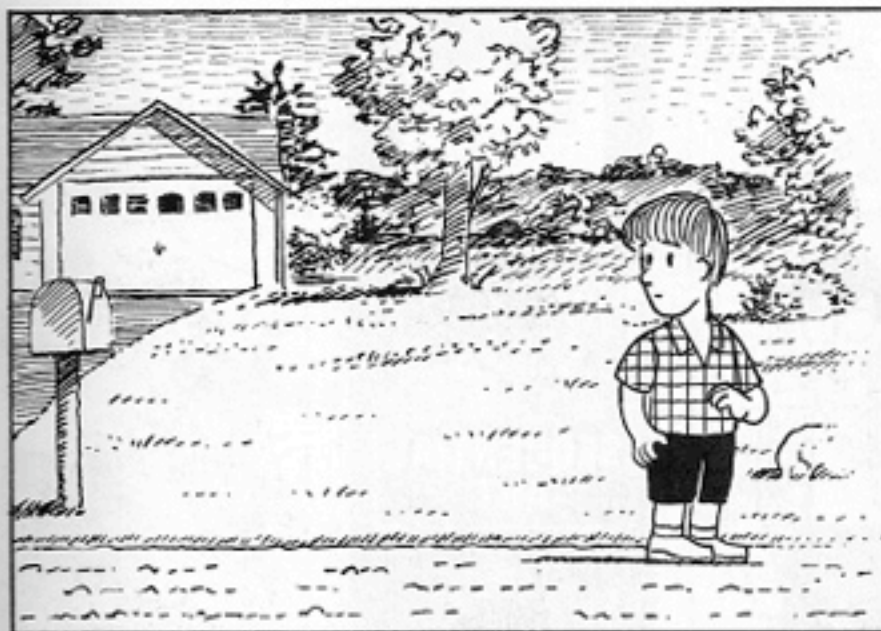


## CHAPTER THREE

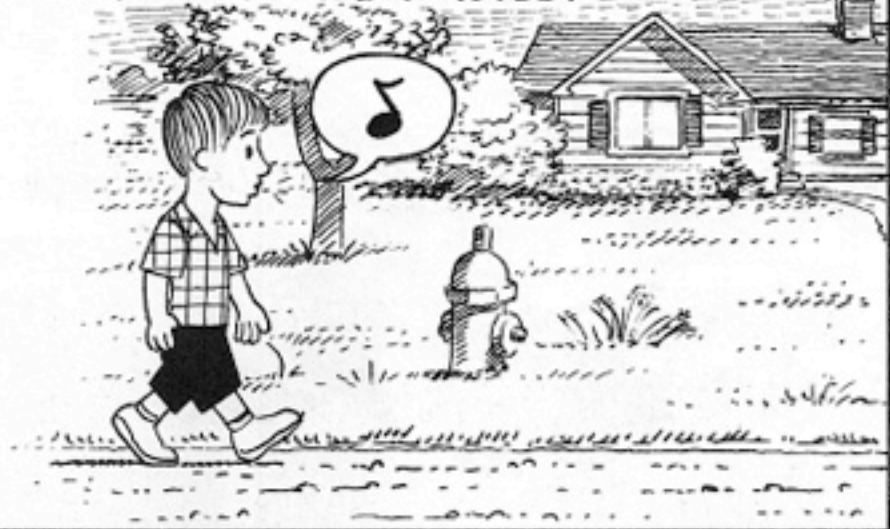
BLOOD IN THE GUTTER.

