

SCOTT MCCLOUD

"When I was a little kid I knew exactly what comics were,"

Scott McCloud writes in his book *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1993).

"Comics were those bright, colorful magazines filled with bad art, stupid stories and guys in tights." But after looking at a friend's comic book collection, McCloud became "totally obsessed with comics" and in the tenth grade decided to become a comics artist.

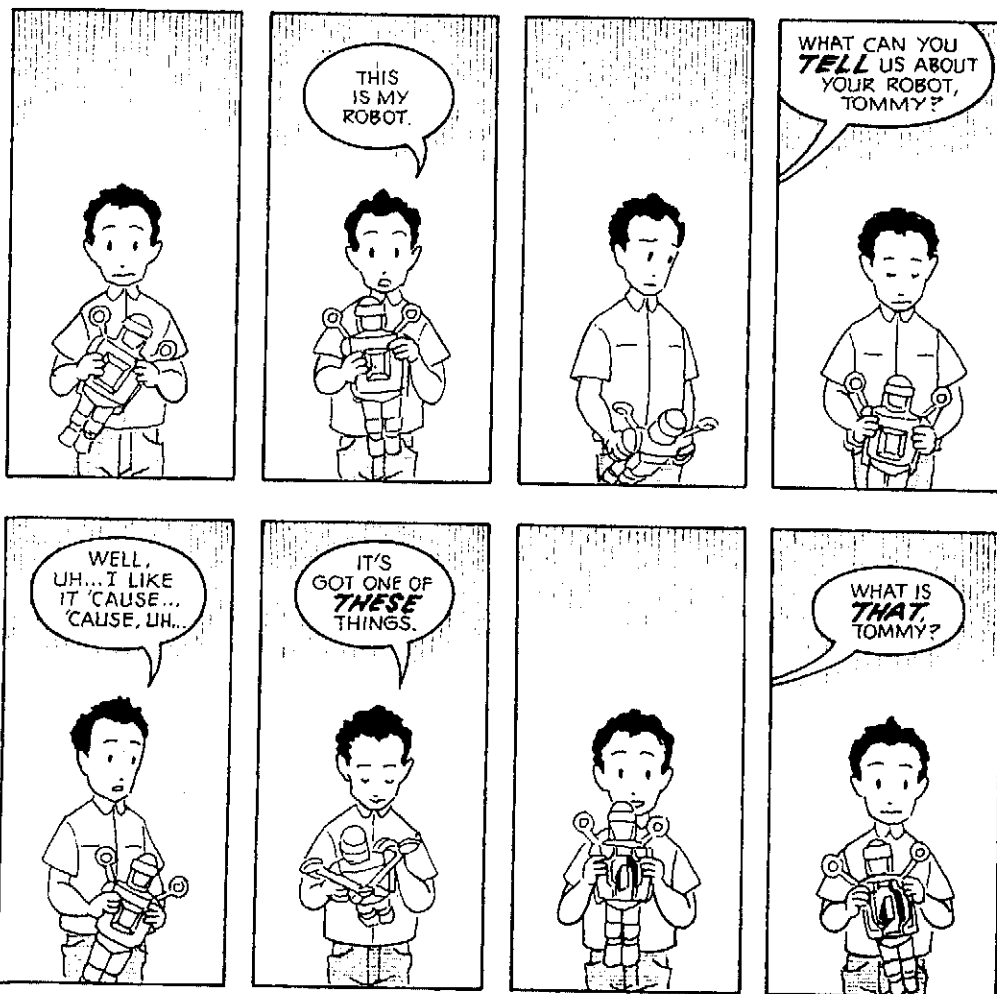
In 1982, McCloud graduated with a degree in illustration from Syracuse University.

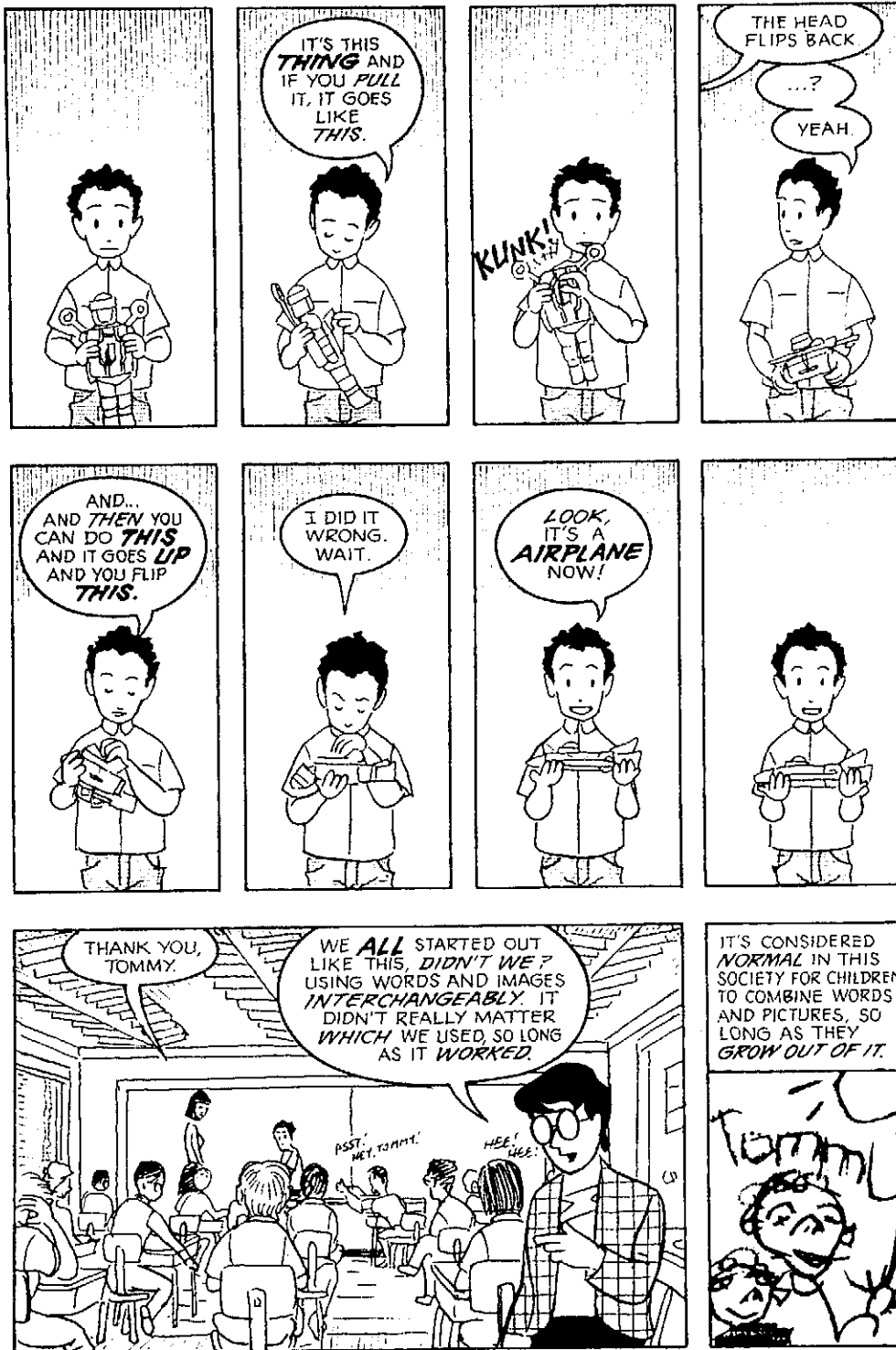
"I wanted to have a good background in writing and art and also just liberal arts in general because I thought that just about anything can be brought to bear in making comics." Later McCloud worked in the production department of DC Comics until he began publishing his two comic series, "Zot!" (1984) and later "Destroy!!"

