THE GRAMMAR OF COMICS

PANEL

panels sequence compose a **PAGE**

Several connected pages resolve a **SCENE**

CHAPTERS
(or acts, or parts)

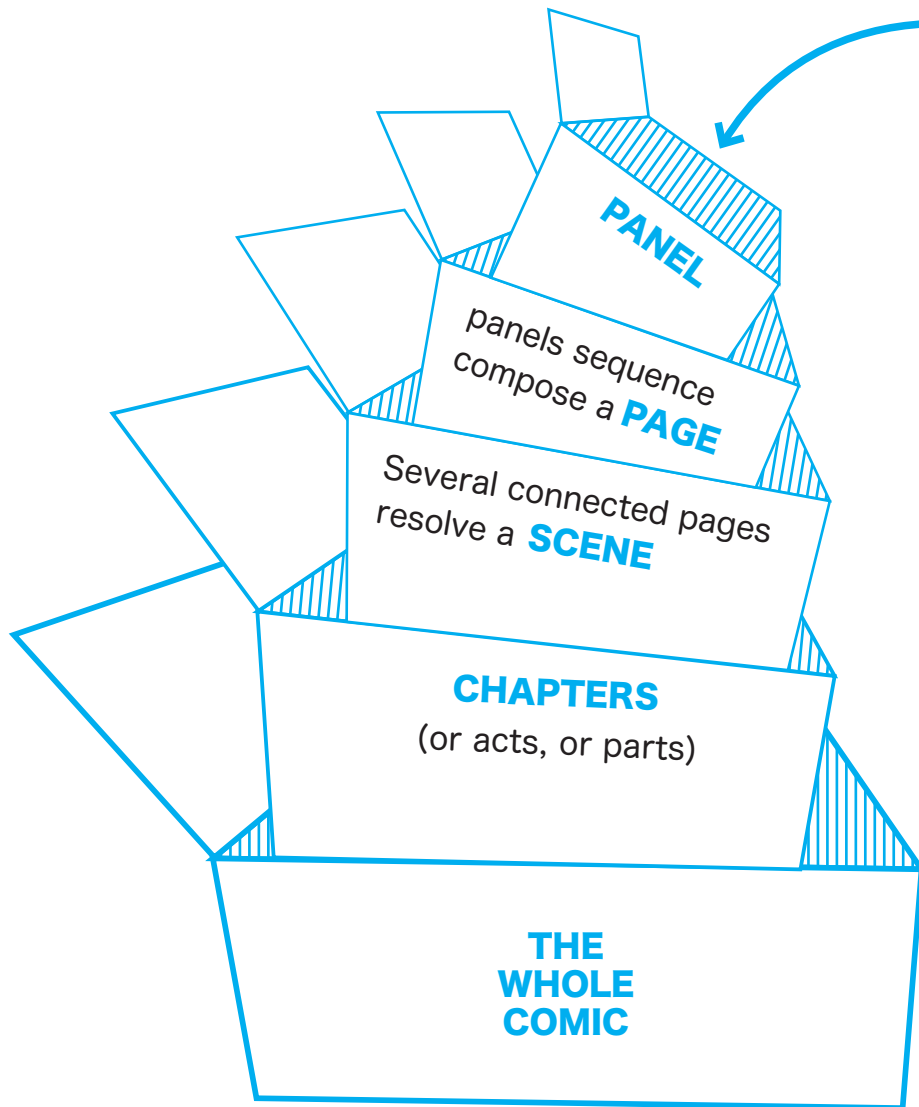**THE WHOLE COMIC**

minimal part of comic language

minimal part of comic language

SINGLE STATIC SHOT

+
