



WRITING AND ART  
**SCOTT McCLOUD**

LETTERING  
**BOB LAPPAN**

EDITORIAL ADVICE AND  
SELECTIVE EGO-TRIMMING  
**STEVE BISSETTE**  
**KURT BUSIEK**  
**NEIL GAIMAN**  
**BOB LAPPAN**  
**JENNIFER LEE**  
**LARRY MARDER**  
**IVY RATAFIA**

EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS  
**WILL EISNER**

EDITOR  
**MARK MARTIN**

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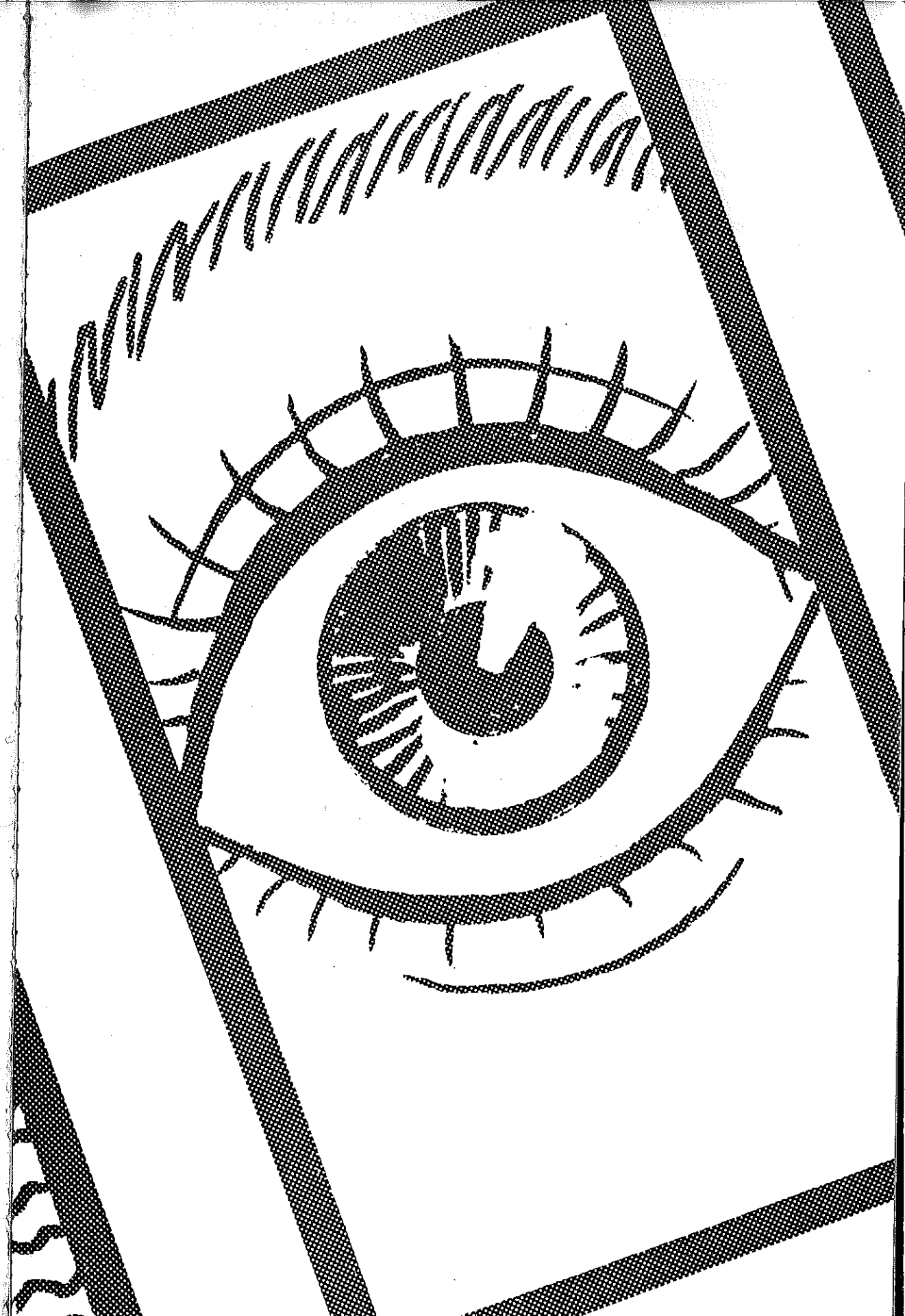
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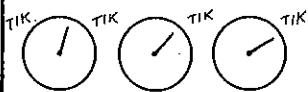
# CHAPTER FOUR

## TIME FRAMES.

SO! LET'S SEE: EACH PANEL OF A COMIC SHOWS A SINGLE MOMENT IN TIME.

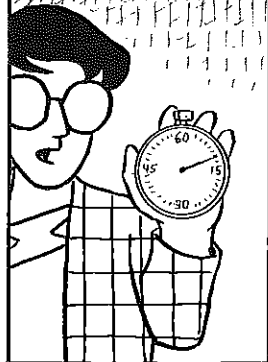


AND BETWEEN THOSE FROZEN MOMENTS -- BETWEEN THE PANELS -- OUR MINDS FILL IN THE INTERVENING MOMENTS, CREATING THE ILLUSION OF TIME AND MOTION.




LIKE A LINE DRAWN BETWEEN TWO POINTS.

RIGHT?



CLIK



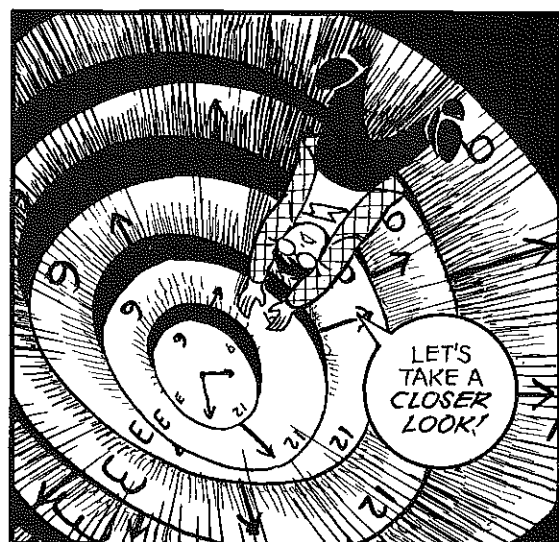
NAAH! OF COURSE NOT!



TIME IN COMICS IS INFINITELY WEIRDER THAN THAT!



LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK!



SMILE!

PAF!

AAGH! THAT FLASH IS BLINDING, UNCLE HENRY!

HEE-HEE!

OH, HENRY! PUT THAT CAMERA AWAY, WILL YOU?

WELL, IF OL' HENRY IS GONNA HAVE MUCH MORE FUN, WE MAY HAFTA LOCK UP THE WINE CELLAR.

AWW, LET HIM BE, MOM. HE'S JUST HAVING FUN.

CHECK!

HMMMM...

SURE YOU WANT TO MOVE THERE, JED?

THUMP

SINGLE MOMENT?

HARDLY!

WHIRRRRR



EVEN THE BRIEF SOUND OF A FLASH-BULB HAS A CERTAIN DURATION, SHORT TO BE SURE, BUT NOT INSTANTANEOUS!

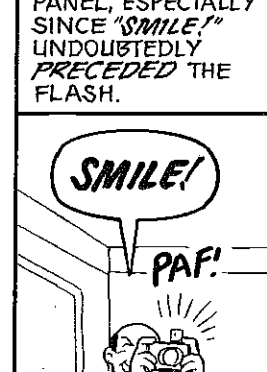
PAF!



FAR SLOWER IS THE DURATION OF THE AVERAGE WORD. UNCLE HENRY ALONE BURNS UP A GOOD SECOND IN THIS PANEL, ESPECIALLY SINCE "SMILE!" UNDOUBTEDLY PRECEDED THE FLASH.

SMILE!

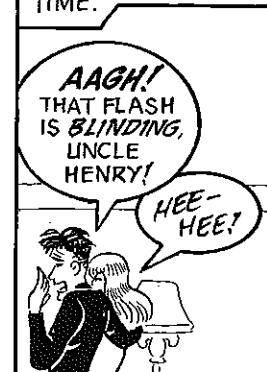
PAF!



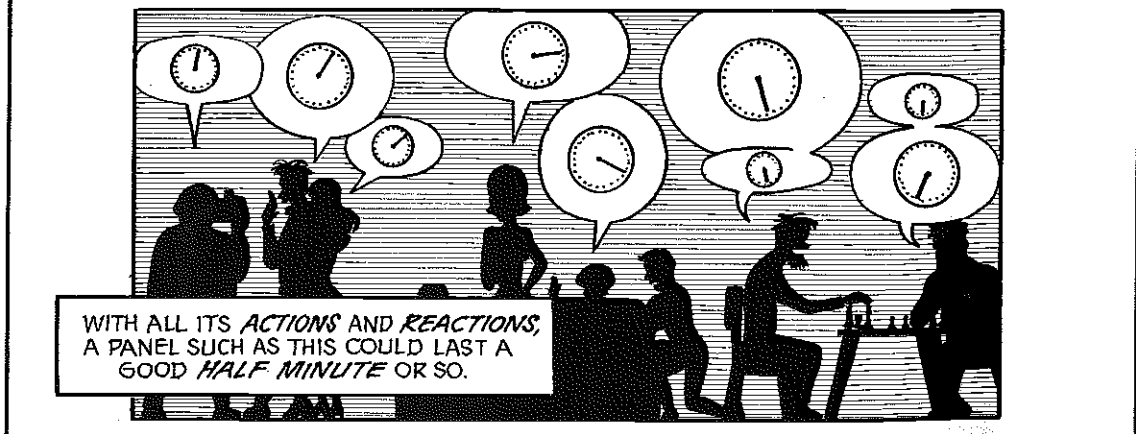
LIKewise, THE NEXT BALLOONS COULD HAVE ONLY FOLLOWED THE BURST OF THE FLASHBULB, THUS ADDING STILL MORE TIME.