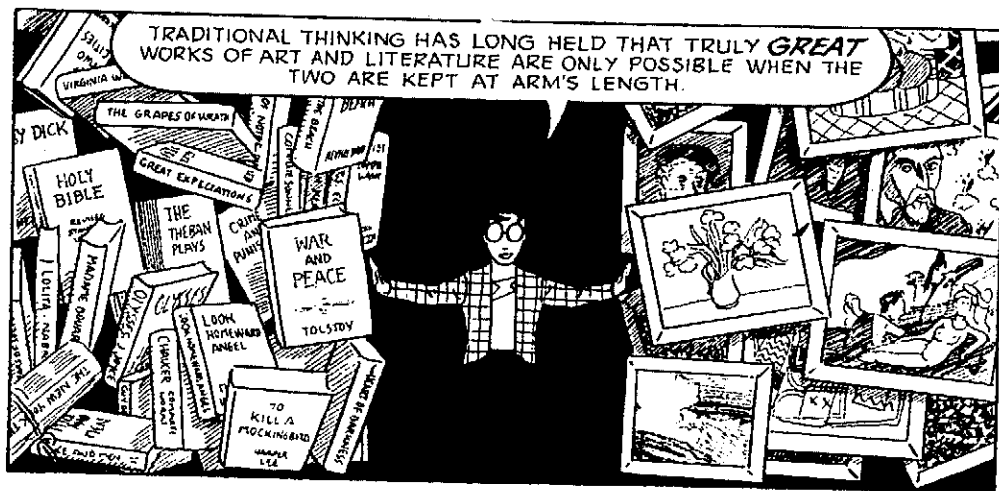
In *Understanding Comics*, a caricature of McCloud leads readers through an insightful study of the nature of sequential art by tracing the history of the relationship between words and images. "Most readers will find it difficult to look at comics in quite the same way ever again," wrote cartoonist Garry Trudeau of McCloud's work. In 2000, he published *Reinventing Comics*, which he describes as "the controversial 242-page follow-up" to *Understanding Comics*. Recently McCloud has been working with comics in the digital environment. His web site is at scottmcccloud.com. "Show and Tell" is the sixth chapter in *Understanding Comics*.

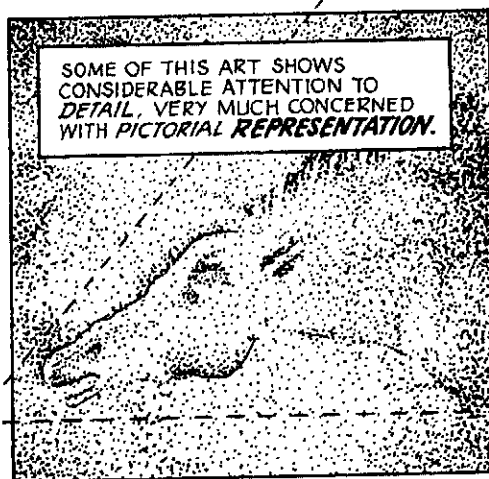
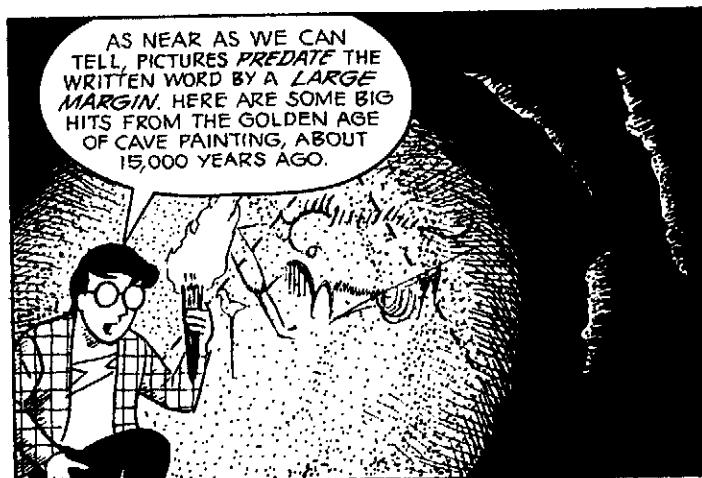
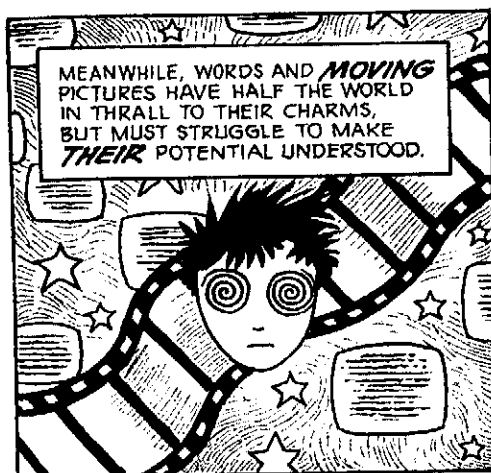
CHAPTER SIX

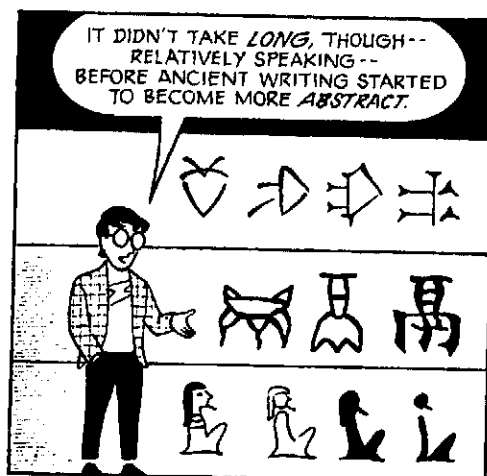
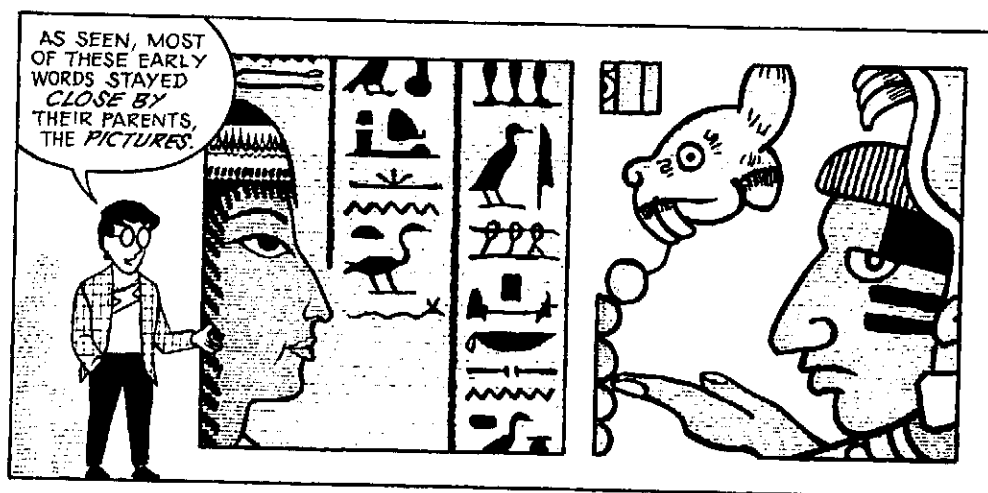
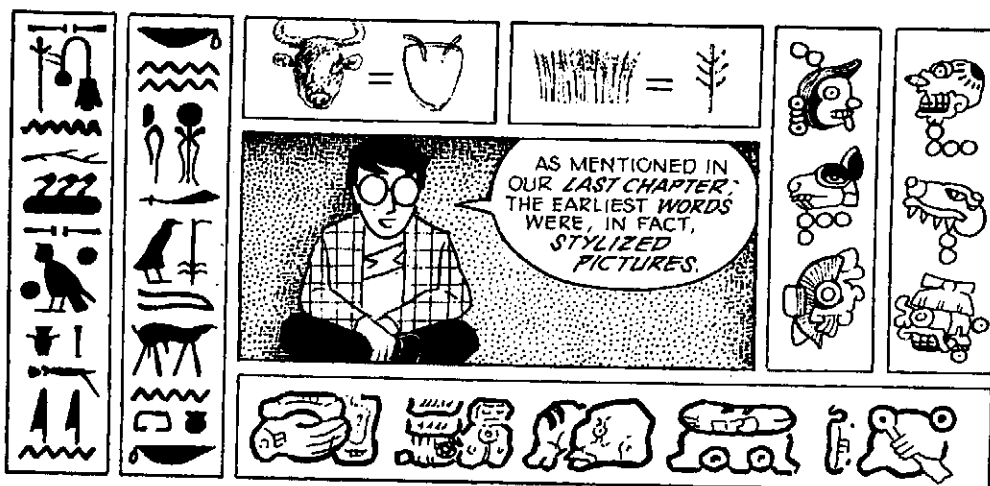
SHOW AND TELL.



