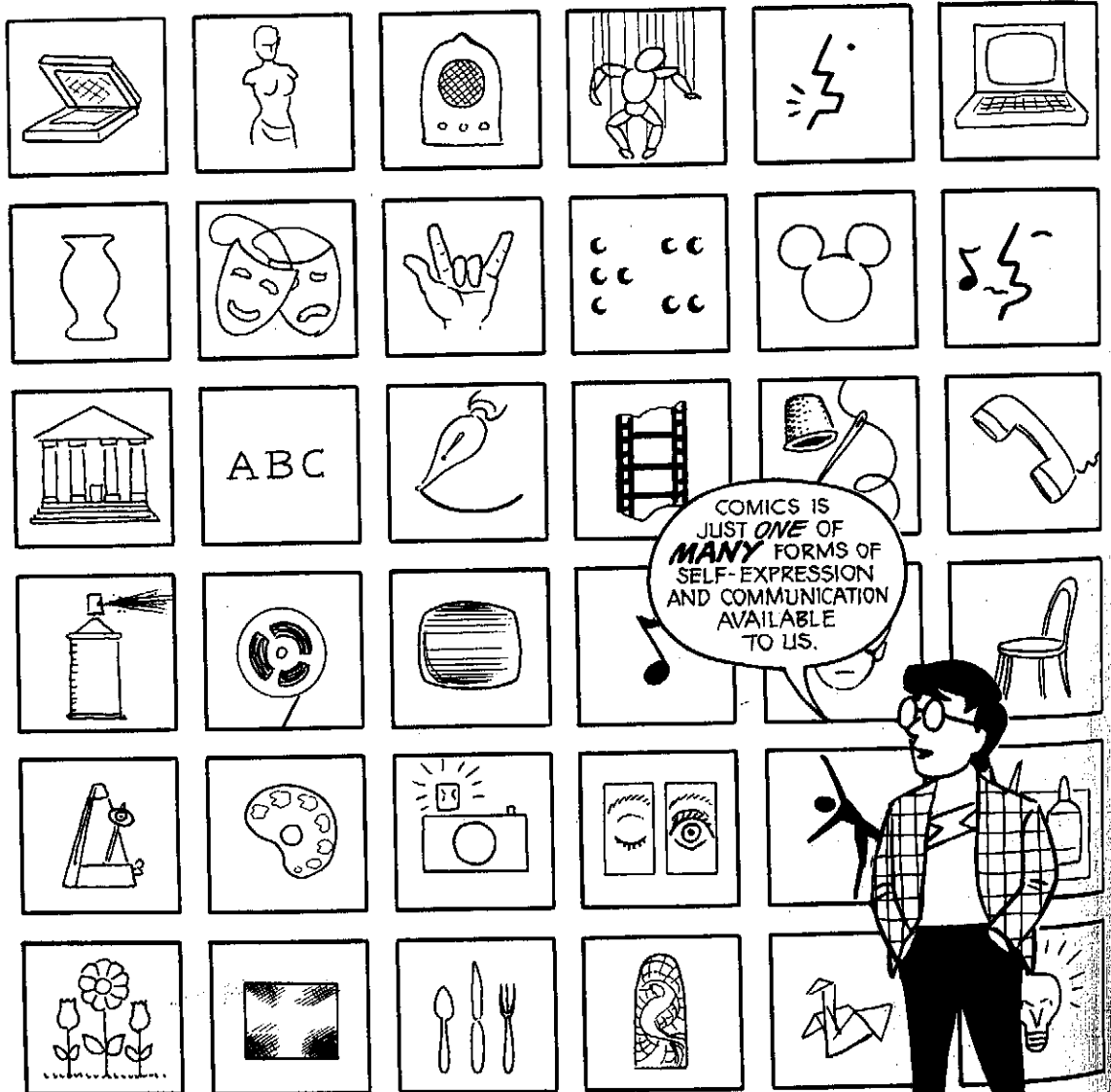


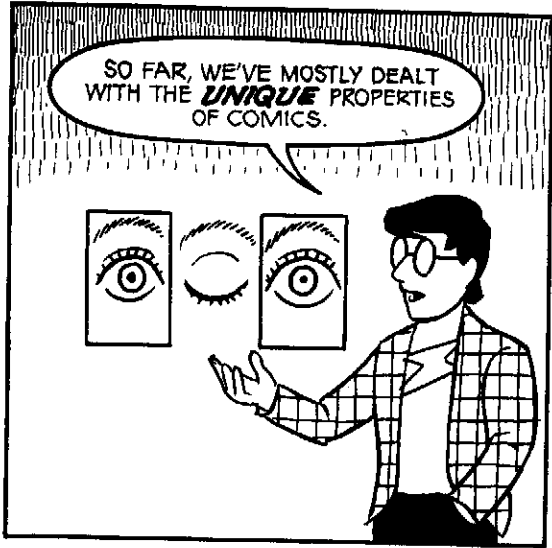
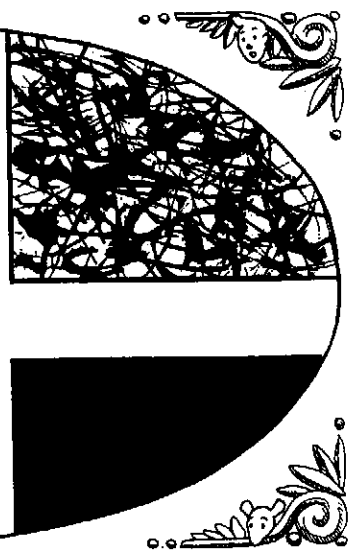
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SIX STEPS.

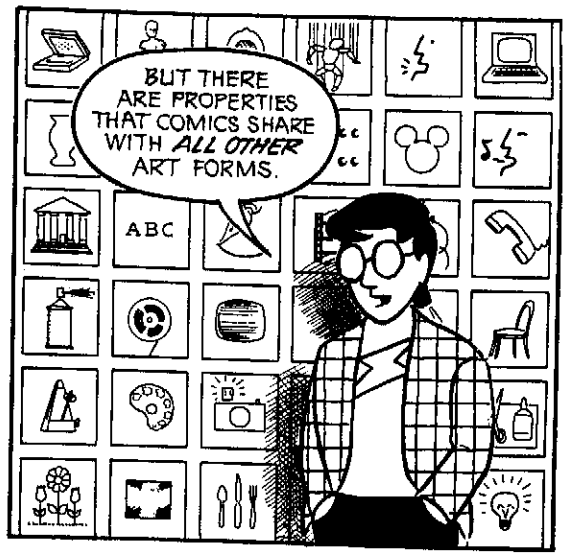


COMICS IS JUST ONE OF **MANY** FORMS OF SELF-EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION AVAILABLE TO US.





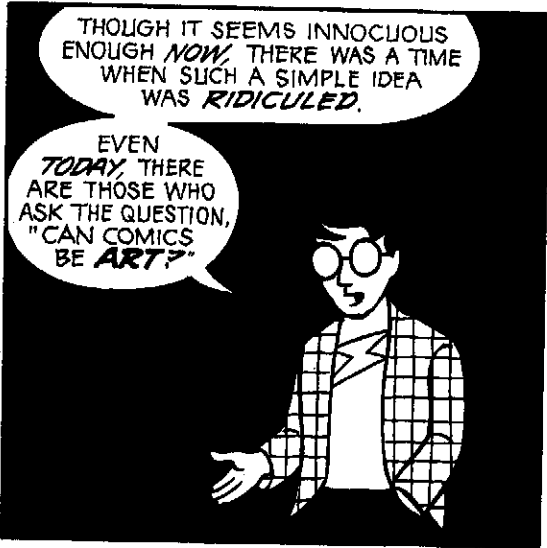
SO FAR, WE'VE MOSTLY DEALT WITH THE **UNIQUE** PROPERTIES OF COMICS.



BUT THERE ARE PROPERTIES THAT COMICS SHARE WITH **ALL OTHER** ART FORMS.

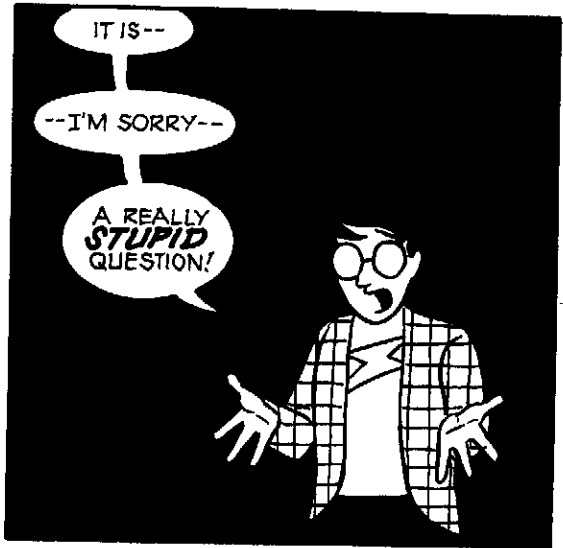


COMICS IS ONE OF THE FORMS OF EXPRESSION AVAILABLE TO US.



THOUGH IT SEEMS INNOCUOUS ENOUGH **NOW**, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SUCH A SIMPLE IDEA WAS **RIDICULED**.

EVEN **TODAY**, THERE ARE THOSE WHO ASK THE QUESTION, "CAN COMICS BE **ART**?"



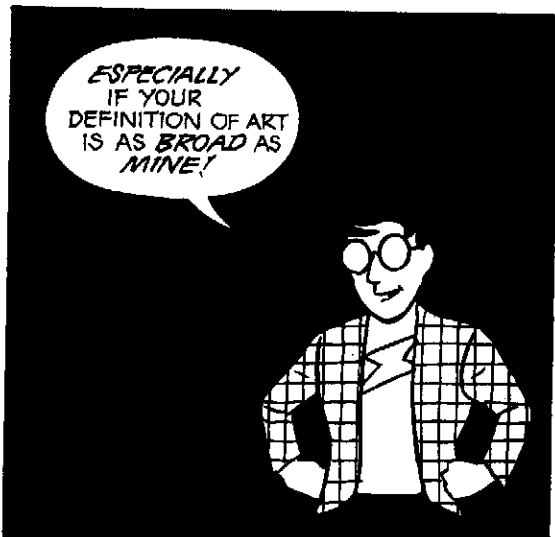
IT IS--

--I'M SORRY--

A REALLY **STUPID** QUESTION!



