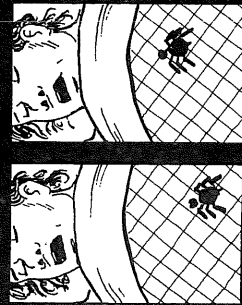
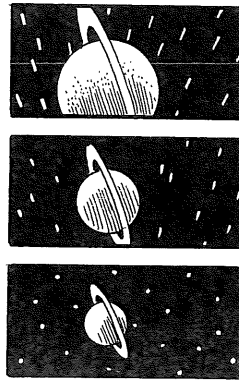
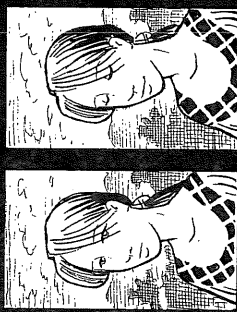
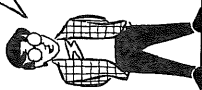


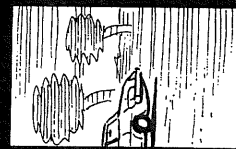
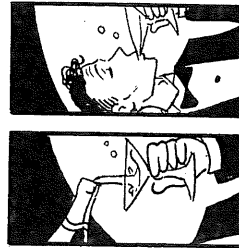
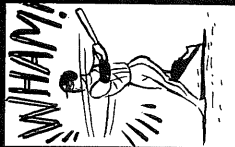
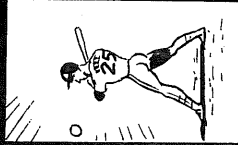
MOST **PANEL-TO-PANEL** TRANSITIONS IN COMICS CAN BE PLACED IN ONE OF SEVERAL DISTINCT CATEGORIES. THE **FIRST** CATEGORY -- WHICH WE'LL CALL **MOMENT-TO-MOMENT** -- REQUIRES VERY LITTLE CLOSURE.

1.



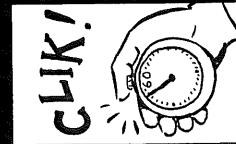
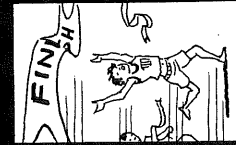
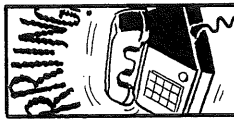
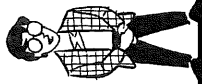
NEXT ARE THOSE TRANSITIONS FEATURING A SINGLE **SUBJECT-TO-ACTION** PROGRESSIONS.

2.



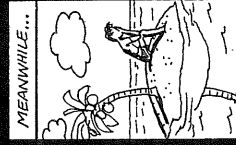
THE **NEXT** TYPE TAKES US FROM **SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT** WHILE STAYING WITHIN A SCENE OR IDEA. NOTE THE DEGREE OF **READER INVOLVEMENT** NECESSARY TO RENDER THESE TRANSITIONS **MEANINGFUL**.

3.



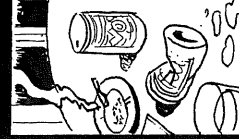
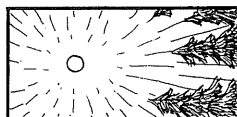
DEDUCTIVE REASONING IS OFTEN REQUIRED IN READING COMICS SUCH AS IN THESE **SCENE-TO-SCENE** TRANSITIONS, WHICH TRANSPORT US ACROSS **SIGNIFICANT DISTANCES OF TIME AND SPACE**.

4.



A **FIFTH** TYPE OF TRANSITION, WHICH WE'LL CALL **ASPECT-TO-ASPECT**. BYPASSING TIME FOR THE MOST PART AND SETS A **WANDERING EYE** ON DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF A PLACE, IDEA OR MOOD.

5.