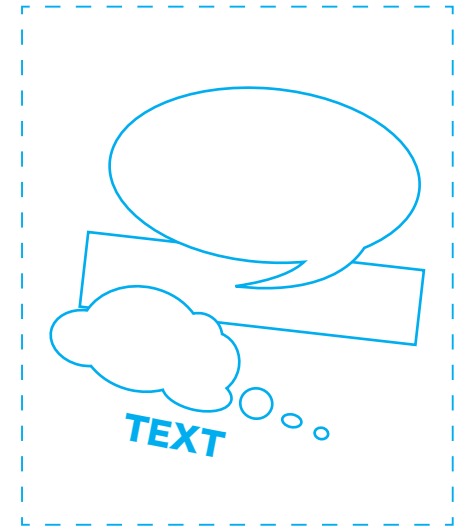
TEXT
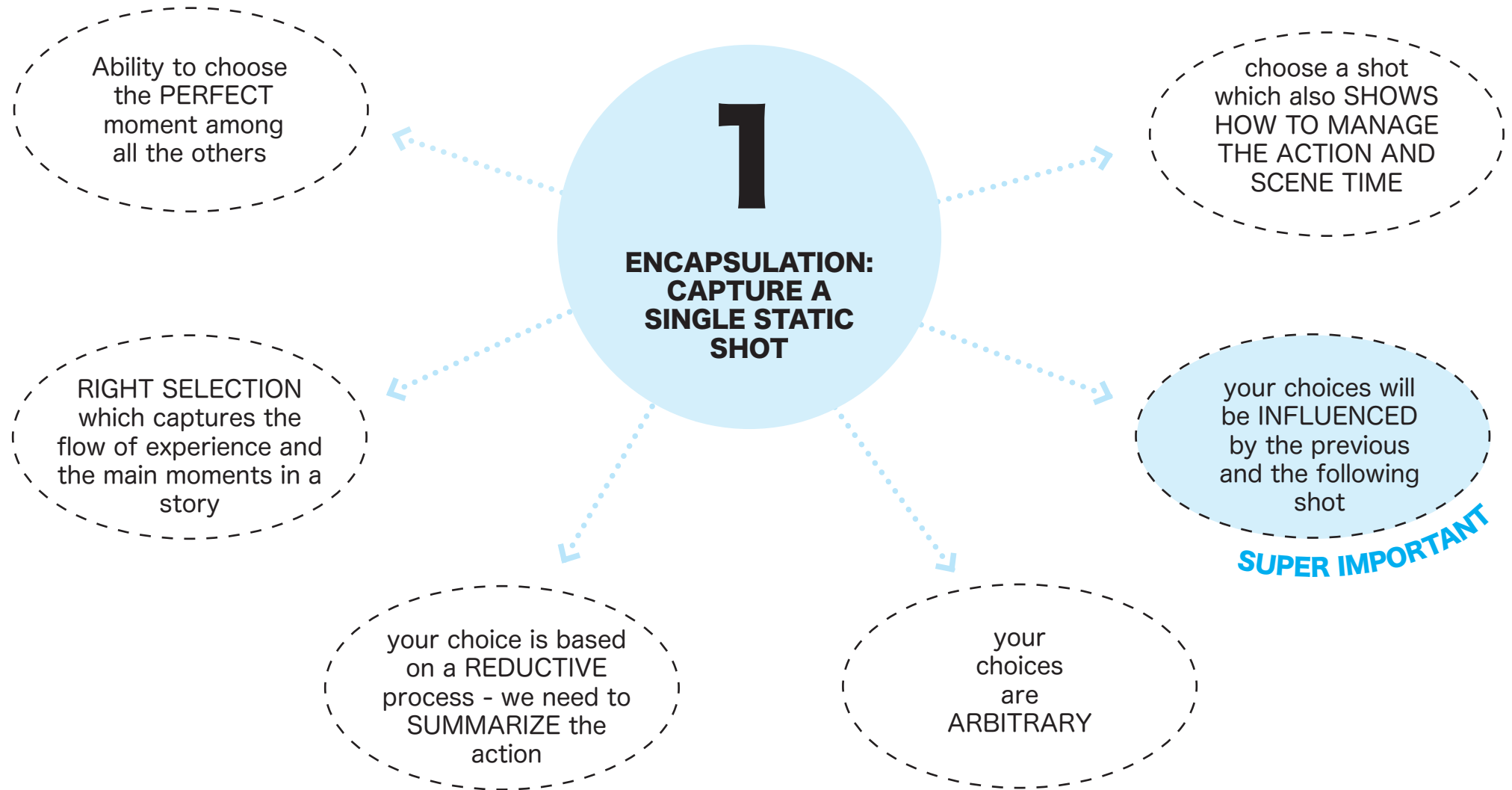
Static shots and texts will be jointly broken down into a panel

The comic is like a game of Chinese boxes, where all the basic elements are tiny significant pieces on theirs own, but there are amplified or changed when altogether

