

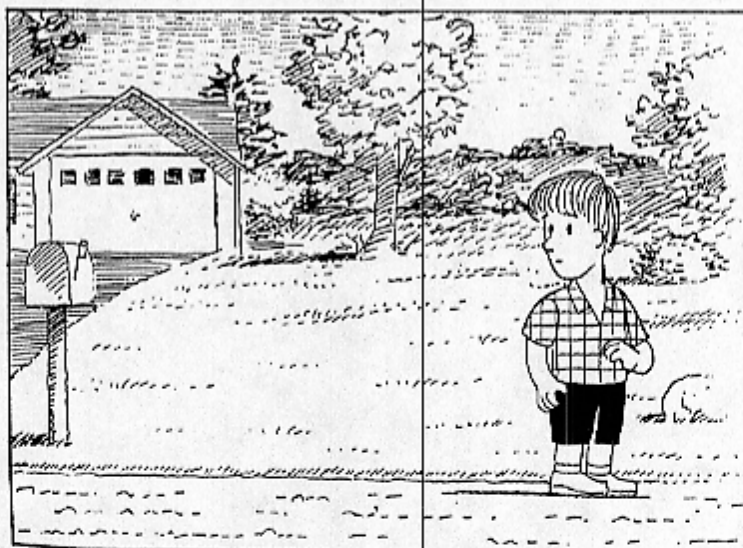
## CHAPTER THREE

### BLOOD IN THE GUTTER.

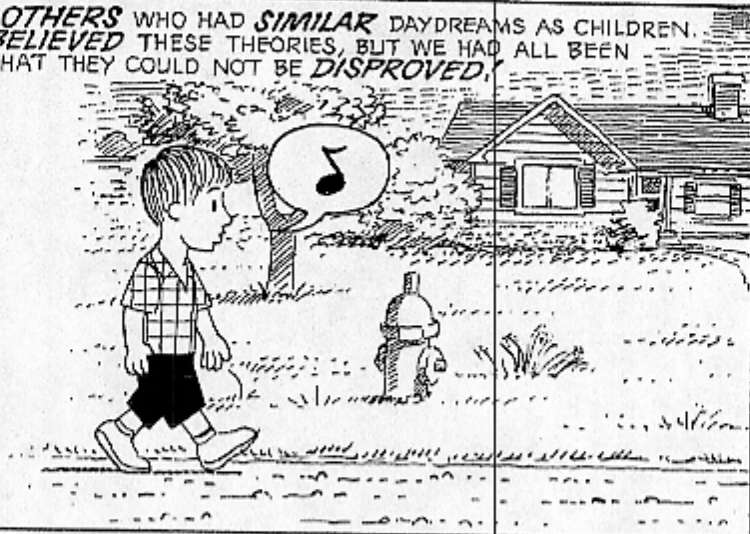
WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG, I HAD A RECURRENT *DAYDREAM* THAT THE *WHOLE WORLD* WAS JUST A *SHOW* PUT ON FOR MY *BENEFIT*, THAT UNLESS I WAS PRESENT TO *SEE* THINGS, THEY JUST--



--CEASED TO EXIST.



LATER IN LIFE, I FOUND OTHERS WHO HAD SIMILAR DAYDREAMS AS CHILDREN. NONE OF US EVER REALLY BELIEVED THESE THEORIES, BUT WE HAD ALL BEEN FASCINATED BY THE FACT THAT THEY COULD NOT BE DISPROVED.



EVEN TODAY, AS I WRITE AND DRAW THIS PANEL, I HAVE NO GUARANTEE THAT ANYTHING EXISTS OUTSIDE OF WHAT MY FIVE SENSES REPORT TO ME.\*



I'VE NEVER BEEN TO MOROCCO, BUT I TAKE IT ON FAITH THAT THERE IS A MOROCCO.



I'VE NEVER SEEN THE EARTH FROM SPACE FIRSTHAND, YET I TRUST THAT THE EARTH IS ROUND.