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--





**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!*

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.**



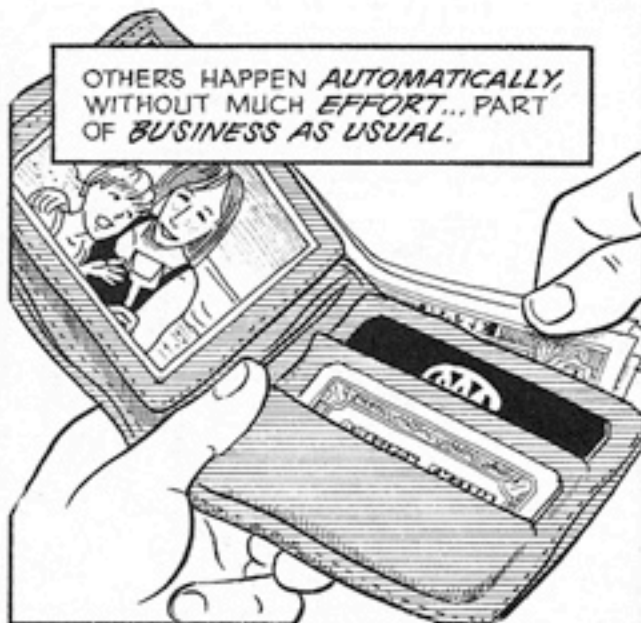
IN OUR DAILY LIVES, WE OFTEN  
COMMIT CLOSURE, MENTALLY  
COMPLETING THAT WHICH IS  
*INCOMPLETE* BASED ON *PAST*  
*EXPERIENCE.*



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



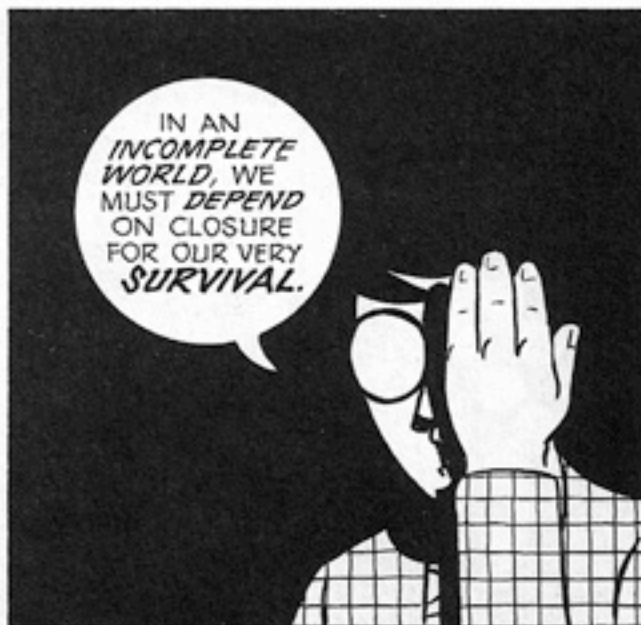
OTHERS HAPPEN *AUTOMATICALLY*,  
WITHOUT MUCH *EFFORT*... PART  
OF *BUSINESS AS USUAL.*