BUT IF WE **MUST** ANSWER IT, THE ANSWER IS **YES**.



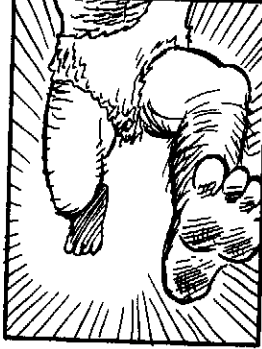
ESPECIALLY IF YOUR DEFINITION OF ART IS AS **BROAD** AS **MINE!**



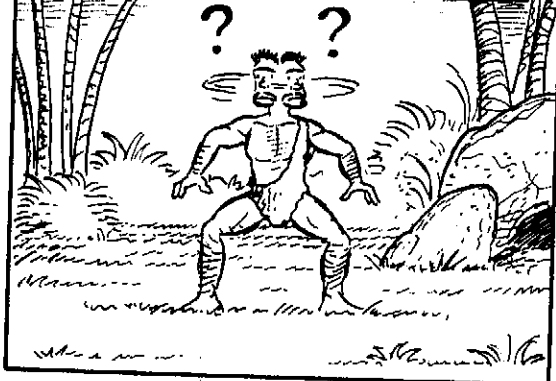
EXAMPLE: HERE'S A PREHISTORIC MALE CHASING A PREHISTORIC FEMALE. WITH ONLY ONE THING ON HIS MIND-- **REPRODUCTION!**



SO **STRONG** IS THIS INSTINCT THAT IT GOVERNS HIS EVERY MOVE! NOT ONE STEP IS WASTED IN THE PURSUIT OF HIS GOAL!



THE **FEMALE**--AFRAID FOR HER **SURVIVAL**--MANAGES TO HIDE. NOW, DEPRIVED OF HIS GOAL, THE MALE STANDS **INDECISIVE.**

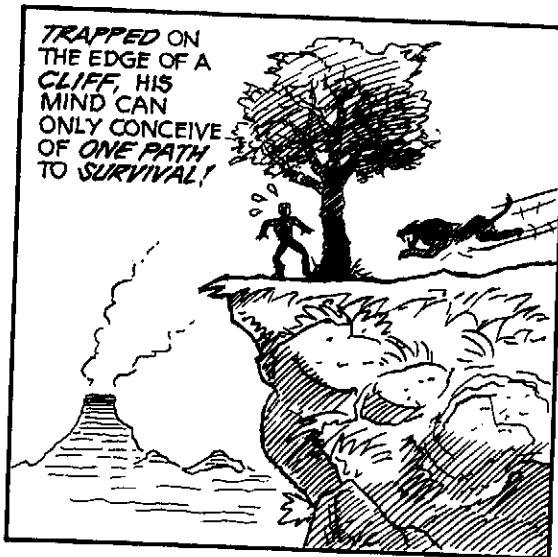


NOW ALL OF HIS THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS ARE FOCUSED ON THAT **OTHER VITAL HUMAN INSTINCT-- SURVIVAL!**

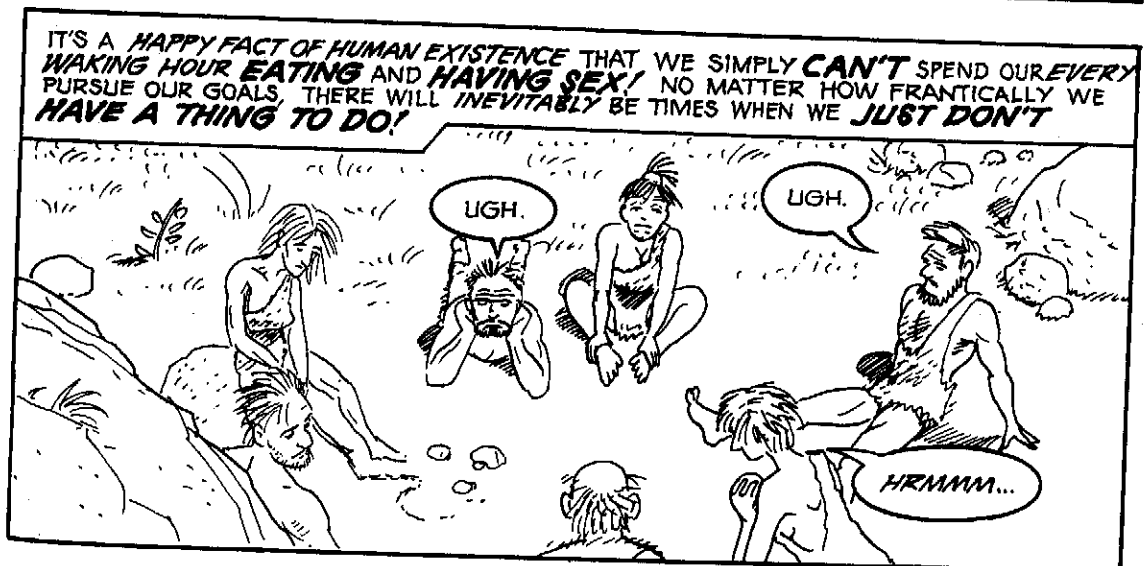
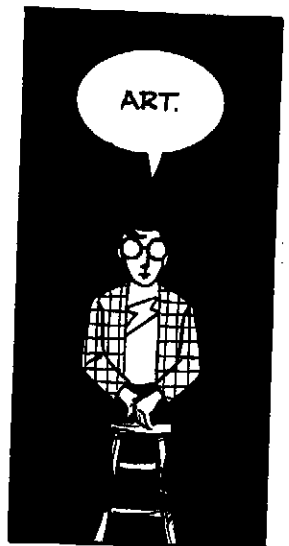
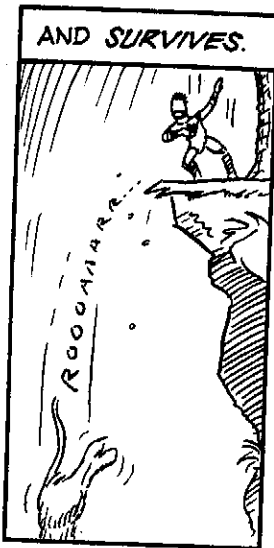


AGAIN HIS LEGS PROPEL HIM FORWARD WITH **MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY!**

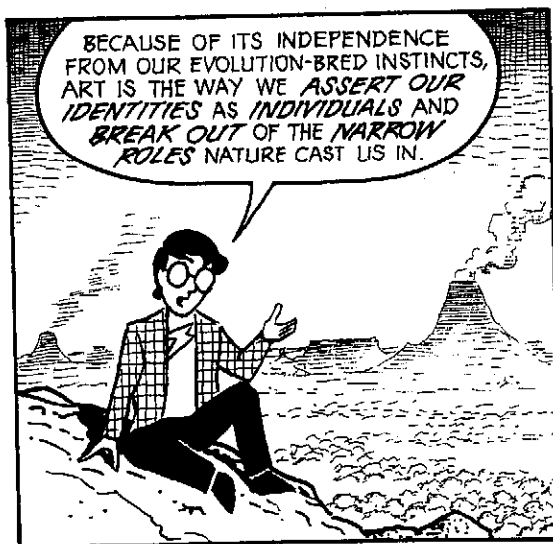
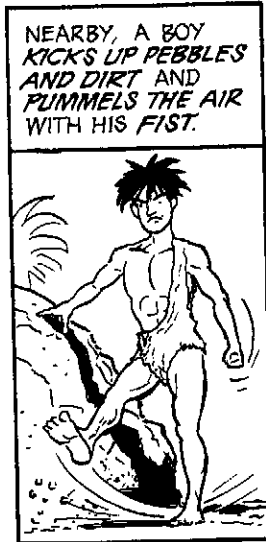
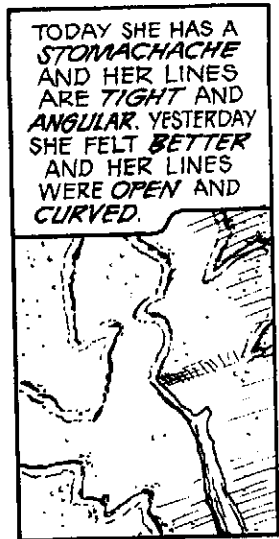
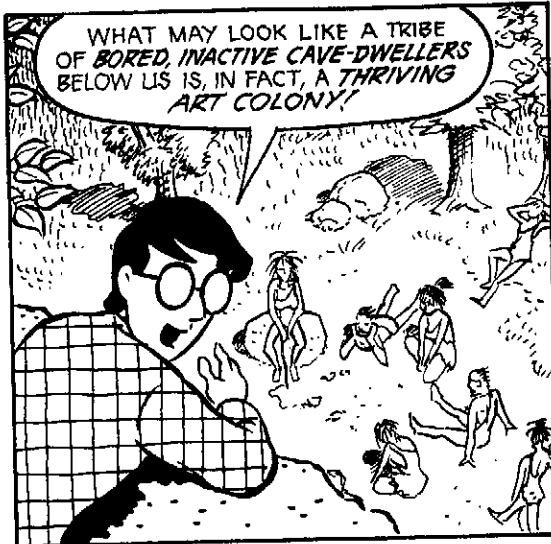




TRAPPED ON THE EDGE OF A CLIFF, HIS MIND CAN ONLY CONCEIVE OF ONE PATH TO SURVIVAL!



