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--

---CEASED TO EXIST.
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.

Peek-a-Boo!
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.

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 OVERPOWERING!

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.

* MEDIA GURU TONY SCHWARTZ DESCRIBES THIS AT LENGTH IN HIS BOOK MEDIA, THE SECOND GOD, ANCHOR BOOKS, 1983.
NOW YOU DIE!!

NO!
NO!

EEYAA!!

See that space between the panels? That's what comics aficionados have named "The Gutter."

And despite its uncereemonious title, the gutter plays host to much of the magic and mystery that are at the very heart of comics.

Here in the limbo of the gutter, human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea.
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!
THE CLOSURE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IS CONTINUOUS, LARGELY INVOLUNTARY AND VIRTUALLY IMPERCEPTIBLE.

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

NOW YOU DIE!!
NO!
NO!

EYAA!!

EVERY ACT COMMITTED TO PAPER BY THE COMICS ARTIST IS AIDED AND ABETTED BY A SILENT ACCOMPLICE.

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.

AN EQUAL PARTNER IN CRIME KNOWN AS THE READER.

NOW YOU DIE!!
NO!
NO!

EYAA!!

THAT, DEAR READER, WAS YOUR SPECIAL CRIME, EACH OF YOU COMMITTING IT IN YOUR OWN STYLE.

ALL OF YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE MURDER. ALL OF YOU HELD THE AXE AND CHOSE YOUR SPOT.
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.

Next are those transitions featuring a single subject in distinct action-to-action progressions.
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.

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.
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.

AND FINALLY, THERE'S THE NON-SEQUITUR, WHICH OFFERS NO LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANELS WHATSOEVER!
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...

Danger!!!
1. Moment-to-moment

2. Action-to-action

3. Subject-to-subject

4. Scene-to-scene

5. Aspect-to-aspect

6. Non-sequitur

THIS SORT OF CATEGORIZATION IS AN INEXACT SCIENCE AT BEST, BUT BY USING OUR TRANSITION SCALE AS A TOOL --

--WE CAN BEGIN TO UNRAVEL SOME OF THE MYSTERIES SURROUNDING THE INVISIBLE ART OF COMICS STORYTELLING!

BY FAR, THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF TRANSITION IN KIRBY'S ART IS ACTION-TO-ACTION. I COUNT SIXTY-TWO OF THEM IN THIS STORY -- ABOUT SIXTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER.

SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT TRANSITIONS ACCOUNT FOR AN ADDITIONAL NINETEEN -- ABOUT TWENTY PERCENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER.

MOST MAINSTREAM COMICS IN AMERICA EMPLOY STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES FIRST INTRODUCED BY JACK KIRBY, SO LET'S START BY EXAMINING THIS LEE-KIRBY COMIC FROM 1966.

ALTOGETHER, I COUNT NINETY-FIVE PANEL-TO-PANEL TRANSITIONS. LET'S SEE HOW THEY BREAK DOWN PROPORTIONATELY.

[TRACED AND SIMPLIFIED FOR CLARITY'S SAKE]
AND SINCE **ALL** OF THE REMAINING TRANSITIONS ARE FROM SCENE-TO-SCENE, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING BREAKDOWN.

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AS A BARGRAPH IT WOULD LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

\[\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 \\
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THIS EMPHASIS ON ACTION-TO-ACTION STORYTELLING SUCCEDESSFULLY MOST PEOPLE'S IDEAS ABOUT KIRBY BUT IS HE UNIQUE IN THIS RESPECT?

APPEARENTLY **NOT**! HERE'S A GRAPH OF PANEL TRANSITIONS IN HERGE'S **TINTIN** AND THE PROPORTION ARE VERY SIMILAR TO KIRBY'S

\[\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 \\
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NOW, HERGE'S AND KIRBY'S STYLES ARE **NOT** SIMILAR! IN FACT, THEY'RE **RADICALLY** DIFFERENT!!

IS THERE SOME KIND OF UNIVERSAL PROPORTION AT WORK HERE, OR IS THERE ANOTHER COMMON LINK? MAYBE A SIMILARITY OF GENRES?

A RANDOM SAMPLING OF VARIOUS AMERICAN COMICS SHOWS THIS SAME PROPORTION PRETTY CONSISTENTLY.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X-MEN #1</th>
<th>&quot;HEARTBREAK SOUP&quot;</th>
<th>BETTY &amp; VERONICA</th>
<th>NAUGHTY BITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLAREMONT &amp; LEE</td>
<td>G. HERNANDEZ</td>
<td>DOYLE &amp; DECARLO</td>
<td>GREGORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANK IN THE RIVER</td>
<td>A CONTRACT WITH GOD</td>
<td>MAUS</td>
<td>DONALD DUCK</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOODRING</td>
<td>EISNER</td>
<td>SPIEGELMAN</td>
<td>BARKS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A survey of well-known European artists yields similar, if not quite as uniform, results.

