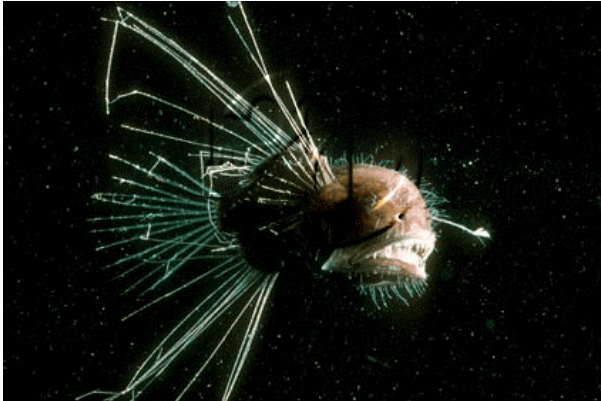


1. Introduction

1.1. The hairy fish



Once upon a time, in a small, but well respected university on an island, not too far away, a fish with hairs around his mouth stared down on a small audience.

I was giving a presentation in front of this projected image. After a few minutes, I reached the point in my talk where the fish became relevant. This was the project of my doctoral thesis and at its core was an objective to see how picture-based messages can be used for communication in organisations: a picture of deep sea fish with a linty face, for instance. That evening a group of us went out for dinner, at which we would prepare for a workshop. At dinner, I sat beside Harro Höpfl, a senior academic at the university. He was easy going and ironic, and together with his impressive track of teaching and publishing, makes him an interesting person to talk to. Referring to a certain deep sea fish, he told me that he had found it hard to concentrate on what I was saying. The picture looked down, and he looked back. He recounted advice his professor had given him when he was a student. It went along the lines: 'Never talk in front of a picture. It is going to distract your audience. Instead, present text; to summarise what you are saying.'

If an experienced academic refers to his old professor, unique gems of wisdom are to be expected. Indeed, it made me think. I was so baffled that I did not pursue this discussion that night. It was fundamentally contrary to the position I had always taken on the subject. To listen to somebody speaking, whilst text was projected in the background, had been always a nightmare for me. If I started to read the text, I struggled to engage with what the person was saying.

Being a visual artist, presentations without text are a logical solution. You show your pictures and you talk along. If it comes to theory, then talking without accompanying images is mostly the solution. Easy.

That a background image adds and changes what is said in front of it was generally clear. But what it does to the text and what follows for the communicated content obviously needs to be clarified.

A background image sets a tone like a *basso continuo* for the spoken text. Motion pictures are all about that mixed media experience. If the same text is spoken in front of two different images, we get two different messages. The space of associations unlocked by the images is a different one.

1.2. Lavatory humour

I add another story here before concluding the tale of Harro and the fish. Some years ago I went to a panel discussion on postfeminism and the body. Four women and one man were expected to be on the panel. The male panellist must have had the impression that no matter what was going to happen he

would be on the receiving end. He decided he would bring along signs: texts on placards. During the discussion he would hold them up at appropriate points. Short quotes, just a few words each time, from his collection of lavatorial poetry were to be written on the placards. I suspect it is unnecessary to explain what happened to the discussion. There was scant opportunity to talk *seriously* about the politics of the borderless body when the signs accompanying the discussion said something about holes or brown substances in lavatory humour style. His signs transgressed the discourse. The ending was quite literally scandalous. The perpetrator was thrown out but, at the same time, half of the audience left with him. Mission completed, discourse subverted, subject appropriated. Certainly, there is a difference between a written sign and a picture. What is similar, is the duration, the sign which stays permanent visible, commenting on a flow of spoken words in front of it. The lavatorial poetry event opens a wider perspective on the text both as a semiotic image and also a purely visual picture. That is something that is presented in the comic strip. In a nutshell, image, story and text.

1.3. Power-point text

Back to what the fish stirred up. Digesting Harro's comment, I began to review my position as artist in an academic context: as a *fish out of water* one might say. At the University of Essex I had met a unique openness and curiosity about the nature of the reciprocity between art and organizational theorising. Artistic methods within academic subject matter

were quite common at Essex, and I had found an open-minded doctoral supervisor (or as we in Germany would say, a *doctor-mother*). Harro and the hairy fish showed me the relation between forms of knowledge and adequate formats of representation. As simple as this sounds, it makes for a good starting point for what I try to do here. And the story continues. As a result of that evening, I came to the conclusion that if I wanted to learn about academic knowledge, one way would be to try to examine text-based PowerPoint presentations in practice.

Consequently, at the next workshop, I produced my first text-based presentation. I read out aloud what was projected on the wall and commented on it.

The workshop was called *Art and Practice*, and I spoke about scientific research contra artistic research. My intention was to explore the method rather than the substance of the presentation and so I chose to present on a project I had undertaken in 2002. The project was called *Feeding Back - Manager in Residence at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, 2002: A real-time experiment, duration 6 months*.

In brief, the title says it all. It indicates how a preoccupation with the way in which economy-orientated thinking shapes culture had led me to undertake the project. Reversing the common Artist-in-Residence schemes, I understood the project as an interventionist comment on the marketisation of society and the influence corporate structures have developed.

The word *experiment* and the wording of the title indicated my understanding of the project as a kind of research project, framed by science and evaluated by scientific reasoning. Altogether it had been a quite successful art project with a reasonable afterlife, but I had never been really happy with what I had made of it. So, almost as a footnote, I asked in my talk what might have happened with a more scientific approach, say, with an organisational studies perspective? Different questions, different methods, different output: in other



The Pink Suit;

2002/2003; 30 pages A4 drawings, ink on paper, 15 prints

In the picture 2004 at Shedhalle, Zürich. in the show *Critique is not enough*.

words, a range of difference in terms of content and format.

A lot of documentation and many artefacts sprang from the project, the most complex outcome being a series of drawings with text embedded in them: indeed, something which looks pretty much like a comic. It has the supplementary title: *The Pink Suit*. I had undertaken this presentation a couple of

times in art exhibitions, mostly in the form of three related lines of frames on the wall. The lower line relates a part of the project, I call it the documentary comic; the middle line consists of printouts of 15 emails which the *Manager in Residence* sent to me during the project; and the top array is a sort of meta-story, commenting on what is going on below.

At the *Art and Practice* workshop at Essex, I talked about the project and its intentions with the purpose of raising issues about media and method. After I had finished, Professor Heather Höpfl, my supervisor, came up to me and said “*Well that’s an intriguing project! It has a lot of potential. You should develop your thesis in that direction!*” This was very flattering at the time, but there is nothing more tedious than revisiting old projects. However, I had a serious discussion with my supervisors, and Heather made a really good case of arguing for the conceptual ideas which underpinned my presentation. Also, it dawned on me that it would fit into other contexts of my work very well. So here I am, reviewing, in every sense of the word, the *Manager in Residence Project* with a specific focus on what comics can say about organizational projects.

Not least, I could see an immediate parallel between the layering of ideas in *The Pink Suit* and the narrative and meta-analyses I was using in both the conceptual framing of the thesis and the structure of the thesis itself.

2. Overview.

2.1. General introductions

2.1.1. In self-reflexive circles

Presented as 'text', this doctoral thesis reflects a series of movements. One of these relates to the shift from art to science understood as moving the artist into the position of "scientist"; another relates directly to the standpoint of the author with all its implications for both authorship and authority. However, this is merely to mark a beginning.

With the development of the comic, traditions of pictorial scripture have re-emerged in the 20th century. This happened in the less restricted area of subculture, and has gained maturity only in the last decades. Its potential is, to a large degree, still untapped.

In this research, I will pose questions like: How can the comic as media describe organisations and processes? What is its potential? How does it compare to a written text on the one hand, and to the use of pictures in organisational studies on the other?

The research is rooted in the discipline of organizational studies. I could address explicitly *either* the comic as potential research tool, or its practical application in organizations. I plan, however, to address them both, since I understand my question as targeting a general type of knowledge residing in the comic. Reinforcing the division between practice and theory is counter-productive if talking about the meeting of different knowledge types, particularly

at this early stage. To develop applicable tools can represent a later step in my work.

In this sense, the comic is not the principal concern of the thesis; it is the catalyst for research into the relation between different fields and their conditions; different definitions, categories and ways of demarcating knowledge. For this purpose, the fields could be called social science and art more 'precise' definitions will be developed later. To equate such fields with text on one hand and pictures on the other is, of course, overly simplistic. However, since this demarcation embodies different perspectives on knowledge, it provides a promising *point de depart* for the research here presented.

I share the sentiment of Peter Reason and John Heron in their slightly fatalistic statement: "While our articulation in this article of a participatory worldview is necessarily expressed in propositional language, we wish to at least point toward the sense of resolution and meaning, of joy and beauty, the image of participation brings to us personally"(1997, 3). In the long run, the term *necessarily* produces even more problems; for the time being, however, I accept it: It is a doctoral thesis and so invariably bound up in the trappings of institutionalization. And, as Heather Höpfl, my supervisor used to say: 'It's only a doctoral thesis'.

2.1.2. On the position of the author

In order to begin exploring the position of the author it is necessary to consider the implications of adopting a positivist methodology. Here, by recursion, in order to establish a position from which to begin, the author must decide to abstract him/herself from the writing, and eliminate him/herself formally from the text. This attempt to step outside the construction of the thesis as a piece of work, as a body of knowledge, as an opus, is in part extremely seductive and at the same time, clearly ludicrous. Yet, part of the appeal of this apparent neutrality is the possibility of fruitful interplay between this supposedly neutral form and the tradition in art, where knowledge is often still organized around an author and his or her personal voice.

The playful move to adopt objective and distant neutrality was designed to make its tradition and the historicity of this style of academic discourse traceable. Clearly, a whole cluster of changes comes with this switch should the author choose to privilege the apparently objective, distant, neutrality of the scientist or to enter the text and claim subjectivity.

"The univocal, third person telling creates a sense of illusory objective neutrality: the reader thinks (or is meant to think) "this is clearly an unbiased, rational point of view. The "implied author" (the one ostensibly narrating the story) appears distantly all-knowing and the narrative a statement of truth." (Barry and Elms, 1997: 436) Consequently,

on the brink of entry into the thesis, is the authorial dilemma: to accept a malformed notion of objectivity which implicitly alienates the author from his/her work or to enter the text, proclaim subjectivity and assume the role of author and artist in the production of the thesis as "work of art". Like Luther "Here I stand. I can do no other" (1621, at the Diet of Worms) I am inevitably bound to my subject matter and cannot extricate myself whatever the temptation of "science" is. It is, therefore, a matter of embracing the thesis as a "work of art".

That said, this thesis can be understood as a reverse ethnological field study. I came from the art world into academia, to learn its rules and methodological paradigms, trying to adopt the proclivities of scholastic language. This study is not tightly specified, but is unavoidably an emergent process. In this sense it comes occasionally close to what has been termed 'auto-ethnography': "a wet term signalling the cultural study of one's own people" (van Maanen, 1988: 106), especially where it reflects the co-production of art and text.

Both my critical position towards the art discourse and an embracing curiosity towards social science inspired this project. If my curiosity developed into a deep admiration for the complexity of social science, it was accompanied by a growing unease with its subliminal discursive power-play, bringing me back to review more positively my own artistic strategies.

Paradigmatic differences between the two fields frequently appear like the subtleties of a ceramic glaze. To break out of the inevitable cycle of observation and self-reflection, these will be attended to, but generally ignored, as perhaps definitional rigidities ought to be. But suppressed or repressed - they remain lurking with all the attendant difficulties of paradigmatic variation.

It is like dealing with moving targets. Paradigms and conventions within the so-called "social science" are blood-splattered battlegrounds in themselves. However, this is comparable to what can be found under the broad term: "art". Parts of social science are much closer to art than to other forms of science, and shared ground is the rule rather than the exception. The definitions of fields and genres move and shift like continental plates and the argument presented here is likewise assumed to be part of that movement.

2.1.3. *Indiscipline: Writing style and attitude*

A traditional form for a doctoral thesis in this field follows a hierarchical argument consisting of proposition, evidence and justification. A thesis appears to imply a linear structure with reinforced argumentation which provides rhetorical buttresses against external attack. In this way, a thesis seems to present a form of structural or defensive closure which, in turn, is what demonstrates mastery of the substantive argument. This 'crafted' approach has some appeal. What is of interest here is the aesthetic of such an approach. This is both seductive and captivating since it is the beauty

of such a form which is intriguing. In the thesis which is presented here, these dimensions of subjectivity and objectivity, of structure and aesthetics, of discourse and of power are played out in varying degrees of compliance, reverence and disregard. Consequently, diversions and progressions from this traditional form of academic writing which draw on largely post-structuralist ideas are reflected in both the issues which this thesis addresses and - to some extent - in the form and content of the thesis itself. Derrida in his provocative essay *The time of a thesis: punctuations* explains that his own thesis was not submitted for many years because he did not wish to submit himself to the thetic form of logocentrism he was deconstructing (Derrida 1983, 42). In a similar way, the intention here was to critique a scientific 'masculine discourse' (Easthope, 1990) in order to open up new perspectives on academic writing. Moreover, the focus on the textual quality originating in the so called *linguistic turn* helped to make the thesis responsive to, and transgressive towards conventional forms (Czarniawska, 1999; Rorty, 1967).

I do claim a three dimensional understanding of the discursive streams of contemporary art and its methods. But I am only about to gain a similar insight in social science, and this thesis constitutes a significant step towards this achievement.

Disciplining of the text: The movement between the form required for a thesis, a thetic presentation: to talk about

it, to both extend beyond it and use that extension simultaneously has left its traces in this work.

The intention of this overview is to provide an insight into the sorts of dilemma which confront the author at the outset of writing a thesis. As the thesis itself will demonstrate, this dilemma is played out in a number of ways, not least in the production of the aesthetic of the thesis as magnum opus. For me, the relationship between the processes that I engage in as a working artist and those which are required of me as author of a thesis are fundamental to the thesis. Overall, my intention here is to identify a concern with the construction of the edifice which is the thesis. Both are characterised by trajectory and outcome; both require specific skills and dispositions; and both are judged by an external audience. Ultimately I reach for an example from the comic genre to lay a comparison for certain paragraphs in my thesis: In chapter nine I will cite Manga comics, and emphasise the fact that they incorporate sections of narrative which seem redundant and do not have an obvious function (in terms of driving a plot). But without them, the piece would never reach its goal in evoking a certain narrative.

2.1.4. On explicitness

However, one distinction between these two means of representation (between art and the requirements of a thesis) is the extent to which the intention is made explicit. This is where major processual differences occur. It is as if in the writing of a thesis all the creative processes must be brought to the surface, carefully examined and analysed and - in effect - the story of the interior monologue revealed and offered up for analysis along with the substantive content. This is done in a way which would not be required of a work of art: indeed, probably can or should never be subjected to such scrutiny by the artist.

My doctoral thesis reaches a balance between both types of text. Structural closure and authority leave enough loose ends and traces of my pondering about it. The text is able to breathe and affords perspective into its own making. Taking the formal and institutional conditions as statement and 'play', ultimately I had to avoid the temptation to actually execute the doctoral thesis in the form of a comic.

Writing as artist in a business school is undertaken at the margins between two fields of knowledge.

But looking on the artistic knowledge of images - and the writer's knowledge of text - I agree with Kress and van Leeuwen: "Yet, just as the grammar creatively employed by poets and novelists is, in the end, the same grammar we use when writing letters, memos and reports, so the 'grammar of

visual design' creatively employed by artists is, in the end, the same grammar we need when producing attractive layouts, images and diagrams for our course handouts, reports, brochures, communiqués, and so on." ([1996]2006, 3) This constitutes a driving force for my research in terms of the cross-fertilization of knowledge between the fields.

W.J.T. Mitchell, who has worked extensively on the reading and interpreting of images, introduces the term *indiscipline* which characterises my text. The term is located at the fringes of disciplines, where they boarder one another; sites of "turbulence and incoherence" (Hill and Helmers (ed), 2004; 18). A discipline is understood as a set of collective practises, insuring continuity. Between this stable set of practices, "indiscipline is a moment of breakage or rupture, when the continuity is broken and the practice comes into question" (ibid). In this sense, this doctoral thesis negotiates between different collective practices, which are in motion themselves, and is *indisciplined*.

The visual as a renewed and overall issue has drifted into different fields of research in the last decades, marked by terms like 'iconic turn' and 'visual turn'. It might be an infeasible and prodigal state of affairs. As Barbara Stafford says about it, this parallel research about images in many different disciplines is not necessarily linked up (Stafford, 1997; 10). The wheel of visual thinking is invented many times at different places.

I do not see the re-invention of the wheel as exclusively negative. The job wheels have to do in different fields is different. To import the wheel into a stone-age society which was not yet ready for it would have destroyed their culture. In this sense pictures have different theoretical and practical tasks. To establish a pictorial meta-standard seems to me a counter-productive option.

It reminds me of the appellative fight Jeffrey Pfeffer and John van Maanen staged some time ago (van Maanen, 1995). Pfeffer complained about the splintered field of Organizational Science, and that in this fractured state it would not go anywhere anymore, but needed trimming and cropping to gain coherent power. If institutional power is the aim, he is undoubtedly right.

But the question should be asked first: what structure of knowledge is seen as helpful for a society? And which related structure of power does that endorse? If chequered and disparate knowledge systems are produced, overview and coherence might be endangered. On the other hand, reductionism decreases, and it offers a knowledge structure applicable to a disparate world. After all, chequered and divided into small sections does not mean unstructured. Rather the opposite is the case, the finer the details, the more emphasis on the connecting structure and the movements is required.

2.1.5. Organizational Studies and Art

My project originates at the point of the mutual interest between Organizational Studies and the Arts. Those working in the field of Organizational Studies have become more interested in the last decade in different ways of researching and thinking about the arts (Barry and Hanson (eds), 2008; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Hoepfl and Linstaed (eds), 2000). Vincent Degot's text from 1986 (*The manager as artist*) is a key point of theoretical germination in this regard. This captured an emerging interest in art and organization studies and has, since that time, been signalled through an increasing preponderance of relevant books, articles and conferences. The SCOS Conference series as well as the Art of Management and Organisation conferences are particularly indicative of this trend.

