

How to do a close reading

1. Read with a pencil in hand, and annotate the text.

“Annotating” means underlining or highlighting key words and phrases—anything that strikes you as surprising or significant, or that raises questions—as well as making notes in the margins.

2. Look for patterns in the things you’ve noticed about the text—repetitions, contradictions, similarities.

3. Ask questions about the patterns you’ve noticed—especially how and why.

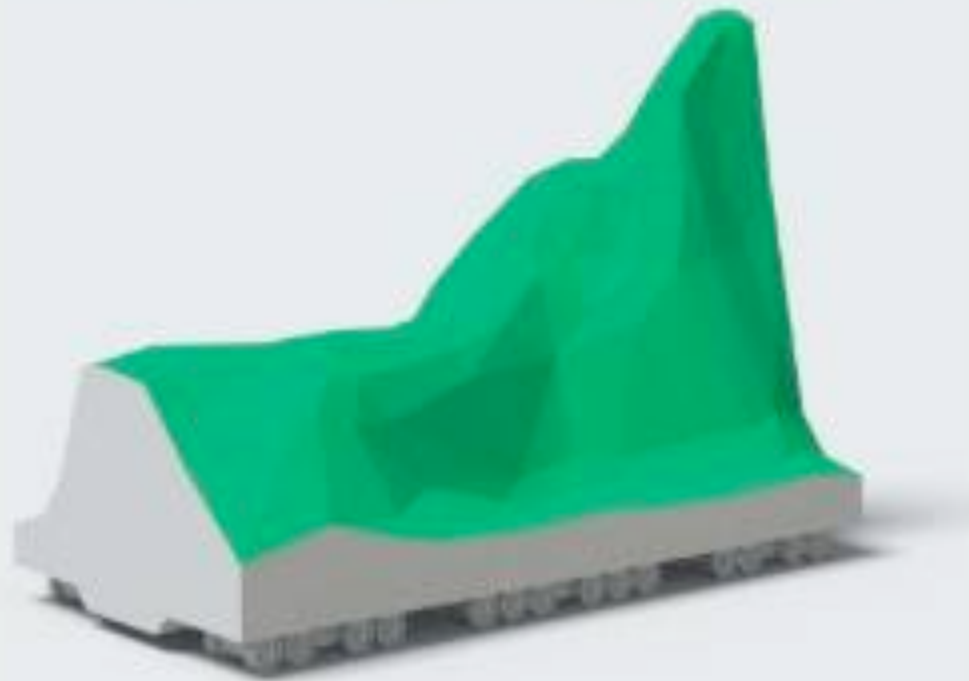
Contemporary dystopias, as these examples show, aspire to unsettle the status quo, but by failing to outline a persuasive alternative, they end up reconfirming it. This weak cocktail of critique and complacency may explain the current popularity of “apocaholism,” as biologist Peter Kareiva has called it. Dystopian science fiction seems like a ready-made tool with which to engage current social and environmental crises—but only because it so often recycles worn scenarios from the apocalypses of the past. At this point, postapocalyptic wastelands have themselves become too reassuringly familiar. Perhaps Michael Crow, the president of Arizona State University, was right in accusing writers of dystopian fiction a few years ago of being complicit in pervasive social pessimism, and calling on them for new utopian visions. When dystopia becomes routine, science fiction writers have new tasks cut out for them.

Ursula Heise, “What’s the Matter with
Dystopia?” (2015)

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SPECULATIVE EVERYTHING

DESIGN, FICTION, AND SOCIAL DREAMING



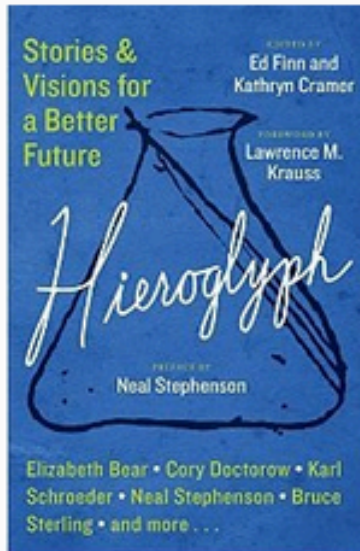
ANTHONY DUNNE & FIONA RABY

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XPRIZE TAPS LEADING WRITERS, FILMMAKERS, CREATIVES FOR SCIENCE FICTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Darren Aronofsky, Margaret Atwood, Akiva Goldsman, Neil Gaiman, Andy Weir, Veronica Roth, and Gale Anne Hurd Among Roster of Advisors Who Will Help XPRIZE Develop Roadmaps for the Future

LOS ANGELES (June 1, 2017) —**XPRIZE**, the global leader in incentivized prize competitions, in partnership with **ANA**, Japan's 5-star airline, today announced the creation of a **Science Fiction Advisory Council**, with a mission to accelerate positive change in the world by bringing together those who can imagine a bold vision of the future with those who can innovate to get us there.



