

Beyond The Panels:  
A Closer Look at Eisner's  
*A Contract With God*

Kingsborough Community College, CUNY  
The Graphic Novels Faculty Interest Group  
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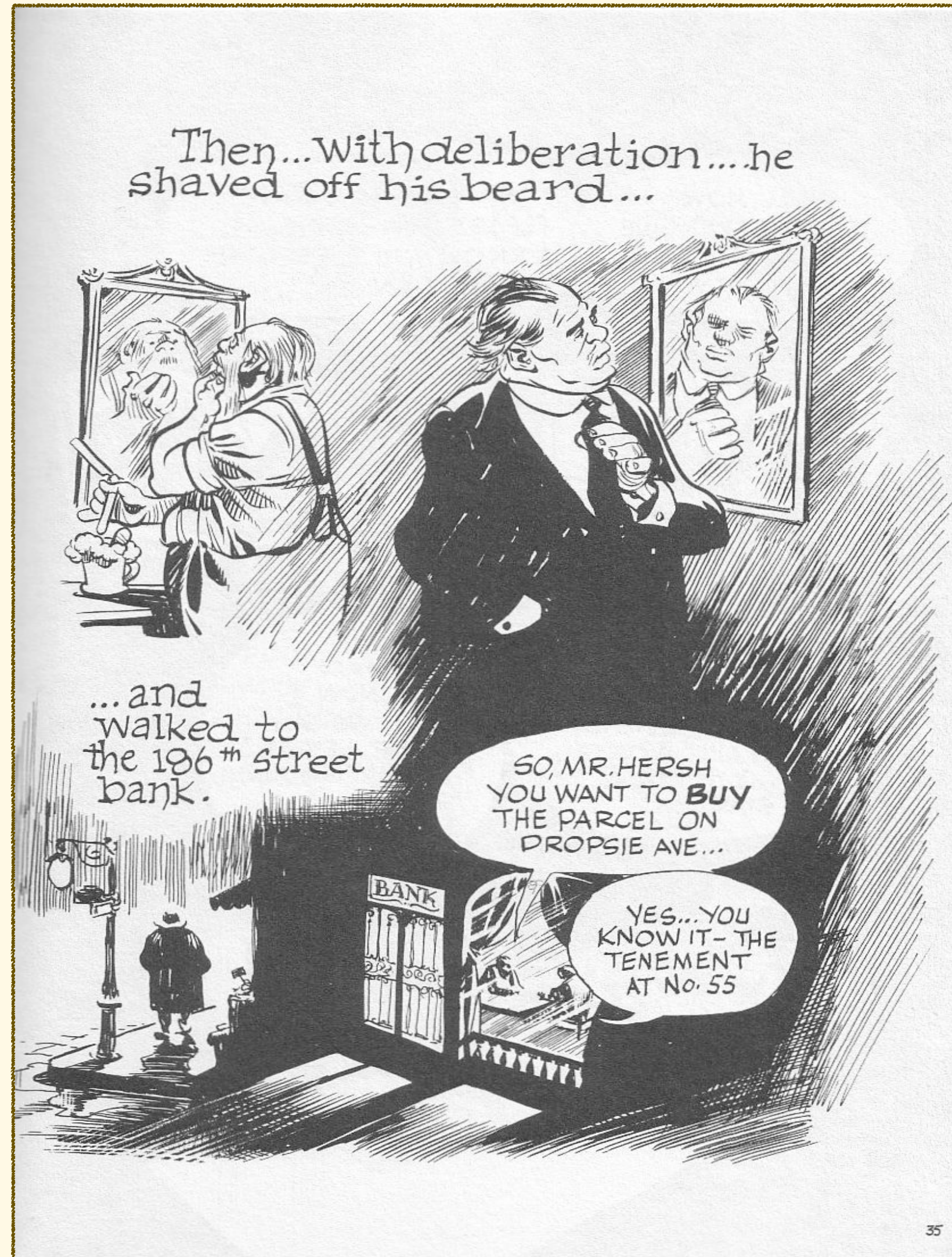
# The Class

- ◆ English 24 (Adv. Comp.) with Research Component
- ◆ Focus on visual mediums: Comics, comics journalism, film (live action, animation, and silent), folklore, theater, performance art, & poetry.
- ◆ **Theme & Research Question: How do we learn through visual mediums?**
- ◆ Comics & Texts: *A Contract with God* - Will Eisner, *Understanding Comics* - Scott McCloud, Selections from *What It Is* - Lynda Barry, *For Colored Girls* - Ntozake Shange.
- ◆ Class Wiki - [www.english24d69c.pbworks.com](http://www.english24d69c.pbworks.com)