IT'S A HAPPY FACT OF HUMAN EXISTENCE THAT WE SIMPLY CAN'T SPEND OUR EVERY WAKING HOUR EATING AND HAVING SEX! NO MATTER HOW FRANTICALLY WE PURSUE OUR GOALS, THERE WILL INEVITABLY BE TIMES WHEN WE JUST DON'T HAVE A THING TO DO!



TODAY SHE HAS A STOMACHACHE AND HER LINES ARE TIGHT AND ANGULAR. YESTERDAY SHE FELT BETTER AND HER LINES WERE OPEN AND CURVED.



FIRST, THEY PROVIDE EXERCISE FOR MINDS AND BODIES NOT RECEIVING *OUTSIDE STIMULUS*.



SECOND, THEY PROVIDE AN *OUTLET FOR EMOTIONAL IMBALANCES*, AIDING IN THE RACE'S *MENTAL SURVIVAL*.



THIRD AND PERHAPS MOST *IMPORTANTLY* TO OUR SURVIVAL AS A RACE, SUCH RANDOM ACTIVITIES OFTEN LEAD--



--TO *USEFUL DISCOVERIES!*



WHILE OVER *HERE*, A LITTLE GIRL SINGS HER SONG OF *YOUTH!*

DoooooRRooooo...
YB-BIP-BIP-BIP!
GREEEGAH!!
WUK! WUK!



THIS FUNCTION WOULD ALSO BE PERFORMED IN *LATER CENTURIES* BY *SPORTS AND GAMES*.



ART AS *SELF EXPRESSION*, THE ARTIST AS *HERO*; FOR MANY, ITS *HIGHEST PURPOSE*.



ART AS *DISCOVERY*, AS THE PURSUIT OF *TRUTH*, AS *EXPLORATION*; THE SOUL OF MUCH *MODERN ART* AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF *LANGUAGE, SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY*.



A LOT HAS *CHANGED* IN HALF A MILLION YEARS, BUT SOME THINGS *NEVER CHANGE*.



THE PROCESSES ARE MORE *COMPLEX* NOW, BUT THE INSTINCTS* *REMAIN THE SAME*. *SURVIVAL AND REPRODUCTION* STILL HOLD THE *UPPER HAND*.



THREE, IN FACT.



*ALONG WITH THEIR MANY RELATED FEELINGS AND CUSTOMS.

YET IN ALMOST EVERYTHING WE DO THERE IS AT LEAST AN **ELEMENT OF ART.**

PERHAPS A LITTLE **UNNECESSARY CHOREOGRAPHY ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE.**

OOOH, BEH BEE!

OR THE **PERSONAL STYLE OF A BICYCLE MESSENGER.**

HONK! HONK!

OR JUST THE WAY WE **SIGN OUR NAMES!**

Sound do herein please d.

IN SOME OCCUPATIONS, THE LATITUDE FOR SELF-EXPRESSION IS **GREATER. SURVIVAL**--MAKING A LIVING--GOES HAND IN HAND WITH **CREATIVE DESIRE.**

I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT SOME ACTIVITIES HAVE MORE **ART IN THEM** THAN OTHERS.

LIFE IS A SERIES OF **MINUTE DECISIONS**, SOME MOTIVATED BY **SURVIVAL**, SOME **NOT**, AND PROPORTIONS DO **VARY.**

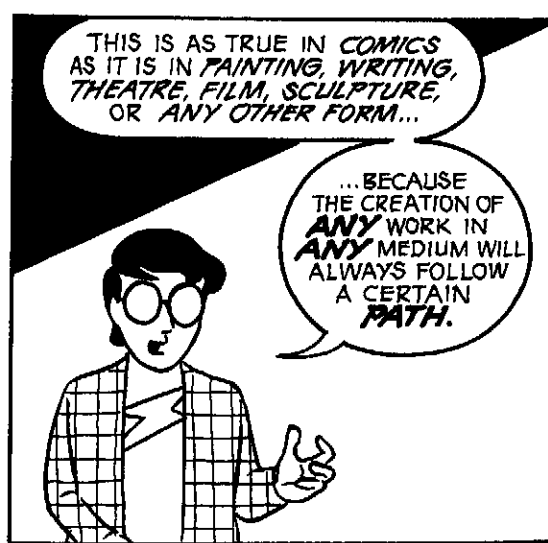
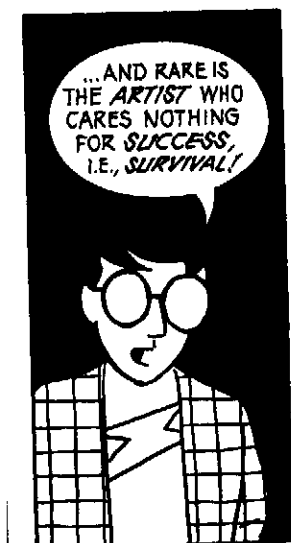
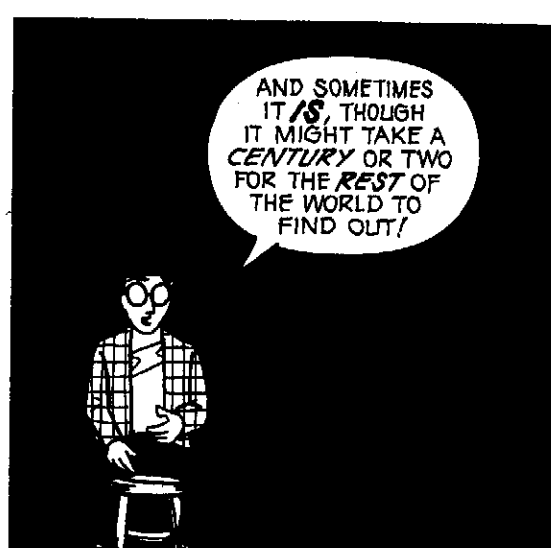
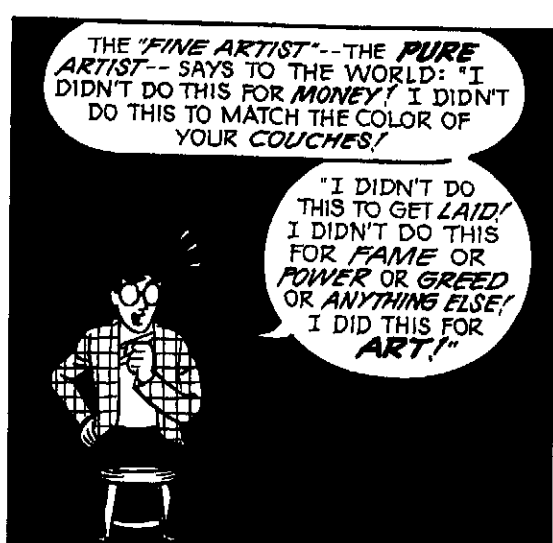
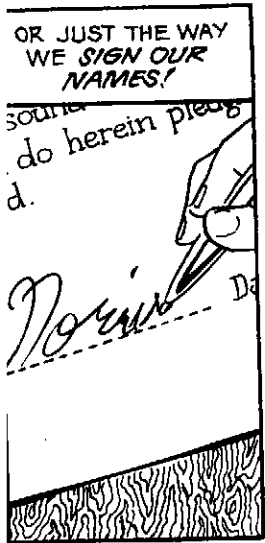
BUT TO PROCLAIM, AS SO MANY SO OFTEN DO, THAT--

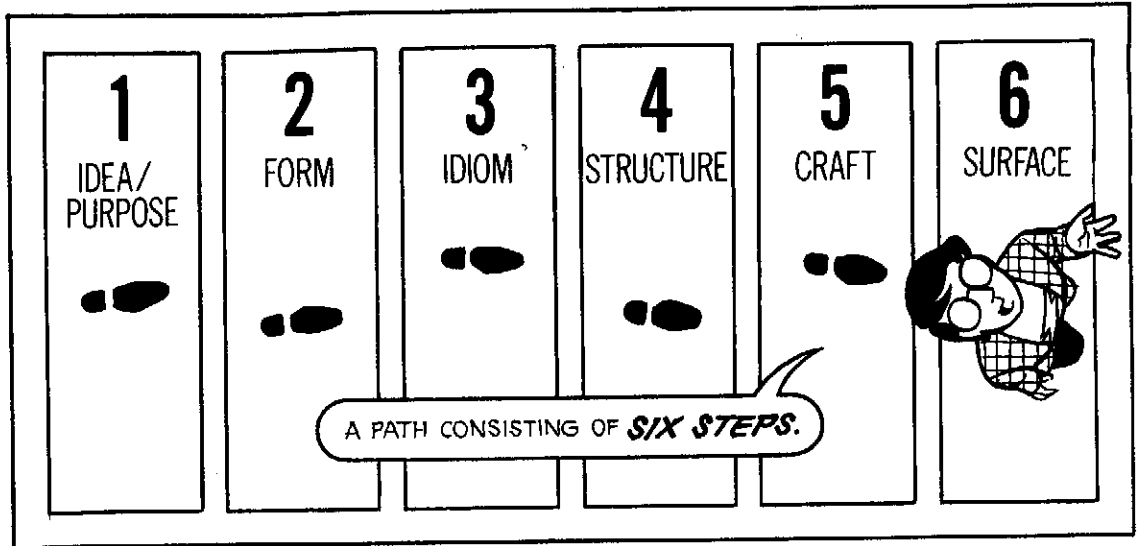
THAT'S NOT ART!

-- PRESUMES THAT ART IS AN **EITHER/OR** PROPOSITION. I DON'T THINK IT IS.

RARE IS THE PERSON IN **ANY** OCCUPATION WHO EXPRESSES **NOTHING...**

...AND RARE IS THE **ARTIST** WHO CARES NOTHING FOR **SUCCESS**, I.E., **SURVIVAL!**





1
IDEA/
PURPOSE

FIRST:
THE *IMPULSES*, THE
IDEAS, THE *EMOTIONS*,
THE *PHILOSOPHIES*, THE
PURPOSES OF THE
WORK... THE WORK'S
"*CONTENT*."