Hieroglyph: Stories & Visions for a Better Future

This anthology unites twenty of today's leading thinkers, writers, and visionaries—among them Cory Doctorow, Gregory Benford, Elizabeth Bear, Bruce Sterling, and Neal Stephenson—to contribute works of “techno-optimism” that challenge us to dream and do Big Stuff. Engaging, mind-bending, provocative, and imaginative, *Hieroglyph* offers a forward-thinking approach to the intersection of art and technology that has the power to change our world.

Arizona State University

question. In a time of crisis we need to once again be exploring big visions and bold gestures. It is not the time to retreat. As we imagine speculative cities of the imminently possible, we begin to enact alternative forms of spatial practice, whereby architects, designers and artists can again play a critical role in exploring the implications and consequences of emerging technologies.

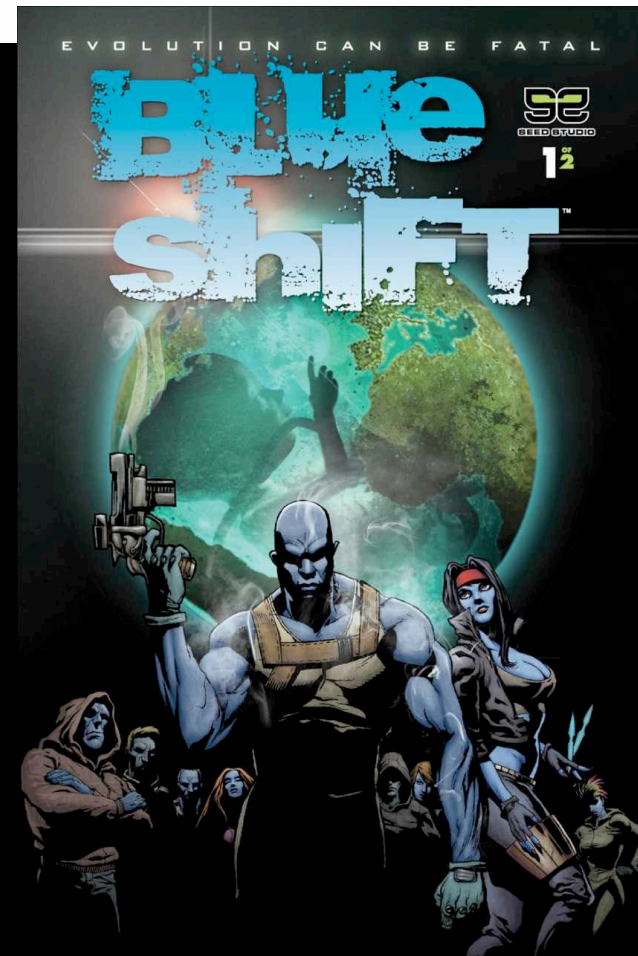
Fiction is a powerful medium through which we share and discuss our hopes, fears and anxieties about the futures we want to have. Cast as a provocateur and storyteller, the speculative architect instigates debate, raises questions and enables the public as active agents in the future of their cities. The tactics of speculation can bring us closer to the technologies that are increasingly shaping the urban realm and the scientific research that is radically changing our world. A projective fiction is a critical tool that is both an extraordinary vision of tomorrow and a provocative examination of the pertinent questions facing us today.

