

Dear Friends of the Laboratory of Kinetic Objects

***Kinetic:** (adj). relating to, or from motion*

In the past twenty-four hours we have been urged to engage in a meaningful change to our habits of movement; and it seems a time to re-awaken our understanding of **kinesis**. The **Laboratory of Kinetic Objects** (LoKO) is dedicated to the analysis of movement; more specifically LoKO has - as its object of analysis and discussion - the ways in which the object world can take on the characteristics of apparent 'liveness' through motion, either illusory or substantial.

Our pleasure in *falling for* or *being taken in by* the obviously unreal depends so very often on a persuasive simulation of movement. We need only to think about the ways in which 'animation' movies or comics and graphic novels delight us because they create the illusion of mobility arising from within the object. Anthropologists for decades dismissed this principle as a kind of naïve animism; however it is our argument this mode of thinking is the most sophisticated mental activity in which we engage. Movement is the one substantial index we have of time; we note the beginning and the close of an action, and we are aware that a 'passage of time' links the two.

My discussions on this platform will take various forms: at points I will engage in a brief discussion of an 'animation' object/a 'kinetic' object that catches my attention; at times I will send out a paper or two for discussion.

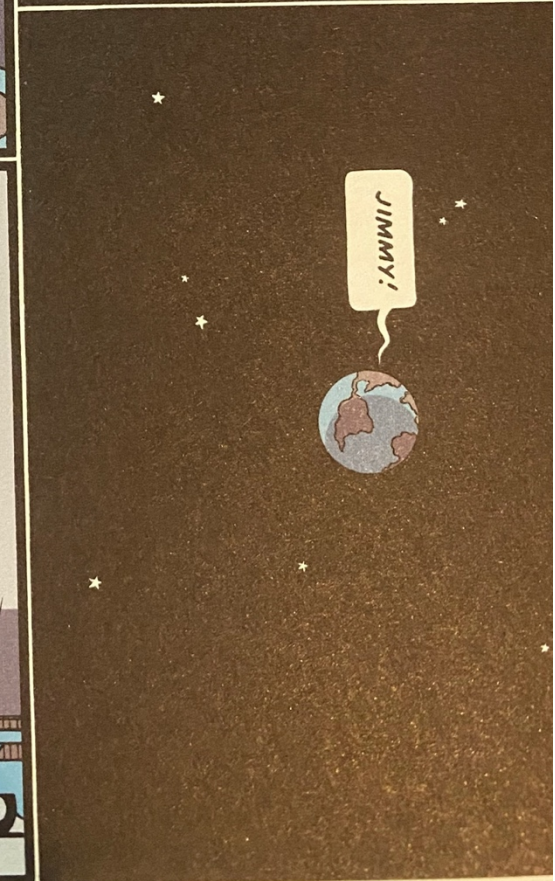
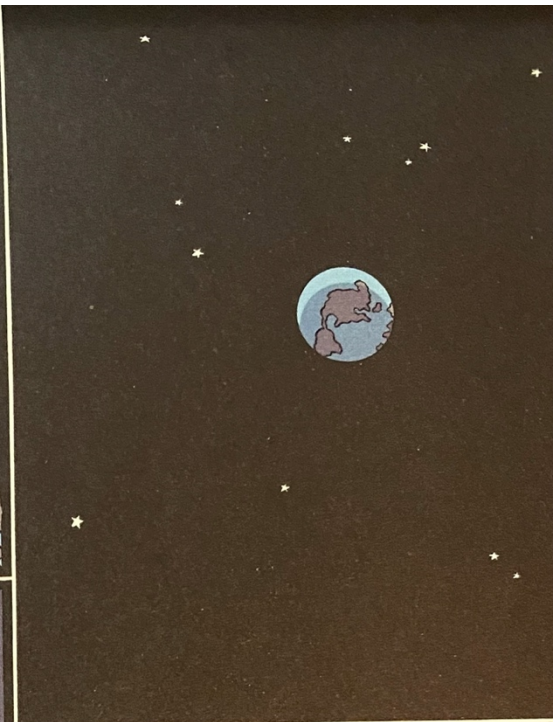
In this opening letter, I will discuss one or two small examples, and will attach two papers for your interest and for group discussion. I will see if we can set up an open blackboard, where followers of the blog can post thoughts and comments about the papers and ongoing debate. This blackboard will, I think, be available to members of the CHR.

