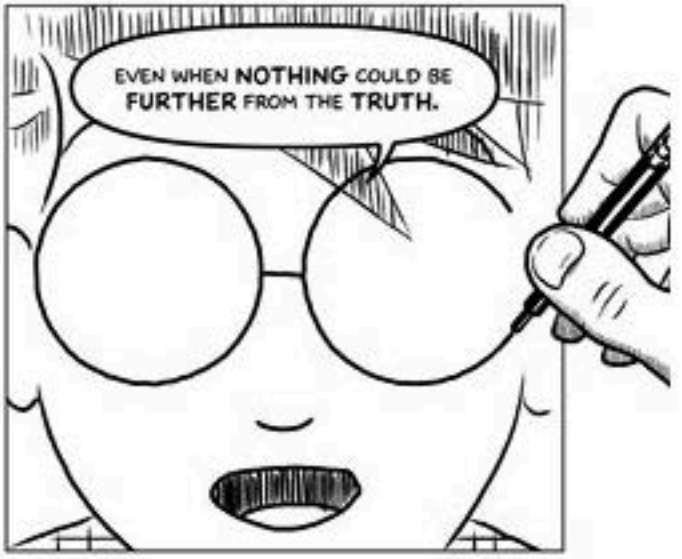
SYMMETRY IS LIFE'S CALLING CARD, THE WAY WE'VE LEARNED TO RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER IN THE WILD.

IT'S THAT BIT OF OURSELVES THAT BREEDS AFFECTION WHEN WE SEE IT IN OUR NEARER RELATIVES --

-- AND MAKES US UNEASY WHEN WE SEE IT IN OUR MORE DISTANT ONES.

IT'S THE KEY INGREDIENT THAT SAYS "YES, THIS IS AN ANIMAL LIKE ME. THIS IS A LIVING THING."


EVEN WHEN NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH.

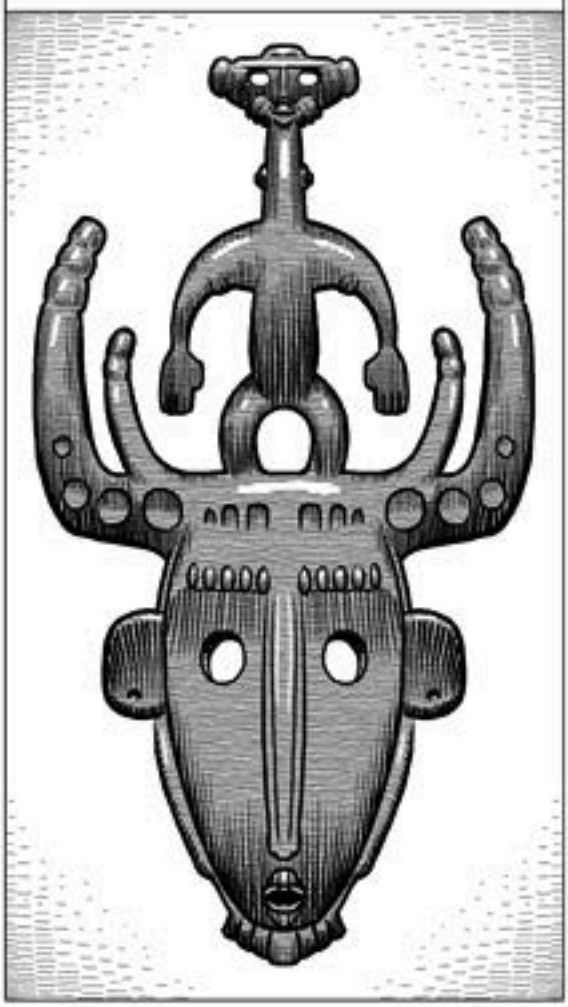
THE KIND OF SYMMETRY YOUR READERS WILL BE LOOKING FOR IS CALLED **"BILATERAL"** SYMMETRY, WHERE LEFT AND RIGHT ARE MIRROR IMAGES.

OUR LOCOMOTION IS AT OUR **BASE** AND OUR NAVIGATIONAL GEAR -- INCLUDING TWO EYES FOR DEPTH PERCEPTION -- ARE AT THE **TOP*** TO GET A BETTER VANTAGE POINT.

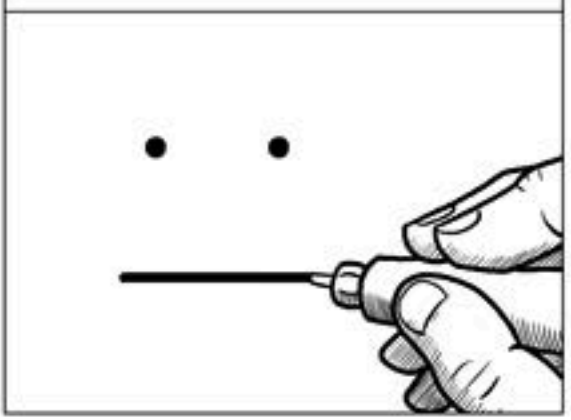
IT'S A **GOOD DESIGN!**

*OR IN FRONT.

NO MATTER HOW **ABSTRACT** OR **STYLIZED** A PIECE OF ART IS, IF IT DISPLAYS THAT BASIC ARRANGEMENT, HUMANS WILL SEE **THEMSELVES** IN ITS FEATURES.



IN FACT, EVEN WHEN A SET OF LINES IS SO SPARE THAT IT COULD AS EASILY DESCRIBE AN APE, A BEAR OR A FISH, THEY'LL STILL SEE A **HUMAN** IF THEY CAN.



HUMANS **LOVE** HUMANS! THEY CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF THEMSELVES. THEY CRAVE THE **COMPANY** OF HUMANS, THEY VALUE THE **OPINIONS** OF HUMANS --

-- AND THEY LOVE HEARING **STORIES ABOUT HUMANS!**

IN FACT, THEY LOVE SUCH STORIES SO MUCH, THEY'LL MAKE ONE UP FROM THE SLIGHTEST HINT.
EVEN THE LOOSEST SCRIBBLE WILL SUGGEST A FIGURE --
-- AN EMOTION --
-- OR A GESTURE.
IN SHORT, CREATING A HUMAN BEING IN THE MIND OF THE READER IS EASY. JUST A FEW LINES IS ALL IT TAKES AND YOUR READERS WILL DO THE REST.
BUT IF YOU WANT THEM TO SEE A SPECIFIC PERSON, WITH A SPECIFIC APPEARANCE AND SPECIFIC HOPES AND DREAMS, THAT'LL TAKE A FEW EXTRA STEPS.

IN THIS CHAPTER, I'LL TALK ABOUT THREE SUCH MEASURES YOU CAN TAKE TO BRING YOUR DRAWINGS TO LIFE AS VIVID, BELIEVABLE HUMAN BEINGS.
1. CHARACTER DESIGN
HOW TO CREATE CHARACTERS WITH DISTINCTION AND PERSONALITY.
2. FACIAL EXPRESSIONS
HOW TO PORTRAY EMOTIONS WITH POWER AND PRECISION.
3. BODY LANGUAGE
HOW TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY FIGURE YOU DRAW HAS A STORY TO TELL.
MASTER THESE ELEMENTS, PLUS THE EFFECTIVE USE OF WORDS (COMING UP IN CHAPTER THREE) --
W
-- AND YOU CAN GIVE BIRTH TO CHARACTERS THAT READERS WILL BELIEVE IN AND REMEMBER FOR YEARS TO COME.
WAA!

I. CHARACTER DESIGN
HOW YOU DESIGN YOUR CHARACTERS HAS A LOT TO DO WITH STYLE AND PERSONAL PREFERENCE. ONCE AGAIN, THERE'S NO "RIGHT" OR "WRONG" WAY TO DO IT.

SOME CHARACTERS ARE BORN AS DOODLES IN A SKETCHBOOK, SOME ARE IMPROVISED IN THE MIDDLE OF A STORY, SOME ARE CONCEIVED IN THE SCRIPT STAGE -- MAYBE TO BE VISUALLY DESIGNED BY OTHERS.
HARD AT "WORK" MR. HARRIGAN?
EW ARRIVAL...
TAP! TAP!
BUT NO MATTER WHAT SEQUENCE OF STEPS BRINGS THEM TO LIFE --

-- THERE ARE THREE QUALITIES THAT NO GREAT COMICS CHARACTER CAN DO WITHOUT.

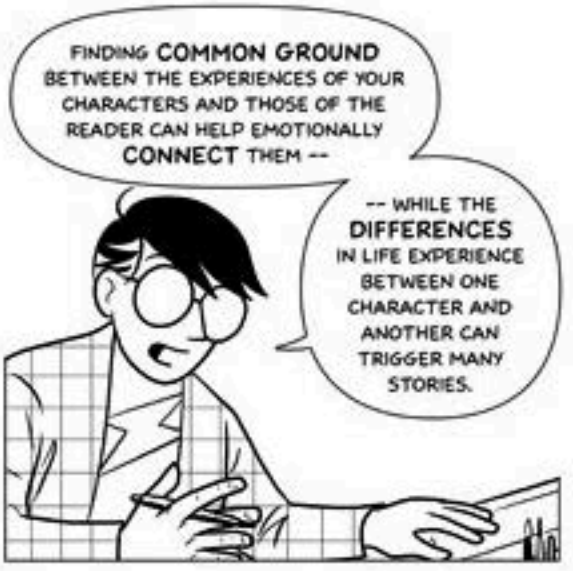
AN INNER LIFE
A UNIQUE HISTORY, WORLD VIEW AND DESIRES.

VISUAL DISTINCTION
A DISTINCT AND MEMORABLE BODY, FACE AND WARDROBE.

EXPRESSIVE TRAITS
TRAITS OF SPEECH AND BEHAVIOR ASSOCIATED WITH THAT CHARACTER.

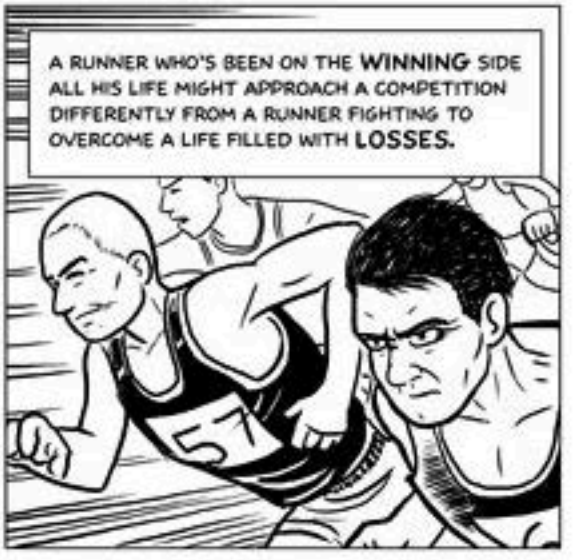
LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT EACH.

CREATING A COMPELLING INNER LIFE FOR YOUR CHARACTERS MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT, AND LEAST UNDERSTOOD, ASPECT OF CHARACTER CREATION.
BEGINNERS KNOW THAT EACH CHARACTER NEEDS A "PERSONALITY" --
WHO'S THE ONE ON THE FRIDGE, HONEY?
HE'S THE MEAN ONE!
-- BUT OFTEN THAT MEANS A LIST OF BEHAVIORAL TRAITS WITHOUT A SPECIFIC ORIGIN OR UNIFYING PURPOSE.
BY GOING DEEPER INTO CHARACTERS' MINDS, WE CAN LOOK FOR THOSE FACTORS THAT GIVE THEM A REASON FOR EVERYTHING THEY DO AND SAY --
-- AND HELP US PREDICT WHAT THEY'LL DO IN ANY GIVEN SITUATION --
Did Someone say Ice Cream?
-- TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THEY VIRTUALLY WRITE THEMSELVES!
A GOOD PLACE TO START IS WITH YOUR CHARACTERS' LIFE HISTORIES.
WHERE WERE YOUR CHARACTERS RAISED? WHAT KINDS OF PARENTS DID THEY HAVE? WHAT'S THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO THEM? AND THE WORST?
WHO WERE THEIR HEROES? WHAT WERE THEIR STRUGGLES? ALL THESE THINGS AND MORE CAN HELP SHAPE WHO THEY ARE.
JUST CONSIDER YOUR OWN HISTORY AND HOW IT SHAPED YOU.


FINDING COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUR CHARACTERS AND THOSE OF THE READER CAN HELP EMOTIONALLY CONNECT THEM --
-- WHILE THE DIFFERENCES IN LIFE EXPERIENCE BETWEEN ONE CHARACTER AND ANOTHER CAN TRIGGER MANY STORIES.

A CHARACTER RAISED IN POVERTY, FOR EXAMPLE, MAY HAVE TROUBLE RELATING TO A SHOPPING-ADDICTED HEIRESS.
STYLE

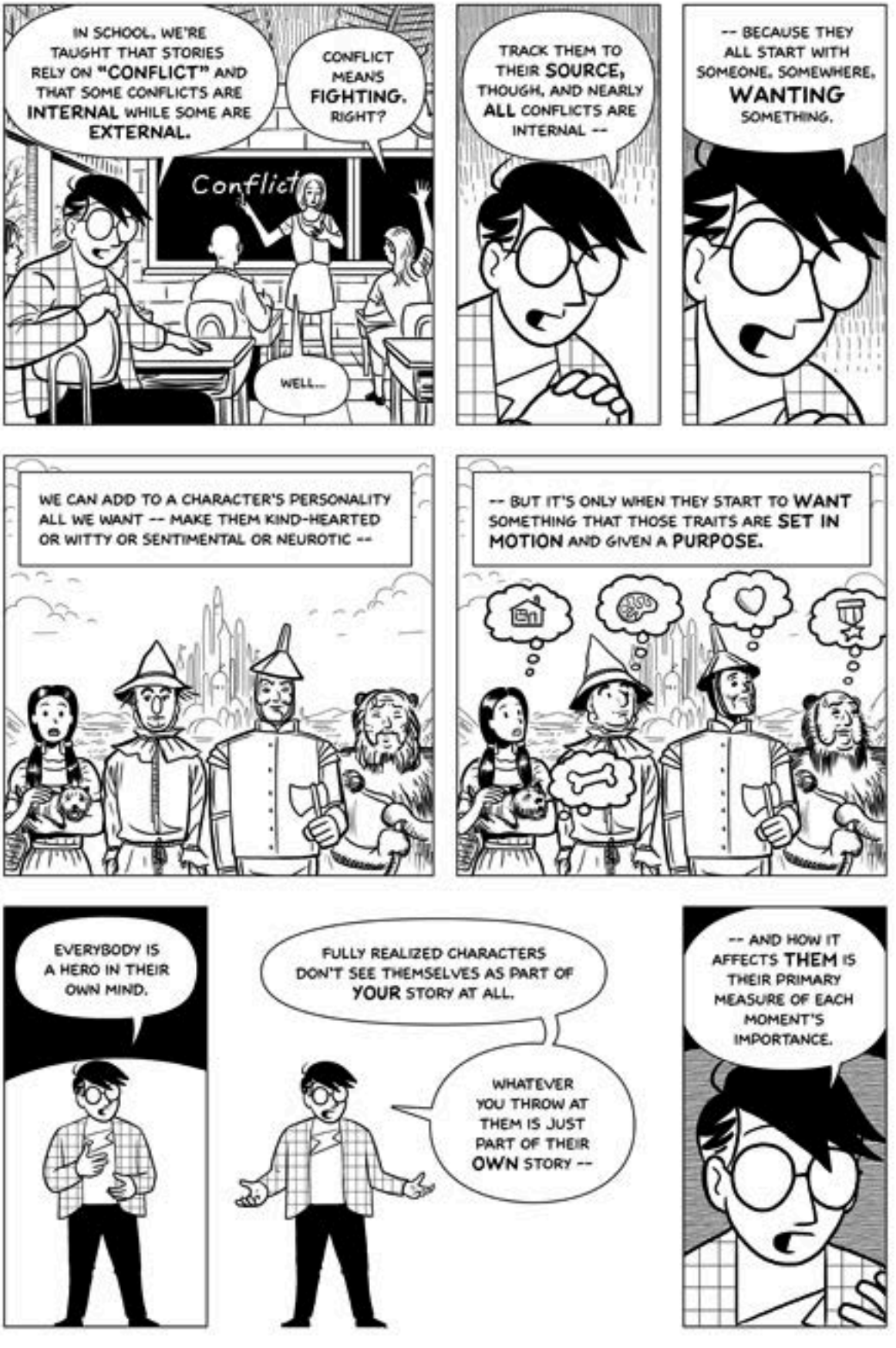
THE SON OF A FUNDAMENTALIST MINISTER MIGHT FIND ROMANCE PROBLEMATIC WITH THE DAUGHTER OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST.
LEFT BEHIND
ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES


A RUNNER WHO'S BEEN ON THE WINNING SIDE ALL HIS LIFE MIGHT APPROACH A COMPETITION DIFFERENTLY FROM A RUNNER FIGHTING TO OVERCOME A LIFE FILLED WITH LOSSES.
57

THESE LIFE HISTORIES -- OR "BACKSTORIES" -- DON'T HAVE TO BE TOO ELABORATE, ESPECIALLY FOR MINOR CHARACTERS.
IN FACT, OBSESSING TOO MUCH OVER SUCH DETAILS IS A CLASSIC BEGINNER'S MISTAKE!
$$
$$$
$$$$$

BUT BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR FACTORS THAT COLOR YOUR CHARACTERS' EVERYDAY OUTLOOKS, HELP OR HINDER THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF OTHERS AND INFLUENCE THEIR ACTIONS.
$$
¢
IN OTHER WORDS, CONCENTRATE ON THE DETAILS THAT SHAPE WHO THEY ARE TODAY.

PANELS TWO-FOUR AND SIX: ART BY STEVE DITKO
(SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).


IN SCHOOL, WE'RE TAUGHT THAT STORIES RELY ON "CONFLICT" AND THAT SOME CONFLICTS ARE INTERNAL WHILE SOME ARE EXTERNAL.
CONFLICT MEANS FIGHTING, RIGHT?
Conflict
WELL...
TRACK THEM TO THEIR SOURCE, THOUGH, AND NEARLY ALL CONFLICTS ARE INTERNAL --
-- BECAUSE THEY ALL START WITH SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, WANTING SOMETHING.
WE CAN ADD TO A CHARACTER'S PERSONALITY ALL WE WANT -- MAKE THEM KIND-HEARTED OR WITTY OR SENTIMENTAL OR NEUROTIC --
-- BUT IT'S ONLY WHEN THEY START TO WANT SOMETHING THAT THOSE TRAITS ARE SET IN MOTION AND GIVEN A PURPOSE.
EVERYBODY IS A HERO IN THEIR OWN MIND.
FULLY REALIZED CHARACTERS DON'T SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF YOUR STORY AT ALL.
WHATEVER YOU THROW AT THEM IS JUST PART OF THEIR OWN STORY --
-- AND HOW IT AFFECTS THEM IS THEIR PRIMARY MEASURE OF EACH MOMENT'S IMPORTANCE.