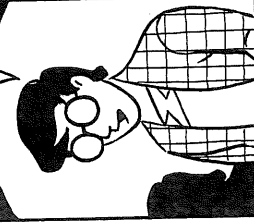


AND FINALLY, THERE'S THE **NON-SEQUITUR**, WHICH OFFERS NO LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANELS **WHATSOEVER!**

6.

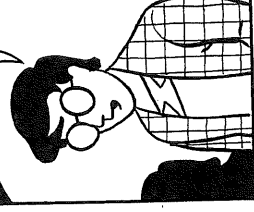


THIS LAST CATEGORY SUGGESTS AN INTERESTING **QUESTION**: IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ANY SEQUENCE OF PANELS TO BE **TOTALLY UNRELATED** TO EACH OTHER?



PERSONALLY, I DON'T **THINK** SO.

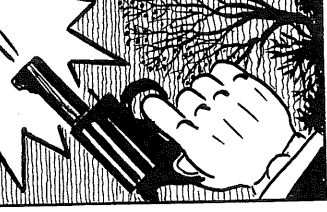
NO MATTER HOW **DISSIMILAR** ONE IMAGE MAY BE TO ANOTHER, THERE IS A KIND OF--



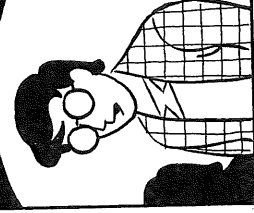
SUCH TRANSITIONS MAY NOT MAKE "SENSE" IN ANY TRADITIONAL WAY, BUT STILL A RELATIONSHIP OF SOME SORT WILL INEVITABLY **DEVELOP**.



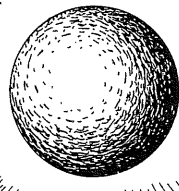
BANG!



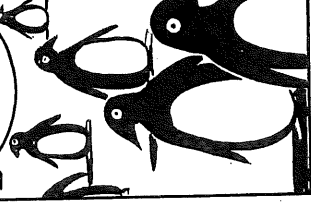
BY CREATING A SEQUENCE WITH TWO OR MORE IMAGES, WE ARE **ENDOWING THEM WITH A SINGLE--**



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



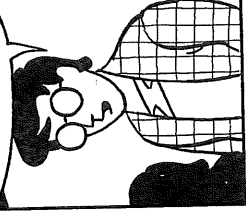
CLOSURE FOR BLOOD, GUTTERS FOR VEINS--



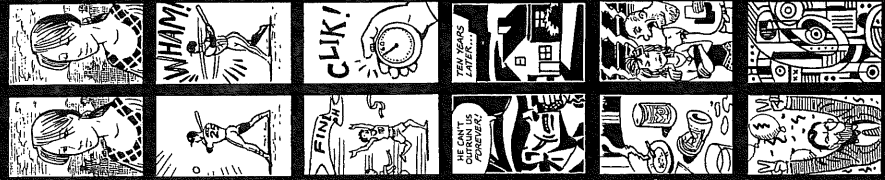
--**OVERRIDING IDENTITY** AND **FORCING THE VIEWER TO CONSIDER THEM AS A WHOLE.**



--**ALCHEMY** AT WORK IN THE SPACE BETWEEN PANELS WHICH CAN HELP US FIND **MEANING OR RESONANCE** IN EVEN THE MOST **JARRING** OF COMBINATIONS.



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.



[TRACED AND SIMPLIFIED FOR CLARITY'S SAKE.]

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



AND SINCE **ALL** OF THE REMAINING TRANSITIONS ARE FROM **SCENE-TO-SCENE**, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING **BREAKDOWN**:

1	---
2	65%
3	20%
4	15%
5	---
6	---

AS A **BAR GRAPH** IT WOULD LOOK SOMETHING LIKE **THIS**.

THIS EMPHASIS ON **ACTION-TO-ACTION** STORYTELLING SUITS MOST PEOPLE'S IDEAS ABOUT **KIRBY**, BUT IS HE *UNIQUE* IN THIS RESPECT?