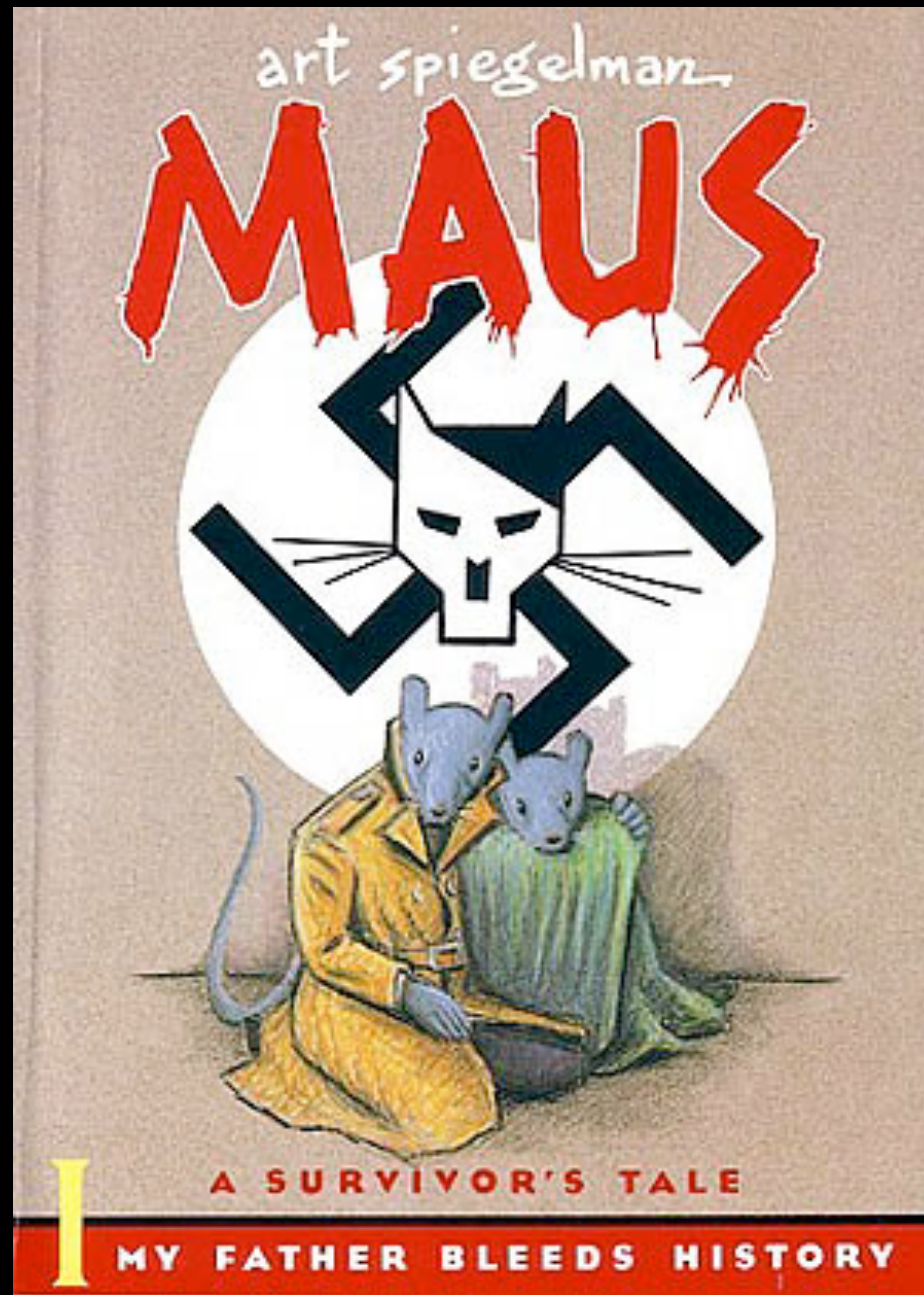
Brave New Now (speculative architecture)

A Simple Response to an Elemental Message (ASREM) was an [Interstellar Radio Message](#) (IRM) consisting primarily of 3775 worldwide responses to this initiative's posed question; *“How will our present, environmental interactions shape the future?”* This transmission also features a smaller 'Honorary Mention' text archive and a series of images of [Earth](#).

This interstellar “message in a bottle” was transmitted on 10 October 2016, at 20:00 UTC by the [European Space Agency Cebreros](#) (DSA2) deep-space tracking station towards [Polaris](#); the [Pole Star](#) which is approximately 434 light years (133 [parsecs](#)) from Earth.^[1] The IRM consisted of a single 27,653,733 byte, 866 second transmission. As of 14 Nov 2017, the signal has travelled approximately 10,360,827,348,480 km.^[2]

BlueShift takes place in New Orleans (the year 2061) and depicts a future ravaged by catastrophic climate change. We based the setting on the UN Global warming report 2000-2100 to establish some factual basis for the setting. The rest came from various reports including the Department of Defense's report on the effect of Global Warming.

