



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.

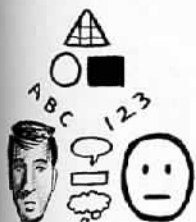


BUT CLOSURE ALLOWS US TO *CONNECT* THESE MOMENTS AND *MENTALLY CONSTRUCT* A *CONTINUOUS, UNIFIED REALITY*.

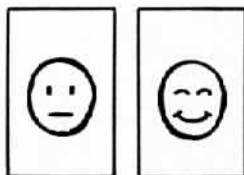
IF *VISUAL ICONOGRAPHY* IS THE *VOCABULARY* OF COMICS, *CLOSURE* IS ITS *GRAMMAR*.

AND SINCE OUR *DEFINITION* OF COMICS HINGES ON THE *ARRANGEMENT* OF ELEMENTS--

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

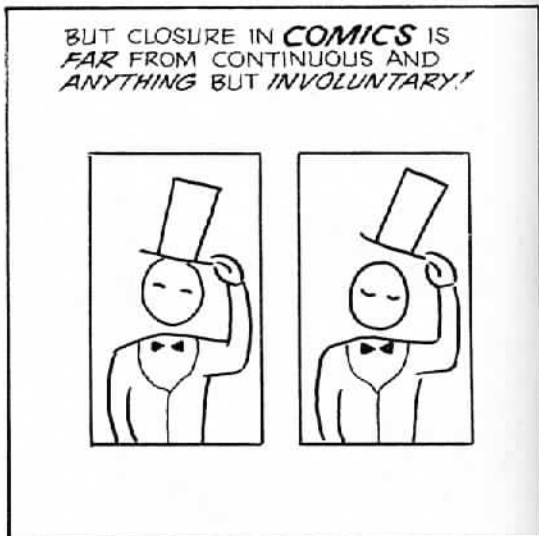
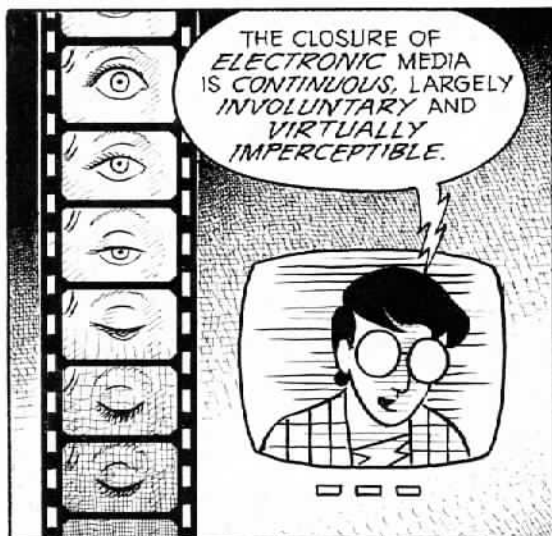


ICONOGRAPHY



CLOSURE





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.



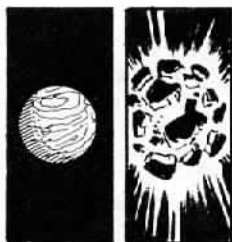
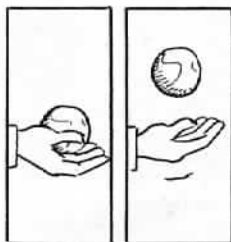
**PARTICIPATION**  
IS A **POWERFUL FORCE**  
IN **ANY MEDIUM.**  
FILMMAKERS **LONG AGO**  
REALIZED THE IMPORTANCE  
OF ALLOWING VIEWERS  
TO USE THEIR  
**IMAGINATIONS.**



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!**



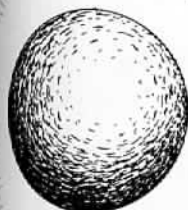
BY CREATING A SEQUENCE WITH TWO OR MORE IMAGES, WE ARE ENDOWING THEM WITH A SINGLE--



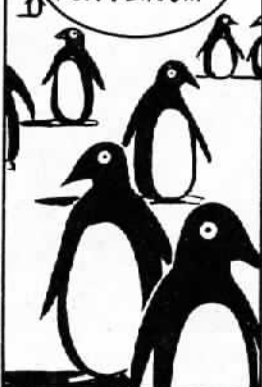
--OVERRIDING IDENTITY, AND FORCING THE VIEWER TO CONSIDER THEM AS A WHOLE.



HOWEVER DIFFERENT THEY HAD BEEN, THEY NOW BELONG TO A SINGLE ORGANISM.



CLOSURE FOR BLOOD, GUTTERS FOR VEINS...





**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!



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*.



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.



[TRACED AND SIMPLIFIED FOR CLARITY'S SAKE.]