The interaction between organizations and the arts also grew on the applied side. Artists and those with an artistic self-understanding work in consulting and advising; consultancies themselves have also implemented techniques developed in the arts (Taylor and Ladkin, 2009; Taylor and Carboni, 2008; Darso, 2004).

The osmotic quality of the theoretical Organisational Studies discourse in turn triggered interest from artists (who had found themselves the subjects of research) to look deeper into social science. They found an openness in Organisational Studies to cross-disciplinary cooperation and discovered a fully developed discourse around issues of artistic practice

and aesthetics (Sullivan, 2005; Kimbell, 2001). Following this, practicing artists turned to social science to undertake academic research. My doctoral thesis is part of this transition.

One does not need to go back to the Enlightenment or Leonardo to find people embodying the exchange between science and art. I only have to look at my supervisor, Professor Heather Höpfl, who worked in the theatre prior to joining the academy. Professor Steven S. Taylor (currently at the WPI, Worcester, MA, USA) has a background in theatre and Professor Ken Friedman (currently Dean for the Faculty of Design at the RMIT in Melbourne) is as well known in the world of visual arts as he is in his academic pursuits.

Hence, this move is not new, but it seems that the mutual interest is being pursued with ever increasing vigour. That the Business School of Essex University took me on, having no relevant qualification in a social scientific discipline, only a Master in Fine Arts, is a telling fact about the self conception of the discourse and the persons embodying it. Parts of the Organizational Studies discipline have developed into a flexible, highly adaptive system, colonizing the boundaries of different fields (Barry and Hanson, (ed) 2008; Alvesson, 1993).

The discourse is learning, developing its own rules as it proceeds; conceptually it is located between Business and Sociology, with a foundation underscored by both philosophy and cultural studies. Most significantly, it is open to the

arts. There is on one hand a desire to judge something by its own standards, but also the exploratory interest: to review different methods and contents, and to adapt them into its native academic discourse.

The issue of the intertwined discourses of (social) science and art is further complicated by the fact that art history and theory is the 'science' dealing with arts practice. Forms and methods used in art history differ from the ones used by artists themselves. My paper keeps the focus as much as possible on artistic practice. The terms 'propositional knowledge' and 'presentational knowledge' help define the relation to knowledge as embodied in social science (Heron and Reason, 2001). They lead me to the comparison and interplay of different knowledge types, which lies at the heart of my undertaking.

2.1.6. What kind of art is discussed?

This paragraph defines the type of art referred to in my work, its boundaries and relations to other fields.

In the first chapters, art still plays an important role as field of reference.

Predominantly I focus on what is commonly called *visual arts*. Contemporary practice extends this to various formats, which are not purely visual. I reach for the pragmatic institutional definition. The understanding of *visual art* is at its core identical with what is accepted by the institutions, by the gatekeepers of the museums and the critics into the

contemporary art shows, Biennales and Documentas. That is identical with what is commonly called 'high art'

It is useful to keep in mind the different approaches to the term art. Other uses include the approach taken by those working within cultural studies. Examples here include community building (play theatre together!), personal development (express yourself!), Gestalt therapy, and *artful interventions* in organisations. Parts of it can proceed into the 'high' art discourse, sometimes play in both leagues, but usually they keep apart.

The relation between the high art discourse and the other cultural areas is comparable to free basic research in science to applied research and production in the industries.

Ultimately, to narrow the understanding down to what is sometimes, and problematically, called 'high art' is not a statement of judgement, value or priority. It is simply defining borders in the use of the term, a term I will only use occasionally. A substantial critique of the institutional and discursive practice of the contemporary high art discourse is, although not explicitly, embedded in my work. The very fact that I am writing this thesis at all is one form of critique.

Comic unfolded in the 20th century into a popular form of culture but only slowly found acceptance within artistic discourse (Groensteen 2009). Youth culture and subculture are still defining parts of the commercial comic production.

An earlier connection of the comic to children's books or funny stories has steadily developed to addressing a more mature audience. Comic artist Art Spiegelman's *Maus* was the first graphic novel to signal wider reputation for the media by gaining the Pulitzer Prize in 1992. Others have followed. This is a sure sign of the coming of age of the media.

If I take an historic approach, as David Kunzle does in his substantial work on the history of comics, I look into the relations of picture-based stories, from altar paintings to medieval story tellers on fairgrounds operating with pictures, and even image based script forms like the ones the Maya used (Kunzle, 1973).

But it is not constitutive for the media and its function, which is at the centre of my investigation. I will look at the relation between picture and text in general, but most specifically, in its special constellation as evidenced within the medium of the comic.

Having outlined some of the general and personal conditions for this thesis, I will move now to give an overview of its chapters.

2.2. The chapters

In what follows, I provide an overview of the content of the chapters.

I have already made general remarks about the intellectual 'position' of the doctoral thesis in relation to the social sciences, organizational studies and art discourse. I understand the thesis as building a horizontal - rather than vertical - structure of thought. It endeavours to compare and combine different types of knowledge.

Chapter three revolves around conventional and institutional conditions of the thesis. Broadly, I embrace a critical perspective but examine this approach in relation to both science and art. Although a struggle for normative power might be expected, ultimately one recognises a mutual benefit in combining science with art.

Chapter four examines and reprints *The Pink Suit*, the comic exploring the Manager in Residence project. The reproduction is framed by loose comments and insights, which break open the body of the comic as a fertile field for research. The techniques and potential demonstrated here is scrutinised in detail later. The project itself unfolds within the comic, while the accompanying text only adds a few lines about participation, inversion and mimicking as artistic strategies; as methods of the project. The reader should leave the chapter with keeping the comic in the back of the mind.

In chapter five, my thesis is contextualised in a broader historic perspective. Within the distinction between Enlightenment and Romanticism, the ruling paradigms and

conventions for science and art production here formulated. The inability to deliver a credible narrative of the world was offset by the Romantic invention of new myths: signification was incorporated into the world. Exploring the seemingly impossible task to bridge the rupture caused by the paradigms of knowledge production in science and art. In this context, this doctoral thesis is a Romantic project itself. The chapter will conclude with Jaques Ranciere's notion of the aesthetic regime (Ranciere [2003] 2007). He re-interprets Modernism with a special focus on the role of the arts. Ranciere goes back to the 18th century to draw different conclusions in a way which redefines Modernism. His position opens a way to understand an artwork, such as a comic, as both autonomous work and contextualised organizational tool.

A thorough examination of definitions and methods is undertaken in chapter six. My unease with just settling on a pre-defined epistemological paradigm leads me to speculate on alternatives. Starting off with Burrell and Morgan's famous grid of research paradigms ([1979]1988) I move on to Stanley Deetz (1996) and his critique of the grid. I then focus on the contribution of Martin and Nakayama (1999) and ultimately explore cross-paradigmatic possibilities. I take up their suggestion to use dialectic as method and as paradigmatic position at the same time.

The extended epistemology offered by Heron and Reason (2001) with its different knowledge types is then called upon, and the dialectic they propose between presentational knowledge

and propositional knowledge is mobilized to underscore this thesis.

In the second part of the chapter I distinguish between 'reading' and 'seeing' a picture and propose the notion of 'viewing' as a combination of the two. I do not 'read' a comic; I 'view' it. Reading and seeing represent different types of information-retrieval in terms of pictures, and are related to presentational and propositional knowledge. The term 'visual grammar' is then introduced (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996]2006), and its knowledge is offered as holding the key for a deeper 'seeing', or 'seeing-in'.

As the joint use of both types of information-retrieval, *viewing* is related to empathy as a way in which to scrutinise organizations, as Antonio Strati has implied. Empathy lets me return via Polanyi's notion of 'tacit knowledge' to the arts: Empathy, or 'indwelling', was - and is - an artistic strategy of perception.

Cultural conditions for understanding pictures as information constitute the focus for chapter seven. The historical rupture between pictures and text in our culture is followed. It is also defining for the medium the comic. Traditional western iconoclasm is linked to epistemological questions, and has in the long run constrained the development of a framework for visual knowledge. This is seen as the reason why levels of visual literacy are relatively low (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996] 2006).

Lessing's text *Laokoon*, which is a founding text of media theory, demonstrates this separation.

I will then look on pictures as sources of information in different research contexts, particularly organisational studies and visual sociology.

Having differentiated presentational from propositional aspects of picture, I turn in the last part of the chapter to focus on language, which is governed by the same divide. The Linguistic Turn has developed a focus on the formal aspects of language. Language can no longer be understood as transparent media and its presentational quality has become part of an advanced discourse in research. That puts it, structurally, on equal footing with pictures; it is just the abilities and proportions that are different.

In chapter eight I explore the limits of visual representation in relation to organizational studies. This is demonstrated through the critique of two works. Edward Tufte's researches the efficiency of visual data displays. He praises knowledge that enhances presentation with the help of visual grammar. But his position denies presentational knowledge as a source of information, in trying to render pictorial displays transparent. Complex visual displays developed as so called *Information Murals* by American consultant and researcher Robert Horn, form the second part of the chapter. They demonstrate the potential of a spatial distribution of information. Unfortunately, the laudable project is overthrown by the missing knowledge of visual grammar.

In chapter nine, I engage with the comic explicitly. Both history of the comic and theory of the comic, as rather young fields of research, are introduced. I define the comic as constituted by visual units in deliberate sequence, spatially arranged in order to communicate. Balloons, frames, captions and the other units of the comic and their basic interaction are examined. Making sense between the units and constructing the narrative is called *closure* (Groensteen 2007, 41; McCloud 1993, 60). I suggest a relation to the sensemaking process known in organisational studies. The chapter ends with a review of two books analysing the comic. Thierry Groensteens' "The System of Comics" ([1999]2007) and Stephan Packard's "Anatomie des Comics" (2006), build the basis for my understanding of how the comic operates. Groensteen extends a basic visual grammar of pictures towards the special features characteristic of a typical comic page. Cross-referencing the units to one another through 'braiding' within the spatio-topological system configured by a comic page is a process referred to by Groensteen as 'arthrology'. Packard, in turn, lends insight to the psychological involvement of the comic viewer through an indexical mirror function provided by the cartoon characters.

In this chapter I analyse in depth examples from the comic literature. A few telling examples have been chosen, ranging from of Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* to a page in Chris Ware's graphic novel *Jimmy Corrigan* (Schulz [1978] 2000; Ware 2000).

The relationship between the underlying visual grammar and the unfolding of the narrative is scrutinised. I demonstrate how time is represented in a comic story; how closure works; and how a comic page can build a narrative map.

This analysis builds the foundations for the conclusions in chapter eleven. Eight features are suggested which can be of use in the visual display of organisations: 1. Mapping: Fast orientation, showing constellations, offering layered deciphering; 2. Spatial cross-referencing; 3. A memory enhancing function; 4. Contextualisation; 5. Management of ambiguity; 6. Depiction of movement; 7. Visual Modulation of text; and 8. Empathy.

Ultimately, the last chapter summarises what the thesis has contributed to knowledge. An epistemological conclusion is drawn. If presentational knowledge and its visual form are taken seriously as sources of information, it holds a promising array of possibilities. Visual literacy nonetheless is a precondition of its use.

However, the dialectic relation between presentational and propositional knowledge is a movement which can be observed in some respects when viewing a comic.

3. Institutions and Discourses

Chapter three focuses more closely on institutional questions arising from the fact that this doctoral thesis is undertaken by an artist in a business school. Political conditions and rules of the discourses and genres determine the questions asked and the answers provided. This self-referential deconstruction is a basis on which to make hegemonic narratives transparent. What happens between textual and non-textual forms of argumentation? I will claim that the institutional shift towards contextualisation of non-textual work has long term consequences for the arts. In turn, it is going to influence science.

The decision to write the thesis as an artist within the context of a Business School is the inversion of the expansion of doctoral study into art academies in the last two decades. I examine reasons for - and impacts produced by - this dislocation, and the implications this has for the positioning of the argument in this thesis.

3.1. The doctorate enters the arts

In this section the focus is predominantly on the UK, but other European countries are moving in a comparable direction since there is a predisposition towards pan-European harmonisation in higher education. The *Joint Declaration of European Ministers of Higher Education* in Bologna on 19 June 1999, dubbed the *Bologna Process*, has lent this transition significant support.

Traditionally, a doctoral thesis as institutional certificate in higher education is made to secure quality in education. Taught doctorates, professional doctorates, practice-based doctorates: The need for professional distinction in practice and rising internationalisation is met by the offers of universities. In turn, they are under pressure through changing policies in university funding (Frayling, 1997; Bone, 2002). Universities are hit by an undercutting neo-liberal agenda in the Bologna process (Dillemuth, 2007). This increases the pressure to generate accountable results in research and publishing. In addition to this prioritisation for accountable results, the accompanying standardisation of the process further endangers and impoverishes the scope of research and practice.

Standardisation in education has reached also the arts, gaining speed after Bologna. A certificate like the doctorate originated in the sciences, but later expanded into art education. Institutions of higher art education have had to become more academic with courses taught in a way comparable to other academic disciplines. That seemed as the only way to maintain their place in the Bologna process on a par with other educational institutions, thereby ensuring continued access to funding.

The drive behind the growth of doctorates in art education, therefore, is not a move initiated from the arts; it is an institutional process (Sullivan 2005, 82-83). Ironically, many of these art institutions have in the last few decades made a

significant effort in developing their own appropriate teaching standards which are less 'academic' in the traditional sense (Lesage, 2009).

Art education had in some respect drifted away from a commonly comprehensible position in general education. "Art programmes needed to be more than a private rite of passage of personal discovery" writes Greame Sullivan, who explores artistic research and art education, predominantly focusing on the US (Sullivan 2005, 83). In an institutional sense this statement is obviously true; but as part of a broader understanding of how culture constitutes itself, it is questionable. It raises the crucial question as to what knowledge types are decisive for quality in the arts and for society at large.

What happens through the Bologna process to art education has caused a heated debate amongst institutions of higher education. The term *artistic research*, in particular, has become a buzzword. A number of periodicals on the subject have been founded such as *MaHKUzine*, *Journal of Artistic Research* based at the Utrecht School of the Arts, *Art Monitor: The Swedish Journal for Artistic Research* and the UK based *ART & RESEARCH*.

This movement is bound to have influence on art practice. In the not-too-distant future most key positions in universities and other institutional art practices are likely to be occupied by artists who have obtained doctorates. This in turn means that the influential positions in art production and education are going to be filled by people with doctorates.

They have undergone a process which could be dubbed 'civilising treatment', whereby the romanticised 'wild' artist is juxtaposed with the 'civilised' scientist. They are likely to prefer similar positions. The undergone rite of passage to write a doctorate, will shift peer group characteristics and re-define success in the arts. This is undoubtedly to influence art production and perception in the future. As so often, a political and institutional shift is the cause for changes in the arts (Heidenreich, 1998).

Of course, there is an alternative perspective. That new criteria are needed to judge a doctorate within the arts has been discussed (UK Council for Graduate Education' 2009), and complaints have been raised that the standards of the usual PhD procedures have been macerated. I could read the process as an infiltration of scientific practice through other fields. What some understand as weakening, others see as broadening research approaches, giving way to a more complex understanding and widening of epistemological issues. The old struggle for normative power in a society between different formats of thinking, and the self-reproduction of institutions shape this process.

3.2. Practice-based doctorate - Masters in their own field

If the doctorate was simply a certificate of 'highest skills in a subject' much of this discussion would be obsolete. Each field has always set its own certified quality standards. To become a master of a handicraft one has to stand up to a group

of recognised other masters - traditionally within the guild - in the field. It takes a few years - and significant financial investment - to get such master certificate as master craftsman, in, for instance, plumbing or carpentry. Only once this level of competence has been reached, can the plumber or carpenter begin trading formally. In Germany it is still like this today, and is seen often as constraint on the free market. But a doctorate in the arts is not like a master certificate, given by masters of the own field. Theoretical context and methodology is the key which links it into a extant network of knowledge. Different qualities are required. As Paul Feyerabend states in *Science as art* (1984), Greek philosophers, namely Plato, have introduced the demand for conceptualising research results and discoveries. Only if the terms are conceptualised according to certain rules of logic and argumentation, they are acceptable. This is not the case if a group of master plumbers allows a new member into their circle. It is the case for doctorates now undertaken within the arts.

The new doctorate in the arts is often accompanied with the term *practice-based*, which can mean to produce and present a body of artwork, accompanied by a theoretical text.

From one perspective this does not seem to be different from the way many research-based doctorates in other fields are handled. A hypothesis is proposed, and experiments undertaken (in a laboratory, a hospital or elsewhere) and then results published and conclusions delineated. There is a body of

theory upon which this method is founded which also facilitates the distribution of findings into the surrounding knowledge structure. If I see the production of a painting as an 'experiment', I could legitimately say there is not much difference in the way practice-based doctorates in the arts are handled.

But the work is only made visible in a sense by its contextualisation, and rendered invisible if it does not appear in the sphere of textual argument. A study of the Council for Graduate Education in the UK stated in 1997:

"Practice based doctoral submissions must include a substantial contextualization of the creative work. This critical appraisal or analysis not only clarifies the basis of the claim for the originality and location of the original work, it also provides the basis for a judgement as to whether *general scholarly requirements* are met" (Emphasis in original, Frayling (ed) 1997, 14). The contribution to the knowledge in the field is dedicated in substantial parts to its contextualisation. The demand to accompany the art work with a text-based conceptualisation of itself has met fierce resistance from many sides, as demonstrated at the conference *Artistic Research and the Bologna Process*, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 2007 (Lesage, 2009).

