CHAPTER TWO

THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS.

WELL, ACTUALLY THAT'S
WRONG. THIS IS NOT
A PAINTING OF A PIPE. THIS
IS A DRAWING OF A PAINTING
OF A PIPE.

NOPE. WRONG AGAIN.
IT'S A PRINTED COPY
OF A DRAWING OF A PAINTING
OF A PIPE.

HERE'S A PAINTING
BY MANISSETTE CALLED "THE
TREACHERY OF IMAGES".

THE INSRIPTION IS IN
FRENCH, TRANSLATED IT MEANS
"THIS IS NOT A PIPE!"

TEN COPY IS ACTUALLY.
OK, IF YOU FOLD THE PAGES
BACK.

AND INDEED THIS IS NOT
A PAINTING OF A PIPE.

RIGHT?

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I'M
SAYING?

IF YOU DO, HAVE YOUR
EGGS CHICKEB. BECAUSE
NO ONE SAID A WORD.

SEE PAGE 214 FOR MORE INFORMATION.
Now, the word **icon** means many things.

**Welcome to the strange and meaningful world of the **ICON**!**

For the purposes of this chapter, I'm using the word **icon** to mean any image used to represent a person, place, thing, idea.

That's a bit broader than the definition in my dictionary, but it's the closest thing to what I need here. "Symbol" is a bit too loaded for me.

**SPLAT!**

**This is not a man.**

This is not a country.

This is a leaf.

This is not people.

This is not paper.

This is not music.

The sorts of images we usually call symbols are one category of icon, however.

**Then there are the icons of language, science and communication.**

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These are the images we use to represent concepts, ideas and philosophies.

Then finally, the icons we call **pictures**; images designed to actually resemble their subjects.

But as resemblance varies, so does the level of iconic content.

Or, to put it somewhat clumsily, some pictures are just more iconic than others.
In pictures, however, meaning is fluid and variable, according to appearance. They differ from real-life appearance to varying degrees.

Words are totally abstract icons. That is, they have no resemblance at all to the real McCoy.

But in pictures, the level of abstraction varies. Some, like the face in the previous panel, so closely resemble their real-life counterparts as to almost suck the eye!

Let's see if we can put these pictorial icons in some sort of order.

There are many things that set these apart from actual faces: they're smaller, flatter, more detailed, they don't move, they lack color, but as pictorial icons, they are pretty realistic.

Common wisdom holds that the photograph and the realistic picture are the icons that most resemble their real-life counterparts.

Somewhat more abstract is this style of drawing found in many adventure comics.

Why, then, is the face about so acceptable to our eyes? Why does it seem just as real as the others?

As we continue to abstract and simplify our image, we are moving further and further from the "real" face of the photo.

What is the secret of the icon we call—"the cartoon?"
Film critics will sometimes describe a live-action film as a "cartoon" to acknowledge the stripped-down intensity of a simple story or visual style.

Though the term is often used disparagingly, it can be equally well applied to many time-tested classics. Simplifying characters and images toward a purpose can be an effective tool for storytelling in any medium.

Cartooning isn't just a way of drawing; it's a way of seeing.

The ability of cartoons to focus our attention on an idea is an important part of their power both in comics and in drawing generally.

But I believe there's something more at work in our minds when we view a cartoon—especially a human face—which warrants further investigation.

Defining the cartoon would take up as much space as defining comics but for now I'm going to examine cartooning as a form of amplification through simplification.

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Why would anyone, young or old, respond to a cartoon as much or more than a realistic image?

Why is our culture so in thrall to the simplified reality of the cartoon?

Defining the cartoon would take up as much space as defining comics but for now I'm going to examine cartooning as a form of amplification through simplification.

When we abstract an image through cartooning, we're not so much eliminating details as we are focusing on specific details.

When we strip down an image to its essential meaning, an artist can amplify that meaning in a way that realistic art can't.

Another is the universality of cartoon imagery. The more cartoonish a face is, for instance, the more people it could be said to describe.