1

ENCAPSULATION: CAPTURE A SINGLE STATIC SHOT

Ability to choose the PERFECT moment among all the others

choose a shot which also SHOWS HOW TO MANAGE THE ACTION AND SCENE TIME

RIGHT SELECTION which captures the flow of experience and the main moments in a story

your choices will be INFLUENCED by the previous and the following shot

SUPER IMPORTANT

your choice is based on a REDUCTIVE process - we need to SUMMARIZE the action

your choices are ARBITRARY

FRAME AND PANELING : HOW TO COMPOSE A SINGLE SHOT

NOT RELEVANT
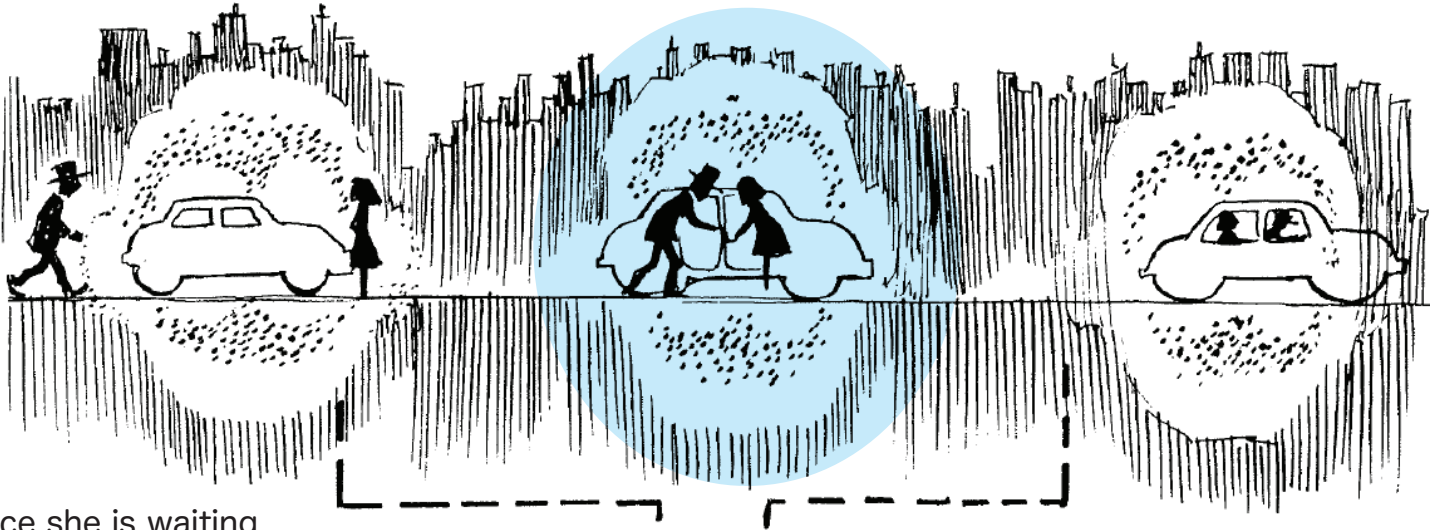Was the woman waiting for the man near the car?

NOT RELEVANT
Where are the two going?