I'VE NEVER BEEN IN THE HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET, YET I ASSUME IT HAS AN INTERIOR, THAT IT ISN'T JUST SOME BIG MOVIE SET!



IN THIS PANEL YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE MY LEGS, YET YOU ASSUME THAT THEY'RE THERE.



EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE NOT!



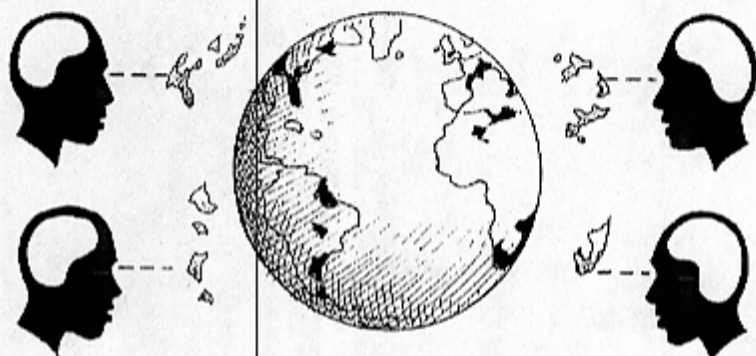
\* NOT TO SAY OUR SENSES ARE ANY KIND OF GUARANTEE!

ALL OF US PERCEIVE THE  
WORLD AS A *WHOLE* THROUGH  
THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR  
*SENSES*.



YET OUR SENSES CAN  
ONLY REVEAL A WORLD  
THAT IS *FRAGMENTED*  
AND *INCOMPLETE*.

EVEN THE MOST *WIDELY*  
*TRAVELLED* MIND CAN ONLY  
SEE SO MUCH OF THE WORLD  
IN THE COURSE OF A LIFE.



OUR PERCEPTION OF  
"REALITY" IS AN ACT OF  
*FAITH*, BASED ON MERE  
*FRAGMENTS*.

AS *INFANTS*, WE'RE *UNABLE*  
TO COMMIT THAT ACT OF FAITH.  
IF WE CAN'T *SEE* IT, *HEAR* IT,  
*SMELL* IT, *TASTE* IT OR *TOUCH* IT,  
IT ISN'T *THERE*!



Peek-A-Boo!



Peek-A-Boo!



THE GAME "*PEEK-A-BOO*" PLAYS  
ON THIS IDEA. GRADUALLY, WE ALL  
LEARN THAT EVEN THOUGH THE *SIGHT*  
OF MOMMY COMES AND GOES,  
MOMMY *REMAINS*.



THIS PHENOMENON OF  
*OBSERVING THE PARTS BUT  
PERCEIVING THE WHOLE*  
HAS A NAME.

IT'S  
CALLED  
**CLOSURE.**



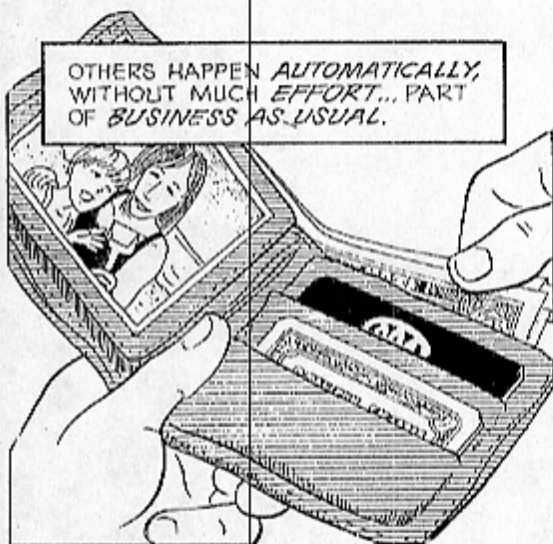
IN OUR DAILY LIVES, WE OFTEN  
COMMIT CLOSURE, MENTALLY  
COMPLETING THAT WHICH IS  
INCOMPLETE BASED ON PAST  
EXPERIENCE.