The fact that your mind is capable of taking a circle, two dots and a line and turning them into a face is nothing short of incredible.

But still more incredible is the fact that you cannot avoid seeing a face here, your mind won't let you!
ASK A FRIEND TO DRAW YOU SOME SHAPES ON A PIECE OF PAPER. THEY SHOULD BE CLOSED CURVES BUT OTHERWISE CAN BE ANYWHERE AND IRREGULAR AS HE OR SHE WANTS.

NOW - YOU'LL FIND THAT NO MATTER WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE, EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THOSE SHAPES CAN BE MADE INTO A FACE WITH ONE SIMPLE ADDITION.

WE SEE OURSELVES IN EVERYTHING.

YOUR MIND HAS NO TROUBLE AT ALL CONVERTING SUCH SHAPES INTO FACES, YET WOULD IT EVER MISTAKE THIS?

WE ASSIGN IDENTITIES AND EMOTIONS WHERE NONE EXIST.

WE HUMANS ARE A SELF-CENTERED RACE.

AND WE MAKE THE WORLD OVER IN OUR IMAGE.
THINK OF YOUR FACE AS A MASK.

THAT'S WHAT IT IS, AFTER ALL.

A MASK.

FACING OUTWARD.

WORN FROM THE DAY YOU WERE BORN.

SLAVE TO YOUR EVERY MENTAL COMMAND.

C'MON, NOBODY'S LOOKING.

GOOD, NOW, WHAT CHANGED WHEN YOU SMILED? WHAT DID YOU SEE?

NOTHING RIGHT.

GOOD, NOW, WHAT YOU SMILED NOT JUST BECAUSE YOU TELLED YOUR CHEEKS TO COMPRESS OR THE CORKING AROUND YOUR EYES?

YOU KNOW? YOU SMILED BECAUSE YOU TRUSTED THIS MASK CALLED YOUR FACE TO RESPONSE.

BUT THE FACE YOU SEE IN YOUR MIND IS NOT THE SAME AS OTHERS SEE.

WHEN TWO PEOPLE INTERACT, THEY USUALLY LOOK DIRECTLY AT ONE ANOTHER, SEEING THEIR PARTNER'S FEATURES IN VIVID DETAIL.

SEEN BY EVERYONE YOU MEET.

BUT NEVER BY YOU!

OPEN IT'S EYES NOW.

JUST THINK IT THE MASK WILL OBEY.
EACH ONE ALSO SUSTAINS A CONSTANT AWARENESS OF HIS OR HER OWN FACE, BUT THIS MIND-PICURE IS NOT NEARLY SO VIVID; JUST A SKETCHY ARRANGEMENT, A SENSE OF SHAPE... A SENSE OF GENERAL PLACEMENT.

SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AND AS BASIC

AS A CARTOON.

THUS, WHEN YOU LOOK AT A PHOTO OR REALISTIC DRAWING OF A FACE...

YOU SEE IT AS THE FACE OF ANOTHER.

YOU SEE YOURSELF.

THE CARTOON IS A VACUUM INTO WHICH OUR IDENTITY AND AWARENESS ARE PULLED.

AN EMPTY SMELL THAT WE INHABIT WHICH ENABLES US TO TRAVEL IN ANOTHER REALM.

WE DON'T JUST OBSERVE THE CARTOON WE BECOME IT.

THAT'S WHY I DECIDED TO DRAW MYSELF IN SUCH A SIMPLE STYLE.

WOULD YOU HAVE LISTENED TO ME IF I LOOKED LIKE THIS?

I DOUBT IT! YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN PAST TOO AWARE OF THE MESSENGER TO FULLY RECEIVE THE MESSAGE!

APART FROM WHAT LITTLE I TOLD YOU ABOUT MYSELF IN CHAPTER ONE, I'M PRACTICALLY A BLANK SLATE!

IT WOULD NEVER EVEN OCCUR TO YOU TO WONDER WHAT MY POLITICS ARE, OR WHAT I HAD FOR LUNCH OR WHERE I GOT THIS SILLY OUTFIT!