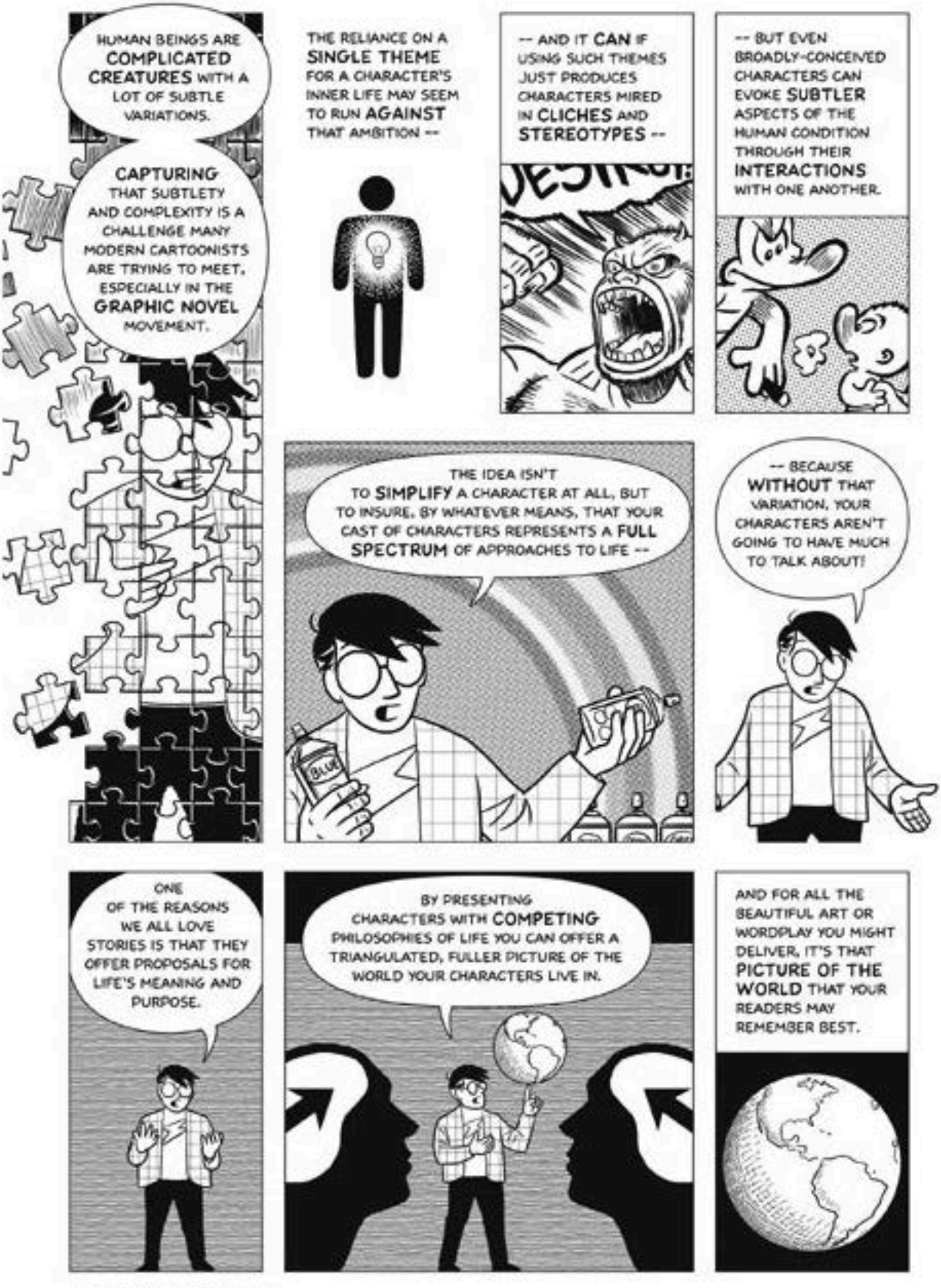
MOST WRITERS PUT A BIT OF THEMSELVES INTO EVERY CHARACTER, WHICH CAN ADD WARMTH AND CREDIBILITY TO A STORY, BUT CAN ALSO DULL THE VARIETY OF A CAST IF TAKEN TOO FAR.
ONE WAY TO BOLSTER THAT VARIETY IS TO BASE EACH CAST MEMBER ON A DIFFERENT UNIFYING IDEA.

THAT'S WHAT I DID IN THE EARLY '80S WHEN I PARTIALLY MODELED THE FOUR MAIN CHARACTERS FOR MY FIRST COMIC BOOK SERIES ZOT! AFTER CARL JUNG'S FOUR PROPOSED TYPES OF HUMAN THOUGHT.
ZOT INTUITION
JENNY FEELING
PEABODY INTELLECT
BUTCH SENSATION

SOUNDS WEIRD, I KNOW. BUT BECAUSE OF THAT, I COULD PREDICT HOW EACH CHARACTER WOULD REACT IN ANY GIVEN SITUATION.
HEY, GUYS! WANNA CRASH THE OSCARS?
SURE. WHY NOT?
IS THAT THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
37% CHANCE OF SUCCESS.
I'M HUNGRY.

ARCHETYPES FROM MYTH AND LEGEND LIKE THE "OLD WISE MAN," THE "HERO" OR "THE TRICKSTER" CAN ALSO BE USED TO INSURE A VARIETY OF DESIRES AND WORLD VIEWS --
SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TELL ME, HARRY?
THE RING MUST BE DESTROYED!
USE THE FORCE, LUKE.
THE "OLD WISE MAN" CLUB

-- WHILE TAPPING INTO UNIVERSAL VALUES THAT TRANSCEND ANY ONE GENRE OR CULTURE.
CAN I GET YOUR AUTOGRAPH?
HANDS OFF THE CLOAK.



PANEL FOUR: ART BY WALT KELLY (SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

PANEL SEVEN: ART BY RUMIKO TAKAHASHI
(SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

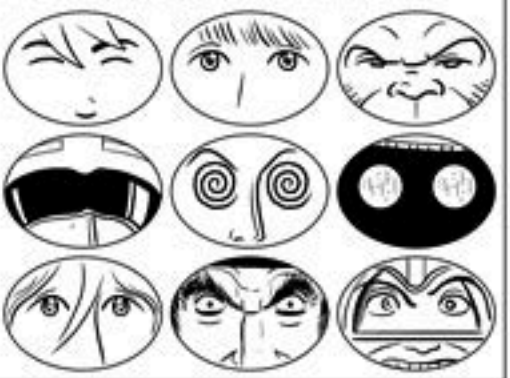
DEEPER DIFFERENCES OF FACE AND BODY TYPE HELP READERS KEEP TRACK OF YOUR CAST, AND GIVES THEM A **UNIQUE VISUAL REMINDER** OF CHARACTERS' DIFFERENT **PERSONALITIES.**

CARTOONY STYLES ACCOMMODATE MORE DRAMATIC VARIATIONS IN BODY TYPES, SO SUCH EXTREME DIFFERENCES HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH **ALL-AGES** TITLES.

BUT IN SOME COMICS CULTURES, **DRAMATIC** STORIES HAVE ALSO BENEFITED FROM THEM --

-- AND EVEN **REALISTICALLY** PROPORTIONED FIGURES CAN SHOW DISTINCT VARIATIONS IN **SHAPE, SIZE** AND OTHER FEATURES.

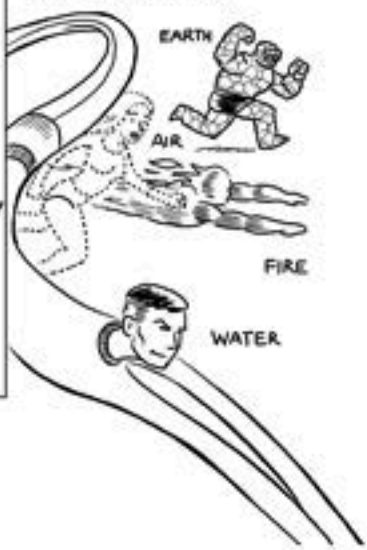
PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO **EYES.** I FOUND WHEN DOING *ZOT!* THAT I COULD HIGHLIGHT CHARACTERS' UNIQUE QUALITIES BY GIVING EACH ONE A **UNIQUE** AND **EASILY RECOGNIZED** PAIR OF **EYES.**



AS WITH INNER DRIVES, SOMETIMES A CHARACTER'S OUTER APPEARANCE CAN BE BUILT AROUND A **SINGLE IDEA.**

SUCH THEMATIC "CASTING" CAN BE OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGED, AS IN NEIL GAIMAN'S ***SANDMAN*** SERIES --

-- OR JUST UNDER THE SURFACE, AS IN LEE AND KIRBY'S ***FANTASTIC FOUR.***



PANEL ONE-THREE: ART BY UDERZO, YASUITI OSIMA AND JAIME HERNANDEZ (SEE ART AND COPYRIGHT CREDITS, PAGE 258).

EISNER SUGGESTS USING **ANIMALS*** AS A BASIS FOR CHARACTERS, IN PART TO TAP INTO READERS' PRIMORDIAL REACTIONS. AND LUCKILY THERE ARE A LOT OF ANIMALS OUT THERE TO CHOOSE FROM!

ANYTHING GOES. EVEN AFTER ONE SET OF THEMES HAS BEEN USED, IT CAN ALWAYS BE USED AGAIN -- SO LONG AS YOUR TAKE ON IT IS **FRESH.**

USE YOUR **IMAGINATION** AND YOU CAN PROBABLY COME UP WITH **MANY** SUCH THEMATIC GROUPS TO USE.

SOME SUGGESTIONS:

- THE FOUR SEASONS
- CHESS PIECES
- THE FIVE SENSES
- MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES
- COUNTRIES/STATES
- CULTURAL ERAS
- THE PLANETS
- HISTORICAL FIGURES
- TREES/PLANTS
- TOYS
- TAROT CARDS
- THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS
- SONGS
- HAND TOOLS
- ASTROLOGICAL SIGNS

YOU MAY EVEN WANT TO TAP SOME OF THE VARIOUS PHYSICAL **STEREOTYPES** CARTOONISTS HAVE USED OVER THE YEARS, THE **FACE** AND **BODY TYPES** THAT CAN MARK A CHARACTER AS **"HEROIC"** OR **"BRUTISH"** OR **"NERDY,"** ETC.

THESE HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE AND CONFORMING TO **READER EXPECTATIONS.**

OF COURSE, YOU COULD ALSO **CONTRADICT** THOSE ASSUMPTIONS, GIVE YOUR READERS A SURPRISE, AND PUNCTURE SOME **REAL-LIFE** STEREOTYPES IN THE PROCESS!

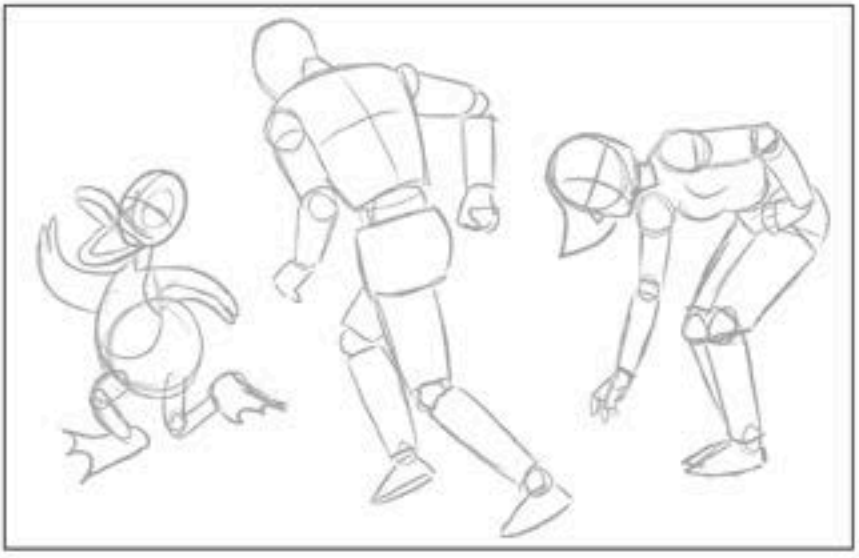
*IN HIS BOOK ***GRAPHIC STORYTELLING*** (SEE BIBLIOGRAPHY)

ONCE YOU'VE DECIDED ON A BASIC **DESIGN** FOR YOUR CHARACTER, YOU MAY WANT TO LOCK THAT DESIGN IN WITH A **"MODEL SHEET."**

THIS IS A SERIES OF DRAWINGS OF YOUR CHARACTER FROM VARIOUS ANGLES -- A KIND OF **BLUEPRINT** YOU CAN REFER TO WHEN DRAWING.

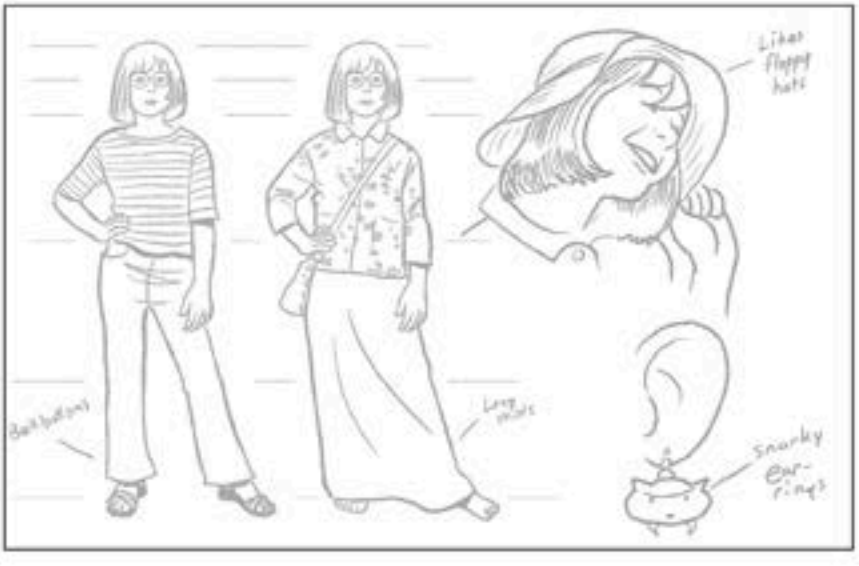
A GOOD MODEL SHEET WILL USUALLY INCLUDE BOTH **FULL FIGURE** AND FACIAL **CLOSE-UPS** --

-- AS WELL AS **NOTES** ON HOW THE BODY IS **CONSTRUCTED,** BOTH **UNDER THE CLOTHES,** AND UNDER THE **SKIN** --



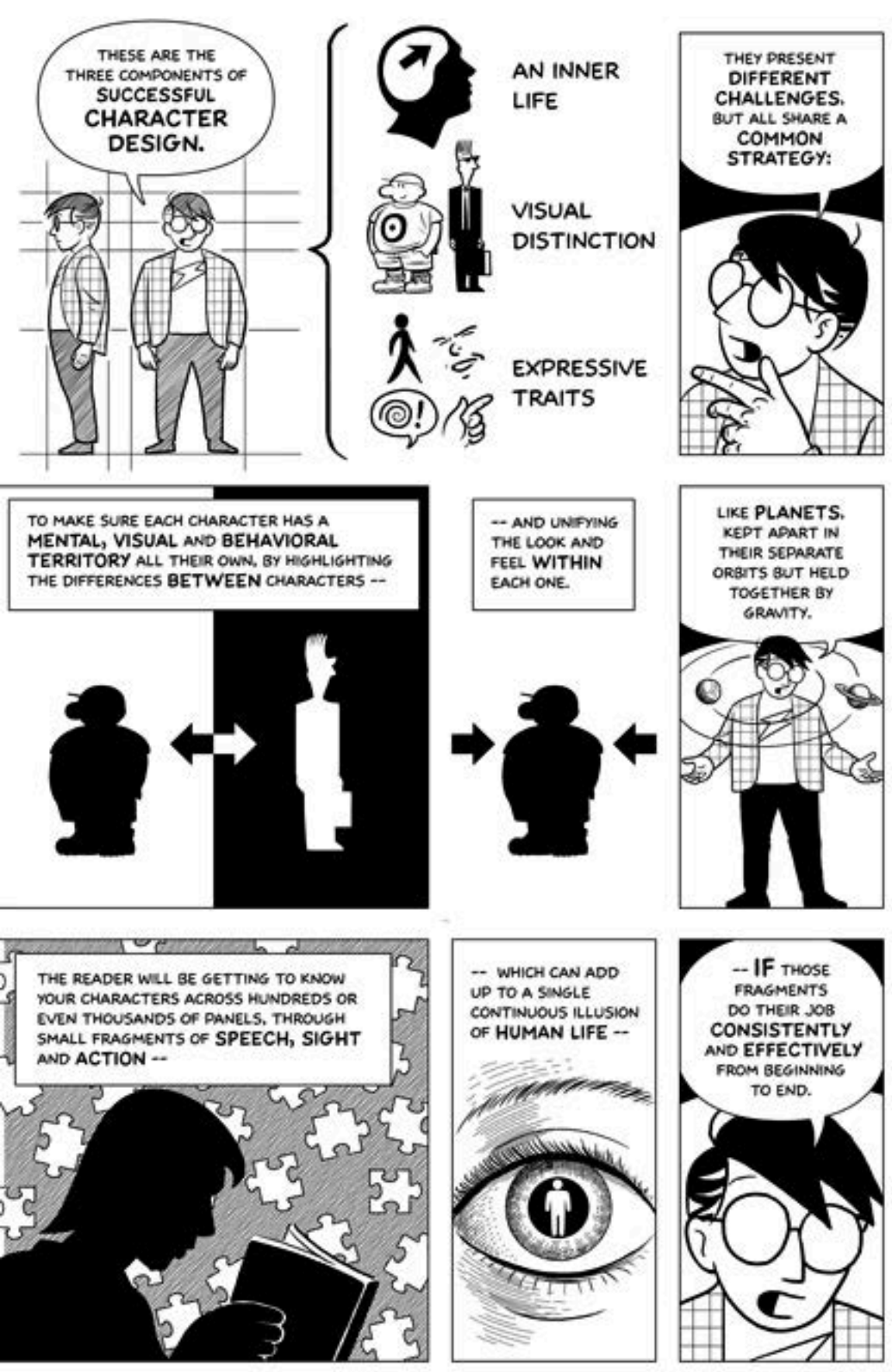
-- **COSTUME** DETAILS, IF THERE **IS** A COSTUME --

-- OR THE DIFFERENT STYLES OF **CLOTHING** YOUR CHARACTER LIKES TO WEAR.



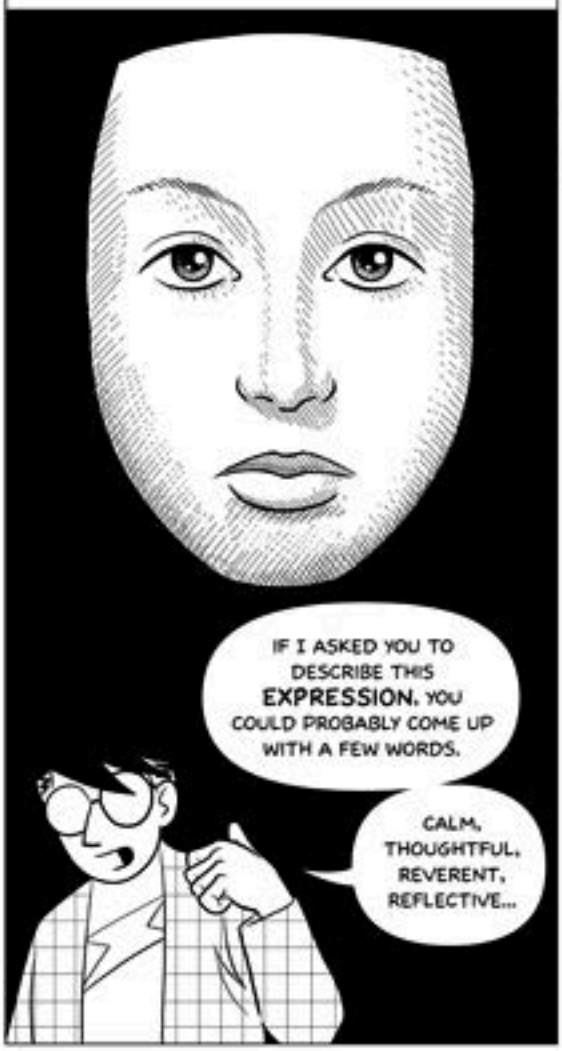
THIS IS WHEN YOU CAN START PLANNING FOR WHAT KINDS OF EXPRESSIVE TRAITS YOU'D LIKE EACH CHARACTER TO HAVE.
THESE ARE THE VARIOUS TENDENCIES OF BODY LANGUAGE --
Big laughs
-- FACIAL EXPRESSION --
Head up, Cocky
Barefoot indoors
Suspicious/ Stubborn frown
wide stride/ arm swings
cross-legged
dimple
-- SPEECH PATTERNS --
Revert to kid-by-two when angry
OH YEAH, LIKE THAT'LL HAPPEN!
Glasses off for long view
-- AND OTHER PERSONAL QUIRKS.
THIS IS WHERE YOU GET TO MAP OUT THE EMOTIONAL TERRITORY EACH CHARACTER OPERATES WITHIN --
Expansive gestures
Contractive gestures

-- AND LOOK FOR THOSE TWO OR THREE KEY EXPRESSIONS OR POSES UNIQUE TO EACH CHARACTER.
sneeping
slight sneer
kindly but sinister
YOU CAN EVEN BUILD YOUR CHARACTERS WITH CERTAIN TYPES OF EXPRESSIONS IN MIND!
SLIGHTLY CROSSED EYES FOR A SLIGHTLY FLAKY CHARACTER, FOR EXAMPLE.
OR A FULL SUPPLY OF WRINKLES, TAILOR-MADE FOR SNEERING.
OR A PERMANENT SLOUCH FOR A GRUMPY, DEFEATED PERSONALITY.
NOW, TO BE HONEST, NOT EVERY CARTOONIST GOES TO THIS MUCH TROUBLE, ESPECIALLY FOR ONE-SHOT MINOR CHARACTERS.
SOME TRUST THEMSELVES TO DESIGN CHARACTERS ON THE FLY --
-- AND MANY MODEL SHEETS ARE LITTLE MORE THAN ROUGH SKETCHES.
BUT WHETHER YOU PLAN TO THE LAST DETAIL OR PREFER TO WING IT, YOUR GOALS SHOULD BE THE SAME --
-- TO FIGURE OUT WHAT MAKES EACH CHARACTER UNIQUE AND PUT THOSE QUALITIES FRONT AND CENTER.