AAGH! THAT FLASH IS BLINDING, UNCLE HENRY!

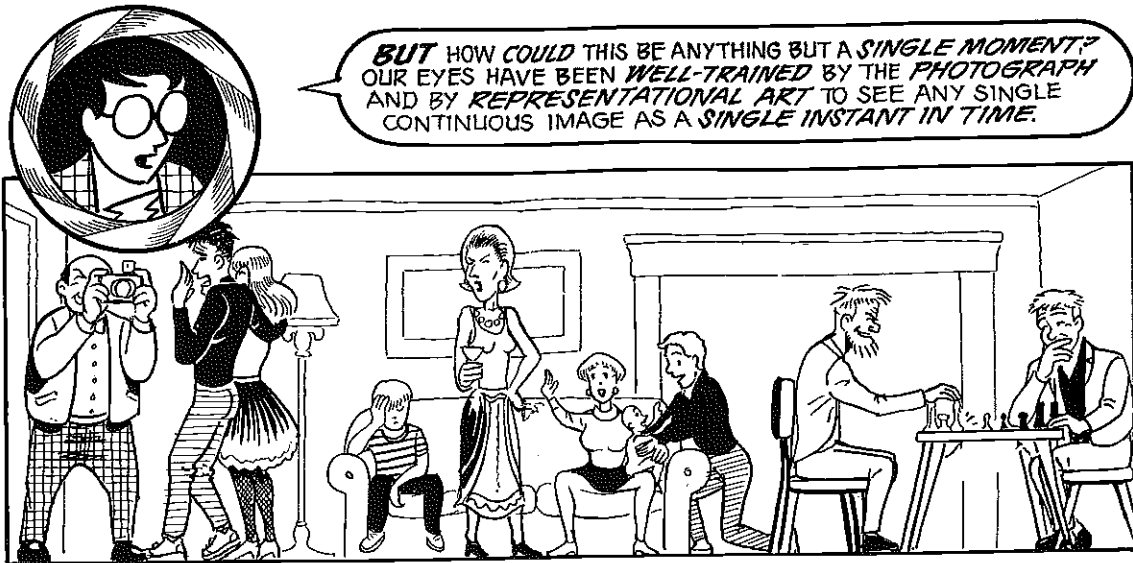
HEE-HEE!



JUST AS PICTURES AND THE INTERVALS BETWEEN THEM CREATE THE ILLUSION OF TIME THROUGH CLOSURE, WORDS INTRODUCE TIME BY REPRESENTING THAT WHICH CAN ONLY EXIST IN TIME -- SOUND.



WITH ALL ITS ACTIONS AND REACTIONS, A PANEL SUCH AS THIS COULD LAST A GOOD HALF MINUTE OR SO.



**BUT** HOW COULD THIS BE ANYTHING BUT A *SINGLE MOMENT*? OUR EYES HAVE BEEN *WELL-TRAINED* BY THE *PHOTOGRAPH* AND BY *REPRESENTATIONAL ART* TO SEE ANY SINGLE CONTINUOUS IMAGE AS A *SINGLE INSTANT IN TIME*.



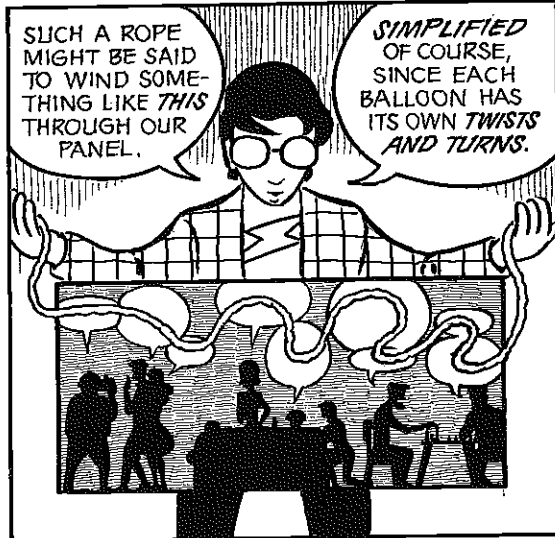
BUT THE ACTIONS THAT WE SEE OCCURRING SEEMINGLY AT THE SAME TIME OBVIOUSLY *CAN'T BE!*



ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT IT: LET'S THINK OF TIME AS A *ROPE*.

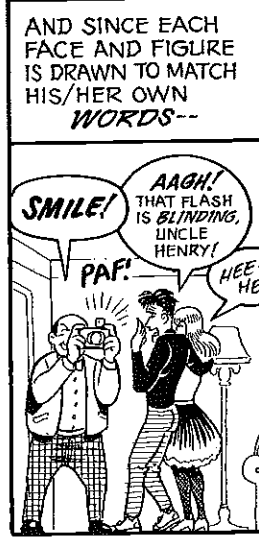


EACH INCH REPRESENTS A *SECOND*.



SUCH A ROPE MIGHT BE SAID TO WIND SOMETHING LIKE *THIS* THROUGH OUR PANEL.

*SIMPLIFIED* OF COURSE, SINCE EACH BALLOON HAS ITS OWN *TWISTS AND TURNS*.

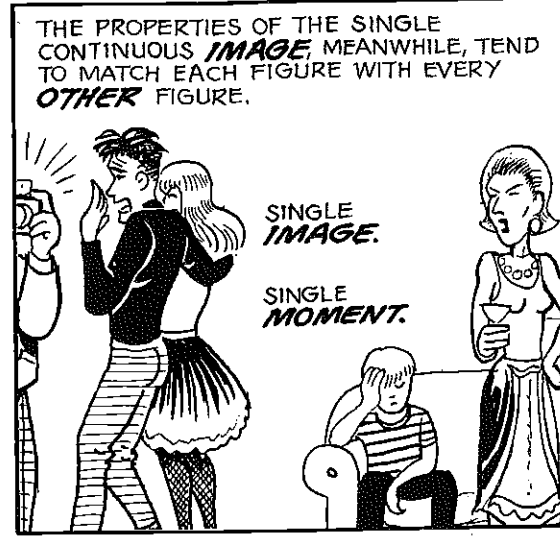


AND SINCE EACH FACE AND FIGURE IS DRAWN TO MATCH HIS/HER OWN *WORDS--*

*SMILE!* *AAGH!* THAT FLASH IS *BLINDING*, UNCLE HENRY!  
*PAF!* *HEE-HEE!*



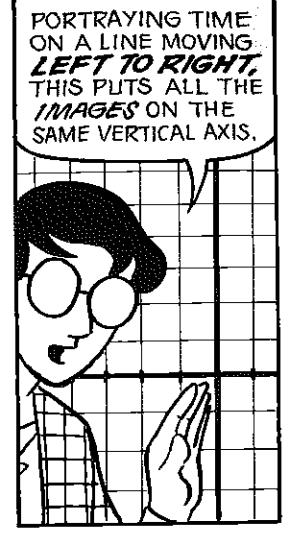
--THOSE FIGURES, FACES AND WORDS ARE MATCHED IN *TIME* AS WELL.



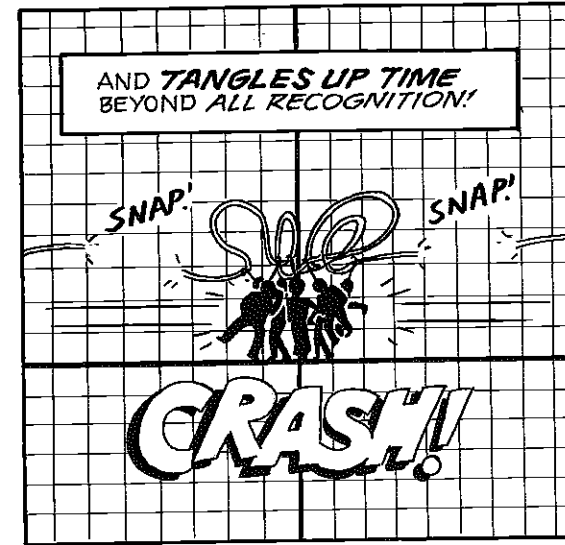
THE PROPERTIES OF THE SINGLE CONTINUOUS *IMAGE*, MEANWHILE, TEND TO MATCH EACH FIGURE WITH EVERY *OTHER* FIGURE.

*SINGLE IMAGE.*

*SINGLE MOMENT.*

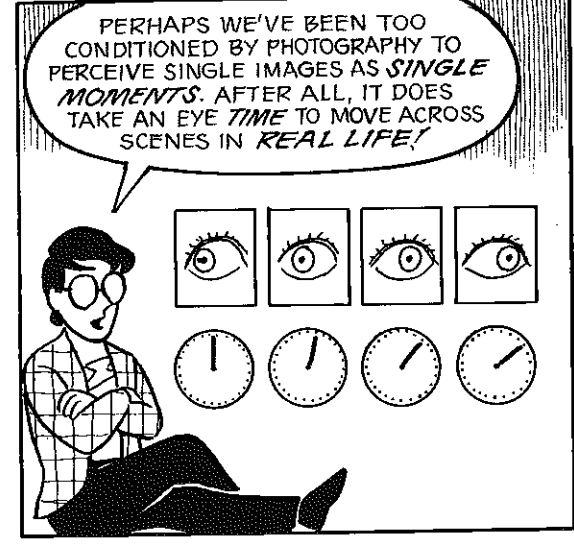


PORTRAYING TIME ON A LINE MOVING *LEFT TO RIGHT*, THIS PUTS ALL THE *IMAGES* ON THE SAME VERTICAL AXIS.