It goes without saying that contextualisation is not the work itself. I will talk later in depth about text as the hegemonic code of our culture, and the arising problems for other forms of message. I see this as one of the central reasons for the route the described development is taking. The positivist

backdrop for science within the described political pressure adds from the other side to the diminishing of the value of different types of messages in their own right.

If, as in practice-based research in art departments, a painting and theoretical text accompany one another, they are usually judged separately. It is comparable to a person with two professions. For example, one person may be both a master of plumbing and an architect. Both professions are busy building houses, but in different ways. The theory department gives a score on the thesis/text, and the art department on the paintings in the degree show, and the scores are aggregated, as it was in the MA in Fine Art Media I received from the Slade School of Fine Art in London in 2002.

My doctorate is not undertaken in an Art Department, but at Essex Business School, in the field of management. In this respect, it figures as a comment on the question of divided competences. But prior to everything else, it has to live up to the demands of the format. It has to live up to the 3.2 mm left margin on the page, indicated by the head of library. It has to stand up to a much larger array of scientific standards, from formalities like the quotation system to a certain style of argument. It has to live up to the standards of knowledge expected at doctoral level.

The institution - the university - is bigger, and claims higher political importance than the plumber guild, at least as long as the toilets are not clogged. But the question remains the same: Why should one type of knowledge be declared superior to another?

3.3. Theory as art practice. The doctorate as art.

So why should those practices be separated? The inclination to understand theory as part of the art practice has a long tradition. It did not start with conceptual works from the 1970s like Art & Language, Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner or Mel Bochner. One of the much earlier proponents was Friedrich Schlegel, who called for critique and theory originating in a single work. Pushing this further, he called for the use of the forms from the work in its theorizing, so that theory and critique can and should be read as art pieces as well, such that they reach a sort of double function. This technique he called *Progressive Universal Poetry* (Schlegel [1796 - 1801]1990).

A more recent position which has left a footprint in art history, and also constitutes an obvious referent for my thesis, is the artist group Art & Language. They understood their conceptualising and writings as their art practice from 1966 onwards. In their practice they came close to sign theory and semiotics, and turned toward theoretical reflections about art and art institutions. The text/theory products were shown in exhibitions or printed in catalogues. In 1972 at the height of their activity they participated at the *Documenta* in Kassel¹. They existed in various groupings, and their remnants were listed for the Turner Prize in 1986.

¹ consisting at the time of Atkinson, Bainbridge, Baldwin, Hurrell, Pilkington and Rushton and the then America editor of Art-Language Joseph Kosuth

But, and as tempting as it may be, to declare this doctorate an art piece in this tradition is misplaced. In fulfilment of the terms and conditions of the doctorate it can be no more than an ethnographic excursion of an artist into another field. I have to, therefore, reconceptualise the bold position I suggested in the first chapter. But this is no retreat. The field I have explored over the last few pages has left traces in my work, and I too have left traces on the that field. It is just one more move in the dialectic pondering between the positions. It is destined to continue.

A second point of reference in the art system is worth calling upon, especially when the *Manager in Residence Project* comes into focus.

The *Manager in Residence* was understood as a *Real time experiment*, being branded as performative practice. The project turned the participants into actors, and their appearances into stage-acts. To separate a part of the world, a place, a moment, an act, a movement and to label it art has become a standing practice since Marcel Duchamp coined the term *Ready Made* in 1916 and selected ordinary everyday objects to be art objects. Choosing, framing, and labelling are parts of the path towards immersing it in the art context.

The same could be said about being a doctoral student. The time of affiliation with the University, the interactions, communications and acts are a type of performative practice. To undergo this ritual of institutional domestication can be understood as formal undertaking, and can be read in its presentational quality, leading to propositional insights

appearing in the final paper. The thesis is its integral and driving part; the materialisation of the performance. In this sense it is similar to the *Pink suit*, the documentary and commentary comic made about the *Manager in Residence* project.

I have demonstrated the institutional pressure and possibilities between which my doctorate unfolds. Spending some time looking at the counter position, the newly established doctorate in the arts has helped to demonstrate the tensions. From the media side, non textual message versus textual message, and from the structural side, statement versus its contextualisation, are the two crossroads to be kept in sight as my study progresses.

Between these competing influences, a fertile soil has formed, fuelled by curiosity and resistance. That interest developed from Organisational Studies within the wider context of social science, as well as from the arts side.

I will move on to explore where it stems from historically. But before this, I will dive into the different waters of practice, and introduce the project of the *Manager in Residence* through the lens of the comic, which was the motivation for this doctorate.

4. The Manager In Residence Project.

4.1. The Pink Suit

This chapter explores *The Pink Suit*, the comic revolving around and documenting the *Manager in Residence Project* (MiR for short). I reprint it and group around it reflections on comic and the project itself. As a whole, the chapter sketches out the starting point for the thesis residing in the Project and the related comic.

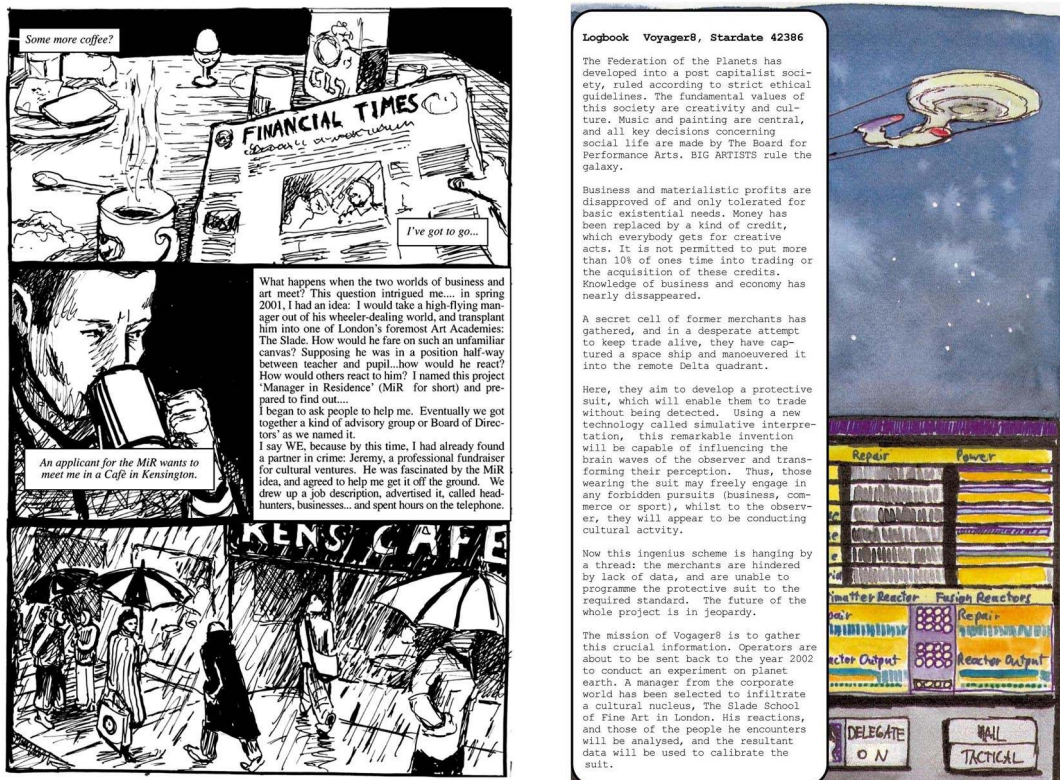
The *Pink Suit* is a partial extension of the project, functioning simultaneously as both its documentation and comment. It consists of two connected comics, a documentary and commentary series of 15 pages each. A double function is posed by the work: standing alone as art piece and being linked with the Manager in Residence Project.

The Manager in Residence Project was understood as participatory art project, bringing a business manager into an art school. I initiated the project as artist, being masters student at the time, in the tradition of interventionist art practice. This type of practice reaches back to the Dada-movement in the early 20th century, but gained wider recognition with the emergence of performance art in the late 50s and during the Fluxus movement in the 60s.

Socially engaged art which interpreted interventions as social sculptures like the Artist Placement Group in the UK in the 60s and 70s, Josef Beuys in Germany and later the so called New Genre Public Art in the US in the 80s, established interventions as artistic tool (Bishop 2006). New

contributions have been made in the 90s with so called Service-Art, and Nicolas Bourriaud has coined with *Relational Aesthetics* the reference term for its contemporary understanding (Bourriaud [1998]2002). Remarkably, his book was published at a similar time to Antonio Stratis' *Organizational Aesthetics*, both approaching the same phenomena but from different perspectives.

Interventionist practices in organisations have become a special interest in organisational studies in the last two decades. Parallel to such practices, similar tools have been used and developed from various consultants (Darso 2004; Taylor/Ladkin 2009; Meisiek/Hatch 2008; Barry/Hanson (ed) 2008).



4.1. The first two pages of the comic are shown below. The documentary part on the left; the commentary part on the right
In exhibitions they would be shown differently, as described in the introduction in figure 1.2.
All ink on paper, each 22 x 15 cm; 2002/03

If the MiR was initiated as an interventionist project, the crucial question is: What belongs to the project and where are its borders?

The subtitle: *Real-time-experiment, duration: 6 months* indicates the timeframe. Where are the borders in terms of space, of persons, of activities? In terms of involved persons, there was Jeremy Goldstein, who helped with fundraising and communication, there was a board of directors consisting of four people supervising the project, myself and the Manager in Residence.

The activities took place at the Slade School of Fine Art, part of the University College London. The project had no legal structure, but the activity was deliberately structured. There was a goal: I wanted to make observations without pre-structured expectation. Observations and interaction where likely to lead to a result which could be communicated within the art context as an art product. Communication was part of it, any personal communication or in public media. And finally, the financial element to the project constituted a defining part of the project.

My reprint of the comic goes along with a contextualised reading, adding to it an understanding to help unlock the project and to sketch an initial account of what is of interest in the comic as medium. I begin with the documentary part, to give an impression of the project. The drawings were not planned to be reproduced in a comic book which would have required designing them as double pages. They where planned to be exhibited in frames in the gallery, as shown in figure 1.2.

4.2. The Pink Suit Comic - The documentary part



On the first page the observer gets an overall impression: The drawing is black and white. In terms of style it is simple, succinct, and realistic. The lettering has not been written by hand, but unusually for a comic, it uses a mechanical

typeface. A classic *Times* typeface is giving a serious, literary impression.

I introduce myself, as acting figure in the story, locating the project within autobiographic comics. The establishing first shot of a coffee table shows me reading the *Financial Times*, and constructs a clear 'I have to hurry off' situation, lending the narrative a significant pace from the outset.



On the second page we meet the Manager-in-Residence to be. The narrative slows down by zooming in to his face over three panels. The drawing reproduces stereotypes about a cool and smart banker. Even the wallpaper has pinstripes reflecting the traditional

attire of a city gent. The off-scene text supports the impression. He looks from right to left, so in the opposite direction to the artist on the first page. They face each other.

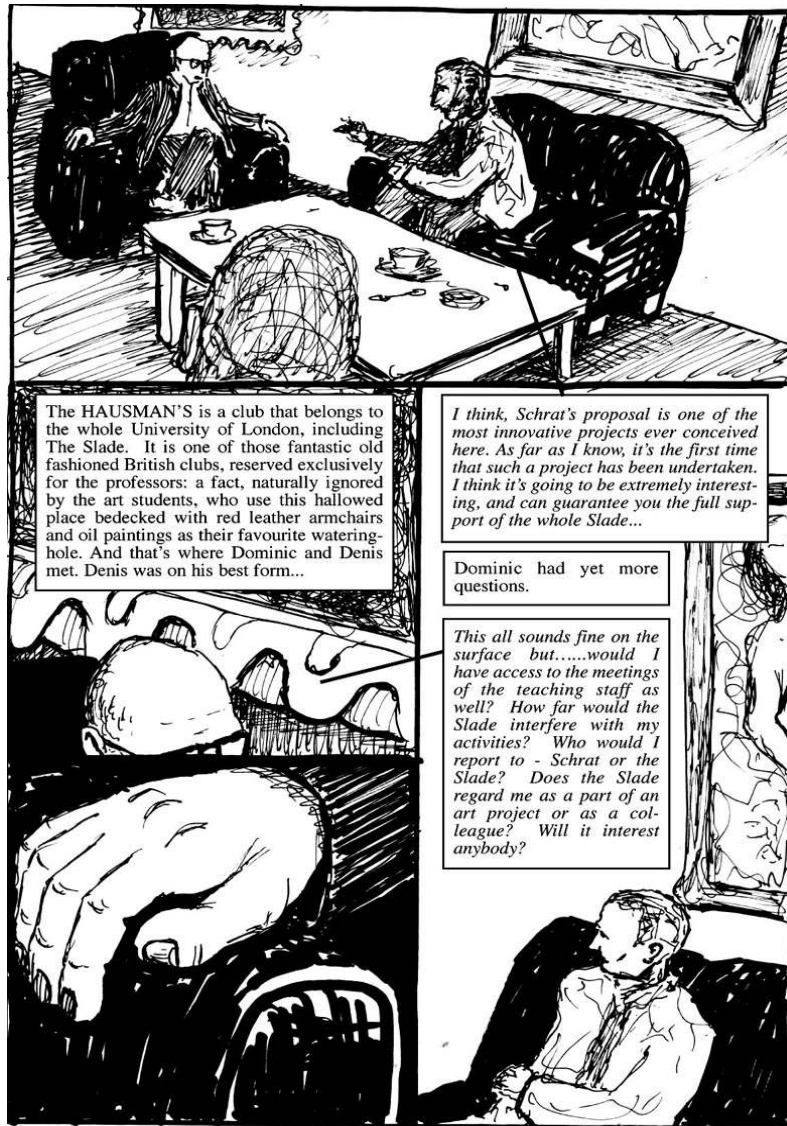
Then, the manager, asks a series of questions, crucial to the project. They are on the table, known and - probably - thought about. The Manager is shown as the active part in this communication, questions posed, but no answers given. Off-

scene text only gives a summary on a different level: The artist tries to fulfil the role he believes he should play. It ends with the short sentence: "He paid for my chocolate". In the flow of narration, this sentence is a full stop to the page. It talks about money and the typical struggle as regards who pays, who is in power. It paraphrases the artist's position as being 'paid for'. This is, of course, a mechanism in which the artist is stereotyped.



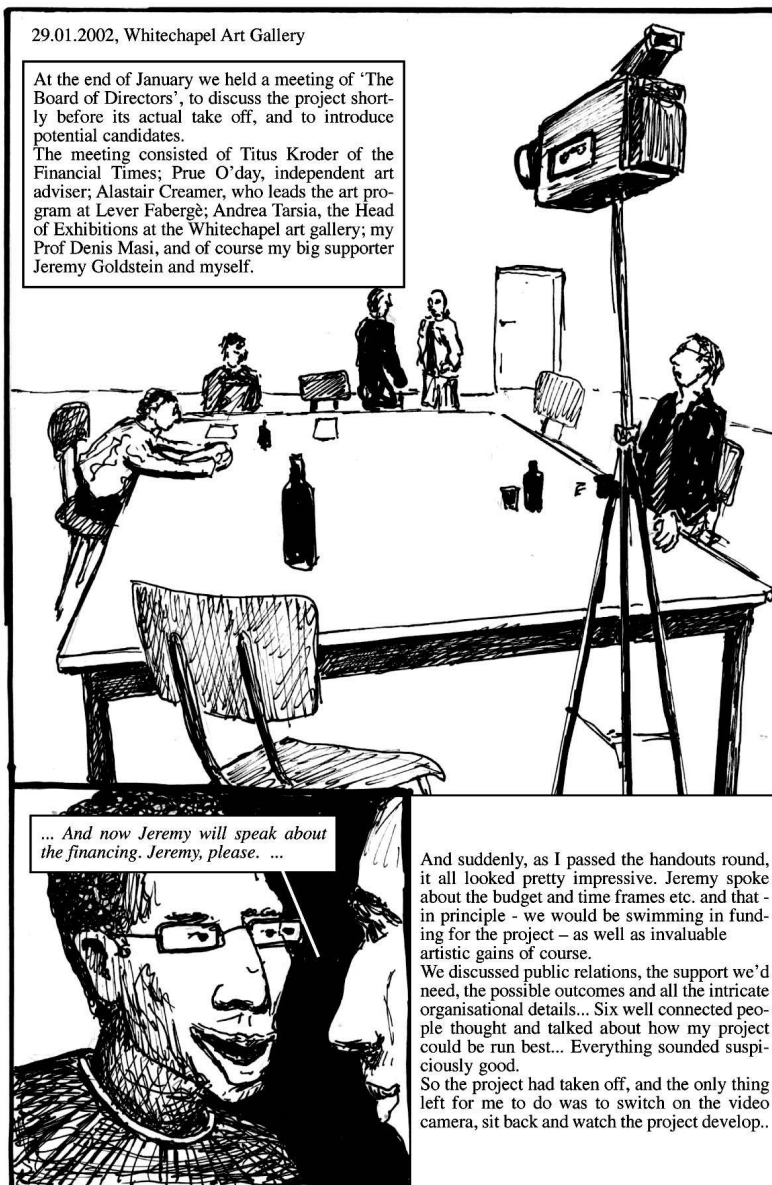
The place is shown, which will host the project, the Slade School of Fine Art in London: a neo-classicist building with columns. Below, we get a sense of the casual style and context of the conversation between professor and student, the latter shouting down from the staircase. It

tends toward an illustrated story, where the images are used to organize the text. The project is not unusual for an art school, and is embedded into the 'anything-goes' policy. The misspelling of the press release opens the gap between professional management - using a press release - and the dilettantish way of pushing it ahead despite a lack of competences. The project paves its way by putting even the director in the yoke. That the project is not under control, but rather controls its path becomes a subliminal element running through the story.



The institutional contact takes place in the old University Club. The first frame establishes a scene of comfortable conversation. Appropriately, the scene is illustrated with armchairs, golden frames, paintings and the gesture of

the manager's hand on the armrest. The professor, who has offered himself as point of contact to the institution is shown as friendly and supportive to the project. He seems to be silenced by the questions, towering in the frame physically over him.



