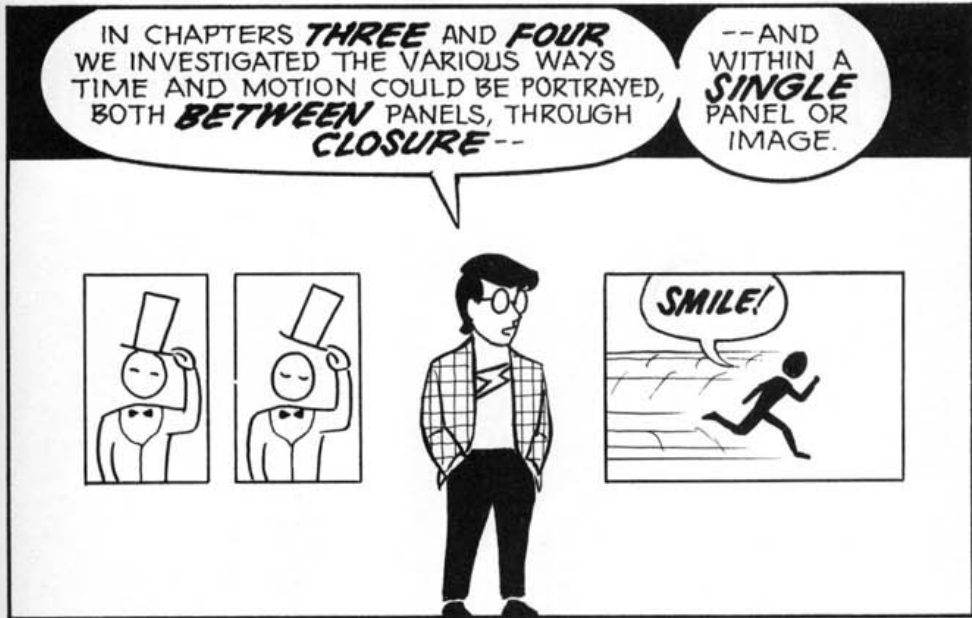




THE IDEA THAT A PICTURE CAN EVOKE AN *EMOTIONAL* OR *SENSUAL* RESPONSE IN THE VIEWER IS VITAL TO THE ART OF COMICS.

SOME IMAGES INSPIRED BY THE PAINTINGS OF ADAM PHILIPS.



IN CHAPTERS *THREE* AND *FOUR* WE INVESTIGATED THE VARIOUS WAYS TIME AND MOTION COULD BE PORTRAYED, BOTH *BETWEEN* PANELS, THROUGH *CLOSURE*--

--AND WITHIN A *SINGLE* PANEL OR IMAGE.



THE INVISIBLE WORLD OF SENSES AND EMOTIONS CAN *ALSO* BE PORTRAYED EITHER *BETWEEN* OR *WITHIN* PANELS.



WE'VE TOUCHED UPON THE *FORMER* CATEGORY IN *CHAPTER THREE*, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *LATTER*?



HOW CAN A *SINGLE IMAGE* REPRESENT THE *SENSES* AND *EMOTIONS* AND HOW DOES THIS IDEA APPLY TO *COMICS*?



ONCE AGAIN WE CAN TURN TO THE WORLD OF "*FINE ARTS*" FOR SOME IDEAS.



IN THE *LATE NINETEENTH* AND *EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES*, SOMETHING KIND OF **SCARY** WAS GOING ON...



NO SOONER HAD THE *IMPRESSIONISTS* FINALLY CONVINCED THEIR PEERS THAT THE WORLD *THEY* SAW WAS THE WORLD AS IT IS *TRULY* SEEN--

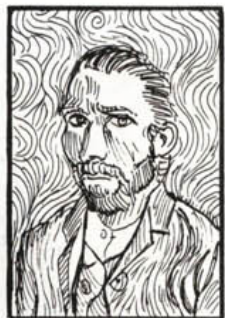


--THAN ANOTHER **UNSEEN** WORLD BEGAN TO MAKE ITSELF **VISIBLE**.



THE SCREAM - 1895 LITHOGRAPH BY EDVARD MUNCH.

IN THE WORKS OF **EDVARD MUNCH** AND **VINCENT VAN GOGH**, THE OBJECTIVE STUDY OF LIGHT SO PRIZED BY THE *IMPRESSIONIST MAINSTREAM* WAS BEING *ABANDONED* IN FAVOR OF A NEW, FRIGHTENINGLY **SUBJECTIVE** APPROACH



**EXPRESSIONISM**, AS IT CAME TO BE CALLED, DIDN'T START AS A *SCIENTIFIC* ART, BUT RATHER AS AN HONEST *EXPRESSION* OF THE INTERNAL TURMOIL THESE ARTISTS JUST COULD NOT *REPRESS*.



THE *SCIENCE* OF IT WASN'T FAR *BEHIND* THOUGH!



AS THE *NEW CENTURY* GOT UNDER WAY, *COOLER HEADS* SUCH AS *WASSILY KANDINSKY* TOOK *GREAT INTEREST* IN THE POWER OF *LINE, SHAPE* AND *COLOR* TO SUGGEST THE INNER STATE OF THE ARTIST **AND** TO PROVOKE THE *FIVE SENSES*.

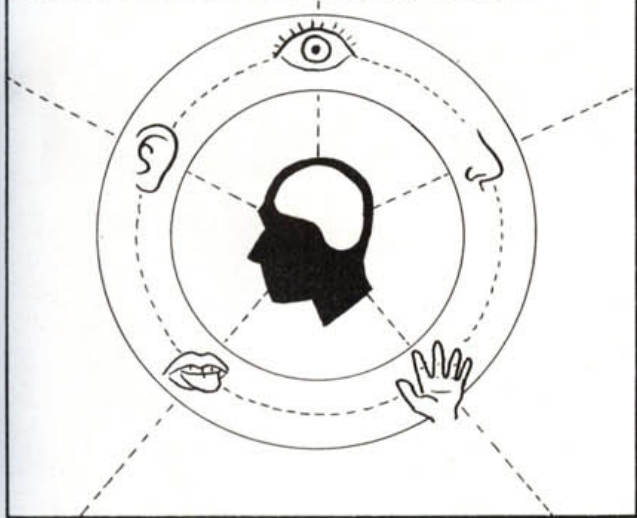


ANGRY REDS...  
PLACID BLUES...  
ANXIOUS TEXTURES...  
LOUD SHAPES...  
QUIET LINES...  
COLD GREENS...