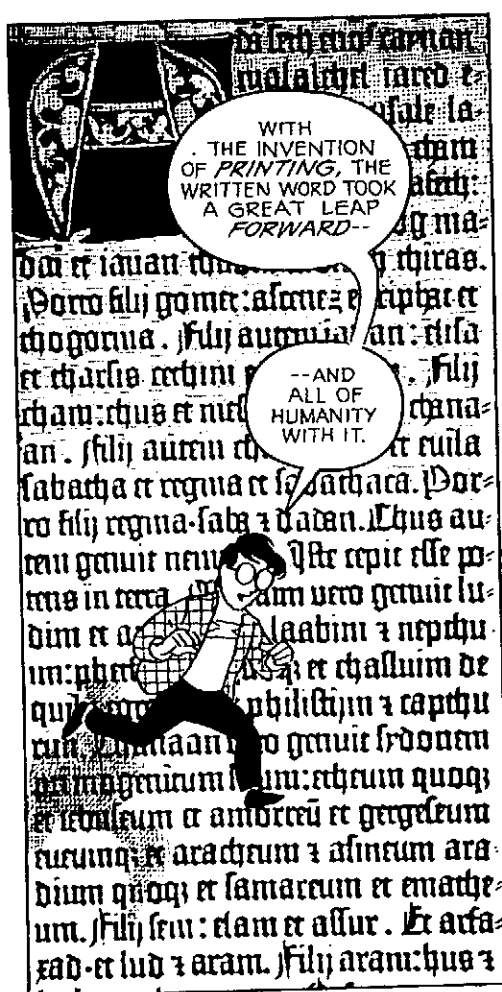
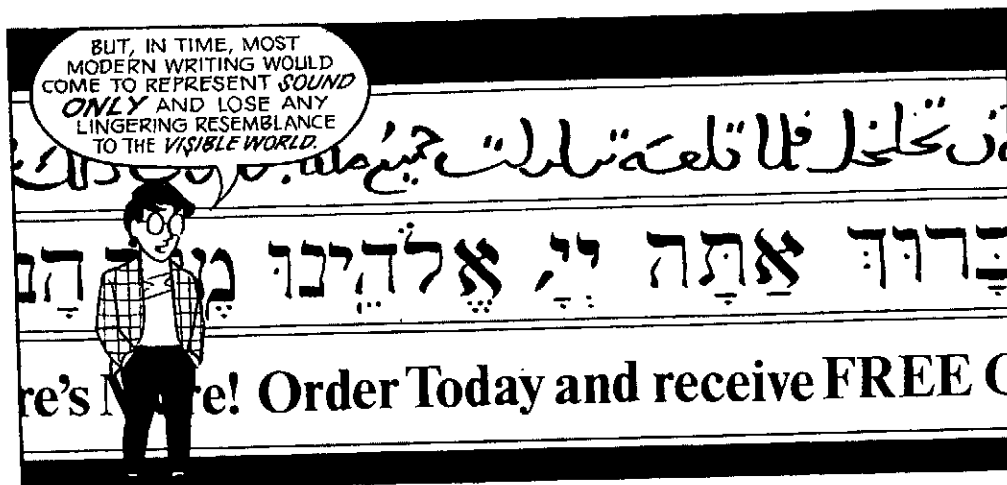








* SEE PAGE 129.





PICTURES, MEANWHILE, BEGAN TO GROW IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION: LESS ABSTRACT OR SYMBOLIC, MORE REPRESENTATIONAL AND SPECIFIC.



FACSIMILE DETAILS OF PORTRAITS BY DURER (1519) REMBRANDT (1660) DAVID (1788) AND INGRES (1810-15)

FACSIMILE OF JEAN-BAPTISTE CAMILLE COROT'S 'A VIEW NEAR VOLTERRA' (1838).

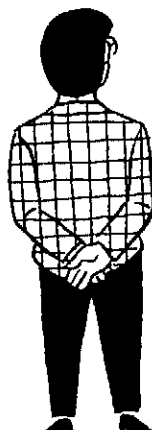


John Keats 1819
Ode on a Grecian Urn

1
Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

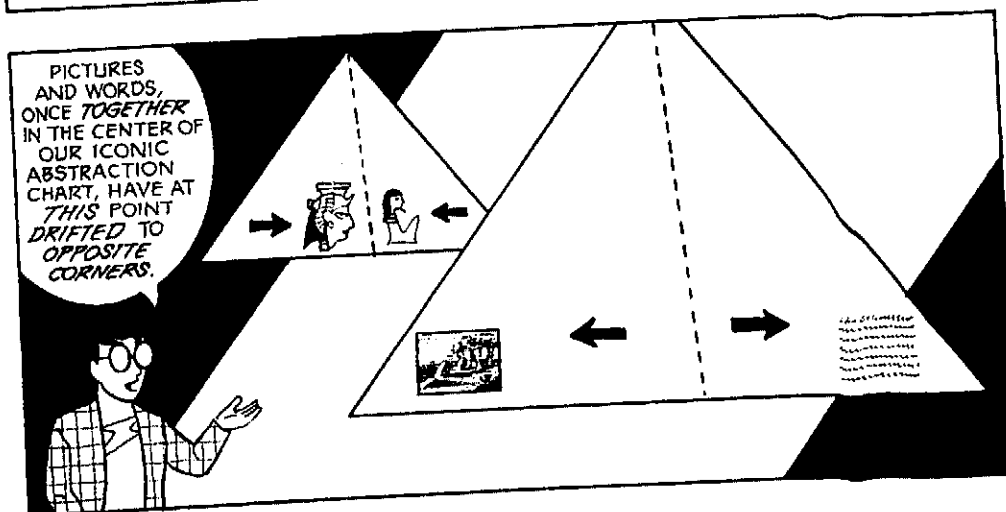
BY THE
EARLY 1800's,
WESTERN ART
AND WRITING HAD
DRIFTED ABOUT AS
FAR APART AS
WAS POSSIBLE.

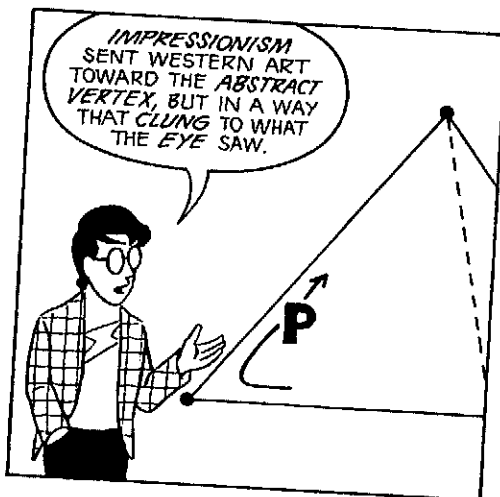
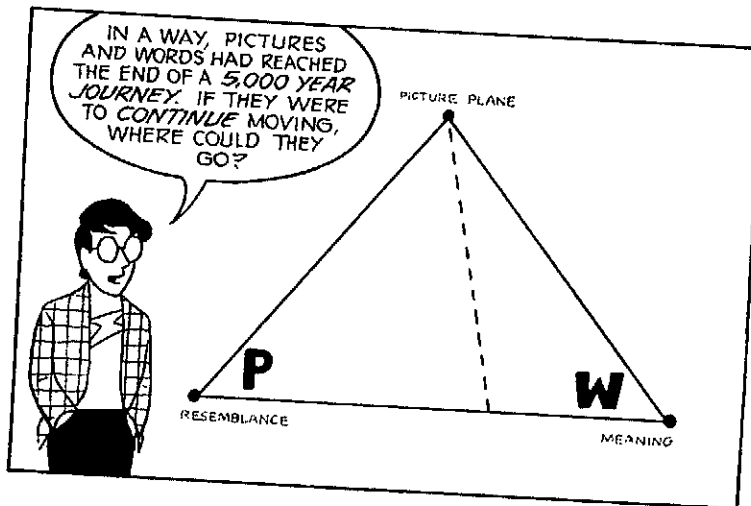
ONE WAS
OBSESSED WITH
RESEMBLANCE,
LIGHT AND COLOR,
ALL THINGS
VISIBLE...



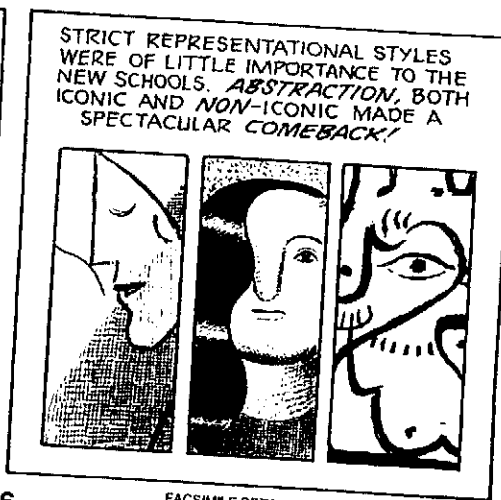
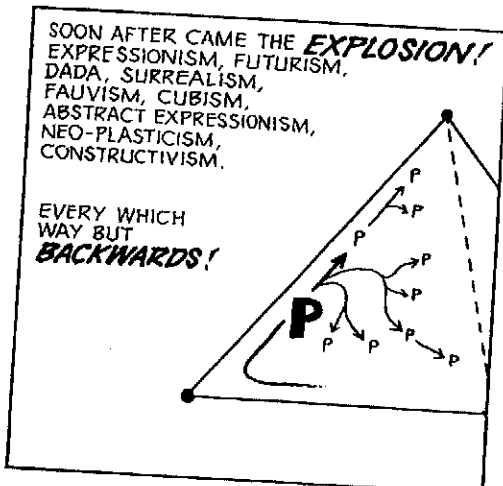
...THE
OTHER RICH IN
INVISIBLE
TREASURES,
SENSES, EMOTIONS,
SPIRITUALITY,
PHILOSOPHY...