I'M JUST A LITTLE VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD.

A CONCEPT.

WHO AM I? I AM IRRELEVANT. I'M JUST A LITTLE PIECE OF YOU.

BUT IF WHO I AM MATTERS LESS, MAYBE WHAT I SAY WILL MATTER MORE.

THAT'S THE THEORY ANYWAY.

SO FAR, WE'VE ONLY DISCUSSED FACES, BUT THE PHENOMENON OF NON-VISUAL SELF-AWARENESS CAN, TO A LESSER DEGREE, STILL APPLY TO OUR WHOLE BODIES.

THERE'S MORE TO IT!

YOU GAVE UP LIFE BY READING THIS "FILLING UP" THIS VERY CONCISE CARTOONY FORM.

WHAT I AM HAPPENS, NOT JUST A LITTLE PIECE OF YOU.
THE LATE GREAT MARSHALL MALLON OBSERVED A SIMILAR FORM OF NON-VISUAL AWARENESS WHEN PEOPLE INTERACT WITH INANIMATE OBJECTS.

WHEN DRIVING, FOR EXAMPLE, WE EXPERIENCE MUCH MORE THAN OUR FIVE SENSES REPORT.

OUR ABILITY TO EXTEND OUR IDENTITIES INTO INANIMATE OBJECTS CAN CAUSE PIECES OF WOOD TO BECOME HANDS...

PIECES OF METAL TO BECOME EARS...

PIECES OF GLASS TO BECOME EYES...

THE WHOLE CAR - NOT JUST THE PARTS WE CAN SEE, FEEL AND HEAR - IS VERY MUCH ON OUR MINDS AT ALL TIMES.

THE VEHICLE BECOMES AN EXTENSION OF OUR BODY. IT ABSORBS OUR SENSES OF IDENTITY. WE BECOME THE CAR.

AND IN EVERY CASE, OUR CONSTANT AWARENESS OF SELF IS FLOWING OUTWARD TO INCLUDE THE OBJECT OF OUR EXTENDED IDENTITY.

AND JUST AS OUR AWARENESS OF OUR BODIES IS SIMPLIFIED CONCEPTUALIZED IMAGERY, THE SAME IS TRUE FOR EACH INANIMATE OBJECT.

IF ONE CAR HITS ANOTHER, THE DRIVER OF THE VEHICLE BEING STRUCK IS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SAY, "HE HIT ME!!"

"THE HIT MY CAR!" OR "THIS HIT MY CAR", FOR THAT MATTER.

OUR IDENTITIES AND AWARENESSES ARE INVESTED IN MANY INANIMATE OBJECTS EVERY DAY. OUR CLOTHES, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN TRIGGER NUMEROUS TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE WAY OTHERS SEE US AND IN THE WAY WE SEE OURSELVES.

-SO TOO IS OUR AWARENESS OF THESE EXTENSIONS GREATLY SIMPLIFIED.

OUR IDENTITIES BELONG PERMANENTLY TO THE CONCEPTUAL WORLD. THEY CAN'T BE SEEN, HEARD, SMELLED, TOUCHED OR TASTED. THEY'RE MERELY IDEAS AND EVERYTHING ELSE--AT THE STREET--BELONGS TO THE SENSUAL WORLD, THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF US.

GRADUALLY WE BECOME MORE AND MORE IDENTIFIABLE WITH OUR IDEAS, AND SOON WE DISCOVER THAT OBJECTS OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD CAN ALSO CROSS OVER.

AND OF THE WORLD AROUND US...

--AND THROUGH THE CARTOON, THE WORLD WITHIN.

---AND THOUGH THE CARTOON, THE WORLD WITHIN.

WE ENCOUNTER THE SAME SENSES TOUCH, TASTE AND SMELL OF OUR OWN BODIES.

--AND POSSESS IDENTITIES OF THEIR OWN.