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

NOW, HERGE'S AND KIRBY'S STYLES ARE **NOT** SIMILAR, IN FACT, THEY'RE **RADICALLY DIFFERENT!!**

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

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

X-MEN #1 CLAREMONT & LEE	"HEARTBREAK SOUP" G. HERNANDEZ	BETTY & VERONICA DOYLE & DECARLO	NAUGHTY BITS GREGORY
FRANK IN THE RUBER WOODRING	A CONTRACT WITH GOD EISNER	MAUS SIEGELMAN	DONALD DUCK BARKS

AND, OF COURSE, NON-SEQUITURS ARE UNCONCERNED WITH **EVENTS** OR ANY **NARRATIVE** PURPOSES OF ANY SORT.

-- WHILE IN THE FIFTH TYPE, BY DEFINITION, NOTHING "HAPPENS" AT ALL!

TEZUKA IS A FAR CRY FROM THE EARLY SPIEGELMAN. HIS STORYTELLING IS CLEAR AND STRAIGHTFORWARD **BUT LOOK AT HOW HE CHARTS!**

BUT BEFORE WE CONCLUDE THAT TYPES 2-4 HAVE A MONOPOLY ON **STRAIGHTFORWARD** STORYTELLING, LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT **OSAMU TEZUKA** FROM JAPAN.

SOME **EXPERIMENTAL** COMICS, LIKE THOSE OF **ART SPIEGELMAN'S** EARLY PERIOD, EXPLORE A **FULL RANGE** OF TRANSITIONS --

--THOUGH GENERALLY IN THE SERVICE OF EQUALLY RADICAL STORIES AND SUBJECTS.

STORIES FROM SPIEGELMAN'S ANTHOLOGY BREAKDOWNS:

JUST WHAT IS **GOING ON** HERE?

"DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE"

"SKINLESS PERKINS"

"PRISONER ON THE HELL PLANET"

"CRACKING JOKES"

"MAUS" (ORIGINAL)

FRONT AND BACK COVERS

"ACE-HOLE MIDGET DETECTIVE"

"REAL DREAM" 1975

A SURVEY OF WELL-KNOWN EUROPEAN ARTISTS YIELDS **SIMILAR**, UNIFORM, RESULTS.

WHAT CAN WE DEDUCE FROM THIS?

SQUEAK THE MOUSE

ASTERIX

WELCOME TO AFIQLOL

THE LONG TUTORROW

"MANHATTAN"

CLIK!

THE BLACK ISLAND

"THE CLOCK STRIKES"

GOSCUINNY & UBERGZ

CRISTIN & FEBERGES

MAVARCA

JOOST SWARTE

TARDI

HERAGE

IF WE CHOOSE TO SEE STORIES AS CONNECTED SERIES OF **EVENTS**, THEN THE PREDOMINANCE OF TYPES 2-4 ARE EASILY EXPLAINED.

ARE THESE THREE TYPES OF TRANSITIONS ALL ANYONE SHOULD EVER NEED TO TELL A STORY IN COMICS?

1. WHAM!

2. CLIK!

3. FIN!

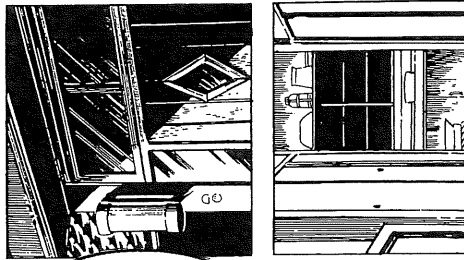
4. THE YEAR WE GAVE UP FOREVER!

TYPES 2-4 SHOW THINGS **HAPPENING** IN **CONCRETE**, EFFICIENT WAYS.

