

Meanwhile... Wham!
**Comic and its communication value in
organizational context**

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Summary

This thesis begins with *The Pink Suit*, a comic strip I have created which comments on an interventionist social art project, the Manager in Residence Project. In this respect, this doctorate resides at the nexus between the arts and the social sciences. A personal level the forms the background, me as artist writing a thesis in the management department at Essex Business School. The thesis develops a framework premised on the history and epistemology of both social science and art, placing a particular focus on the field of organizational studies.

Within this tradition I discuss the controversial relationship in western culture between knowledge generated by text on the one hand and pictures on the other. This relationship is exemplified in the comic medium.

Potential of comic is examined, both as a tool for communication about organizations, and as an example of the transgression between different types of knowledge. The interplay between pictures and text in a given comic page is organized by its own medium-specific rules. Comparisons to other forms of visual display of data like maps and organigrams convey both similarities and differences to already established praxis. The sequential manner in which a comic unfolds is fundamental to the means by which its diagrammatic elements underlie its narrative.

Ultimately, I conclude by presenting eight different features of comic which help illuminate issues of communication within organizational contexts.

As regards epistemology and ontology, I suggest ultimately that increasing the awareness and interpretation of visual knowledge both broadens the means by which organizational data can be presented and enhances our understanding of the world.

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I would like to dedicate my doctorate to my father. He died during the course of this thesis. In his last days I was close to him, working on the thesis in the room upstairs to his. He would not have read it; he was a humble carpenter. But he was a man full of energy and passion. He was a very religious man, who shared his faith with whoever he encountered. Without his example and verve for understanding the world in his own way, I doubt very much I would have had the energy to complete this degree. He did not share my way of life, nor did I share his; but we met on common ground of respect and love. May his god bless him.

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