What can we deduce from this?

Are these three types of transitions all anyone should ever need to tell a story in comics?

If we choose to see stories as connected series of events, then the predominance of types 2-4 are easily explained.

Types 2-4 show things happening in concise, efficient ways.

Type 1 shows actions like type 2, but it tends to require several panels to do what type 2 does in two--
--While in the Fifth Type, by definition, nothing "happens" at all!

And, of course, non-sequiturs are unconcerned with events or any narrative purposes of any sort.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Some experimental comics, like those of Art Spiegelman's early period, explore a full range of transitions--

--though generally in the service of equally radical stories and subjects.

Stories from Spiegelman's anthology breakdowns:

"Don't Get Around Much Anymore"  "Introduction"  "Maus" (Original)

"Skinless Perkins"  "Prisoner on the Hell Planet"  "Cracking Jokes"

Front and back covers  "Ace-Hole, Midget Detective"  "Real Dream" 1975

But before we conclude that Types 2-4 have a monopoly on straightforward storytelling, let's take another look at Osamu Tezuka from Japan.

Tezuka is a far cry from the early Spiegelman. His storytelling is clear and straightforward.

But look at how he charts!

1 2 3 4 5 6

Just what is going on here?
ACTION-TO-ACTION TRANSITIONS STILL DOMINATE IN TEZUKA'S WORK, BUT TO A LESSER DEGREE.

IN FACT, SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT TRANSITIONS ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY AS MANY AS ACTION.

HERE ALSO WE SEE OUR FIRST EXAMPLES OF MOMENT-TO-MOMENT TRANSITIONS.

THOUGH THE LATTER TYPE ONLY ACCOUNTS FOR FOUR PERCENT OF THE TOTAL, SUCH SEQUENCES CONTRAST STRIKINGLY WITH THE WESTERN TRADITIONS EXEMPLIFIED BY KIRBY AND HERGE.

BUT, MOST STRIKING OF ALL IS THE SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE OF THE FIFTH TYPE OF TRANSITION, A TYPE RARELY SEEN IN THE WEST.
ASPECT-TO-ASPECT TRANSITIONS HAVE BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF JAPANESE MAINSTREAM COMICS ALMOST FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.

MOST OFTEN USED TO ESTABLISH A MOOD OR A SENSE OF PLACE, TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL IN THESE QUIET, CONTEMPLATIVE COMBINATIONS.

EVEN SEQUENCE, WHILE STILL AN ISSUE, SEEMS FAR LESS IMPORTANT HERE THAN IN OTHER TRANSITIONS.

RATHER THAN ACTING AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN SEPARATE MOMENTS, THE READER HERE MUST ASSEMBLE A SINGLE MOMENT USING SCATTERED FRAGMENTS.
IN EXAMINING SEVERAL JAPANESE ARTISTS, WE FIND SIMILAR PROPORTIONS TO TEZUKA'S, INCLUDING A HIGH INCIDENCE OF THE FIFTH TYPE.

WHY?

LENGTH MAY BE ONE OF THE FACTORS AT WORK HERE. MOST JAPANESE COMICS FIRST APPEAR IN ENORMOUS ANTHOLOGY TITLES WHERE THE PRESSURE ISN'T AS GREAT ON ANY ONE INSTALLMENT TO SHOW A LOT "HAPPENING."

WHEN INDIVIDUAL FEATURES ARE COLLECTED, THEY MAY RUN FOR THOUSANDS OF PAGES.

AS SUCH, DOZENS OF PANELS CAN BE DEVOTED TO PORTRAYING SLOW CINEMATIC MOVEMENT OR TO SETTING A MOOD.

BUT I DON'T THINK LONGER STORIES ARE THE ONLY FACTOR, OR EVEN THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE.

I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMETHING A BIT MORE FUNDAMENTAL TO THIS PARTICULAR EAST/WEST SPLIT.
Traditional Western art and literature don't wander much. On the whole, we're a pretty goal-oriented culture.

But, in the East, there's a rich tradition of cyclical and labyrinthine works of art.

Japanese comics may be heirs to this tradition, in the way they so often emphasize being there over getting there.

Through these and other storytelling techniques, the Japanese offer a vision of comics very different from our own.

For in Japan more than anywhere else, comics is an art—
--OF INTERVALS.

The idea that elements omitted from a work of art are as much a part of that work as those included has been a specialty of the East for centuries.

In the graphic arts this has meant a greater focus on figure/ground relationships and “negative space.”

“The Great Wave off Kanagawa” by Hokusai (c. 1829). (Turn this picture upside down to see the other wave of negative space...nature’s Yin and Yang.)

In music too, while the Western classical tradition was emphasizing the continuous, connected worlds of melody and harmony, Eastern classical music was equally concerned with the role of silence.