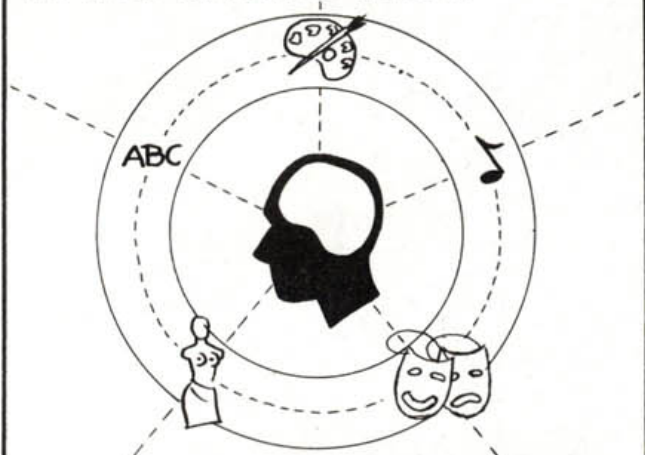
THESE WERE  
STRANGE IDEAS  
IN 1912!



KANDINSKY AND HIS PEERS WERE SEARCHING FOR AN ART THAT MIGHT SOMEHOW **UNITE THE SENSES**--



-- AND IN *DOING SO*, UNITE THE DIFFERENT ARTFORMS WHICH *APPEALED* TO THOSE DIFFERENT SENSES.



WE CALL THIS IDEA **SYNAESTHETICS**.

NOT *SURPRISING*, THEN, THAT SIMILAR IDEAS WERE EXPRESSED BY CREATORS IN *OTHER FIELDS* SUCH AS *RICHARD WAGNER* AND THE FRENCH POET *BAUDELAIRE*.



"Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it *makes* visible."

--PAUL KLEE  
PAINTER,  
TEACHER,  
CARTOONIST.



ART HISTORIANS HAVE GENERALLY HELD THAT WHILE *PAINTERS, MUSICIANS* AND *POETS* HAVE GRAPPLED WITH SUCH IDEAS, PRACTITIONERS OF THE "LOW" ART OF *COMICS* HAVE REMAINED *BLISSFULLY IGNORANT* OF THEM.

BUT HAVE THEY?

IN SURVEYING A *CENTURY* OF COMICS, ONE FINDS CREATORS LIKE THE UNDERGROUND'S *RORY HAYES*, WHO ARE *BLATANTLY EXPRESSIONISTIC*, BUT SUCH ARTISTS ARE *FEW AND FAR BETWEEN*.



MOST HAVE WORKED IN A FAIRLY *STRAIGHTFORWARD STYLE*. *ICONIC*, MAYBE, BUT NOT FILLED WITH THE EXPRESSIVE LINES OF A *MUNCH* OR THE COLORS OF A *VAN GOGH*.

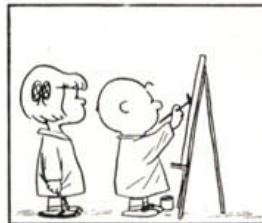


CAN WE SAY, THEREFORE, THAT ONE OF THESE TWO CREATORS IS EXPRESSING MOOD AND EMOTION AND THE OTHER IS *NOT*? OR DOES THE DIFFERENCE LIE IN *WHAT* IS BEING EXPRESSED?



PEANUTS

CHARLES SCHULZ



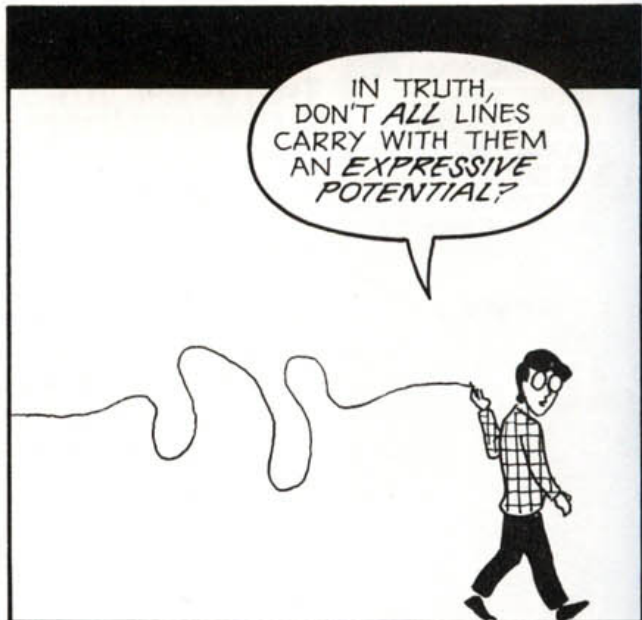
IF *THESE* LINES ARE EXPRESSIVE OF *FEAR*, *ANXIETY* AND *MADNESS*--



--THEN COULDN'T *THESE* LINES BE SAID TO PORTRAY *CALM*, *REASON* AND *INTROSPECTION*?

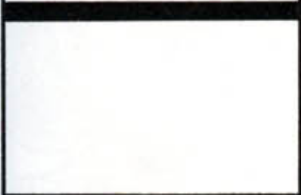


IN TRUTH, DON'T *ALL* LINES CARRY WITH THEM AN *EXPRESSIVE* POTENTIAL?