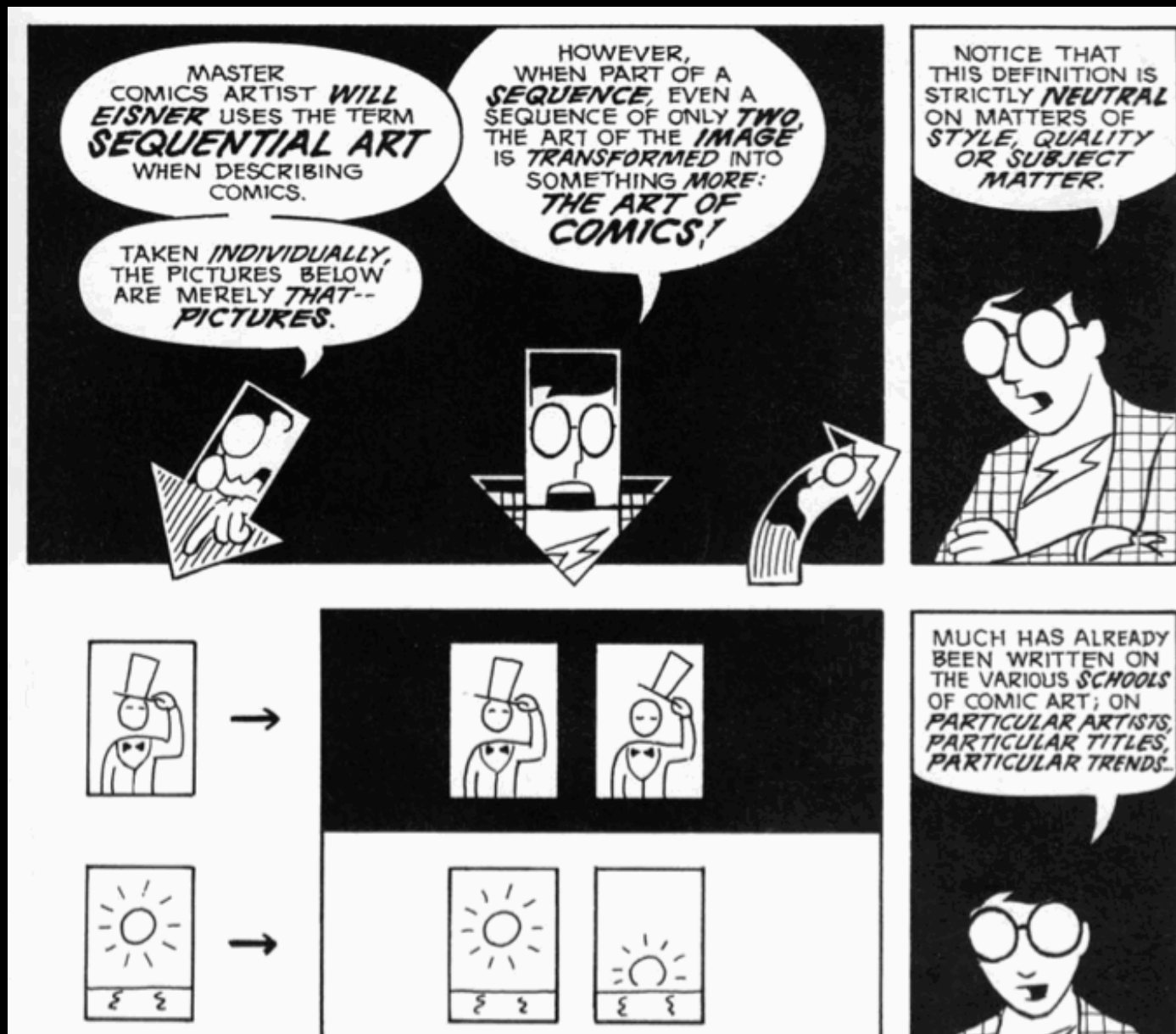




Art
Spiegelman,
Maus
(1980-1991)

“commix”