SOME FORMS OF CLOSURE ARE  
*DELIBERATE INVENTIONS OF  
STORYTELLERS TO PRODUCE  
SUSPENSE OR TO CHALLENGE  
AUDIENCES.*



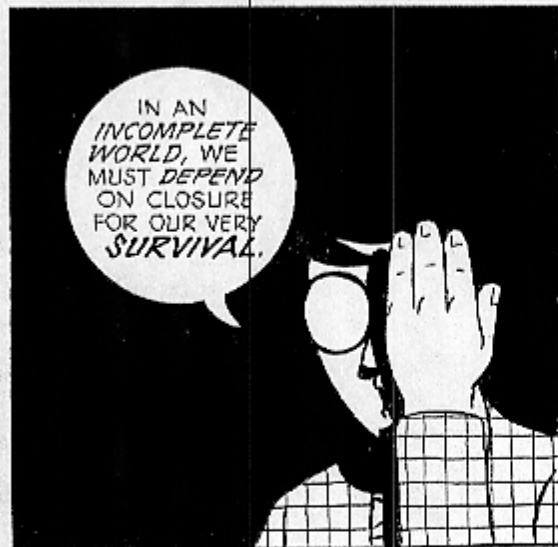
OTHERS HAPPEN *AUTOMATICALLY,*  
WITHOUT MUCH *EFFORT...* PART  
OF *BUSINESS AS USUAL.*



IN *RECOGNIZING AND RELATING  
TO OTHER PEOPLE,* WE ALL  
DEPEND *HEAVILY* ON OUR LEARNED  
ABILITY OF CLOSURE.



IN AN  
INCOMPLETE  
WORLD, WE  
MUST *DEPEND*  
ON CLOSURE  
FOR OUR VERY  
**SURVIVAL.**



CLOSURE CAN TAKE  
MANY FORMS. SOME  
SIMPLE, SOME COMPLEX.



CLOSURE  
CLOSURE  
CL S RE

CLOSURE

SOMETIMES, A MERE *SHAPE* OR  
*OUTLINE* IS ENOUGH TO  
TRIGGER CLOSURE.



THE MENTAL PROCESS DESCRIBED  
IN *CHAPTER TWO* WHEREBY  
THESE LINES BECOME A *FACE*  
COULD BE CONSIDERED CLOSURE.



EVERY TIME WE SEE  
A *PHOTOGRAPH*  
REPRODUCED IN A  
*NEWSPAPER* OR  
*MAGAZINE*, WE  
COMMIT CLOSURE.