SAMPLE ONE: My first sample for your engagement is a set of pages from the opening of a graphic novel, a quite astonishing book, *Jimmy Corrigan, Smartest Kid on Earth*, by F.C. Ware.

The opening is the 'back-story', in a way, for the protagonist of the novel, a desolate and anxious young man working in the environment of late capitalism. The back story gives us an insight into the articulation of class, gender and economy in a large urban setting under the conditions of late capitalism through the world-view of a young boy, coming to consciousness. His single mother is, in a way, a symptom as well as the condition of the world in which he gains awareness in the American mid-west. The novel is complex, full of dense allusion and suggestion, and sad.

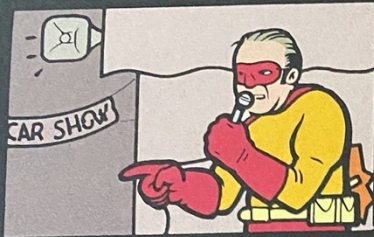
In brief, one can summarise: a boy-child wakes up somewhere in the universe; he and his mother interact; and go to a diner that markets itself through a superhero theme. His mom takes home one of the superhero waiters after the meal.

It is worth regarding how emotion is poured into each of these little drawings; how the passage of time is suggested, how one image 'bleeds' into the next image. Consider the variation in the size of the frames, and what this does for the dynamic of the text. Consider the treatment of light and darkness.





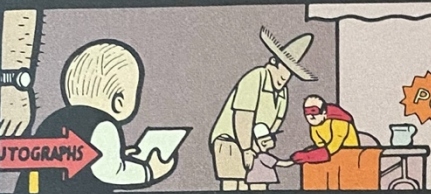
IT'S **GREAT** TO BE HERE... I JUST FLEW IN,
BUT Y'KNOW--MY ARMS AREN'T TIRED AT **ALL!**



HA HA HA



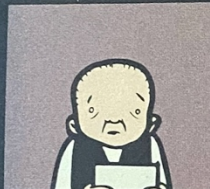
BUT SERIOUSLY-- FIGHTING CRIME IS **HUNGRY**
WORK--THAT'S WHY I KEEP A FRIED CHICKEN
LEG IN MY SECRET BELT --JUST IN **CASE!**



ALL RIGHT, **LITTLE MISTER!**
YOU'VE **REALLY** DONE IT
THIS TIME! I'VE **HAD** IT
WITH YOU! THIS IS **IT!!**



MOM!



HELLO, SON



DON'T "MOM" **ME**, BUSTER!

HEY HEY THERE, MA'AM
THAT'S NO WAY TO
TREAT MY **PARTNER!**



WHY, THIS **SLUGGER'S**
A **REAL SMART KID.**



PARDON **ME**, 'SIR'?

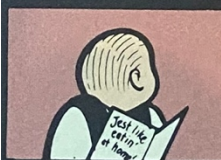
IN FACT, HE WAS JUST TELLING
ME WHAT A **GREAT** MOM HE
HAD, AND HOW SHE MIGHT
KNOW OF A GOOD PLACE TO EAT
AROUND HERE, ONCE I'M OFF WORK



MY TREAT, OF COURSE



TABLE FOR THREE? THIS WAY, PLEASE.



I'VE NEVER HAD DINNER
WITH A FAMOUS PERSON



I'VE NEVER HAD DINNER WITH
SUCH A CHARMING LADY



I'VE GOT THIS GREAT LITTLE
BEACH HOUSE IN BURBANK

OH REALLY? HA HA



RIGHT--JUST CREAM, NO SUGAR. DO YOU HAVE A COAT HA





The following two pages of dense notes are on the cover, comments by the author/illustrator, on the work and its meanings. Note his discussion of 'metaphor'.

Apologies for the rough and ready quality of the images .

CORRIGENDA

ǎo-jēn dā) n. pl. a list of errors with their corrections, in a book. [LATIN, *corrigenda* = to correct, *corrigere*, to correct.] ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY.