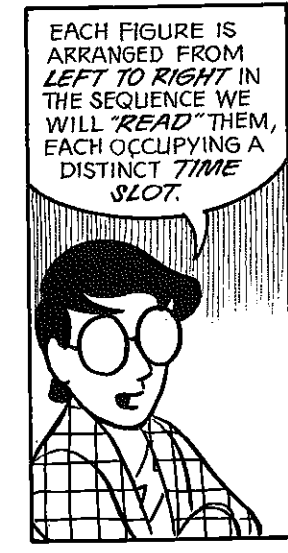


AND *TANGLES UP TIME* BEYOND ALL *RECOGNITION!*

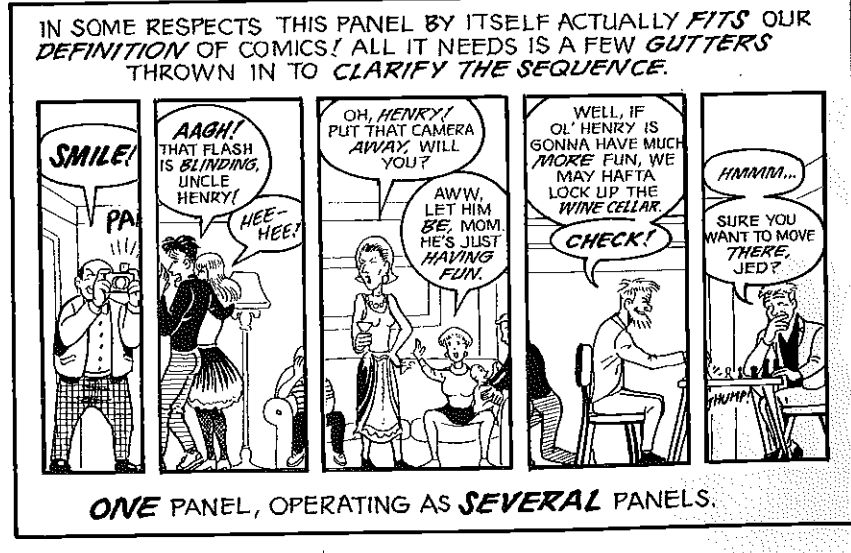
*SNAP!* *SNAP!*  
**CRASH!**



PERHAPS WE'VE BEEN TOO CONDITIONED BY PHOTOGRAPHY TO PERCEIVE SINGLE IMAGES AS *SINGLE MOMENTS*. AFTER ALL, IT DOES TAKE AN EYE *TIME* TO MOVE ACROSS SCENES IN *REAL LIFE!*

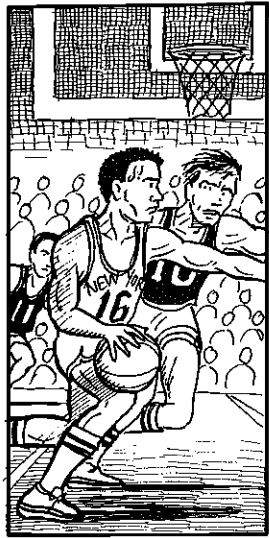


EACH FIGURE IS ARRANGED FROM *LEFT TO RIGHT* IN THE SEQUENCE WE WILL *"READ"* THEM, EACH OCCUPYING A DISTINCT *TIME SLOT*.



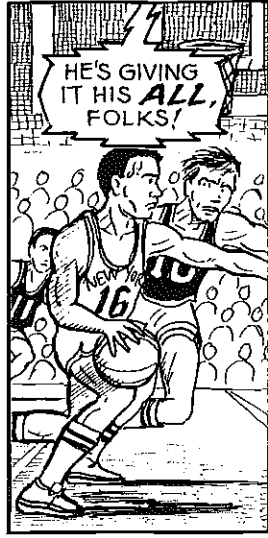
IN SOME RESPECTS THIS PANEL BY ITSELF ACTUALLY *FITS* OUR *DEFINITION* OF COMICS! ALL IT NEEDS IS A FEW *GUTTERS* THROWN IN TO *CLARIFY* THE SEQUENCE.

*ONE* PANEL, OPERATING AS *SEVERAL* PANELS.



NOT ALL PANELS ARE LIKE THAT, OF COURSE.

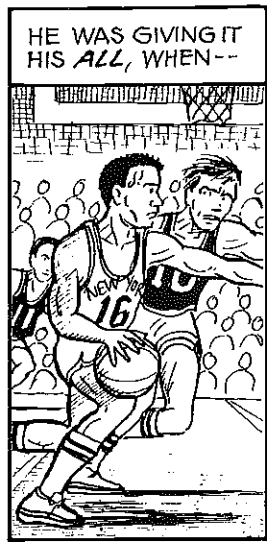
A SILENT PANEL SUCH AS THIS COULD INDEED BE SAID TO DEPICT A SINGLE MOMENT!



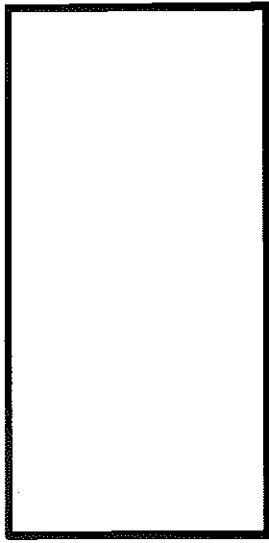
IF SOUND IS INTRODUCED, THIS CEASES TO BE TRUE--



-- BUT, IN AN OTHERWISE SILENT CAPTIONED PANEL, THE SINGLE MOMENT CAN ACTUALLY BE HELD.



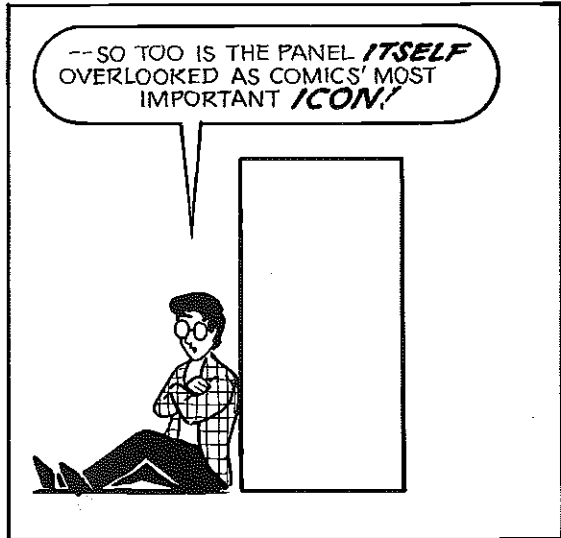
THESE VARIOUS SHAPES WE CALL PANELS HOLD IN THEIR BORDERS ALL OF THE ICONS THAT ADD UP TO THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS.



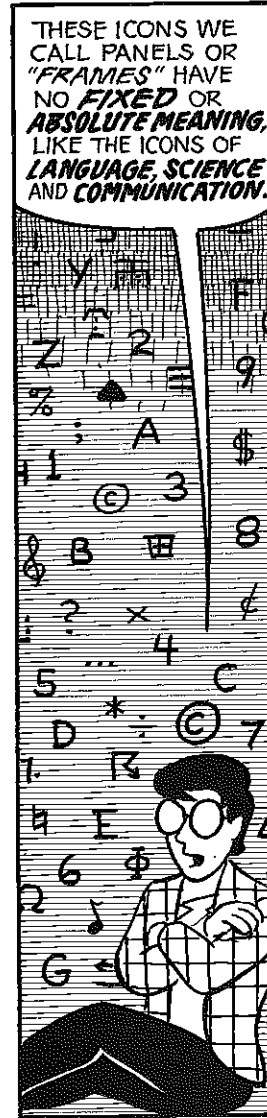
ALL EXCEPT ONE.



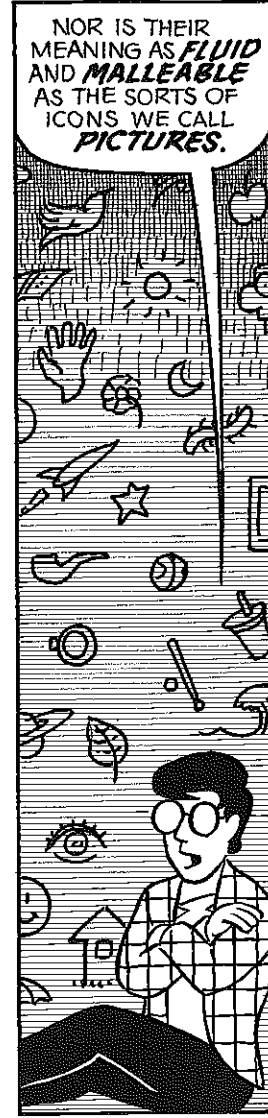
FOR JUST AS THE BODY'S LARGEST ORGAN -- OUR SKIN -- IS SELDOM THOUGHT OF AS AN ORGAN --



-- SO TOO IS THE PANEL ITSELF OVERLOOKED AS COMICS' MOST IMPORTANT ICON!