FIRST STANZA OF KEATS' POEM





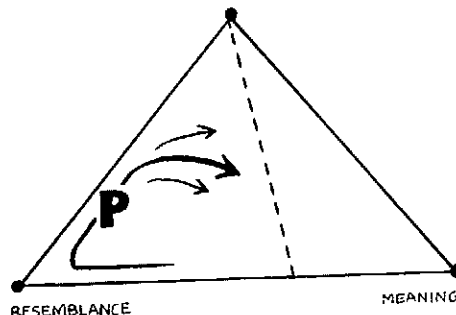
FACSIMILE DETAIL OF "A SUNDAY AFTERNOON ON THE ISLAND OF LA GRANDE JATTE" BY GEORGES SEURAT.



FACSIMILE DETAILS OF PORTRAITS BY PICASSO, LEGER AND KLEE.

SOME ARTISTS HEADED *UPWARD* TO THE *SUMMIT* OF THE PICTURE PLANE, WANTING NEITHER *RESEMBLANCE* NOR EXTERNAL "*MEANING*."

BUT THE *MAIN* THRUST WAS A RETURN TO *MEANING* IN ART, AWAY FROM *RESEMBLANCE*, BACK TO THE REALM OF *IDEAS*.



MEANWHILE, THE WRITTEN WORD WAS ALSO CHANGING. POETRY BEGAN *TURNING AWAY* FROM THE ELUSIVE, *TWICE-ABSTRACTED* LANGUAGE OF OLD TOWARD A MORE *DIRECT*, EVEN *COLLOQUIAL*, STYLE.

John Keats 1819
Ode on a Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are thy? What maidens looke?

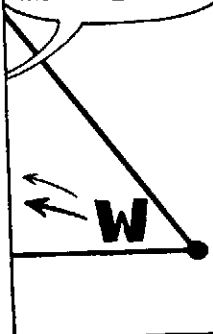
Walt Whitman 1890
Facing West from California's Shores

Facing west, from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking
what is yet unfound,
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the
house of maternity, the
land of migrations, look afar
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the
circle almost circled:
For starting westward from Hindustan,
from the vales of Kashmere, From Asia,
from the north, from the God, the sage,
and the hero, From the south, from the
flowery peninsulas and the spice Islands,
Long having wandered since, round the
earth having wandered,
Now I face home again,
very pleased and joyous;
(But where is what I started for,
so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?)

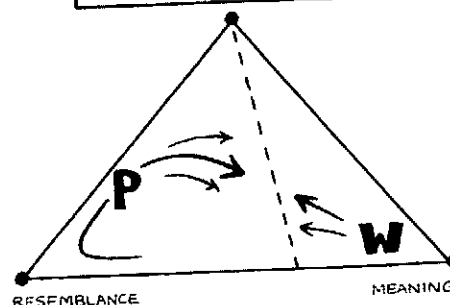
IN PROSE, LANGUAGE WAS BECOMING EVEN MORE *DIRECT*, CONVEYING *MEANING* *SIMPLY* AND *QUICKLY*, MORE LIKE *PICTURES*.



"MEANING" WAS NOT *ABANDONED* BY ANY MEANS, BUT AUTHORS WERE DEFINITELY MOVING *LEFT*--



-- AND HEADED FOR A *COLLISION*!



H^àtre MICHEL 40 rue des Mathurins

SOIRÉE

DU CŒUR

une semaine
prolongée
au 7 juillet

CHERZ A B A R B E

Organisation :

Organisée par :

le plan de legs 20 fr.
matériel d'exposition 20 fr.
matériel de bureau 10 fr.
matériel de bureau 10 fr.

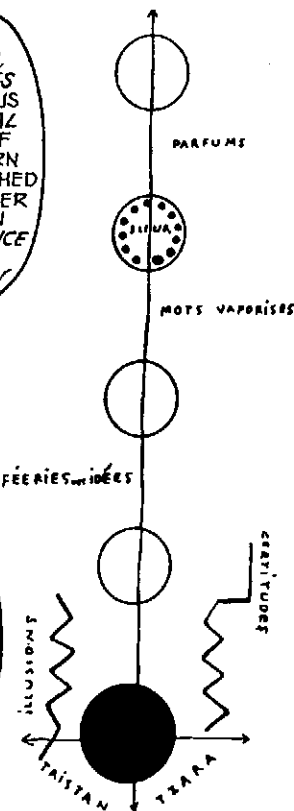
Bernheim Jean, 22, Bd de la Madeleine
Dorval, 4, Place de la Madeleine
Ferdinand, 10, Rue Soufflot
Au Sans Pareil, 27, Avenue Edith
M. G. Avenue Lavandier
Paul Goussier, 20, Rue St. Denis
Léonide Morand, 27, Rue Soufflot
Paul Rosenberg, 21, Rue St. Denis
et au Théâtre Michel, Tél. 1 Oct. 60-60

DADA POSTER FOR THE PLAY
"THE BEARDED HEART"

Portrait de TRISTAN TZARA

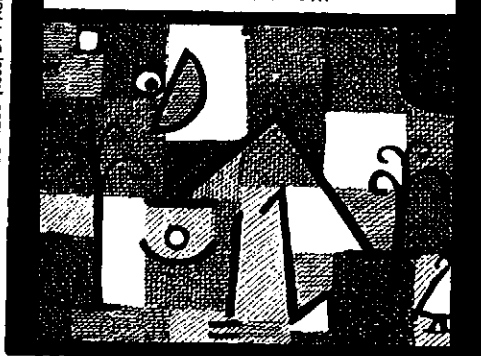
par
FRANCIS PICABIA

THE
WORK OF
DADAISTS,
FUTURISTS
AND VARIOUS
INDIVIDUAL
ARTISTS OF
THE MODERN
ERA BREACHED
THE FRONTIER
BETWEEN
APPEARANCE
AND
MEANING!

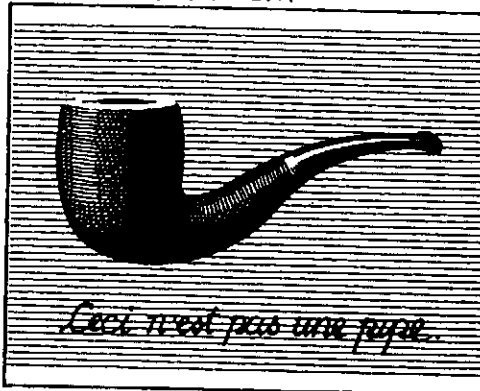


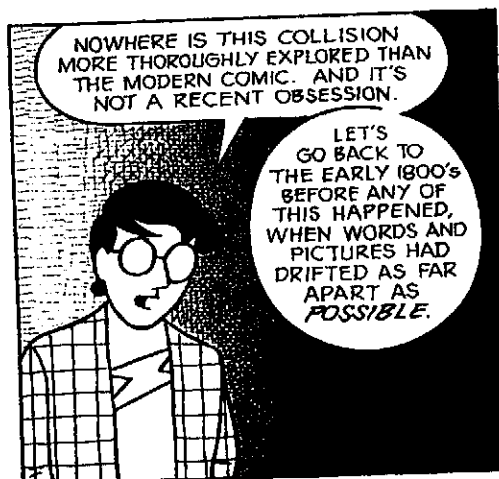
FACSIMILE OF "ORIENTAL SWEETNESS" (1938) BY PAUL KLEE.

PAINTINGS INCREASINGLY TOOK ON
SYMBOLIC, EVEN CALLIGRAPHIC,
MEANINGS...



WHILE SOME ARTISTS ADDRESSED THE
IRONIES OF WORDS AND PICTURES
HEAD-ON!





UP TO THAT POINT, *EUROPEAN BROADSHEETS* HAD OFFERED REMINDERS OF WHAT WORDS AND PICTURES COULD DO WHEN COMBINED.