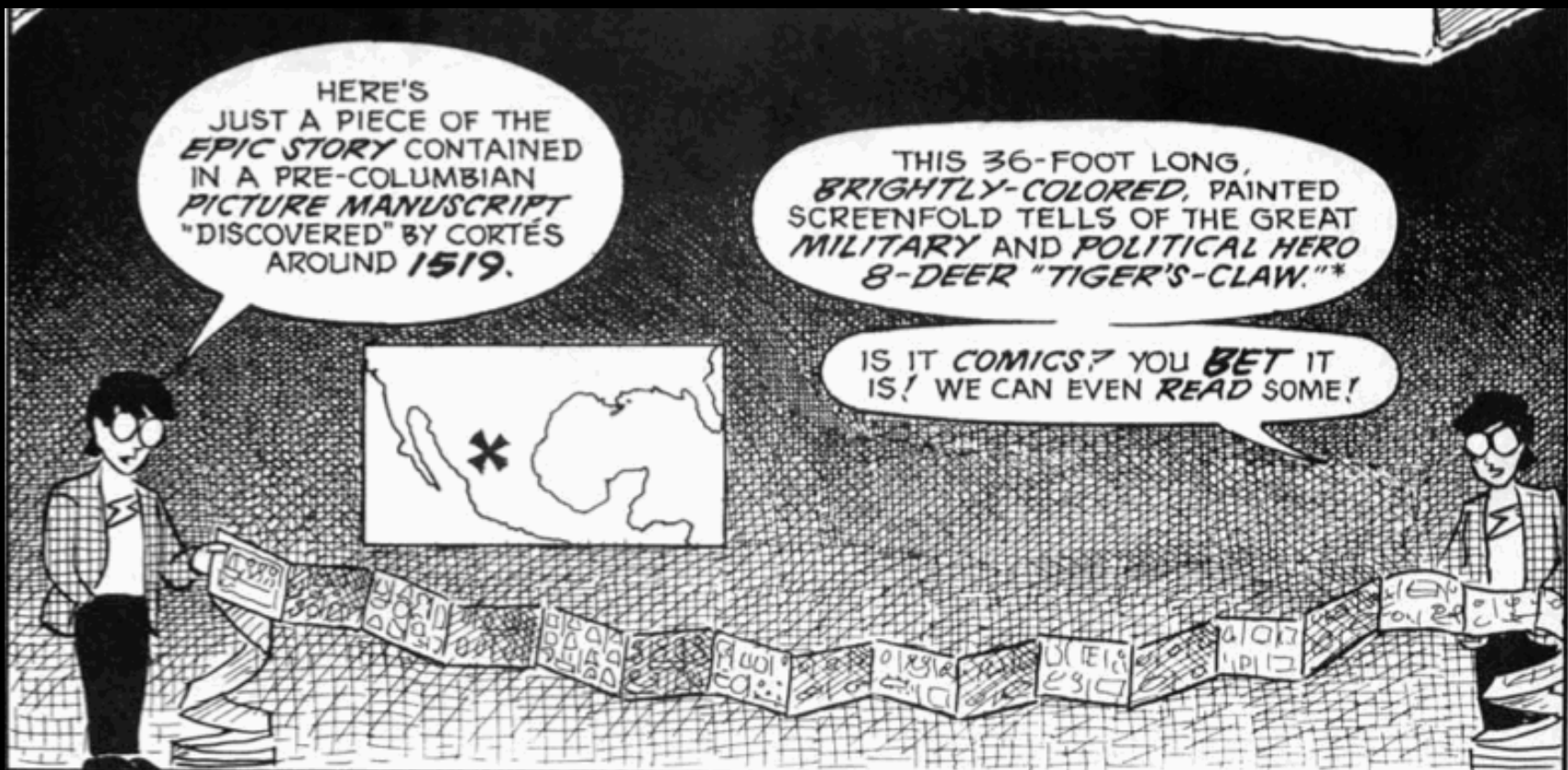


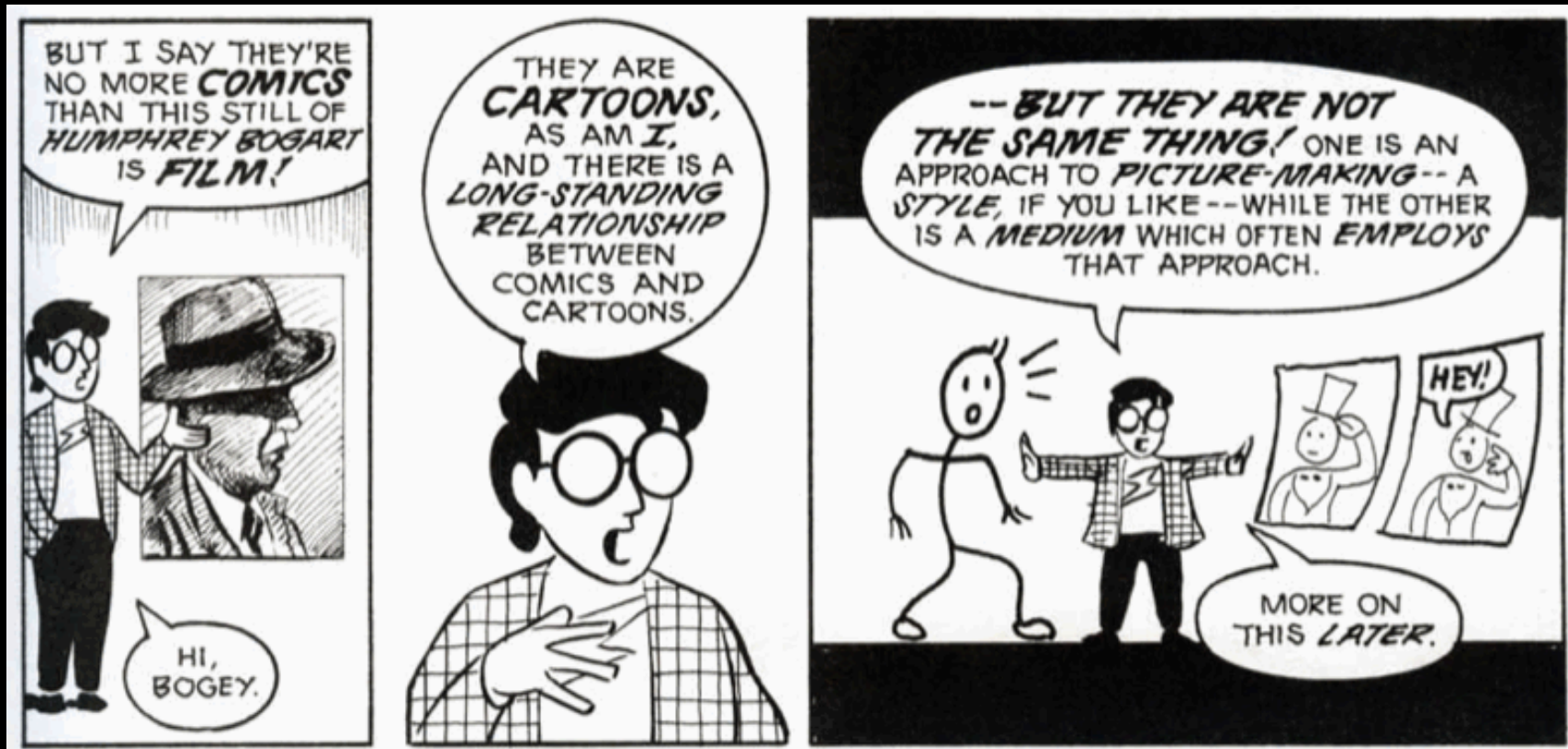


Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, p. 5

com-ics (kom'iks)**n.** plural in form, used with a singular verb. **1.** Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.

Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, p. 9





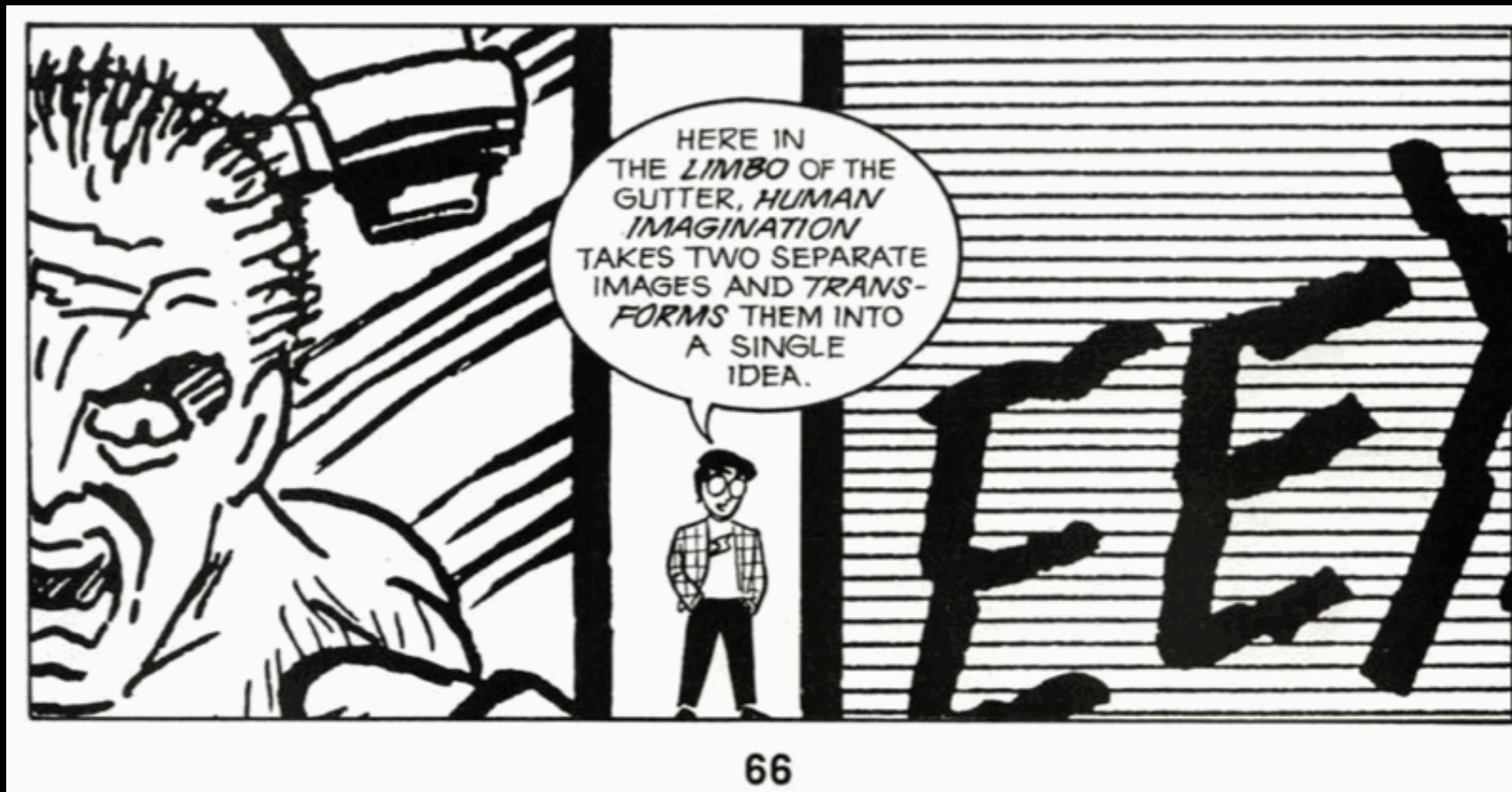
Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, p. 21

DEFINING THE
CARTOON WOULD
TAKE UP AS MUCH
SPACE AS DEFINING
COMICS, BUT FOR
NOW, I'M GOING TO
EXAMINE CARTOONING
AS A FORM OF
AMPLIFICATION
THROUGH
SIMPLIFICATION.



WHEN WE
ABSTRACT AN IMAGE
THROUGH *CARTOONING*,
WE'RE NOT SO MUCH
ELIMINATING DETAILS
AS WE ARE *FOCUSING*
ON *SPECIFIC*
DETAILS.

BY *STRIPPING*
DOWN AN IMAGE
TO ITS ESSENTIAL
"MEANING," AN ARTIST
CAN *AMPLIFY* THAT
MEANING IN A WAY
THAT REALISTIC
ART *CAN'T*.



McCloud on the gutter

COMICS PANELS *FRACTURE* BOTH *TIME* AND *SPACE*, OFFERING A *JAGGED, STACCATO RHYTHM* OF *UNCONNECTED MOMENTS*.



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

McCloud on closure, p. 67



1.
*MOMENT-
TO-
MOMENT*



2.
*ACTION-
TO-
ACTION*



3.
*SUBJECT-
TO-
SUBJECT*



4.
*SCENE-
TO-
SCENE*



5.
*ASPECT-
TO-
ASPECT*



6.
*NON-
SEQUITUR*

Geology of new fear

Fear of terrorism

Agoraphobia, or political fear

Xenophobia

Economic

Demographic

Ecological

Historical models vs. futures models
(financial markets, predictive
policing, Google flu, speculative
fictions)

Negative forms of speculation

- Finance: derivatives, Ponzi schemes, subprime mortgages
- Precautionary principle: risk management, emergency preparedness, terror alerts

William Gibson

“The looming apocalypse today is multi-causal. It’s extremely complex and systemic and possibly quite slow. It causes a fundamentally different kind of anxiety.”