# Ground Work



# Teaching Closure & Gutters



Eisner - "A Contract with God"



Eisner - "Cookalein"

# Student Examples: Closure & Gutters

English 24 - Winter 2012

Professor Thompson

Homework - Understanding Comics Activity

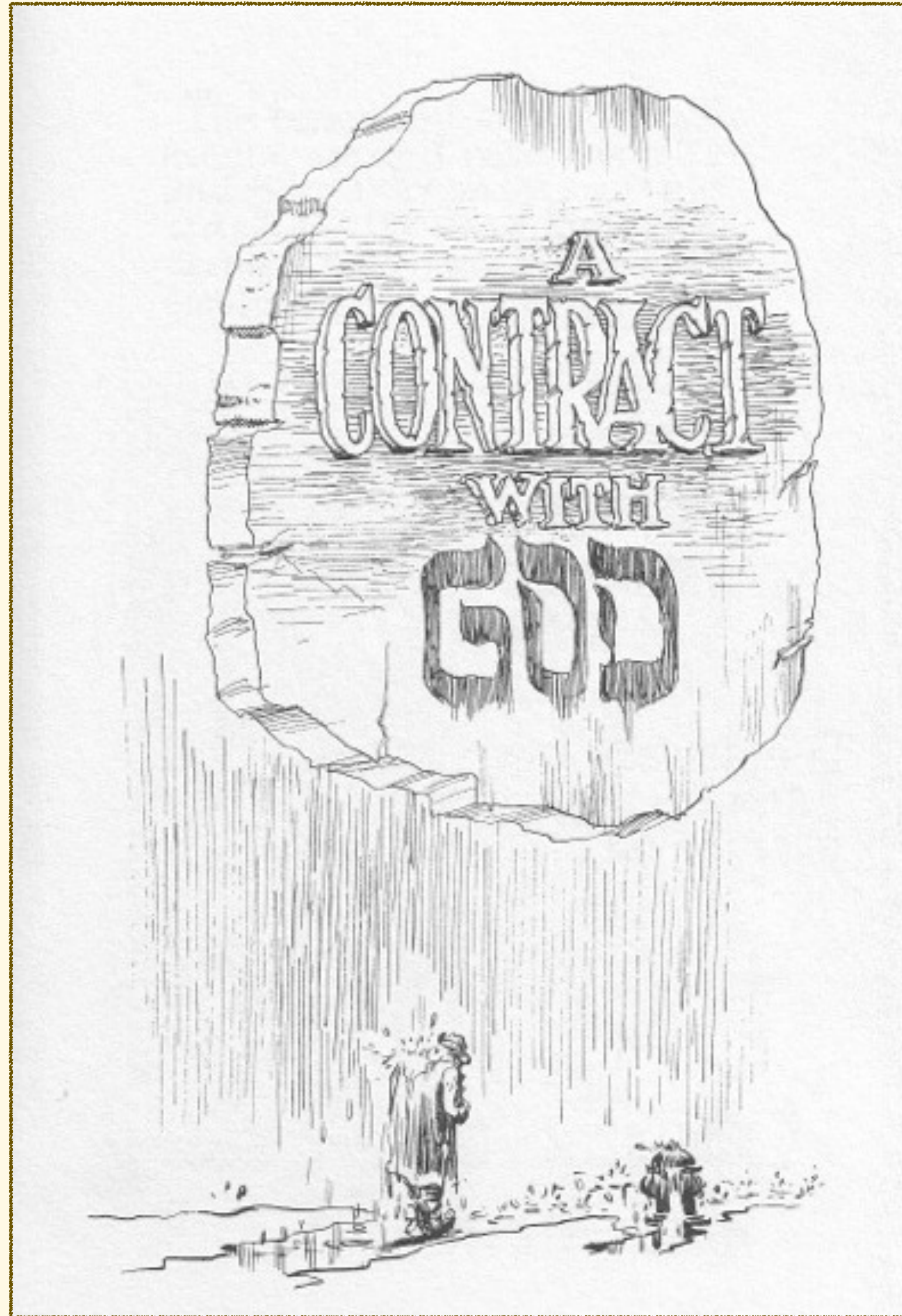
I think closure is the conclusion of something based on previous knowledge. A beinging to the end.



