MIND IS TAKING FOUR **PICTURE FRAGMENTS** AND CONSTRUCTING AN ENTIRE SCENE **OUT OF THOSE FRAGMENTS**.



BUT THE SCENE YOUR MIND CONSTRUCTS FROM THOSE **FOUR PANELS** IS A VERY **DIFFERENT PLACE** FROM THE SCENE CONSTRUCTED FROM OUR TRADITIONAL **ONE-PANEL ESTABLISHING SHOT**.



LOOK AGAIN.

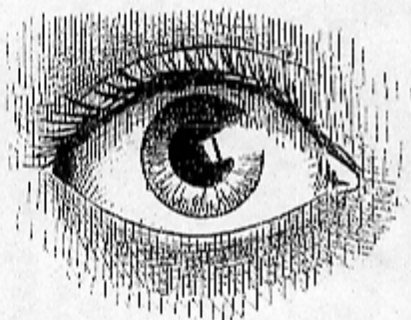
YOU'VE BEEN IN KITCHENS BEFORE, YOU KNOW WHAT A **POT ON THE BOIL** SOUNDS LIKE; DO YOU ONLY HEAR IT IN THAT **FIRST PANEL**?



AND WHAT ABOUT THE **CHOPPING SOUND**? DOES THAT ONLY LAST A **PANEL** OR DOES IT **PERSIST**? CAN YOU **SMELL** THIS KITCHEN? **FEEL** IT? **TASTE** IT?



COMICS IS A **MONO-SENSORY** MEDIUM. IT RELIES ON ONLY **ONE** OF THE SENSES TO CONVEY A **WORLD** OF EXPERIENCE.



BUT WHAT OF THE OTHER **FOUR**?

WE REPRESENT **SOUND** THROUGH DEVICES SUCH AS **WORD BALLOONS**.



WE REPRESENT **SMELL** THROUGH THE **WORDS** CHOSEN TO **DESCRIBE** IT.



BUT ALL IN ALL, IT IS AN **EXCLUSIVELY VISUAL** REPRESENTATION.

WITHIN THESE PANELS, WE CAN ONLY CONVEY INFORMATION **VISUALLY**.



BUT **BETWEEN** PANELS, NONE OF OUR SENSES ARE REQUIRED AT ALL.



WHICH IS WHY **ALL** OF OUR SENSES ARE **ENGAGED**!



SEVERAL TIMES
ON EVERY PAGE
THE READER IS
RELEASED--LIKE A
TRAPEZE ARTIST--
INTO THE OPEN AIR
OF IMAGINATION...



...THEN *CATCHED*
BY THE OUTSTRETCHED
ARMS OF THE *EVER-*
PRESENT NEXT
PANEL!



CAUGHT *QUICKLY*
SO AS NOT TO LET
THE READER *FALL*
INTO *CONFUSION*
OR *BOREDOM*.



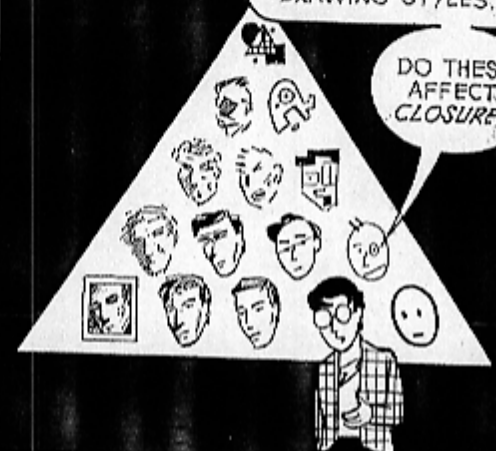
BUT IS IT POSSIBLE
THAT CLOSURE CAN
BE SO MANAGED IN
SOME CASES--



--THAT
THE READER
MIGHT LEARN
TO *FLY?*



IN CHAPTER TWO, WE DISCUSSED
VARIOUS TYPES OF ICONIC AND NON-ICONIC
DRAWING STYLES.