OR, AS OUR EXTENSIONS...

--BEGIN TO GLOW--

--WITH THE LIFE--

INANIMATE OBJECTS MAY BECOME TO POSSESS SEPARATE IDENTITIES SO THAT IF ONE JUMPED UP AND STARTED SINGING IT WOULDN'T FEEL OUT OF PLACE.

BUT IN EMPHASIZING THE CONCEPTS OF THE CARTOON, THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE OBJECTS MIGHT HAVE TO BE OMITTED.

IF AN ARTIST WANTS TO PORTRAY THE BEAUTY AND COMPLEXITY OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD...

--REALISM OF SOME SORT IS GOING TO PLAY A PART.

THROUGH TRADITIONAL REALISM THE COMICS ARTIST CAN PORTRAY THE WORLD WITHOUT--

--WE LEND THEM TO OTHERS.
WHEN DRAWING THE FACE AND FIGURE, NEARLY ALL COMICS ARTISTS APPLY AT LEAST SOME SMALL MEASURE OF CARTOONING, EVEN THE MORE REALISTIC ADVENTURE ARTISTS:

"ARE A FAR CRY FROM PHOTO-REALISTS!"

STORYTELLERS IN ALL MEDIA KNOW THAT A SUITE INDICATOR OF AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT IS "THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE AUDIENCE IDENTIFIES WITH A STORY'S CHARACTERS."

AND SINCE VIEWER-IDENTIFICATION IS A SPECIALTY OF CARTOONING, CARTOONS HAVE HISTORICALLY HELD AN ADVANTAGE IN BREAKING INTO WORLD POPULAR CULTURE.

IN THE WORLD OF ANIMATION, WHERE THE EFFECT HAPPENED TO BE A PRACTICAL NECESSITY, DISNEY HAS USED IT WITH IMPRESSIVE RESULTS FOR OVER 50 YEARS!

IN EUROPE IT CAN BE FOUND IN MANY POPULAR COMICS FROM ASTERIX TO TINTIN TO WORKS OF JACQUES TARDI.

IN AMERICAN COMICS, THE EFFECT IS USED FAR LESS OFTEN, ALTHOUGH IT HAS CRIED UP IN THE WORKS OF ARTISTS AS DIVERSE AS CARY ZUCKER, JAMES HENDERSON AND IN THE TEAM OF DAVE SIM AND GERHARD.

ON THE OTHER HAND, NO ONE EXPECTS AUDIENCE TO IDENTIFY WITH BRICK WALLS OR LANDSCAPES AND INDEED BACKGROUNDS TEND TO BE SLIGHTLY MORE REALISTIC.

IN SOME COMICS, THIS SPLIT IS FAR MORE PRONOUNCED. THE BELGIAN "CEREAL LINE" STYLE OF HERGE'S TINTIN COMBINES VERY "COMIC CHARACTERS WITH UNUSUALLY REALISTIC BACKGROUNDS"

IN JAPAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MASKING EFFECT WAS, FOR A TIME, VIRTUALLY A NATIONAL STYLE!

THANKS TO THE SEMINAL INFLUENCE OF COMICS CREATOR MASAHIKO TAKAHASHI, JAPANESE COMICS HAVE A LONG RICH HISTORY OF ICONIC CHARACTERS.

BUT, IN RECENT DECADES, JAPANESE FANS ALSO DEVELOPED A TASTE FOR FLASHY, PHOTO-REALISTIC ART.
THE RESULTANT HYBRID STYLES HAD TREMENDOUS ICONIC RANGE FROM EXTREMELY CARTOONISH CHARACTERS TO NEAR-PHOTOGRAPHIC BACKGROUNDS.

BUT JAPANESE COMICS ARTISTS TOOK THE IDEA A STEP FURTHER.

SOON, SOME OF THEM REALIZED THAT THE OBJECTIFYING POWER OF REALISTIC ARTS COULD BE PUT TO OTHER USES.