2
FORM

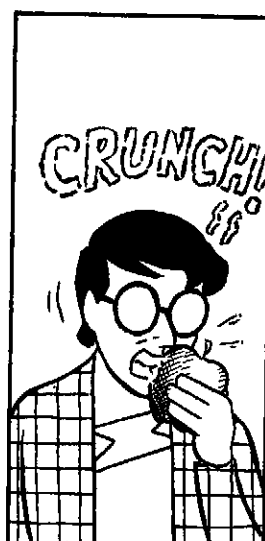
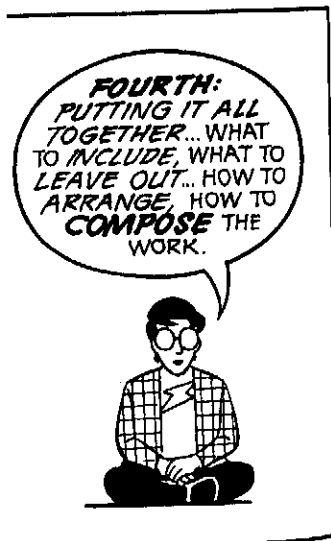
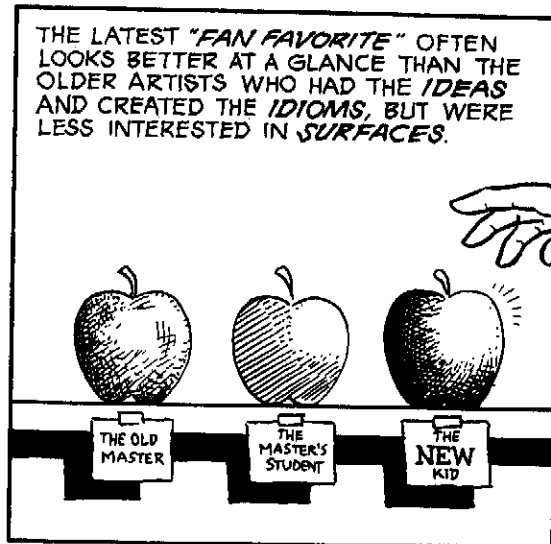
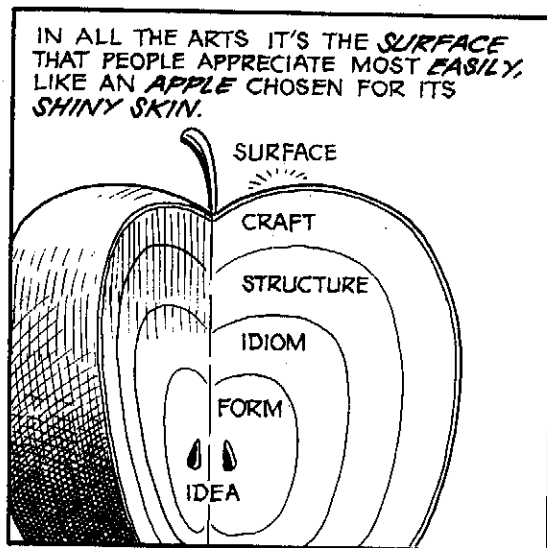
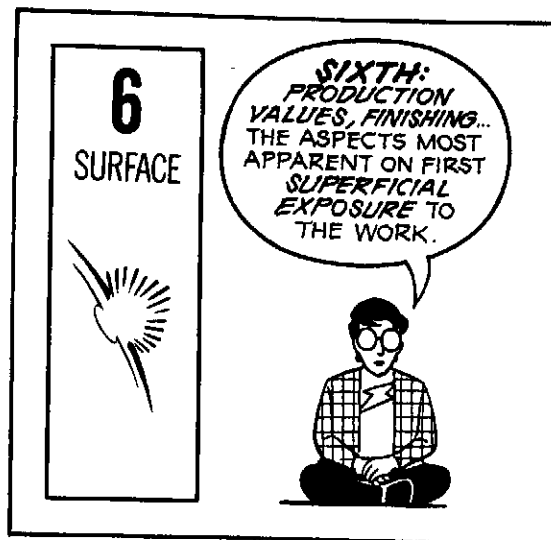
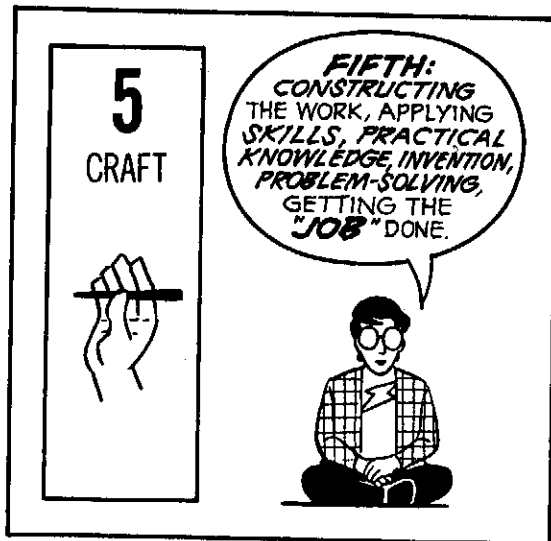
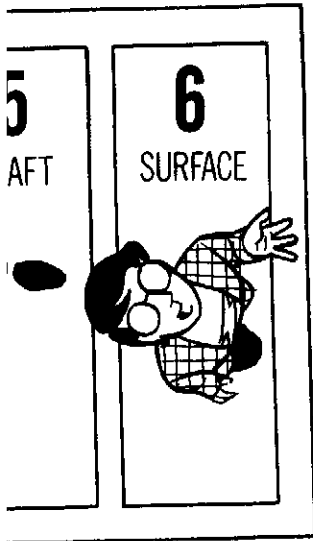
SECOND:
THE *FORM* IT WILL
TAKE... WILL IT BE A
BOOK? A *CHALK*
DRAWING? A *CHAIR*?
A *SONG*? A *SCULPTURE*?
A *POT HOLDER*? A
COMIC BOOK?

3
IDIOM

THIRD:
THE "*SCHOOL*" OF
ART, THE VOCABULARY
OF *STYLES* OR *GESTURES*
OR *SUBJECT MATTER*,
THE *GENRE* THAT THE
WORK BELONGS TO...
MAYBE A *GENRE*
OF ITS OWN.

4
STRUCTURE

FOURTH:
PUTTING IT ALL
TOGETHER... WHAT
TO *INCLUDE*, WHAT TO
LEAVE OUT... HOW TO
ARRANGE, HOW TO
COMPOSE THE
WORK.

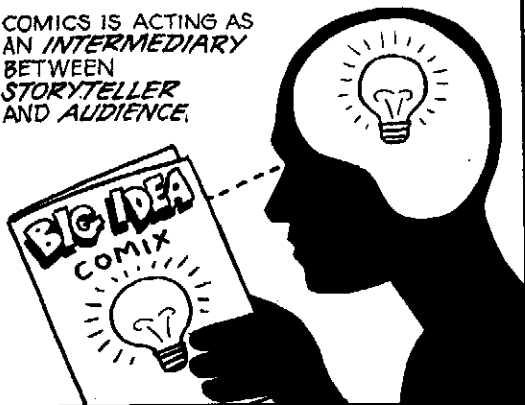


IN **COMICS**, THE CYCLE BEGINS *ALL OVER THE WORLD*, AS YOUNG READERS *DISCOVER* COMICS FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IN A FEW CASES, BEGIN TO DEVELOP A *LOVE* FOR COMICS THAT WILL LAST A *LIFETIME!*



IN THIS EARLY STAGE, THESE READERS ARE EXPERIENCING THE **CHARACTERS, IDEAS, EVENTS AND EMOTIONS** OF THE STORY **DIRECTLY**

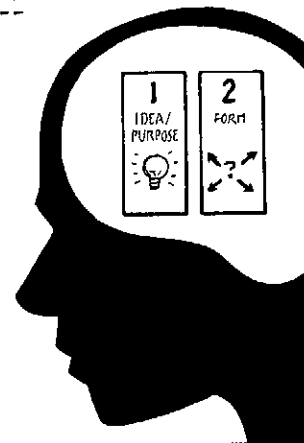
COMICS IS ACTING AS AN **INTERMEDIARY** BETWEEN **STORYTELLER** AND **AUDIENCE.**



BUT IN SOME, AN AWARENESS OF THE **FORM** BEGINS TO DEVELOP, AN AWARENESS THAT ALL COMICS ARE JUST **INK ON PAPER--**

--THAT **MAKING** THEM ONLY **REQUIRES** CERTAIN **SKILLS--**

--AND THAT THOSE **SKILLS** CAN BE **LEARNED!**



ON MA

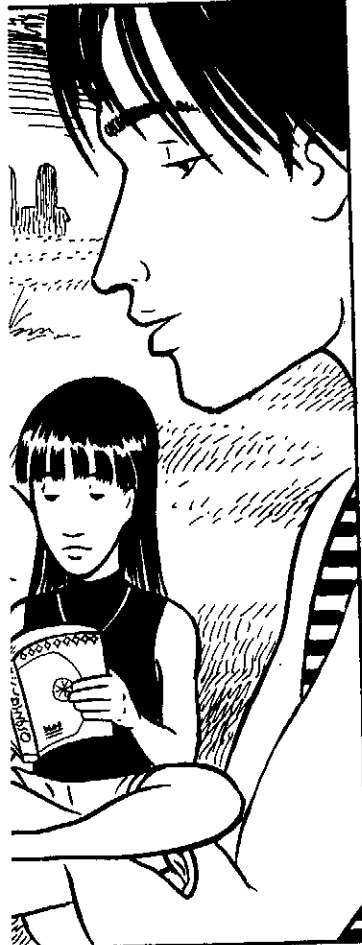
MOR
IDEA
OF O

BUT W
REAL

... AN
THAT
PERSF
WH

--GULP--

FOR THE WORLD, AS
THE FIRST TIME
A LOVE FOR COMICS

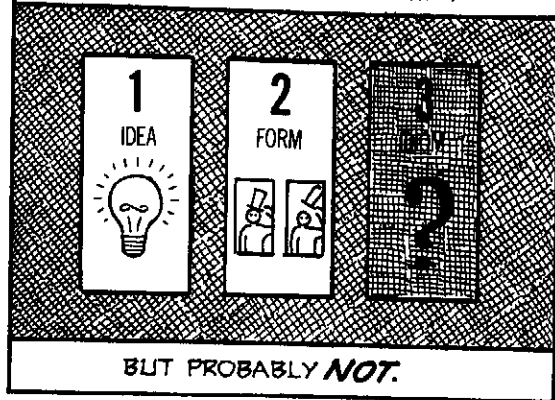


ONE OF THEM--FULL OF **BIG IDEAS**--
MAKES THE **BIG DECISION**.