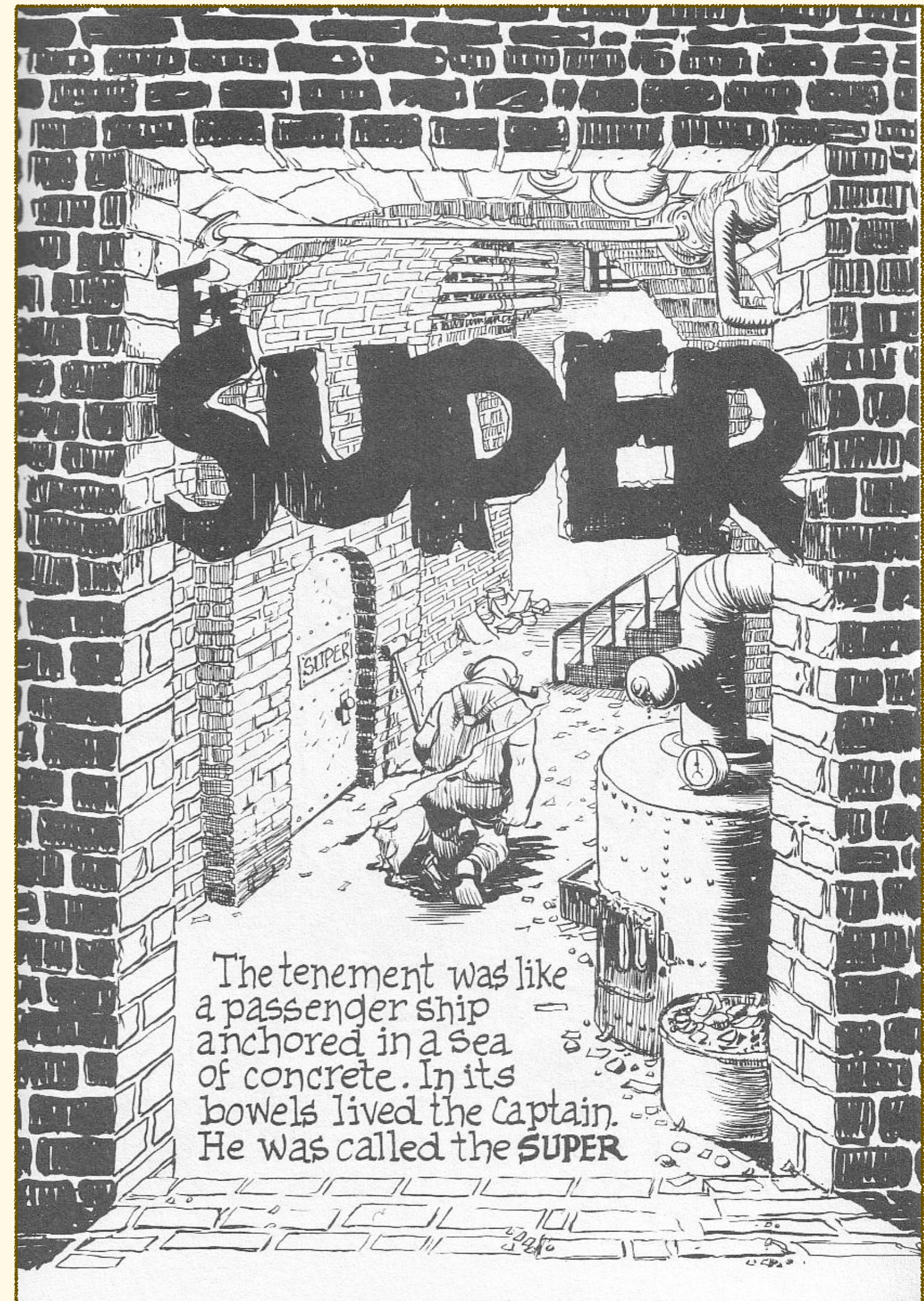
I believe there are different kinds of closure depending on how you interpret the comic.

Gutters are the spaces in between the panels. The gutters may help you put your own twist to the story because the entire story isn't drawn out for you.