THESE ARE THE THREE COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CHARACTER DESIGN.
AN INNER LIFE
VISUAL DISTINCTION
EXPRESSIVE TRAITS
THEY PRESENT DIFFERENT CHALLENGES. BUT ALL SHARE A COMMON STRATEGY:
TO MAKE SURE EACH CHARACTER HAS A MENTAL, VISUAL AND BEHAVIORAL TERRITORY ALL THEIR OWN, BY HIGHLIGHTING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHARACTERS --
-- AND UNIFYING THE LOOK AND FEEL WITHIN EACH ONE.
LIKE PLANETS, KEPT APART IN THEIR SEPARATE ORBITS BUT HELD TOGETHER BY GRAVITY.
THE READER WILL BE GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CHARACTERS ACROSS HUNDREDS OR EVEN THOUSANDS OF PANELS, THROUGH SMALL FRAGMENTS OF SPEECH, SIGHT AND ACTION --
-- WHICH CAN ADD UP TO A SINGLE CONTINUOUS ILLUSION OF HUMAN LIFE --
-- IF THOSE FRAGMENTS DO THEIR JOB CONSISTENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY FROM BEGINNING TO END.

PANEL TWO: ART BY CRAIG THOMPSON (SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

2. FACIAL EXPRESSIONS



EXPRESSIONS AREN'T SOMETHING WE CAN OPT OUT OF EASILY, AS WITH WORDS.
THEY'RE A COMPULSIVE FORM OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION ALL OF US USE.
WE ALL KNOW HOW TO "READ" AND "WRITE" THEM WITH OUR FACES --
-- BUT FEW OF US CAN CONSCIOUSLY REPRODUCE THEM IN ART WITH AS MUCH STYLE AND GRACE --
-- AS WE DO IN LIFE.
YET, AS COMICS ARTISTS, WE NEED TO DO EXACTLY THAT IF WE WANT THE EMOTIONS OF OUR CHARACTERS TO COME THROUGH ON THE PAGE.
ALMOST ANY STORY CAN BE EVALUATED BY ITS ABILITY TO PROVOKE EMOTION IN THE READER, EVEN IF EMOTIONS AREN'T ITS PRIMARY FOCUS --
-- AND THERE'S NO STRONGER CONDUIT TO YOUR READERS' EMOTIONS THAN THROUGH THE EMOTIONS OF THE CHARACTERS YOU CREATE FOR THEM.
AND WITH FOUR SENSES, MOST NOTABLY SOUND, UNAVAILABLE TO YOU --
-- YOU'LL WANT TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE ONE YOU HAVE.
TAP TAP

PUTTING **FACIAL EXPRESSIONS** TO USE IN **COMICS** REQUIRES YOU TO TACKLE **FOUR SUBJECTS:**

THE DIFFERENT **KINDS** OF FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND WHERE THEY COME FROM.

HOW THOSE EXPRESSIONS ARE FORMED BY THE **MUSCLES** OF THE FACE.

THE VARIOUS STRATEGIES FOR **RENDERING** THOSE EXPRESSIONS **GRAPHICALLY.**

AND HOW FACIAL EXPRESSIONS WORK IN COMICS-STYLE **SEQUENCES.**

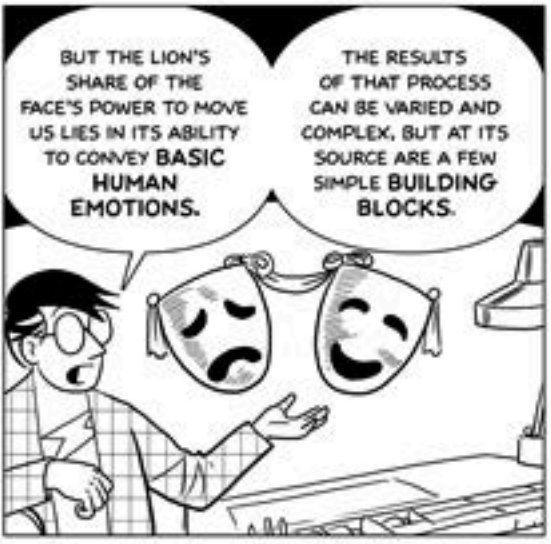
THE HUMAN FACE CAN TAKE ON ANY NUMBER OF SHAPES IN THE COURSE OF A DAY.

SOME INDICATE **PHYSICAL STATES** SUCH AS PAIN OR EXHAUSTION.

SOME ARE MEANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS **DIRECTLY.**

BUT THE LION'S SHARE OF THE FACE'S POWER TO MOVE US LIES IN ITS ABILITY TO CONVEY **BASIC HUMAN EMOTIONS.**

THE RESULTS OF THAT PROCESS CAN BE VARIED AND COMPLEX, BUT AT ITS SOURCE ARE A FEW SIMPLE **BUILDING BLOCKS.**



IN 1872, DARWIN WROTE THAT SOME EXPRESSIONS MIGHT BE **UNIVERSAL.** A VIEW SHARED BY MODERN EXPRESSIONS EXPERTS LIKE PAUL EKMAN.*

THESE ARE THE **BASIC EMOTIONS** WHICH **ALL** HUMAN BEINGS EXHIBIT, REGARDLESS OF **CULTURE, LANGUAGE** OR **AGE.** A SMALL HANDFUL OF "PURE" EXPRESSIONS FROM WHICH OTHERS ARE DERIVED.

SIX OF THEM, TO BE **EXACT.**

* SEE BIBLIOGRAPHY.

ANGER

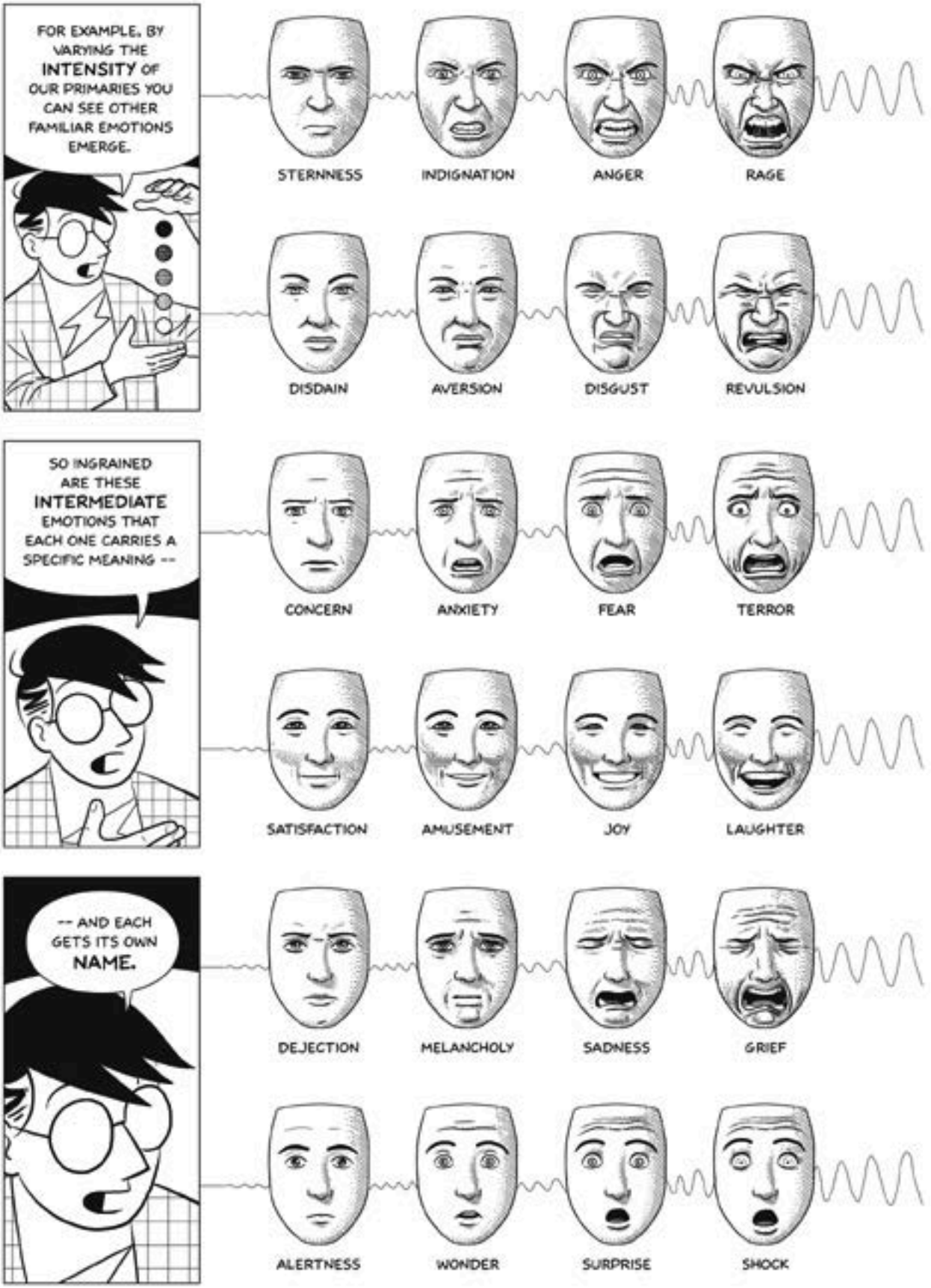
DISGUST

FEAR

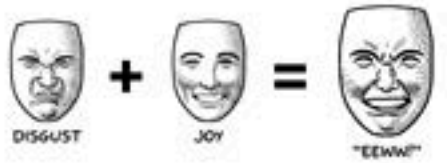
JOY

SADNESS

SURPRISE


FOR EXAMPLE, BY VARYING THE INTENSITY OF OUR PRIMARIES YOU CAN SEE OTHER FAMILIAR EMOTIONS EMERGE.
STERNNESS
INDIGNATION
ANGER
RAGE
DISDAIN
AVERSION
DISGUST
REVULSION
SO INGRAINED ARE THESE INTERMEDIATE EMOTIONS THAT EACH ONE CARRIES A SPECIFIC MEANING --
CONCERN
ANXIETY
FEAR
TERROR
SATISFACTION
AMUSEMENT
JOY
LAUGHTER
-- AND EACH GETS ITS OWN NAME.
DEJECTION
MELANCHOLY
SADNESS
GRIEF
ALERTNESS
WONDER
SURPRISE
SHOCK

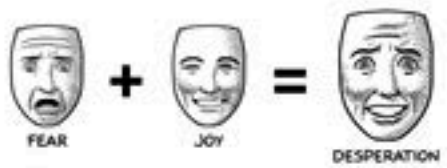
AND BY MIXING ANY TWO OF OUR EMOTIONAL PRIMARIES, WE CAN PRODUCE A THIRD EXPRESSION -- WHICH, IN MANY CASES, IS ALSO DISTINCT AND RECOGNIZABLE ENOUGH TO EARN ITS OWN NAME.


DISGUST
JOY
"EEWW!"

DISGUST
SADNESS
PAIN EMPATHY

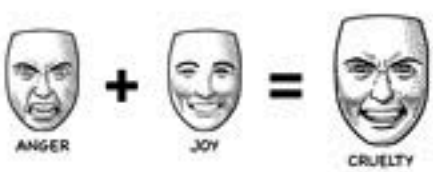
DISGUST
SURPRISE
"YOU ATE IT???"

ANGER
DISGUST
OUTRAGE


FEAR
JOY
DESPERATION

ANGER
FEAR
CAGED ANIMAL

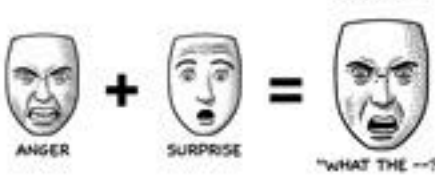
FEAR
SADNESS
DEVASTATION

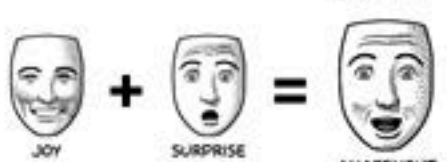

ANGER
JOY
CRUELTY

FEAR
SURPRISE
SPOOKED

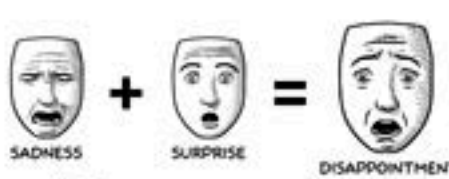
ANGER
SADNESS
BETRAYAL

JOY
SADNESS
FAINT HOPE


ANGER
SURPRISE
"WHAT THE --?!"

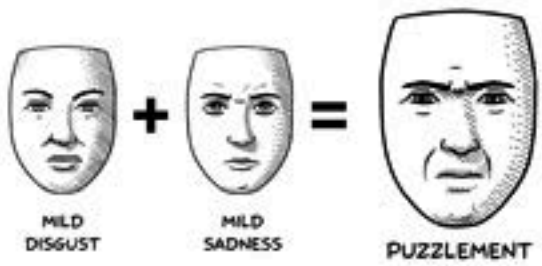

JOY
SURPRISE
AMAZEMENT

DISGUST
FEAR
HORROR


SADNESS
SURPRISE
DISAPPOINTMENT

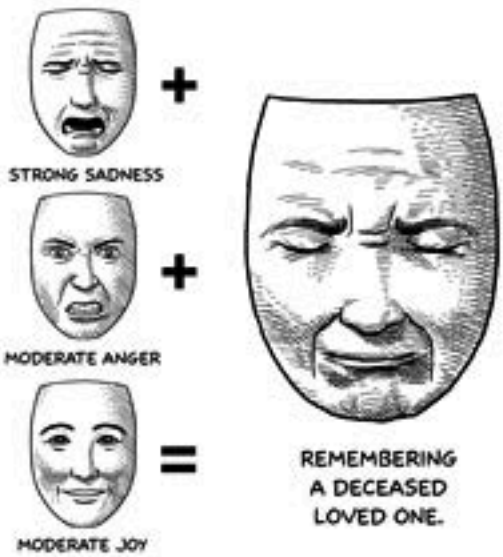
CREEPY, YES -- BUT USEFUL. SEE THE CHAPTER NOTES FOR MORE ON WHY.

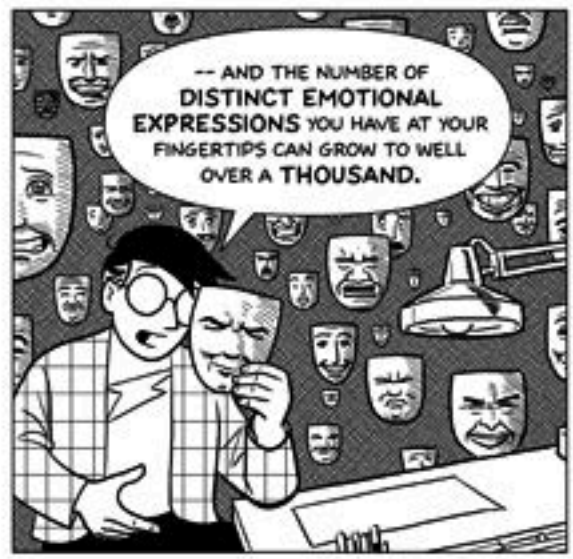
THROW IN MIXTURES OF THE OTHER INTENSITIES --


MILD DISGUST
MILD SADNESS
PUZZLEMENT

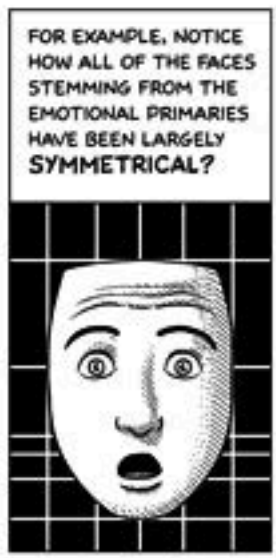
MILD JOY
MILD SADNESS
PITY

-- OR EVEN COMBINATIONS OF THREE OR MORE --


STRONG SADNESS
MODERATE ANGER
MODERATE JOY
REMEMBERING A DECEASED LOVED ONE.

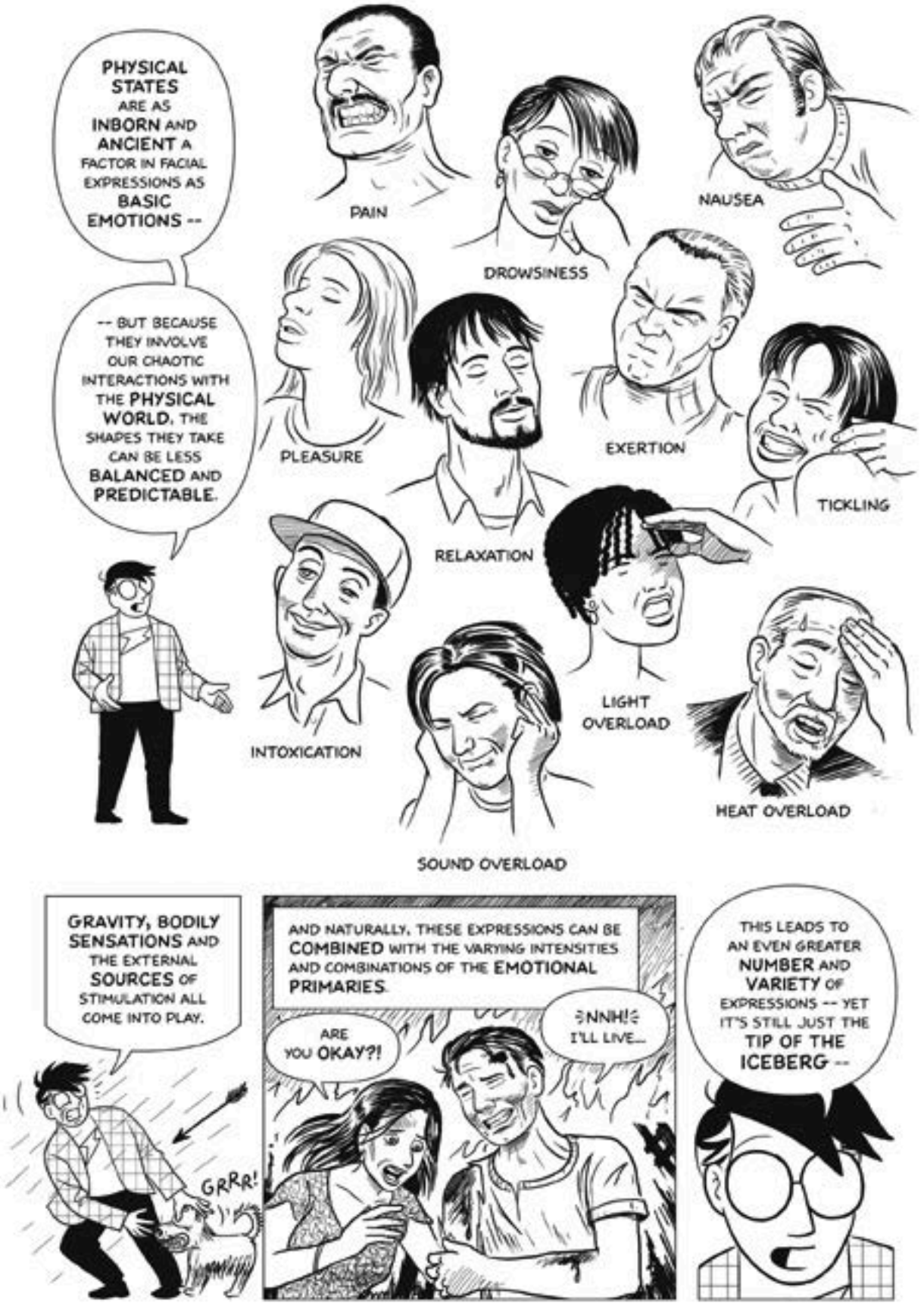

-- AND THE NUMBER OF DISTINCT EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS YOU HAVE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS CAN GROW TO WELL OVER A THOUSAND.

AND THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS WHICH CAN ADD EVEN MORE VARIETY.


FOR EXAMPLE, NOTICE HOW ALL OF THE FACES STEMMING FROM THE EMOTIONAL PRIMARIES HAVE BEEN LARGELY SYMMETRICAL?

EMOTION HAS NO DIRECTION. IT COMES FROM WITHIN.

BUT THERE'S A WORLD OUTSIDE THOSE FACES THAT CAN ALSO PLAY A PART IN FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.