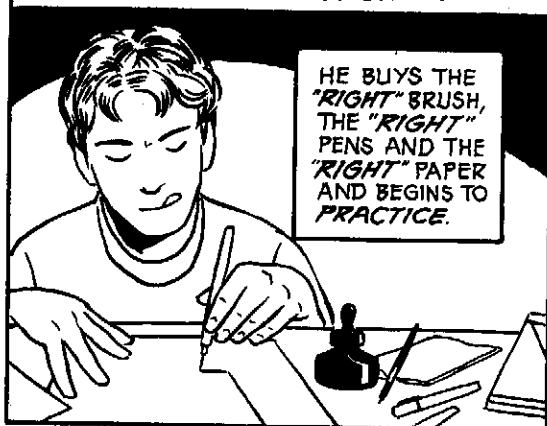
I'M GONNA
MAKE **COMICS**
WHEN I GROW
UP!

HE'S OFF TO A LOGICAL START. HE HAS
THE **IDEAS** AND HE'S CHOSEN **COMICS**
AS HIS **FORM OF EXPRESSION**. MAYBE
NOW HE'LL CONSIDER WHAT **TYPES** OF
COMICS ARE RIGHT FOR HIM.



BUT PROBABLY **NOT**.

MORE LIKELY HE **POSTPONES** HIS **OWN**
IDEAS AND BEGINS TO STUDY THE **CRAFT**
OF **OTHER** ARTISTS IN HIS ATTEMPT TO
BECOME A **PROFESSIONAL**.



HE BUYS THE
"RIGHT" BRUSH,
THE "RIGHT"
PENS AND THE
"RIGHT" PAPER
AND BEGINS TO
PRACTICE.

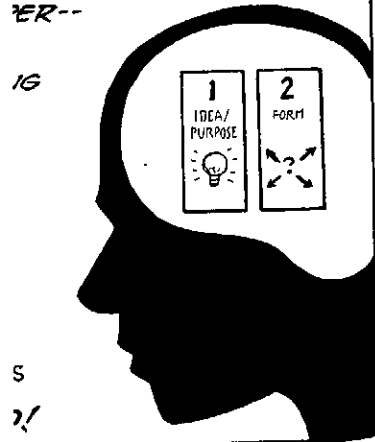
EVENTUALLY...



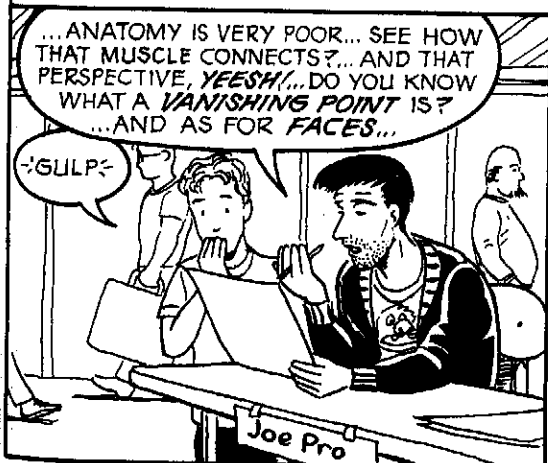
LOOK, JACK!
I CAN DRAW AS
WELL AS A
PROFESSIONAL!

WOW!

AN AWARENESS OF THE
NEEDS TO DEVELOP, AN
REALIZATION THAT ALL COMICS ARE JUST
DRAWING--



BUT WHEN HE BRINGS THE WORK TO A
REAL PROFESSIONAL AT THE LOCAL **CON**:

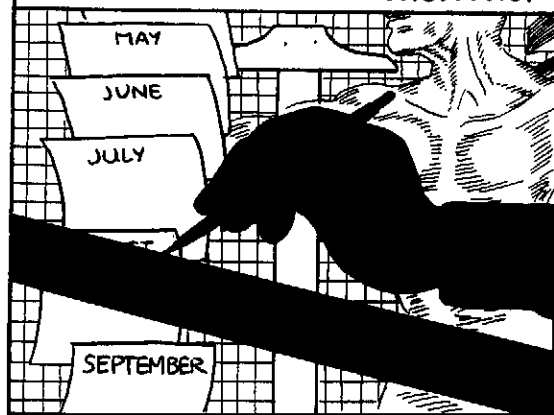


... ANATOMY IS VERY POOR... SEE HOW
THAT MUSCLE CONNECTS?... AND THAT
PERSPECTIVE, **YEESH!**... DO YOU KNOW
WHAT A **VANISHING POINT** IS?
...AND AS FOR **FACES**...

:-GULP:-

Joe Pro

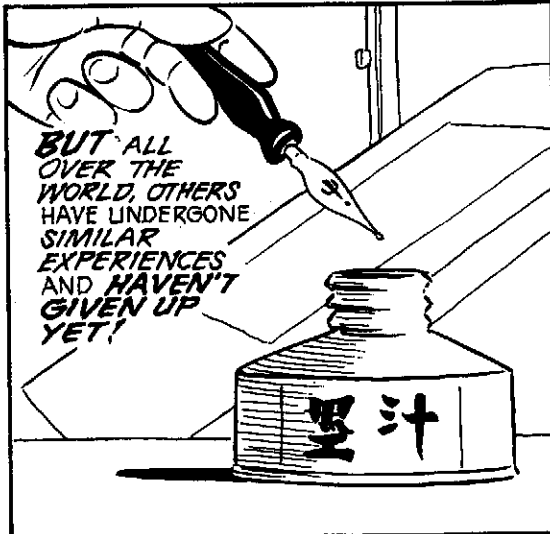
SO HE BUYS SOME BOOKS ON **ANATOMY**
AND **PERSPECTIVE**, STUDIES A VARIETY
OF **DRAWING TECHNIQUES** AND **PRACTICES**.
PRACTICES, PRACTICES FOR MONTHS.



BUT SOMEHOW, IT NEVER QUITE "CLICKS" FOR HIM. MAYBE HE JUST DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH SKILL... MAYBE HE LOSES INTEREST... MAYBE LIFE JUST GETS IN THE WAY... BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON--



-- HE LEAVES HIS DREAMS OF MAKING COMICS BEHIND.

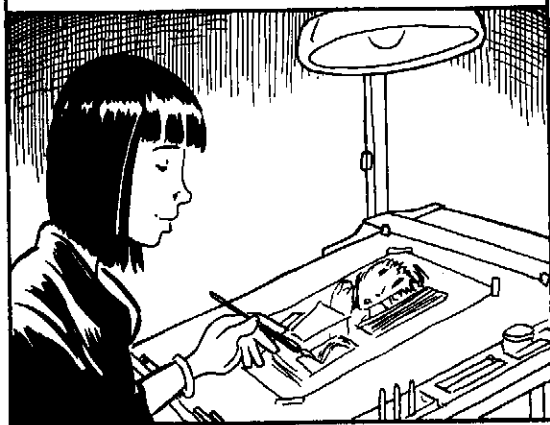


BUT ALL OVER THE WORLD, OTHERS HAVE UNDERGONE SIMILAR EXPERIENCES AND HAVEN'T GIVEN UP YET!



BUT MAYBE PARTICULAR PART OF THE COMMUNITY NECESSARIL

ONE OF THEM IS NOW READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP! SHE'S STUDIED HER CRAFT ALL THE WAY THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL AND INTO COLLEGE.



SHE'S A GOOD, HARDWORKING STUDENT.



< I THINK I'VE REALLY MADE A BREAKTHROUGH! >

< THIS IS VERY GOOD. >

HE SPENDS HIS WORKING OUT OF COMICS CO THE KIND THEY



BUT WHEN SHE SHOWS HER WORK TO A SEASONED PRO...