# The Visual Metaphor



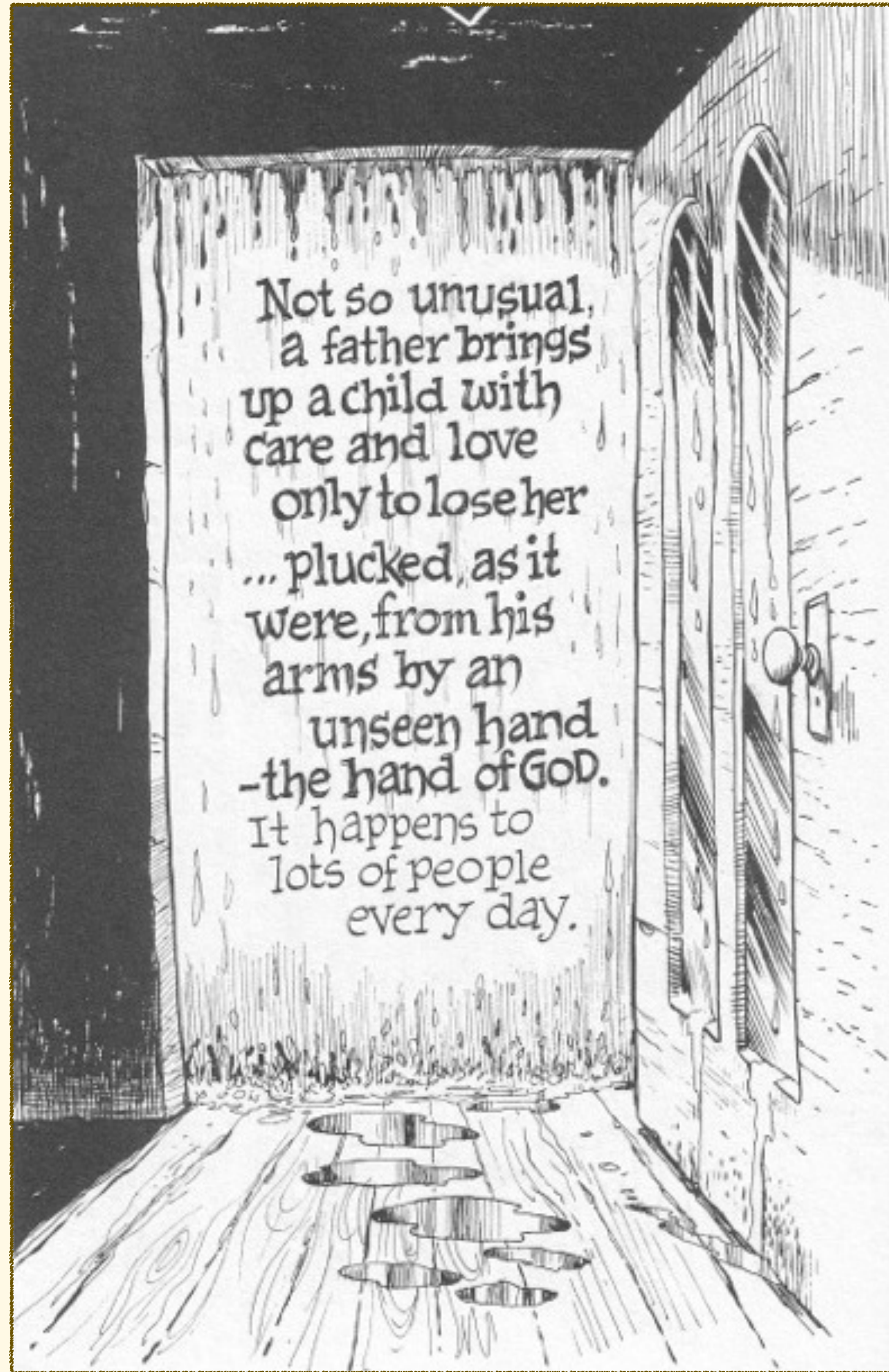
Eisner - *A Contract with God*



The tenement was like a passenger ship anchored in a sea of concrete. In its bowels lived the Captain. He was called the **SUPER**.

Eisner - "The Super"

# The Visual Metaphor



Eisner - *A Contract with God*



Eisner - "The Super"

# Understanding Visual Metaphors

## Free write:

“...he was left with little else but remoteness to defend his dignity and promote his authority” (104).