Where does the man come from?
NOT RELEVANT

Why is the man driving, if it is the woman's car?
NOT RELEVANT

Since she is waiting near the car, is it the woman's car?
NOT RELEVANT

The man and the woman are getting in the car
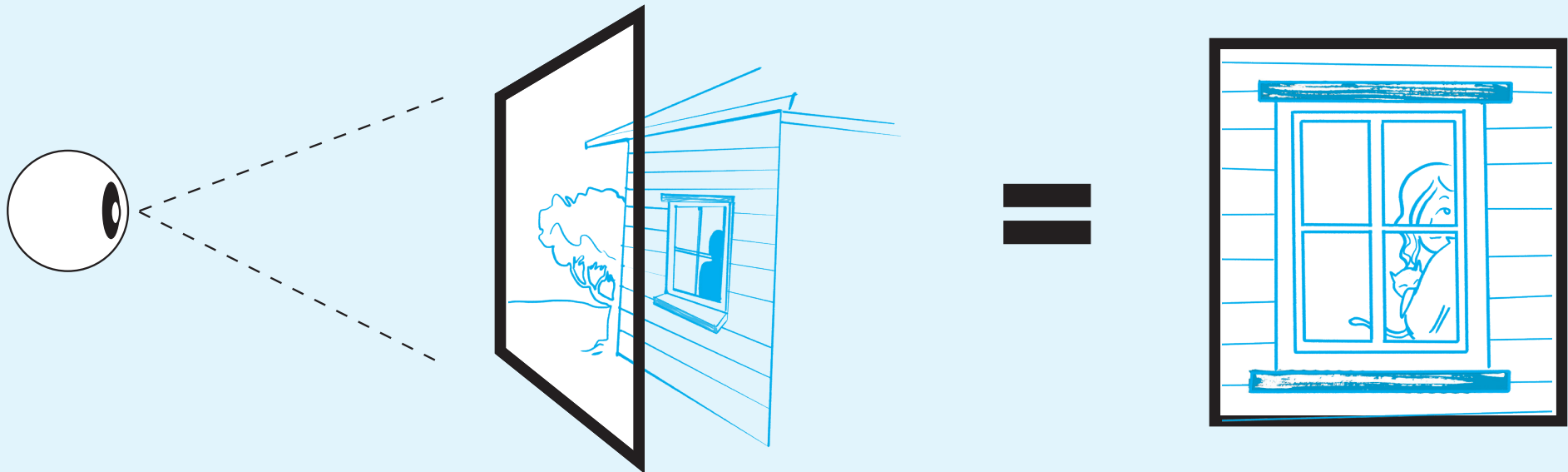**RELEVANT**

Will Eisner

FRAME AND PANELING : HOW TO COMPOSE A SINGLE SHOT

2

**ENCAPSULATION:
THE POWER OF A
RIGHT ANGLE**

When we choose the shot we must decide in which position OUR READER WILL BE, IN RESPECT TO THE SUBJECT

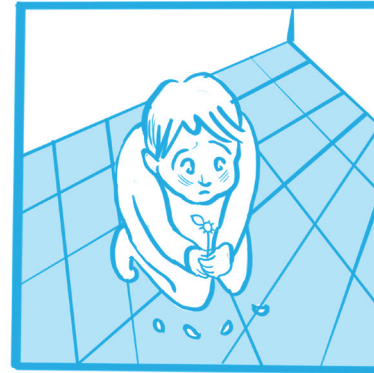We are choosing his POINT OF VIEW Imagine the frame like a windows in front of your reader
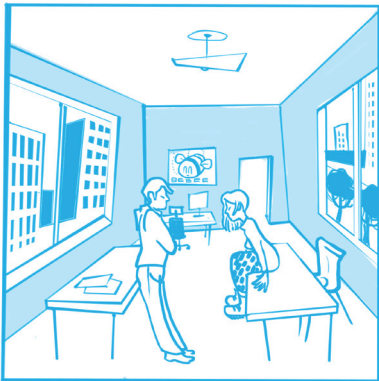
LINGO

ESTABLISHING SHOT:
- establishes setting -
setting location and
tone
- often a pause-panel
without action

HIGH ANGLE:
- diminishing the subject
below
- sense of weakness or
discomfort

WIDE ANGLE:
- large, pulled out shot
which shows space
- giving a wide selec-
tion of information
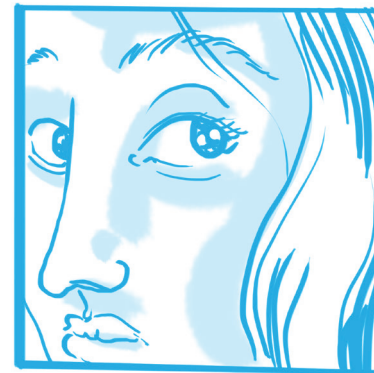(place, environment,
social interaction)
- showing background