Place and date is stated on this page, providing an official, documentary frame: 'A big London gallery'. A room with a large, near empty table gives an unsettling impression. People are disconnected. A camera dominates the page, adding to the discomfort. The

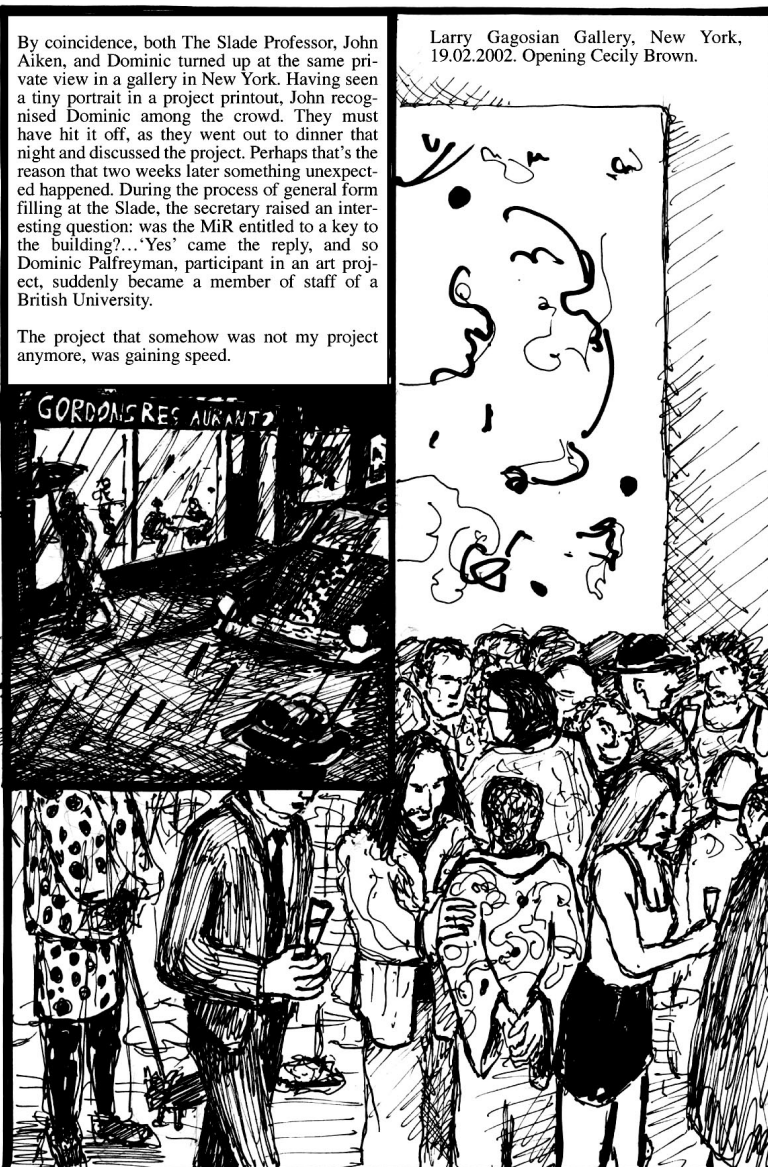
observer is in the distance, behind the camera. The off-scene text details the name and profession of the persons present. As stated in the off-scene text, to turn everything in an official looking undertaking was the plan of the event itself, as it was of this comic page. The project is created through symbolic events like this. To put together a *Board of Directors* mimicked corporate scenarios. Besides this symbolic function, it initiated connections for the project, and established an organisational form. It constructed a backdrop of power, against which the MiR was supposed to read himself.



A six frame grid of this page shows only fragmented insights. The top right frame and second tier left frame copy the perspective we had on the former page, so the camera sits in the same place on the page as before and performs a visual rhyme. The page

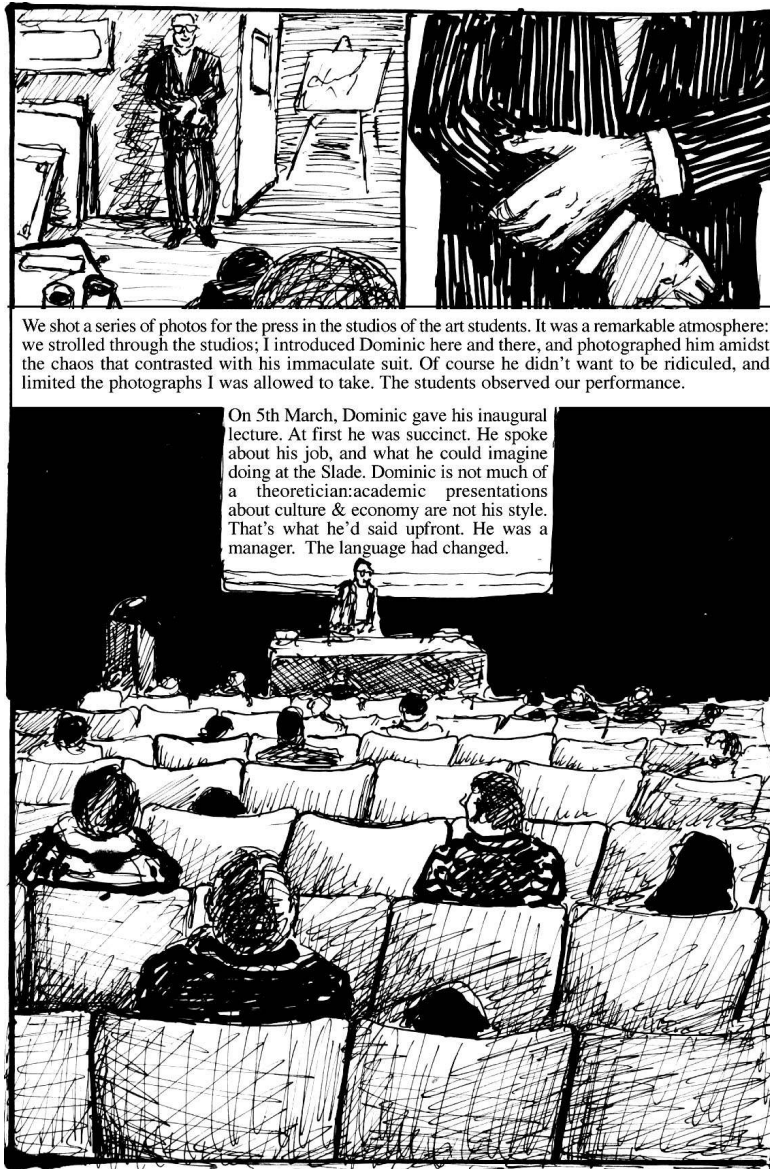
is bright, clearly structured and objects appear like signs, isolated on a white background. We see person looking, a camera, a part of a table, a speaking mouth. Only the manager, whose pinstripe suit is used as identifier, sits in the corner below and observes the fragmented scenery and offering comment.

The page starts with the introduction of the MIR to be, and ends with him being 'in the project'.



This page opens the context into the art business. For those in the know, this is one of the richest and 'hippest' galleries in New York. Cecily Brown, a young and well regarded painter was educated at the same academy in which the project is undertaken. The Slade director is there

as well as the manager. A hip crowd is depicted, probably the Manager front left, if we follow the pinstripe suit indicator. The figure's head is cut off, but appears then in another frame, outside, in a rainy street. The context of the rainy street might be the restaurant the two went into earlier. It figures as counter-position dark/light and outside inside, referencing the rainy street on the first page. The text tells an anecdote about the project taking on its own life, going further than planned. The artist is shown as observer, who looks rather surprised and again ingenuous.



The drawings on top focus on the theme of the manager in an artist studio, signalled by the easel in the background. His hands do the talking. The perspective below puts him in the centre of the whole page, between two black blocks, from which escape is

impossible. Behind him the text, in front of him the auditorium. It is the same gesture of enclosure as in the drawings above, where he stands in front of a wall, blocking himself with half crossed arms.

He speaks in front of a large university auditorium in which a limited number of people have showed up. The page focuses on two types of communication within the project. Shooting photos for the press is a symbolic act, as it sees external public communication as part of the project. Internal communication takes place as a lecture to students and staff.

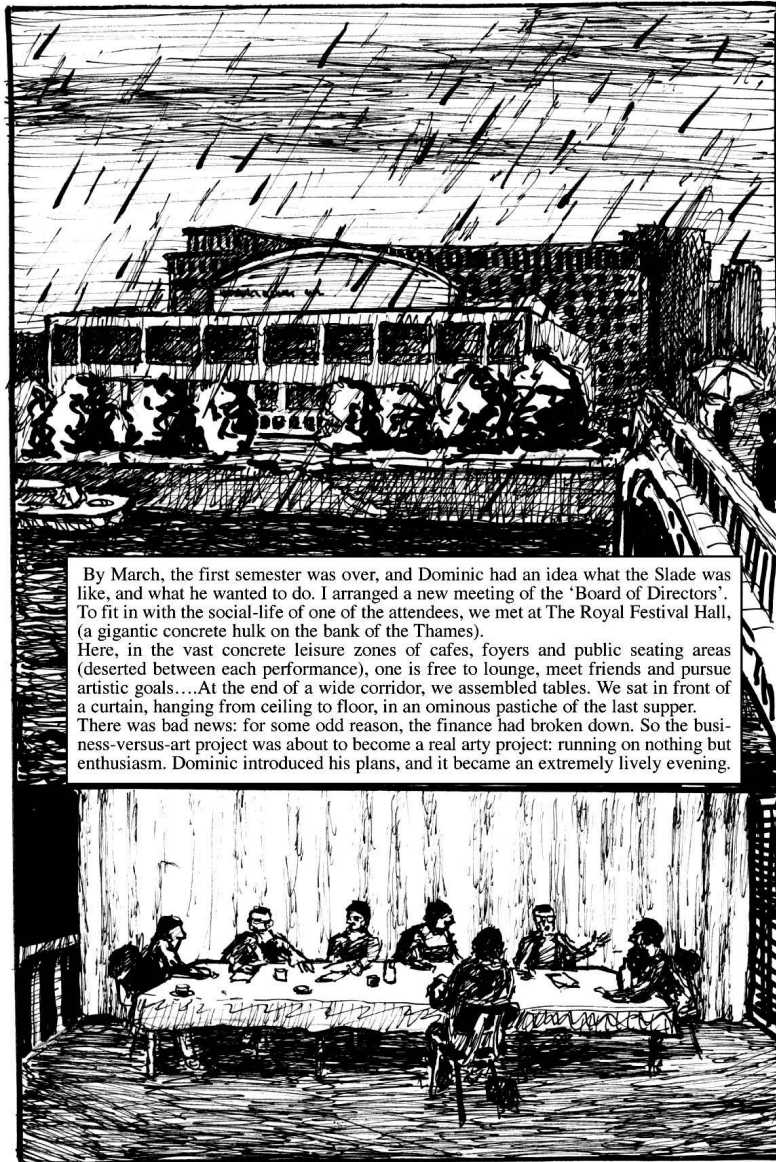


Finally, the manager is at the Slade and we see that he is actually meeting students.

A staircase cuts through the frames and the same image connects the upper left and lower right frames. Two art students in their outfits on one side and the Manager in

pinstripe suit on the other.

Two drawings, bound by visual rhythm, show him meeting students, implying that this is a regular occurrence.



Once again we have a rainy outdoors scene, this time at the Royal Festival Hall. The second image gets us inside and shows a table at which people are sat in the distance. The scene of the Last Supper springs to mind, and this is stated in the text. This text/image

tautology presents an interesting scenario. It says: *I* (the comic speaks now) *do not believe in the reader being able to read visuals*. There is a didactic impulse in the overall take; a documentary impulse, seeking to convey a message. Images are at times silenced by overriding explanatory text. The board of directors is this time seen together, having formed a group. The dramatic realisation that there is no money, symbolised by the Last Supper and the rain, gets buried among other statements.

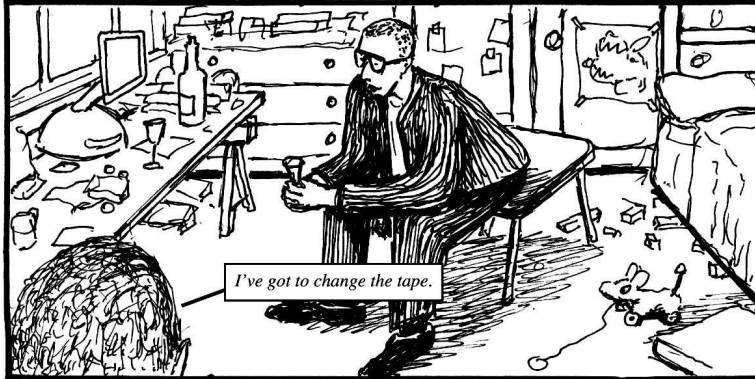


On this page the manager and myself are going to meet a professor of the Slade. The scene is again one of rain. The dialogue drifts and settles on the last of the three panels. The text box is positioned between the two faces, preventing any visual connection

between the two characters. The professor is lent authority by virtue of the fact that his face is shown in its entirety, whilst the Manager's face is only visible from the side. Bruce, the professor, tells a story about the relation between advertisement and so called 'free' art.

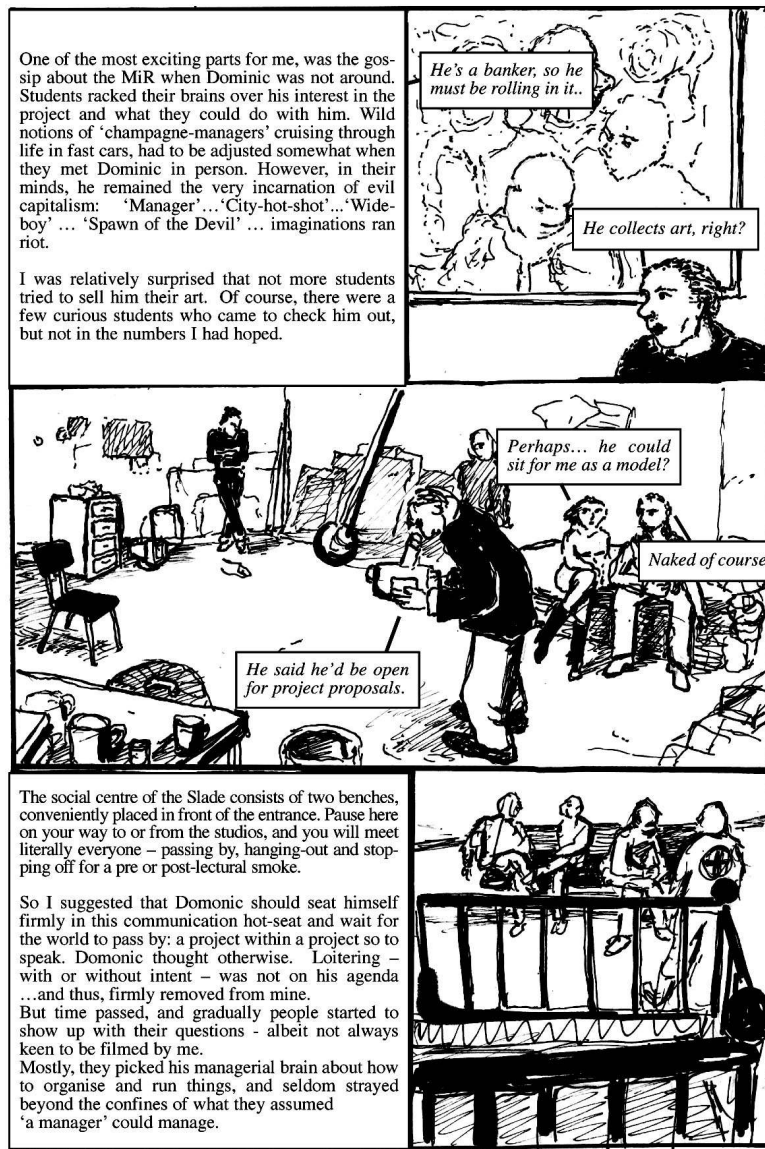


In April I invited Dominic to our house. Private atmosphere usually relaxes people: I bought some wine and cooked. We had arranged to review the project when he'd reached this stage, and I had prepared a few questions. My little son quickly created exactly the right atmosphere for a 'heart-to-heart' discussion.