From Debussy to Stravinsky to Count Basie, Western music has gradually incorporated a strong awareness of the power of fragmentation and intervals.

In the last century or two, as Western cultural influences swept the East, so too have Eastern and African ideas of fragmentation and rhythm swept the West.

From Debussy to Stravinsky to Count Basie, Western music has gradually incorporated a strong awareness of the power of...
In the visual arts, the impact of Eastern ideas was both powerful and lasting.

The traditional emphasis in Western art upon the primacy of foreground subjects and continuousness of tones gave way to fragmentation and a new awareness of the picture plane.

Facsimile of "Figure" by Pablo Picasso 1948

What do you think this painting by Al Held is called?*

In theater, the idea that "less is more" has real practical implications. One of the most successful shows in history is The Fantasticks—a play whose entire set came in three pieces—a tattered banner, a stick and a cardboard moon.

The mastery of any medium using minimal elements has long been considered a noble aspiration.

*Answer: "The Big N" [See page 216]
HERE'S A STORY.

I PROMISE.

I PROMISE.

I PROMISE.

WELL, IT'S GETTING LATE!

I BETTER GO NOW!

HMM...

I SEEM TO HAVE LOST MY KEYS. CAN I BORROW YOURS?

OKAY, THEY'RE IN MY PURSE.

THANKS!

SLAM!

RRR... BRUM!

BRUM!

DARN! TRAFFIC SLOWDOWN.

HMM...

I'LL TAKE A SHORT-CUT!

HERE I AM!

I HOPE DAISY IS READY!

DING-DONG!

HI, CARL! HI, DAISY!

I'M SORRY, CARL, BUT I CAN'T GO OUT WITH YOU TONIGHT!

AWW!

WHAT WILL I DO NOW?

HOW ABOUT TOMORROW NIGHT?

OKAY!

SMEK!

TOMORROW IT IS.

I KNOW, I'LL RENT A VIDEO!

VIDEO HOUSE

HMM...

I ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE THIS ONE!

$3.50, PLEASE.

HERE YA GO.

BILL, WHO?

THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING YOU.

I DON'T KNOW ANY "BILLS!"

HAVE A NICE DAY!

I'LL BUY SOME BEERS.

ONE BEER WON'T HURT.

GLUG! GLUG!

CRASH!

RIP, CARL.

END
HERE'S A STORY.
I PROMISE YOU WON'T DRINK AND DRIVE, CARL...

BRUM!
HERE I AM!

I PROMISE YOU WON'T DRINK AND DRIVE, CARL...

HERE'S A STORY.

HI, CARL! HI DAISY!
I'M SORRY, CARL, BUT I CAN'T GO OUT WITH YOU TONIGHT.

WHAT'LL I DO NOW?

AHH!

GLUG! GLUG! GLUG!

CRASH!

RIP, CARL.

CRASH!
RIP, CARL.

END

END

I'LL BUY SOME BEERS.

GLUG! GLUG! GLUG!

CRASH!

RIP, CARL.

END

END

THE ART OF COMICS IS AS SUBTRACTIVE AS IT IS ADDITIVE.

AND FINDING THE BALANCE BETWEEN TOO MUCH AND TOO LITTLE IS CRUCIAL TO COMICS CREATORS THE WORLD OVER.

TO STRIKE THAT BALANCE, CREATORS REGULARLY MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THEIR READERS' EXPERIENCES.

SOME SEEM PRETTY SAFE, LIKE THE ASSUMPTION THAT THIS WILL BE PERCEIVED BY AUDIENCES AS AN EYE CLOSING.

SAFE THAT, IF THE AUDIENCE DOESN'T REACT RIGHT, IT TELLS THEM...
WE ASSUME AS READERS THAT WE WILL KNOW WHAT ORDER TO READ PANELS IN, BUT THE BUSINESS OF ARRANGING THOSE PANELS IS ACTUALLY QUITE COMPLEX.

AS CLOSURE BETWEEN PANELS BECOMES MORE INTENSE, READER INTERPRETATION BECOMES FAR MORE ELASTIC.

AND MANAGING IT BECOMES MORE COMPLICATED FOR THE CREATOR.

SOME ARTISTS CAN BE DELIBERATELY AMBIGUOUS, OF COURSE, AND OFFER US NO STRICT INTERPRETATION TO GO ON.

CLOSURE CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE WITHIN PANELS AS WELL AS BETWEEN THEM, WHEN ARTISTS CHOOSE TO SHOW ONLY A SMALL PIECE OF THE PICTURE.

COMICS CAN BE MADDERINGLY VAGUE ABOUT WHAT IT SHOWS US.

BY SHOWING LITTLE OR NOTHING OF A GIVEN SCENE--

--AND OFFERING ONLY CLUES TO THE READER--

--THE ARTIST CAN TRIGGER ANY NUMBER OF IMAGES IN THE READER'S IMAGINATION.
READERS FACED WITH PANELS LIKE THESE WILL HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS.