**SIDE-ON VIEW or STATIC
SHOT:**
- front-facing shot
- accessibility
- dialogue scenes

LOW ANGLE:
- subject dominate
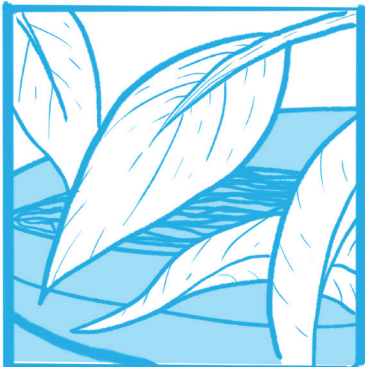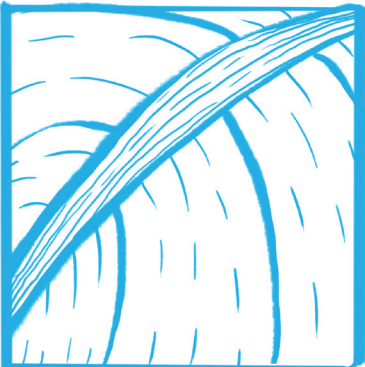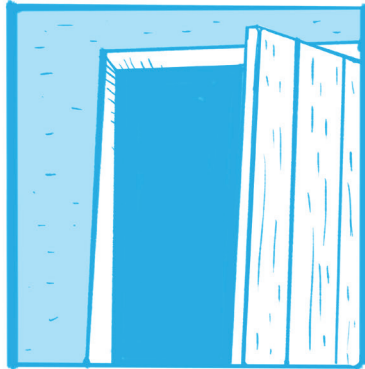space from above
- empowerment shot

CLOSE UP:
- empathic shot
- personal space of charac-
ters reaching intimacy

CLOSE IN:
- close-up involving object or action to highlight valuable information
- focus on important object or detail
- slows the reading time

ZOOM IN and ZOOM OUT (simulation of cinematic camera movement):
- illusion of physically moving inside a scene
- looking closer into subject of matter or to give distance from it.
- setting a specific mood: intimacy (we reach the subject) or detachment (we leave a scene) exactly like in real life

BIRD'S EYE VIEW (areal):
- high view (a drone or helicopter view)
- gives a lot of information simultaneously
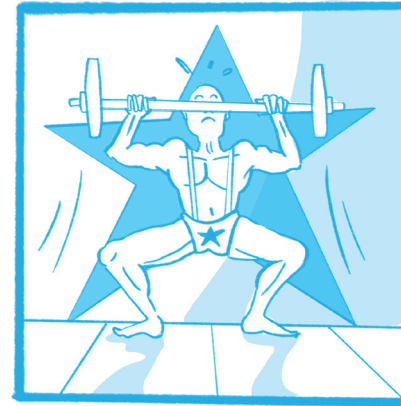
FULL BODY SHOT:
brings emphasis to the character to point out changes or features

WORM'S EYE VIEW (overhead):
- shows both action and location simultaneously
- creates a sense of danger or suspense

MONTAGE:
- series of frames interlinked
- showing different scenes simultaneously or a sequence of actions within the same panel
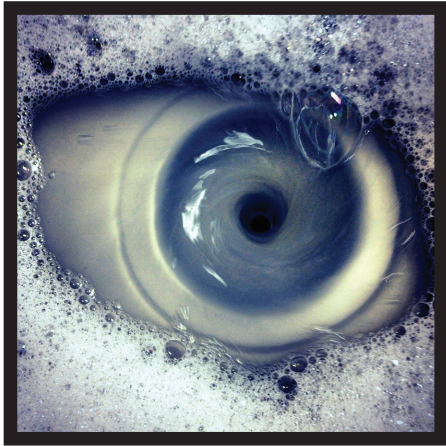

TILT CAMERA (Dutch angle):
- disrupts the horizontal point of view
- creates a dynamic diagonal to enforce action or mood

POV (first person Point Of View):
- reader becomes the main character, experiencing his point of view.
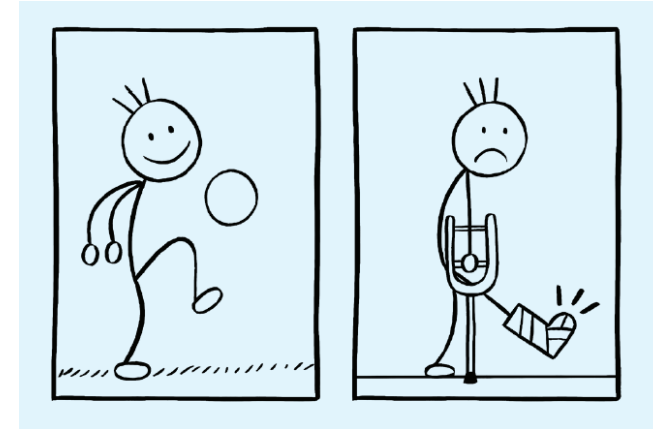- increases empathy and identification
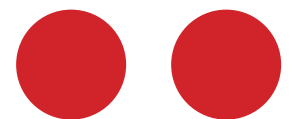
3

ENCAPSULATION:
THE CLOSURE
IS WHAT ALLOWS
US TO BUILD A
SEQUENCE

HEL O!