Finally, at this point, we get an outdoors scene in which it is not raining; one which represents a row of small British suburban houses. The private perspective of the artist comes into play, and begins to dominate this page. The scene is one of family, a simple dinner

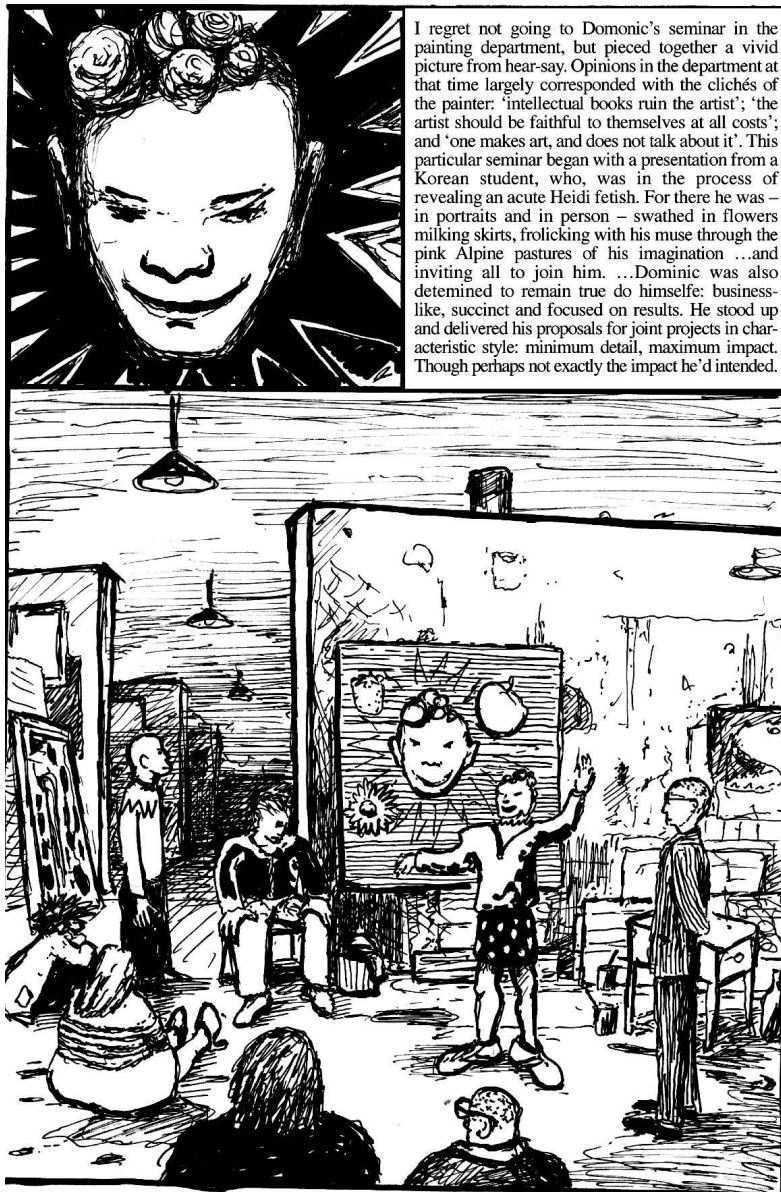
table, and chaos, a sort of juxtaposition to the pinstripe-suited individual. The lapidary sentence *I've got to change the tape* indicates that the artist has become a sort of servant to the project.



This page revolves around the way in which the students receive the presence of the manager at the Slade. The loose social network produced by students is shown by little speech bubbles dealing with the subject. They illustrate merely what has been said in the first

longer off-scene text. In the studio situation an impression is given of an incoherent style of working. People hang around and somebody films what is probably an empty chair.

The second off-scene text focuses on two benches in front of the building. They formed a central point of the loose communication network in the university. I tried to turn them into a formal part of the project. Two ideas clash as to how formalised communication should be undertaken within such a project.



The manager is followed to another meeting with a student group. We get a lively picture drawn about the students lives within the art academy. We also get some sense of the differences between departments and the cliché of the anti-intellectual painter.

The meetings have taken on a certain routine.

The drawing zooms in on the face of the student shown below in the painting studio with his fellow students. It shows a typical scene of a presentation in a studio, with the manager standing amidst them. The Korean student with the Heidi fetish is all of a sudden accompanied by a guy in a pinstripe suit, turning everything into a theatre setting.



The last page of the comic depicts a door in a series of shots, slowly zooming out, waving goodbye. It is a rather slow-moving narrative at this point, and the viewer witnesses the manager fly-posting on the door. The manager has come into action.

Posting flyers is not an obvious activity for a banker; he seems to have adapted to the project and the art academy. Nevertheless he is applying different strategies to engage with different target groups, demonstrating his managerial skills. The last sentence is the artist's, who remains in a rather indifferent position, offering help to the manager.

The overview of the documentation I have provided, sketches with an easy hand the basics of the project and the questions that arise, but breaks up at the point where the actual

activity begins. The constellation is in focus, and the questions are in focus.

4.3. Method as Form: Inversion, Participation and Mimicry

The Manager in Residence Project is using different artistic methods. The main methods are: inversion, participation and mimicry. They are built into each other, in the way that the whole experiment is an inversion of the Artist in Residence programmes. Within the inverted form it mimics science and corporate strategies. To use the term *method* might be misleading, if read in the context of methodology common in social science. Inversion, mimicry and participation are better termed *stylistic features*, being part of the overall composition of the project. They become operational nevertheless as method, but their prevailing aspect is both a formal one and a presentational one.

The organisational arrangement of the MiR is not different from other subjects of observation, like a live nude model. Using the aforementioned methods helps scrutinise the model from different aspects. They would compare to using a brush or a sharp pencil, both having capacities to teach different things if used in drawing. The sharp pencil is better for outlines, while the brush is more suitable for broad shades defining light.

4.4. The Manager in Residence and the comic as inversion

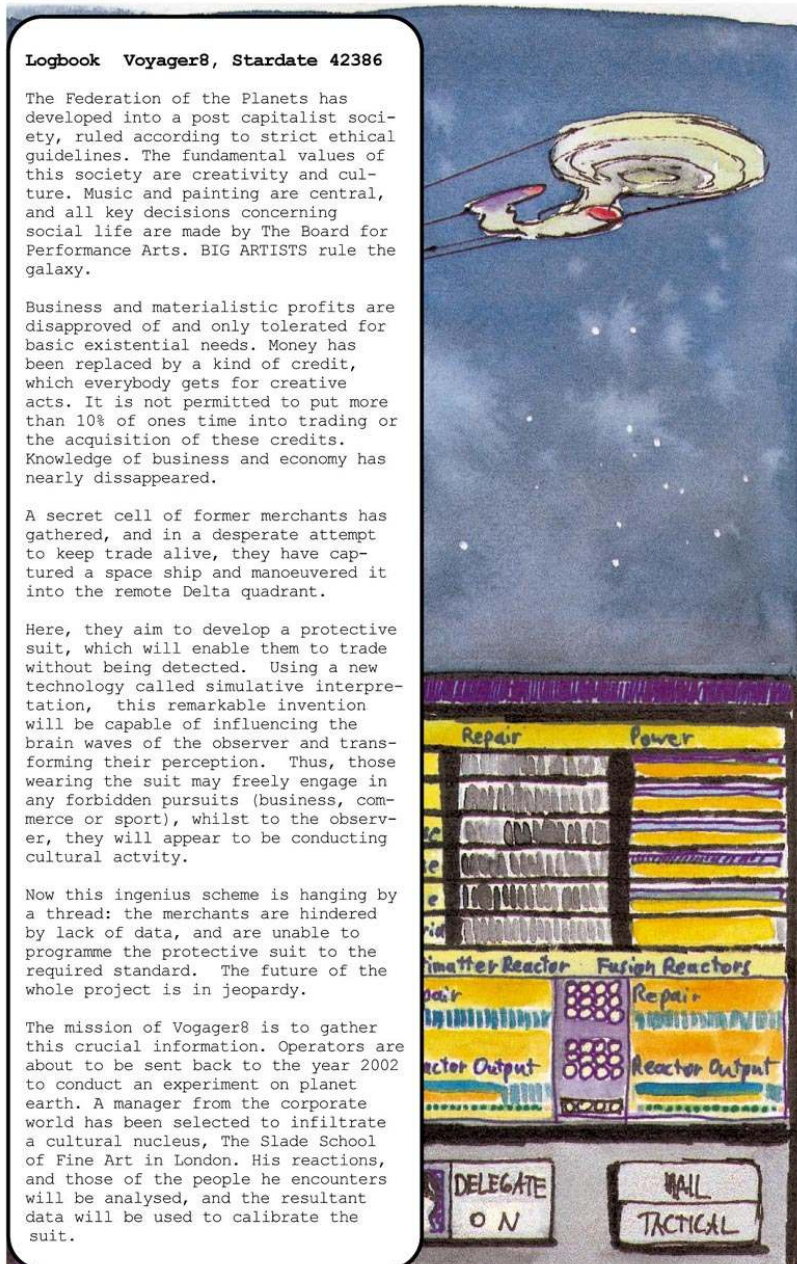
By inverting the Artist Residence schemes to a Manager-in-Residence, I inversed not only the situation, but also the

perspective from which it is viewed. The observer remains in the same position, but the world in front of the eyes turns upside down. It contests the idea to describe art as commodity by describing a corporation person (organisation) as aesthetic entity. A second inversion takes place, as the language for this description is artistic: it is not money that describes the value of an art piece, but artistic notions - a comic strip - describes an organizational setting.

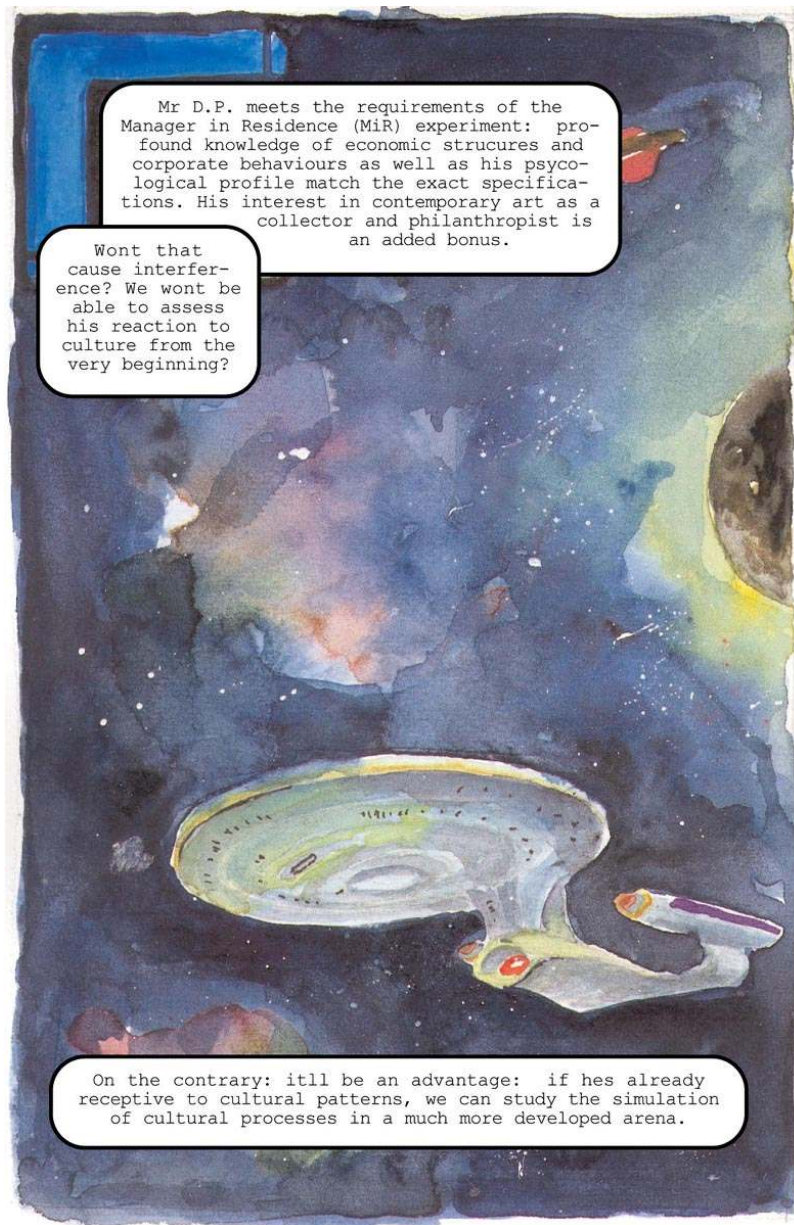
4.4.1. Manager in Residence as Arts-In-Business

I was doing my Master of Arts at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, and so I was supposed to produce art at the Slade. Prior to, during, and after the MiR interacted with Slade, the artist Henrik Schrat was a student at Slade. But to consider the Slade as institution changed the level of interaction from being part of it to doing something *with* it. In this sense, the project and its research could have been carried out in any other organisation. The concerns are: Who is guest and who is host? Who pays and who gets paid? Who learns and who teaches? Who defines the rules and who has to deal with them?

4.5. The Pink Suit. The Starship-level.



Having introduced the basic features of the comic, I am going to explore the second element of *The Pink Suit*, the Starship-level. It is a comment to the documentary part.



4.5.1. General Setting and Technique

The setting of the Starship-level is taken from a computer game, based on the Starship Enterprise film series.

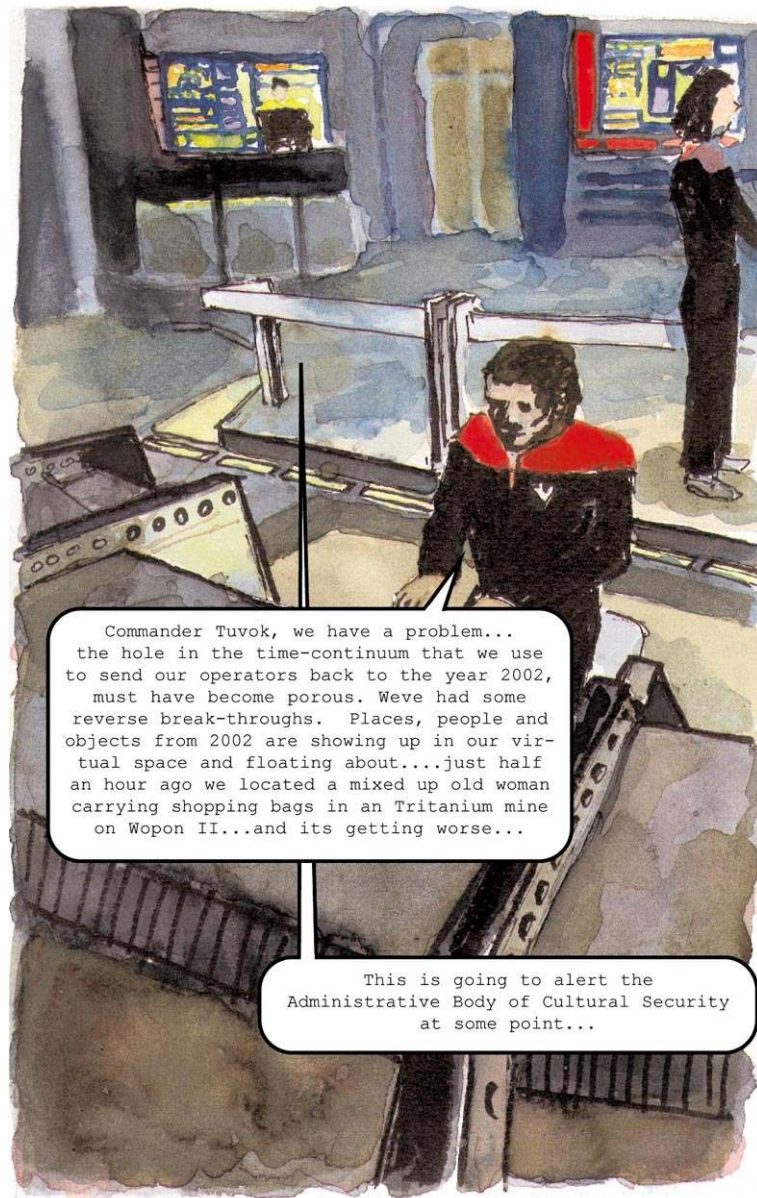
Painting with water colour after screen shots of a computer game as templates draws parallels between the

open air landscape painting and sitting with an easel in a three dimensional digital space. The technique used is one of the first impressions the observer gains, thereby setting the tone for everything else. Watercolours became fashionable during the 18th century. In Britain, especially, it turned into something of a people's 'sport', and the Watercolour Societies founded during this period still exist today. William Turner's convolution of watercolours is seen as a high point of the technique.



For the 20th century that meant, that the general interest declined among the artists, to distinguish from the works of amateurs, but a couple of artists nevertheless worked with watercolour. Paul Klee, Paul Cezanne, Egon Schiele and Emil Nolde are among the prominent

artists having worked early in the 20th century with it. The notion of easy-to-make effects and sweet beauty remained attached to it, and whoever choose to work in the media had to relate to this tradition. Mark Rothko and Sam Francis used the transparency and light of the colours within Abstract Expressionism, and Georgia O'Keefe painted her famous flowers. Postmodern figurative painters picked up the technique with reflection of its history, like Elisabeth Payton in the 90ies and her ironic beautiful watercolour portraits of celebrities.



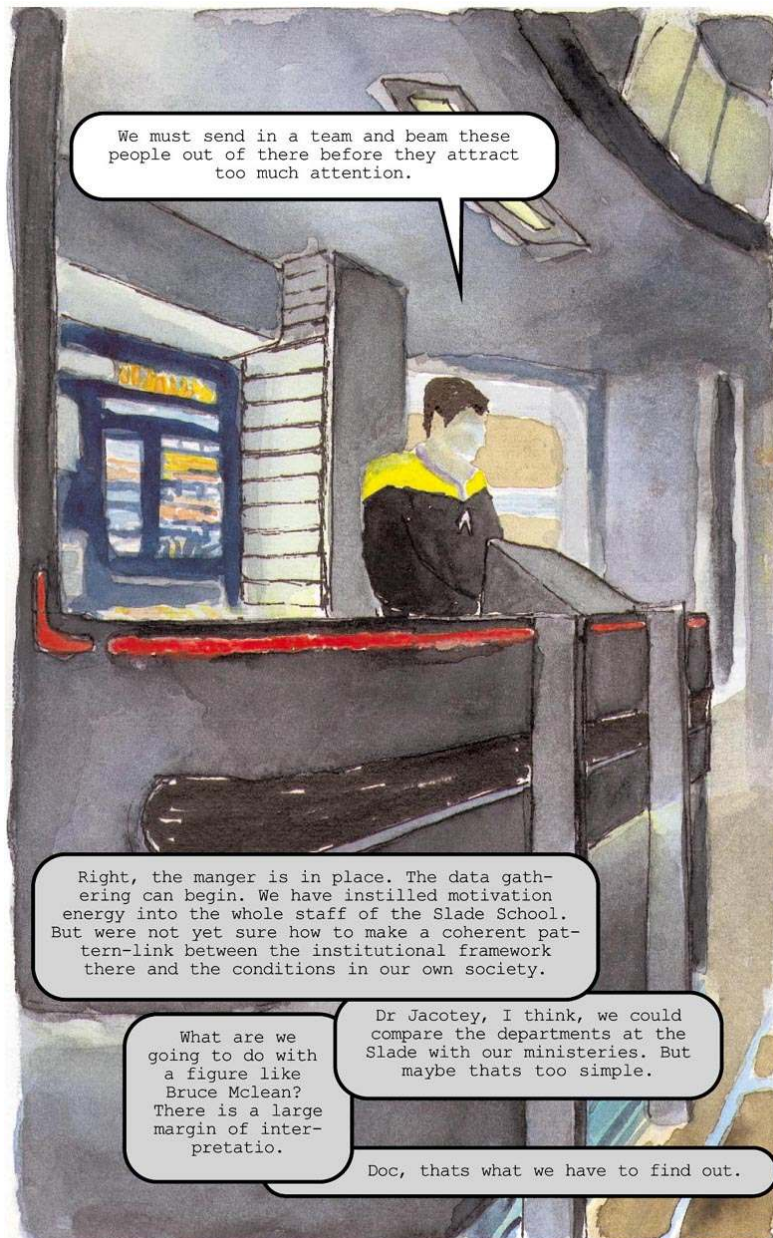
In the comic and illustration, however, watercolour has always been the first choice. The watercolour quality was often hidden under the disciplined use of colour, the process known as *inking* in the comic world. In *Tintin* comics (picture 9.12 for instance) the inking is more a colouring in of

surfaces. But famously, Bill Sienkiewicz reinstalled the use of free and experimental watercolour in the comic *Elektra: Assassin* in 1986/87.