I THINK
THE ANSWER
IS *YES*.



SINCE CARTOONS ALREADY EXIST AS CONCEPTS FOR THE
READER, THEY TEND TO FLOW EASILY THROUGH THE
CONCEPTUAL TERRITORY *BETWEEN* PANELS.



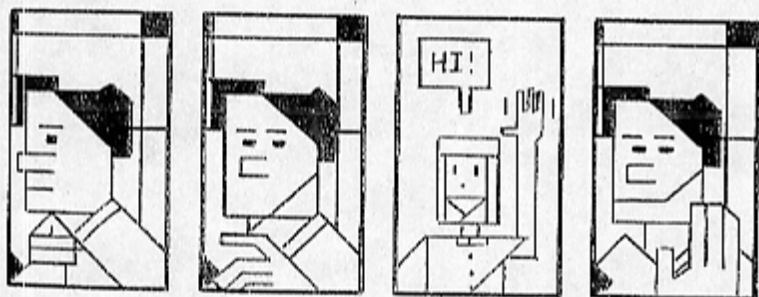
IDEAS FLOWING INTO ONE ANOTHER *SEAMLESSLY*.

BUT *REALISTIC* IMAGES HAVE A BUMPIER RIDE. THEIRS IS A PRIMARILY *VISUAL* EXISTENCE WHICH DOESN'T PASS EASILY INTO THE REALM OF IDEAS.



AND SO, WHAT SEEMED LIKE A CONTINUOUS SERIES OF MOMENTS IN THE LAST EXAMPLE, HERE LOOKS A LITTLE MORE LIKE A SERIES OF *STILL PICTURES*...

SIMILARLY, I THINK WHEN COMICS ART VEERS CLOSER TO CONCERNS OF THE *PICTURE PLANE*, CLOSURE CAN BE MORE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, THOUGH FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.



NOW IT'S THE *UNIFYING PROPERTIES* OF *DESIGN* THAT MAKE US MORE AWARE OF THE PAGE AS A *WHOLE*, RATHER THAN ITS INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS, THE *PANELS*.

...TO *ME* ANYWAY. THESE THINGS ARE ALL *SUBJECTIVE*!



A GOOD RULE OF THUMB IS THAT IF READERS ARE PARTICULARLY *AWARE* OF THE ART IN A GIVEN STORY--

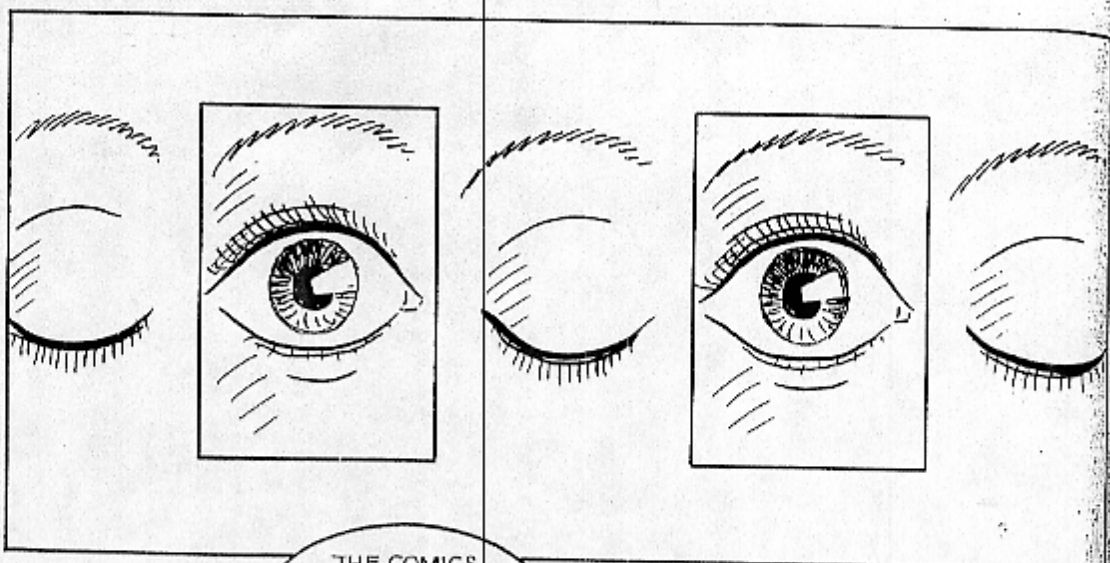


--THEN CLOSURE IS PROBABLY NOT HAPPENING WITHOUT SOME *EFFORT*.