APOLOGY

(ǎo-pǎi 'ǎ-jē) n. also **POSTSCRIPT**. I BEGAN THIS STORY IN 1993 AS A WEEKLY COMIC STRIP IN VERY TOLERANT AND FORGIVING CHICAGO NEWSPAPER, "NEW TY." IT WAS PLANNED PURELY AS AN IMPROVISATORY EXERCISE. I TAKE NO MORE THAN A SUMMER TO COMPLETE, AND TO HOPEFULLY PROVIDE A SEMI-AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SETTING IN WHICH I JUDG "WORK OUT" SOME OF THE MORE EMBARRASSING FRAGMENTS OF CONFIDENCE AND EMOTIONAL TRUTHFULNESS I WAS EXPERIENCING AS A VERY IMMATURE AND NOT TERRIBLY ACUTE CARTOONIST. TO POKED INTO THE SUBJECT BEFORE THAT I MEETING AN ESTRANGED PARENT—BUT I WANTED TO TRY MORE RESPECTABLE "STARS," BY SHOWING MY HAPLESS AND OORLY-WRITTEN "ALTER EGO" OF THE MOMENT, "JIMMY CORJAN," THROUGH THE STARTING GATES FIRST. I HAD SPENT MY ENTIRE LIFE AVOIDING CONTACT WITH MY OWN FATHER, AND I GUESS I THOUGHT THAT ONCE THIS STORY WAS FINISHED, I WOULD SOMEHOW HAVE "PREPARED" MYSELF TO MEET THE REAL MAN, AND THEN BE ABLE TO GET ON WITH MY LIFE. OF COURSE, REAL LIFE IS MUCH MORE BADLY PLOTTED THAN THAT.

ROUGHLY FIVE YEARS LATER, AFTER THOROUGHLY MIRING MYSELF IN THE SWAMPY MUCK OF A STORY WHICH NOW SEEMED TO HAVE NO END IN SIGHT, AND, EVEN WORSE, LIKELY NO POINT TO THE POOR MOVIEGOERS AND "SWM'S" WHO HAD TO WADE AROUND IT EVERY WEEK TO SWIM IN THE FRESHER WATERS OF THE FILM REVIEWS AND PERSONAL ADS, I RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL, WITHOUT WARNING, FROM A MAN CLAIMING TO BE MY FATHER. AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT A JOKE, PERPETRATED BY A DISGRUNTLED AND MEAN-SPIRITED NEWSPAPER READER, BUT THE SHAKY, DECISIVE, RIDICULOUSLY UNFAMILIAR VOICE TOLD ME THAT HE WASN'T TRYING TO BE FUNNY. I WILL NOT CATALOGUE CONVERSATION HERE, NOR WILL I DETAIL HOW HE LOCATED ME, NOR WILL I TRY TO DESCRIBE THE EMBARRASSING SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND OUTRAGE THAT I FELT BY HIS BREAKING OUR THIRTY YEAR SILENCE, INSTANTLY LAYING REST THE SELF-PITYING IDENTITY TO UNCONSCIOUSLY CULTURED AND INVESTED INTO A STORY THAT I WASN'T EVEN DONE WITH YET. IN OUR TWENTY MINUTES OF TALK, HOWEVER, I WAS SURPRISED TO DISCOVER THAT, AT LEAST COMPARED TO THIS MAN WHO HAD SUDDENLY STEPPED FORWARD TO CLAIM MY CO-AUTHORSHIP, I WAS THE BETTER WRITER, FOR THE PAINFULLY AWKWARD AND INAPPROPRIATELY FAMILIAR PHRASES WITH WHICH HE TRIED TO LIGHTEN HIS MONOLOGUE WERE MUCH MORE IL-CONSIDERED AND NONPLUSSED THAN ANYTHING I HAD EVER PUT INTO JIMMY'S DAD'S MOUTH.

HE CALLED ME TWO OR THREE MORE TIMES OVER THE NEXT YEAR, ALWAYS SUGGESTING THAT WE GET TOGETHER SOMETIME. I ALWAYS VAGUELY AGREEING WITHOUT COMMITTING TO ANY TIME OR PLACE. I DIDN'T LIKE HIS INSISTENCE, AND I WASN'T SURE IF I EVEN WANTED TO MEET WITH HIM YET. WHY, I DON'T KNOW. BUT ONE DAY, ABOUT A YEAR AFTER OUR FIRST "CONTACT," HE CALLED TO SAY THAT HE'D BE VISITING CHICAGO SOON AND ASKED IF I WOULD CONSIDER MEETING HIM AND HIS WIFE AT A RESTAURANT FOR DINNER—NO PRESSURE—JUST DINNER. MY WIFE, WHO HAD UNDERGONE A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE YEARS BEFORE, RIGHTFULLY ENCOURAGED ME. I AGREED. WHAT ELSE WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO?