< YOU'RE A SKILLED SCRIPTER AND DRAFTSPERSON, BUT YOUR STORYTELLING ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH, YOU HAVE NO SENSE OF PACING... THESE LAYOUTS ARE VERY MUDDY... YOU HAVE TO COMPOSE YOUR STORIES... >



< GULP! >

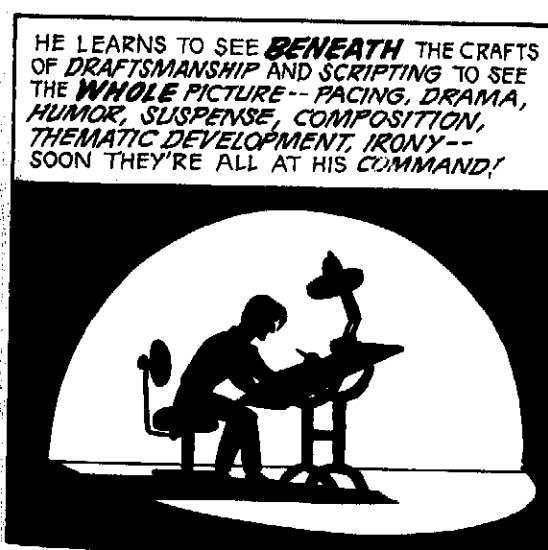
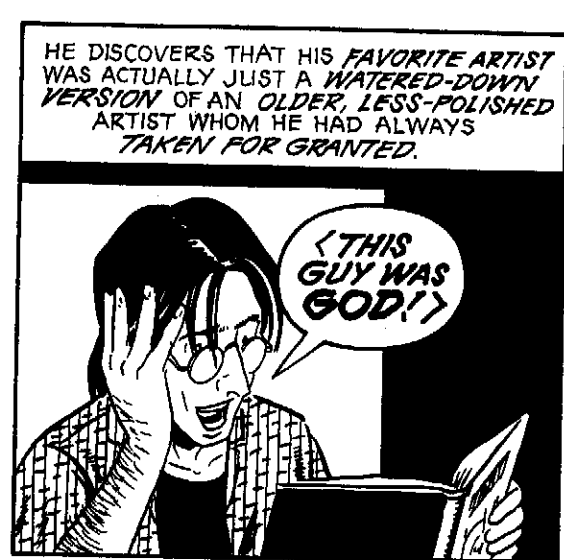
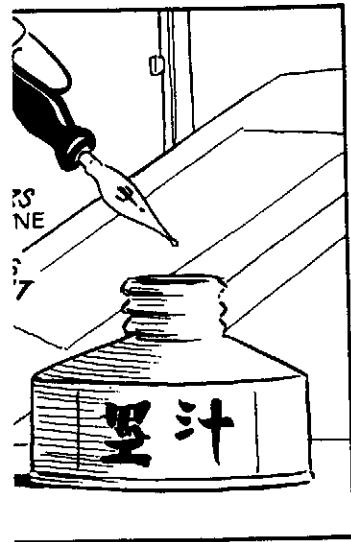
HER SKILLS CAN GET HER WORK AT THIS POINT, BUT ONLY AS AN ASSISTANT TO OTHERS. UNTIL SHE UNDERSTANDS THE STRUCTURE OF COMICS BENEATH THE CRAFT, THIS IS AS FAR AS SHE CAN GO.



HE LEARNS TO OF DRAFTSMAN THE WHOLE P. HUMOR, SLY, THEMATIC DE. SOON THEY'RE



* WELL, OKAY, ONE BO



BUT MAYBE THIS IS **ENOUGH** FOR THIS PARTICULAR ARTIST, ENOUGH TO JUST BE PART OF THE **ART, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY** OF COMICS WITHOUT NECESSARILY **CALLING THE SHOTS.**

BUT **ELSEWHERE**, ANOTHER CREATOR HAS BEEN THROUGH THE SAME SORT OF PROCESS AND HE WANTS **MORE!**

HARDWORKING STUDENT.

< I THINK I'VE REALLY MADE A **BREAKTHROUGH!** >

< THIS IS **VERY GOOD.** >

HE SPENDS HIS **EVERY WAKING HOUR** WORKING OUT THE **DIFFICULT PRINCIPLES** OF COMICS COMPOSITION AND STORYTELLING, THE KIND THEY **DON'T TEACH** IN **BOOKS!** *

< PLEASE, TRY TO GET SOME **SLEEP HONEY.** >

HE DISCOVERS THAT HIS **FAVORITE ARTIST** WAS ACTUALLY JUST A **WATERED-DOWN VERSION** OF AN **OLDER, LESS-POLISHED** ARTIST WHOM HE HAD ALWAYS **TAKEN FOR GRANTED.**

< **THIS GUY WAS GOD!** >

AN GET HER **WORK** AT ONLY AS AN **ASSISTANT** UNTIL SHE UNDERSTANDS THE OF COMICS **BENEATH** THE AS FAR AS SHE CAN GO.

HE LEARNS TO SEE **BENEATH** THE CRAFTS OF **DRAFTSMANSHIP** AND **SCRIPTING** TO SEE THE **WHOLE PICTURE**-- **PACING, DRAMA, HUMOR, SUSPENSE, COMPOSITION, THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT, IRONY**-- SOON THEY'RE ALL AT HIS **COMMAND!**

< I'VE **DONE IT!** I'VE LEARNED **ALL THERE IS TO KNOW!** >

4
STRUCTURE

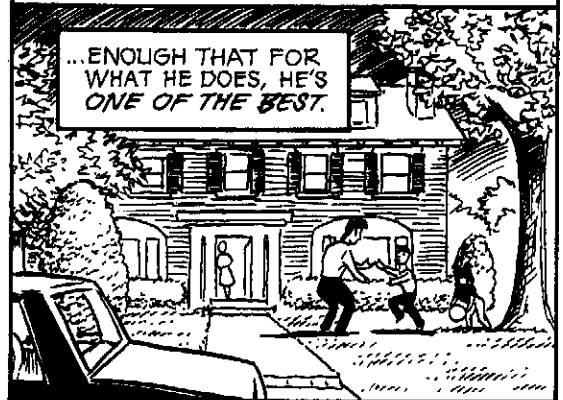
< **THIS TIME** I'LL GET MY **OWN BOOK,** I'M **SURE** OF IT! >

* WELL, OKAY, **ONE BOOK!** EISNER'S, AGAIN.

AND LET'S SAY IT **WORKS!** HE **DOES** LAND HIS OWN BOOK AND SOON IS ESTABLISHED AS A CREATOR OF **GREAT SKILL**. HE UNDERSTANDS **COMICS** STORYTELLING BETTER THAN MOST.



HIS WORK ISN'T PARTICULARLY **ORIGINAL**. THE CRITICS DON'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO HIM, BUT HE MAKES A **DECENT LIVING** FOR **HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY** AND THAT'S ENOUGH FOR HIM...



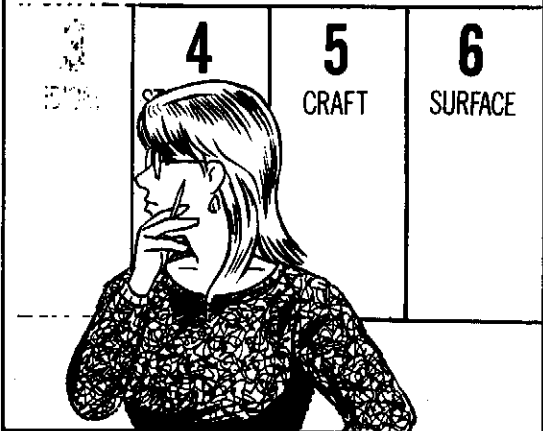
BUT **ANOTHER ARTIST** HAS MADE IT THROUGH THE **SAME SORTS OF HURDLES** AND REACHED THE **SAME LEVELS OF SUCCESS** AND **STILL ISN'T SATISFIED**



SHE WONDERS IF HER SUCCESS REALLY **MEANS ANYTHING** WHEN THERE ARE **SO MANY OTHERS** DOING THE **SAME THINGS** IN THE **SAME WAYS**. SHE WANTS AN **IDENTITY**.



SHE BELIEVES THAT THERE'S SOMETHING **MORE**-- SOME **PIECE OF THE PUZZLE**-- THAT SHE **STILL HASN'T FOUND**.



SHE BEGINS TO INVENT **NEW WAYS** OF SHOWING "**THE SAME OLD THING**." SHE DEVELOPS **INNOVATIVE NEW TECHNIQUES**. AND STARTS **DOING AWAY WITH "THE SAME OLD THING" ALTOGETHER!**



PARTICULARLY ORIGINAL. IT PAY MUCH ATTENTION MAKES A DECENT LIVING AND HIS FAMILY AND NOUGH FOR HIM...



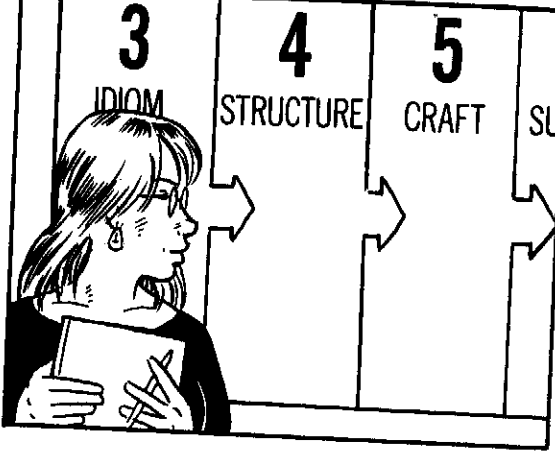
HER SUCCESS REALLY GO WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY DOING THE SAME THINGS. SHE WANTS AN IDENTITY.



INVENT NEW WAYS OF DOING AN OLD THING. SHE DEVELOPS INVENTIVE NEW TECHNIQUES. TO MOVE AWAY WITH "THE OLD WAY" ALTOGETHER!



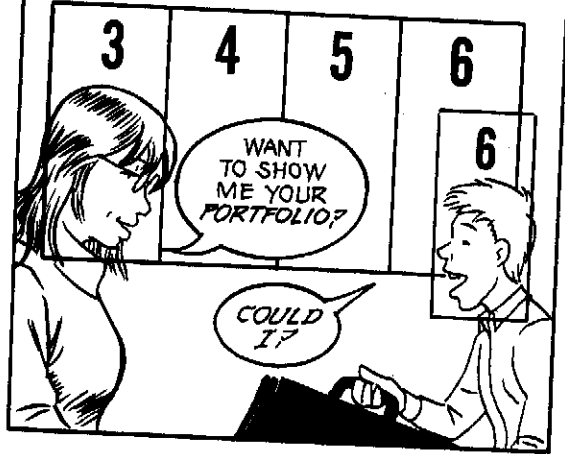
AS SHE CREATES HER OWN PERSONAL IDIOM OF COMICS, SHE FINDS THE WHOLE OF HER WORK CHANGING TO SUIT THAT IDIOM.