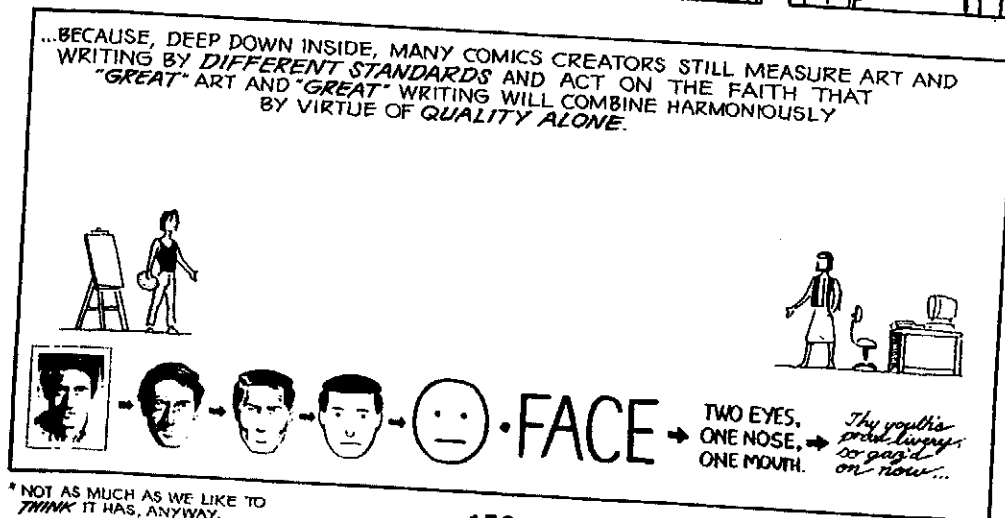
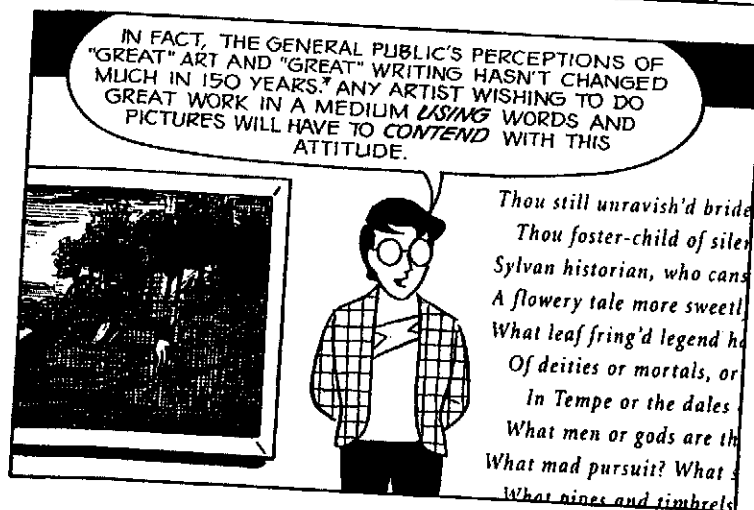
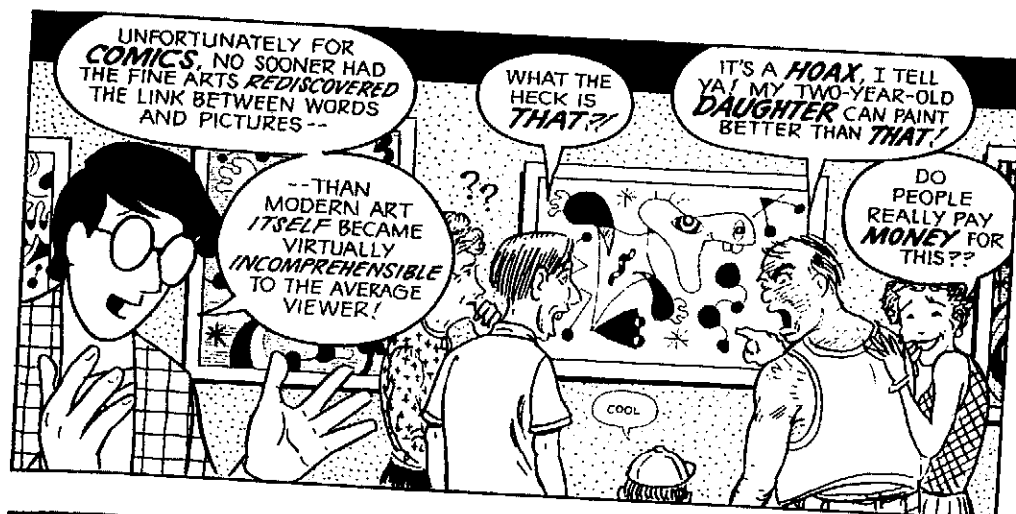
BUT AGAIN IT WAS *RODOLPHE TOPFFER* WHO FORESAW THEIR *INTERDEPENDENCY* AND BROUGHT THE FAMILY BACK TOGETHER AT LAST.



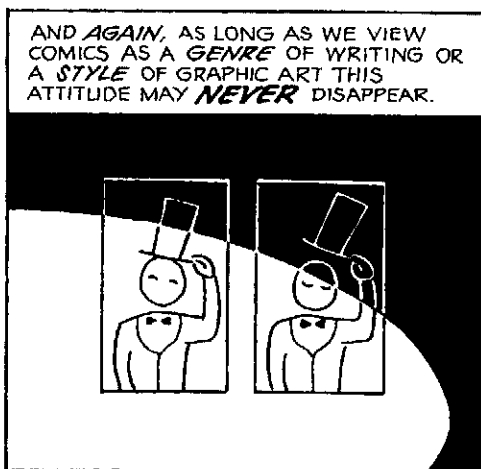
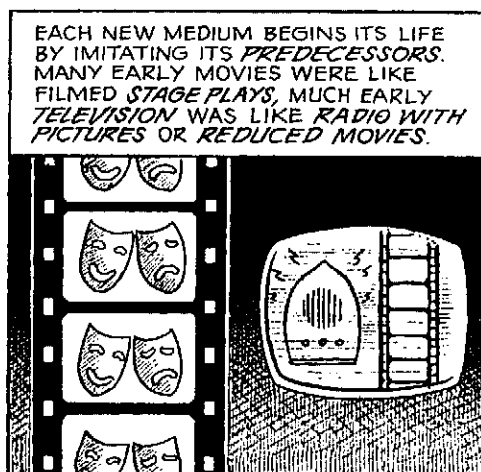
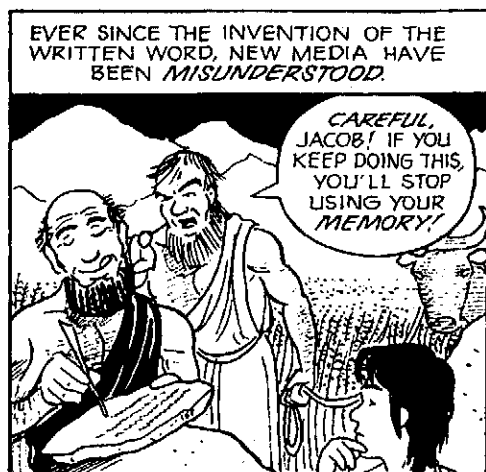
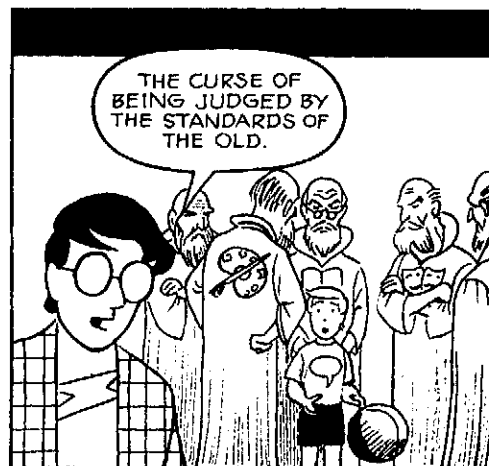
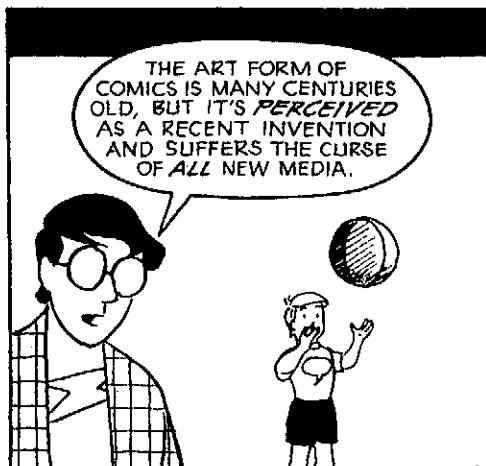
M. CRÉPIN ADVERTISES FOR A TUTOR, AND MANY APPLY FOR THE JOB.

TRANSLATION BY E. WIESE.






* NOT AS MUCH AS WE LIKE TO THINK IT HAS, ANYWAY.



WORDS AND PICTURES IN COMBINATION MAY NOT BE MY **DEFINITION** OF COMICS, BUT THE COMBINATION HAS HAD **TREMENDOUS INFLUENCE** ON ITS **GROWTH**.

com-ics (kom'iks)n. a form, used with a singular, juxtaposed pictorial images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey and/or to produce response in the reader.

2. Superheroes, costumes, fighting villains who battle world in violent action.



A HUGE RANGE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCES CAN BE **PORTRAYED** IN COMICS THROUGH EITHER WORDS OR PICTURES.