PHYSICAL STATES ARE AS INBORN AND ANCIENT A FACTOR IN FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AS BASIC EMOTIONS --
-- BUT BECAUSE THEY INVOLVE OUR CHAOTIC INTERACTIONS WITH THE PHYSICAL WORLD, THE SHAPES THEY TAKE CAN BE LESS BALANCED AND PREDICTABLE.
PAIN
DROWSINESS
NAUSEA
PLEASURE
RELAXATION
EXERTION
TICKLING
INTOXICATION
LIGHT OVERLOAD
HEAT OVERLOAD
SOUND OVERLOAD
GRAVITY, BODILY SENSATIONS AND THE EXTERNAL SOURCES OF STIMULATION ALL COME INTO PLAY.
GRRR!
AND NATURALLY, THESE EXPRESSIONS CAN BE COMBINED WITH THE VARYING INTENSITIES AND COMBINATIONS OF THE EMOTIONAL PRIMARIES.
ARE YOU OKAY?!
NNH! I'LL LIVE...
THIS LEADS TO AN EVEN GREATER NUMBER AND VARIETY OF EXPRESSIONS -- YET IT'S STILL JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG --

THESE ARE THE VISUAL SIGNALS WE SEND TO EACH OTHER **DIRECTLY**, OFTEN IN COMBINATION WITH BODY LANGUAGE SIGNALS LIKE **HEAD** AND **HAND** POSITION AND **GAZE DIRECTION**.

-- BECAUSE WHEN YOU THROW IN ALL THE MANY WAYS WE USE OUR FACES AS A FORM OF **DIRECT SPECIALIZED SIGNAL** --

-- NO SYSTEM OF ANALYSIS COULD EVER BEGIN TO **CATALOG** ALL THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FACIAL EXPRESSIONS YOUR CHARACTERS COULD WEAR!

THEY'RE DEEPLY ROOTED IN OUR INBORN **EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS** AND STILL AFFECTED BY **PHYSICAL STATES** --

-- BUT THEY **ADD** AN EVER-CHANGING GLOSSARY OF CULTURALLY-SPECIFIC **SIGNS** AND **SYMBOLS** UNDERSTOOD BY BOTH **SENDER** AND **RECEIVER**.

THEY ARE, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, A **LANGUAGE** -- THOUGH A LANGUAGE ONLY PARTIALLY UNDER OUR CONSCIOUS CONTROL.

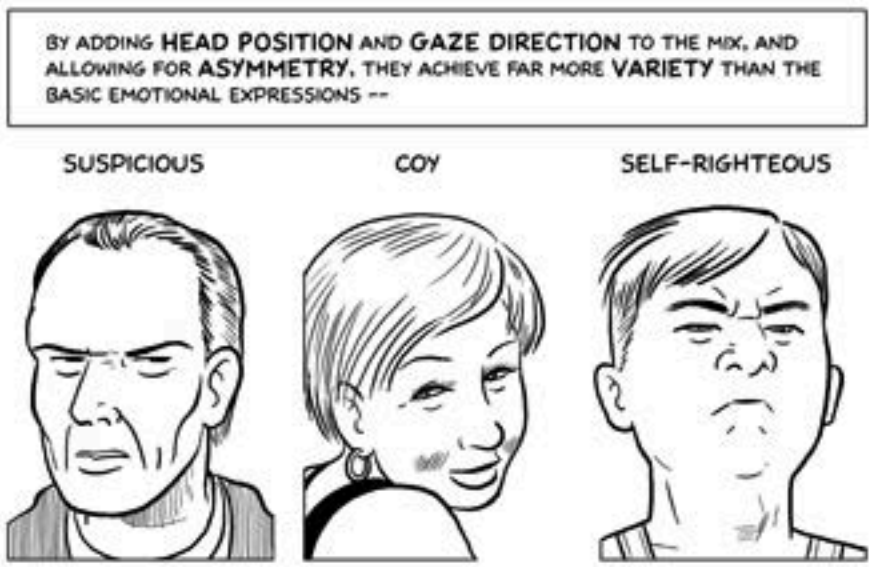
SOME OF THESE SIGNS HAVE BECOME AS FORMALIZED AS TRAFFIC SIGNALS.

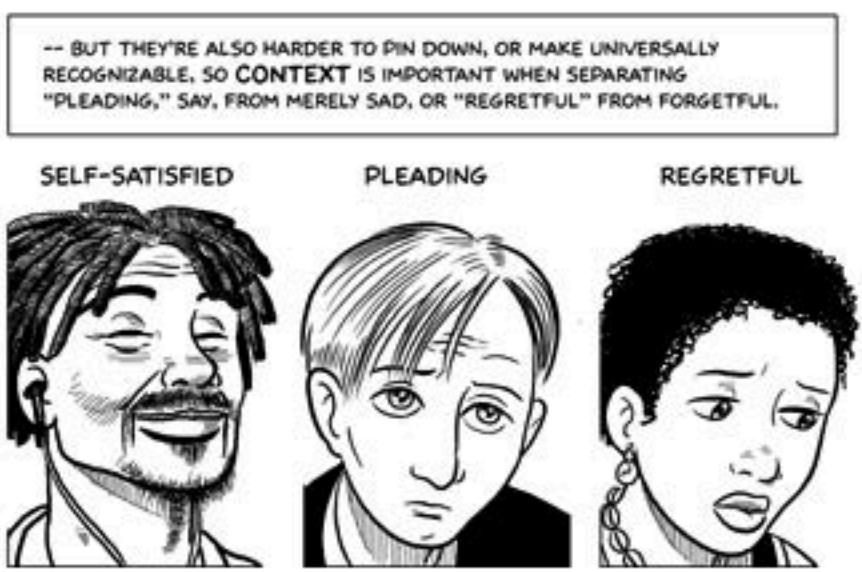
THE WINK.

THE OUTSTRETCHED TONGUE.

THE "OH, MOM...!" LOOK.

BUT MOST ARE MORE SUBTLE AND IDIOSYNCRATIC, TAILORED TO SPECIFIC PEOPLE IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS, AND SUBJECT TO THE INDIVIDUAL STYLE OF THE SENDER.


BY ADDING HEAD POSITION AND GAZE DIRECTION TO THE MIX, AND ALLOWING FOR ASYMMETRY, THEY ACHIEVE FAR MORE VARIETY THAN THE BASIC EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS --
SUSPICIOUS
COY
SELF-RIGHTEOUS


-- BUT THEY'RE ALSO HARDER TO PIN DOWN, OR MAKE UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZABLE, SO CONTEXT IS IMPORTANT WHEN SEPARATING "PLEADING," SAY, FROM MERELY SAD, OR "REGRETFUL" FROM FORGETFUL.
SELF-SATISFIED
PLEADING
REGRETFUL

EACH EXPRESSION HAS TO MATCH A FEW **KEY FEATURES** TO BE RECOGNIZABLE.

PLUS

PLUS

EQUALS

SUSPICION

BUT, ONCE THOSE KEY FEATURES ARE IN PLACE, THE SENDER CAN **SPIN** THAT EXPRESSION IN ANY NUMBER OF DIRECTIONS.

FOUR VARIATIONS ON SUSPICION:

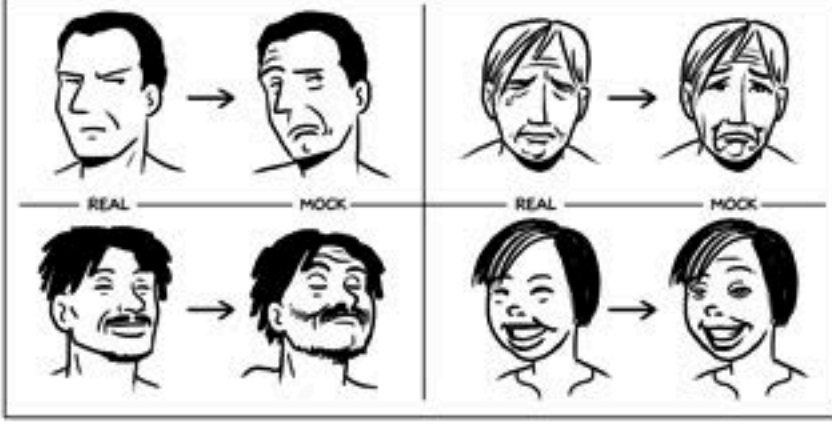
A BIT OF AN EMOTION LIKE DISGUST CAN BE ADDED. FOR EXAMPLE, TO GIVE SUSPICION A **DISDAINFUL AIR.**

BUT IF THAT EMOTION BECOMES THE FACE'S DOMINANT VISUAL STATEMENT, THE EXPRESSION CAN BE **HIJACKED.**

IN REAL LIFE, WE ACHIEVE THESE KINDS OF PRECISE EFFECTS WITHOUT MUCH CONSCIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF **HOW** WE DO IT.

YET, WE MUST UNDERSTAND ON **SOME** LEVEL HOW OUR FACES ACHIEVE THESE LOOKS --

-- BECAUSE WE CAN ALSO CONSCIOUSLY **IMITATE** ANY OF THESE EXPRESSIONS, AND EVEN ADD AN ELEMENT OF STYLIZATION OR EXAGGERATION TO PRODUCE A **MOCK VERSION** OF EACH ONE.



IN SOME CASES, AN ATTEMPT TO **STOP** SHOWING EMOTION CAN ACTUALLY BE ONE OF THE KEY FACTORS THAT MAKE A GIVEN FACIAL EXPRESSION RECOGNIZABLE.

EMBARRASSMENT:

AVERTED, FEARFUL GAZE. MOUTH EXPRESSIONLESS.

RESENTMENT:

AVERTED, ANGRY GAZE. MOUTH CLOSED TIGHTLY.

IN FACT, ADULT SOCIETY RELIES, IN LARGE PART, ON THE **SUPPRESSION** OF BASIC EMOTIONS. THE WAYS IN WHICH WE SUPPRESS AND REDIRECT THEM ARE THE SOURCE OF MUCH OF OUR EXPRESSIONS' **VARIETY** AND **DEPTH.**

LOOK AT THE **SMILES** IN SNAPSHOTS AND EACH WILL SEEM AS **UNIQUE** AS A **SNOWFLAKE.**

BUT UNDERNEATH THEM ALL ARE THESE SAME **BASIC PRINCIPLES** PLAYED OUT AGAIN AND AGAIN.

AS **PART** OF HUMAN SOCIETY, WE ALL WANT TO **SEE PAST** EACH OTHER'S FACES TO THE PERSON **WITHIN.**

-- WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE HUMAN FACE **IS** A MACHINE OF SORTS, FOR ALL ITS BEAUTY AND SUBTLETY.

WE DON'T WANT TO DECONSTRUCT THEM TO THE POINT WHERE THE HUMAN FACE SEEMS LIKE A **MACHINE.**

BUT AS ARTISTS HOPING TO **REPRODUCE** THOSE INNER PERSONALITIES IN THE MINDS OF OUR READERS --

AND THE ONLY WAY TO **UNDERSTAND** THAT MACHINE IS TO GO **BENEATH THE SURFACE** --

-- AND SEE ITS **PARTS** IN **ACTION.**

FACIAL MUSCLES

1 ORBICULARIS OCULI, WHICH SQUEEZES THE EYE AS IN SQUINTING, SO LET'S CALL IT THE **SQUINTER.**

2 THE FRONTALIS, KNOWN AS **THE BROW-LIFTER.**

3 THE **CORRUGATOR.** WHICH PUSHES DOWN THE BROW. KNOWN AS THE "FROWNING MUSCLE" BUT THAT'S JUST CONFUSING.

(ANYWAY "CORRUGATOR" JUST SOUNDS COOLER)

4 LEVATOR PALPEBRAE, WHICH ALSO SOUNDS COOL. BUT **LID-LIFTER** IS EASIER TO REMEMBER BECAUSE THAT'S ALL IT DOES.

5 LEVATOR LABII SUPERIORIS. THREE BRANCHES OF MUSCLES, KNOWN COLLECTIVELY AS **THE SNEERING MUSCLE.**

6 ZYGOMATIC MAJOR, KNOWN AS **THE SMILING MUSCLE.**

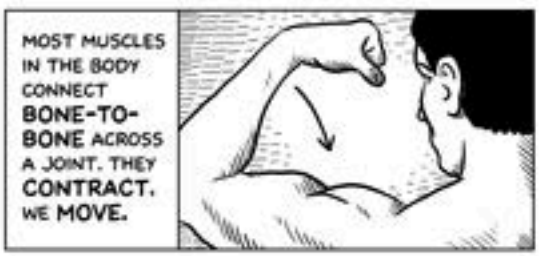
7 **TRIANGULARIS** WHICH PULLS DOWN THE MOUTH'S CORNERS. (I WOULD CALL IT THE "FROWNING MUSCLE" BUT...)

8 9 RISORIUS (8), KNOWN AS THE **LIP-STRETCHER,** USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NECK MUSCLES KNOWN AS **PLATYSMA** (9).

10 DEPRESSOR LABII INFERIORIS. PULLS THE BOTTOM LIP DOWN, AS IN SPEAKING, SO LET'S CALL IT THE **SPEAKING MUSCLE.**

11 THE MENTALIS, OR **POUTING MUSCLE.** WHICH PUSHES UP THE CHIN AND LOWER LIP, CREATING A BULGE IN THE CHIN.

12 ORBICULARIS ORIS, THE **LIP-TIGHTENER.** WHICH CURLS AND TIGHTENS THE LIPS.



*I GOT THESE TWELVE FROM GARY FAIGIN'S EXCELLENT BOOK ON THE SUBJECT (SEE BIBLIOGRAPHY), THOUGH I MADE SOME NAME CHANGES AS NOTED.

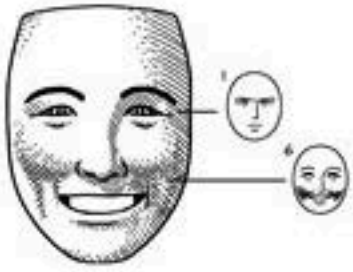
WHEN YOU **SMILE**, FOR EXAMPLE, THE **SURFACE** END OF THAT MUSCLE (#6) IS **PULLED** TOWARD THE **ANCHORED** END --

-- **PULLING** THE FLESH FROM **UNDERNEATH** TOWARD THE CHEEK BONE WHERE IT **BUNCHES UP** AND LEADS TO THE IRREGULAR WRINKLES WE CALL **"DIMPLES."**

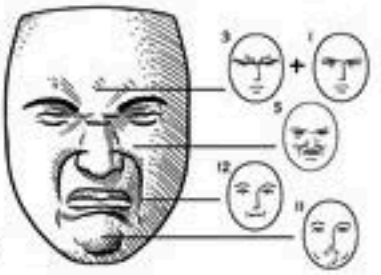
TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT OUR **EMOTIONAL PRIMARIES** WITH THESE MUSCLES IN MIND.

CORRUGATOR PLUS LID-LIFTER ADDS UP TO AN ANGRY GLARE, WHILE THE ACTIVE SNEERING, SPEAKING AND LIP-STRETCHER MUSCLES PRODUCE THE SQUARE MOUTH OF THE CORNERED PREDATOR.

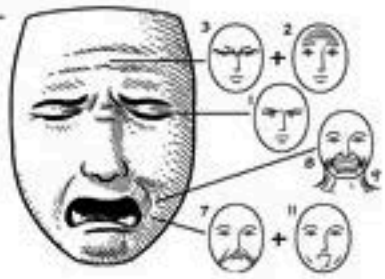
THE SMILING MUSCLE PULLS THE CORNER OF THE MOUTH UP AND OUT, COMPRESSING CHEEKS WHICH, TOGETHER WITH THE SQUINTER, PRODUCE THE ARCHED EYES OF JOY.



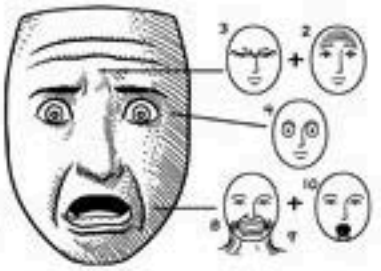
CORRUGATOR PLUS SQUINTING MUSCLE SHUTS THE EYES TIGHT IN REACTION TO THE DISGUSTING OBJECT OF ATTENTION, WHILE THE MOUTH AND NOSE RECOIL VIA THE POUTING AND SNEERING MUSCLES.



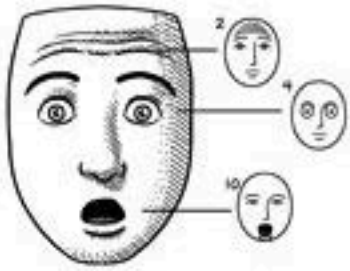
CORRUGATOR/BROW-LIFTER STRUGGLE OVER SQUINTED EYES, WHILE THE LIP-STRETCHER, TRIANGULARIS AND POUTING MUSCLE PRODUCE THE SIDEWAYS '8' SHAPE OF THE CRYING MOUTH.



CORRUGATOR AND BROW-LIFTER COMPRESS AND RAISE THE FOREHEAD OVER THE LIFTED LIDS OF FEAR-FILLED EYES, WHILE THE LIPS ARE TIGHTLY STRETCHED APART AND OPENED.



THE BROW-LIFTER PULLS THE UPPER FACE STRAIGHT UP IN SURPRISE OVER WIDE OPEN LID-LIFTED EYES, WHILE THE MOUTH FALLS OPEN. ALL OTHER MUSCLES REMAIN INACTIVE.



BY LEARNING WHAT'S GOING ON **UNDER** THE **SKIN** YOU CAN BETTER SHOW WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE **SURFACE** --

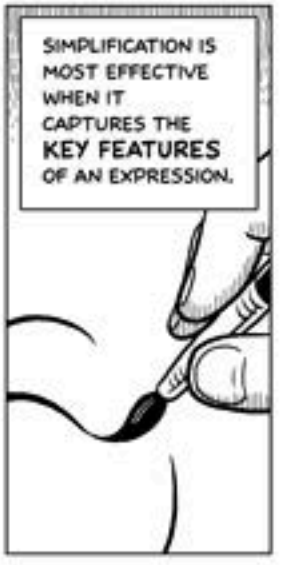
-- AND SHOW YOUR **READERS** WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE YOUR CHARACTERS **MINDS**.

REALISM.
REPRODUCING THE REAL-LIFE APPEARANCE OF EXPRESSIONS WITH REALISTIC TONES AND DETAILS.

SIMPLIFICATION.
SEARCHING FOR A FEW KEY LINES OR SHAPES WHICH CLEARLY CONVEY AN EXPRESSION.

EXAGGERATION.
AMPLIFYING THE KEY FEATURES THAT MAKE AN EXPRESSION RECOGNIZABLE.

SYMBOLISM.
IMAGES THAT DEPICT EMOTIONS SYMBOLICALLY RATHER THAN WITH REAL-WORLD RESEMBLANCE.

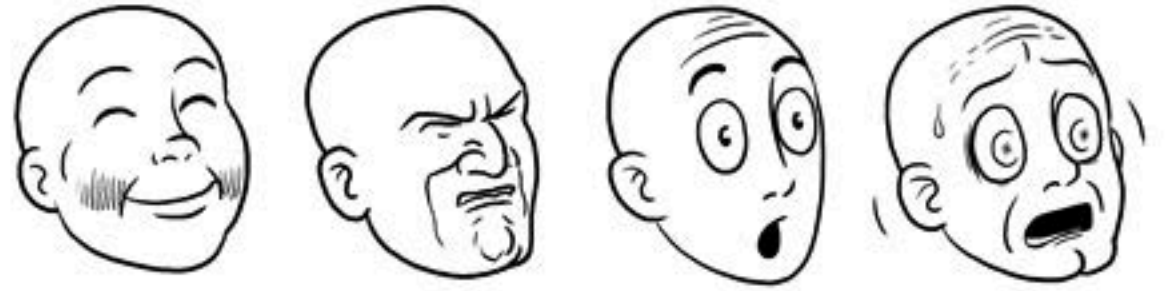


THE ARCHED EYES AND BUNCHED CHEEKS OF **JOY**, FOR EXAMPLE.

OR THE PINCHED BROW AND NOSE, SQUARED UPPER LIP AND BULGING CHIN OF **DISGUST.**

OR THE RAISED BROW, POPPED EYES AND SLACK JAW OF **SURPRISE** --

-- AND HOW IT DIFFERS FROM THE TORTURED BROW AND STRETCHED MOUTH OF **FEAR.**



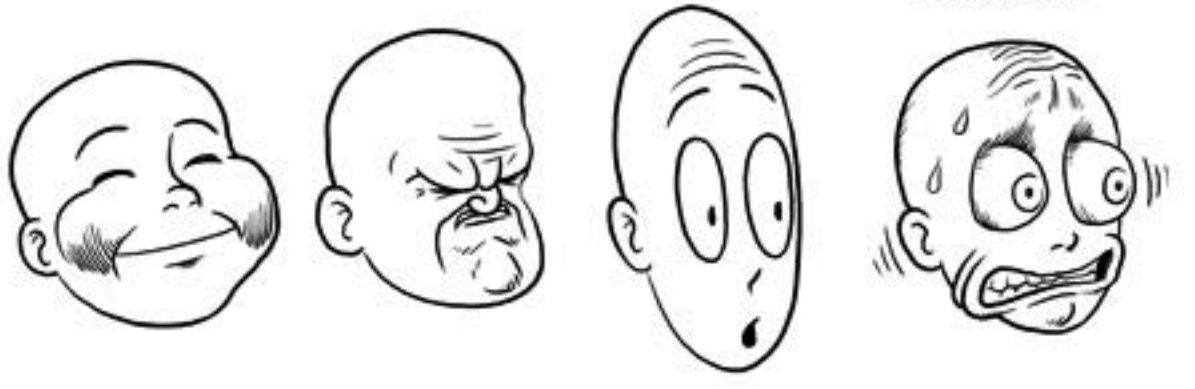
EXAGGERATION SEIZES ON THESE SAME KEY FEATURES AND SIMPLY **RAMPS UP** THEIR GEOMETRIC EXTREMES.