I LIKE THE MAGICAL EFFECT PERSONALLY, BUT IT'S JUST ONE OF MANY POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO COMICS ART.

I LIKE THE MAGICAL EFFECT PERSONALLY, BUT IT'S JUST ONE OF MANY POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO COMICS ART.

MANY OF MY FAVORITE ARTISTS USE IT VERY RARELY.

STILL, I HOPE THE JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE ON CARTOONING HELPS DEMONSTRATE THAT ONE'S CHOICE OF STYLES CAN HAVE CONSEQUENCES FAR BEYOND THE MERE "LOOK" OF A STORY.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE MOST CHARACTERS WERE DESIGNED SIMPLY TO ASSIST IN READER-IDENTIFICATION...

...OTHER CHARACTERS WERE DRAWN MORE REALISTICALLY IN ORDER TO OBJECTIFY THEM, EMFATIZING THEIR "OTHERNESS" FROM THE READER.

A PIECE LIKE THIS SWORD MIGHT BE USED CARTOON IN ONE SEQUENCE.

"DUE TO THE "LIFE" IT POSSESSES AS AN EXTENSION OF MY CARTOON IDENTIFY..."

AS I WRITE THIS, IN JAPAN, MANY AUDIENCES ARE JUST BEGINNING TO DISCOVER THAT A SIMPLE STYLE DOESN'T NECESSARILY TELL A SIMPLE STORY.

THE PLATONIC IDEAL OF THE CARTOON MAY SEEM TO OBTAIN MUCH OF THE AMBIGUITY AND COMPLEX CHARACTERIZATION WHICH ARE THE HALLMARKS OF MODERN LITERATURE, LEAVING THEM SUITABLE ONLY FOR CHILDREN.

BUT SIMPLIE ELEMENTS CAN COME IN COMPLEX WAYS, AS ATOMS, MOLECULES AND MOLECULES BECOME LIFE.

IN JAPANESE COMICS, THE SWORD MIGHT NOW BECOME VERY REALISTIC, NOT ONLY TO SHOW US THE DETAILS, BUT TO MAKE US AWARE OF THE SWORD AS AN OBJECT, SOMETHING WITH WORKING TEXTURE AND PHYSICAL COMPLEXITY.

IN THIS AND IN OTHER WAYS, COMICS IN JAPAN HAVE EVOLVED VERY DIFFERENTLY FROM THOSE IN THE WEST.

AND LOOK THE ATOM, GREAT POWER IS LOCKED IN THESE FEW SIMPLE LINES.

ONLY RELEASABLE, ONLY BY THE READER'S MIND.
"Reality"  

**Wait! There's more!**  

We've reduced the face to two dots and two lines. Is our iconic abstraction scale complete?

---

**Meaning retained.**  

**Resemblance gone.**  

---

**Are the ultimate abstraction.**

---

The scale shows several slightly different progressions. Let's continue one on from this and see if we can isolate it any further.

---

**Can any configuration of any number of these be more abstracted from reality?**

---

Writing and drawing are art forms. Disciplines of the different mediums are separate. But just how different are they?

---

**And "good" comics as those in which the combination of these very different forms of expression is thought to be harmonious.**

---

**Words—**

---

**Words, pictures and other icons are the vocabulary of the language called comics.**

---

A single unified language deservers a single unified vocabulary.

---

Without it, comics will continue to limp along as the bastard child of words and pictures.

---

Several factors have conspired against comics receiving the unified identity they need.

---

And among them lie a lack of stability and quirkiness best instincts.
Both artist and writer begin, hands joined across the gap, with a common purpose: to make comics of quality.

The artist knows that this means more than just stick-figures and crude cartoons. He sets off in search of a higher art.

The writer knows that this means more than just "POW! POUNCH!" and one-a-day GROAN. She sets off in search of something deeper.

Pictures are received information. We need no formal education to set the message of the abstract symbols of language instantaneous.

Writing is perceived information, it takes time and specialized knowledge to decode the abstract symbols of language.