AS A RESULT--AND DESPITE ITS MANY **OTHER** POTENTIAL USES -- COMICS HAVE BECOME **FIRMLY IDENTIFIED** WITH THE ART OF **STORYTELLING**.



AND **INDEED**, WORDS AND PICTURES HAVE **GREAT** POWERS TO TELL STORIES WHEN CREATORS FULLY EXPLOIT THEM **BOTH**.

ROMANCE
DADA
HORROR
SURREALISM
HISTORICAL FICTION
FOLK TALES
EROTICA
MYSTERY
RELIGIOUS TOPICS
SATIRE
STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS
ADAPTATIONS
SOCIAL ALLEGORY
EPIC POETRY
BLANK VERSE
BIOGRAPHY

SEQUENTIAL ART






AND SO FAR, WE'VE ONLY SEEN THE **TIP OF THE ICEBERG!**



AS CHILDREN, WE "SHOW AND TELL" **INTERCHANGEABLY**, WORDS AND IMAGES COMBINING TO TRANSMIT A **CONNECTED SERIES OF IDEAS**.

IT'S GOT ONE OF THOSE THINGS

THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH WORDS AND PICTURES CAN **COMBINE** IN COMICS IS VIRTUALLY **UNLIMITED**.



BUT LET'S TRY TO BREAK IT DOWN INTO SOME DISTINCT **CATEGORIES**.



FIRST,
WE HAVE THE
WORD SPECIFIC
COMBINATIONS,
WHERE PICTURES
ILLUSTRATE, BUT
DON'T SIGNIFICANTLY
ADD TO A LARGELY
COMPLETE
TEXT.



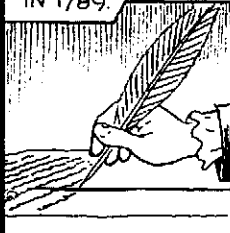
WE STUMBLED BACK TO THE
APARTMENT SHORTLY BEFORE
DAWN, **VOMITING** EVERY 20
YARDS.



JUDY GAVE ME HER
KEYS AND SMILED.



THE **UNITED STATES**
CONSTITUTION WAS
ADOPTED BY THE
SECOND CONTINENTAL
CONGRESS IN 1787
AND PUT INTO EFFECT
IN 1789.



THEN
THERE ARE
PICTURE SPECIFIC
COMBINATIONS
WHERE WORDS DO
LITTLE MORE THAN
ADD A **SOUNDTRACK**
TO A VISUALLY
TOLD SEQUENCE.



AND,
OF COURSE,
DUO-SPECIFIC
PANELS IN WHICH
BOTH WORDS AND
PICTURES SEND
ESSENTIALLY
THE **SAME**
MESSAGE.



GRIM-FACED,
GEORGE LIFTED
HIS LOLLYPOP.



BUT THE CAPTAIN'S MIGHTY
BLOW **MISSSES** ITS INTENDED
TARGET!

BLAST! HE
DODGED MY PUNCH AND
I STRUCK THIS **BRICK**
WALL!



I FEEL SO **SAD!**

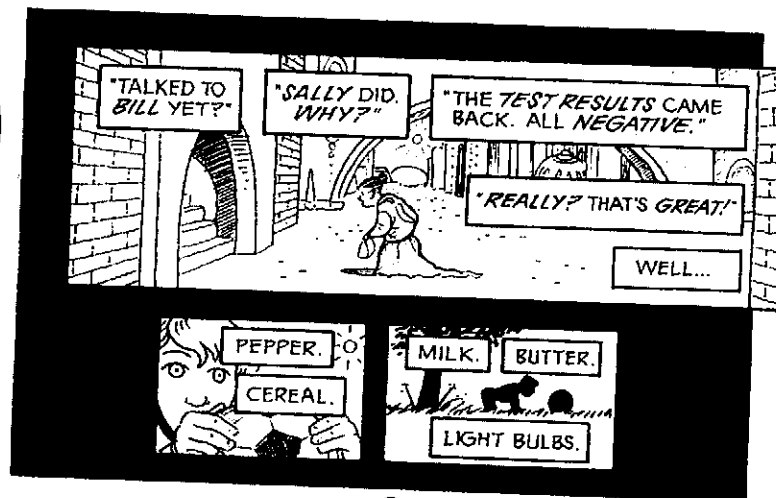


... **THOUGHT** AMY.

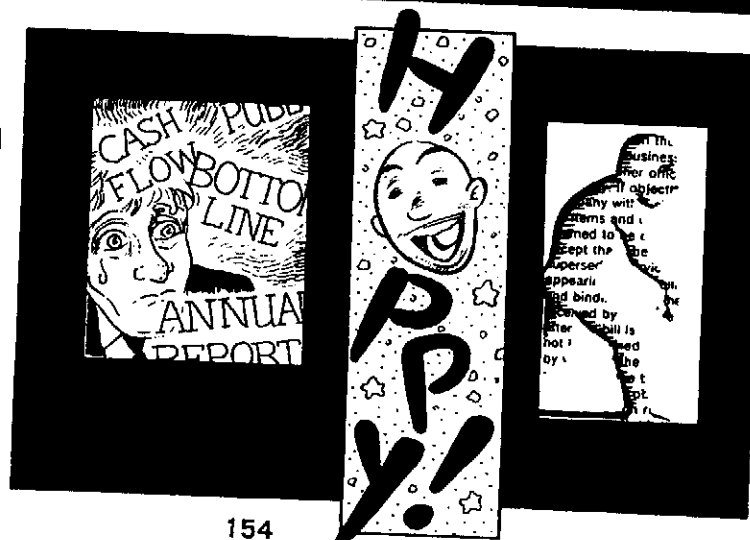
ANOTHER TYPE IS THE **ADDITIVE** COMBINATION WHERE WORDS **AMPLIFY** OR **ELABORATE** ON AN IMAGE OR **VICE VERSA**.



IN **PARALLEL** COMBINATIONS, WORDS AND PICTURES SEEM TO FOLLOW VERY DIFFERENT COURSES--WITHOUT **INTERSECTING**.



STILL ANOTHER OPTION IS THE **MONTAGE** WHERE WORDS ARE TREATED AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF THE PICTURE.



PERHAPS THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF WORD/PICTURE COMBINATION IS THE **INTERDEPENDENT**, WHERE WORDS AND PICTURES GO **HAND IN HAND** TO CONVEY AN IDEA THAT NEITHER COULD CONVEY **ALONE**.



INTERDEPENDENT COMBINATIONS AREN'T ALWAYS AN **EQUAL BALANCE** THOUGH AND MAY FALL **ANYWHERE** ON A SCALE BETWEEN TYPES ONE AND TWO.

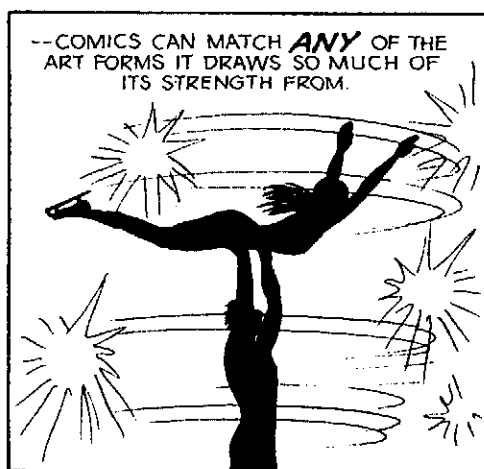
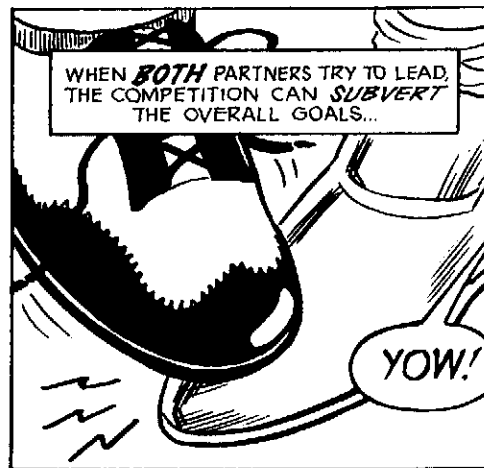
P