CHEEKS BULGING LIKE GRAPEFRUIT...

A FACE **PINCHED** NEARLY OUT OF EXISTENCE...

A HEAD **STRETCHED THIN...**

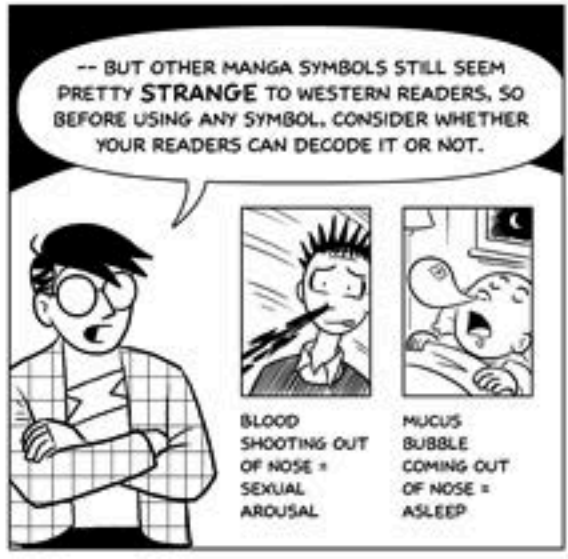
EYES **LITERALLY** "BULGING OUT OF THEIR SOCKETS..."



FURIOUS
ANXIOUS
CRAZY
SPITEFUL
EMBARRASSED
PROUD
DRUNK
IN LOVE
DEAD
SYMBOLIC EXPRESSIONS DON'T RELY ON AN UNDERSTANDING OF REAL FACIAL EXPRESSIONS TO WORK.
A SIMPLE DOODLE OR TWO IS USUALLY ALL IT TAKES.
SOME BEGIN THEIR LIVES AS SIMPLE PICTURES OF ACTUAL PHYSICAL REACTIONS SUCH AS SWEAT --
-- THEN DRIFT INTO THE MORE ABSTRACT TERRITORY OF PURE SYMBOLS.
OTHERS ARE STRICTLY METAPHORICAL AND REQUIRE YOU AND YOUR AUDIENCE TO BOTH "KNOW THE CODE" BEFORE THE MESSAGE CAN GET THROUGH.
SYMBOLIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CLOSER TO THE WRITTEN WORD IN THE SENSE THAT THEIR MEANING IS FIXED REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY'RE RENDERED --
-- JUST AS A WORD MEANS THE SAME THING REGARDLESS OF HANDWRITING OR FONT CHOICE.
Anxious
Anxious
Anxious
Anxious
RESEMBLANCE
MEANING

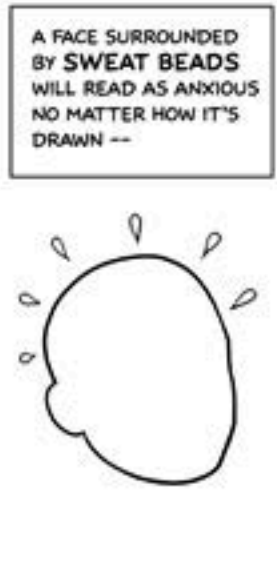
UNLIKE THE BASIC EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS, WHICH ANYONE, ANYWHERE CAN RECOGNIZE, SYMBOLIC EXPRESSIONS VARY FROM CULTURE TO CULTURE.

RECENTLY SOME SYMBOLS FROM JAPANESE COMICS, LIKE THE BULGING VEIN-ON-FOREHEAD, HAVE BECOME MORE FAMILIAR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMICS --


-- BUT OTHER MANGA SYMBOLS STILL SEEM PRETTY STRANGE TO WESTERN READERS, SO BEFORE USING ANY SYMBOL, CONSIDER WHETHER YOUR READERS CAN DECODE IT OR NOT.
BLOOD SHOOTING OUT OF NOSE = SEXUAL AROUSAL
MUCUS BUBBLE COMING OUT OF NOSE = ASLEEP

SYMBOLS ARE A GREAT WAY TO GET AN EXPRESSION ACROSS, REGARDLESS OF YOUR DRAWING ABILITY --

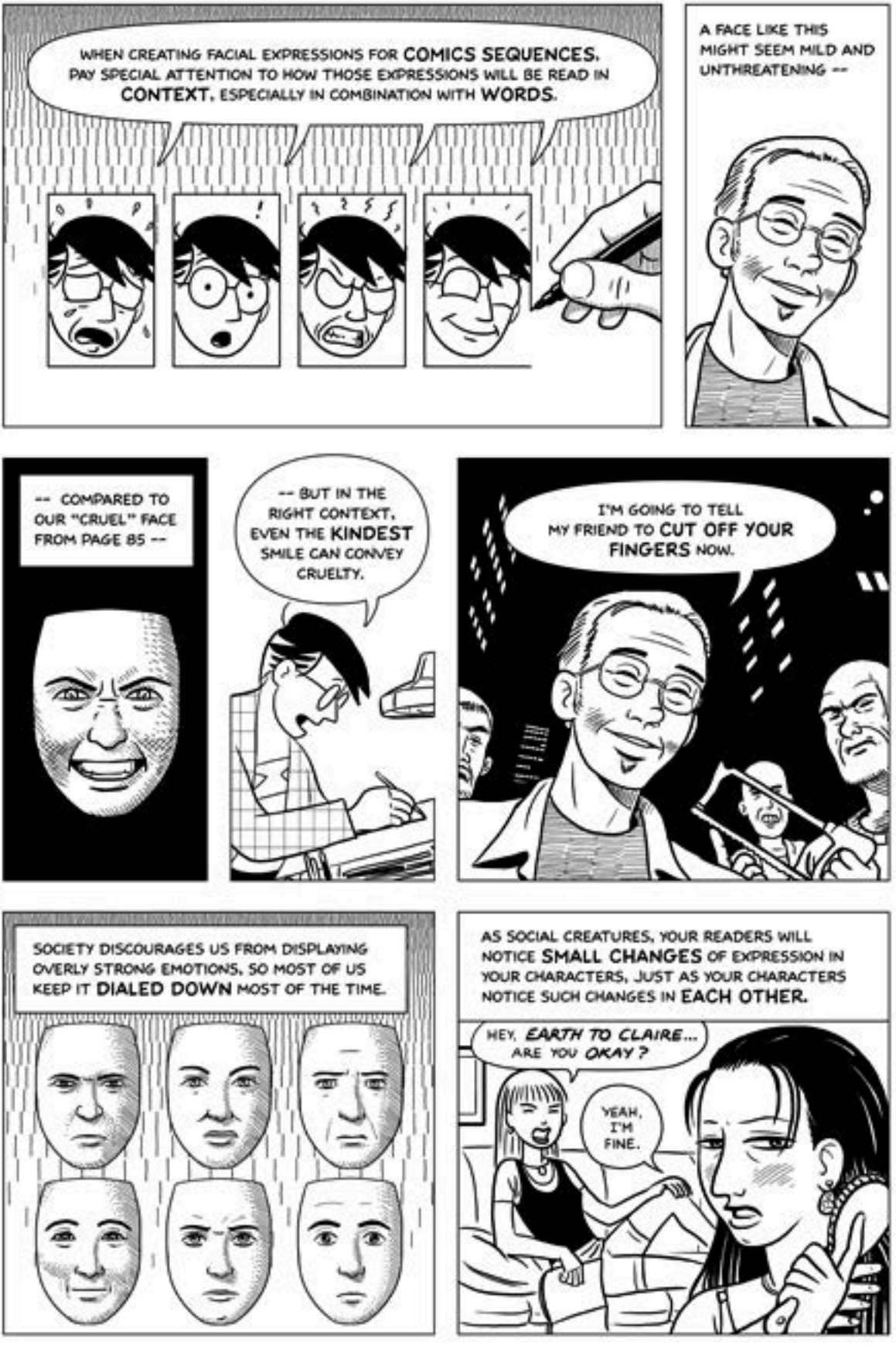
-- BUT DON'T LET THEM BECOME A CRUTCH!


A FACE SURROUNDED BY SWEAT BEADS WILL READ AS ANXIOUS NO MATTER HOW IT'S DRAWN --

-- BUT THE RIGHT EXPRESSION WILL ADD STRENGTH AND PRECISION THAT YOU CAN'T ACHIEVE ANY OTHER WAY.

IN THE END, MOST COMICS ARTISTS INCORPORATE AT LEAST A LITTLE REALISM, SIMPLIFICATION, EXAGGERATION AND SYMBOLISM INTO THEIR STYLES --

-- WHATEVER IT TAKES TO SPECIFY THE EMOTION AND GET THE JOB DONE.


WHEN CREATING FACIAL EXPRESSIONS FOR COMICS SEQUENCES, PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO HOW THOSE EXPRESSIONS WILL BE READ IN CONTEXT, ESPECIALLY IN COMBINATION WITH WORDS.
A FACE LIKE THIS MIGHT SEEM MILD AND UNTHREATENING --
-- COMPARED TO OUR "CRUEL" FACE FROM PAGE 85 --
-- BUT IN THE RIGHT CONTEXT, EVEN THE KINDEST SMILE CAN CONVEY CRUELTY.
I'M GOING TO TELL MY FRIEND TO CUT OFF YOUR FINGERS NOW.
SOCIETY DISCOURAGES US FROM DISPLAYING OVERLY STRONG EMOTIONS, SO MOST OF US KEEP IT DIALED DOWN MOST OF THE TIME.
AS SOCIAL CREATURES, YOUR READERS WILL NOTICE SMALL CHANGES OF EXPRESSION IN YOUR CHARACTERS, JUST AS YOUR CHARACTERS NOTICE SUCH CHANGES IN EACH OTHER.
HEY, EARTH TO CLAIRE... ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH, I'M FINE.

DON'T GET **TOO** SUBTLE, THOUGH! IN REAL LIFE, WE CAN COMMUNICATE THE INTENSITY OF OUR FEELINGS THROUGH **VOCAL INFLECTION**, WHILE OUR FACES' EXPRESSIONS STAY FAIRLY **MUTED** --

FINE. WE'LL ALL GO FISHING ***NEXT*** WEEK THEN.

-- BUT IN **COMICS**, WE CAN ONLY APPROXIMATE THE **SOUNDS** OF VOICES --

-- AND READERS AREN'T LOOKING DIRECTLY AT YOUR CHARACTERS' FACES AS THEY **READ** THEIR WORDS --

-- SO YOU MIGHT NEED TO TURN UP THE **EMOTIONAL VOLUME** ON SOME FACES TO COMPENSATE.

FINE. WE'LL ALL GO FISHING ***NEXT*** WEEK THEN.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT EXPRESSION CAN BE A FUNCTION OF CHOOSING THE RIGHT **MOMENT**. OUR FACES CYCLE THROUGH A LOT OF EXPRESSIONS WHEN SPEAKING.

WHEN A SINGLE FACE HAS TO REPRESENT ALL THE WORDS IN A BALLOON OR TWO, SUCH FACES ACT AS A SORT OF **"EMOTIONAL AVERAGE"** SUMMING UP THE BALLOON AS A WHOLE.

SURE. WE COULD ***BUY*** THE THEATER, BUT WE'D HAVE TO SELL THE ***HOUSE*** TO GET THE ***MONEY!***

THEN AGAIN, IF EMOTIONAL CHANGES ARE THE **FOCUS** OF A GIVEN SCENE --

-- DEVOTING A PANEL TO **EACH CHANGE OF EMOTION** MIGHT ACHIEVE THE INTENSITY THE SCENE REQUIRES.

I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU TO FILL IN THE BLANKS **EMOTIONALLY**, JUST AS YOU FILL IN THE BLANKS **BETWEEN PANELS.**

EVEN WITH THE BAREST OF EVIDENCE YOU'LL WANT TO SEE ME AS A **PERSON**, NOT JUST A SERIES OF DRAWINGS.

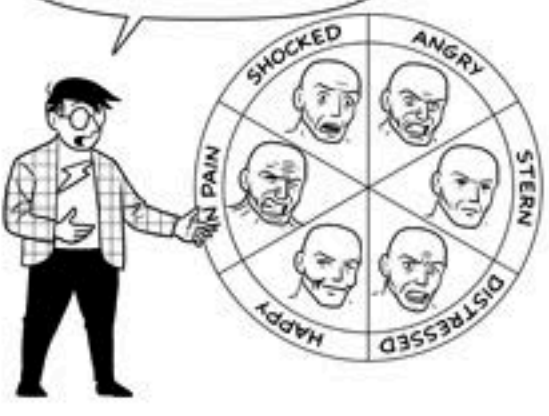
SOME OF THE MOST **EMOTIONALLY COMPLEX** COMICS IN HISTORY HAVE FEATURED PROTAGONISTS WITH A **LIMITED PALETTE** OF EXPRESSIONS, YET IN **CONTEXT**, THOSE FACES SEEM TO HAVE BOTH **BREADTH** AND **DEPTH.**

ART SPIEGELMAN'S *MAUS* (LEFT) FEATURES ONLY A FEW BASIC EXPRESSIONS, WHILE CHRIS WARE'S CHARACTER JIMMY CORRIGAN STICKS MOSTLY TO JUST THIS ONE.

READERS MAY EVEN "SEE" EXPRESSIONS THAT **AREN'T THERE**, BASED SOLELY ON THE SURROUNDING **STORY** AND **TEXT.**

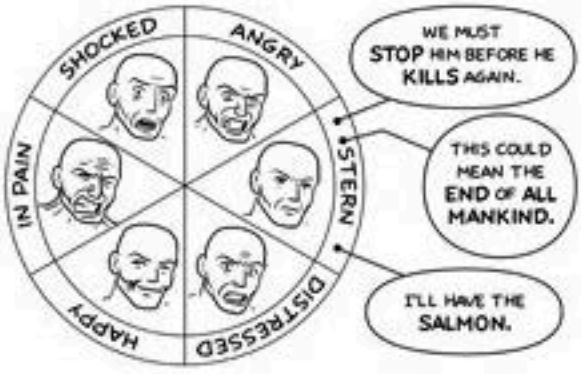
PANELS FROM *JACK'S LUCK RUNS OUT* BY JASON LITTLE, A COMIC WITH UNCHANGING FACES TAKEN FROM PLAYING CARDS.

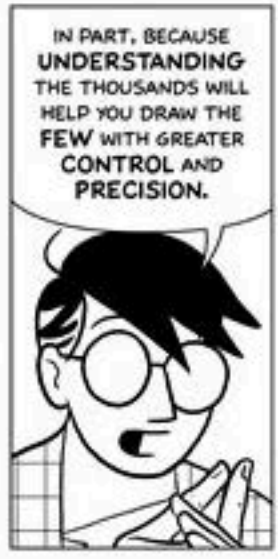
BUT IN MANY POPULAR COMICS OVER THE YEARS, CHARACTERS FEATURE SEVERAL **BASIC TYPES** OF **EXPRESSIONS** --

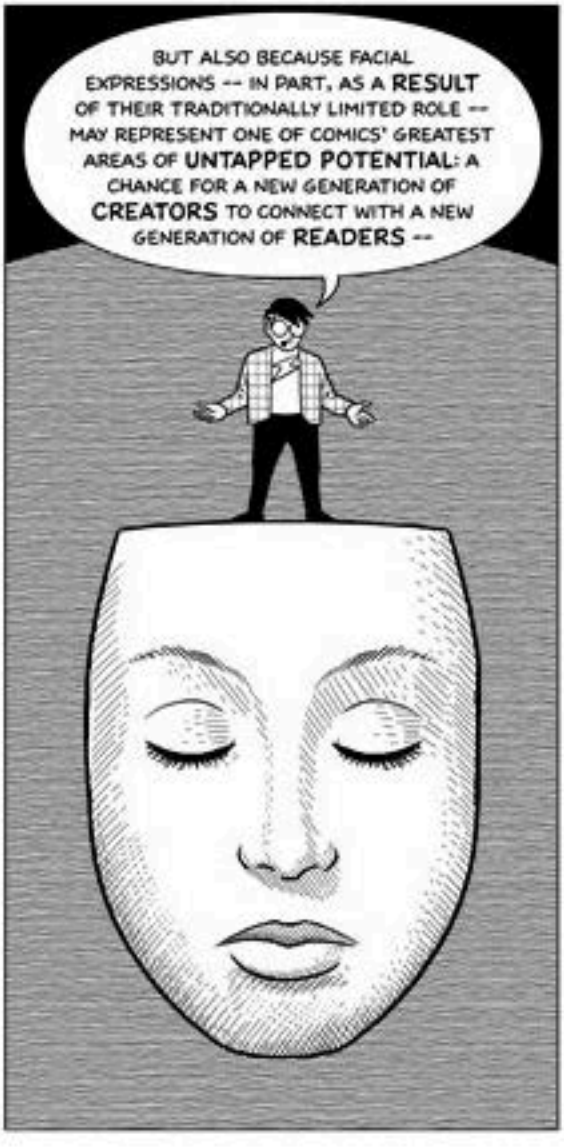


PANEL FIVE: ART BY ART SPIEGELMAN AND CHRIS WARE. PANEL SIX: ART BY JASON LITTLE (SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

-- WHICH CAN THEN BE **FINE-TUNED** BY THEIR CORRESPONDING **WORD BALLOONS.**





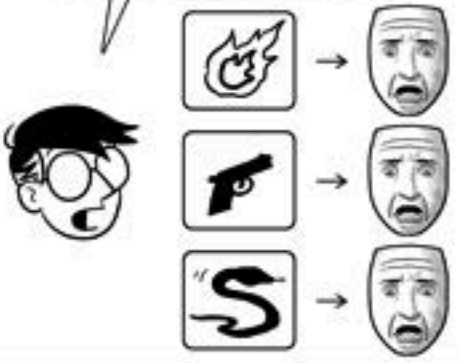


*MORE ON WORD BALLOON PLACEMENT IN CHAPTER 3.

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND BODY LANGUAGE EXPRESS MANY OF THE **SAME FEELINGS** AND OFTEN WORK **TOGETHER** --

-- BUT THERE ARE IMPORTANT **DIFFERENCES.**

THE BASIC EXPRESSIONS ARE FAIRLY **CONSISTENT** IN APPEARANCE. A FACE OF EXTREME FEAR, WHATEVER THE CAUSE, TENDS TOWARD THE SAME FAMILIAR SHAPE.



BODY LANGUAGE IS MORE **SITUATIONALLY-BASED**, AFFECTED BY DIRECTION, TERRAIN, SOURCE OF DANGER, PHYSICAL OPPORTUNITY, ETC...

BODY LANGUAGE IS MORE **GRAVITY-BOUND** THAN FACIAL EXPRESSIONS --

-- AND EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES LEAD TO A SPLIT BETWEEN WHAT WE'RE DOING ON THE **OUTSIDE** AND WHAT WE'RE FEELING ON THE **INSIDE.**

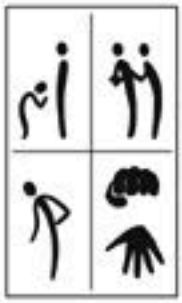
MOST IMPORTANTLY, FOR COMICS ARTISTS, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS ARE MORE **SURFACE-ORIENTED**, MORE AFFECTED BY NUANCE, SKIN SHADOWS, ETC. --

-- WHILE BODY LANGUAGE IS MORE **SILHOUETTE-BASED**, ALL ABOUT HOW OUR LIMBS, HANDS AND HEAD ARE POSITIONED.

THERE'S A KIND OF **CALLIGRAPHY** TO BODY LANGUAGE. JUST AS AN **"A"** IS AN **"A"** NO MATTER HOW IT'S **WRITTEN** --

-- SO, TOO, DO **GESTURES** AND **POSES** COMMUNICATE THEIR MEANINGS NO MATTER HOW THEY'RE **DRAWN.**

JUST AS WITH FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, MASTERING **BODY LANGUAGE** IN COMICS MEANS TACKLING FOUR SUBJECTS: THE VARIOUS **KINDS** OF BODY SIGNALS, THE **ANATOMY** THAT UNDERLIES THEM, STRATEGIES FOR **DRAWING** SUCH POSES AND HOW BODY LANGUAGE WORKS IN **COMICS SEQUENCES.**



UNLIKE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, THERE AREN'T ANY KINDS OF **"PRIMARY"** BODY POSES FROM WHICH ALL OTHERS ARE DERIVED.