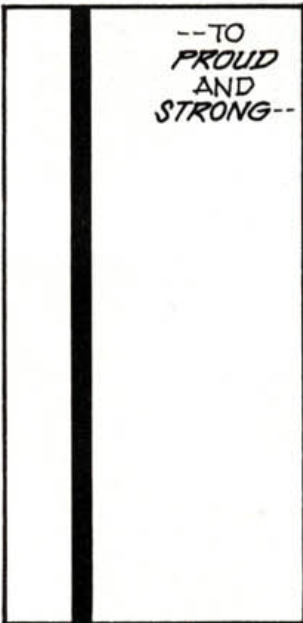


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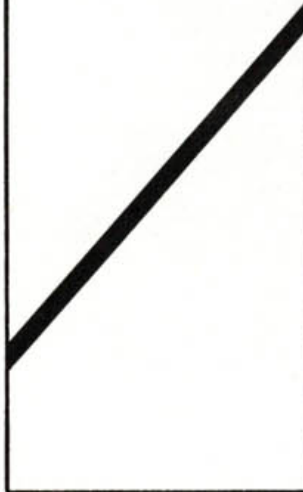
BY DIRECTION  
ALONE, A LINE  
MAY GO FROM  
PASSIVE AND  
TIMELESS--



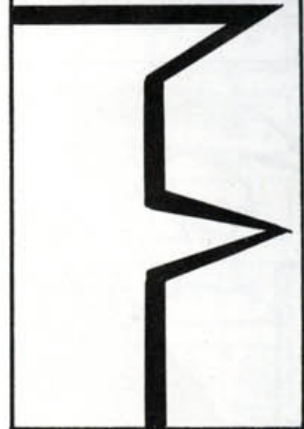
--TO  
PROUD  
AND  
STRONG--



--TO  
DYNAMIC  
AND  
CHANGING!



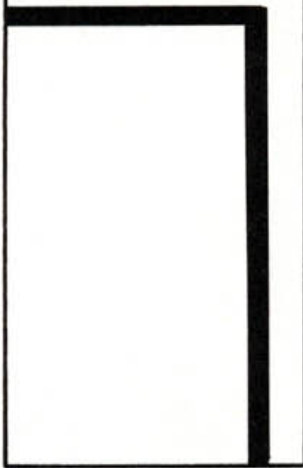
BY ITS  
SHAPE, IT  
CAN BE  
UNWELCOMING  
AND SEVERE--



--OR  
WARM  
AND GENTLE--



--OR  
RATIONAL  
AND  
CONSERVATIVE.



BY ITS  
CHARACTER  
IT MAY SEEM  
SAVAGE AND  
DEADLY--



--OR WEAK  
AND UNSTABLE--



--OR HONEST  
AND DIRECT.



THE MOST BLAND "EXPRESSIONLESS"  
LINES ON EARTH CAN'T HELP BUT  
CHARACTERIZE THEIR SUBJECT  
IN SOME WAY.



AND WHILE FEW  
COMIC ARTISTS MAY  
CONSIDER THEMSELVES  
EXPRESSIONISTS,  
THAT DOESN'T MEAN  
THAT THEY CAN'T TELL  
ONE LINE FROM  
ANOTHER!





IN *DICK TRACY*, FOR EXAMPLE, CHESTER GOULD USED **BOLD LINES, OBTUSE ANGLES AND HEAVY BLACKS** TO SUGGEST THE MOOD OF A *GRIM, DEADLY* WORLD OF ADULTS--



-- WHILE THE *GENTLE CURVES* AND *OPEN LINES* OF CARL BARKS' *UNCLE SCROOGE* CONVEY A FEELING OF *WHIMSY, YOUTH* AND *INNOCENCE*.



IN *R. CRUMB'S* WORLD, THE *CURVES* OF *INNOCENCE* ARE **BETRAYED** BY THE *NEUROTIC QUILL-LINES* OF *MODERN ADULthood*, AND LEFT *PAINFULLY* OUT OF PLACE--



-- WHILE IN *KRYSTINE KRYTTRE'S* ART, THE *CURVES* OF CHILDHOOD AND THE *MAD LINES* OF A *MUNCH* CREATE A *CRAZY TODDLER* LOOK.



IN THE *MID-1960s* WHEN THE *AVERAGE MARVEL* READER WAS *PRE-ADOLESCENT*, POPULAR INKERS USED *DYNAMIC* BUT *FRIENDLY* LINES A LA *KIRBY/SINNOTT*.



BUT WHEN MARVEL'S READER BASE *GREW* INTO THE *ANXIETIES* OF *ADOLESCENCE*, THE *HOSTILE, JAGGED* LINES OF A *ROB LIEFELD* STRUCK A MORE *RESPONSIVE CHORD*.



FOR *DECADES* OF COLOR COMIC BOOKS, THE *SIGNATURE STYLES* OF INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS LIKE *NICK CARDY* HAVE INFUSED *PERSONAL EXPRESSION* INTO *EVERY STORY*--



-- WHILE *JULES FEIFFER'S* *UNEVEN LINES* DID *BATTLE* WITH THEMSELVES IN A *PANTOMIME* OF THE *INNER STRUGGLES* OF *MODERN LIFE*.



IN *JOSÉ MUNOZ'S* WORK, *DENSE PUDDLES* OF INK AND *FRAYING LINEWORK* COMBINE TO EVOKE A WORLD OF *DEPRAVITY* AND *MORBID DECAY*--



-- WHILE *JOOST SWARTE'S* *CRISP ELEGANT LINES* AND *JAZZY DESIGNS* SPEAK OF *COOL SOPHISTICATION* AND *IRONY*.