W

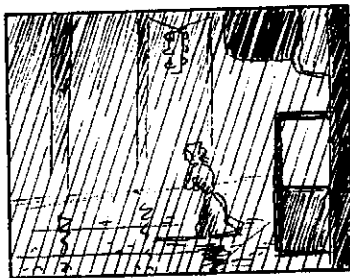
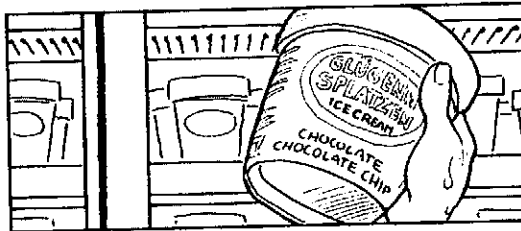
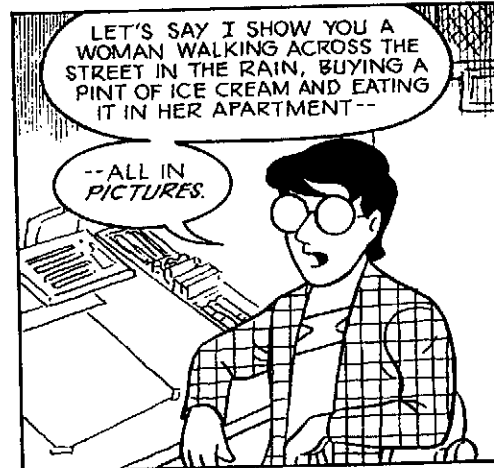
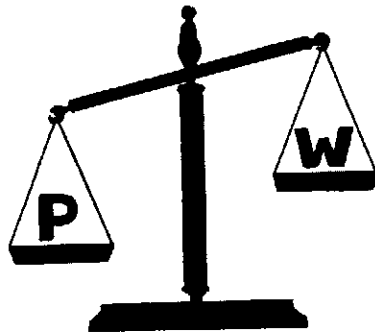
GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE MORE IS SAID WITH **WORDS**, THE MORE THE PICTURES CAN BE FREED TO GO EXPLORING AND **VICE VERSA**.

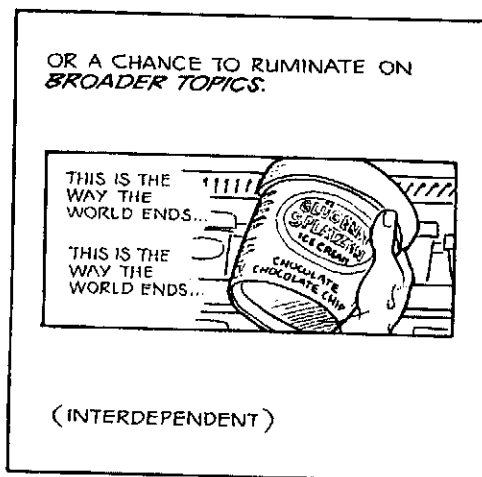
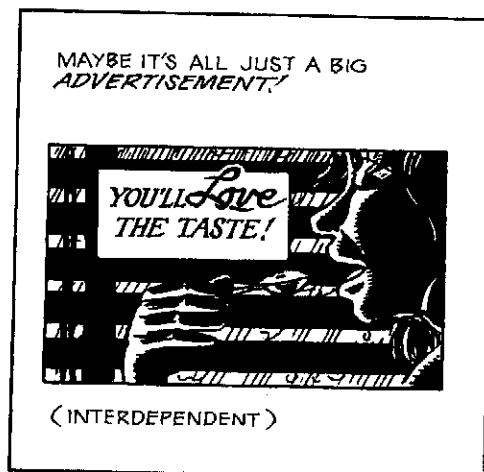
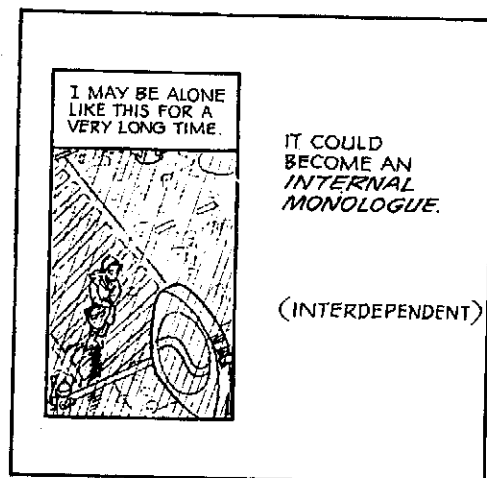
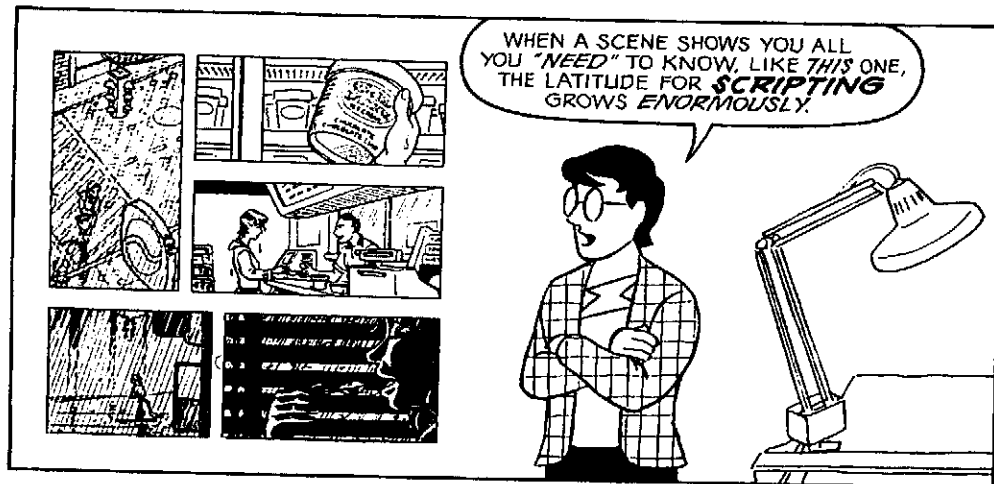
W

P

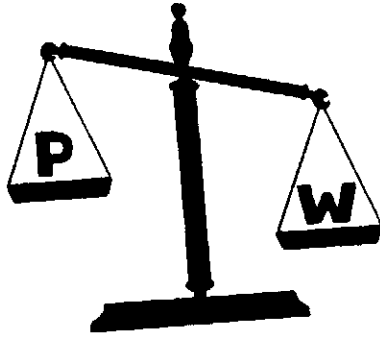


WHEN **PICTURES** CARRY THE WEIGHT OF CLARITY IN A SCENE, THEY FREE WORDS TO EXPLORE A WIDER AREA.





ON THE *OTHER* HAND, IF THE **WORDS** LOCK IN THE "MEANING" OF A SEQUENCE, THEN THE **PICTURES** CAN REALLY TAKE OFF.



SAME SCENE NOW, BUT THIS TIME ALL IN **WORDS!**



I CROSSED THE STREET TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE. THE RAIN SOAKED INTO MY BOOTS.