BUT THERE ARE A FEW BASIC KINDS OF **RELATIONSHIPS** BETWEEN OUR PHYSICAL ACTIONS AND THE MESSAGES THEY CONVEY, WHICH SURFACE OFTEN.

THESE INCLUDE:

ELEVATION AND STATUS

DISTANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS

IMBALANCE AND DISCONTENT

GESTURE AND COMMUNICATION

AT THE HEART OF EACH OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS IS A SIMPLE STATEMENT OF **SPACE** AND **GEOMETRY.**

FOR EXAMPLE, IF I MADE TWO BRUSH STROKES AND ASKED YOU WHICH ONE LOOKED MORE **"PROUD"** YOU MIGHT THINK IT WAS A WEIRD QUESTION --

-- BUT WITH LINES LIKE THESE, YOU'D HAVE NO TROUBLE GUESSING **WHICH ONE** I WAS THINKING OF.

THAT'S YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF **ELEVATION** AND **STATUS** AT WORK.

A.

B.

FOR ALL THE DETAILS OF ANATOMY, CHARACTER, CLOTHING AND LIGHTING CONTAINED IN A PICTURE LIKE THIS, IT'S THE SIMPLE GEOMETRIC **FACT** OF **A** AND **B**'S **POSTURE** THAT SPEAKS THE LOUDEST.

A.

B.

LOW GUY:

HUMBLE.

HIGH GUY:

POWERFUL.

WHETHER IT COMES FROM OUR OLD MAMMALIAN COMBAT INSTINCTS OR THE PARENT/CHILD ARCHETYPE, THE IDEA OF HEIGHT AS POWER CAN STILL BE SEEN IN EVERYTHING FROM CEREMONIES TO ARCHITECTURE.

2

1

3

TODAY, WE MAY NOT BOW AS **LOW** AS WE USED TO --

THOSE PAPERS, SIR.

THANK YOU. THAT'LL BE ALL.

-- BUT THAT OLD-BRAIN **IDEA** OF THE "BOW" IS **EVERYWHERE!**

WE "BOW" WHEN WE MAKE **MISTAKES** --

YOU'RE RIGHT; I SHOULD HAVE SEEN THAT.

-- WHEN WE'RE **SHY** --

I'M SURE YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME, BUT...

-- OR **ASHAMED** --

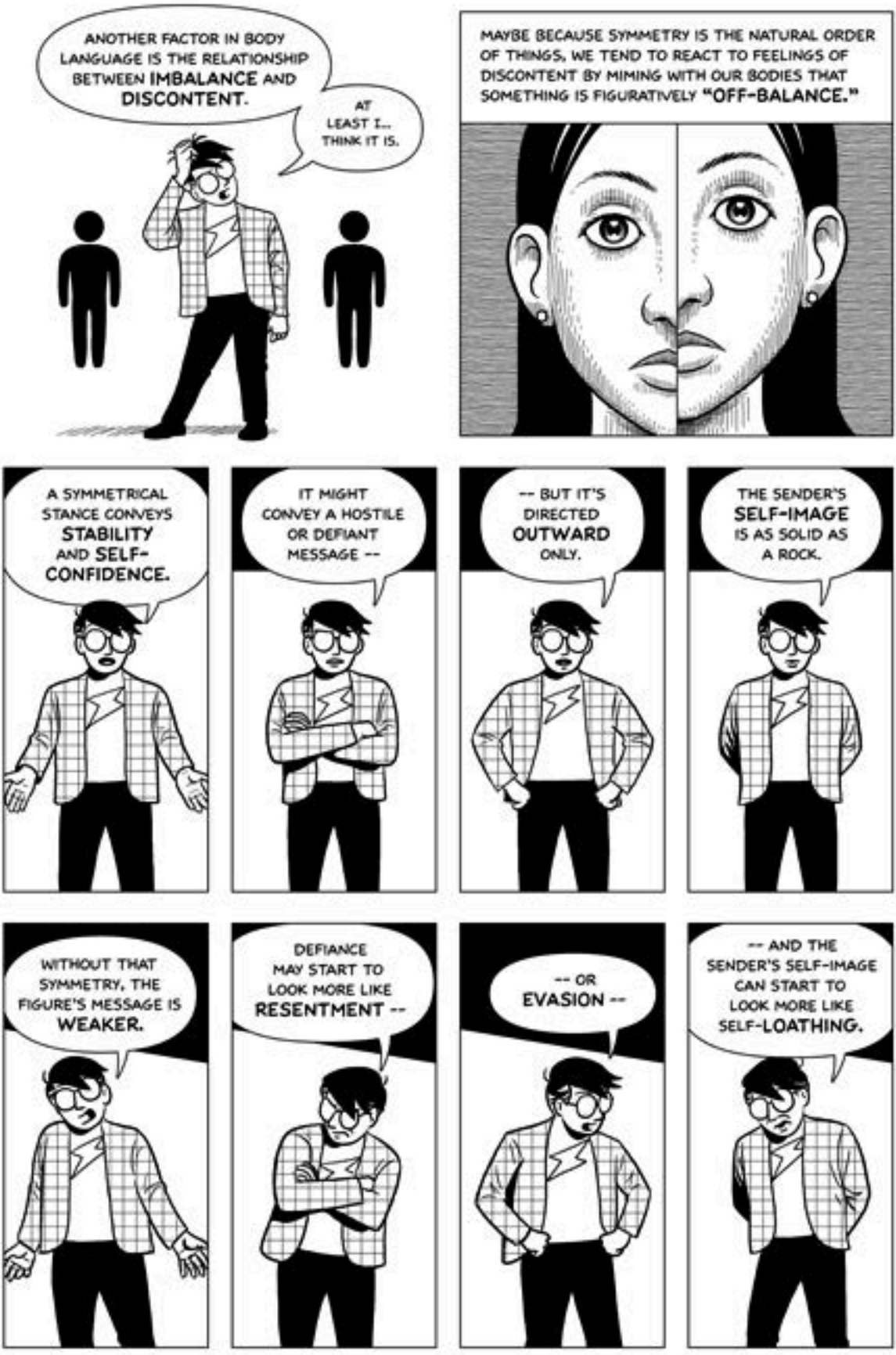
WHAT ARE YOU HOLDING, RICKY?

-- OR **DEFEATED.**

PANEL FIVE: ART BY BRYAN HITCH AND PAUL NEARY/ANDREW CURRIE. PANEL SIX: ART BY CHRIS WARE, R. CRUMB, SETH AND ERIC DROOKER (SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

ANOTHER PRINCIPLE AT WORK IN BODY LANGUAGE IS THE CORRELATION BETWEEN DISTANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS.
YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE TERM "PERSONAL SPACE" -- THAT BUBBLE AROUND US THAT DESCRIBES OUR COMFORT ZONE.
NEXT!
THE SIZE OF THAT ZONE DEPENDS ON WHO WE'RE INTERACTING WITH. FOR PUBLIC ENCOUNTERS WITH STRANGERS, WE LIKE TO KEEP A DISTANCE OF SEVERAL FEET, FOR EXAMPLE.
EXCUSE ME, DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?
REPENT
THE TIME IS NOW!
CAN'T YOU READ??
IN SOCIAL GATHERINGS, THAT BUBBLE SHRINKS AS WE'RE EXPECTED TO INTERACT ON A MORE PERSONAL LEVEL WITH OUR FELLOW HUMANS.
HEY, LOVED THE FIRST BOOK! I'M STILL, UH...
...WORKING ON THAT SECOND ONE.
AND IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY, THE BUBBLE SHRINKS OR POPS.
CAN'T TALK NOW, I'M IN A PANEL.
BEEP BOOP BEEP
EVEN WHEN SOCIAL SITUATIONS PUT US AT A CERTAIN FIXED DISTANCE FROM OTHERS, WE STILL INDICATE OUR DESIRED CLOSENESS TO EACH OTHER THROUGH OUR STANCES.
I'M SORRY, AM I STANDING TOO CLOSE?

ONLY A FEW LOVED ONES CAN BREACH THE ZONE OF PHYSICAL CONTACT, BUT THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF WAYS THEY CAN DO IT, AND THAT GIVES CARTOONISTS HUNDREDS OF WAYS TO SHOW INTIMACY BESIDES HUGGING AND KISSING (OR SEX, IF IT'S THAT KIND OF COMIC).
LIKEWISE, THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF WAYS TO SHOW A CHARACTER RESISTING INTIMACY WITH ANOTHER, THROUGH THE WAYS THEY TURN AWAY, STEP BACK, AVERT THEIR EYES OR ERECT "BARRIERS" TO CREATE SYMBOLIC OR EVEN LITERAL DISTANCES.
AM I BORING YOU?
NO, NOT AT ALL...
THE RELATIONSHIPS YOU COME UP WITH FOR YOUR CHARACTERS CAN HAVE A POWERFUL EFFECT ON THE RELATIONSHIPS YOUR CHARACTERS HAVE WITH YOUR READERS.
AND YOU CAN BUILD AND STRENGTHEN THOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN EVERY PANEL, BY SHOWING HOW THEY PLAY THEMSELVES OUT IN SPACE.


ANOTHER FACTOR IN BODY LANGUAGE IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMBALANCE AND DISCONTENT.
AT LEAST I... THINK IT IS.
MAYBE BECAUSE SYMMETRY IS THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS, WE TEND TO REACT TO FEELINGS OF DISCONTENT BY MIMING WITH OUR BODIES THAT SOMETHING IS FIGURATIVELY "OFF-BALANCE."
A SYMMETRICAL STANCE CONVEYS STABILITY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE.
IT MIGHT CONVEY A HOSTILE OR DEFIANT MESSAGE --
-- BUT IT'S DIRECTED OUTWARD ONLY.
THE SENDER'S SELF-IMAGE IS AS SOLID AS A ROCK.
WITHOUT THAT SYMMETRY, THE FIGURE'S MESSAGE IS WEAKER.
DEFIANCE MAY START TO LOOK MORE LIKE RESENTMENT --
-- OR EVASION --
-- AND THE SENDER'S SELF-IMAGE CAN START TO LOOK MORE LIKE SELF-LOATHING.

OF COURSE, GRAVITY, FATIGUE AND PHYSICAL OBSTACLES OFTEN REQUIRE US TO TAKE ASSYMMETRICAL POSES. THESE DON'T NECESSARILY INDICATE ANY KINDS OF EMOTIONAL IMBALANCE --
-- ESPECIALLY IF OVERALL BALANCE IS MAINTAINED AND THE HEAD STANDS UPRIGHT.
AND EVEN BLATANTLY LOPSIDED POSES DON'T HAVE TO SEEM WEAK IF EYE CONTACT IS MAINTAINED.
SUCH COMBOS HAVE A REBEL FLAVOR, A SORT OF "YEAH, I'M LOPSIDED; WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT?" LOOK, SIMILAR TO EXPRESSIONS OF SUSPICION.
BUT GENERALLY SPEAKING, IF YOU WANT TO TAKE A CALM, CONFIDENT POSE AND INTRODUCE A LITTLE UNREST --
-- THROWING IN A LITTLE IMBALANCE IS A GREAT WAY TO DO IT.
WHETHER WE'RE SHOWING OUR FEELINGS OR COMMUNICATING OUR OPINIONS, IMBALANCE IS EVERYWHERE. WE TIP OUR HEADS AT UNSOLVED PROBLEMS --
-- ARCH AN EYEBROW AT DISTURBANCES IN THE NATURAL ORDER --
-- EVEN THROW OUR WHOLE BODIES NEARLY INTO A FALL --
YOU... WHAT?!
-- ALL JUST TO SHOW THE IMBALANCES WE SEE IN OURSELVES --
-- OR IN THE WORLD AROUND US!

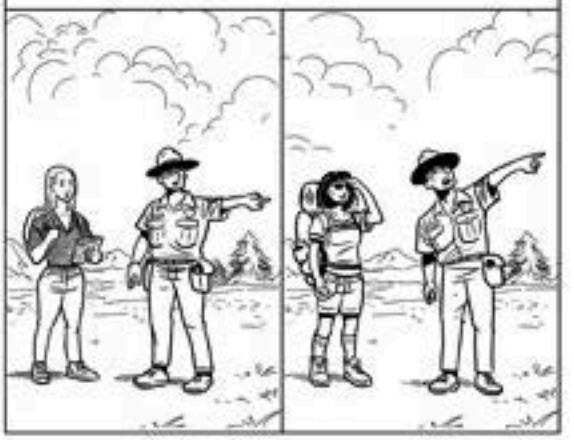
ELEVATION, DISTANCE AND IMBALANCE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE WAYS OUR BODIES LET OTHERS KNOW HOW WE FEEL ABOUT OURSELVES, EACH OTHER AND THE WORLD.

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN AND YOU'LL SEE MANY MORE.

THE WAY AN EXTREME POSTURE OF GRIEF CAN RESEMBLE A FETAL POSITION.

THE WAY ONE PERSON WILL TURN TOWARD A STRANGER IN A CROWDED DOORWAY WHILE ANOTHER WILL TURN AWAY.

THE WAY WE POINT HIGHER WHEN WE'RE POINTING AT SOMETHING FURTHER AWAY, AS IF SHOOTING AN ARROW.



THE WAY WE SIGNAL OUR INTEREST IN SOME KINDS OF ADVANCES AND DISINTEREST IN OTHERS.

THE WAY WE WAIT FOR A CO-WORKER COMPARED TO THE WAY WE WAIT FOR SOMEONE WE LOVE.

HANDS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN BODY LANGUAGE, BUT UNLIKE WHOLE-BODY POSTURES, THEY TEND TO SPECIALIZE IN MORE DELIBERATE MESSAGES.

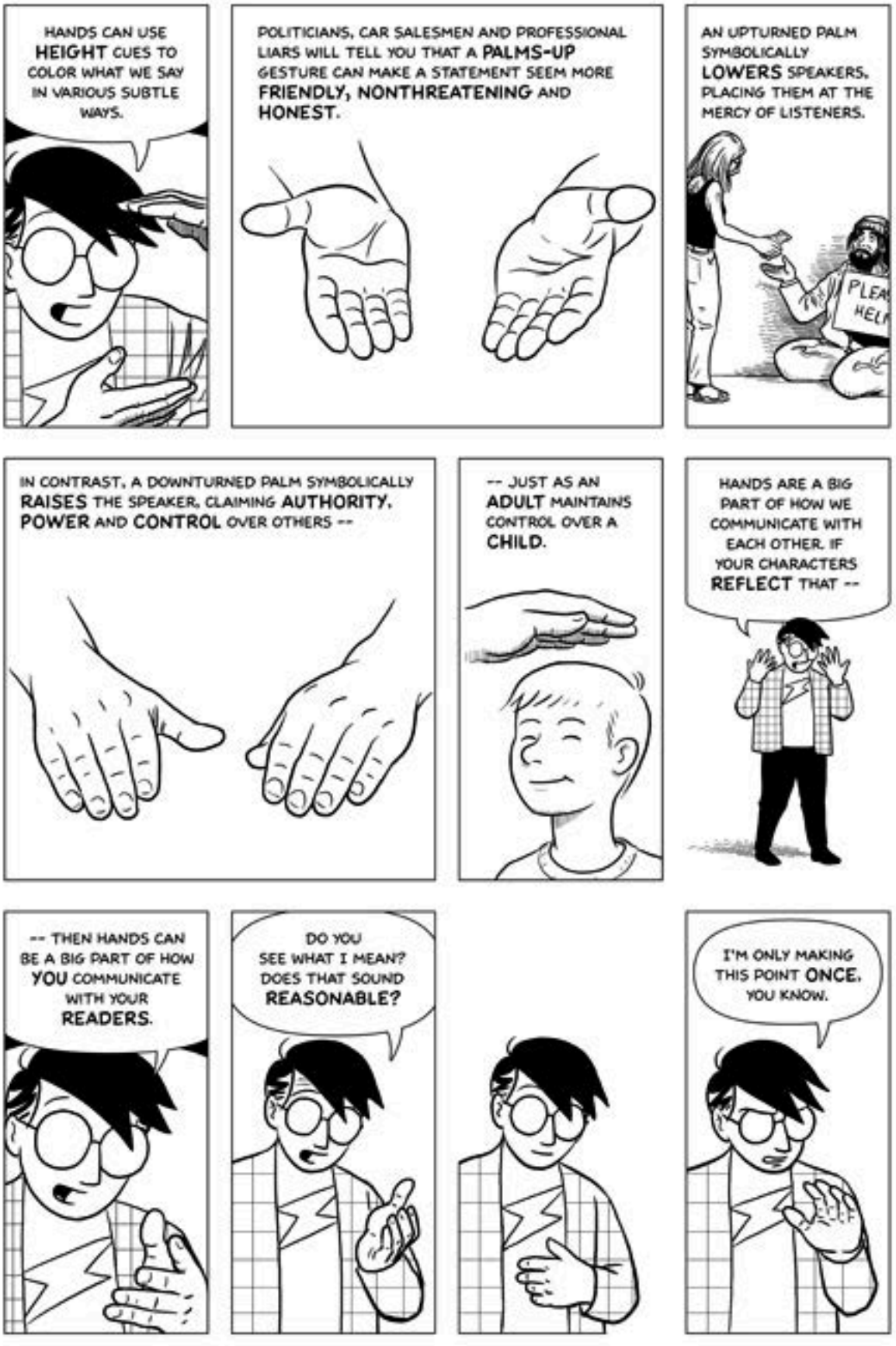
SOME TAKE THE SHAPE OF SYMBOLS WITH FIXED MEANINGS, LIKE AN INFORMAL SIGN LANGUAGE --

-- AND AS WITH ANY LANGUAGE, SUCH SIGNS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REGIONAL DIFFERENCES. SO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE BEFORE USING THEM IN YOUR COMICS.
"I'M STRONG!" (WESTERN WORLD)
"I SWEAR" (MIDDLE EAST)
"SPEAK-UP!" (WORLD-WIDE)
"I DON'T GET IT." (NORTHERN AFRICA)
"JEALOUS" (JAPAN)

HANDS CAN ALSO AMPLIFY THE SORTS OF SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS WE DISCUSSED IN THE LAST FEW PAGES.

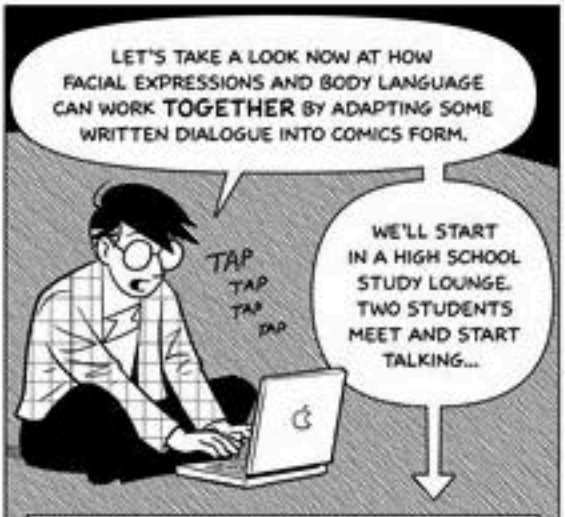
CONTACT WITH ONE'S HANDS, FOR EXAMPLE, IS A KEY STEP TAKEN TO BRIDGE DISTANCE IN HOPES OF INTIMACY --

-- AND A LOT OF IMBALANCE SIGNALS CAN INCORPORATE HAND SIGNALS.
1.0
1.0


HANDS CAN USE **HEIGHT** CUES TO COLOR WHAT WE SAY IN VARIOUS SUBTLE WAYS.
POLITICIANS, CAR SALESMEN AND PROFESSIONAL LIARS WILL TELL YOU THAT A **PALMS-UP** GESTURE CAN MAKE A STATEMENT SEEM MORE **FRIENDLY, NONTHREATENING** AND **HONEST.**
AN UPTURNED PALM SYMBOLICALLY **LOWERS** SPEAKERS, PLACING THEM AT THE MERCY OF LISTENERS.
IN CONTRAST, A DOWNTURNED PALM SYMBOLICALLY **RAISES** THE SPEAKER, CLAIMING **AUTHORITY, POWER** AND **CONTROL** OVER OTHERS --
-- JUST AS AN **ADULT** MAINTAINS CONTROL OVER A **CHILD.**
HANDS ARE A BIG PART OF HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER. IF YOUR CHARACTERS **REFLECT** THAT --
-- THEN HANDS CAN BE A BIG PART OF HOW **YOU** COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR **READERS.**
DO YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN? DOES THAT SOUND **REASONABLE?**
I'M ONLY MAKING THIS POINT **ONCE.** YOU KNOW.