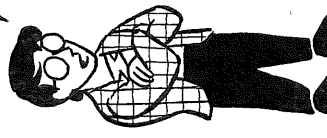
TYPE 1 SHOWS **ACTIONS** LIKE TYPE 2, BUT IT TENDS TO REQUIRE **SEVERAL PANELS** TO DO WHAT TYPE 2 DOES IN **TWO**...

1.

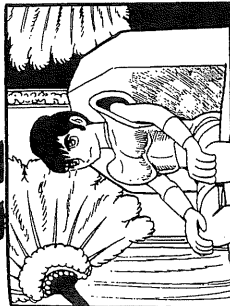
2.



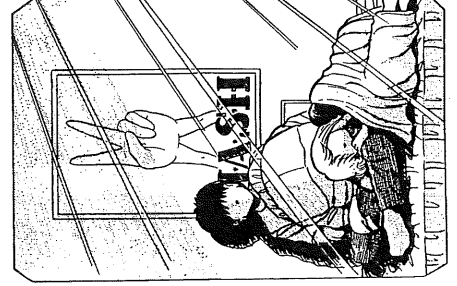
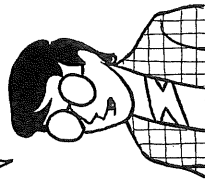
ASPECT-TO-SUBJECT TRANSITIONS HAVE BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF JAPANESE *MANGA* SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING.



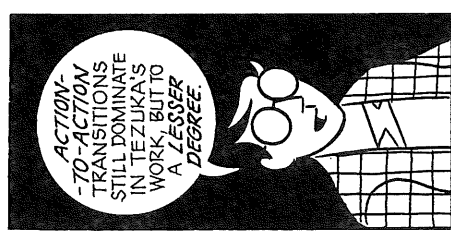
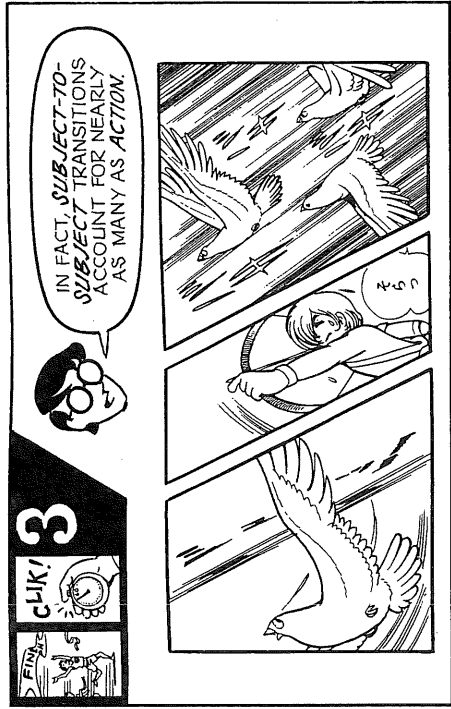
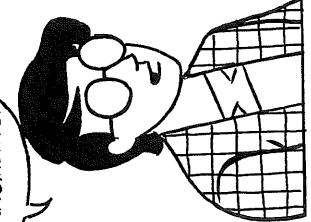
MOST OFTEN USED TO ESTABLISH A *MOOD* OR A *SENSE OF PLACE*, TIME SEEMS TO *STAND STILL* IN THESE QUIET, CONTEMPLATIVE COMBINATIONS.