OUR EYES TAKE IN  
THE *FRAGMENTED*,  
*BLACK-AND-WHITE*  
*IMAGE* OF THE  
"*HALF-TONE*"  
PATTERNS--



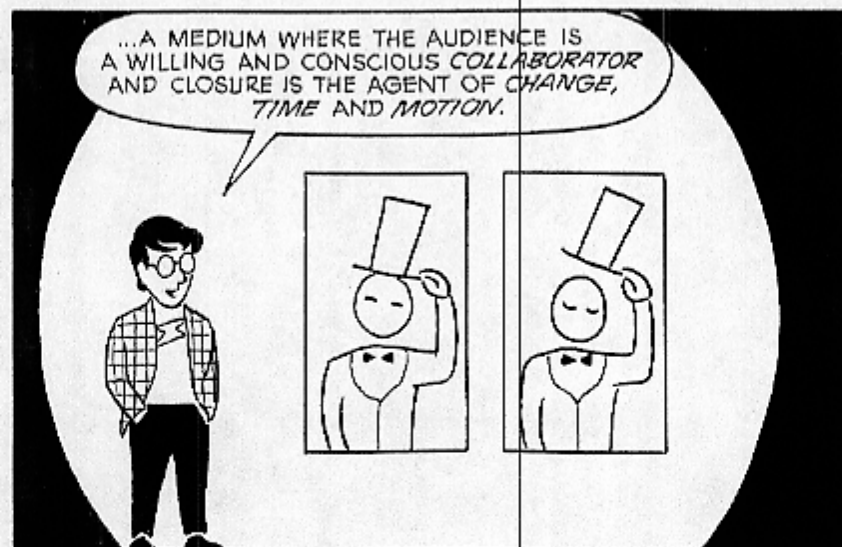
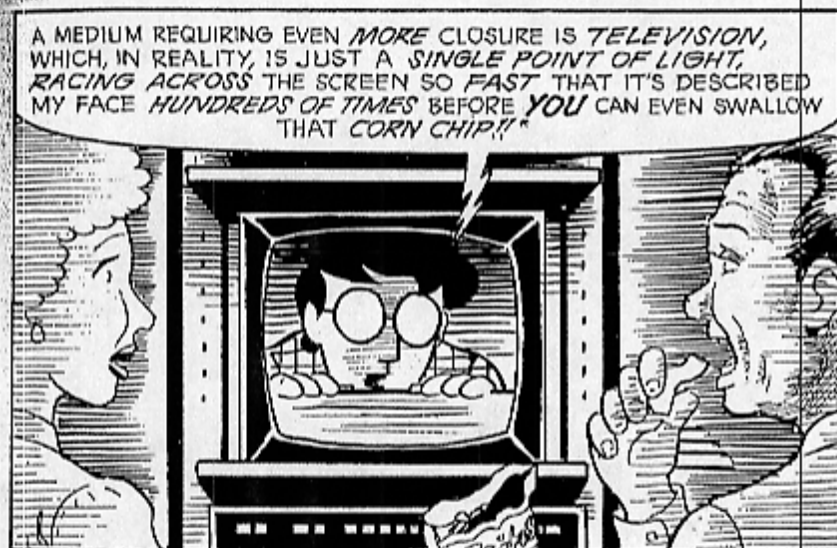
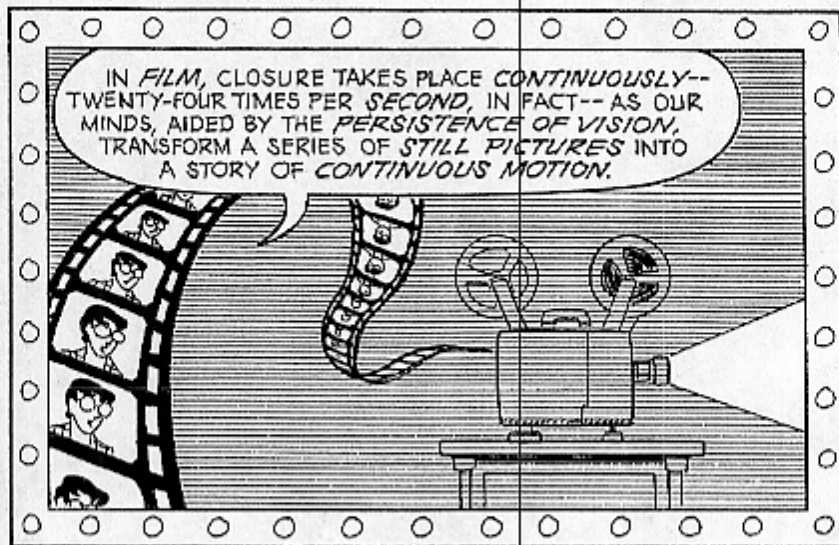
--AND  
OUR MINDS  
TRANSFORM IT  
INTO THE  
"*REALITY*"--

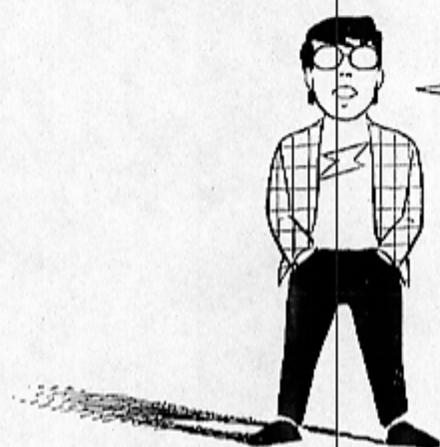


--OF THE  
*PHOTOGRAPH!*









SEE  
THAT SPACE  
*BETWEEN* THE  
PANELS? THAT'S  
WHAT COMICS  
AFICIONADOS HAVE  
NAMED "THE  
GUTTER!"