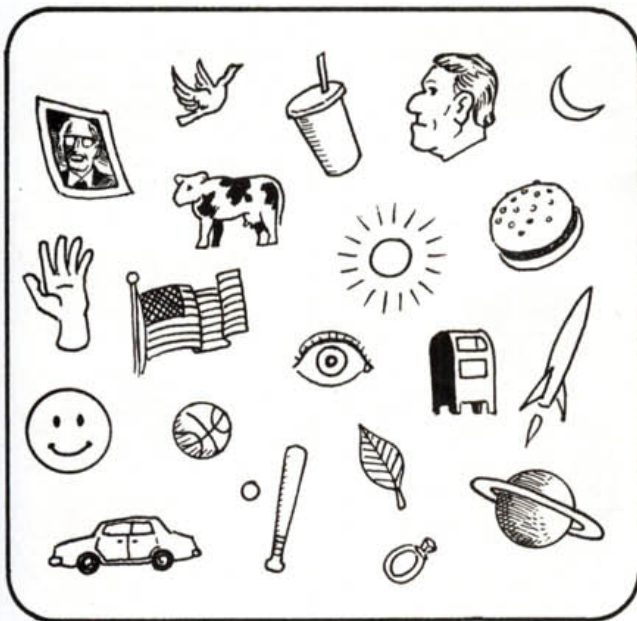
IN *SPIEGELMAN'S* "*PRISONER ON THE HELL PLANET*," *DELIBERATELY EXPRESSIONISTIC LINES* DEPICT A *TRUE-LIFE HORROR* STORY.



AND IN *EISNER'S* *MODERN* WORK A *FULL RANGE* OF LINE STYLES CAPTURE A *FULL RANGE* OF MOODS AND *EMOTIONS*.



SEE PAGE 216 FOR COPYRIGHT INFORMATION.



NOW, IF PICTURES CAN, THROUGH THEIR RENDERING, REPRESENT **INVISIBLE** CONCERNS SUCH AS **EMOTIONS** AND THE **OTHER SENSES**--



--THEN THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PICTURES AND OTHER TYPES OF ICONS LIKE LANGUAGE WHICH **SPECIALIZE** IN THE INVISIBLE MAY SEEM A BIT **BLURRY**.

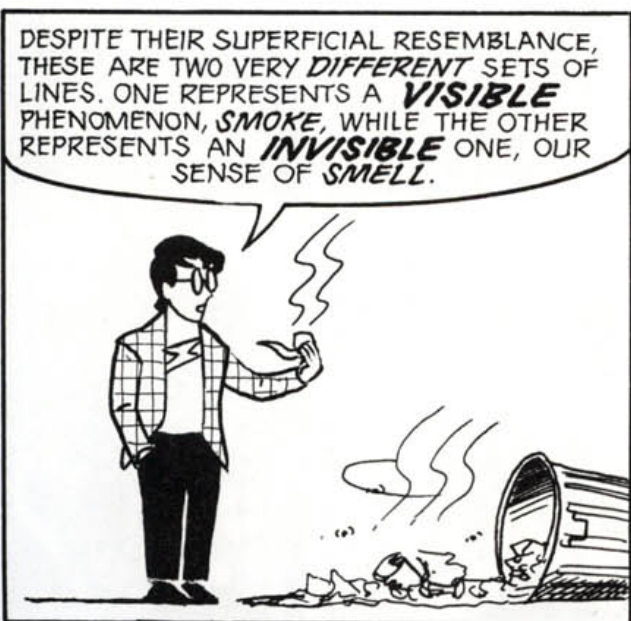
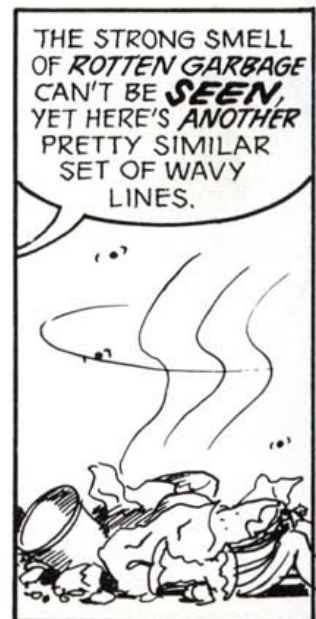
IN FACT, WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN THE **LIVING LINES** OF THESE PICTURES IS **THE PRIMORDIAL STUFF** FROM WHICH A **FORMALIZED LANGUAGE** CAN **EVOLVE!**

I'LL GIVE YOU AN **EXAMPLE**.

LET'S SAY I WANTED TO SMOKE THIS **PIPE**--

--ASSUMING IT **IS** A PIPE--

--AND I LIT IT WITH A MATCH LIKE **SO:**



TAKEN OUT OF THEIR *ORIGINAL CONTEXT*,  
 THEY CAN NOW BE APPLIED *ANYWHERE*  
 AND THE READER WILL INSTANTLY KNOW  
 WHAT THEY MEAN.



EVEN THE *FLIES*  
 HAVE OVER THE YEARS  
 BEEN APPROACHING  
 THE *ABSTRACT STATUS*  
 OF *LINGUISTIC*  
*SYMBOLS*.



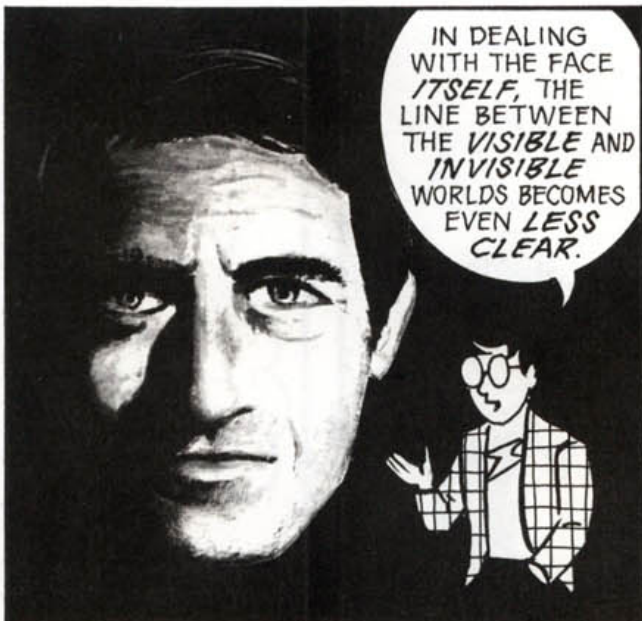
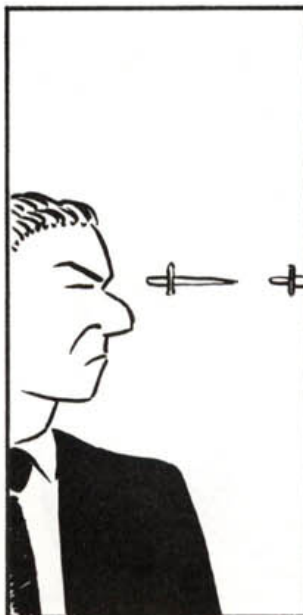
WHENEVER AN ARTIST  
 INVENTS A NEW WAY  
 TO *REPRESENT THE*  
*INVISIBLE*, THERE IS  
 ALWAYS A CHANCE  
 THAT IT WILL BE  
*PICKED UP BY*  
*OTHER ARTISTS*.