ADDITIVE process: the subject (our reader)
will fill the gaps building
SENSE.

All the information will be put toghether and reas-
sembled into a reasonable scenery, because we are
constantly looking for meanings.
Our way to process this blank space comes from
our experience of the world, it's both common and
extremely personal

CLOSURE
HUMAN SKILL TO FILL THE VOIDS ADDING SENSE, MAKING SOMETHING REASONABLE FOR US.
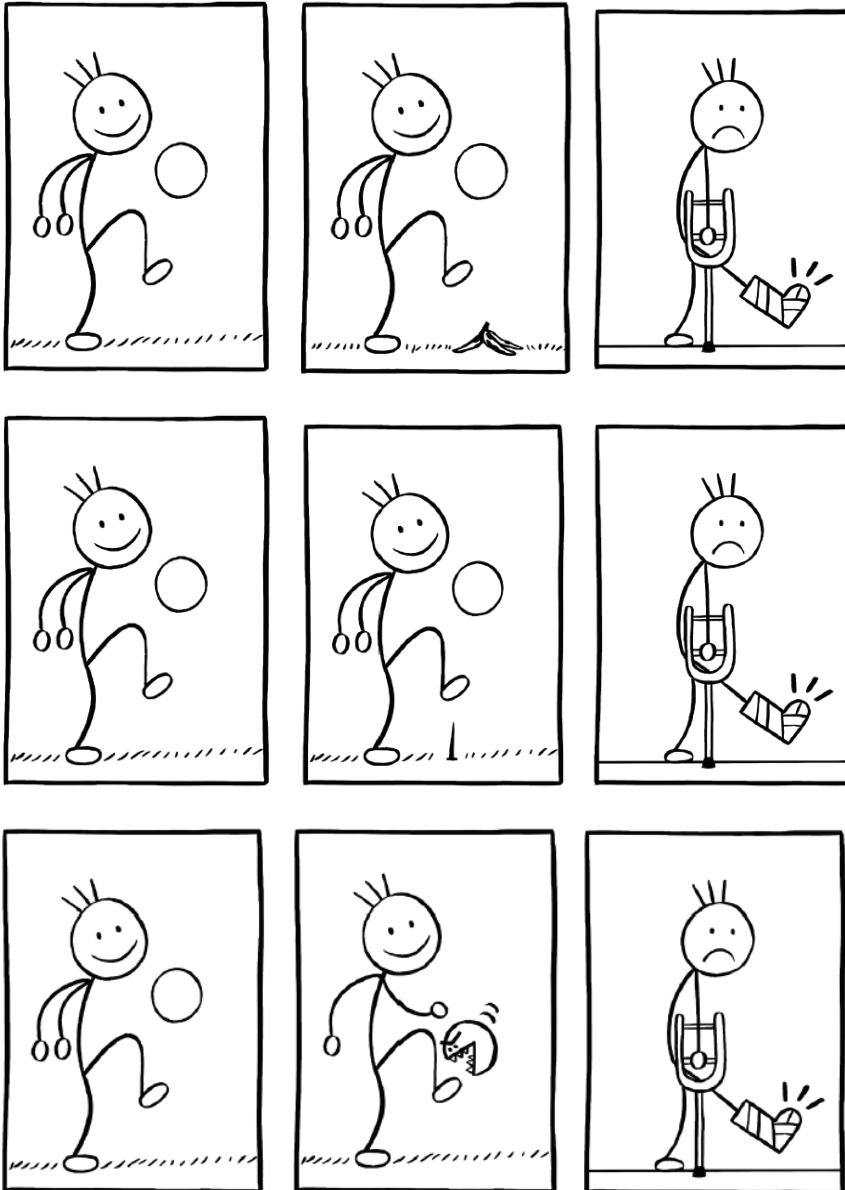
each panel is a
fragment of space and time