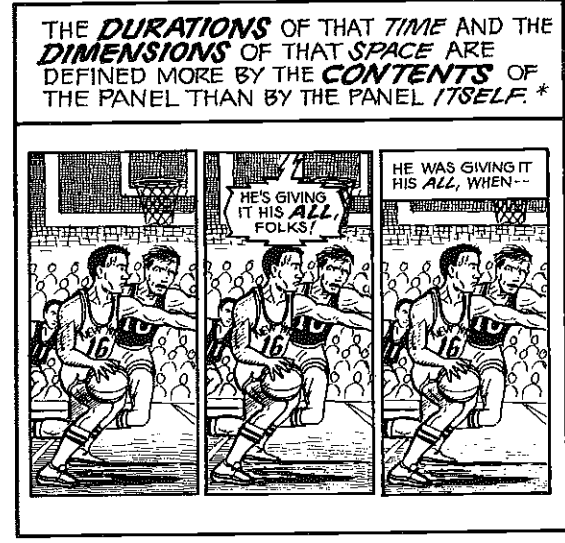
THESE ICONS WE CALL PANELS OR "FRAMES" HAVE NO FIXED OR ABSOLUTE MEANING, LIKE THE ICONS OF LANGUAGE, SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATION.



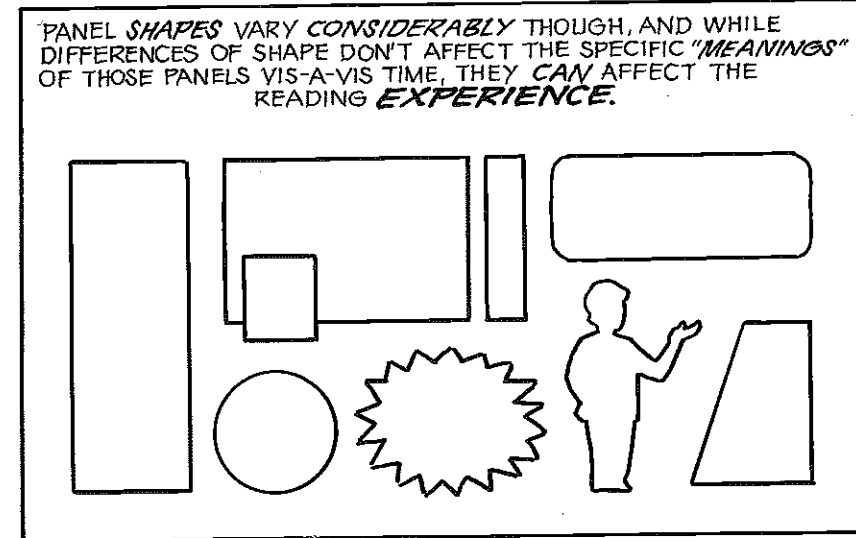
NOR IS THEIR MEANING AS FLUID AND MALLEABLE AS THE SORTS OF ICONS WE CALL PICTURES.



THE PANEL ACTS AS A SORT OF GENERAL INDICATOR THAT TIME OR SPACE IS BEING DIVIDED.



THE DURATIONS OF THAT TIME AND THE DIMENSIONS OF THAT SPACE ARE DEFINED MORE BY THE CONTENTS OF THE PANEL THAN BY THE PANEL ITSELF.\*

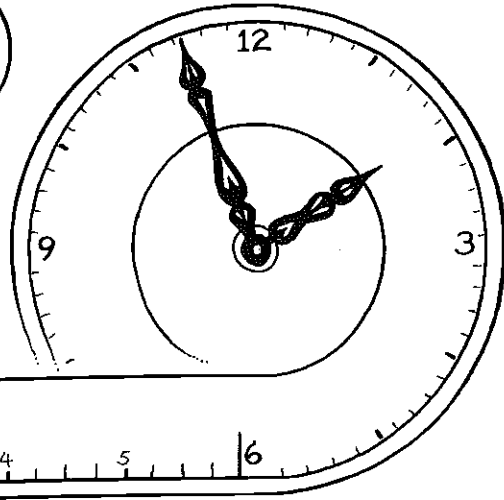


PANEL SHAPES VARY CONSIDERABLY THOUGH, AND WHILE DIFFERENCES OF SHAPE DON'T AFFECT THE SPECIFIC "MEANINGS" OF THOSE PANELS VIS-A-VIS TIME, THEY CAN AFFECT THE READING EXPERIENCE.



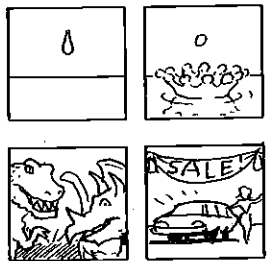
WHICH BRINGS US TO THE STRANGE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIME AS DEPICTED IN COMICS AND TIME AS PERCEIVED BY THE READER.

IN LEARNING TO READ COMICS WE ALL LEARNED TO PERCEIVE TIME *SPATIALLY*. FOR IN THE WORLD OF COMICS, *TIME AND SPACE ARE ONE AND THE SAME.*



THE PROBLEM IS *THERE'S NO CONVERSION CHART!*

THE FEW CENTIMETERS WHICH TRANSPORT US FROM *SECOND TO SECOND* IN ONE SEQUENCE COULD TAKE US A *HUNDRED MILLION YEARS* IN ANOTHER.



SO, AS *READERS*, WE'RE LEFT WITH ONLY A *VAGUE SENSE* THAT AS OUR EYES ARE MOVING THROUGH *SPACE*, THEY'RE ALSO MOVING THROUGH *TIME*-- WE JUST DON'T KNOW BY *HOW MUCH!*

IN MOST CASES IT'S NOT HARD TO MAKE AN EDUCATED GUESS AS TO THE DURATION OF A GIVEN SEQUENCE, SO LONG AS THE *ELEMENTS* OF THAT SEQUENCE ARE *FAMILIAR* TO US.



FROM A *LIFETIME OF CONVERSATIONS*, WE CAN BE SURE THAT A "*PAUSE*" PANEL LIKE THIS LASTS FOR NO MORE THAN *SEVERAL SECONDS.*



BUT IF THE CREATOR OF THIS SCENE WANTED TO *LENGTHEN* THAT PAUSE, HOW COULD HE OR SHE DO SO? ONE OBVIOUS SOLUTION WOULD BE TO ADD MORE PANELS, BUT IS THAT THE ONLY WAY?



IS THERE ANY WAY TO MAKE A SINGLE SILENT PANEL LIKE THIS ONE SEEM *LONGER*? HOW ABOUT WIDENING THE *SPACE BETWEEN PANELS*? ANY DIFFERENCE?



WE'VE SEEN HOW TIME CAN BE CONTROLLED THROUGH THE *CONTENT* OF PANELS, THE *NUMBER* OF PANELS AND CLOSURE *BETWEEN* PANELS, BUT THERE'S STILL *ONE MORE.*

AS UNLIKELY AS IT SOUNDS, THE *PANEL SHAPE* CAN ACTUALLY MAKE A *DIFFERENCE* IN OUR *PERCEPTION* OF TIME. EVEN THOUGH THIS LONG PANEL HAS THE SAME BASIC "*MEANING*" AS ITS SHORTER VERSIONS, STILL IT HAS THE *FEELING* OF GREATER LENGTH!



EVER NOTICED HOW THE WORDS "SHORT" OR "LONG" CAN REFER EITHER TO THE **FIRST** DIMENSION OR TO THE **FOURTH**?

IN A MEDIUM WHERE TIME AND SPACE **MERGE** SO COMPLETELY, THE DISTINCTION OFTEN **VANISHES!**

THE **PANEL BORDER** IS OUR **GUIDE** THROUGH **TIME AND SPACE**, BUT IT WILL ONLY GUIDE US **SO FAR.**

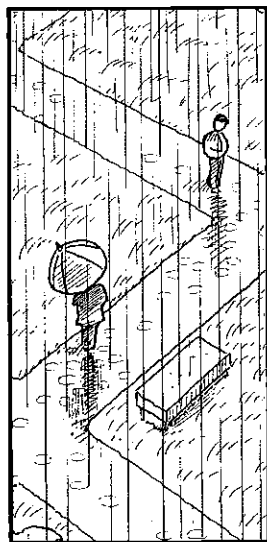
AS MENTIONED, PANELS COME IN MANY SHAPES AND SIZES, THOUGH THE **CLASSIC RECTANGLE** IS USED MOST OFTEN.

MOST OF US ARE SO USED TO THE STANDARD **RECTANGULAR** FORMAT THAT A "**BORDERLESS**" PANEL SUCH AS THIS CAN TAKE ON A **TIMELESS QUALITY.**

HEY, ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?!

I GUESS.