NATURALLY, IF YOU WANT TO DRAW CONVINCING BODY LANGUAGE, YOU'LL WANT TO LEARN HOW TO DRAW A CONVINCING BODY.
HERE'S WHERE A GOOD WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN ANATOMY CAN BE INVALUABLE.
I WON'T ATTEMPT A WHOLE COURSE IN ANATOMY AND FIGURE DRAWING HERE.
THERE ARE SOME GOOD BOOKS ON THE SUBJECT, WHICH I'LL MENTION IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY.
BESIDES WHICH, IT'D TAKE A HUNDRED PAGES AND, UM... WELL...
MY OWN FIGURE DRAWING ISN'T EXACTLY THE GREATEST.
BUT EVEN IF YOU'RE LIKE ME AND ANATOMY DOESN'T COME EASILY, YOU CAN STILL IMPROVE YOUR STORYTELLING DRAMATICALLY BY JUST GETTING THE GESTURE ACROSS IN EVERY FIGURE YOU DRAW.

PANELS ONE, TWO AND FOUR: ART BY HEINRICH KLEY, JAIME HERNANDEZ AND TOM HART (SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).



Pete: Hey, are you okay?

Carrie: Not so much. I got a "D" on the history test.

Pete: Huh. Lucky you. I got an "F"

Carrie: No way! You always ace those things!

Pete: Actually, I think Mr. Duncan kinda lost it. I heard everybody got a "D" or an "F" today.

Carrie: Really? Wow. He was acting kind of weird in class. All that stuff about Jif Peanut Butter and the Communists.

Miller(entering): Room for one more?

Carrie: No.

Pete: Hey, Miller.

Miller: So, did you hear? Duncan went on a rampage!

Carrie: What?

Miller: I was there! He smashed all the iMacs in Room 4 with a baseball bat! Then he stole the rhino head off the wall and ran off!

Pete: You're kidding!

Carrie: Oh my God!

Pete: Wow. I kinda love Mr. D. now.

Carrie: You swear you're not making this up!

Miller: I swear! The police are looking for him and everything.

Pete: Y'know, I always heard Mr. D. was nuts. Did you guys know that last year, he was --

Carrie: Uh...

Pete: What?

Mr. Duncan: Hello, children.

AN EASY-GOING CHARACTER LIKE PETE CAN BE A CHALLENGE. WITHOUT A STRONG EMOTION, HIS BODY LANGUAGE MIGHT BE NEUTRAL TO THE POINT OF UNINTERESTING.
LET'S PUT A COUPLE OF VENDING MACHINES INTO THAT LOUNGE SO PETE WILL AT LEAST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS HANDS.
IN FACT, WE CAN JUST INCLUDE THE MACHINES IN A BIG ESTABLISHING SHOT ON THE FIRST PAGE.
K-CLUNK!
NOW, NOTICE HOW EVEN IN A LONG-SHOT, WE CAN ALREADY "READ" CARRIE'S POSTURE?
HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?
NOT SO MUCH. I GOT A "D" ON THE HISTORY TEST.
HUH. LUCKY YOU. I GOT AN "F."
FFT!
AND "LISTEN" TO PETE'S VOICE. WITH A DIFFERENT POSE AND EXPRESSION, THE EXACT SAME DIALOGUE WOULD FEEL DIFFERENT.
HUH. LUCKY YOU. I GOT AN "F."
FFT!

NO WAY! YOU ALWAYS ACE THOSE THINGS!
ACTUALLY, I THINK MR. DUNCAN KINDA LOST IT. I HEARD EVERYBODY GOT A "D" OR AN "F" TODAY.
REALLY? WOW.
CARRIE IS TRANSITIONING TOWARD THE POSE OF THE WILLING LISTENER NOW, BECAUSE SOMEONE SHE LIKES IS SAYING SOMETHING THAT INTERESTS HER.
LEANING FORWARD
ARMS APART
LEGS — RELAXED
HE WAS ACTING KINDA WEIRD IN CLASS. ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT JIF PEANUT BUTTER AND THE COMMUNISTS.
ROOM 24
ROOM FOR ONE MORE?
NO.
NOT TRUE FOR POOR MILLER, THOUGH, WHOSE UNWELCOMED INVASION OF HER PERSONAL SPACE EARNS HIM EVERY "BARRIER" SIGNAL IN THE BOOK.
SNEER
"COLD SHOULDER"
ARMS CROSSED
LEGS CROSSED
LEANING AWAY
HEY, MILLER.
SO, DID YOU HEAR? DUNCAN WENT ON A RAMPAGE!
WHAT?
WITH MILLER'S NEWS, HOWEVER, HER POSE SOFTENS AND HER EXPRESSION ACKNOWLEDGES HIM (ALL STUDENTS ARE FAMILY WHEN DISSING TEACHERS).
SHOULDER RELAXED
TURNING TOWARD SPEAKER
SNEER GONE
I WAS THERE! HE SMASHED ALL THE IMACS IN ROOM 4 WITH A BASEBALL BAT!
THEN HE STOLE THE RHINO HEAD OFF THE WALL AND RAN OFF!
YOU'RE KIDDING!
OH MY GOD!

SHE STILL DOESN'T WANT TO DATE THE GUY OR ANYTHING -- THE BARRIERS ARE STILL UP -- BUT MILLER AT LEAST HAS HER ATTENTION.

PETE SEEMS A LITTLE MORE ACCEPTING OF MILLER. BUT JUDGING BY THE LEG, LAME WAVE AND FIFTEEN-WATT SMILE, HE'S NOT A BIG FAN.

MEANWHILE, MILLER'S BODY IS ALL ABOUT FORWARD MOMENTUM. HE'S CONFIDENT THAT HE'S GOT THE GOODS.

SO CONFIDENT, IN FACT, THAT HE'S GOT HIS HANDS DOWN IN THAT "QUIET! YOU WANNA HEAR THIS." WAY.
HE'S IN COMMAND.

WOW, I KINDA LOVE MR. D. NOW.
YOU SWEAR YOU'RE NOT MAKING THIS UP!
I SWEAR! THE POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR HIM AND EVERYTHING!

Y'KNOW, I ALWAYS HEARD MR. D WAS A LITTLE NUTS. DID YOU GUYS KNOW THAT LAST YEAR, HE WAS--
UH...

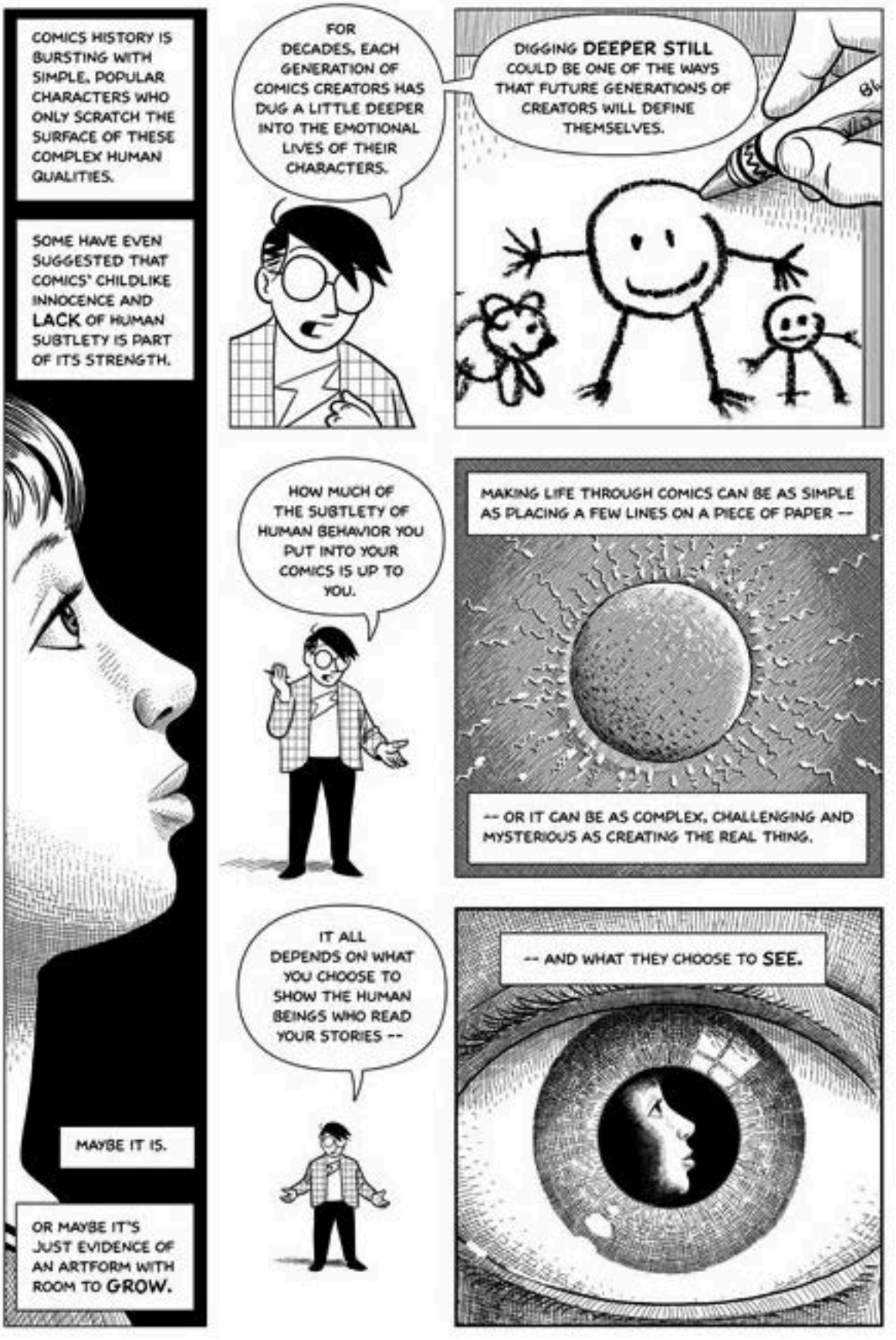
WHAT?

HELLO, CHILDREN...

SEE CARRIE'S FOREFINGER JAB? THAT'S SERIOUS. SHE'D KICK HIS ASS IF HE LIED TO HER.

HENCE MILLER'S COMICALLY FORMAL GESTURE INCLUDES AN ELEMENT OF ACTUAL FEAR. BOTH IN THE CONSTRICTED POSE AND IN ASPECTS OF HIS EXPRESSION.

FROM CHARACTER DESIGN TO FACIAL EXPRESSION TO BODY LANGUAGE, IT'S THAT SENSE OF RECOGNITION THAT MANY OF YOUR READERS WILL VALUE IN YOUR COMICS ABOVE ALL ELSE.


COMICS HISTORY IS BURSTING WITH SIMPLE, POPULAR CHARACTERS WHO ONLY SCRATCH THE SURFACE OF THESE COMPLEX HUMAN QUALITIES.
SOME HAVE EVEN SUGGESTED THAT COMICS' CHILDLIKE INNOCENCE AND LACK OF HUMAN SUBTLETY IS PART OF IT'S STRENGTH.
MAYBE IT IS.
OR MAYBE IT'S JUST EVIDENCE OF AN ARTFORM WITH ROOM TO GROW.
FOR DECADES, EACH GENERATION OF COMICS CREATORS HAS DUG A LITTLE DEEPER INTO THE EMOTIONAL LIVES OF THEIR CHARACTERS.
DIGGING DEEPER STILL COULD BE ONE OF THE WAYS THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS OF CREATORS WILL DEFINE THEMSELVES.
HOW MUCH OF THE SUBTLETY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR YOU PUT INTO YOUR COMICS IS UP TO YOU.
MAKING LIFE THROUGH COMICS CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS PLACING A FEW LINES ON A PIECE OF PAPER --
-- OR IT CAN BE AS COMPLEX, CHALLENGING AND MYSTERIOUS AS CREATING THE REAL THING.
IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU CHOOSE TO SHOW THE HUMAN BEINGS WHO READ YOUR STORIES --
-- AND WHAT THEY CHOOSE TO SEE.

NOTES

CHAPTER 2: STORIES FOR HUMANS

PAGE 58–61—SYMMETRY AND RECOGNITION

GRANTED, THERE ARE PLENTY OF WAYS TO DISTINGUISH AN ANIMAL FROM ITS ENVIRONMENT (GROWTH AND REPRODUCTION, MOVING, RESPONDING TO STIMULI...) THE REASON I CHOSE TO FOCUS ON SYMMETRY—BESIDES THE FACT THAT I LIKE WEIRD DIGRESSIONS—IS THAT IT'S THE ASPECT OF LIFE MOST AT HOME IN A STATIC VISUAL MEDIUM LIKE COMICS.

THE ABOVE IMAGE IS FROZEN IN TIME. YOU CAN'T SEE IT MOVE. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON IN IT'S HEAD. BUT YOU KNOW IT'S ALIVE. AND YOU'D KNOW IT EVEN IF YOU'D NEVER SEEN A TIGER IN YOUR LIFE.

NATURE PROVIDES OTHER EXAMPLES OF SYMMETRY, LIKE CRYSTALS, AND THERE ARE PLANTS THAT EXHIBIT IT, BUT ANIMALS HAVE ENOUGH OF A MONOPOLY ON THE BILATERAL DESIGN THAT I DESCRIBE ON PAGE 60 THAT I THINK IT'S FAIR TO DUB IT OUR "CALLING CARD."

ON PAGE 61, I ALSO TOUCH ON OUR PREFERENCE FOR SEEING HUMANS IN

SIMPLE IMAGES, SOMETHING I TALK ABOUT AT LENGTH IN *UNDERSTANDING COMICS*, CHAPTER TWO.

FYI: THE SCULPTURE ON PAGE 60 IS AN INVENTION, BUT IT'S BASED ON VARIOUS SIMILAR SCULPTURES FROM AFRICA.

PAGE 64, PANEL FIVE—CHARACTERS THAT "WRITE THEMSELVES"

I'VE HEARD CREATORS LITERALLY SAY THAT THEY'RE NOT SO MUCH WRITING THEIR CHARACTERS AS RELAYING WHAT THE CHARACTERS THEMSELVES WANT TO DO, AN INTUITIVE APPROACH THAT COMES UP IN CONNECTION WITH THE "ANIMIST" CAMPFIRE DISCUSSED IN CHAPTER SIX. IT'S ACTUALLY A PRETTY COMMON ATTITUDE AMONG SUCCESSFUL COMICS ARTISTS.

AND LUNATICS, OF COURSE.

PAGE 65, PANEL FIVE—THE BACKSTORY TRAP

SERIOUSLY, THERE ARE MANY SAD, LONELY WOULD-BE COMICS AUTHORS WHO ADD COMPULSIVELY TO THE BACKSTORIES OF CHARACTERS NO ONE WILL EVER SEE INSTEAD OF PRODUCING READABLE, FINISHED STORIES. DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU! FOR A CAUTIONARY TALE, TRY GOOGLING THE NAME "HENRY DARGER," OR GET THE DOCUMENTARY ABOUT DARGER CALLED *IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL*.

PAGE 65, PANEL SIX—WHEN LIFE HISTORIES COLLIDE

CHARACTERS WHOSE DIFFERING ORIGINS GOVERN THE NATURE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIPS INCLUDE:

- BETTY AND VERONICA
- SUPERMAN AND LOIS LANE
- FRODO AND GOLLUM
- TARZAN AND JANE
- POPEYE AND OLIVE OYL
- JEAN VALJEAN AND INSPECTOR JAVERT
- THE LITTLE MERMAID AND PRINCE WHATSISNAME
- BUFFY AND SPIKE

PAGE 66—LIFE LESSONS

A FRIEND OF MINE SAW A SCREENING OF SAM RAIMI'S 2002 *SPIDER-MAN* MOVIE DURING WHICH HE SAT BEHIND A FATHER AND HIS SON. EARLY IN THE FILM, THE NOT-YET-HEROIC SPIDER-MAN IS RIPPED OFF BY A FIGHT PROMOTER AND WHEN THE FIGHT PROMOTER IS ROBBED MOMENTS LATER, SPIDER-MAN LETS THE CROOK GET AWAY TO GET EVEN.

SCREENWRITER DAVID KOEPP (WHO STAYS CLOSE TO THE COMICS ORIGIN FOR THE MOST PART) CONSTRUCTS THE SCENE TO MAXIMIZE OUR SYMPATHY WITH SPIDER-MAN. SURE ENOUGH, MY FRIEND REPORTS THAT THE FATHER LEANED OVER TO HIS SON AT THIS POINT IN THE MOVIE AND SAID, "NOW THAT'S JUSTICE!"

THE FATHER AT THAT SCREENING (AND PRESUMABLY HIS SON) WAS INSIDE SPIDER-MAN'S HEAD TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT WHEN THE CHARACTER'S UNCLE IS MURDERED BY THAT SAME CROOK IN THE VERY NEXT SCENE, HE AND THE CHARACTER RECEIVED THE MOVIE'S MORAL WAKE-UP CALL AT THE SAME TIME, DOUBLING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MOMENT.

IF MANY OF OUR BEST STORIES INCLUDE A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE OUTLOOK OF

A MAIN CHARACTER, THE **BEST** OF THE BEST HELP US TO UNDERGO THAT CHANGE **WITH** THEM.

PAGE 67, PANEL FIVE—SHOW IT, DON'T SING IT!

IN *THE WIZARD OF OZ*, CHARACTERS LITERALLY SING ABOUT THEIR DESIRES, BUT IN MORE NATURALISTIC STORIES, YOUR CHARACTERS SHOULD SHOW WHAT THEY WANT THROUGH THEIR ACTIONS AND RARELY, IF EVER, SPELL IT OUT LIKE THAT. IN REAL LIFE, ESPECIALLY WHERE BASIC DESIRES LIKE LOVE OR MONEY ARE CONCERNED, PEOPLE ARE CONSTANTLY ANGLING FOR THE THINGS THEY WANT WITHOUT ADMITTING IT TO OTHERS—OR EVEN TO THEMSELVES.

AUDIENCES FEEL SMARTER AND HAVE MORE FUN IF THEY CAN GUESS A CHARACTER'S FEELINGS EVEN BEFORE THE CHARACTER DOES.

PAGE 67, PANEL SIX—"EVERYBODY IS A HERO IN THEIR OWN MIND"

PROPS TO WRITER/ARTIST JIM STARLIN FOR INCLUDING THAT LINE IN THE FIRST COMIC I EVER BOUGHT, AN EARLY ISSUE OF *WARLOCK* (#9, I THINK) WHEN I WAS ABOUT 13 YEARS OLD.

PAGE 68, PANEL TWO—JUNG AT HEART

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT IN JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY TO USE IDEAS LIKE THESE AS JUMPING OFF POINTS. I'M CERTAINLY NOT. MY TOTAL GRASP OF JUNG'S "FOUR FUNCTIONS" OF MENTAL ACTIVITY IN 1982 WHEN I CREATED THOSE FOUR CHARACTERS WAS THAT "THINKING" EMPHASIZED LOGIC AND REASONING, "SENSATION" WAS ABOUT SENSORY EXPERIENCE, "FEELING" ASSIGNED VALUES AND JUDGEMENTS, AND "INTUITION" WAS ABOUT THE

PERCEPTION OF THINGS UNSEEN.

EVEN IF I WAS WAY OFF THE MARK, JUNG GAVE ME A STARTING POINT THAT HELPED SEPARATE THOSE CHARACTERS ENOUGH TO GIVE THEM UNIQUE DESIRES IN MOST SITUATIONS.

PAGE 68, PANEL FIVE—MYTHOLOGY AND ARCHETYPES

JOSEPH CAMPBELL'S BOOK *THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES* COMES UP A LOT WHEN DISCUSSING ARCHETYPES IN LITERATURE, IN PART BECAUSE OF HIS INFLUENCE ON GEORGE LUCAS' ORIGINAL STAR WARS CHARACTERS. LUCAS' DOCUMENTARY ON CAMPBELL, *THE POWER OF MYTH*, WAS ANOTHER TOUCHSTONE FOR MANY WRITERS DURING THAT PERIOD. AGAIN, YOU DON'T NEED TO HAVE A DEGREE IN MYTHOLOGY TO PUT SUCH IDEAS TO USE. FEEL FREE TO USE ANYTHING THAT INSPIRES YOU AS A JUMPING OFF POINT.

PAGE 69, PANEL FOUR—SUBTLETY THROUGH INTERACTION

WHEN I THINK OF THIS PRINCIPLE, I USUALLY THINK OF THE FRENCH PAINTER GEORGES SEURAT (1859–1891).

SEURAT USED MANY SMALL DOTS OF PURE COLOR IN HIS PAINTINGS, WHICH APPEARED TO MIX IN THE VIEWER'S EYES WHEN SEEN FROM A DISTANCE TO CREATE THE ILLUSION OF A SUBTLER AND MORE VARIED RANGE OF TONES AND COLORS (TODAY, COLOR PRINTING PRODUCES SIMILAR EFFECTS WITH HALFTONE DOTS OF CYAN, MAGENTA AND YELLOW).