IF ENOUGH ARTISTS  
 BEGIN *USING* THE  
 SYMBOL, IT WILL  
 ENTER THE LANGUAGE  
 FOR *GOOD*--

-- AS MANY  
*HAVE* THROUGH  
 THE YEARS.





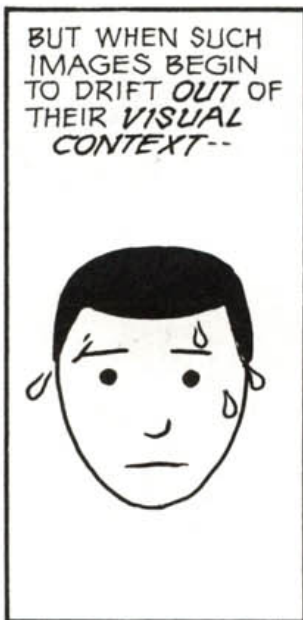
IN DEALING WITH THE FACE *ITSELF*, THE LINE BETWEEN THE *VISIBLE* AND *INVISIBLE* WORLDS BECOMES EVEN *LESS CLEAR*.



THE CARTOON FACE IS AN *ABSTRACT*, BUT IT IS BASED UPON *VISUAL DATA*.



SOME INDICATORS OF EMOTION ARE *ALSO* VISUALLY BASED, SUCH AS THE FAMILIAR *SWEAT BEAD*.



BUT WHEN SUCH IMAGES BEGIN TO DRIFT *OUT* OF THEIR *VISUAL CONTEXT*--

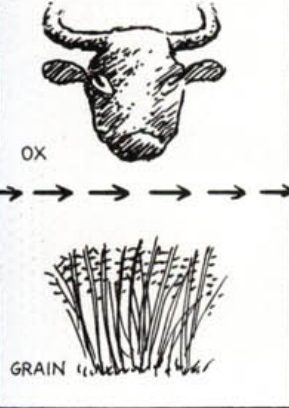


--THEY DRIFT *INTO* THE *INVISIBLE* WORLD OF THE *SYMBOL*.

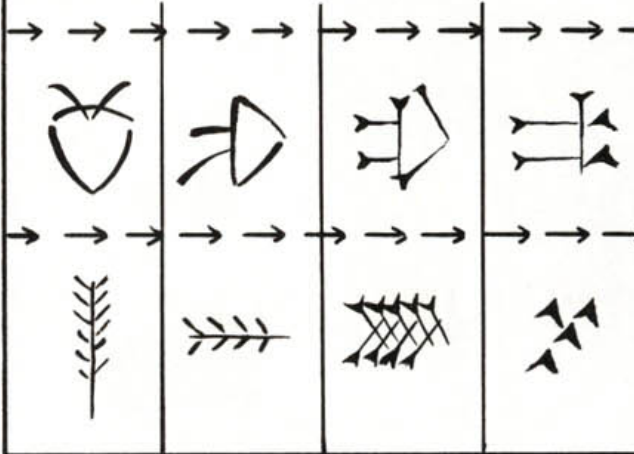


THIS DRIFT FROM *VISIBLE* TO *INVISIBLE* HAS BEEN THE BASIS OF ALL *WRITTEN LANGUAGES* SINCE CIVILIZATION *BEGAN*.

SUMERIANS IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA GOT THINGS ROLLING OVER 5,000 YEARS AGO WHEN A NEED WAS FOUND TO RECORD CERTAIN *COMMODITIES*.



THESE FIRST SYMBOLS -- *CARTOONS*, REALLY -- GRADUALLY EVOLVED AWAY FROM *ANY* RESEMBLANCE TO THEIR SUBJECT, TOWARD THE HIGHLY ABSTRACTED FORMS OF MODERN LANGUAGES...



...AND *EVENTUALLY* TO OUR *TOTALLY* ABSTRACT *SOUND-BASED* SYSTEM.



THE LONGER ANY FORM OF ART OR COMMUNICATION EXISTS, THE MORE *SYMBOLS* IT ACCUMULATES.



THE MODERN COMIC IS A YOUNG LANGUAGE, BUT IT ALREADY HAS AN *IMPRESSIVE ARRAY* OF *RECOGNIZABLE* *SYMBOLS*.



AND THIS *VISUAL VOCABULARY* HAS AN *UNLIMITED POTENTIAL* FOR *GROWTH*.