## Discussion:

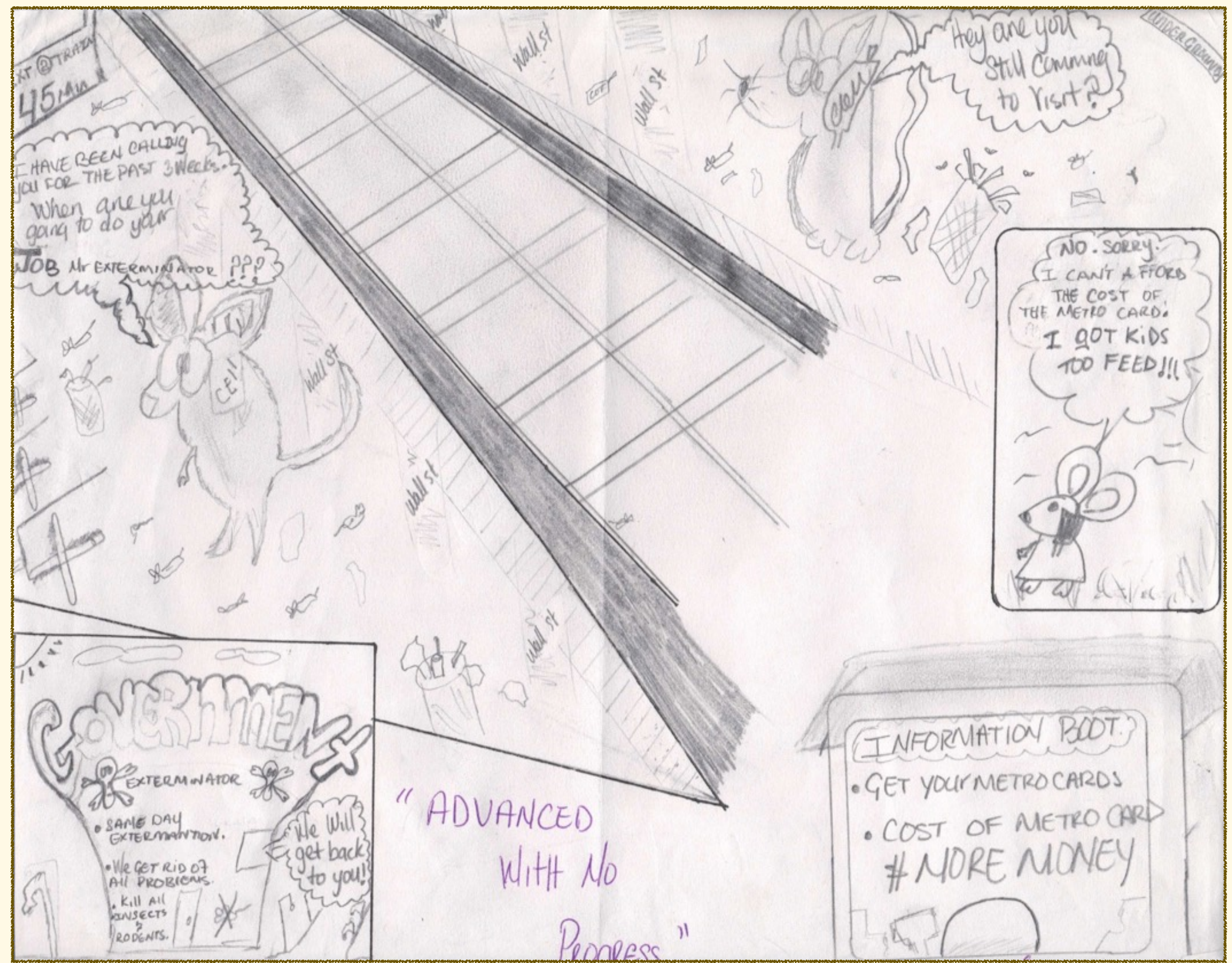
- 1.) Explain the significance of the metaphor, font, and overall panel presentation on p. 95.
- 2.) On page 98, what is the overall implication being made about the Super. What are your thoughts about the close up?
- 3.) Do you get the impression that the Super is tough and mean, or is he something else? Give examples to explain your opinions of his temperament.
- 4.) How do you interpret/understand the images and facial expressions of the Super on pages 106-107, especially in the last image?
- 5.) Who do you feel is/are the victim(s) in this story? Give examples to support your opinions.
- 6.) On what pages/panels do you see repetition of the captain/passenger ship metaphor that is established at the beginning of the story?



# Student Examples: Comic Journalism



"Love the Pit Bull"



"Advanced with No Progress"

# Conclusions: Student Success ?

- ◆ **Empowerment/Motivation/Effort:**

Students authored assignments that reconcile their own personal interests with their observations and connections to the outside world, texts or comics. They wrote literature reviews/editorials about their intellectual process of reading/viewing the medium and how it enhanced their understanding and experience.

- ◆ **Reflective Thinking/Questioning:**

They asked more critical questions: What do the images make them think of? Why do I care about this topic? How do I want to represent my stake in the conversation of this topic?

- ◆ **Creativity:**

Students exploited the visual medium itself to creatively depict their thinking via comic editorials, aka Comics Journalism. (Dan Archer)

- ◆ Ultimately, visual mediums and Multimodality enables students to fill in the gaps of their own thinking because there is always a need to visualize and imagine in order to interpret and/or create new meanings.

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