CLAK! CLAK! CLAK!

BY CONSTRUCTING WHOLE IMAGES BASED ON THESE FRAGMENTS, READERS ARE PERFORMING CLOSURE, JUST AS---

WHOOSH!

Splip Splip

?

Ding! Ding!

Uh--just as readers complete an action or idea BETWEEN---

OW!

OW!

Ding! Ding!

Ahem. I say, just as readers complete---

--an action or---

OW! OW!

Stop that!

Ding! Ding!

OW!

Ding! Ding!

OW!
Whatever the mysteries within each panel, it's the power of closure between panels that I find the most interesting.

There's something strange and wonderful that happens in this blank ribbon of paper.

We already know that comics asks the mind to work as a sort of in-betweener—filling in the gaps between panels as an animator might—but I believe there's still more to it than that.

Let's take another look at the fifth type of transition, the one so popular in Japan.

Here's a four-panel establishing shot of an old-fashioned kitchen scene.

Chop! Chop! Chop!
Now, most of you should have no trouble perceiving that you're in a kitchen from those four panels alone.

With a high degree of closure, your mind is taking four picture fragments and constructing an entire scene out of those fragments.

But the scene your mind constructs from those four panels is a very different place from the scene constructed from our traditional one-panel establishing shot!

Look again. You've been in kitchens before, you know what a pot on the boil sounds like; do you only hear it in that first panel?

And what about the chopping sound? Does that only last a panel or does it persist? Can you smell this kitchen? Feel it? Taste it?

Comics is a mono-sensory medium. It relies on only one of the senses to convey a world of experience.

But what of the other four?

We represent sound through devices such as word balloons.

Within these panels, we can only convey information visually.

But between panels, none of our senses are required at all.

Which is why all of our senses are engaged!

But all in all, it is an exclusively visual representation.
Several times on every page the reader is released—like a trapeze artist—into the open air of imagination...

Then caught by the outstretched arms of the ever-present next panel!

Caught quickly so as not to let the reader fall into confusion or boredom.

But is it possible that closure can be so managed in some cases—

That the reader might learn to fly?

In chapter two, we discussed various types of iconic and non-iconic drawing styles.

Do these affect closure?

Since cartoons already exist as concepts for the reader, they tend to flow easily through the conceptual territory between panels.

Ideas flowing into one another seamlessly.
BUT 
REALISTIC 
IMAGES HAVE A 
BUMPIER RIDE. 
THEIRS IS 
A PRIMARILY 
VISUAL 
EXISTENCE WHICH DOESN'T PASS EASILY 
INTO THE REALM OF IDEAS.

AND SO, WHAT SEEMED LIKE A CONTINUOUS SERIES OF 
MOMENTS IN THE LAST EXAMPLE, HERE LOOKS A LITTLE MORE 
LIKE A SERIES OF STILL PICTURES...

SIMILARLY, I THINK WHEN COMICS ART VEERS CLOSER TO 
CONCERNS OF THE \textit{PICTURE PLANE}, CLOSURE CAN BE MORE 
DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, THOUGH FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.

NOW IT'S THE \textit{UNIFYING PROPERTIES} OF DESIGN 
THAT MAKE US MORE AWARE OF THE PAGE AS A WHOLE, RATHER 
THAN ITS INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS, THE PANELS.

-- THEN 
CLOSURE IS 
PROBABLY NOT 
HAPPENING 
WITHOUT SOME 
EFFORT.

OF COURSE, MAKING THE READER WORK A LITTLE 
MAY BE JUST WHAT THE ARTIST IS TRYING TO DO. 
ONCE AGAIN, IT'S ALL A MATTER OF 
PERSONAL TASTE.

...TO 
ME 
ANYWAY. THESE 
THINGS ARE ALL 
SUBJECTIVE!
THE COMICS CREATOR ASKS US TO JOIN IN A SILENT DANCE OF THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN.

THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE.

THIS DANCE IS UNIQUE TO COMICS. NO OTHER ARTFORM GIVES SO MUCH TO ITS AUDIENCE WHILE ASKING SO MUCH FROM THEM AS WELL.

THIS IS WHY I THINK IT'S A MISTAKE TO SEE COMICS AS A MERE HYBRID OF THE GRAPHIC ARTS AND PROSE FICTION.

WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN THESE PANELS IS A KIND OF MAGIC ONLY COMICS CAN CREATE.
Here in this studio, I've tried to control that process and use it to make my case.

But I can only point the way. I can't take you anywhere you don't want to go.

All I can do is make assumptions about you and hope that they're correct.

-- just as we all assume, every day, that there's more to life than meets the eye.

All I ask of you is a little faith.

-- and a world of imagination.