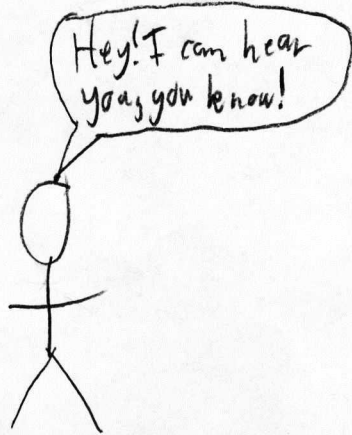


Wm Ritz

Dave Eggers is a pompous ass,  
We already knew that, though.



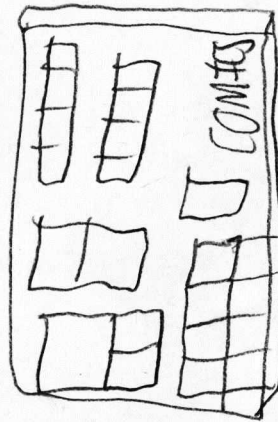
I mean, did you ever read A Heartbreaking  
Work of Staggering Genius? Such a line to  
the point of inducing nausea. Practically  
unreadable after Page 100 or so.



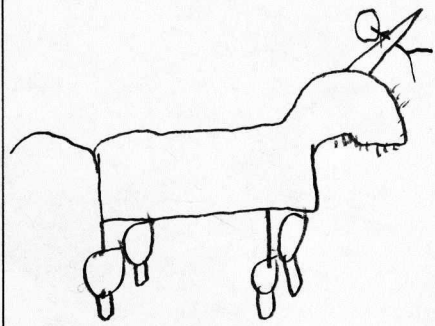
There's something to be said for its tenderness,  
but all in all whatever emotion it showed  
was horribly bogged-down by Eggers'  
haval-gazing. It was fleeting, unmemorable.



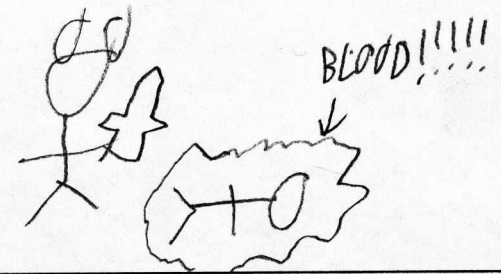
It follows, then, that McSweeney's 13  
is a collection of self-important, self-  
aggrandizing strips with no memorable  
qualities. And at times, this is true.



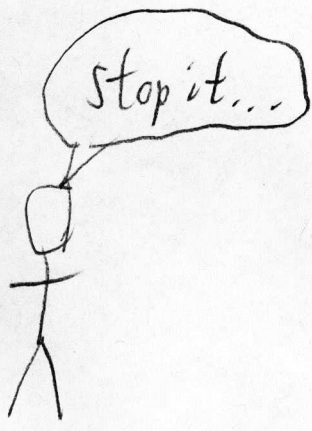
Takes, for example, Underworld Comedy by Kaz. Despite the clean art style, the whole thing is aimless, shooting for shock value above all else. It's honestly somewhere between boring and gross - not a good combination.



The only memorable bit is how ridiculous it is. And, sure, maybe Kaz is making an Eggers-esque stab at commenting on the saturation of violence in our culture, but there's just something dull about a Mickey Mouse lookalike stabbing someone. It's all been done before.



It therefore merits inclusion in this volume. Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing, it simply exists, a lumpy, half-assed attempt at art which is right up Eggers' alley.

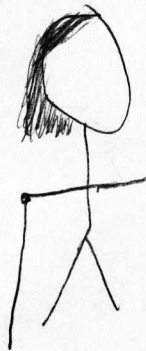


(Aside: the reason I'm choosing this minimal effort format is because a. I can't draw, but b. it's something Eggers might do. Remember that fake interview he conducted to spew more nonsense about himself? I'm using this to spew my own nonsense. It's like to believe that Eggers would approve)

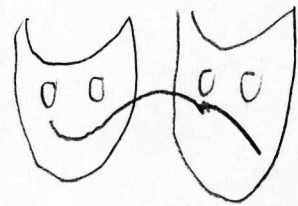
(Also no drawing this panel, because m'art m.)  
!!!!

3

Conversely, a cartoon like Ware's Christmas Thanksgiving one is an odd choice for the anthology, because it's actually sad. No pretentious art-school drama, just a poignant (if a bit cliché) story and gorgeously simplistic art.



Our professor briefly mentioned that we'd love or hate Chris Ware, but I think I fall in the former category. Unlike the pointless surrealism of Underworld, his work is firmly grounded in actual human ideas, constructs, and emotions.

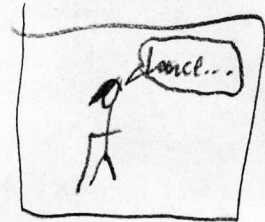


↑  
I suck at art. You get the picture, hopefully.

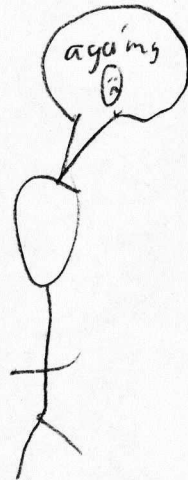
Surrealism only really works if it's based on reality, and the unfortunate truth of Underworld is that its reality has already been critiqued about a billion times before (and much better at that).

In contrast, the intentionality of Ware's piece is wonderful. Every sound effect, every pathos-filled face, even the inter-panel sperm are all so artfully done. This is what comics do well: combining words and pictures to create emotion.

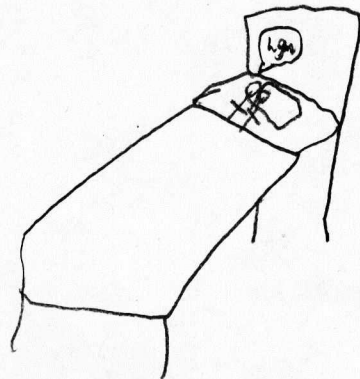
2002-4 vs. 1960s-70s  
X                      ✓



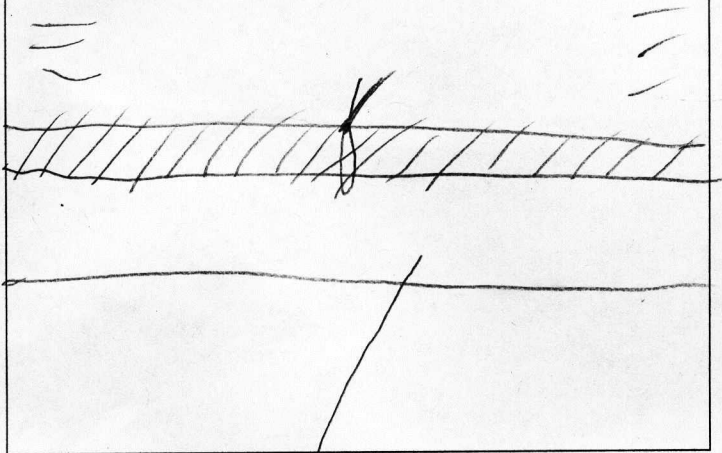
In conclusion, most of the comics in McSweeney's 13 reflect Eggers' pretension, and Underworld is no exception.



However, even Eggers can't keep Chris Ware from being brilliant, and as such his entry is one of the odd ones out, a shockingly excellent piece.



The never-ending tugs between style and substance continue to pull at McSweeney's, but I'm glad to see some artists can do both. I just wish it happened more often.



END