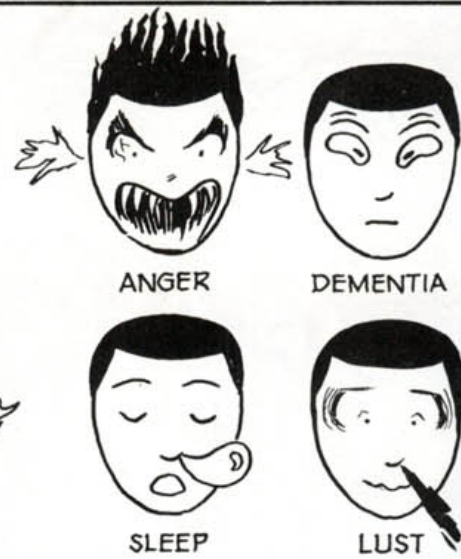


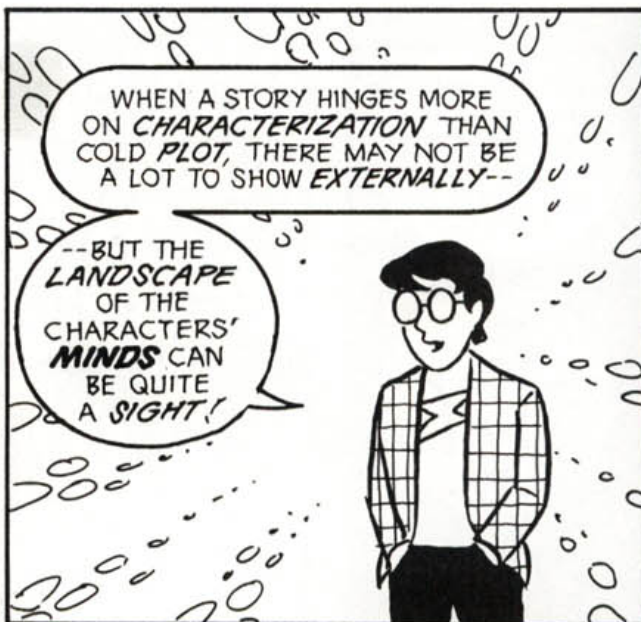
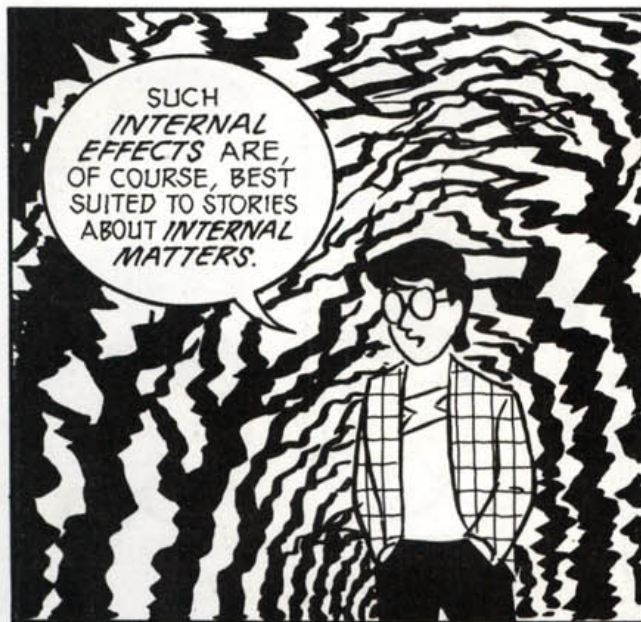
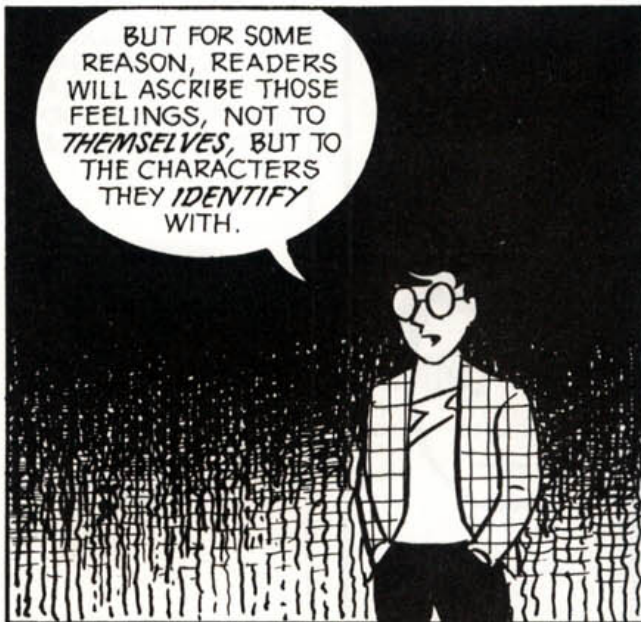
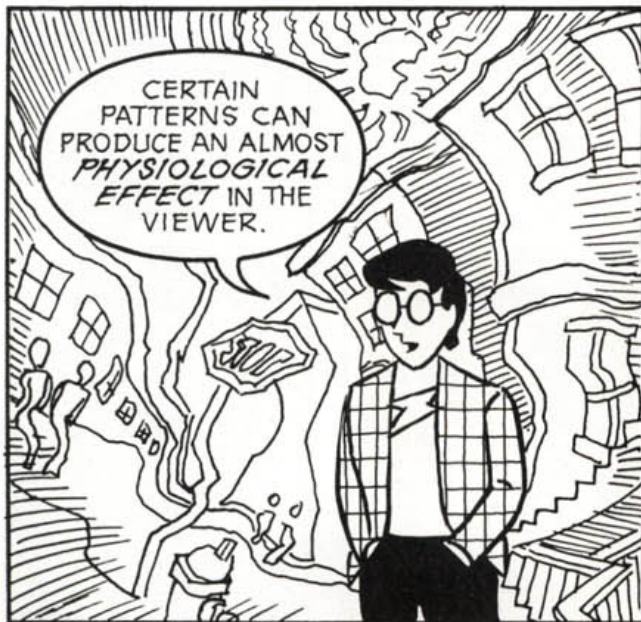
WITHIN A GIVEN CULTURE THESE SYMBOLS WILL QUICKLY SPREAD UNTIL EVERYBODY KNOWS THEM AT A *GLANCE*.



THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS THAT MORE THAN ONE SET OF SYMBOLS WILL *EVOLVE!*

SO IT WAS, ONCE AGAIN, IN *JAPAN* WHERE COMICS DEVELOPED FOR *YEARS* IN RELATIVE *ISOLATION* FROM THEIR WESTERN COUSINS.