I DREADED THE DAY, HAVING ATTRIBUTED SO MUCH IMPORTANCE TO IT FOR NEARLY MY ENTIRE LIFE. FUNDAMENTALLY, I GUESS I WAS JUST AFRAID—THE WORST FEAR OF ALL—THAT HE SIMPLY WOULDN'T LIKE ME. BUT IT WAS EASY: WE MET. I SAW HIM FROM ACROSS THE RESTAURANT: A SMALL, LARGE-HEADED MAN WHOM I WOULDN'T HAVE EVER PICKED OUT OF A CRIMINAL LINE-UP OF A THOUSAND FATHERS. HE WAS PLEASANT, AND SEEMED AS HUMBLED BY MY PRESENCE AS I WAS BY HIS. WE TALKED, OR TRIED TO—I WAS RELIEVED, AT THE VERY LEAST, TO GLEAN FROM HIS REMARKS THAT HE'D NEVER SEEN MY STUFF, THE INVISIBLE AND UNIVERSALLY UNFASHIONABLE WORLD OF THE COMIC STRIP HAVING LEFT ME THANKFULLY UNREAD. GRADUALLY, THE SUBLINE OUTRAGEDNESS OF OUR EVENING ERODED INTO TWO PEOPLE SIMPLY RUNNING OUT OF THINGS TO SAY TO EACH OTHER. WE WEREN'T FATHER AND SON ANYMORE, JUST A PAIR OF REGRETFUL MEN. AFTER ABOUT THREE HOURS, WE SAID GOODBYE, SOMEWHAT AFFABLY AGREED TO MEET AGAIN, AND GOT ON WITH OUR LIVES.

THAT CHRISTMAS, I FINALLY WORKED UP THE NON-COURAGE TO CALL HIM AND WISH HIM A HAPPY HOLIDAY, THOUGH HIS ANSWERING MACHINE WAS BARELY AUDIBLE SO I WASN'T SURE IF THE CONNECTION WAS GOOD. I LEFT A MESSAGE ANYWAY. I DIDN'T HEAR FROM HIM AGAIN UNTIL THE FOLLOWING SPRING; HE SAID HE'D BE IN TOWN AGAIN, AND AGAIN ASKED IF I WOULD LIKE TO GET TOGETHER. AND SO I AGAIN AGREED, MARKING THE DATE ON MY CALENDAR SOMEWHAT RELUCTANTLY. HE SAID HE'D CALL WHEN HE GOT INTO TOWN. THE DAY CAME, AND WENT, AND THE TELEPHONE NEVER RANG.

IN THE ENSUING MONTHS I "FINISHED" THE STORY, SHINING IT UP TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, GENUINELY SURPRISED THAT IT MIGHT GRADUATE FROM THE EXILE OF NEWSWEEKLIES AND COMIC BOOKS INTO THE "REAL WORLD" OF BOOKSTORES, REMAINDER TABLES, AND RUMMAGE SALES, DESPITE ITS AWFUL FLAWS. I RESOLVED THAT ONCE

FATHER, FATHER OR WORSE; AT LEAST IT WOULD BE A MORE PREFERABLE MEANS OF DISCOVERY FOR HIM THAN AT A GARAGE SALE, OR IN A NURSING HOME LIBRARY. UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, I WILL NOT HAVE THAT OPPORTUNITY, AS HE DIED OF A HEART ATTACK IN JANUARY. I MENTION NONE OF THIS TO TRY AND ALIGN MYSELF WITH THE SEEMINGLY UNSTOPPABLE SWARM OF PERSONAL MEMOIRISTS WHO POPULATE THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR BOOKLISTS OF MULTIPLE SELF-HELP PROGRAMS, BUT TO ADMIT THE CHASM WHICH GAPES BETWEEN THE RIDICULOUS, ARTLESS, DUMBFOUNDEDLY MEANINGLESS CONCERNCE OF "REAL" LIFE AND MY WEAK FICTION—NOT TO MENTION MY INABILITY AT KNITTING THEM TOGETHER. IN OTHER WORDS, I WISH I COULD'VE DONE A BETTER JOB. MAYBE I SHOULD'VE JUST TRIED TO BE A MEMOIRIST, OR, MORE EFFECTIVELY, SIMPLY KEPT MY INK BOTTLE CAPPED.

