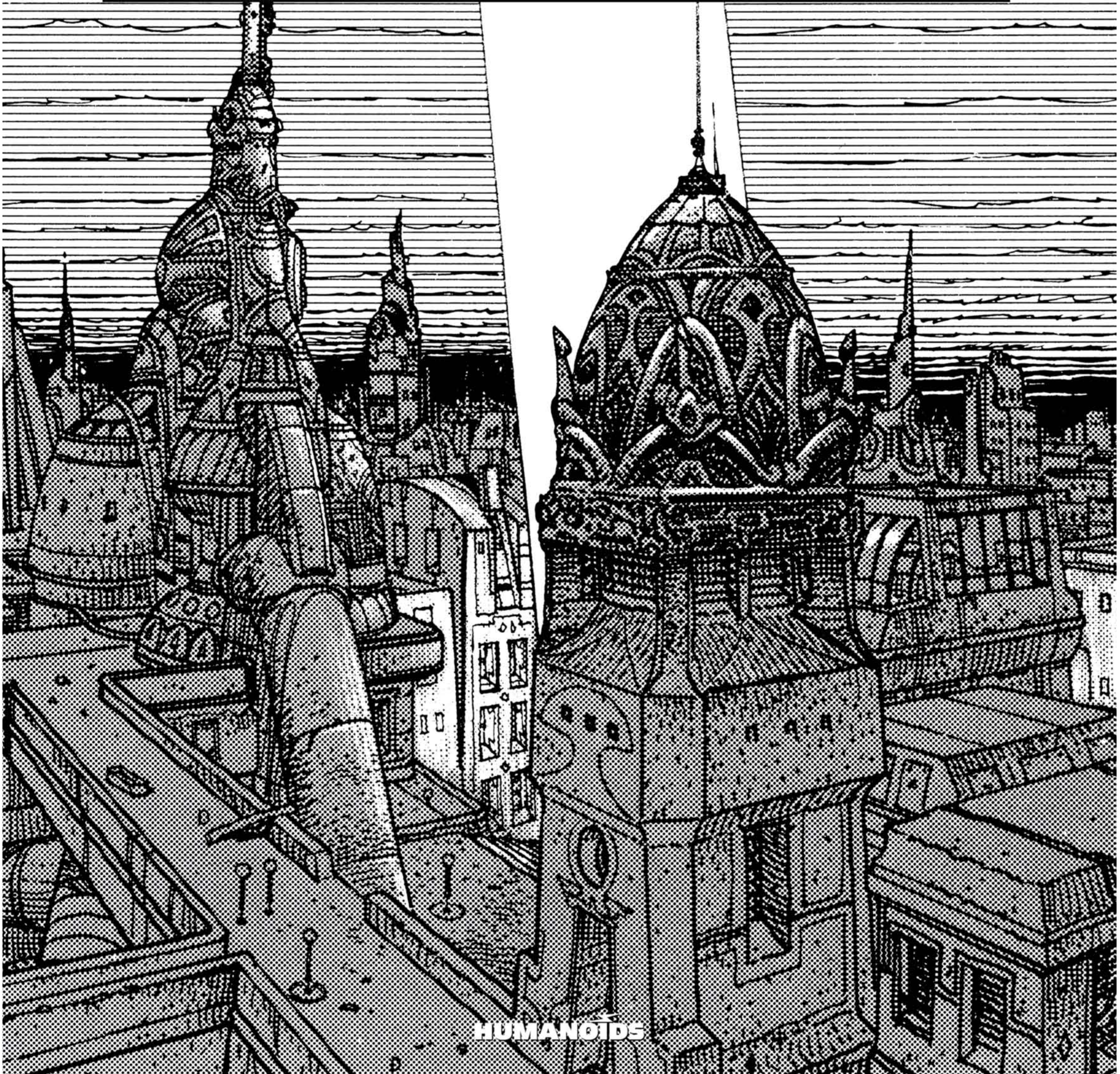