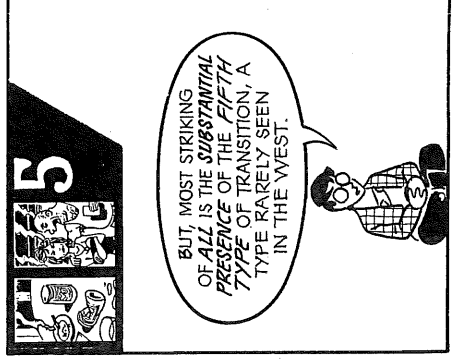
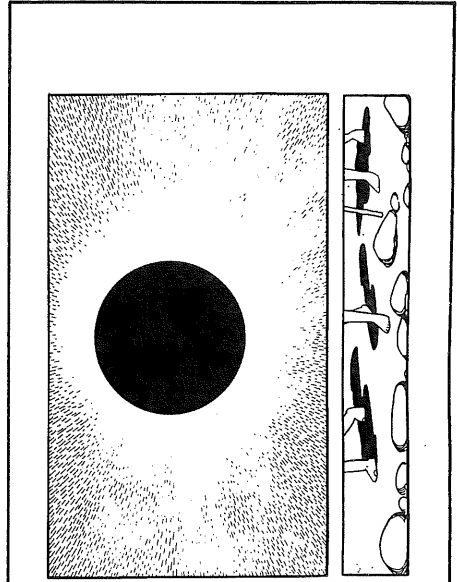
EVEN *SEQUENCE* WHILE STILL AN *ISSUE* SEEMS FAR LESS IMPORTANT HERE THAN IN OTHER TRANSITIONS.



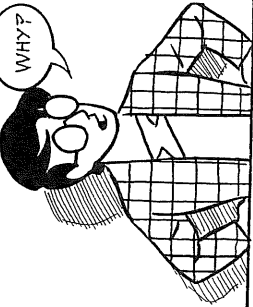
RATHER THAN ACTING AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN *SEPARATE* MOMENTS, THE READER *HERE* MUST ASSEMBLE A *UNIQUE* MOMENT USING *SCATTERED* FRAGMENTS.



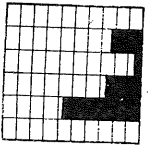
THOUGH THE LATTER TYPE ONLY ACCOUNTS FOR *FOUR PERCENT* OF THE TOTAL, SUCH SEQUENCES CONTRAST STRIKINGLY WITH THE WESTERN TRADITIONS EXEMPLIFIED BY KIRBY AND HERGE.



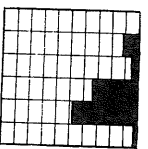
IN EXAMINING SEVERAL JAPANESE ARTISTS, WE FIND SIMILAR PROPORTIONS TO TEZUKA'S, INCLUDING A HIGH INCIDENCE OF THE FIFTH TYPE.



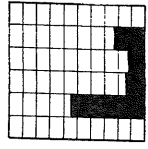
WHY?



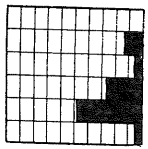
750 RIDER (五井半蔵?)



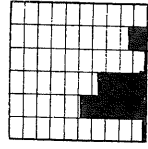
AKIKA KATSUHIKO OTONO



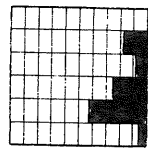
FATHER & SON HAYASHI, A. OSIMA



CHIBATA SORU SHINJIRO ISHIMIZU



WOLF & CUB KOIKE & KOJIYA

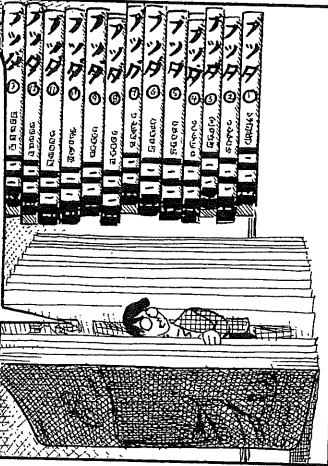


PHOENIX OSAMU TEZUKA

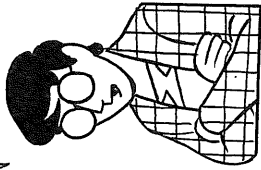
LENGTH MAY BE ONE OF THE FACTORS AT WORK HERE. MOST JAPANESE COMICS FIRST APPEAR IN ENORMOUS ANTHOLOGY TITLES WHERE THE PRESSURE ISN'T AS GREAT ON ANY ONE INSTALLMENT TO SHOW A LOT "HAPPENING."