REGARDLESS, IN RACING THROUGH THIS STORY FOR ITS FINAL "EDIT," SKIDDING PAST ALL THESE ERRORS, OMISSIONS, AND MISTAKES, IT OCCURRED TO ME UPON CLOSING THE "MANUSCRIPT" THAT THE FOUR OR FIVE HOURS IT TOOK TO READ IS ALMOST EXACTLY THE TOTAL TIME I EVER SPENT WITH MY FATHER, EITHER IN PERSON OR ON THE TELEPHONE. ADDITIONALLY, AND AT RISK OF SOUNDING MELODRAMATIC, ITS FINAL PRINTED SIZE SEEMS NEARLY EQUAL IN VOLUME TO THE LITTLE BLACK BOX, OR URN, BEFORE WHICH I BRIEFLY STOOD THIS JANUARY, BENEATH A COLOR PHOTO OF THE MAN ITS LABEL CLAIMED TO CONTAIN.

--C. WARE, CHICAGO, MARCH 2000.

CRUTCH



(dǎo-kā-shān) n. IN THIS SEMI-AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WORK OF FICTION, I FEAR I MAY HAVE POTENTIALLY IMPUGNED (AT LEAST, PERHAPS, IN A CARELESS READER'S COMPREHENSION OF THE BOOK) SOME "REAL-LIFE" ALTER-EGOS, MOST NOTABLE OF WHOM MIGHT BE MY MOTHER, WHO, BEING A THOUGHTFUL, INTELLIGENT, AND SUPPORTIVE WOMAN, SHE BEARS NO RESEMBLANCE WHATSOEVER TO THE MISERABLE WRETCH WHO DOMINATES POOR JIMMY. AS SUCH, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO HER, ESPECIALLY AS IT IS WHOLLY CHARACTERIZED BY HER ABSENCE.

A SUPPORT, USED BY THE LAME OR INFIRM AS A WALKING AID, esp. FOLLOWING A LOCOMOTIVE INJURY, etc.

DEDICATION

DRAFT RIOTS

(drǎf-tí 'rǐ-òts) n. pl. THE "CIVIL WAR DRAFT RIOTS" OCCURRED IN NEW YORK CITY, BOSTON, AND OTHER LARGE METROPOLITAN CENTERS IN JULY 1963 AT THAT TIME, PERSONS WHO WERE ABLE TO PAY A \$300 "SUBSTITUTION FEE" (i.e. THE RICHER CLASSES) WERE FREED FROM THE RESPONSIBILITY (PARTICULARLY IRISH IMMIGRANTS) ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO THE DRAFT. AFRO-AMERICANS WERE, IRONICALLY, INELIGIBLE FOR ACTIVE ARMY SERVICE, AND SO BY DEFAULT WERE POSITIONED TO TAKE OVER THE MOSTLY MENIAL JOBS WHICH WOULD BE VACATED BY THE IRISH. ANGRY MOBS, (REPORTEDLY COMPOSED OF PRIMARILY IRISH CITIZENS) MURDERED NEARLY ONE THOUSAND AFRO-AMERICANS AND CAUSED OVER TWO MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF PROPERTY DAMAGE OVER A PERIOD OF FOUR DAYS.

OF UNION ARMY SERVICE, LEAVING THE POOR CLASSES (PARTICULARLY IRISH IMMIGRANTS) ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO THE DRAFT. AFRO-AMERICANS WERE, IRONICALLY, INELIGIBLE FOR ACTIVE ARMY SERVICE, AND SO BY DEFAULT WERE POSITIONED TO TAKE OVER THE MOSTLY MENIAL JOBS WHICH WOULD BE VACATED BY THE IRISH. ANGRY MOBS, (REPORTEDLY COMPOSED OF PRIMARILY IRISH CITIZENS) MURDERED NEARLY ONE THOUSAND AFRO-AMERICANS AND CAUSED OVER TWO MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF PROPERTY DAMAGE OVER A PERIOD OF FOUR DAYS.

EXPOSITION

(ék-spō-zí-tsh'ón) n. THE MAIN BODY OF A WORK, esp. THAT WHICH EXPUCATES A MAIN THEME, OR INTRODUCES A FUNDAMENTAL MOTIF.



FINGER

(fíng-gar) n. ONE OF THE FIVE DIGITS OF THE HAND, ESPECIALLY, ONE OTHER THAN THE THUMB. slang. TO DOMINATE OR HANDLE SOMETHING POSSESSIVELY. slang. A GREETING, INVOLVING SINGULAR EXTENSION OF THE MIDDLE DIGIT, AND BESTOWING A WISH OF COPULATION UPON THE RECIPIENT; SEE HELLO.