WHEN THE **CONTENT** OF A SILENT PANEL OFFERS NO CLUES AS TO ITS **DURATION**, IT CAN ALSO PRODUCE A SENSE OF **TIMELESSNESS.**

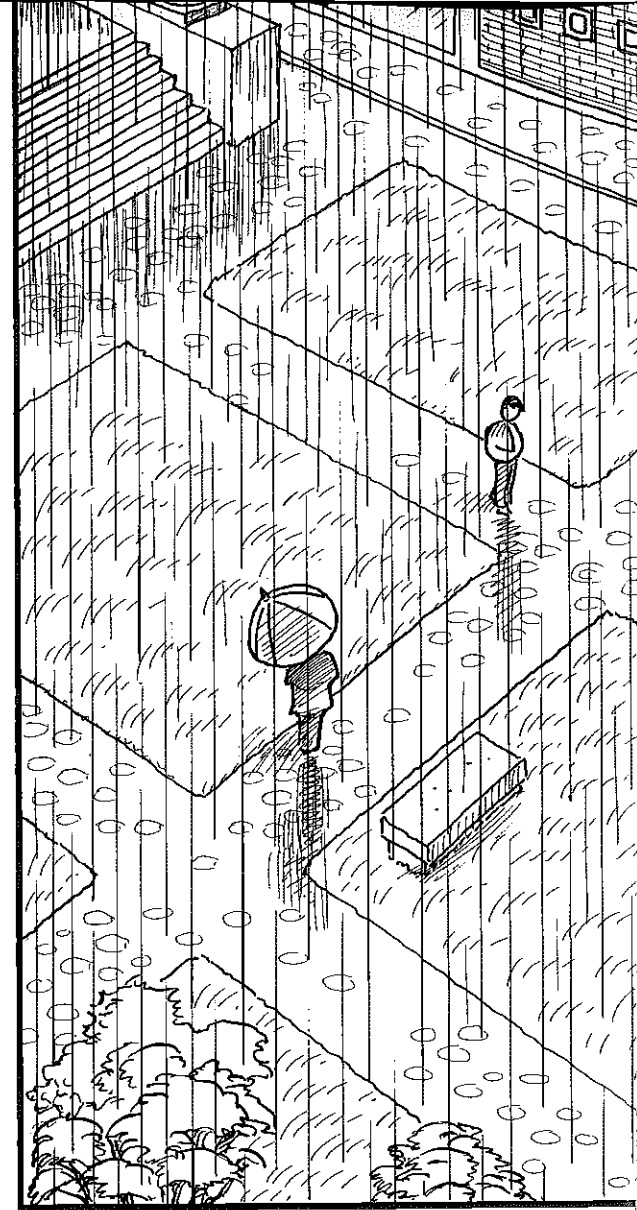


BECAUSE OF ITS **UNRESOLVED NATURE**, SUCH A PANEL MAY **LINGER** IN THE READER'S MIND.

AND ITS PRESENCE MAY BE FELT IN THE PANELS WHICH **FOLLOW** IT.

WHEN "**BLEEDS**" ARE USED -- I.E., WHEN A PANEL RUNS OFF THE EDGE OF THE **PAGE** -- THIS EFFECT IS **COMPOUNDED.**

TIME IS NO LONGER CONTAINED BY THE FAMILIAR ICON OF THE **CLOSED PANEL**, BUT INSTEAD **HEMORRHAGES** AND ESCAPES INTO **TIMELESS SPACE.**



SUCH IMAGES CAN **SET THE MOOD** OR A **SENSE OF PLACE** FOR **WHOLE SCENES** THROUGH THEIR **LINGERING TIMELESS PRESENCE.**

ONCE AGAIN, THIS IS A TECHNIQUE USED MOST OFTEN IN **JAPAN** AND ONLY RECENTLY ADOPTED HERE IN THE **WEST.**

IN COMICS, AS IN FILM, TELEVISION AND "REAL LIFE," IT IS ALWAYS **NOW**.



**THIS** PANEL AND **THIS** PANEL **ALONE** REPRESENTS THE **PRESENT**.



ANY PANEL **BEFORE** THIS-- THAT **LAST** ONE, FOR INSTANCE-- REPRESENTS THE **PAST**.



LIKEWISE, ALL PANELS **STILL** TO **COME**-- THIS **NEXT** PANEL, FOR INSTANCE-- REPRESENT THE **FUTURE**.



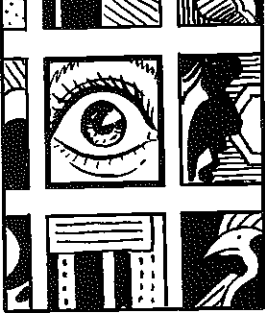
BUT **UNLIKE** OTHER MEDIA, IN COMICS, THE PAST IS MORE THAN JUST **MEMORIES** FOR THE AUDIENCE AND THE FUTURE IS MORE THAN JUST **POSSIBILITIES!**



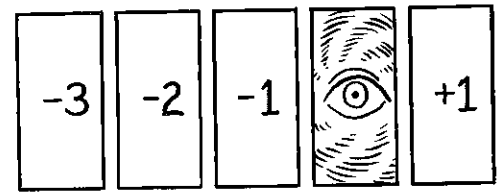
BOTH **PAST** AND **FUTURE** ARE **REAL** AND **VISIBLE** AND **ALL AROUND US!**



WHEREVER YOUR EYES ARE FOCUSED, THAT'S **NOW**. BUT AT THE SAME TIME YOUR EYES TAKE IN THE **SURROUNDING** LANDSCAPE OF **PAST** AND **FUTURE!**



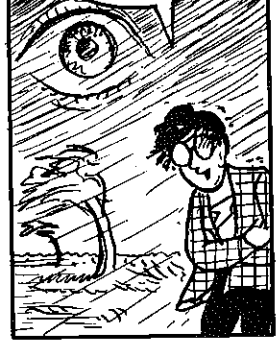
LIKE A **STORM FRONT**, THE EYE MOVES OVER THE COMICS PAGE, PUSHING THE WARM, HIGH-PRESSURE **FUTURE** AHEAD OF IT, LEAVING THE COOL, LOW-PRESSURE **PAST** IN ITS WAKE.



WHEREVER THE EYE HITS **LAND**, WE EXPECT IT TO BEGIN MOVING **FORWARD**.



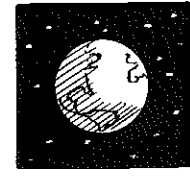
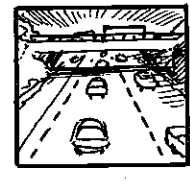
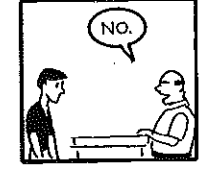
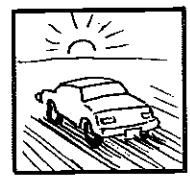
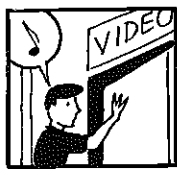
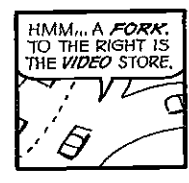
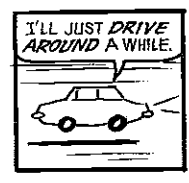
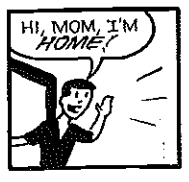
BUT **EYES**, LIKE **STORMS**, CAN **CHANGE DIRECTION!**



YET WE **SELD**OM **DO** CHANGE DIRECTION, EXCEPT TO **RE-READ** OR **REVIEW** PASSAGES. IT'S **LEFT-TO-RIGHT**, **UP-TO-DOWN**, **PAGE AFTER PAGE**.



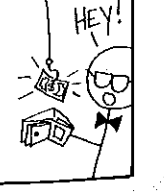
THE IDEA THAT THE **READER** MIGHT **CHOOSE** A DIRECTION IS STILL CONSIDERED **EXOTIC**.



THIS MAY, IN PART, BE THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER MEDIA LIKE **FILM** AND **TELEVISION** WHERE **VIEWER** CHOICE HAS NOT GENERALLY BEEN **FEASIBLE**.

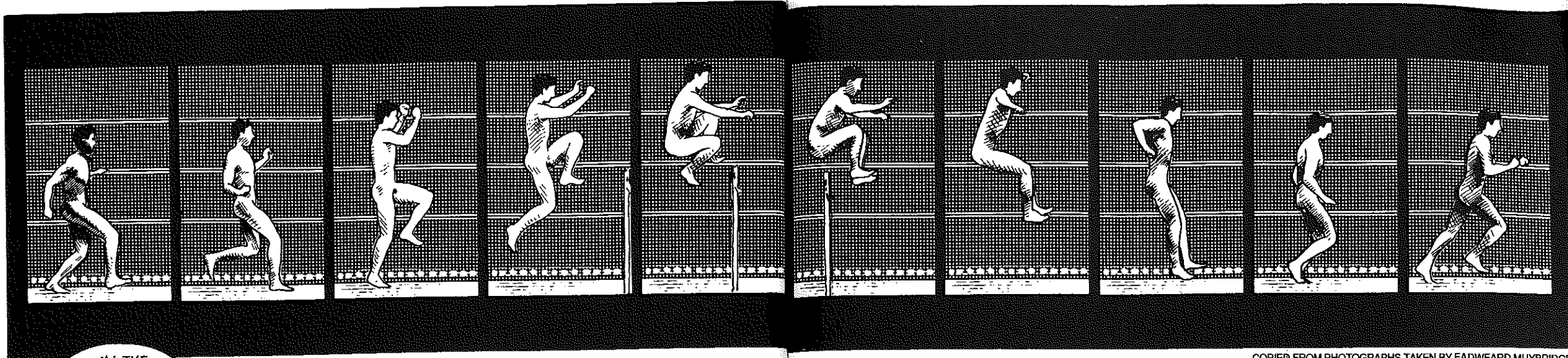


CONDITIONED AS WE ARE TO READ **LEFT-TO-RIGHT** AND **UP-TO-DOWN**, A MISCHIEVOUS CARTOONIST CAN PLAY ANY NUMBER OF **TRICKS** ON US.









COPIED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE.

IN THE LAST QUARTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IT SEEMED LIKE EVERYONE WAS TRYING TO CAPTURE MOTION THROUGH SCIENCE!

BY 1880, INVENTORS THE WORLD OVER KNEW THAT "MOVING PICTURES" WERE JUST AROUND THE CORNER. EVERYONE WANTED TO BE FIRST!

MY STROBOSCOPE IS SUPERIOR IN EVERY WAY TO THE OBSOLETE ZOËTROPE!

BAH! MY PRAXINOSCOPE IS BETTER!

FOOLS! MY KINEMATOSCOPE WILL SHOW YOU!

HA! CHILD'S PLAY! THEY ARE BUT MERE TOYS NEXT TO THE AWESOME PHANTASMATROPE!

FRAUDS ALL! MY ZOÏPRAXINOSCOPE WILL--!