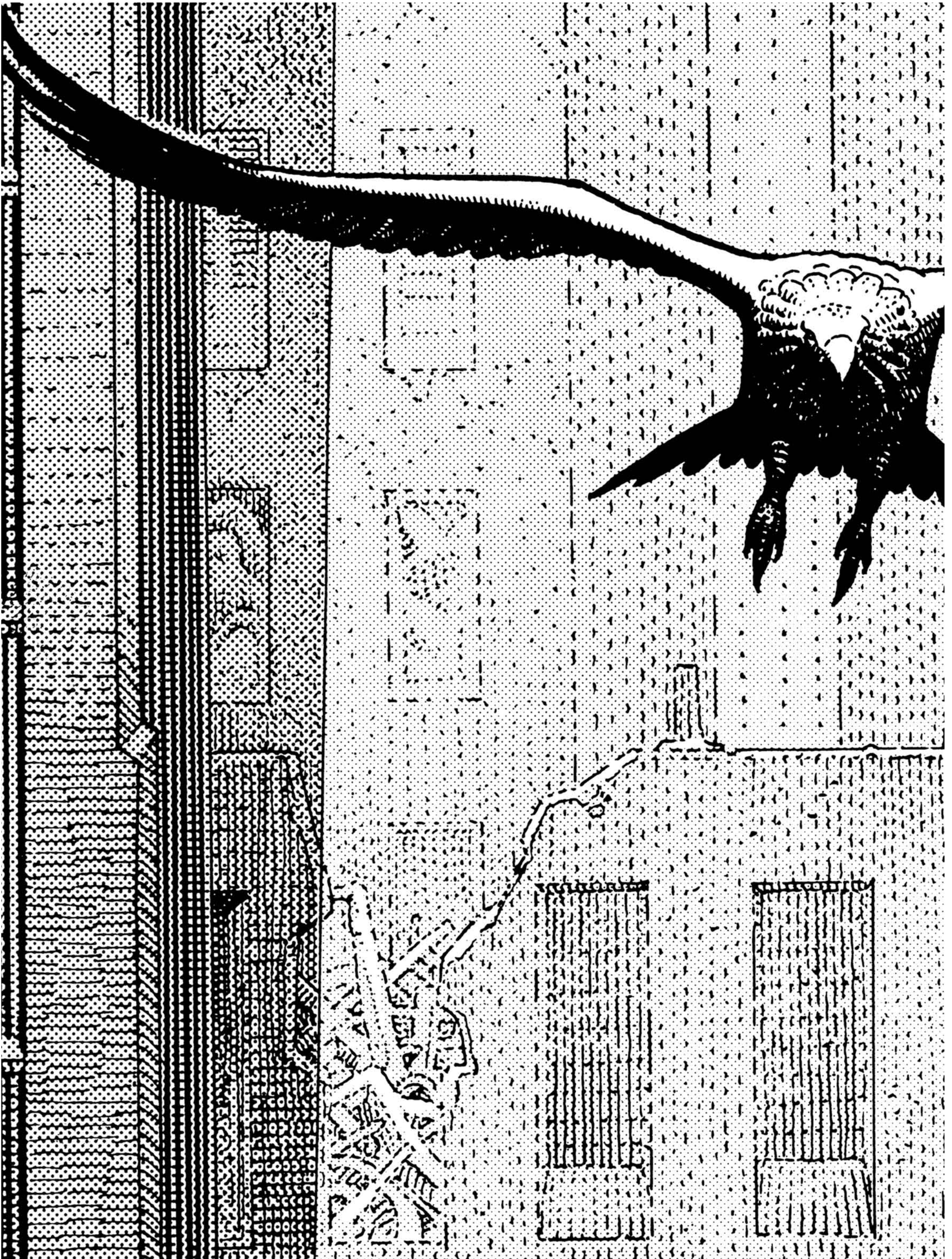