THIS PRINCIPLE IS EVIDENT IN MANY *EUROPEAN COLOR COMICS* AND IN *JAPANESE ROMANCE COMICS* WHERE EXPRESSIONISTIC EFFECTS HAVE BEEN DEVISED FOR ALMOST ANY EMOTION *IMAGINABLE!*



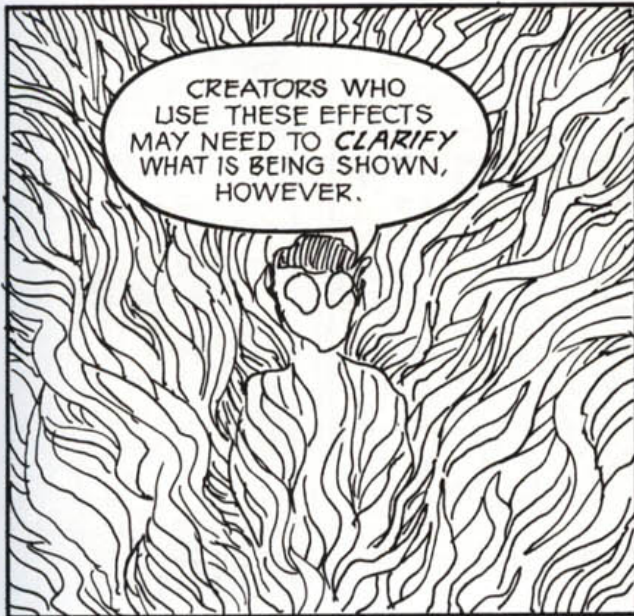
EXPRESSIONISM AND SYNAESTHETICS ARE *DISTORTIVE* BY THEIR NATURE. IF STRONG ENOUGH, THEIR EFFECTS CAN *OBSCURE* THEIR SUBJECTS.



BUT A LACK OF CLARITY CAN ALSO FOSTER GREATER *PARTICIPATION* BY THE READER AND A SENSE OF *INVOLVEMENT* WHICH MANY WRITERS AND ARTISTS *PREFER*.



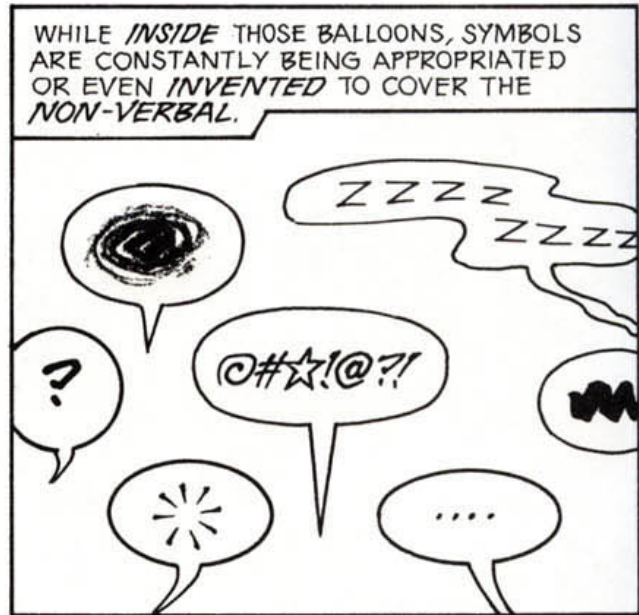
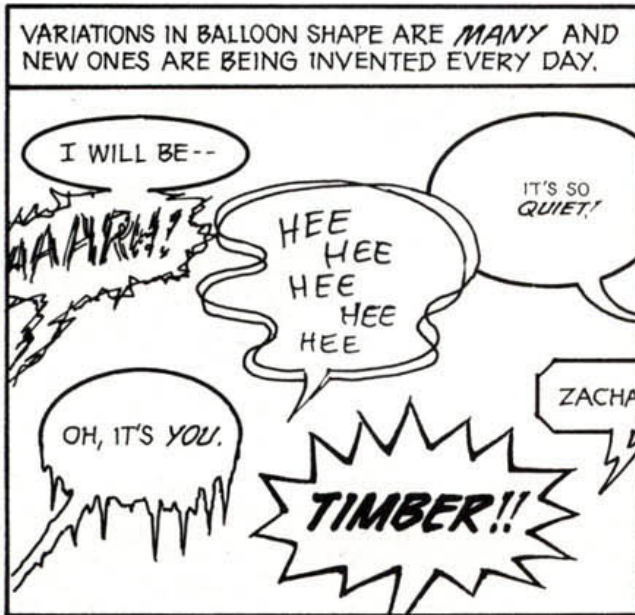
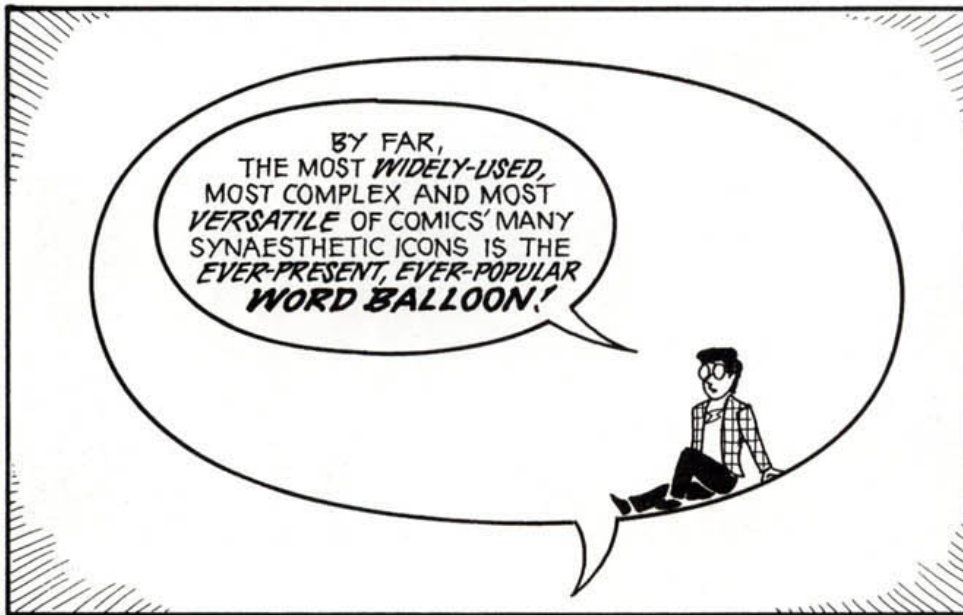
CREATORS WHO USE THESE EFFECTS MAY NEED TO *CLARIFY* WHAT IS BEING SHOWN, HOWEVER.