EVENTUALLY THOMAS EDISON, THAT OLD SCALLYWAG, FILED THE FIRST PATENT ON A PROCESS USING STRIPS OF CLEAR PLASTIC PHOTOS AND FILM WAS OFF AND RUNNING!



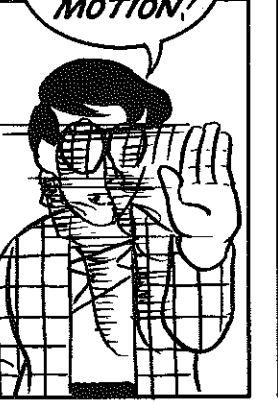
IF YOU'RE GOING TO PAINT A WORLD--



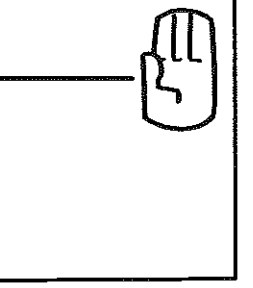
-- FILLED WITH MOTION --



-- THEN BE PREPARED TO PAINT MOTION!

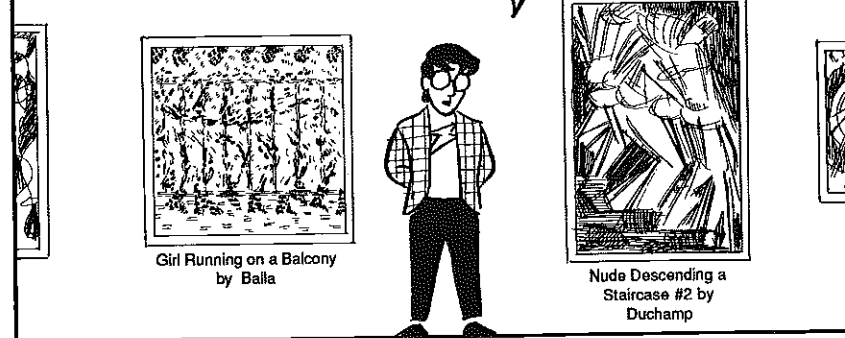


DUCHAMP, MORE CONCERNED WITH THE IDEA OF MOTION THAN THE SENSATION, WOULD EVENTUALLY REDUCE SUCH CONCEPTS AS MOTION TO A SINGLE LINE.



AS THE MOVING PICTURE BEGAN ITS SPECTACULAR RISE, A FEW OF THE MORE RADICAL PAINTERS OF THE DAY EXPLORED THE IDEA THAT MOTION COULD BE DEPICTED BY A SINGLE IMAGE ON CANVAS.

THE FUTURISTS IN ITALY AND MARCEL DUCHAMP IN FRANCE BEGAN THE SYSTEMATIC DECOMPOSITION OF MOVING IMAGES IN A STATIC MEDIUM.



Girl Running on a Balcony by Balla

Nude Descending a Staircase #2 by Duchamp

IT WASN'T A BAD IDEA!

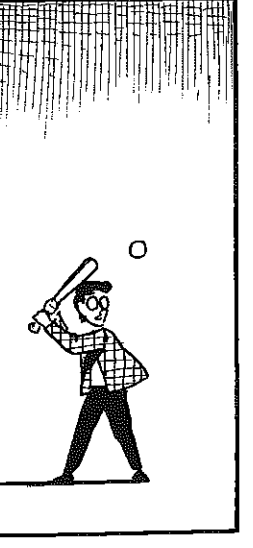
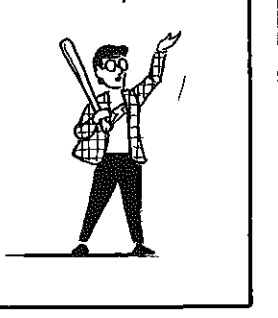


DUCHAMP SOON MOVED ON, THE FUTURISTS DISBANDED AND FINE ARTISTS GENERALLY LOST INTEREST IN THIS OTHER TYPE OF "MOVING PICTURE."

BUT THROUGHOUT THIS SAME PERIOD ANOTHER MEDIUM, LESS CONSPICUOUSLY, HAD BEEN INVESTIGATING THIS SAME AREA.



I'M SURE YOU CAN ALL GUESS WHICH MEDIUM I MEAN!



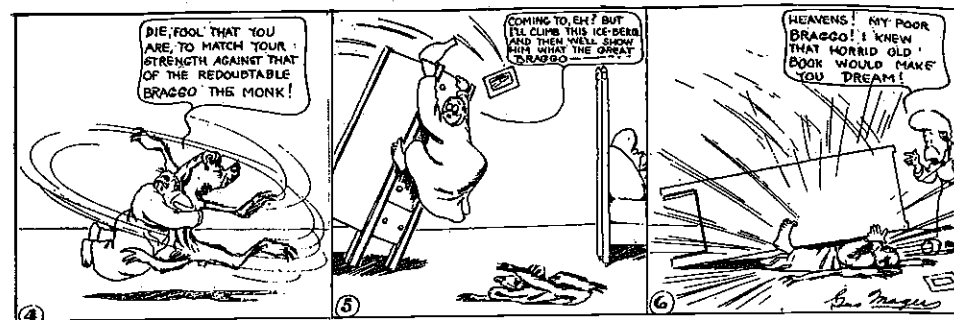


FROM ITS *EARLIEST DAYS*, THE MODERN COMIC HAS GRAPPLED WITH THE PROBLEM OF SHOWING MOTION IN A *STATIC MEDIUM*.

HOW DO YOU SHOW THIS ASPECT OF TIME IN AN ART WHERE *TIME STANDS STILL*?

AND IN COMICS, UNLIKE PAINTING, IT WAS MORE THAN JUST A *THEORETICAL QUESTION*!

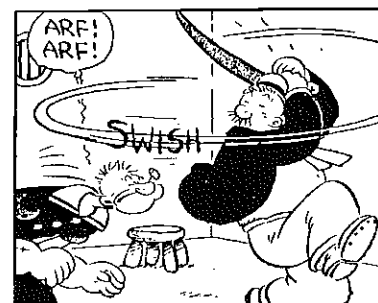
IN THE BEGINNING, MOTION LINES--OR "*ZIP-RIBBONS*" AS SOME CALL THEM--WERE *WILD, MESSY*, ALMOST *DESPERATE* ATTEMPTS TO REPRESENT THE PATHS OF *MOVING OBJECTS* THROUGH SPACE.



"POPEYE" AND "BRAGGO THE MONK" © KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, INC.

THOUGH SEQUENTIAL ART SURVIVED FOR MANY CENTURIES *WITHOUT* DEPICTING MOTION, ONCE THE GENIE WAS OUT OF THE BOTTLE IT WAS PERHAPS *INEVITABLE* THAT MORE AND MORE EFFICIENT MEANS WOULD BE SOUGHT. AT FIRST, THIS SEARCH CENTERED ON *MULTIPLE IMAGES* IN SEQUENCE.

OVER THE YEARS, THESE LINES BECAME MORE *REFINED* AND *STYLIZED*, EVEN *DIAGRAMMATIC*.



EVENTUALLY, IN THE HANDS OF *HEROIC FANTASY* ARTISTS LIKE *BILL EVERETT* AND *JACK KIRBY*--

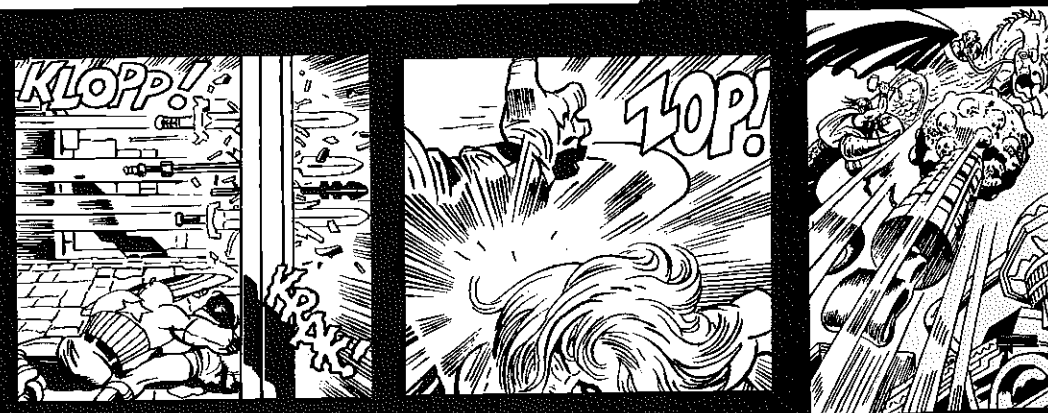


BUT JUST AS A SINGLE PANEL CAN REPRESENT A *SPAN* OF TIME THROUGH *SOUND*--

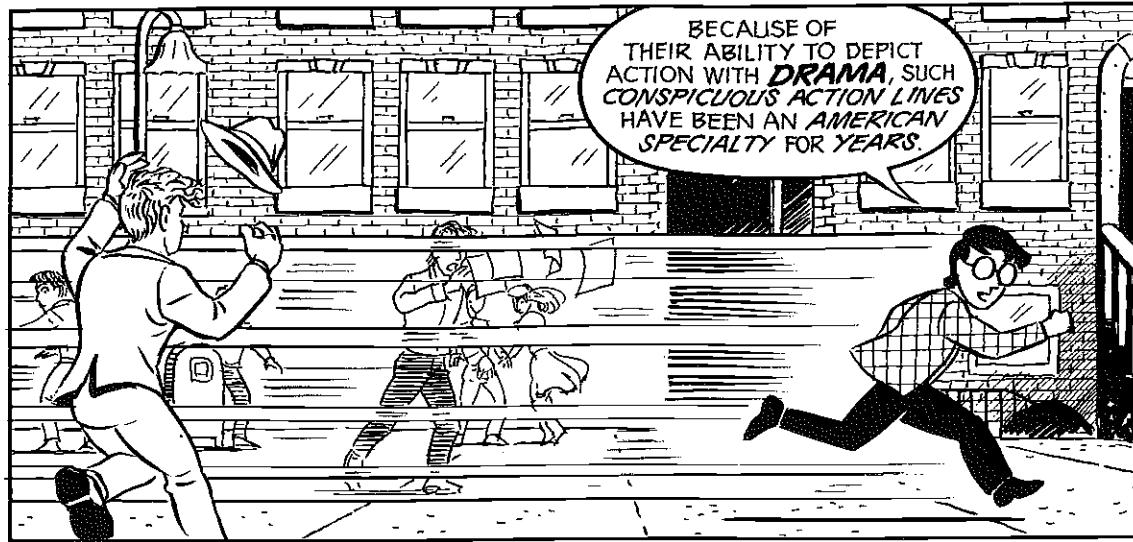
--SO TOO CAN A SINGLE PANEL REPRESENT A *SPAN* OF TIME THROUGH *PICTURES*!