# THE EYES OF THE CAT

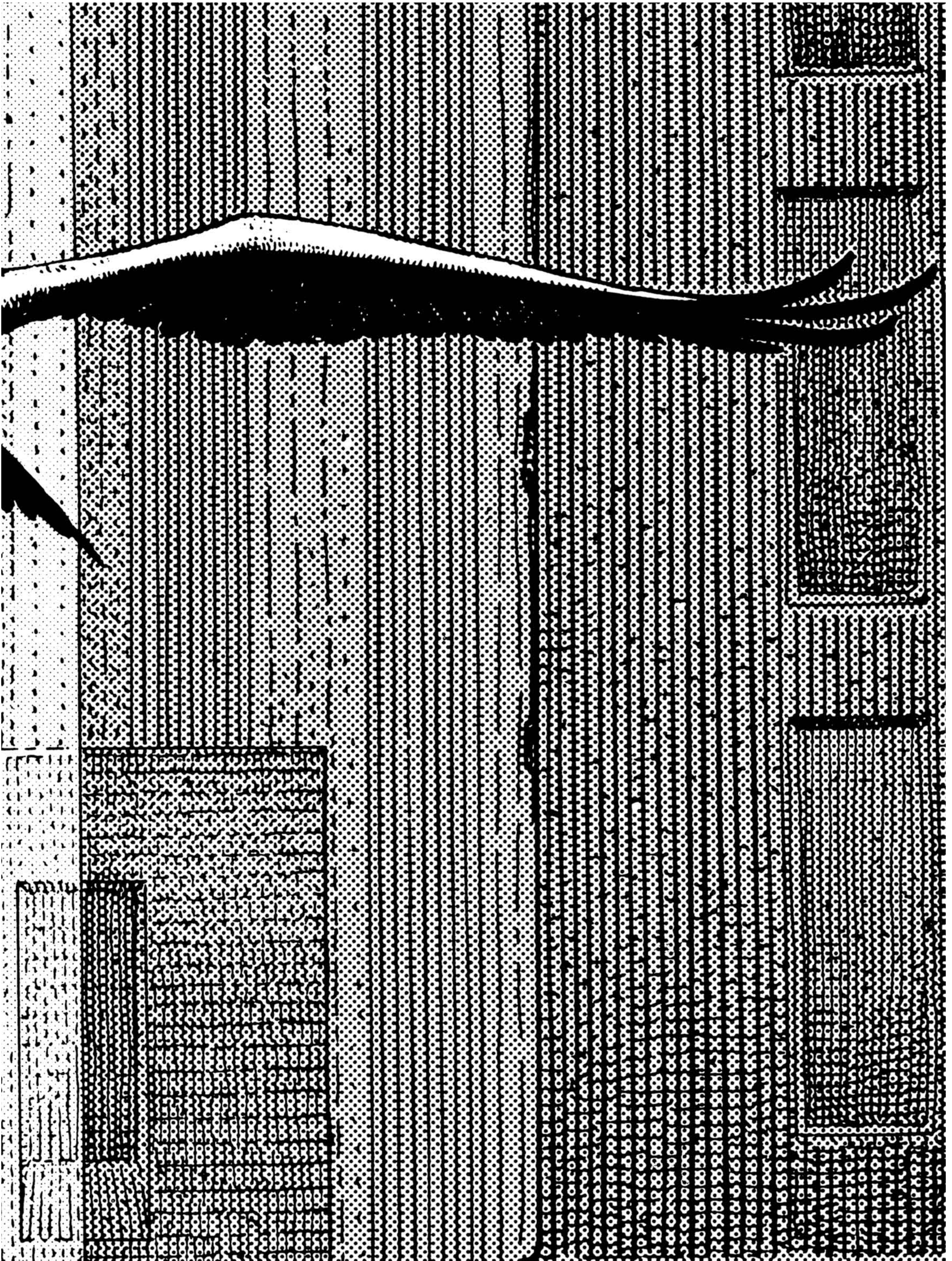
MOEBIUS & JODOROWSKY







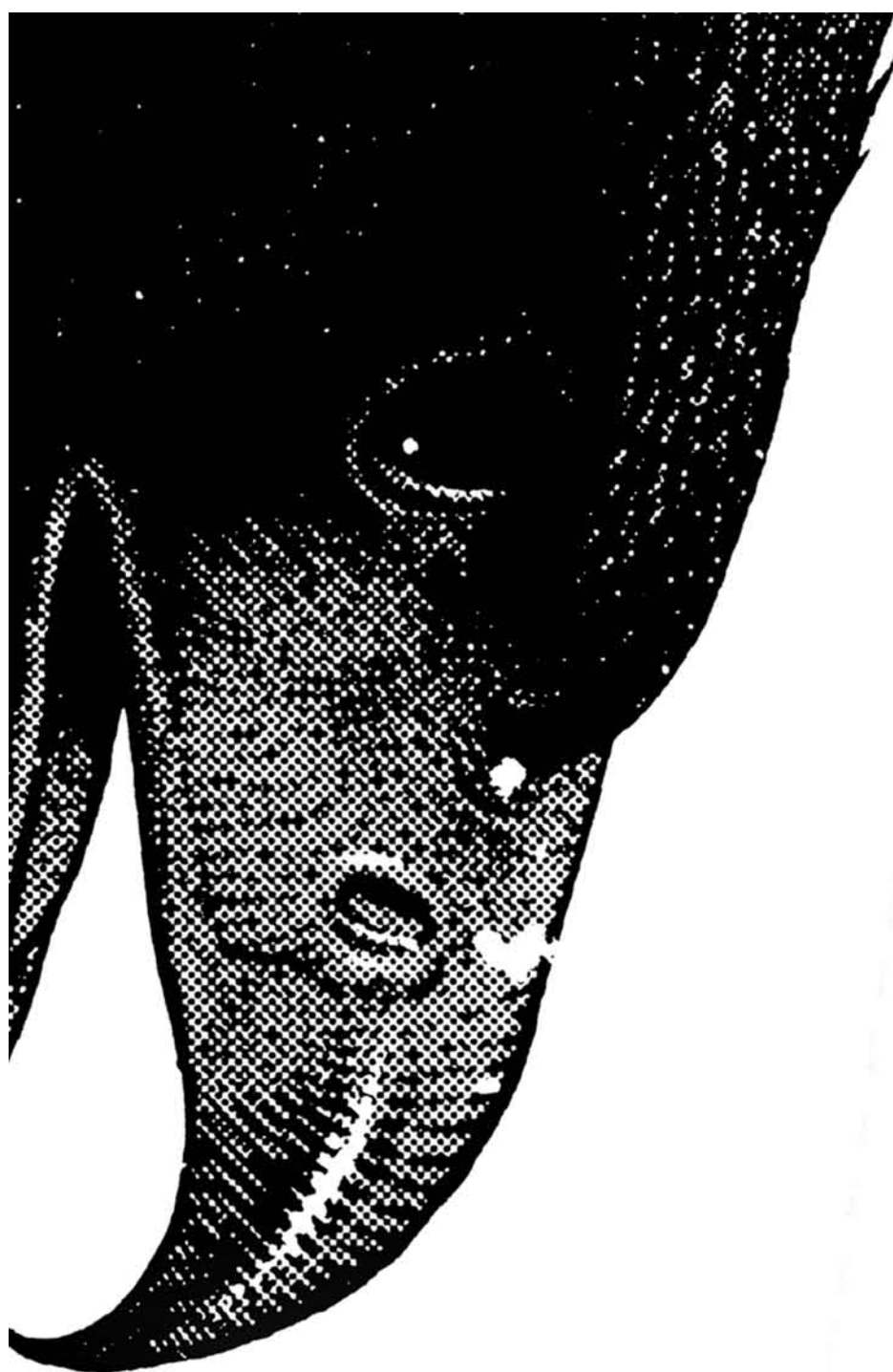












## FOREWORD

It was chance that guided my collaboration and friendship with Moebius. We were destined to create our graphic novels together because of magical forces beyond our control.

During that year's Cannes International Film Festival, the start of preparations for *Dune*, the monumental science fiction movie that I was to direct, was announced. Producer Michel Seydoux and I were driving back to Paris when we decided to stop along the way for a coffee in a gas station that happened to have a rack of books and comics. And there on the rack I noticed one with beautiful drawings of space ships and astronauts. I looked for the name of the artist and it was signed "Moebius." It was then that Michel said, "This is the style I am looking for in my movie, and this is the artist I want to design the costumes!" Then, flipping through the pages of the other nearby comics, I picked up one entitled "The Adventures of Blueberry," drawn by Jean Giraud. "And this is the artist I want to draw the storyboard for *Dune*!" That was all well and good, but how was I going to find these two future collaborators? Three days later I was to have a meeting in Los Angeles with Douglas Trumbull, who created the special effects in 2001: A Space Odyssey. Going with these two artists was indispensable. Only their illustrations would enable me to tell this famous technician exactly how I wanted to make this film.

When I got back to Paris, I went to see my press agent, Jacques Itah, to ask for his help. Just as I walked into his office, Jacques introduced me to Jean Giraud. They were discussing a contract for him to do the poster for some film whose title I've since forgotten. I was stunned to learn that the two men that I was looking for were one and the same, and that he was standing right there in front of me. Giraud is Moebius; Moebius is Giraud. Right off the bat, I invited him to go with me to the United States. Moebius, however, hesitated, saying that he had too much work. I then replied that if he couldn't make up his mind then and there, I would get Philippe Druillet to take his place. Instantly, Jean exclaimed, "I'll go!" It was the beginning of a long and wonderful adventure.