OF COURSE, MAKING THE READER *WORK* A LITTLE MAY BE JUST WHAT THE ARTIST IS *TRYING* TO DO. ONCE AGAIN, IT'S ALL A MATTER OF *PERSONAL TASTE*.





THE COMICS
CREATOR ASKS US
TO JOIN IN A SILENT
DANCE OF THE
SEEN AND THE
LINSEEN.

THE
VISIBLE
AND THE
INVISIBLE.



THIS DANCE IS *UNIQUE*
TO COMICS. NO OTHER ARTFORM
GIVES SO MUCH TO ITS AUDIENCE
WHILE ASKING SO MUCH
FROM THEM AS WELL.



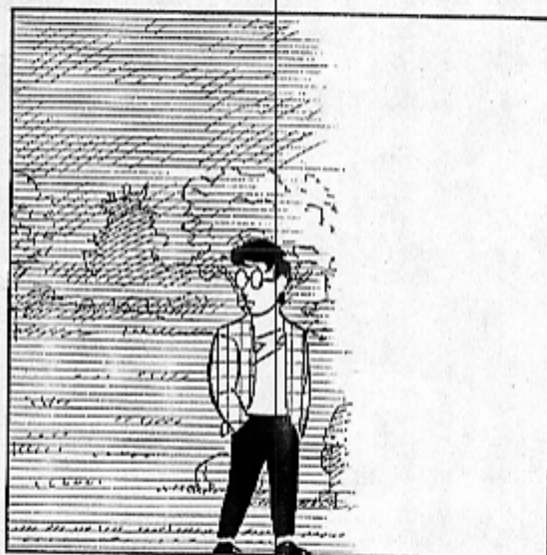
THIS IS WHY I THINK IT'S
A MISTAKE TO SEE COMICS AS
A MERE *HYBRID* OF THE
GRAPHIC ARTS AND PROSE
FICTION.

WHAT
HAPPENS
BETWEEN THESE
PANELS IS A
KIND OF MAGIC
ONLY COMICS
CAN CREATE.

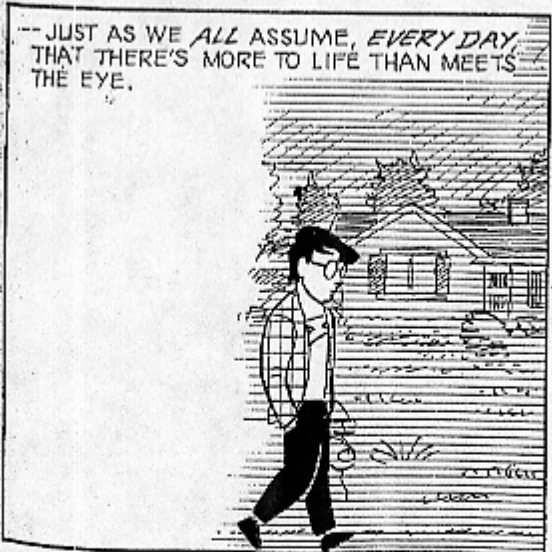




ALL I CAN DO IS MAKE *ASSUMPTIONS* ABOUT YOU AND HOPE THAT THEY'RE *CORRECT*--



-- JUST AS WE *ALL* ASSUME, *EVERY DAY* THAT THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN MEETS THE EYE.



ALL I ASK OF YOU IS A LITTLE *FAITH*--

-- AND A *WORLD* OF *IMAGINATION*.