LET'S SAY THAT FINANCIAL SUCCESS AND THE RESPECT OF HER PEERS SOON FOLLOW.*



YOUNG ARTISTS BEGIN TO IMITATE HER STYLE, BUT MOST OF THEM ONLY SEEM TO APPRECIATE THE "SURFACE."



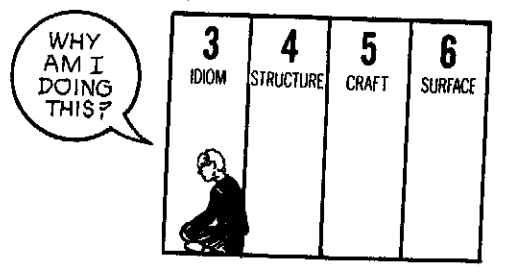
AND MAYBE SHE'LL BE SATISFIED WITH THAT KIND OF SUCCESS, SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WHATEVER SHE DOESN'T KNOW, SHE'S ON THE RIGHT PATH TO FIND OUT.

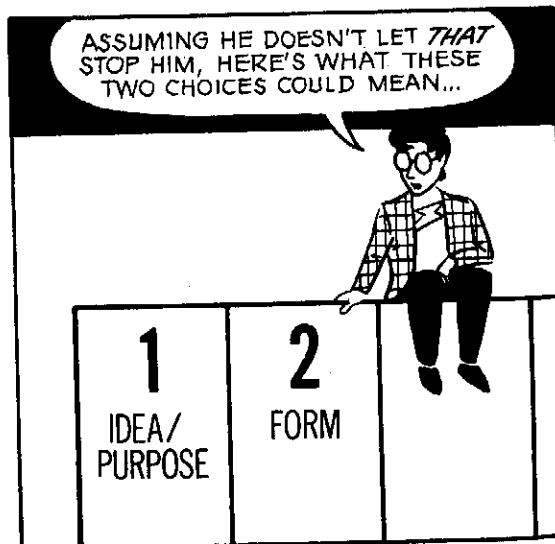
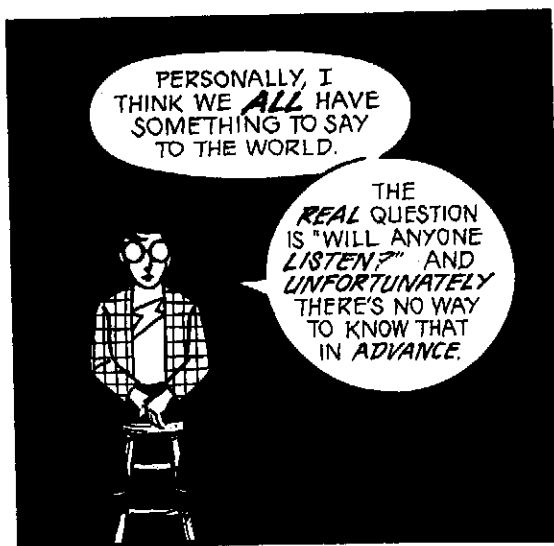
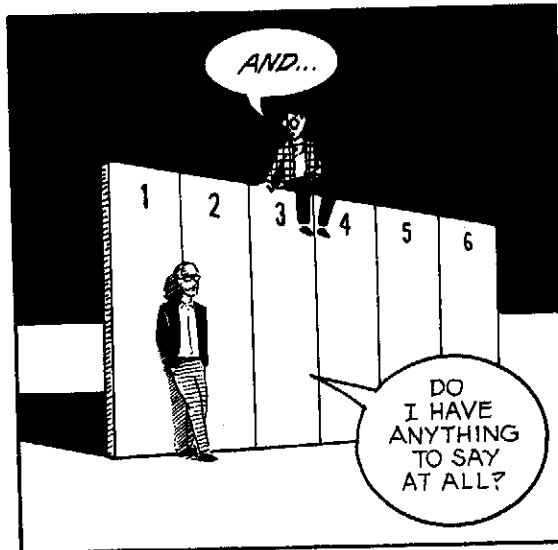
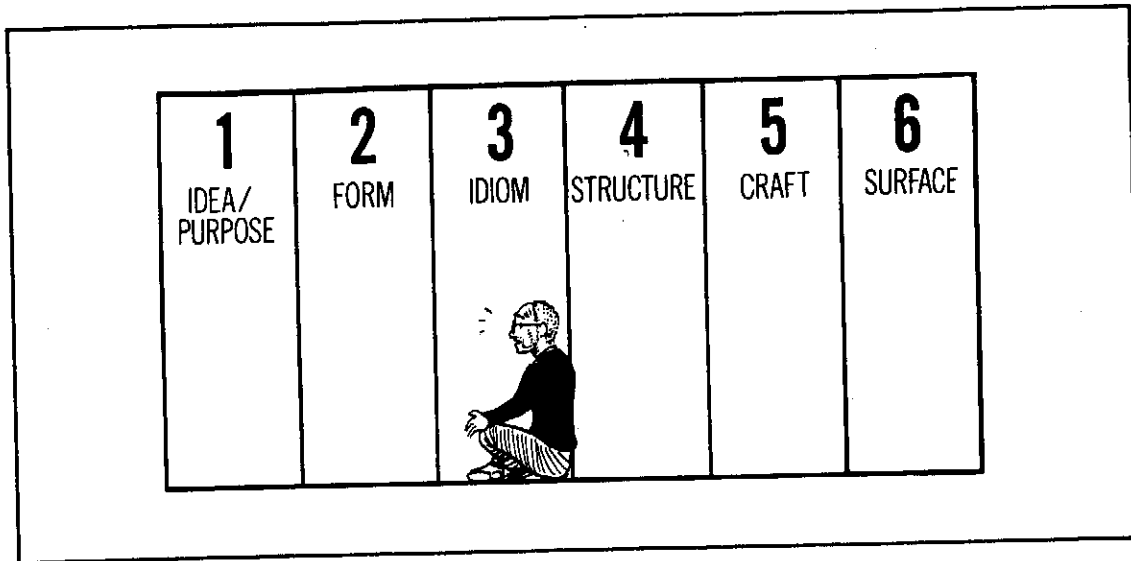


BUT ELSEWHERE, ANOTHER CREATOR HAS MADE IT TO THIS SAME PLACE AND STILL FEELS DISSATISFIED. HE FEELS THAT SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT HAS BEEN NEGLECTED...



...SOMETHING FUNDAMENTAL, SOMETHING AT THE CORE OF WHO HE IS AS AN ARTIST. WITH THESE THOUGHTS ON HIS MIND, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE ASKS THAT ONE SIMPLE QUESTION:





6

SURFACE

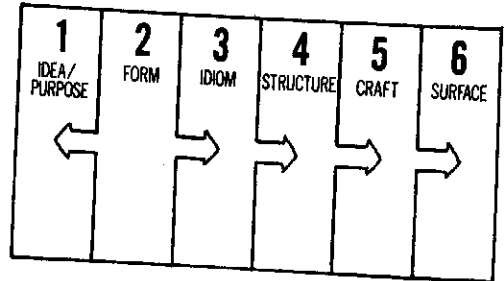
2
FORM



BY CHOOSING **FORM**, HE'D BE SETTING UP TO BECOME AN **EXPLORER**.

HIS GOAL: TO **DISCOVER** ALL THAT THE ART FORM IS **CAPABLE** OF.

AND HIS ART WOULD NOT **LACK** FOR **IDEAS** OR FOR A **PURPOSE**.



HIS ART WOULD JUST **BECOME** HIS PURPOSE AND THE IDEAS WOULD ARRIVE IN TIME TO GIVE IT **SUBSTANCE**.

CREATORS WHO TAKE THIS PATH ARE OFTEN **PIONEERS AND REVOLUTIONARIES**--ARTISTS WHO WANT TO **SHAKE THINGS UP**, CHANGE THE WAY PEOPLE **THINK**, QUESTION THE **FUNDAMENTAL LAWS** THAT GOVERN THEIR CHOSEN ART.



MCCAY



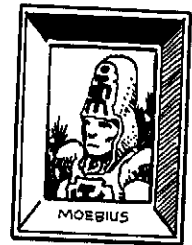
SPIEGELMAN



HERRIMAN



STERRETT



MOEBIUS

(IN **OTHER** ART FORMS: STRAVINSKY, PICASSO, VIRGINIA WOOLF, ORSON WELLES, ETC.)

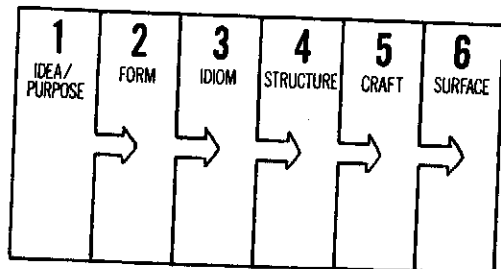
1
IDEA/
PURPOSE



ON THE OTHER HAND, IF HE CHOOSES THE **FIRST** STEP AS HIS GOAL, THEN HIS ART BECOMES A **TOOL**.

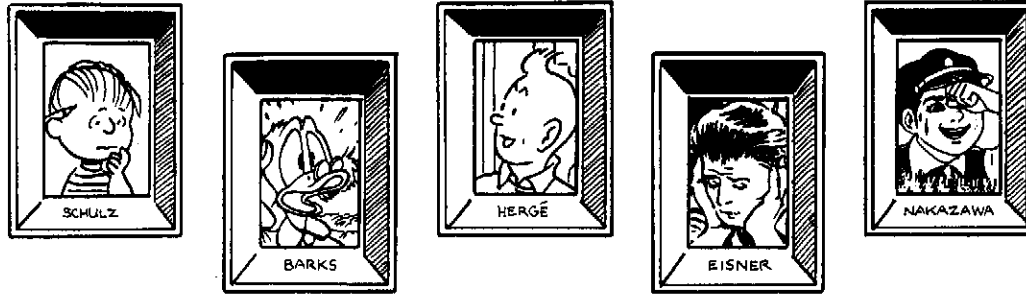
AND THE **POWERS** OF THAT ART WILL RELY ON THE POWERS OF THE IDEAS **WITHIN**.