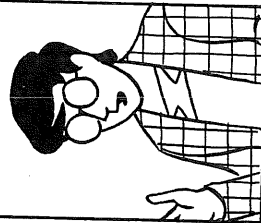
WHEN INDIVIDUAL FEATURES ARE COLLECTED, THEY MAY RUN FOR THOUSANDS OF PAGES.



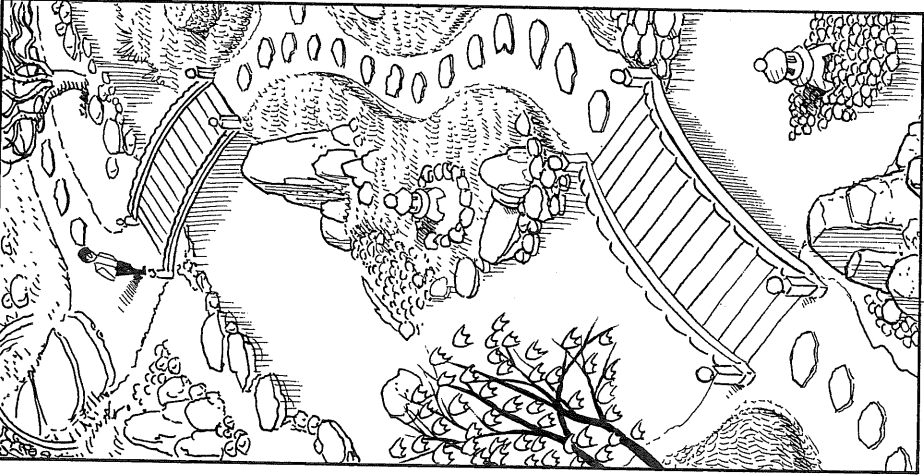
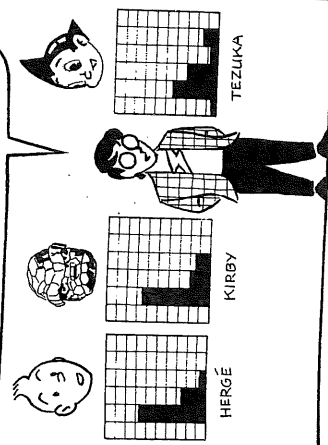
AS SUCH, DOZENS OF PANELS CAN BE DEVOTED TO PORTRAYING SLOW CINEMATIC MOVEMENT OR TO SETTING A MOOD.



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



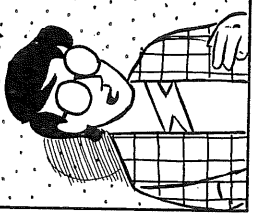
I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMETHING A BIT MORE FUNDAMENTAL TO THIS PARTICULAR EAST/WEST SPLIT.



MMM... WHERE WAS I?

OH, YES...

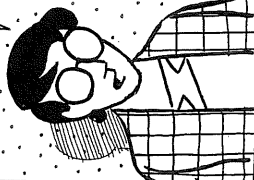
TRADITIONAL WESTERN ART AND LITERATURE DON'T WANDER MUCH. ON THE WHOLE, WE'RE A PRETTY GOAL-ORIENTED CULTURE.



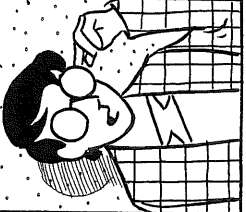
BUT, IN THE EAST, THERE'S A RICH TRADITION OF CYCLICAL AND LABYRINTHINE WORKS OF ART.



JAPANESE COMICS MAY BE HEIRS TO THIS TRADITION, IN THE WAY THEY SO OFTEN EMPHASIZE BEING THERE OVER GETTING THERE.



THROUGH THESE AND OTHER STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES, THE JAPANESE OFFER A VISION OF COMICS VERY DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN.



FOR IN JAPAN MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, COMICS IS AN ART--