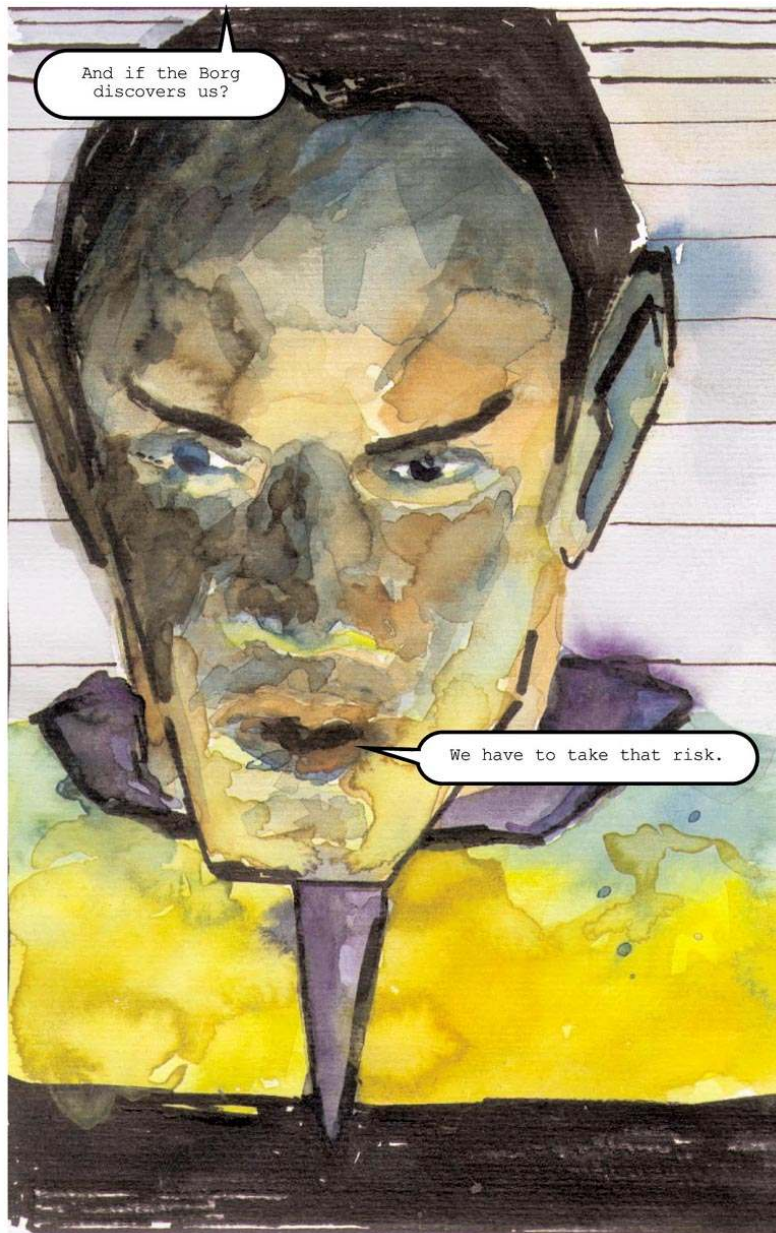
In this context can the use of watercolour for the comic *Pink Suit* be understood. On one side, there is the traditional, simple black and white stile; on the other the easy flowing beauty of watercolour wash. One side is 'dry' and fact-oriented, the other

elusive and fictional. As in the documentary part, the text is not handwritten. Frames have round edges to conform to the Starship-aesthetic, and the typeface is a classic Courier typeface. This style indicates something technical but simple, in contrast to both the sharp-edged frames and traditional Times typeface used in the documentary part.



There are only two pages containing more than a single frame. The pictures generally are composed rather like a painting with dropped text on it than like arrangements in comic literature. We get the impression that the text is laid on top of the

picture, and not embedded in it, causing a certain simplistic crudity. This lends it another functional twist. It seems to say: I am not really a comic, I do something else, I talk to you.



4.5.2. Science

Fiction

Science fiction has always been first choice for discussing societies in a narrative frame, from Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), George Orwell's *1984* (1949) to the books of the Strugatzkis, Stanislaw Lem or Philippe K. Dick. *Starship*

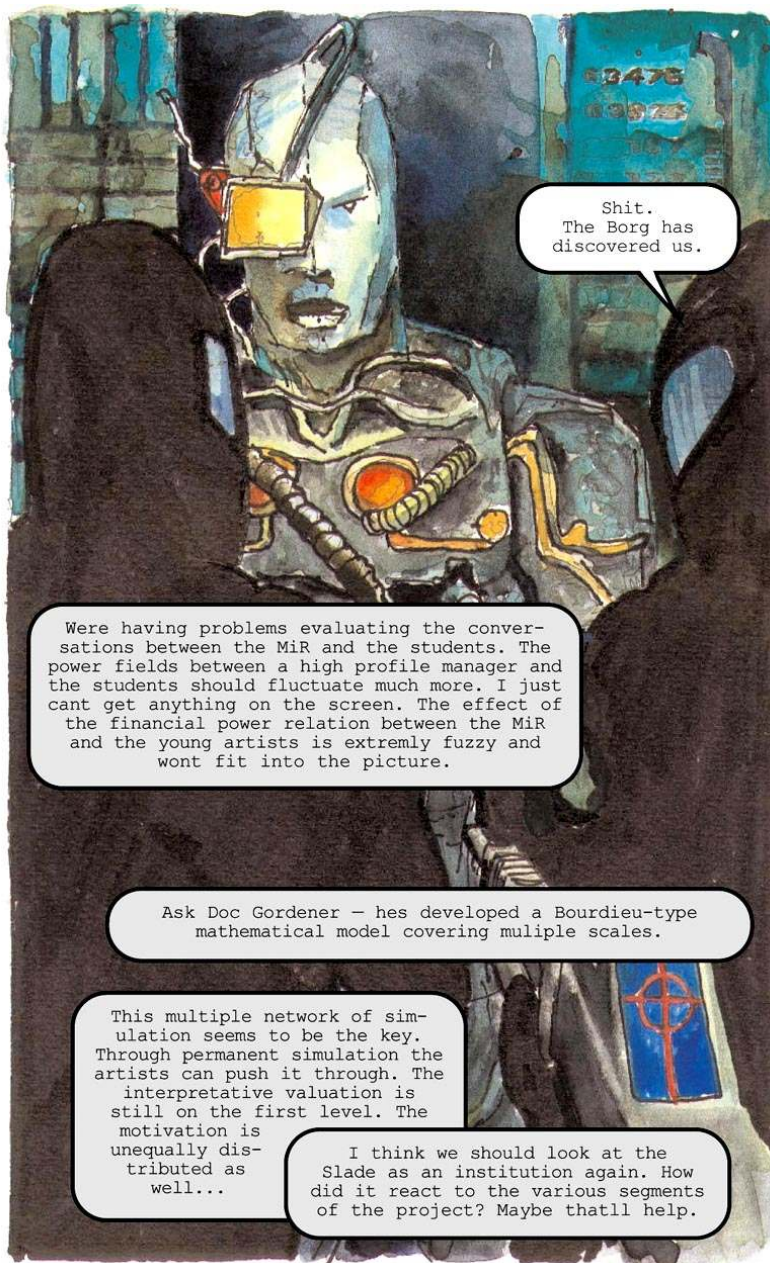
Enterprise is in this context a frame which is widely known, constituting a simple theatre setting. It usually takes place within the spaceship. There is a limited number of actors and a set of reoccurring enemies and alien races with special attributes.

Leaving aside all the hidden political and gender issues in the *Enterprise*-cosmos, all this constitutes a perfect framework. It provides a full set of conventions known to a lot of people in a theatre-like setting.



The Starship-level is used as a narrative comment and explanation on the documentary part. In this sense, it has its origin and reference there and remains secondary to it, in the same way the documentary comic originates in - and is secondary to - the project

itself. If presented in isolation, both establish their existence as independent art pieces.



4.5.3. More

Inversions

The real MiR project is in the narration counterbalanced. Inverting the point of origin of the project, the reason for the project in reality is located within the science fiction. One is being told that the MiR project is an experiment, initiated by people from the

future who travelled through a time hole back to our times. They are interested to learn how a businessman can survive in an arty surrounding. The desire to understand this is caused by another inversion: In the future, the universe is ruled by 'The Big Artists', a dictatorship of creativity, and business people are about to become extinct. The last remaining business people seized a ship, and sent an operator back through a time hole, to initiate the experiment on earth.



The data gathered through this experiment should enable them to construct a hazard-suit, protecting them against the artists, and disguising business acts as artistic acts.

I am an artist down here on earth; I am understood to

be a subject manipulated by the crew from Enterprise. A reference is made herewith to the traditional understanding of artists as the voice of a higher being.



4.5.4. How the comic operates

Discussing the experiment on earth and the state of affairs of the Manager In Residence Project goes on in nearly all pages as an off - scene text in speech balloons without tail.

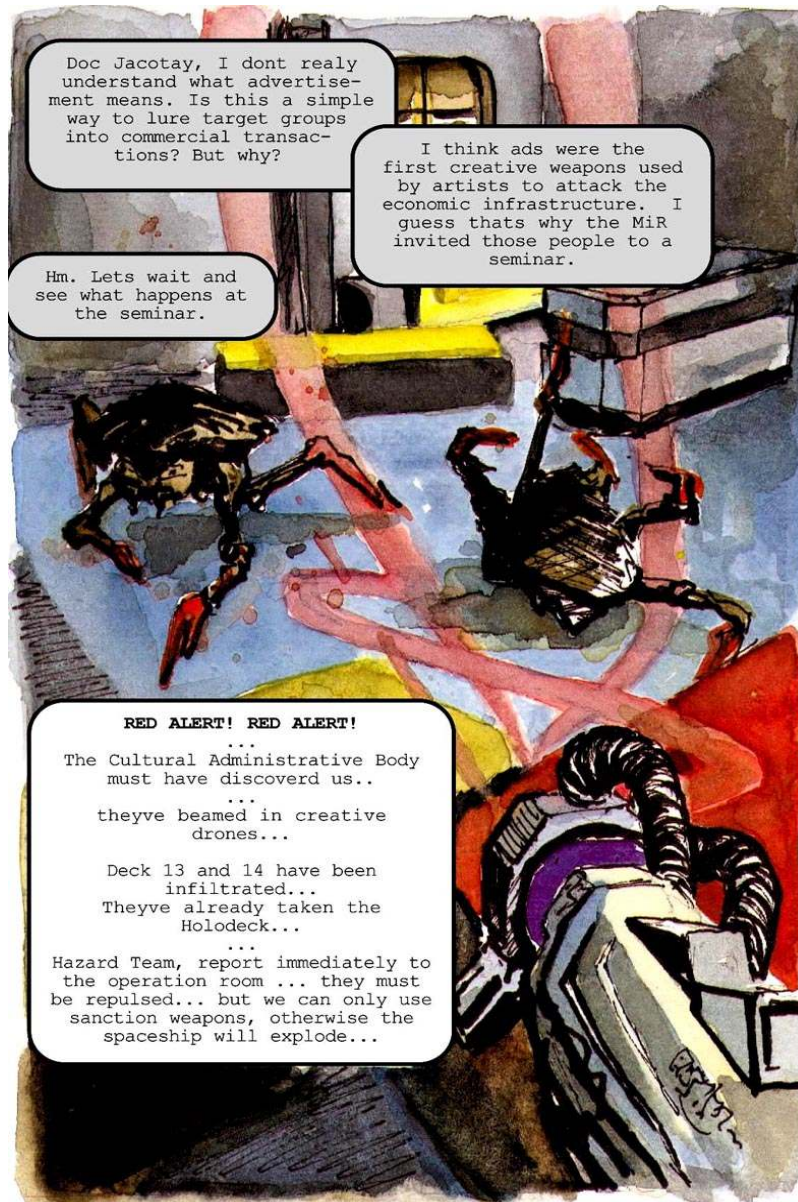
The reader does not get to know exactly who is talking but can

assume that some scientists from the spaceship are. The texts are not a neutral narrators voice. Some of their balloons have a grey background to distinguish direct speech. Voices of people off-scene add to the assumption of a complex world behind the picture frames.



There is a true narrator's voice nonetheless on page one, introducing the narration in a longer speech. The third level of text are statements of the crew in direct speech. On page eight, a problem occurs in the hole which was made into the time-continuum to go back in time to

the Slade School of Fine Art in the year 2000. A reverse break-through makes people appear in the future: "just half an hour ago we located a mixed up old woman carrying shopping bags in a Tritanum Mine on Wopon II." (see p.8). The move introduces a second line of drama, embedded within the overarching story. Real people getting lost in cyberspace. A political demonstration is projected into the future or into a computer game, which renders the democratic power useless either way.



4.6.

Understanding

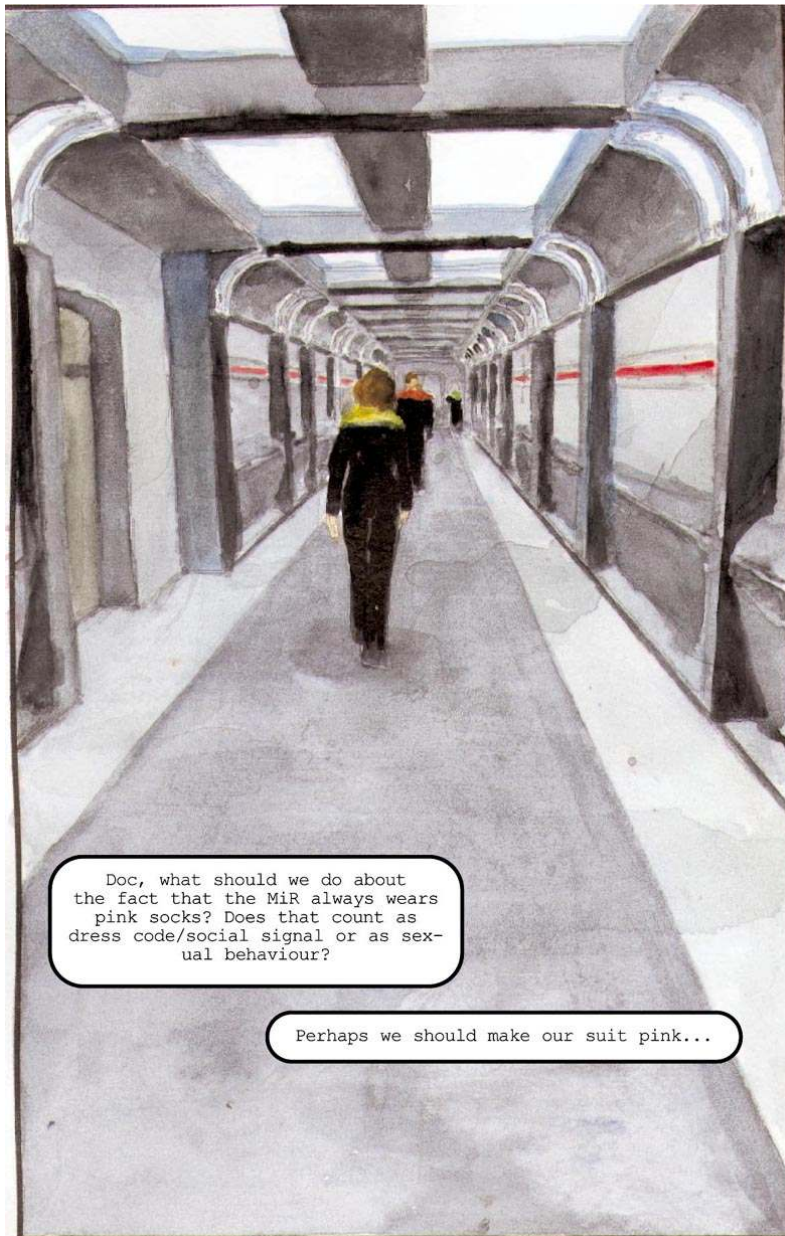
both parts

together.

What does the Pink Suit tell us about the project, and what is missing? In the documentary part the viewer is left on the threshold of the door, which is literally the door of the project: The lectures for

which the Manager is canvassing have not even started.

This is not an account of the story, but more a tale of how something works, or is planned to work. The fields of action are drawn, the figures introduced, the contexts set, and the questions are posed, but to 'play the game' is left to the observer.