AND DESPITE  
ITS *UNCEREMONIOUS*  
TITLE, THE GUTTER PLAYS  
HOST TO MUCH OF THE *MAGIC*  
AND *MYSTERY* THAT ARE  
AT THE VERY *HEART*  
OF COMICS!



HERE IN  
THE *LIMBO* OF THE  
GUTTER, *HUMAN*  
*IMAGINATION*  
TAKES TWO SEPARATE  
IMAGES AND *TRANS-*  
*FORMS* THEM INTO  
A SINGLE  
IDEA.





NOTHING  
IS *SEEN* BETWEEN  
THE TWO PANELS,  
BUT *EXPERIENCE*  
TELLS YOU SOMETHING  
*MUST* BE THERE!



Peek-A-Boo!



Peek-A-Boo!



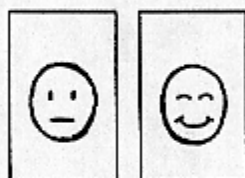
COMICS PANELS *FRACTURE* BOTH *TIME* AND *SPACE*, OFFERING A *JAGGED*,  
*STACCATO RHYTHM* OF *UNCONNECTED MOMENTS*.



BUT CLOSURE ALLOWS US TO *CONNECT* THESE MOMENTS  
AND *MENTALLY CONSTRUCT* A *CONTINUOUS, UNIFIED REALITY*.

IF *VISUAL*  
*ICONOGRAPHY* IS  
THE *VOCABULARY* OF  
COMICS, *CLOSURE* IS  
ITS *GRAMMAR*.

AND SINCE OUR  
*DEFINITION* OF  
COMICS HINGES ON  
THE *ARRANGEMENT*  
OF ELEMENTS--

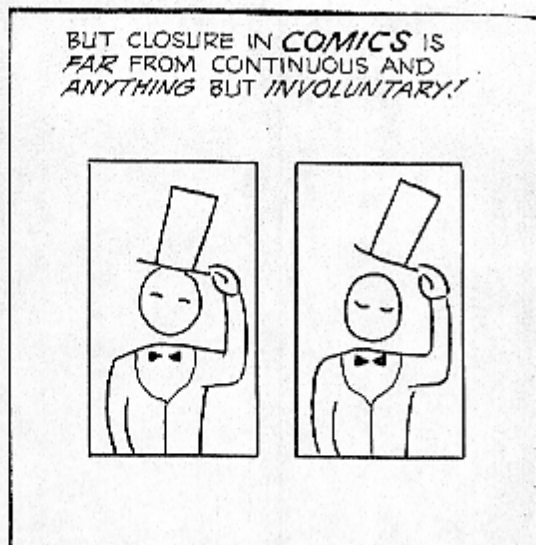
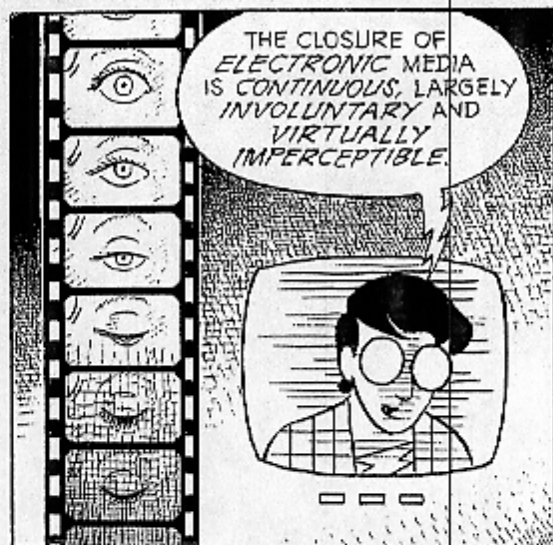