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



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!*

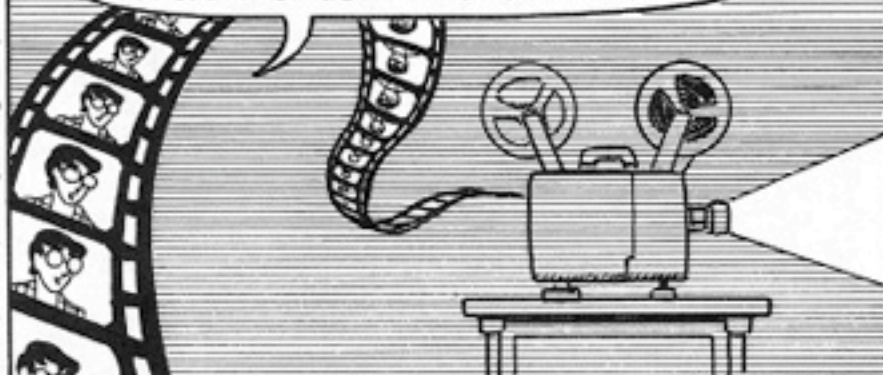




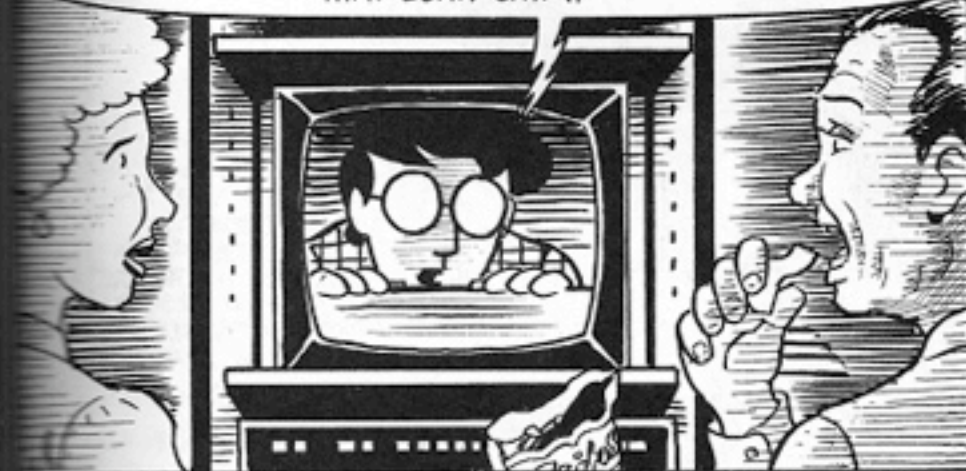
IN  
ELECTRONIC  
MEDIA, CLOSURE  
IS CONSTANT,  
EVEN OVER-  
POWERING!



IN FILM, CLOSURE TAKES PLACE CONTINUOUSLY--  
TWENTY-FOUR TIMES PER SECOND, IN FACT-- AS OUR  
MINDS, AIDED BY THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION,  
TRANSFORM A SERIES OF STILL PICTURES INTO  
A STORY OF CONTINUOUS MOTION.



A MEDIUM REQUIRING EVEN MORE CLOSURE IS TELEVISION,  
WHICH, IN REALITY, IS JUST A SINGLE POINT OF LIGHT,  
RACING ACROSS THE SCREEN SO FAST THAT IT'S DESCRIBED  
MY FACE HUNDREDS OF TIMES BEFORE YOU CAN EVEN SWALLOW  
THAT CORN CHIP!!



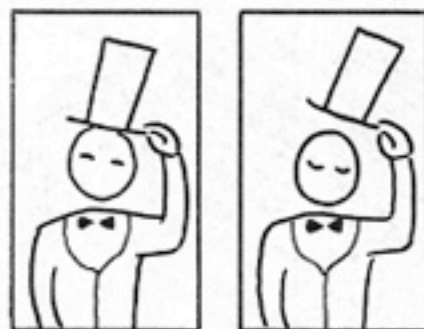
BETWEEN SUCH  
AUTOMATIC  
ELECTRONIC  
CLOSURE AND THE  
SIMPLER CLOSURE  
OF EVERYDAY  
LIFE--



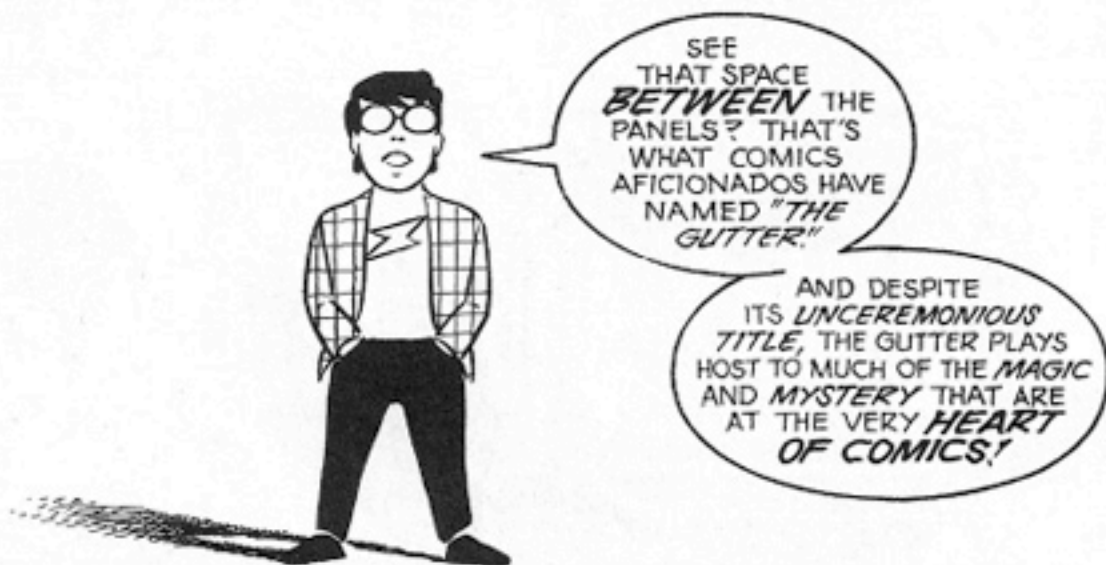
...THERE LIES  
A MEDIUM OF  
COMMUNICATION  
AND EXPRESSION  
WHICH USES CLOSURE  
LIKE NO OTHER...