GLASSES



HELLO

(hǎ-ló, hǎ-) interj. also **HULLO**. AN INFORMAL EXPRESSION, UTILIZED AS A GREETING, IN ANSWER OF A TELEPHONE, OR AS A MEANS OF SUMMONING ATTENTION. IT WAS PROBABLY NOT IN COMMON USAGE BEFORE THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, AND SO ITS CAVALIER EMPLOYMENT IN SECTIONS OF THIS BOOK SET IN THE AMERICAN 1890s MAY BE ENTIRELY UNJUSTIFIED.

LONELY

(lón-'lē) adj. ALONE, OR BY ONESELF. THE PERMANENT STATE OF BEING FOR ALL HUMANS, DESPITE ANY EFFORTS TO THE CONTRARY. CAN BE SOOTHED OR SUBDUED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, viz. MARRIAGE, SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, BOARD GAMES, LITERATURE, MUSIC, POETRY, TELEVISION, PARTY HATS, PASTRIES, ETC., BUT CANNOT BE SOLVED.

METAPHOR

(mēt'a-fōr-far) n. A TIGHTLY FITTING SUIT OF METAL, GENERALLY TIN, WHICH ENTIRELY ENCLOSES THE WEARER, BOTH IMPEDING FREE MOVEMENT AND PREVENTING EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION AND/OR SOCIAL CONTACT.

PEACH

(pēch) n. A SOFT, SINGLE-SEEDED STONE FRUIT, WITH A PINKISH-RED TINTED DOWNY SKIN, AND MOIST, DEWY FLESH; THE TREE, *PRUNUS PERSICA*, IS NATIVE TO CHINA, BUT HAS BEEN WIDELY CULTIVATED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, HAVING BEEN SPREAD BY THE ROMANS AND THEN BROUGHT BY THE SPANISH TO AMERICA. see **SYMBOL**.

REPRODUCE

(rē-pra-dōō) v. tr. TO PRODUCE A COUNTERPART, IMAGE, OR COPY OF, OR, TO BRING TO MIND AGAIN, AS IN A MEMORY. --intr. TO GENERATE OFFSPRING, OR, TO UNDERGO COPYING, PRINTING, TO PRINT, OR TO PUBLISH. art. TO MAKE VALUELESS.

SIMPLETON

(sím-pal-fan) n. A STUPID PERSON; A FOOL, OR, ONE WHO DEVOTES ONESELF TO STUPID OR FOOLISH THINGS; ex: Billy is a simpleton; he reads comic books. MANY OF THE ORIGINAL COMIC BOOKS IN WHICH THIS BOOK WAS SERIALIZED ARE STILL AVAILABLE; CONSULT www.fantagraphics.com ON YOUR HOME TERMINAL FOR PRICES AND AVAILABILITY, OR TELEPHONE 800 651 1100.

SYMBOL

(sím-bol) n. SOMETHING THAT REPRESENTS SOMETHING ELSE, esp. COMMON IN BAD LITERATURE. ALSO, A PRINTED OR WRITTEN SIGN USED TO REPRESENT AN UNDERSTOOD CORRESPONDING ASPECT OF EXPERIENCE, GENERALLY READ, AND NOT APPRECIATED AS AN AESTHETIC FORM IN AND OF ITSELF.