In museums and in libraries, the artist finds what he's looking for. He studies the techniques of the great masters of Western art. He practices his craft night and day.

She, too, finds what she's looking for, in the great masters of Western literature. She reads and writes constantly. She searches for a voice uniquely hers.

Finally, they're ready. Both have mastered their arts. His brushwork is nearly invisible in its subtlety. Her descriptions are dazzling. The words flow together like a Shakespearean sonnet.

They're ready to join hands once more and create a comics masterpiece.

When pictures are more abstracted from reality, they require greater levels of perception. More like words.

When words are more direct, they require lower levels of perception and are received faster, more like pictures.

Our need for a unified language of comics sends us toward the center where words and pictures are like two sides of one coin.

But our need for sophistication in comics seems to lead us outward. Words and pictures are most separate.

Both are worthy aspirations. Both stem from a love of comics and a devotion to its future.

Can they be reconciled?

I say the answer is yes, but since this book belongs in a different chapter, we'll have to come back to this later.
ICONE
ABSTRACTION
IS ONLY ONE
FORM OF
ABSTRACTION
AVAILABLE TO
COMICS ARTISTS.

THIS IS
THE REALM OF THE
ART OBJECT, THE
PICTURE PLANE, WHERE
SHAPE, LINES AND
COLOR CAN BE
THEMSELVES AND
NOT PRETEND
OTHERWISE.

REALITY

PENCIL
FACE

BELOW ME
THE AREA DESCRIBED
BY THESE 3 VERTICES
"REALITY," LANGUAGE AND
THE PICTURE PLANE
REPRESENTS THE TOTAL
PICTORIAL VOCABULARY
OF COMICS OR ANY
OF THE VISUAL
ARTS.

USUALLY THE WORD
"ABSTRACTION" REFERS TO THE
NON-ICONIC REALITY WHERE
NO ATTEMPT IS MADE TO CLING
TO RESEMBLANCE OF MEANING.

THE TYPE OF
ART WHICH OFTEN
PROVIDES THE QUESTION
"WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"

Capabilities
"IT MEANS" WHAT IT
IS!

INK
ON PAPER

MOST COMIC ART
LIES NEAR THE
REALITY—THAT IS
ALONG THE ICONIC
ABSTRACTION SIDE
WHERE EVERY LINES
HAS A MEANING.

APPEAR THE LINE, BUT
NOT NECESSARILY
ON IT, FOR EVEN
THE MOST SYMMETRICAL
CARICATURE CHARACTERS
HAS A "MEANINGLESS"
LINE OR TWO.

IF WE INCORPORATE
LANGUAGE AND
OTHER IONS INTO
THE CHART, WE CAN
BEGIN TO BUILD A
COMPREHENSIVE
MAP:

--OF THE
UNIVERSE
CALLED
COMICS.
MIST OF THE PRECEDING EXAMPLES WERE PLACED ON OUR CHART BASED ON THE DRAWING STYLES USED ON SPECIFIC CHARACTERS.

EACH CREATOR EMPLOYS A RANGE OF STYLES, THOUGH, AND MANY OCCUPY SEVERAL PLACES ON THE CHART DURING A GIVEN PROJECT.

LIKE MATT FEEZELL’S CYCLOMERICALLY KEEP TO ONE AREA CONSISTENTLY.

THE COMBINATION OF EXTREMELY ICONIC CHARACTERS VS ENVIRONMENTS MIXED WITH SIMPLE, DIRECT LANGUAGE AND A SOUND EFFECT OF TWO WOULD GIVE US A SHAPE SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

WE’VE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE RANGE OF HERO’S AND OTHERS WHO CONTRAST ICONIC CHARACTERS WITH REALISTIC BACKGROUND.

HERO’S STRETCHES NEARLY FROM LEFT TO RIGHT—FROM REALISM TO CARTOONING—BUT VENTURES VERY LITTLE INTO THE UPPER WORLD OF NON-ICONIC ABSTRACTION.