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE FUTURISTS' *DYNAMIC* MOVEMENT AND DUCHAMP'S *DIAGRAMMATIC CONCEPT* OF MOVEMENT LIES COMICS' "*MOTION LINE*."

--THOSE SAME LINES BECAME *SO* STYLIZED AS TO ALMOST HAVE A *LIFE* AND *PHYSICAL PRESENCE* *ALL THEIR OWN*!

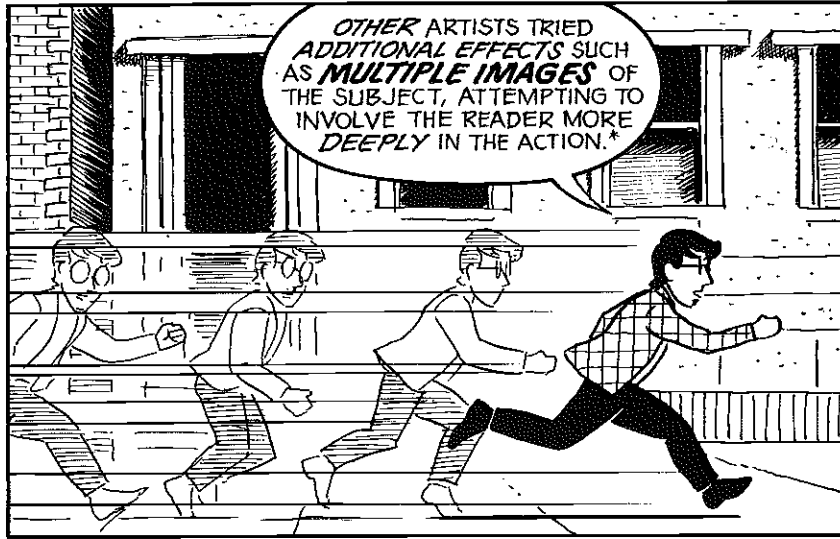
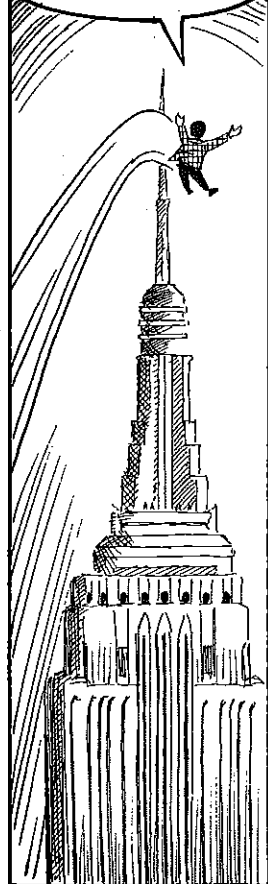


ART (CENTER AND ABOVE RIGHT) © D.C. COMICS. (LEFT AND RIGHT) © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP INC.



BECAUSE OF THEIR ABILITY TO DEPICT ACTION WITH **DRAMA**, SUCH **CONSPICUOUS ACTION LINES** HAVE BEEN AN **AMERICAN SPECIALTY** FOR YEARS.

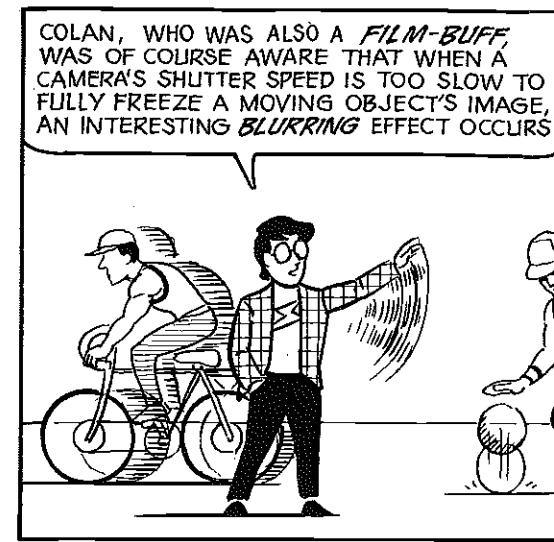
IN THIS APPROACH, BOTH THE **MOVING OBJECT** AND THE **BACKGROUNDS** ARE DRAWN IN A **CLEAR, ARTICULATED STYLE**, AND THE **PATH OF MOTION** IS IMPOSED **OVER** THE SCENE.



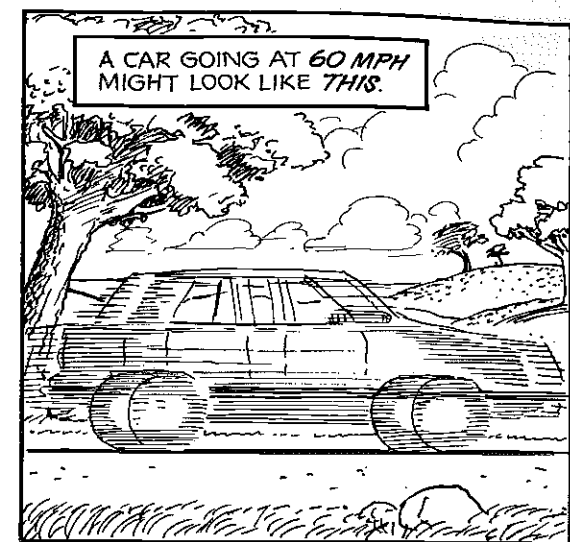
OTHER ARTISTS TRIED **ADDITIONAL EFFECTS** SUCH AS **MULTIPLE IMAGES** OF THE SUBJECT, ATTEMPTING TO INVOLVE THE READER MORE **DEEPLY** IN THE ACTION.\*



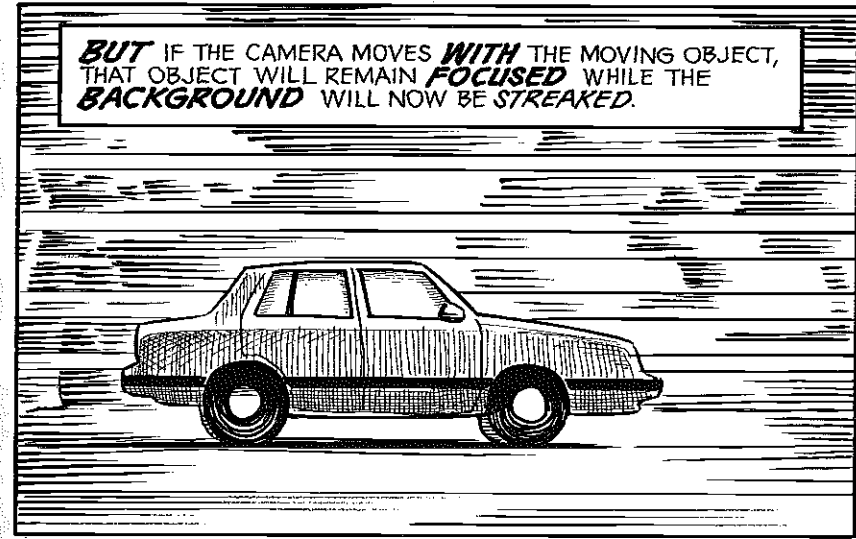
STILL OTHERS, SUCH AS MARVEL'S **GENE COLAN**, BEGAN INCORPORATING PHOTOGRAPHIC **STREAKING** EFFECTS WITH SOME INTRIGUING RESULTS IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES.



COLAN, WHO WAS ALSO A **FILM-BUFF** WAS OF COURSE AWARE THAT WHEN A CAMERA'S SHUTTER SPEED IS TOO SLOW TO FULLY FREEZE A MOVING OBJECT'S IMAGE, AN INTERESTING **BLURRING** EFFECT OCCURS.



A CAR GOING AT **60 MPH** MIGHT LOOK LIKE **THIS**.