NOW "**TELLING THE STORY**" (OR IN THE CASE OF **NON-FICTION**, "**DELIVERING THE MESSAGE**") TAKES **PRIORITY** OVER **INVENTION**.

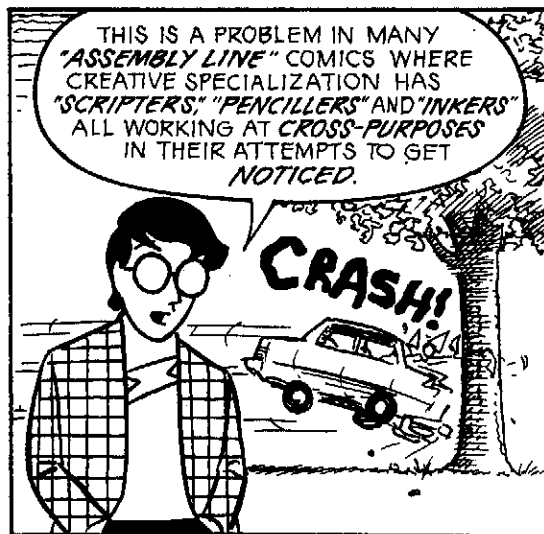
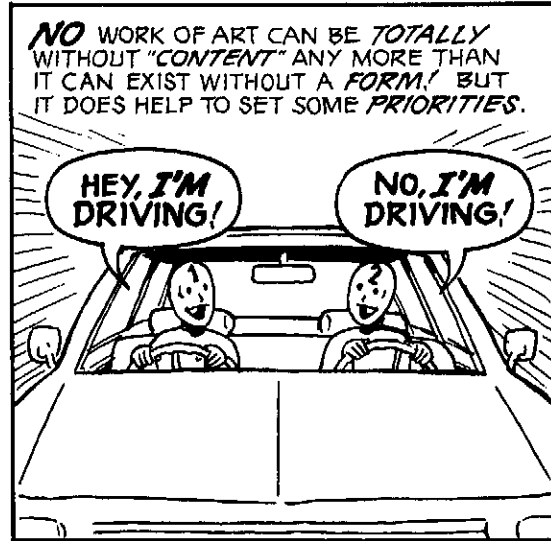
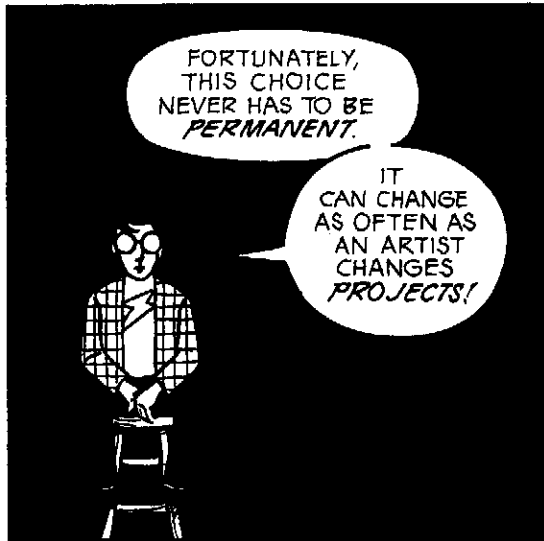


BUT TELLING A STORY AS **EFFECTIVELY** AS POSSIBLE MAY **REQUIRE** SOME INVENTION. IT OFTEN **DOES**.

THIS IS THE PATH OF GREAT **STORYTELLERS**, CREATORS WHO HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY *THROUGH* COMICS AND DEVOTE ALL THEIR ENERGIES TO *CONTROLLING* THEIR MEDIUM, REFINING ITS ABILITY TO CONVEY MESSAGES *EFFECTIVELY*.



(IN OTHER ART FORMS: CAPRA, DICKENS, WOODY GUTHRIE, EDWARD R. MURROW, ETC.)



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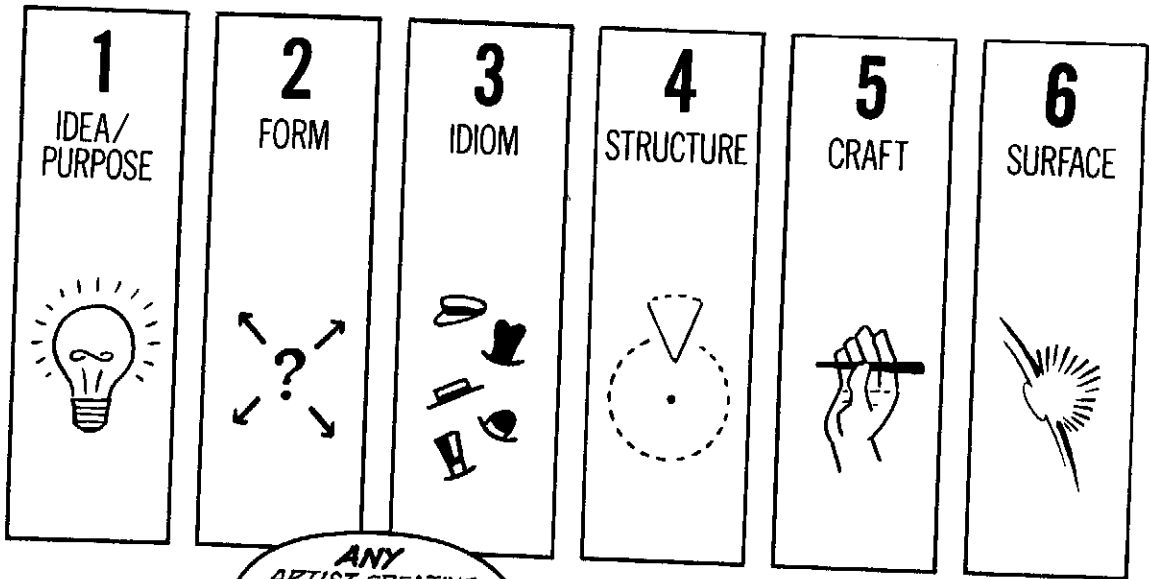
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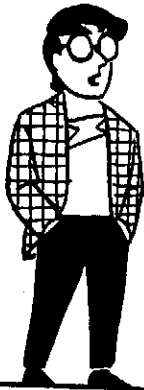
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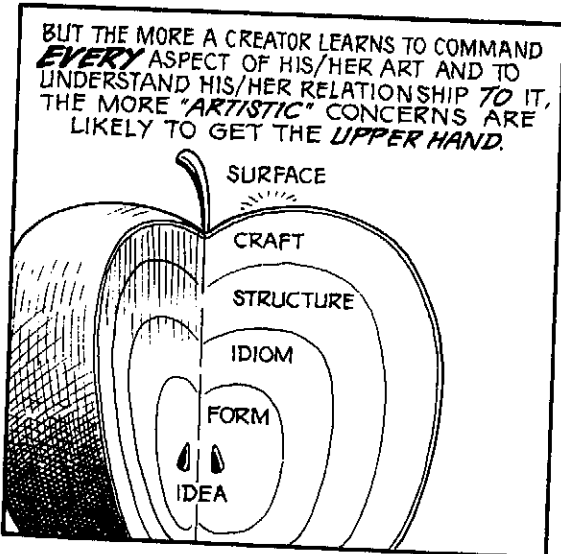
ANY ARTIST CREATING ANY WORK IN ANY MEDIUM WILL ALWAYS FOLLOW THESE SIX STEPS WHETHER THEY REALIZE IT OR NOT.

ALL WORKS BEGIN WITH A PURPOSE, HOWEVER ARBITRARY; ALL TAKE SOME FORM; ALL BELONG TO AN IDIOM (EVEN IF IT'S AN IDIOM OF ONE); ALL POSSESS A STRUCTURE; ALL REQUIRE SOME CRAFT; ALL PRESENT A SURFACE.



AND ALL ASPECTS OF COMICS HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR SELF-EXPRESSION, EVEN WHEN ECONOMIC SURVIVAL IS THE ARTIST'S MAIN CONCERN.

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF "ART."



THE ORDER OF THE SIX STEPS IS INNATE. LIKE THE ARRANGEMENT OF BONES IN A DINOSAUR'S SKELETON, THEY CAN BE DISCOVERED IN ANY ORDER, BUT WHEN BROUGHT TOGETHER, THEY WILL ALWAYS FALL INTO PLACE!

WHEN FORM SEEM SOME CORE, LIKE

5
RAFT

6
SURFACE

IN PRACTICE, ANY ASPECT OF COMICS MAY BE THE ONE WHICH FIRST DRAWS AN ARTIST INTO ITS ORBIT.

STILL, THE LEARNING PROCESS FOR MOST ARTISTS IS A SLOW AND STEADY JOURNEY FROM **END** TO **BEGINNING**,

1 IDEA/ PURPOSE	2 FORM	3 IDIOM	4 STRUCTURE	5 CRAFT	6 SURFACE
			←		
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OF COMICS
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FROM **SURFACE** TO **CORE**.

AND IT'S AT THE **CORE** OF ART THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IS FINALLY ASKED:

1 IDEA/ PURPOSE	2 FORM
------------------------------	------------------

"WHY AM I DOING THIS?"

THE SIX STEPS OF THE ARRANGEMENT OF SAUR'S SKELETON, ORDERED IN ANY ORDER, PUT TOGETHER, THEY FALL INTO PLACE!

WHEN **FORM** RULES THE WORK, IT MAY SEEM SOMEWHAT **ARTIFICIAL** AT THE CORE, LIKE A **SEEDLESS FRUIT**.

BUT SUCH WORKS DON'T TAKE THE **SHAPE** OF ART FOR GRANTED AND BY QUESTIONING OUR **FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS**--