...A MEDIUM WHERE THE AUDIENCE IS  
A WILLING AND CONSCIOUS COLLABORATOR  
AND CLOSURE IS THE AGENT OF CHANGE,  
TIME AND MOTION.







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



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--

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



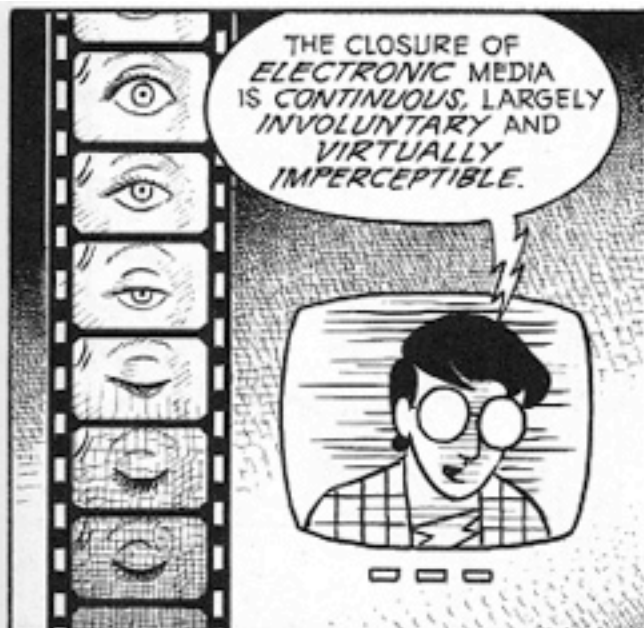
ICONOGRAPHY



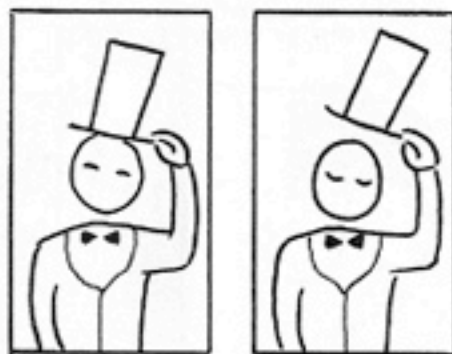
CLOSURE







BUT CLOSURE IN *COMICS* IS FAR FROM CONTINUOUS AND ANYTHING BUT INVOLUNTARY!



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**.

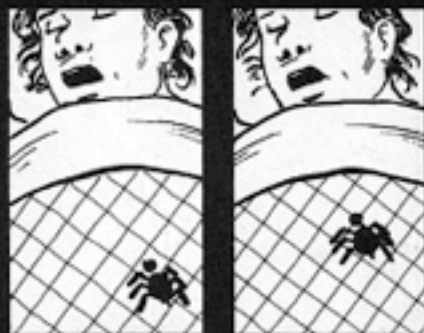
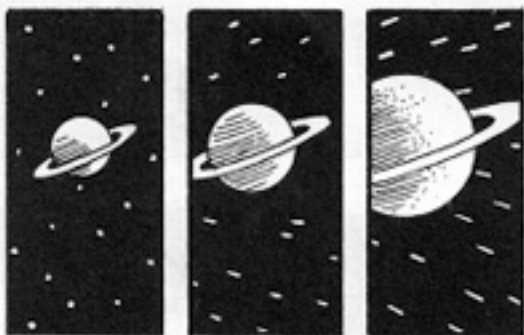




MOST  
**PANEL-TO-PANEL**  
TRANSITIONS IN COMICS  
CAN BE PLACED IN ONE  
OF SEVERAL DISTINCT  
CATEGORIES. THE **FIRST**  
CATEGORY-- WHICH WE'LL  
CALL **MOMENT-TO-**  
**MOMENT**--REQUIRES  
VERY **LITTLE**  
CLOSURE.



1.



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



2.



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*...