CLOSURE

--THEN, IN A  
VERY REAL SENSE,  
*COMICS IS*  
*CLOSURE!*







I MAY HAVE DRAWN AN AXE BEING RAISED IN THIS EXAMPLE, BUT I'M NOT THE ONE WHO LET IT DROP OR DECIDED HOW HARD THE BLOW, OR WHO SCREAMED, OR WHY.



THAT, DEAR READER, WAS YOUR SPECIAL CRIME, EACH OF YOU COMMITTING IT IN YOUR OWN STYLE.



TO KILL A MAN  
BETWEEN PANELS  
IS TO CONDEMN  
HIM TO A  
THOUSAND  
DEATHS.



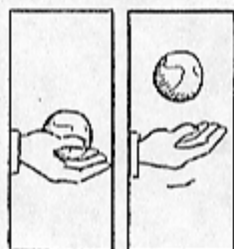
**PARTICIPATION**  
IS A POWERFUL FORCE  
IN ANY MEDIUM.  
FILMMAKERS LONG AGO  
REALIZED THE IMPORTANCE  
OF ALLOWING VIEWERS  
TO USE THEIR  
IMAGINATIONS.



BUT WHILE **FILM** MAKES  
USE OF AUDIENCES' IMAGINATIONS  
FOR OCCASIONAL EFFECTS,  
**COMICS** MUST USE IT  
FAR MORE OFTEN.



FROM THE **TOSSING** OF A **BASEBALL**  
TO THE **DEATH** OF A **PLANET**, THE  
READER'S **DELIBERATE, VOLUNTARY**  
**CLOSURE** IS COMICS' **PRIMARY** MEANS  
OF SIMULATING **TIME** AND **MOTION**.



**CLOSURE**  
IN COMICS FOSTERS  
AN INTIMACY SURPASSED  
ONLY BY THE **WRITTEN**  
**WORD**, A **SILENT, SECRET**  
**CONTRACT** BETWEEN  
**CREATOR** AND  
**AUDIENCE**.

HOW THE CREATOR  
**HONORS** THAT CONTRACT  
IS A MATTER OF BOTH  
**ART** AND **CRAFT**.



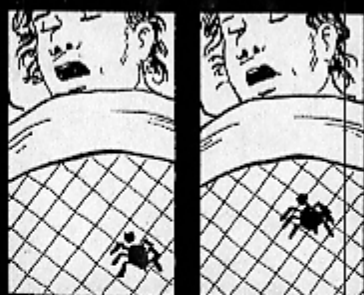
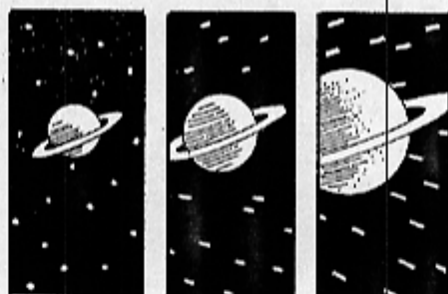
LET'S  
TAKE A LOOK  
AT THE  
**CRAFT**.



MOST  
PANEL-TO-PANEL  
TRANSITIONS IN COMICS  
CAN BE PLACED IN ONE  
OF SEVERAL DISTINCT  
CATEGORIES. THE FIRST  
CATEGORY-- WHICH WE'LL  
CALL **MOMENT-TO-  
MOMENT**--REQUIRES  
VERY LITTLE  
CLOSURE.



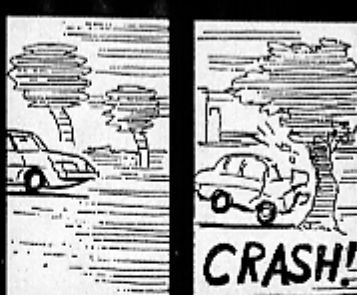
1.