EITHER THROUGH THE *CONTENT* OF *SURROUNDING SCENES* OR, OF COURSE, THROUGH *WORDS*.







OF COURSE WORDS *THEMSELVES*, MORE THAN ALL THE OTHER VISUAL SYMBOLS, HAVE THE POWER TO COMPLETELY DESCRIBE THE *INVISIBLE REALM OF SENSES AND EMOTIONS*.



WORDS CAN TAKE EVEN SEEMINGLY *NEUTRAL* IMAGES AND INVEST THEM WITH A *WEALTH OF FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES*.



**I** SAT BY THE OPEN WINDOW, HOPING TO CATCH A WHIFF OF THE OLD CHARCOAL GRILLS. FROM NEXT DOOR CAME THE OTHERWORLDLY HUM OF TELEVISION. THE OLD CLOCK STRUCK A LAZY EIGHT.



AS NOTED, PICTURES CAN INDUCE *STRONG FEELINGS* IN THE READER, BUT THEY CAN ALSO LACK THE *SPECIFICITY* OF WORDS.



WORDS, ON THE OTHER HAND, OFFER THAT *SPECIFICITY*, BUT CAN LACK THE IMMEDIATE EMOTIONAL CHARGE OF PICTURES, RELYING INSTEAD ON A *GRADUAL CUMULATIVE* EFFECT.



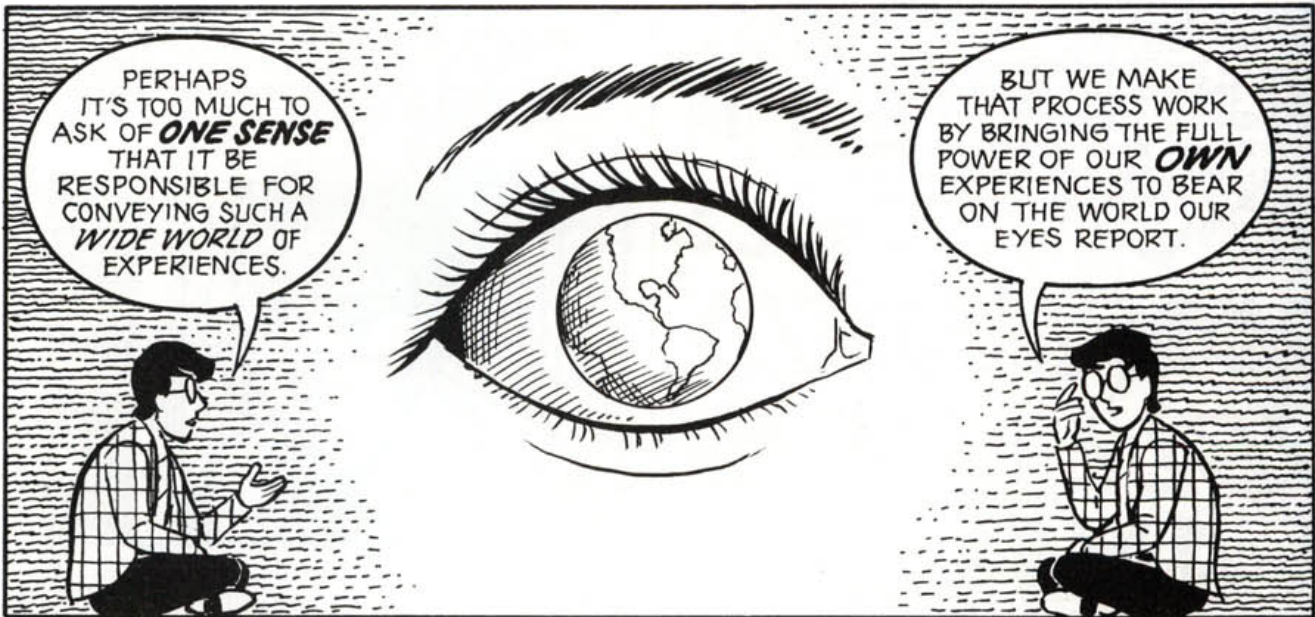
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I'M ON TO YOUR PLOT... I KNOW YOU PUT SOMETHING IN MY DOG'S FOOD THAT MADE HIM NOT LOVE ME ANYMORE AND...

*TOGETHER*, OF COURSE, WORDS AND PICTURES CAN WORK MIRACLES.



BUT WE'LL GET TO THAT IN THE *NEXT CHAPTER*.



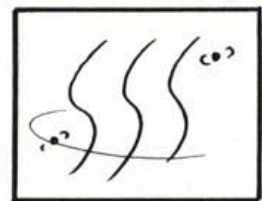
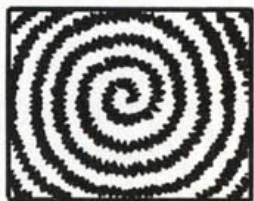


PERHAPS IT'S TOO MUCH TO ASK OF **ONE SENSE** THAT IT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONVEYING SUCH A **WIDE WORLD** OF EXPERIENCES.

BUT WE MAKE THAT PROCESS WORK BY BRINGING THE FULL POWER OF OUR **OWN** EXPERIENCES TO BEAR ON THE WORLD OUR EYES REPORT.



IN THIS CHAPTER, WE'VE DEALT WITH THE **INVISIBLE** WORLDS OF **SENSES** AND **EMOTIONS**, BUT IN FACT **ALL** ASPECTS OF COMICS SHOW IT TO BE AN **ART OF THE INVISIBLE**.



WHAT YOU **SEE** IS SELDOM WHAT YOU **GET** IF ALL YOU'RE SEEING (SEEING EVEN NOW) IS JUST **INK** AND **PAPER**.



IN THE  
END, WHAT  
YOU **GET** IS  
WHAT YOU  
**GIVE.**