“The mind, exposed to the ordinary course of life, receives upon its surface a **myriad impressions**.... From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms, composing in their sum what we might venture to call life itself... Is it not perhaps the **chief task of the novelist** to convey this incessantly varying spirit...?”

-- Virginia Woolf, “Modern Novels”

Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Modern Life” (1903)

“The psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli... **the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions.**”

I was probably about 18 or 19 when I read *ULYSSES* and that taught me how to write. As Leopold Bloom wanders around town, you get his complete thought processes, but it's threaded through the whole city. What Joyce is doing is creating electricity. He's wiring a whole territory – both the book and the city – with these connections and nodes and transfers and switches. Everything becomes this huge network in which any division between outer space and inner space collapses. There's a total consistency and continuity. And I love that – it's what life is actually like. It's what literature should try and somehow produce.

Interview with Tom McCarthy

Marcel Proust, *A la recherche* (vol. 1)

pressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shiver ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me.

And I begin again to ask myself what it could have been, this unremembered state which brought with it no logical proof, but the indisputable evidence, of its felicity, its reality, and in whose presence other states of consciousness melted and vanished. I want to try to make it reappear. I retrace my thoughts to the moment at which I drank the first spoonful of tea. I rediscover the same state, illuminated by no fresh light. I ask my mind to make one further effort, to bring back once more the fleeting sensation. And so that nothing may interrupt it in its course I shut out every obstacle, every extraneous idea, I stop my ears and screen my attention from the sounds from the next room. And then, feeling that my mind is

Marcel Proust, *A la recherche* (vol. 6)

bles of the restaurant in Paris. Always, when these **resurrections** took place, the distant scene engendered around the common sensation had for a moment grappled, like a wrestler, with the present scene. Always the present scene had come off victorious, and always the vanquished one had appeared to me the more beautiful of the two, so beautiful that I had remained in a state of ecstasy on the uneven paving-stones or before the cup of tea, endeavouring to prolong or to reproduce the momentary appearances of the Combray or the Balbec or the Venice which invaded only to be driven back, which rose up only at once to abandon me in the midst of the new scene which somehow, nevertheless, the past had been able to permeate. And if the present scene had not very quickly been victorious, I believe that I should have lost consciousness;

for so complete are these resurrections of the past during the second that they last, that they not only oblige our eyes to cease to see the room which is near them in order to look instead at the railway bordered with trees or the rising tide, they even force our nostrils to breathe the air of places which are in fact a great distance away, and our will to choose between the various projects which those distant places suggest to us, they force our whole self to believe that it is surrounded by these places or at least to waver doubtfully between them and the places where we now are, in a dazed uncertainty such as we feel sometimes when an indescribably beautiful vision presents itself to us at the moment of our falling asleep.

Life does not say to you: in 1914 my next-door neighbour, Mr Slack, erected a greenhouse and painted it with Cox's green aluminium paint ... If you think about the matter you will remember, in various unordered pictures, how one day Mr Slack appeared in his garden and contemplated the wall of his house. You will then try to remember the year of that occurrence and you will fix it as August 1914 because having had the foresight to bear the municipal stock of the City of Liège you were able to afford a first-class season ticket for the first time in your life. You will remember Mr Slack – then much thinner because it was before he found out where to buy that cheap Burgundy of which he has since drunk an inordinate quantity though whisky you think would be much better for him! Mr Slack again

Ford Madox Ford

Kamau Brathwaite on nation language

But by the time we reach Chaucer (1345-1400), the pentameter prevails. Over in the New World, the Americans –Walt Whitman– tried to bridge or to break the pentameter through a cosmic movement, a large movement of sound. Cummings tried to fragment it. And Marianne Moore attacked it with syllabics. But basically the pentameter remained, and it carries with it a certain kind of experience, which is not the experience of a hurricane. The hurricane does not roar in pentameter. And that's the problem: how do you get a rhythm that approximates the natural experience, the environmental experience. We have been trying to break out of the entire pentametric model in the Caribbean and to move into a system that more closely and intimately approaches our own experience. So that is what we are talking about now.