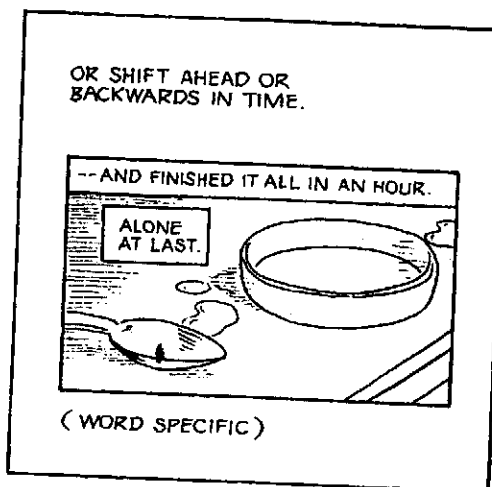
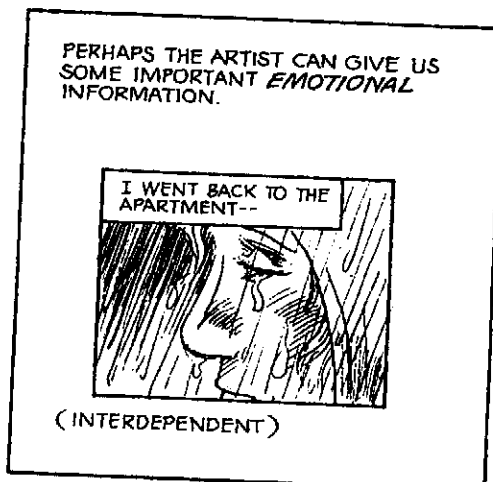
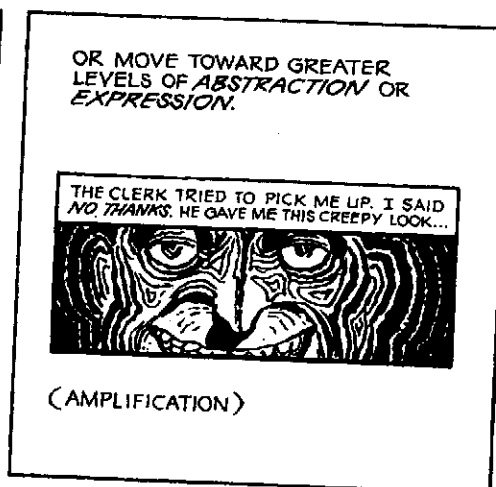
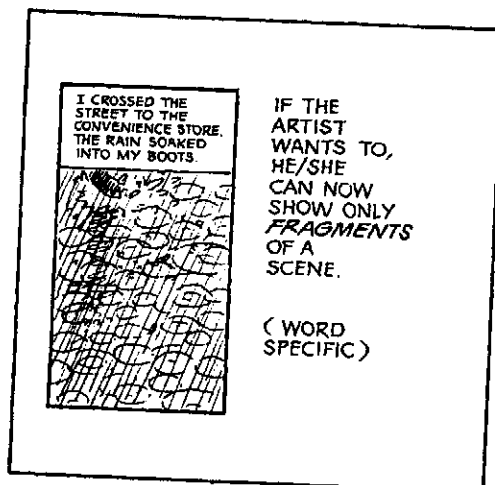
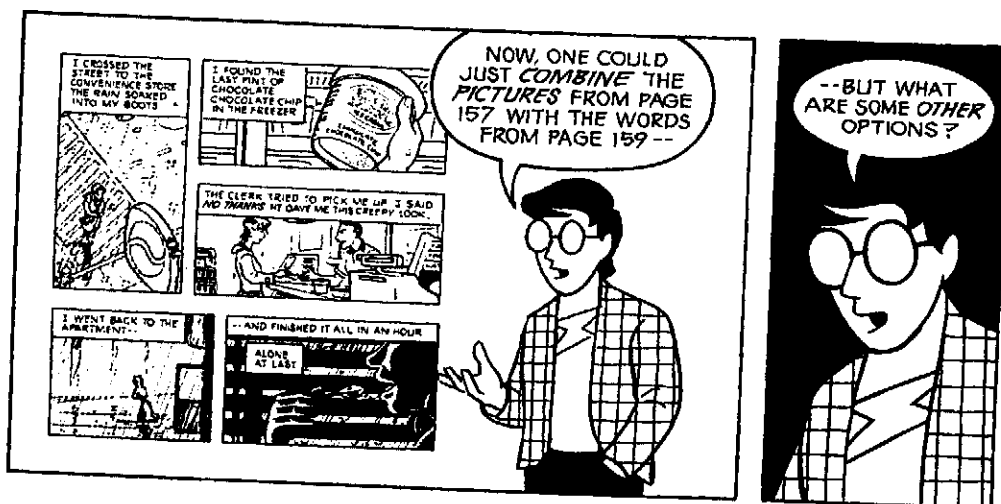
I FOUND THE LAST PINT OF CHOCOLATE CHOCOLATE CHIP IN THE FREEZER.

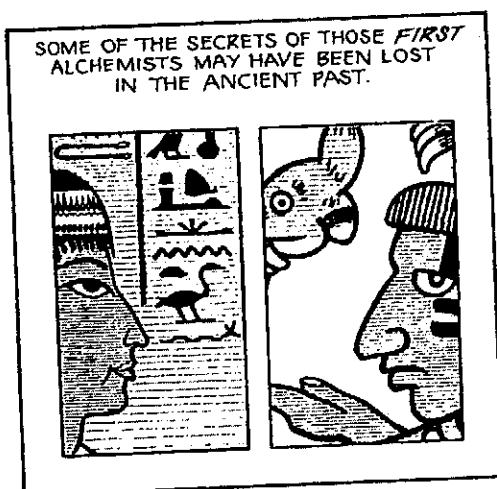
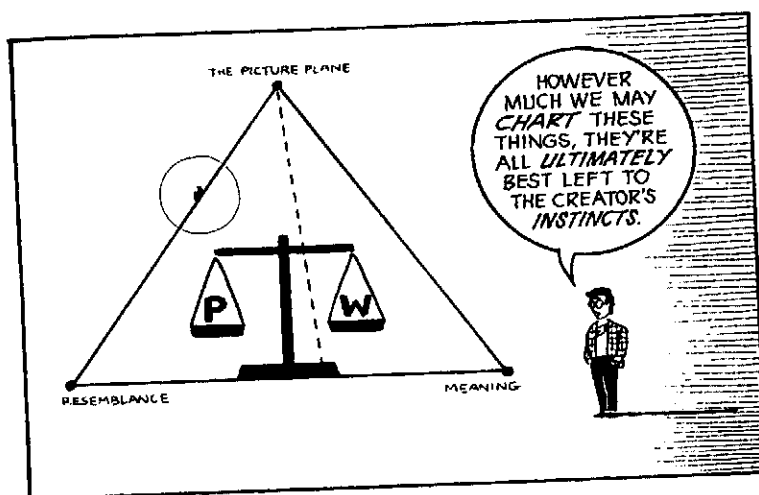
THE CLERK TRIED TO PICK ME UP. I SAID *NO THANKS*. HE GAVE ME THIS CREEPY LOOK...

I WENT BACK TO THE APARTMENT--

--AND FINISHED IT ALL IN AN HOUR.

ALONE AT LAST.





-- WHEN TO TELL WAS TO SHOW--



-- AND TO SHOW WAS TO TELL.

SEEING & WRITING 3

Donald McQuade
University of California, Berkeley

Christine McQuade
Queens College, City University of New York

Bedford/St. Martin's
Boston, New York

FOR BEDFORD/ST. MARTIN'S

Executive Editor: Alanya Harter
Developmental Editor: Genevieve Hamilton Day
Senior Production Editor: Bridget Leahy
Senior Production Supervisor: Joe Ford
Marketing Manager: Karita dos Santos
Editorial Assistant: Joanna Lee
Text and Cover Design: Zx4
Copyeditor: Barbara Bell
Photo Research: Sally McKissick
Composition: Monotype, LLC
Printing and Binding: R.R. Donnelly & Sons, Inc.

President: Joan E. Feinberg
Editorial Director: Denise B. Wydra
Editor in Chief: Karen S. Henry
Director of Marketing: Karen Melton Soeltz
Director of Editing, Design, and Production: Marcia Cohen
Managing Editor: Elizabeth M. Schaaf

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2005927796

Copyright © 2006 by Bedford/St. Martin's

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, except as may be expressly permitted by the applicable copyright statutes or in writing by the Publisher.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

1 0 9 8 7 6
f e d c b a

For information, contact: Bedford/St. Martin's,
75 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116
617-399-4000
bedfordstmartins.com

ISBN: 0-312-43429-4
EAN: 978-0-312-43429-8

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction

Verbal Texts

Robert Frost. "In White." From *The Dimensions of Robert Frost* by Reginald L. Cook. Copyright © 1958 by Reginald L. Cook. Reprinted by permission Henry Holt & Company, LLC. "Design." From *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, edited by Edward Connery Latham. Copyright © 1964 by Lesley Frost Ballantine, 1936 by Robert Frost, 1969 by Henry Holt & Company. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt & Company, LLC.

David Ignatow. "My Place." From *Against the Evidence: Selected Poems 1934-1994*. © 1994 by David Ignatow. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Visual Texts

Untitled drawings. Peter Arkle. © Peter Arkle, 2005.

Dean College, The Way There. Courtesy of Dean College, Franklin, MA.

Subway Passengers, New York, NY. Walker Evans. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Arnold H. Crane, 1971. (1971.646.18) © 1999 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Man Turning into a Barcode. Graphis Student Design.

Life in Hell. Matt Groening. © 1985 by Matt Groening.

Untitled cartoon. Marshall Hopkins. © 2004 The New Yorker Collection, 2004 Marshall Hopkins from cartoonbank.com. All Rights Reserved.

Poverty Is a Crime, and Our People Are the Victims [after *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California*]. Malik. Courtesy the Dorothea Lange Collection, Oakland Museum of California. *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California* series. Dorothea Lange. Courtesy the Dorothea Lange Collection, Oakland Museum of California.

Mountain Lakes, New Jersey, 1977. Arno Rafael Minkinen. Courtesy of Arno Rafael Minkinen.

12-23-97 5:09 PM; 3-3-98 6:25 PM. Richard Misrach. Courtesy of Richard Misrach.

Down and Out in Discount America cover, by *Nation* magazine, January 3, 2005. Reprinted with permission from *Nation* magazine. www.thenation.com.

Natural Resources, February 16, 2005. Nerilicon. Copyright by Nerilicon and Cagle Cartoons. All rights reserved.

Overhead view of cloverleaf. Photodisc Collection/Getty Images. *American Gothic*. Gordon Parks. Courtesy Gordon Parks/Corbis.

Image of Homelessness. Mark Peterson. Courtesy of Redux Pictures.

Warren Avenue at 23rd St., Detroit, Michigan, October 1993. © Joel Sternfeld. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine.

It's Your Life. Courtesy of Visa.

Acknowledgments and copyrights are continued at the back of the book on pages 746-751, which constitute an extension of the copyright page. It is a violation of the law to reproduce these selections by any means whatsoever without the written permission of the copyright holder.