THANKS

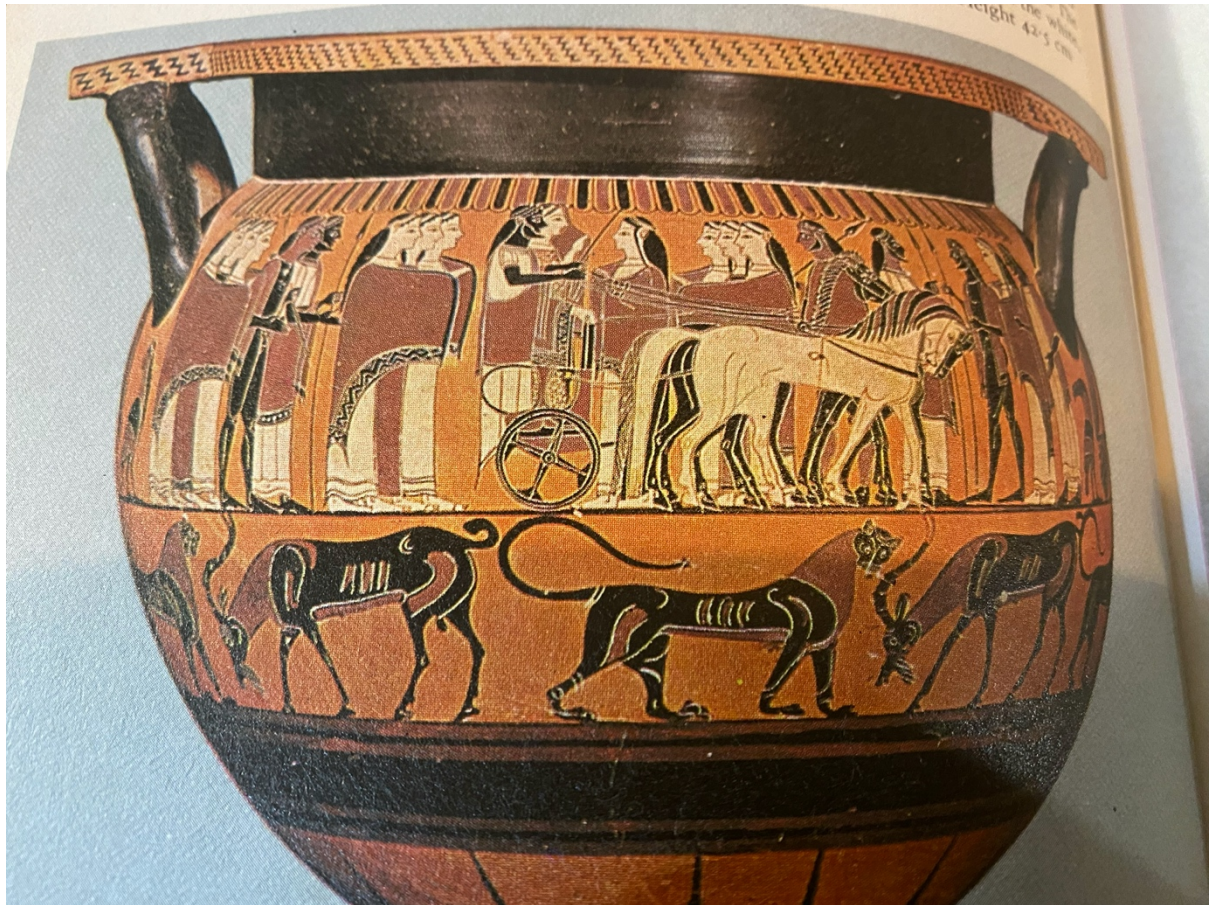
(thāngks) pl. n. TO THOSE EDITORS WHO SHOWED GREAT FOOLHARDINESS BY PUBLISHING THIS WORK IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER: BRIAN HIEGELKE; KIM THOMPSON & GARY GROTH; DAN FRANK & CHARLES I. KIDD AS WELL FOR GUIDANCE: R. HEANE, R. LOESCHER & A. SPIEGELMAN. APRIL & ERIC WILSON, DR. D. McCALL, AND MRS. MARNIE WARE.