This comic is a recipe but not a cake. In this sense, the comic is not a documentation, it is rather an exemplified question. The viewer does not even get information about the fundraising or cash flow. Ultimately, the Pink Suit did not set out to provide an

analysis and draw conclusions. The formal language of my comic and its restraints within the MiR project are far too limiting to draw broader conclusions from it. With the help of further examples, I will introduce and analyse the comic as media, its parts and techniques later.



e

For now my intention has been to set a basic tone for the thesis, to open the mind for the comic. It has provided a frame of reference from which the following chapter on history, methodology and general observations about pictures and text can be related.

5. History.

5.1. Introduction

Here I sketch out a historical perspective. I call this the 'family tree' to both illustrate a personal relationship but also to emphasise the discursive determination between social science and art. Situated between these fields, I came to understand this thesis as a romantic project in a double sense. On one hand, as artist originating in the tradition of art whose ontological view can be traced back to Romanticism. On the other, hurling myself into the divide between two fields is a romantic gesture driven by longing to unify disparate parts.

Central to this chapter is the rift which opened in the 18th century, and has simplified been pinned down as Romanticism versus Enlightenment. Traditions of thinking emerging from this caused a fundamental divide in Modernism between Science and Art. Vico and Descartes are identified as the forerunners to this struggle. The Romantic position with a focus on attitude and form was to become the ancestor of an artistic ontology, while the Enlightenment was lent legitimacy to a rational worldview in a positivist tradition. I will examine the roots of Romanticism, in part through the eyes of Isaiah Berlin (2000a, 2000b). Relativism, described as a move to crack the holistic worldview, is traced by Berlin back to Montesquieu and Herder. Disenchantment of the world by rationality - and later capitalism - forced the Romantic counter-reaction. The inability to deliver a credible

narrative of the world was countered with the Romantic invention of new myths: signification was read into the world. The chapter will conclude with Jaques Ranciere's notion of the aesthetic regime (Ranciere [2003] 2007). He re-interprets Modernism with a special focus on the role of the arts. A different light is shed on the mentioned rift. Indeed, Ranciere goes back to the 18th century to draw different conclusions. He resumes what Friedrich Schiller had termed 'playdrive' - mediating between matter and form. Pierre Guillet de Monthoux had already introduced this move into the organizational studies discourse, coining the term 'Schwung' for the movement between matter and form. (see for instance Guillet de Monthoux, 2004).

Ranciere's aesthetic regime opens a way to read artistic production into the background of science and art at the same time. If this is later introduced to the discursive position of the comic, it delivers more ammunition for another underpinning question: whether or not this doctorate can be seen as art piece. The question seems to haunt me.

If I take into account the linguistic turn in science and narrative theory (Gabriel 2000, Czarniawska 1998, Boje 2007), Ranciere's suggestion can be applied to scientific writing as well. I will discuss this in more depth in later chapters. For now, I will look into what I call the family tree of my doctorate, to help define my position.

5.2. Enlightenment versus Romanticism - The family tree of this doctorate

Dresden is a town in south east Germany, with a rich tradition in the arts. In the 18th and 19th century, in particular, it was a cultural centre of Europe. The collection of paintings in the Zwinger originating in this time is one of the largest of its kind. Caspar David Friedrich lived and painted in Dresden, as Carl Maria von Weber did, who authored the *Freischütz*, considered the romantic opera par excellence. The academy of art still stands tall in the city centre, overseeing the river Elbe. If you are keen on a traditional understanding of painting, go to Dresden for your education. Many of the new German painters (known as 'Leipzig School') studied in Dresden, which is not far away from Leipzig. This is where I received my education in stage design and painting, and where I was probably intoxicated with both love and hate for historic Romanticism.

But the most eye-opening insights towards Romanticism for me came from a British scholar, Isaiah Berlin. His six lectures known as *The roots of romanticism* are particularly relevant. These were delivered in 1966 and transmitted a few times by the BBC.² Berlin spends his entire first lecture in search of a definition for Romanticism, reviewing the literature from the contemporaries of the Romantics up to today. He ends up in a two page account of contradicting opinions sourced from a range of remarkable scholars and artists working in the Romanticist tradition. He culminates with A. O. Lovejoy's

² After his death, it was published as a book. (see Millán-Zaibert 2002)

despairing inability to define it (Berlin 2000a, 17-19). Some of the attributes he mentions I refer to if I call the doctoral thesis a romantic project. There is the unavoidable fragmentary character, the irony, the multiaccessibility and foremost the despair and pleasure of committing myself to the unsolvable task of pacifying the arts-sciences divide. The energy derives from longing for something unreachable; it is a driving force which never runs dry.

But Isaiah Berlin comes up with an argument which goes beyond all diverging characteristics, and assigns Romanticism much more significance. Romanticism breaks away from paradigms which have ruled much of the European history before.

Paradigms, which continued to be operational in the positivist tradition of the 20th century and up to today. They were very much tangible in the age of Enlightenment. He describes them in three statements, on which the western tradition has rested. Paraphrasing him: First, all genuine questions can be answered. If a question cannot be answered, it is not a question. We may not know what the answer is, but someone else will. Perhaps it will take a wise man; perhaps it might be known in another time, a golden age, either in the past or in the future; and at the very least, the answer is known to an entity wiser than we, to a god. Second, all these answers are knowable, or the way to find the answers can be learned. Third, and most important, all the answers must be compatible with each other. (Berlin 2000a, 21)

Cracks in this foundation had showed earlier, but had not yet translated into a cultural mindset. What produced the external pressure resulting in those cracks?

5.3. Forerunner: Vico versus Descartes

With his monumental work René Descartes introduced the individual into philosophy and became one of the founding stones of modern thinking. Leaving this significance aside, his idea that every true 'knowledge' is to be deduced from principles has been criticised for dismissing history, poetics, politics and social contexts of any philosophical significance. It focused on rationality, teamed with a deep mistrust in the senses (Na, Jong-Seok, 2002).

Opposing his belief that rationality is the utmost foundation for science, another fascinating figure entered the stage of thinking in that time: Giambattista Vico (1668 - 1744). Vico developed much of what he did in conflict and against the Cartesian spirit. Antonio Strati notes: "Vico was firmly opposed to Cartesian rational explanation. He instead emphasized mythical poetry, the myths, the mythological imagination, reasoning by metaphors, in short the mythical thought of individuals and the close and direct connection between their thought and their feelings based on the sensory faculties of their bodies" (Strati 1999, 152/53). Vicos' *verum factum* principle - *the true is the made* - is surely in tune with what was to become the Romantic idea of *creation*, and is in opposition to Descartes' believe in primary principles.

Verum factum suggests an even deeper and older link between the meaning of the created objects as expressions in a communication process. It relates back to the idea (from Augustine to Aquinas) that only God knows the world fully, because he has made it. Hence, also man can only fully understand what they have made themselves. Vico called it *knowledge per caussas*, and distinguishes it from what men can empirically learn from the world they have not made. He drew a sharp division between natural science and the humanities, between self-understanding and the observation of the external world (Berlin [1960]2000b, 123).

If this division is followed through the Romantic divide, what was to become social science could be projected into an area where the arts were to reside as well. Both gather and operate knowledge about human creation.

Vico felt the rift between subject and object (*res cogitas* versus *res extensa*) which came into being through the Cartesian idea of science turned the world into the soul-less, homogenous field. The Romantics later expressed and tried to reanimate it. Vico's vision broke the same ground earlier: if "myth is the 'means of transrational communication' which tells us the '*truth of the image*' that 'in like manner to *artistic truth*' 'is often more reliable than *historical truth*' (Dorfles, 1967 in: Strati, 1999; 155).

5.4. Disenchantment of the world. Enlightenment and Romanticism.

Empirical science had made significant progress in the 18th century, and was about to engender the first wave of industrialisation. Bureaucracy had entered the European state forms in a dimension never seen before, foremost in Prussia under Friedrich II, followed by France after the revolution. What would a century later be called *the iron cage of bureaucracy* (Weber [1905] 1958, 181) had emerged.

Rationalisation and rationalism became the driving force behind society.

In the French revolution was found a crucial setback for the Enlightenment: the high expectations for *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* where drowned in blood. This was followed a couple of years later by despair produced by the Napoleonic wars. Enlightenment had made its way from being a hopeful culture to the ideology of the *terror of reason* (Safranski 2007, 43; 53; 172).

With the grinding spirit of capitalism came inconsistencies in the societal culture it produced, which in turn gave birth to a counter-movement.

On one hand, it was undeniable: bureaucracy was operational, empiric findings advanced technology. On the other, they seemed to be linked to evil and war, and ultimately to a far-reaching disruption between men and their environment. The values of society had shifted, as Schiller notes: "today necessity is master, and bends a degraded humanity beneath its tyrannous yoke. Utility is the great idol of the age, to which

all powers must do service, and all talents swear allegiance” (Schiller [1795] 1957, 26).

The Romantics complained about the world becoming “...an ingenious piece of machinery, in which out of the botching together of a vast number of lifeless parts a collective mechanical life results. (...) man himself grew to be only a fragment(...) he becomes merely the imprint of his occupation, of his science” (ibid. 40). Schiller calls famously upon the playdrive, to mediate between the impulse of reason and imagination - *Form* - on one side and the sensual impulse - *Matter*, re-interpreting Kantian categories. Guillet de Monthoux introduces this perspective to an organisational approach in his book *The Art Firm*. He coined the term *Schwung*, the energy of the swing stemming from the playdrive, held between form and matter: the swing is enabled to do its job, secured in his drawing by a tree and an angel.



5.1. The schwung-swing
Guillet de Monthoux,
2004, 19

Yet, Romanticism was never anti-

Enlightenment: scientific experiments where practiced and empirical science was well-respected among the Romantics (Beiser 1996, 317 - 329). In turn, the Enlightenment had a deep respect for the arts. It was not black and white, it was rather a question of priorities, and the increased rationality made a different point visible: That there are different needs in a human being besides the functional perspective on what *works*, what is *operational*. It follows

that what is valuable to human beings can be different to what has traditionally been seen as scientific truth.

If the definition of scientific truth produces negative impacts on the social, the leading concept of society needed to shift or a different concept of truth needed to be called upon. A coherent truth was not a convincing mission statement anymore. At least a broadening of the approach was needed, to complement it. If on one side the idea of a plurality of cultural identities was born, it lost its normative power due to the shifts towards rationalism. The society was about to lose its ability to narrate its own story in a way in which people could relate.

So how then was the idea of plurality born?

4.5. Relativism

The first counter position to a Cartesian mechanical worldview was relativism. A crack in the coherence of knowledge could be marked with Montesquieu. Very much in the spirit of Enlightenment, he was a man who was one of the first voices to propose a mindset which became known as relativism.

An example from the Conquistadora and the meeting of Hernan Cortés and Montezuma makes for a good demonstration for the first ideas of relativism. It seems as remote here as it was central at the time and, in a sense, it still is. It was published in 1748: "...when Montezuma with so much obstinacy insisted that the religion of the Spaniards was good for their country, and his for Mexico, he did not assert an absurdity" (Montesquieu [1748] 1914, XXIV/24). The way in which this

phrase is uttered makes it obvious how much of a frightening thought this must still have been at his time. Montesquieu goes into fascinating detail: what is good for a Lutheran religion, what is good for Catholicism, and why it is good for Hindus in India to avoid eating cows.

The cautious move was picked up upon by the rigorous pluralism of cultures praised a few years later by Johann Gottfried Herder. He was keen on identifying cultural groups by their own values, leading to what he is famed or sometimes condemned for: nationalism and historicism. Herder extends the notion of voice. He understands the 'works of men' as voices, as ongoing streams of nonverbal expression, not to be detached from their makers (Berlin [1960] 2000b, 176). In reading objects and works as an ongoing communication carpet, objects talk to objects. Herder is an early indicator of this extended form of intertextuality. Seen in the light of the art context of the late 20th century, he tapped into a territory which would get a lot of attention and different labels 200 years later. Labels included 'process-based art' and 'relational aesthetics'. For Herder, everything humans did was an expression of their inner self and a means of communication. He understood every form of human self-expression in some sense as artistic, as the essence of human beings as such, which just needs to be decoded. From this point of view, there is no difference between an empirical research paper and a poem. A lot is lost but a new starting point is gained.

The Romantics applied the grain of relativism to the individual. They reduced the scale of reference from nations and religions to the individual itself.

What Herder had done for the understanding of cultures as a whole was transferred to one single expression. Justification and criteria are nowhere else to be found than in the work itself. Friedrich Schlegel defined (literary) criticism in this new sense and made a significant impression in the history of critique. Critique can only come from criteria defined by the work which is criticised. He went further with what he called *progressive universal poetry* (Safranski 2007, 59). Poetry was understood much as an open term, as the meeting ground for different discursive forms, including science. Inclusive in terms of media and genres as Schlegel's idea is, what makes it different from the *Gesamtkunstwerk* idea, as Wagner would use it later, is its incompleteness and its self-irony. Irony works like a built-in fuse against totalitarian ideas, and Schlegel put special emphasis on it. He roots it in the difference between the said and the world: "In view of our overly-complex world, each statement implies a reduction in complexity." (Safranski 2007, 63)³. If one knows about THIS, then things can only be said with ironic distance. Irony should not to be mistaken for cynicism. If this reflective irony gets slashed away and Romantic ideas team up with the organizing force of positivist science, a deadly cocktail emerges. In this sense the Fascism and Communism of the early 20th century re-appropriated modern bureaucracy as a

³ „Jede bestimmte Aussage bedeutet angesichts des Überkomplexen der Welt eine Komplexitätsreduzierung.“

(coherent) narration and mythology. On one side reason was killed within scientific thinking, and on the Romantic side, the irony and the incompleteness were dropped. Both need each other.

Schlegel explained his ideas in the *Athenäum fragment 116*, published in 1798 in his newspaper *Athenäeum*. It is based on his extended understanding of the terminus poetry: "Romantic poetry is a progressive universal poetry. Its destiny is not merely to reunite all of the different genres and to put poetry in touch with philosophy and rhetoric. Romantic poetry wants to and should combine and fuse poetry and prose, genius and criticism, art poetry and nature poetry. It should make poetry lively and sociable, and make life and society poetic (..) Romantic poetry is to the arts what wit is to philosophy and what society, company, friendship, and love are in life. (...) Indeed, that is its true essence, that it is always in the process of becoming and can never be completed." (Schlegel [1798] in: Bernstein (ed) 2003, 249-50)

This approach enabled the piece of critique and reflection to become a piece of literature itself, and closed the circle between the expression and its critique.

As I said earlier, society had lost its ability to narrate its own story in a credible way and the Romantics set out to fill it again with meaning. They looked for new myths, worked on creating them, and on organizing and collecting old ones. But even if the narration is exchangeable, it is not an arbitrary undertaking. The focus is different. Roland Barthes writes in *Mythologies* (1957) that the actual narration is not defining

for a myth. It is rather a condition, under which everything could become a myth, resulting in a culturally-embedded storyline (Barthes [1957] 1964; 85). Or, as Strati writes: "Myths, fables and rituals are forms of self-expression and communication based on the awareness of feeling, on the human capacity to create, and on the productivity of the imagination" (Strati 1999, 15). In this sense fakes of mythical discoveries are telling examples of the time. The faked 'discovery' of the Ossians writings - Ossian, an ancient Irish bard - by James McPherson in England (1760s) or the discovery of the faked *Prillwitz Idols* and the pagan sanctuary *Rethra* (1760s) in Prussia are well known. Medieval ambience was prominent amongst all disciplines, from painting to literature to music. They served as a placeholder for the strategy of narrating as such. "The notion of returning to Dionysus or Odin is absurd. Therefore we must have modern myths, and since there are no modern myths, because science has killed them, or at any rate has made the atmosphere unpropitious to them, we must create them.(...)That is how *Hamlet*, for example, becomes a myth, or *Don Quixote* or *Faust*" (Berlin 2000a, 122). So not only is it about creating or collecting them, it is also about turning something into a myth and using it to animate and enliven the world. Objects, persons and procedures were attached a meaning within a mythological and poetical space. Significantly, the narration was able to synchronize with others and with the surroundings. Moreover, the myth engendered feelings of empathy. The plot provided the matrix for a structural analogy between the self

and the outer world. Everyday objects were turned (back) into something with a deeper meaning. This procedure, this breaking down of the barrier between the mundane and the poetic, the everyday and the poetic was called *Romantisizing* by Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel and is central to Romanticism. Every object and activity should be loaded with meaning. Where Herder understood the made world as an expression, men made objects as utterances, the Romantics took it further to a more deliberate and knowing giving of meaning.

Hurling oneself out into the world, being part of a world filled with meaning and narration, reading oneself into this living texture where goals.

4.6. What to do and how to do it

If it is not the narration but its condition which counts, it also becomes hard to distinguish the Romantic attitude from the product. Safranski notes: "They do consider art actually not as much as product than as a happening, which can take place always and everywhere" (Safranski, 2007; 59).

Romanticism focused on the attitude of doing something and the passion of it. By extending in this way towards attitude and processes, I would say that performance art was made possible. To think of an organizational process as artistic expression was made possible. In turn what is called *Romantisizing* is kindred to the approach called *Social constructionism* as a label in social science research today. The society is given meaning by the people, and how they "make sense of the world especially through sharing their experiences with others via the medium of language" (Esterby-Smith; Thorpe; Lowe 2002, 29).

The myths projected onto the world were exchangeable to a certain degree. But that it was done and the way it was done was the epistemological statement transporting the ontological view of the world.

The divide between an interpretation of the world reduced to empirically provable facts and continuous creation of it produced different approaches. Whilst the empirical understanding - and what followed from it - focused predominantly on the WHAT, the romantics, and what followed from them focused on the HOW. That HOW was not seen as a

quality attached to surfaces, more as an inherent resonance, a structural kinship between created and creator.