NEXT  
ARE THOSE  
TRANSITIONS  
FEATURING A SINGLE  
SUBJECT IN DISTINCT  
**ACTION-TO-ACTION**  
PROGRESSIONS.



2.





tech. willy

THE NEXT TYPE TAKES US FROM **SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT** WHILE STAYING WITHIN A SCENE OR IDEA. NOTE THE DEGREE OF **READER INVOLVEMENT** NECESSARY TO RENDER THESE TRANSITIONS **MEANINGFUL**.



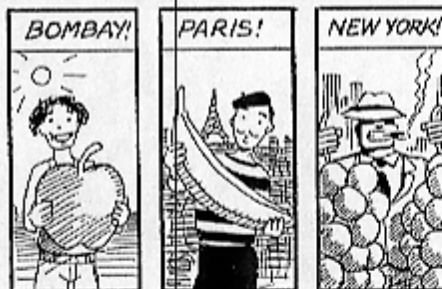
3.



**DEDUCTIVE REASONING** IS OFTEN REQUIRED IN READING COMICS SUCH AS IN THESE **SCENE-TO-SCENE** TRANSITIONS, WHICH TRANSPORT US ACROSS **SIGNIFICANT DISTANCES OF TIME AND SPACE**.



4.



A FIFTH  
TYPE OF TRANSITION,  
WHICH WE'LL CALL  
**ASPECT-TO-ASPECT**,  
BYPASSES TIME FOR THE  
MOST PART AND SETS A  
WANDERING EYE ON  
DIFFERENT ASPECTS  
OF A PLACE, IDEA  
OR MOOD.



5.



AND  
FINALLY, THERE'S  
THE **NON-SEQUITUR**,  
WHICH OFFERS NO  
LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN PANELS  
WHATSOEVER!



6.





THIS LAST CATEGORY SUGGESTS AN INTERESTING QUESTION. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ANY SEQUENCE OF PANELS TO BE TOTALLY UNRELATED TO EACH OTHER?



PERSONALLY, I DON'T THINK SO.

NO MATTER HOW DISSIMILAR ONE IMAGE MAY BE TO ANOTHER, THERE IS A KIND OF--



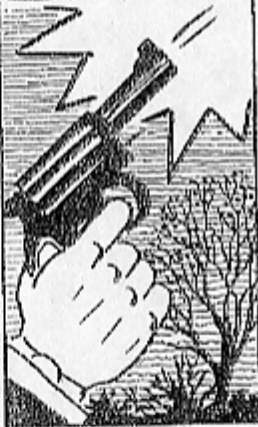
--ALCHEMY AT WORK IN THE SPACE BETWEEN PANELS WHICH CAN HELP US FIND MEANING OR RESONANCE IN EVEN THE MOST JARRING OF COMBINATIONS.



SUCH TRANSITIONS MAY NOT MAKE "SENSE" IN ANY TRADITIONAL WAY, BUT STILL A RELATIONSHIP OF SOME SORT WILL INEVITABLY DEVELOP.



**BANG!**



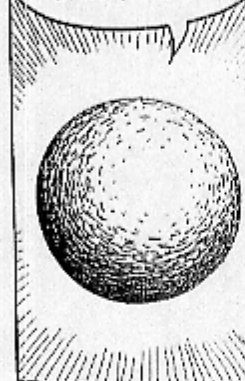
BY CREATING A SEQUENCE WITH TWO OR MORE IMAGES, WE ARE ENDOWING THEM WITH A SINGLE--



--OVERRIDING IDENTITY, AND FORCING THE VIEWER TO CONSIDER THEM AS A WHOLE.



HOWEVER DIFFERENT THEY HAD BEEN, THEY NOW BELONG TO A SINGLE ORGANISM.



CLOSURE FOR BLOOD, GUTTERS FOR VEINS...