HERE'S A TINY PIECE OF HIS BEST KNOWN PAINTING, *SUNDAY AFTERNOON ON THE ISLAND OF LA GRANDE JATTE*, THE ONLY PAINTING EVER MADE INTO A MUSICAL, AS FAR AS I KNOW:

WHEN SIMPLY-CONCEIVED CHARACTERS INTERACT, THEY'RE LIKE SEURAT'S DOTS, REFERENCE POINTS TO DIFFERENT BASIC ASPECTS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR THAT CAN ILLUMINATE ASPECTS OF LIFE THAT ARE MUCH MORE SUBTLE.

I FIRST NOTICED THIS WHEN READING GILBERT HERNANDEZ'S CLASSIC STORY *HEARTBREAK SOUP*.

PAGE 70, PANELS FOUR AND FIVE—COOKIE-CUTTER CHARACTERS

THIS IS DEPRESSINGLY COMMON. MAYBE A THIRD OF ALL WOULD-BE COMICS ARTISTS JUST DRAW THE SAME CHARACTER OVER AND OVER AND OVER. PLEASE, DON'T BE ONE OF THEM!

PAGE 70, PANELS SEVEN AND EIGHT—THE REPERTORY APPROACH

SOME ARTISTS, NOTABLY JAPAN'S OSAMU TEZUKA, HAVE A CAST OF VARIED CHARACTER TYPES THAT APPEAR IN DIFFERENT STORIES AS IF THEY WERE ACTORS IN A REPERTORY COMPANY TAKING ON DIFFERENT ROLES. OTHERS, LIKE WILL EISNER AND RUMIKO TAKAHASHI, HAVE A NARROWER RANGE OF FEATURES FOR HEROIC OR BEAUTIFUL PROTAGONISTS, BUT A WIDE RANGE OF FACE AND BODY TYPES AMONG SUPPORTING CHARACTERS.

PAGE 71—CHARACTER VARIATION

YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE EVERY CHARACTER DIFFERENT FROM EVERY OTHER CHARACTER IN EVERY WAY, OF COURSE, BUT SEE EXERCISE #3 FOR SOME OF THE PARAMETERS YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER.

PAGE 72, PANEL SEVEN—KIRBY'S BRAIN

I HAVEN'T TURNED UP ANY DIRECT EVIDENCE THAT JACK KIRBY OR STAN LEE BASED THE FANTASTIC FOUR ON THE FOUR GREEK CLASSICAL ELEMENTS, THOUGH KIRBY FOLLOWED A SIMILAR TEMPLATE FOR THE F.F.'S NON-SUPERHERO PREDECESSORS *THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN*, SO IT'S PROBABLY NOT A COINCIDENCE.

PAGE 73, PANELS FOUR THROUGH SEVEN—COMICS AND STEREOTYPES

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN COMICS AND STEREOTYPES REACHES ALL THE WAY BACK TO ITS ORIGINS. SWISS ARTIST RODOLPHE TOPFFER (1799–1846)—OFTEN CONSIDERED A STARTING POINT FOR COMICS AS WE KNOW THEM TODAY—FLIRTED WITH THE PSEUDOSCIENCE OF PHRENOLOGY, WHICH HELD THAT YOU COULD TELL ANYONE'S PERSONALITY AND MENTAL CAPABILITY JUST BY MEASURING THEIR HEAD-SHAPE. TOPFFER DIDN'T NECESSARILY BUY INTO THE "SCIENCE'S" MORE TOXIC CONCLUSIONS, BUT HE CONSIDERED SUCH VISUAL STEREOTYPING USEFUL FOR VISUAL ARTISTS WORKING IN THE SIMPLE STYLE OF NARRATIVE DRAWING HE DEVELOPED.

FROM ITS BEGINNINGS IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY, AMERICAN COMIC STRIPS CONTAINED NEGATIVE DEPICTIONS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, AND RACIST

DEPICTIONS OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS. SOME OF COMICS' SEMINAL ARTISTS, LIKE WINDSOR MCKAY AND WILL EISNER, INTRODUCED CHARACTERS VISUALLY MODELLED AFTER OLD RACIAL STEREOTYPES. IN EISNER'S CASE, ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO HUMANIZE THE BLACK SIDEKICK EBONY IN EISNER'S SERIES *THE SPIRIT*, BUT THE STEREOTYPED VISUAL DESIGN CONTINUED TO WEIGH HEAVILY ON THE SERIES, WHICH EVENTUALLY DROPPED THE CHARACTER.

SINCE THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO WILL, WHO I CONSIDERED A FRIEND AND MENTOR, IT'S IMPORTANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEGITIMATE CRITICISMS LEVELED AGAINST EBONY—ESPECIALLY THE EARLIEST VERSIONS OF THE CHARACTER. TO HIS CREDIT, THOUGH, THE VERY YOUNG EISNER WOULD MOVE ON TO WORK IN COMICS FOR SIX DECADES AFTER LEAVING THOSE EARLY PAGES BEHIND, AND PRODUCE MANY SOCIALLY PROGRESSIVE STORIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE YEARS FOLLOWING 1978'S *A CONTRACT WITH GOD*.

MORE GENERALIZED STEREOTYPES LIKE THOSE SHOWN ON PAGE 73 (THE BIG BRUTE, LITTLE NERD AND HEROIC LEADING MAN) DON'T NECESSARILY CARRY THE SAME SOCIAL CHARGE, AND THEY'RE TEMPTING FOR CARTOONISTS HOPING TO MAKE A FAST IMPRESSION. BUT EVEN HERE, SOME PREJUDICES CAN CREEP IN. NOTICE THE SHIRT PATCH OVER THE "BRUTE'S" POCKET, MARKING HIM AS BLUE COLLAR? AND DOES THE "NERD" HAVE STEREOTYPICALLY "JEWISH" FEATURES? IN SHORT: EVERY STEREOTYPE COMES FROM SOMEWHERE, AND THAT PLACE MAY NOT ALWAYS BE OBVIOUS.

PAGE 74–77—MODEL SHEETS AND CHARACTER CONSTRUCTION

BOOKS ON ANIMATION ARE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL FOR LEARNING HOW CHARACTERS CAN BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE MODEL SHEET PHASE TO INSURE A CONSISTENT APPEARANCE THROUGHOUT A STORY. I LEARNED A LOT FROM AN OLD PRESTON BLAIR BOOK, AND HE SEEMS TO STILL HAVE SOME OTHERS IN PRINT, BUT LOOK AROUND AND YOU CAN PROBABLY FIND QUITE A FEW.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE FROM PRESTON BLAIR'S RECENT BOOK *CARTOON ANIMATION*:

ART BY PRESTON BLAIR (SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

PAGE 78—GRAVITY AND SEPARATION

THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WITH KEEPING CHARACTERS INTERNALLY CONSISTENT AND DIFFERENT FROM ONE ANOTHER IS THAT AFTER A WHILE, CHARACTERS WIND UP SOUNDING MORE AND MORE LIKE THEIR AUTHOR— ONE OF MANY REASONS TO HAVE AN HONEST FRIEND READING YOUR STUFF AND LOOKING OUT FOR SUCH UNWANTED HABITS.

PAGE 80–101—FACIAL EXPRESSIONS: GENERAL COMMENTS

ONE OF THE BIG PROBLEMS WITH HOW-TO-DRAW BOOKS IS THE IMPLICIT ASSUMPTION THAT READERS SHOULD STUDY THE MASTER'S DRAWINGS AND IMITATE THEM (AN ESPECIALLY BAD IDEA IN MY CASE, SINCE I'M HARDLY A "MASTER").

THE DRAWINGS IN THIS SECTION ARE MY BEST ATTEMPTS TO ILLUSTRATE THE PRINCIPLES OF FACIAL EXPRESSION I'M DESCRIBING, BUT THEY'RE NOT

SUPPOSED TO SHOW THE "RIGHT WAY" TO DRAW SPECIFIC EXPRESSIONS. THERE ARE COUNTLESS WAYS TO DRAW ANY EXPRESSION, AND COUNTLESS ARTISTS WHOSE TECHNIQUES YOU CAN STUDY.

THE BEST SOURCES I FOUND FOR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS (BESIDES REAL-LIFE OBSERVATIONS) WERE DARWIN, PAUL EKMAN AND ARTIST GARY FAIGIN. SEE BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EACH. FAIGIN'S BOOK, *THE ARTIST'S COMPLETE GUIDE TO FACIAL EXPRESSIONS*, WAS ESSENTIAL AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

PAGE 84–85—THE CREEP FACTOR

OKAY, EVEN **I** FIND THESE TWO PAGES KIND OF CREEPY AND REDUCTIVE, SO I CAN HARDLY BLAME YOU IF YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY. NOBODY WANTS TO THINK OF THEIR FACE AS A MACHINE, REACTING TO INTERNAL SWITCHES OF EMOTION LIKE A THREE-WAY FLOOR LAMP. FACES ARE INFINITELY MORE SUBTLE THAN THAT, AND THE EMOTIONS THAT GOVERN THEM ARE SUBTLER STILL.

THIS IS ANOTHER PLACE WHERE A COLOR ANALOGY MIGHT BE USEFUL. A PURE RED, GREEN OR BLUE IS RARELY SEEN IN NATURE WHERE VARIATIONS OF HUE, SATURATION AND VALUE LEAD TO AN INCREDIBLY SUBTLE WORLD OF COLORS. DESCRIBING A HILLSIDE AS "GREEN" OR A RUSTY ABANDONED CAR AS "ORANGE" BARELY SCRATCHES THE SURFACE. BUT UNTIL WE UNDERSTAND THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HOW PRIMARY COLORS COMBINE WITH ONE ANOTHER, OUR CHANCES OF REPRODUCING THAT SUBTLETY IN ART IS REDUCED. THE CHARTS ON PAGES 84 AND 85 ARE JUST MY WAY OF SHOWING WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE "RED" AND "BLUE" OF EMOTIONS COMBINE.

FACES **ARE** MACHINES, BY THE WAY. THAT DOESN'T MAKE THEM ANY LESS BEAUTIFUL.

PAGE 91, PANELS ONE AND TWO—HIDING EMOTIONS

CHRIS WARE, IN A NEW YORKER "MASTER CLASS" WITH CHARLES BURNS (AVAILABLE ON ITUNES, THOUGH A BIT PRICEY) QUESTIONED THE USEFULNESS OF EVEN TRYING TO TEACH BASIC EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS TO CARTOONISTS, LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE WAY ADULTS HIDE EMOTIONS:

"I JUST RECENTLY HAD A DAUGHTER, AND I THINK THE ONLY HUMAN BEINGS ON THE PLANET WHO COMMUNICATE THIS WAY ARE BABIES. ONLY THEY REALLY USE THEIR FACES TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES, AND BY ABOUT AGE TWO, THEY START TO TRY TO [CONTROL THEIR FACES] OR LIE TO YOU. I THINK ONLY A CHILD IS COMPLETELY HONEST IN THEIR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, AND BEYOND THAT, ONE OF THE SECRETS OR TRICKS TO DRAWING A SUCCESSFUL COMIC STRIP ABOUT ADULTS, IF YOU'RE DRAWING THEM FROM THE OUTSIDE IN, IS TO REMEMBER THAT MOST ADULTS LIE WITH THEIR FACES."

PAGE 94–99—WHEN NOT TO BE SUBTLE

EVEN IF YOUR DRAWING STYLE INCLUDES A SOME VERY SUBTLE EXPRESSIONS, YOU'LL NEED TO KEEP THEM SIMPLE IN LONGSHOT. HERE'S PART OF A PANEL BY JAIME HERNANDEZ:

EACH EXPRESSION IS ALMOST STICK FIGURE SIMPLE, BUT IT HELPS US TO HEAR THE SARCASM, STERN RESOLVE AND INNOCENT AFFECTION IN THEIR

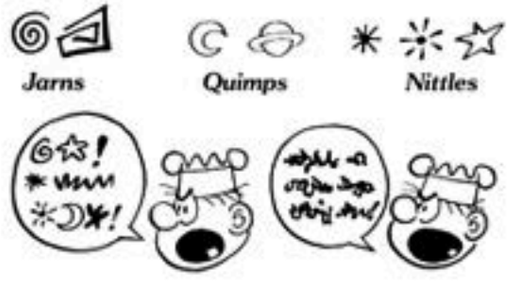
CORRESPONDING WORD BALLOONS.

ART BY JAIME HERNANDEZ.

MORE COMPLEX EXPRESSIONS ARE BEST USED FOR CHARACTERS IN CLOSE-UP THAT READERS WILL BE GETTING A GOOD LOOK AT. FACES IN THE BACKGROUND, OR THOSE THAT ARE PART OF A CROWD MIGHT NEED TO TELEGRAPH THEIR EMOTIONS A BIT MORE.

PAGE 96—THEY HAVE NAMES!

MORT WALKER'S *THE LEXICON OF COMICANA* GIVES SOME GREAT, FUNNY NAMES TO A LOT OF FAMILIAR CARTOON SYMBOLS (THOSE SWEAT BEADS? MORT CALLS 'EM "PLEWDS!"). SEE BIBLIOGRAPHY TO TRACK DOWN A COPY.



ART BY MORT WALKER.

PAGE 99, PANEL SEVEN—PANEL-TO-PANEL CHANGES

HERE ARE FOUR CONSECUTIVE FACES FROM A FOUR-PAGE SILENT COMIC BY KYLE BAKER. CAN YOU FIGURE OUT THE SITUATION FROM THE FACES ALONE?

ART BY KYLE BAKER (SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

EVEN IN SIMPLER CARTOON STYLES, ONE OR TWO WELL CHOSEN LINES CAN GO A LONG WAY TOWARD SPECIFYING AN EMOTION, AS IN THIS TWO PANEL TRANSITION FROM CHARLES SCHULZ'S PEANUTS:

ORDINARILY, WHEN LUCY YELLS, SHE HAS A HEAVY, ANGRY BROW, AS IF ON THE VERGE OF PUNCHING SOMEBODY. IN THIS SEQUENCE, THOUGH, THE BROW IS UP, INDICATING A MORE REASONABLE KIND OF OUTRAGE. MEANWHILE, LINUS' SMILE IS STILL ON ITS WAY DOWN (REAL SMILES FADE GRADUALLY) BUT WE CAN BEGIN TO SEE THE LOWER LIP HEADING OUT A BIT INTO THE STRETCH THAT DENOTES FEAR (ALONG WITH THE BODY LANGUAGE TO MATCH):

PAGE 102–111—BODY LANGUAGE

HERE ARE SOME BETTER ARTISTS THAN ME, DEMONSTRATING THE TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS I DESCRIBE IN THE BODY LANGUAGE SECTION, STARTING WITH JAIME HERNANDEZ ON **ELEVATION** AND **STATUS:**

ART BY CHARLES SCHULZ, JAIME HERNANDEZ, WILL EISNER AND CRAIG THAMPSON (SEE ART CREDITS, PAGE 258).

WILL EISNER ON **DISTANCE** AND **RELATIONSHIPS:**

AND CRAIG THOMPSON ON **IMBALANCE** AND **DISCONTENT:**

PAGE 104—BODY LANGUAGE FACTORS

THESE ARE MY OWN CATEGORIES AND THEY'RE BY NO MEANS COMPLETE (AS I MENTION ON PAGE III). MY REFERENCES FOR BODY LANGUAGE WERE A BIT MORE SPOTTIER THAN THOSE FOR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS. IN THIS SECTION, I RELIED MORE ON MY OWN OBSERVATIONS FOR PUTTING IT ALL INTO SOME USEFUL ORDER.

PAGE III—OTHER BODY SIGNALS

PARTS OF THIS PAGE DRAW ON IDEAS IN DESMOND MORRIS' 1977 BOOK *MANWATCHING* (SEE BIBLIOGRAPHY)

OPTIONAL EXERCISES

1—CHARACTER LIFE HISTORY (PAGES 64–66)

FROM PAGE 64, PANEL SIX: "JUST CONSIDER YOUR OWN HISTORY AND HOW IT SHAPED YOU."

TRY LISTING THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF YOUR OWN HISTORY. YOUR FAMILY LIFE, PLACE OF BIRTH, BIG EVENTS, ETC... THEN CREATE A NEW CHARACTER THAT LOOKS NOTHING LIKE YOU, BUT HAS THOSE SAME KEY EXPERIENCES IN HIS/HER PAST. CONSIDER WHAT KIND OF PERSON COULD HAVE EMERGED FROM THAT HISTORY.

NOW CREATE A SECOND CHARACTER THAT HAD AN OPPOSITE LIFE HISTORY IN THOSE SAME FIVE WAYS. HOW WOULD THE TWO OF THEM RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER IF CIRCUMSTANCES THREW THEM TOGETHER?

#2—CASTING A WIDE NET (PAGE 71)

CREATE A CAST OF THREE TO FIVE CHARACTERS THAT ARE ALL DIFFERENT IN AT LEAST FOUR OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS, BUT ALL THE **SAME** IN ONE OTHER RESPECT. HOW DO THEIR DIFFERENCES HELP TO HIGHLIGHT THE ONE THING THEY ALL HAVE IN COMMON?

- HEIGHT
- WEIGHT
- FACIAL PROFILE
- BEAUTY
- STRENGTH
- RACE AND ETHNICITY
- BACKGROUND
- DESIRES
- AGE
- INTELLIGENCE
- STYLE OF OUTFIT
- TEMPERAMENT
- OBLIGATIONS
- ALLEGIANCE
- GENDER

#3—DIFFERENT DESIRES (PAGE 67)

TRY CREATING A 1–2 PAGE ROUGH COMIC FEATURING ONE OF THESE PAIRINGS IN CONVERSATION. USING DIALOGUE, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND BODY LANGUAGE, CAN YOU MAKE IT CLEAR TO THE READER WHAT EACH CHARACTER WANTS, WITHOUT THEM HAVING TO COME OUT AND SAY IT DIRECTLY?:

- AN UNDERCOVER FEMALE COP LOOKING FOR A KILLER IN A SINGLES BAR, AND A GUY TRYING TO HIT ON HER.
- A NEWSPAPER REPORTER DOING TAPED INTERVIEWS OF "LIFE ON THE STREET" AND A HUNGRY HOMELESS MAN HOPING HE'LL BE OFFERED PART OF THE SANDWICH THE REPORTER IS HOLDING.
- A SUPERHERO TRACKING A VILLAIN AND THAT SAME VILLAIN IN DISGUISE, POSING AS A CIVILIAN OFFERING TO "HELP" THE HERO.

#4—EXPRESSIONS AND BODY LANGUAGE (PAGES 80–120)

TRY A ONE PAGE SEQUENCE OF A PERSON HOLDING A PHONE TO THEIR EAR, SPEAKING ONLY OCCASIONALLY, MAKING SHORT UNSPECIFIC ANSWERS OR COMMENTS ON WHAT THE UNSEEN CALLER IS TELLING THEM ("I SEE," "UH-HUH," "NO, OF COURSE," ETC...). SEE IF YOU CAN COMMUNICATE HOW THE OTHER CALLER IS AFFECTING THEM EMOTIONALLY, THROUGH THEIR CHANGES OF EXPRESSION AND BODY LANGUAGE ALONE.

EXTRA CHALLENGE: CAN YOU THEN TAKE THE EXACT SAME DIALOGUE AND REDRAW THE CONVERSATION TO HAVE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT EMOTIONAL MEANING?

#5—TARGETING EXPRESSIONS

PICK TWO EXPRESSIONS FROM THIS LIST, AND DRAW A FACE TO MATCH EACH:

- CONFIDENT
- UNCERTAIN
- FRUSTRATED
- HURT (EMOTIONALLY)
- FLIRTATIOUS
- MISCHIEVOUS
- TIRED

THEN GIVE THE SAME LIST TO A FRIEND, ALONG WITH YOUR DRAWINGS, AND ASK HIM/HER TO GUESS WHICH EXPRESSION YOU WERE GOING FOR.

#6—TARGETING POSES

PICK ONE OR TWO ATTITUDES FROM THIS LIST, AND DRAW A BODY TO MATCH:

- POMPOUS
- UNEASY
- IMPATIENT
- AGGRESSIVE
- TIRED
- HUMBLE
- STUBBORN

NO FACIAL EXPRESSION FOR THIS ONE, JUST A NOSE AND EARS TO SHOW HEAD POSITION.

AGAIN, GIVE THE SAME LIST TO A FRIEND AND ASK HIM/HER TO GUESS WHICH POSE YOU WERE GOING FOR.

#7—BODY LANGUAGE IN SEQUENCE

TRY DRAWING A SHORT COMIC SHOWING TWO FACELESS STICK FIGURES IN CONVERSATION. WITHOUT USING ANY WORDS AT ALL, CAN A FRIEND DESCRIBE EACH CHARACTER'S CHANGING EMOTIONS?

ADDITIONAL NOTES AT:
WWW.SCOTTMCCLOUD.COM/MAKINGCOMICS