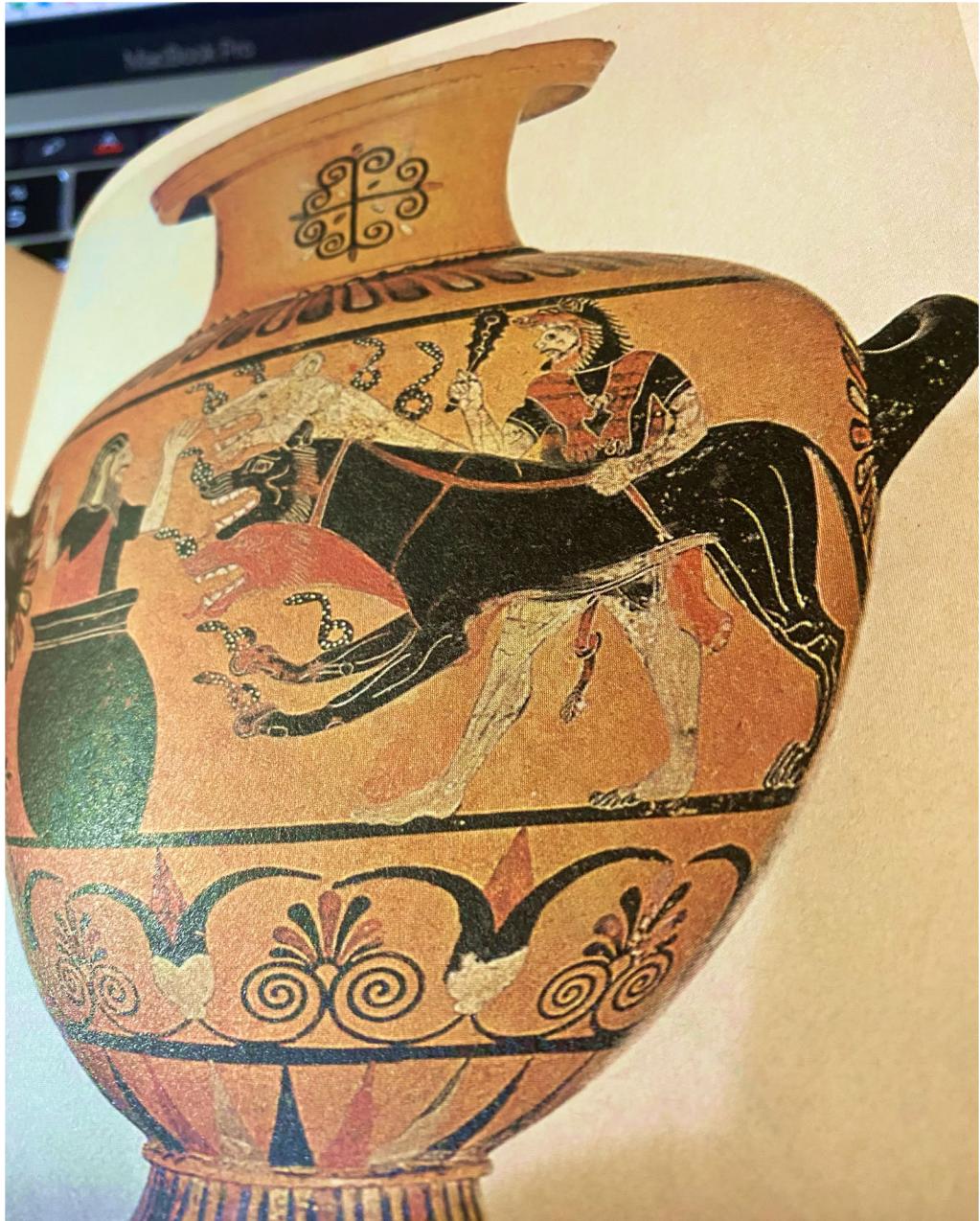
WARE, C.

(wār, ē) n. AMERICAN CARTOONIST, b. 1967, OMAHA, NEBRASKA, CURRENTLY RESIDING CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. AUTHOR AND CREATOR OF THE BELOVED "ACME NOVELTY LIBRARY" SERIES OF CHILDREN'S GUIDEBOOKS, GAME PAMPHLETS, AND PICNIC SONGSHEETS, (IRREGULAR ORGANS THROUGH WHICH THE BULK OF THIS WORK FIRST PASSED. MR. WARE IS MARRIED, YET HAS NOT REPRODUCED.

SAMPLE TWO for your consideration:

I have long been curious about the history of movement in and on static objects. Here are a couple of examples of classical Greek vases and containers where the figures are painted in a clay slip (a wet and paintable clay used for decoration) onto the clay surface and then the vessel is 'fired' (baked at a very high temperature in order to change the character of the raw clay so that the elements meld together under the intense heat, making the clay water-tight as well as long-lasting.) We can see in these objects, an early form of the pleasure in the moving object, as the painted figures seem to 'move' around the vase or jar, and will be represented in different actions, depending on the angle of the viewer. These date from approximately the 6th century BCE; about 2600 years ago. It is interesting to consider the aesthetics of this decorative tradition of these vases in relation to the celebrated puppetry traditions of Java (the traditions of Wayang Kulit), where shadow puppets act out narratives and dramatic cycles in a world of illusory 'liveness.'





SAMPLE THREE: Attached is a science paper on how 'intention' can be interpreted from the ways in which a hand grasps a bottle of water- apparently there is a marked difference in the ways in which we grasp a bottle of water if we intend to drink from the bottle, and if we intend to pour the contents of the bottle into a glass. This may seem an odd question to explore, but such details have real meaning when one is considering, say, puppetry, in which the puppeteer is hoping to get the audience to

understand what is motivating the puppet from its actions. This kind of detailed work is really meaningful. Basil Jones from Handspring Puppet Company has always argued that movement is thought. Such strategies are also used in conventional acting (and in daily practice) because we often need to signal or express - or disguise -- what is going on in our minds via the actions of our bodies, the expression of our face; the gesture or inflections of our hands.