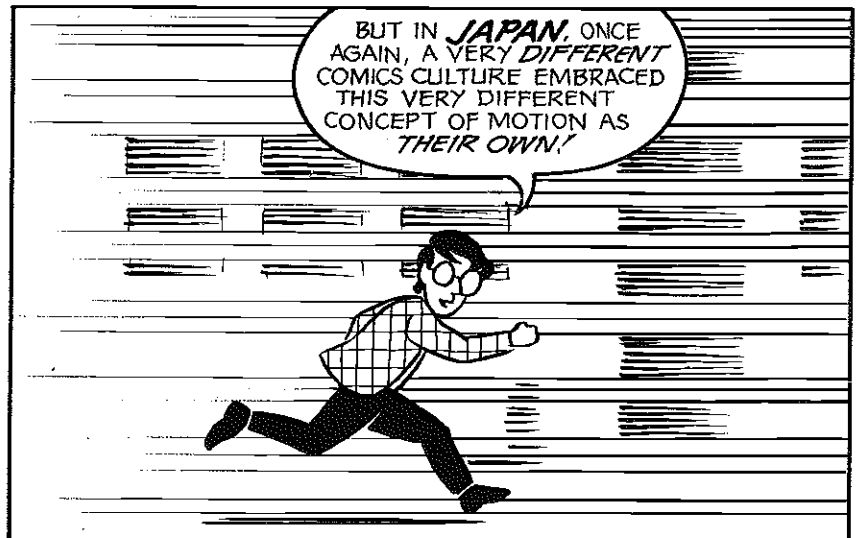
**BUT** IF THE CAMERA MOVES **WITH** THE MOVING OBJECT, THAT OBJECT WILL REMAIN **FOCUSED** WHILE THE **BACKGROUND** WILL NOW BE **STREAKED**.



**AMERICAN** COMICS ARTISTS TOOK LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN THIS KIND OF **PHOTOGRAPHIC TRICKERY**.



AND IN **EUROPE** WHERE MOTION LINES WERE USED ONLY **SPARINGLY**, IT WAS LIKewise **IGNORED**.



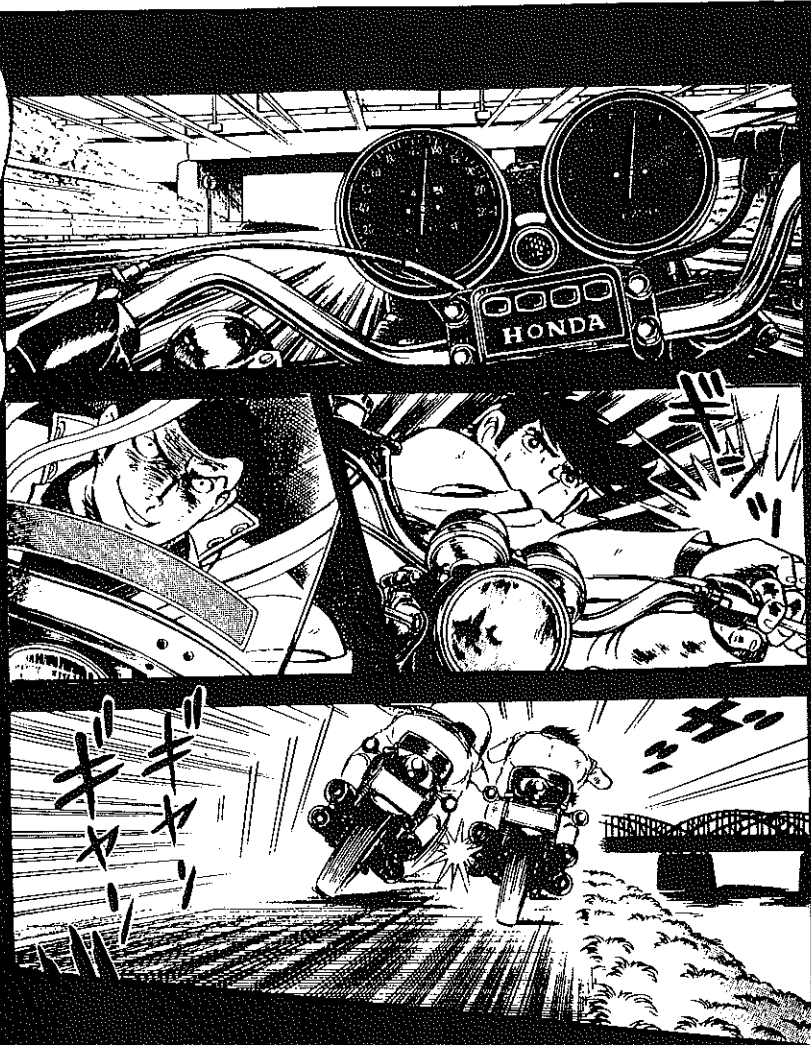
BUT IN **JAPAN**, ONCE AGAIN, A VERY **DIFFERENT** COMICS CULTURE EMBRACED THIS VERY DIFFERENT CONCEPT OF MOTION AS **THEIR OWN!**

\* MULTIPLE IMAGES CAN BE FOUND IN THE WORK OF KRIGSTEIN, INFANTINO AND OTHERS.

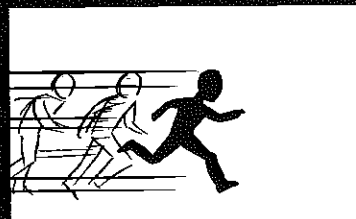
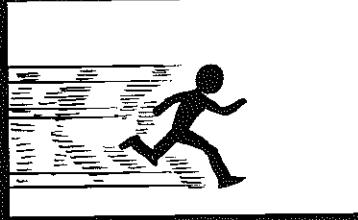
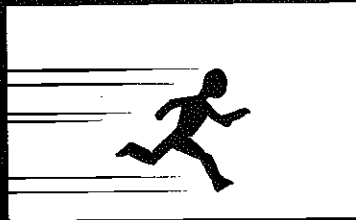
"SUBJECTIVE MOTION," AS I CALL IT, OPERATES ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IF OBSERVING A MOVING OBJECT CAN BE INVOLVING, BEING THAT OBJECT SHOULD BE MORE SO.

JAPANESE ARTISTS, STARTING IN THE LATE 60s, BEGAN PUTTING THEIR READERS "IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT" WITH PANELS LIKE THESE.

AND STARTING IN THE MID-EIGHTIES, A FEW AMERICAN ARTISTS BEGAN TO ADOPT THE EFFECT IN THEIR OWN WORK, UNTIL BY THE EARLY NINETIES IT HAS BECOME FAIRLY COMMON.



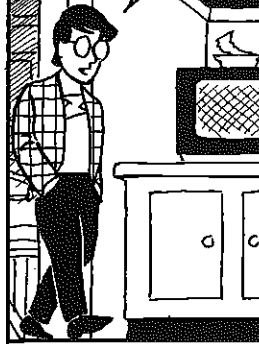
©石井いさみ?



ARE THESE THE ONLY WAYS WE CAN PORTRAY MOTION IN A SINGLE PANEL? THINK ABOUT IT.



IN A MEDIUM WHERE TIME AND SPACE MERGE--



--THE STORYTELLER HAS SOME UNUSUAL TOOLS AT HIS/HER DISPOSAL--



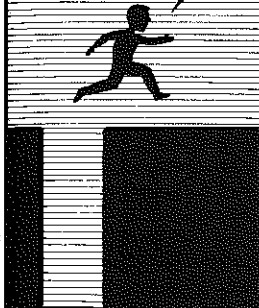
--SUCH AS THE POLYPTYCH, WHERE A MOVING FIGURE OR FIGURES--



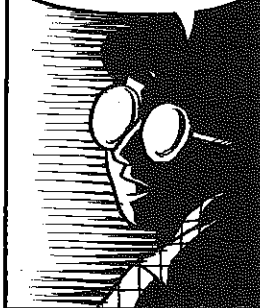
--IS IMPOSED OVER A CONTINUOUS BACKGROUND.



IN COMICS, COMPOSITION FOLLOWS A VERY DIFFERENT SET OF RULES THAN IN MOST GRAPHIC ARTS.



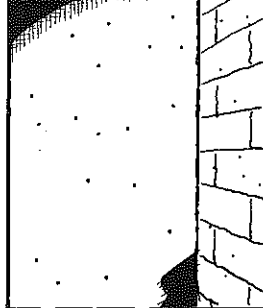
BY INTRODUCING TIME INTO THE EQUATION, COMICS ARTISTS ARE ARRANGING THE PAGE IN WAYS NOT ALWAYS CONDUCTIVE TO TRADITIONAL PICTURE-MAKING.



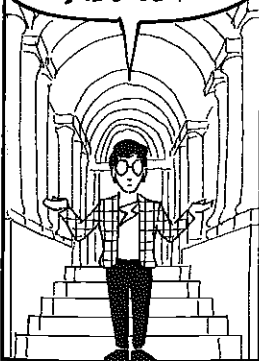
HERE, THE COMPOSITION OF THE PICTURE IS JOINED BY THE COMPOSITION OF CHANGE, THE COMPOSITION OF DRAMA--



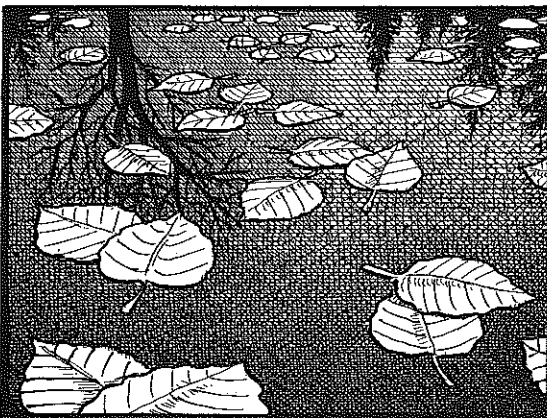
--AND THE COMPOSITION OF MEMORY.



IF THE COMPOSITION OF A SINGLE PANEL IS TRULY "PERFECT," DOESN'T THAT IMPLY THAT IT CAN--OR EVEN SHOULD--STAND ALONE?



THE NATURAL WORLD CREATES GREAT BEAUTY EVERY DAY, YET THE ONLY RULES OF COMPOSITION IT FOLLOWS ARE THOSE OF FUNCTION AND CHANCE.



COMICS, AT ITS BEST, SHOULD DO NO LESS.