We worked together for almost two years on the script for *Dune*. Moebius drew no less than 3,000 sketches. With inexhaustible energy, after eight hours of work on the film, he would then buckle down for the rest of the day to work on "Arzac." He showed me the first pages and I was overwhelmed. All the more so because they were mute; there was

not a single letter or word balloon to disturb the magnificence of the drawings. Suddenly, and with the greatest respect, I proposed an idea: "Why not draw, over a double-page spread, a single sketch of your hero flying over an entire war, from beginning to end, starting with the invasion by some barbarian warriors in the background and continuing on until the defeat in the foreground?" Moebius loved this vision and drew it, marking our first ever collaboration in the world of graphic novels.

Despite all our enthusiasm, the *Dune* project was unfortunately cancelled. When the film's collaborators, such as H.R. Giger, Chris Foss, Dan O'Bannon, and of course Moebius all found out that the film was not going to be made, they were all quite depressed – so much so that O'Bannon was even confined to a psychiatric clinic (two years later however, he was discharged having written with the script for *Alien*)...Giger (who would later design the sets and the monster for *Alien*) returned to Switzerland... Foss returned to England... Then one evening, I accidentally ran into Moebius at a show featuring the singer Barbara. By the greatest of coincidences, we were seated next to each other. I recognized the hand of Fate. I told him, "Failure is really only a bump in the road. We should take all of our creations for *Dune* and turn them into a series of graphic novels." Moebius answered, "I agree, but it seems very difficult to find a story that would have the power and the creativity of *Dune*." He was right. Unable to hide my disappointment, we parted... That same night, I dreamed that I was flying in intergalactic space. A cosmic being formed by two superimposed pyramids, one black, the other white, was calling me. I moved toward it and found myself submerged in the center. We exploded. And that's how my subconscious mind introduced me to "El Incal" ("The Incal")! Excited, I called Jean, and we debuted the series in the magazine "Metal Hurlant." The first book, "The Black Incal," is today considered a classic in the world of graphic storytelling...

Les Humanoïdes Associés, which published the monthly magazine, then organized a great advertising campaign by launching a new limited edition of small volumes that it called the Mistral Edition. In each book was written: "This title is not for sale. It is being given freely to the loyal fans of Les Humanoïdes Associés." And then Dionnet and Manoeuvre, the magazines' editors, asked us to create a short story for one of these volumes... I want the reader to understand this well: the graphic novel is an industrial art. We, the artists, are artisans; we do our work and are paid per page. This is our *modus vivendi*... Les Humanoïdes Associés was suggesting here we should work for free, without earning authors' rights. It was only for our love for "The Incal" that we accepted.

I suggested to Jean a short story, in five pages divided into five scenes, about a blind boy. Moebius was fascinated with the story but he objected, saying, "It's too short, only five pages. We need to fill 25 pages." I answered, "We will be free from the traditional format of each page cut into panels. We will tell the story in a series of beautiful and solitary illustrations, each taking up an entire page... Opposite each of these pages, you will see the boy's shadow as if he were looking through a window. This will be repeated 18 times. In the first of the illustrations, you will simply see an eagle, small at first, and beginning its hunt. Then when the eagle returns after a long wait, you will start to animate the child and modify the shadows over him as we shall then see him in reverse angle and now as one of the large illustrations."

And thus was born "The Eyes of the Cat." It was distributed for free. Soon, however, they began to sell copies on the black market. Today they go for the equivalent of 300 Euros. Then there was a pirated edition. These pirates made quite a lot of money, while we, Moebius and I, earned immense artistic pleasure from the experience.

In those years, between about 1977-1978, Moebius lived in a house about thirty miles outside of Paris. Whenever he finished a page, he would call me on the telephone. Driven by an irresistible curiosity, I would immediately get in my car to go see him. Every time I saw a new page, I swear on the life of my cat Kazan that I experienced a spiritual pleasure exceeding that of an orgasm. There before my eyes, I had the undeniable proof that comic book art was great art, just as respectable as the paintings hanging on the walls of museums.

In order to see each one of these blessed pages, I traveled thirty miles going and thirty miles coming back. Sixty miles in all!... And I did it twenty-five times. That means that I dedicated 1,500 miles on the road in honor of "The Eyes of the Cat."

I don't regret it one bit. Moebius's art deserves that and much more.

Alexandro Jodorowsky  
Paris – July 29, 2011