MARY FLEENER, ON THE OTHER HAND, VARIES ONLY SLIGHTLY IN HER LEVEL OF ICONIC CONTENT WHILE THE LEVEL OF NON-ICONIC ABSTRACTION GOES NEARLY FROM TOP TO BOTTOM.

IN THE MID-EIGHTIES, JACK KIRBY, ALONG WITH STEVE DITKO, STOOD OUT AS A MIDDLE GROUND OF ICONIC FORMS WITH A SENSE OF THE REAL ABOUT THEM, DISTAGERED BY A POWERFUL IMPERSONAL SENSE.

TODAY, MANY AMERICAN MAINSTREAM COMICS STILL FOLLOW KIRBY’S LEAD FOR STORYTELLING, BUT THE TENDENCY FOR MORE REALISTIC ART AND MORE ELABORATE SCRIPTS HAS PUSHED ART AND STORY FURTHER APART IN MANY CASES.
In the eighties and nineties, most of the counter-culture of independent creators, working mostly in black and white, were drawn to the right of mainstream comics art while covering a broad range of writing styles.

This follows the lead of the post-Kurtzman generation of underground cartoonists who used cartoony styles to portray adult themes and subject matter.

Ironic that the two bastions of cartooning art are underground and children's comics, pretty far apart as genres go.

Some artists, such as the inexpressible Sergio Aragonés, stayed true to a particular area, long ago and have been quite happy since.

Others, such as Dave Mckean, are forever on the move, experimenting, taking chances, never satisfied.

The entire history of visual arts belongs in this space. Monet set up his easel along the left face, Mondrian at the top, Renaissance lower left, Matisses right, where I'm standing.

But each artist has different inner needs, different points of view, different passions, and so needs to find different forms of expression.

For comics to mature as a medium, it must be capable of expressing each artist's innermost needs and ideas.

And those on the right by the beauty of ideas.

While those at the top by the beauty of nature.

Those who approach the upper left, for example, are probably attracted by a sense of the beauty of art.

Those who approach the lower right are forever on the move and have been quite happy since.

Check out Wassily Kandinsky's terrific 1911 essay, "On the Problem of Form."
BY DRAWING BORDERS AROUND THE VOCABULARY OF COMICS, I HOPE I HAVEN'T MADE IT SEEM SMALLER THAN IT IS.

COMICS ARTISTS HAVE A UNIVERSE OF IDEAS TO CHOOSE FROM.

AND IT'S EXPANDING ALL THE TIME!

GUYS IS AN INCREASINGLY SYMBOL-ORIENTED CULTURE.

AS THE PARENTS-CHILDREN APPROACHES, VISUAL IGNOGRAPHY MAY FINALLY HELP US REALIZE A FORM OF UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATION.

IT'S YOUR JOB TO CREATE AND RECREATE AN IDEA FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT. NOT JUST THE CARTOONISTS.

ONE OF THEM TELEVISION HAS REACHED INTO THE LIVES OF EVERY HUMAN BEING ON EARTH.

- AND FOR BETTER OR WORSE, ALTERED THE COURSE OF HUMAN AFFAIRS FROM HERE 'TIL DOOMSDAY.

THE FATE OF THE OTHER ONE, SEQUENTIAL ART.

IT'S BEEN OVER TWENTY YEARS SINCE MILHAN FIRST OBSERVED THAT THOSE PEOPLE GROWING UP IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY WANTED ROLES, AND THAT'S WHAT VISUAL IGNOGRAPHY IS ALL ABOUT.

AS IT HAPPENS, ONLY TWO POPULAR MEDIA WERE IDENTIFIED BY MILHAN AS "COOL" MEDIA - THAT IS, MEDIA WHICH COMMAND AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT THROUGH ICONIC FORM.

I OWN, DEMAND OUR ATTENTION TO MAKE THEM WORK.

THERE IS NO LIFE HERE EXCEPT THAT WHICH YOU GIVE TO IT.

- ANYONE'S GUESS.