THE CLOSURE

allows the reader to fill the blanks
and construct a logical flow of the
story (adding time and movement)

CLOSURE IS AN ACT OF
PARTICIPATION, IS THE
ENGAGEMENT TRIGGER
FOR A READER

Readers fill in the gaps according
to their cultural backgrounds and
personal experiences

Imagine how different
closures can be when
the same comic is read
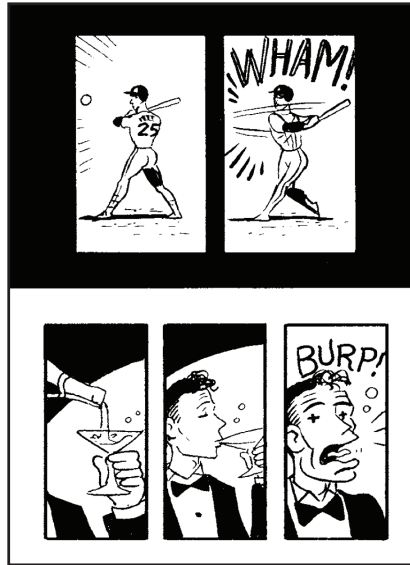by people from different
cultural backgrounds

THE DIFFERENT KIND OF CLOSURE (SCOTT MCCLOUD, 2001)
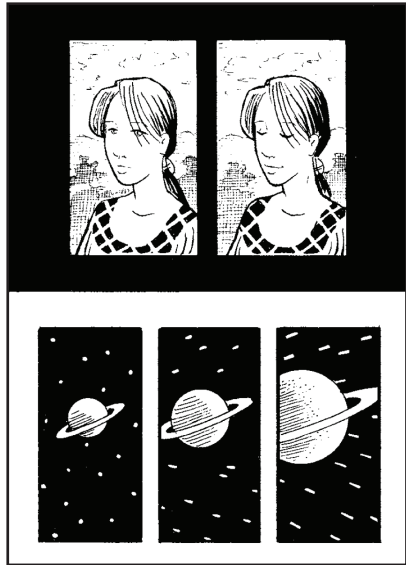
1 MOMENT TO MOMENT

selection of various frames through a single action

MINIMUM CLOUSURE

2 ACTION TO ACTION

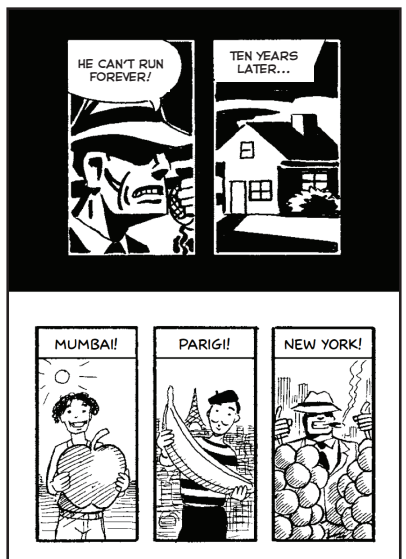selection of different progressive actions performed- by a single subject

LOW CLOUSURE

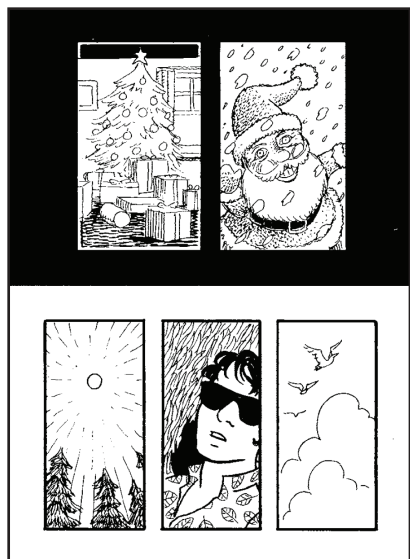## 3 SUBJECT TO SUBJECT

change of subject into a single scene

MEDIUM/ HIGH CLOUSURE

4 SCENE TO SCENE

Deductive reasoning between scene, sub- ject, time...

MEDIUM CLOUSURE

5 ASPECT TO ASPECT

selection of different aspects of a place, a subject, an atmosphere

HIGH CLOUSURE

6 NON SEQUITUR

the link between the panels is not logi- cal

HIGH CLOUSURE