Goethe's *Faust* illustrates this. The relation between Goethe and the Romantics was characterised by tension. The Romantics like Schelling, the early Hegel, Tieck, Novalis, and the whole Jena circle, adored Goethe, but he didn't feel entirely comfortable with this association. He certainly had his Romantic moments too, but generally he represented the classical, reasoning spirit. In the figure of Faust - the researcher trying to find sense in the universe - romanticism and the reasoning spirit are embedded. Faust's research as such was probably only of limited interest to the Romantics, but the force which pulled him; the obsession; the way he did things within the topos of the medieval alchemist; that was certainly fascinating for them. For the Romantics Faust imbued the world with meaning through his research.

I return here to Isaiah Berlin, and to what unifies the strands of Romanticism to the foundations of western beliefs. As he wrote: Every question can be answered, every answer can be known, and all these answers are compatible with each other.

Romanticism disapproved of the whole mindset: "'Understanding' is not a proper term to use, because it presupposes always the understander and the understood, the knower and the known, some kind of gap between the subject and the object, but there is no object, there is only the subject, thrusting itself

forward" (Berlin, 2000a, 120). It is not the knowledge that is of interest, but its creation.

4.7. Jaques Ranciere and the aesthetic regime

Moving from the defining moment of the historic divide into our times, I here pick up the development from the perspective of French philosopher Jacques Ranciere. The project of Modernism as a consequence of the Romantic/Enlightenment divide is re-defined by him. His take assists with the problem of a comic being between 'autonomous' art work and 'functional' communication tool.

The aesthetic regime is the last of Ranciere's three artistic regimes, a triad of historical epochs of different conditions for the understanding of what is called art. Each of them constitute "a mode of articulation between ways of doing and making, their corresponding form of visibility" and the conceptualisation of both of them (Ranciere [2000]2004, 91). This aesthetic regime, which is the epoch we are still in today, re-defines Modernism. It offers a position from which I can read artistic expressions into different discourses. It opens and changes the discursive status of an art piece. The comic as artistic product would not lose its discursive status and credibility, but constitutes a hinge function.

The first of Ranciere's artistic regimes, the *ethical regime of images*, which is rooted in ancient Greece, does not identify art as such. Ranciere puts the distribution of images

in relation to the ethos of the community in its centre. He says: "In this regime, it is a matter of knowing in what way images' mode of being affects the *ethos*, the mode of being of individuals and communities" (ibid, p. 21). Artistic images are evaluated in terms of their utility to society and are equated to common craft labour. Only the distribution is different: This labour as a private act is transferred into the public. "[T]he mimetician provides a public stage for the 'private' principle of work" (ibid, p. 43).

The second regime dates from the Renaissance, and is called the *poetic or representative regime of art*. Proper ways of doing and making classify what later will be called 'fine arts'. The technique (*techne*) is brought to the 'simulacrum' (*mimesis*). "The art of imitations is a technique and not a lie" (ibid p. 43). A lie - as Plato understood it - is when (mimetic) craft or art mimics the realness, which mimics in turn the world of ideas. It is the "notion of representation or *mimesis* that organize these ways of doing, making, seeing and judging" (ibid p. 22). If *mimesis* is seen as organising principle for doing, it is still not what constitutes art. It is the framework of social and political conditions that "render art visible". The person appears - the author, the person of the artist - and is granted his or her own freedom. "A regime of visibility is at once what renders the arts autonomous and also what links this autonomy to a general order of occupations and ways of doing and making." The artist

as person is moved away from the demands of other labour and granted a sphere with its own rules (ibid p. 22).

In the third regime, the *aesthetic regime*, hierarchies in the arts are made redundant. One effect of this is that it does not make sense any longer to talk about arts in plural, but about art. Art is freed from any hierarchy of subject matter and genres. The changes marking the start of the third regime go further: Art is also freed from doing and making, from skill (techne) organized by mimesis. In this sense, the barriers to everyday objects and possibilities are broken down. By doing so, art is elevated into autonomy and singularity of an aesthetic realm. The aesthetic regime gives "the absolute singularity of art and, at the same time, destroy[ing] any pragmatic criterion for isolating this singularity. It simultaneously establishes the autonomy of art and the identity of its forms with the forms that life uses to shape itself" (ibid p. 23).

If Ranciere calls consequentially on Schiller, and his *Aesthetic Education of Man* which he terms as the first and foremost manifesto of the aesthetic regime, the circle to form and matter as discussed above closes. It is indicating "this fundamental identity of opposites. (...) it is the moment of the formation and education of a specific type of humanity." (ibid p.24).

Schiller appeals to use the (aesthetic) formations to educate and build an ethical responsibility. But to call on Schiller

and his aesthetic education is an iconic move of the project of Enlightenment resulting in Modernity. So what is the difference?

Schiller's division into subject matter (sensual material, nature) and form (reason), "established the idea, that domination and servitude are, in the first place, part of an ontological distribution, (the activity of thought versus the passivity of matter)" (Ranciere [2000] 2004, 27).

But central to the re-reading is mutual dependence and balance. One aspect unfolds the other. On one side sits the autonomy of art, the formalist focus on its own material and language as utmost emancipation, be it words, paint, or music. On the other hand (what Ranciere terms *modernatism*) is the identification "with forms that accomplish a task or fulfil a destiny specific to modernity" (ibid p.27). To call on this double function as essential state for art in the aesthetic regime establishes a position from which the modern disparate dichotomy of autonomous and engaged art collapses.

The double function was never thought of as a domination model as modernism took it, but as two balanced opposites. Between the two opposites the swing of *Schwung* commutes, as Guillet de Monthoux calls it. *Schwung* is the action, the oscillation between domination and servitude, to use Ranciere's terms. "On one hand is nature; on the other, morality. Nature is a slide onto barbaric carnal hedonism, and morality as a road to serfdom under dogmatic tyrants" (Guillet de Monthoux 2004,

18). The play, the serious play is understood as the mediating force reconciling them. Schiller's call for an aesthetic revolution, for the 'aesthetic state' "became the 'aesthetic programme' of German Romanticism, the programme summarised in the rough draft written collectively by Hegel, Hölderlin and Schelling: the material realization of unconditional freedom and pure thought in common forms of life and belief" (Ranciere [2000] 2004, 27).

There is a taste of conspiracy theory in Ranciere's claim that "The notion of modernity has been deliberately invented to prevent a clear understanding of the transformations of art and its relationships with the other spheres of collective experience" (ibid p. 25). The system of exclusion which modernism developed around art was extremely successful strategically. The number of museums of contemporary art and the prices on the art market speak a clear language. But on the other side, and that is what Ranciere complains about, it made an (re-)entry of artistic expression into science and other spheres problematic.

The real battleground is the understanding of history, while the paradigmatic replacement of old with new is only a mechanism of disguise. "It contrasts, more profoundly, two regimes of historicity" (Ranciere 2000, 24). The new is re-defined *within* the old. No visible, dramatic - or ultimately violent - rupture is programmed.

Illustrating this different approach, Ranciere "reinterprets what makes art or what art makes" (ibid, p. 26), and in so doing refers to Giambattista Vico as an early example. Vico's

own re-interpretation of Homer, to see him⁴ less as the inventor of the tales, but more as a witness of the image-laden language and thought of ancient times, describes the difference the aesthetic regime makes. The conditions of the work are reinterpreted, as a "new way of living amongst words, images and commodities" (ibid, p.25).

Ultimately, Ranciere believes that there is a political choice in art: it can either hold open spaces for democracy, or create a new reactionary mysticism. There is never a pure art: the aesthetic power has always meant to create a libratory egalitarian social space. Nevertheless, he knows that this can only work, if art stays within its own autonomous space, as a double function of autonomous art and engaged art; they complement each other. This reconciliation opens the doors to get the resistive horse-powers on the street, without falling into the trap of utility.

The politics of aesthetics form two mutually dependant views, which always co-exist. First, the aesthetic experience equates to other forms of experience. It tends to dissolve into other forms of life. In the second, the resistant form, the political potential of the aesthetic experience arises from the distinction of art from other activity and its resistance to any transformation into a form of life (Berrebi, 2008).

4.8. Summary

The Romantics broke away from a belief in knowledge produced by a question-and-answer scheme as the backbone of the western

⁴ Homer as a person, or the Homer as a collective. The idea, that Homer was not a single person but a collective was introduced by Vico.

civilisation. They took the general approach to art, its production and focus with them. A large part of the art to come later did not understand itself as Romantic, nor could it be called Romantic. But the paradigmatic shift caused by the Romantics defined much of the perception and attitude. The main arguments are still operational today in the arts: Being true to oneself, creating permanently the universe around oneself and being *sincere* in what is produced. The term *being sincere* is similar to what Existentialists would call later *authenticity*, and Berlin calls the Existentialists the true predecessors of Romanticism (Berlin 2000, 143).

The basic divide between scientific and artistic research and their related ontologies can simply be represented by a focus on WHAT and HOW respectively. On one side propositional knowledge came to dominate, while on the other presentational knowledge played the major role.

The divide still governs the encounter of science and art, and it governs my doctoral thesis.

In going back to the 18th century and taking a different route to what he terms aesthetic regime, Jacques Ranciere redefines Modernism. Not the domination of matter through thought, the domination of nature through morality as it was in Modernism is the structure of the aesthetic regime, but the balanced interplay of them. His notion of the aesthetic regime offers a position in which the rift between autonomous and engaged art collapses. This position forms a basis both to understand the comic as artistic form, and to research it as a tool for communication in and about organizations.

6. Paradigms and Definitions.

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will explore different types of definition, method and structure. I will begin with ontological assumptions, before discussing epistemology.

In the second part of the chapter I will define the terms 'reading', 'seeing' and 'viewing' in relation to the comic. I will argue that we do not read a comic, but view it. This definition is taken as occasion to discuss approaches to visual and textual expressions, which are important in the hybrid nature of the comic. Viewing is related to empathy, empathy as a way to scrutinise organizations, as Antonio Strati has argued. Empathy lets me return via Polanyi's tacit knowledge to the arts: Empathy, or indwelling was and is an artistic strategy of perception.

6.2. Paradigm and Epistemology

It could be said, that every expression, every research text and every art piece wrestles with Ontology and Epistemology. Unlike the last chapter, I will not use an explicit historic perspective but relate instead to contemporary paradigms in organizational studies as a means of illuminating my own ontological assumptions.

In my transition from 'art' to 'science', I still regard my epistemological position as underscored by constructionism with a relativist bent.

I am uneasy as regards this exercise of conceptual positioning. Most researchers are conscious that this is a 'game'; and it is crucial to determine whereabouts the figure is placed on the chessboard. This process is of course necessary both to take positions in order to communicate and in the interests of preserving research rigour. But whilst in practice these positions are in flux both on paper and within the mind of the researcher, the ritual of adopting a *particular* position seems to perpetuate a conservative strategy. My mistrust is less about the places delineated on the board, but more in the very limits of the chessboard itself. This mistrust relates to epistemological questions, and the hegemonic position of propositional knowledge for the construction and formulation of such a chessboard. However, in deep admiration of the sophisticated methodological discussions in the history of social science, and in awareness of the beauty of the concepts, I will do my best to describe my position by reference to them.

There is another problem too. My thesis is based in organizational studies, which itself is part of the broader social sciences. However, my work transcends the fields of both social science and art and so this represents relatively uncharted methodological terrain. My work does not follow the path of case study, data collection, application of a method and conclusion in the classic sense. I am instead navigating a methodological abyss between media theory on one side and the humanities and the arts on the other. However, this does not

free me from the necessity to look on methodology and epistemology as points of reference in organizational studies.

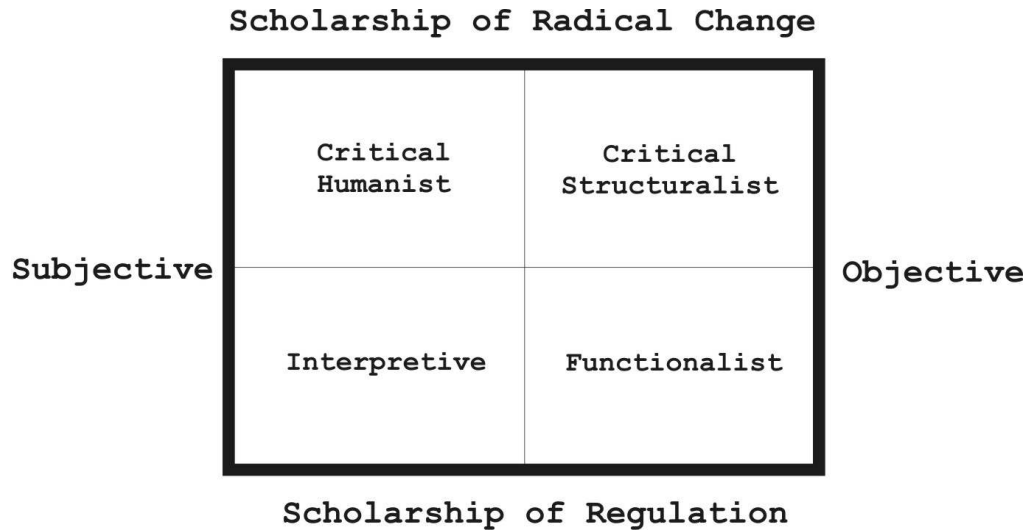
To define a 'paradigmatic position' is a static terminology I feel uneasy with, as already indicated. It is movement which characterises thinking. Experience is created by being thrown into reality and trying to accumulate and knit together that which is encountered. By describing the position, it has already moved on: The term *paradigm* is a frightening metaphor, as the *establishment of a position* is too. It is not a fortress I seek; it is a route or merely a 'slippage' through a landscape. I will discuss landmarks on the map of this landscape.

I begin with the grid presented by Burrell and Morgan ([1979]1988), which is a ritual opener for *establishing a position* in organizational studies. With Stanley Deetz (1996) and his critique of the grid, I move on into a more liquid field of paradigmatic assumptions. I do not stop there, but call on Martin and Nakayama (1999) and how they have developed Burrell and Morgan's model further, with a dialectic way of thinking about positions. Dialectic is a perspective with which I have sympathy and seek to engage with explicitly in this doctoral thesis. Dialectic in a Hegelian tradition is a method, but also a paradigmatic statement. This is where I would wish to rest. However, there is no place to rest: the place has moved. Dialectic is also the means of transit I deploy for crossing over into the realm of epistemology. It is

the dialectic movement between different types of knowledge which will escort my thoughts later looking as regards the pictorial/textual dichotomy in comics. The extended epistemology by Heron and Reason is incorporated (2001).

6.2.1. The Grid by Burrell and Morgan

The four quadrants on the grid presented by Burrell and Morgan ([1979]1988) is a helpful tool for gaining a provisional understanding of paradigmatic map which underpins the social



6.1. Adapted form Burrell & Morgen, 1988, p. 22

sciences. The left hand side is oriented to a subjective approach to social phenomena; the right hand side to an objective approach. The second dimension - top and bottom - refers to assumptions relating to power and order. The bottom is oriented to consensus and regulation, while the top is oriented to change and power struggle.⁵ Interestingly for me, they suggest this grid should be understood as four *distinct* categories, and not as field of changeover and transition. "These paradigms are contiguous but separate, have some shared

⁵ The top left, on the individual side it is called radical humanist, and refers to critical theory and cultural studies, and the right side, called Critical Structuralist refers to structural oppression in the tradition of Marxism. The lower line consists of the Interpretive paradigm on the left, the individual side, which focuses on understanding patterns, often through dialogue, and has roots towards anthropology and sociology. On the right, the objective side the Functionalist paradigm is located below the Critical Structuralist one. It focuses on external knowable facts separate from the researcher, and its methods are more quantitative and it stands in a positivist tradition. Those four paradigms suggested by Burrell and Morgan can serve as a starting point to position within or to argue against.

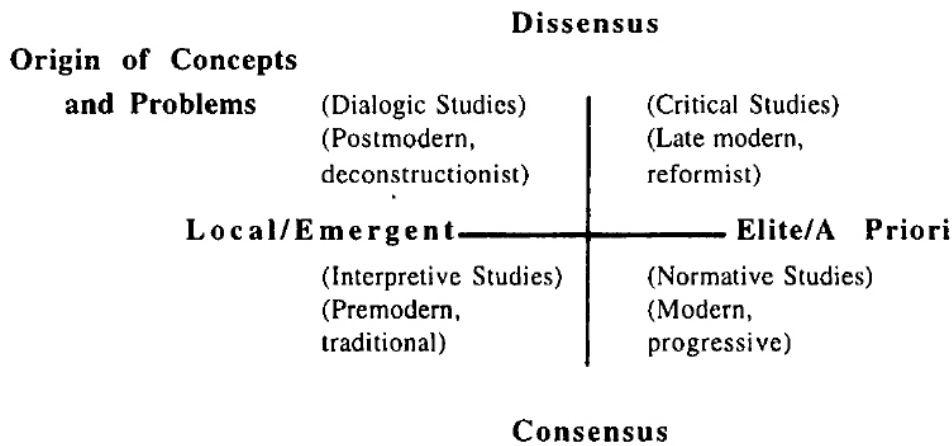
characteristics but different underlying assumptions, and are therefore mutually exclusive.” (Martin/Nakayama 1999, 74). This grid has proven to be an academic success; it is still used broadly. If I have to select one position, I would select the lower left hand quadrant. A significant amount of the literature to which I refer in this thesis, is considered commensurate with this position too. Most works on organizational culture and organizational symbolism lean toward the interpretive side (Czarniawska 1998, 16). But as I have indicated already, I am examining media not people. It is only in a supplementary sense that the capacities of the media depend on what people make of it, thereby rendering meaningful a particular position within a social science paradigm. It is their interpretation, the way they relate the message embedded in comic to their social reality, and how the message influences behaviour which is in the core of my interest. This decision-making is based on subjective interpretation of their world, and the analogies they draw with the message. The interpretive paradigm is therefore the position from which I argue, but this is not enough. My methodological framing requires further embellishment.

6.2.2. Stanley Deetz

I move on now ‘sliding’ both towards and through another paradigmatic grid. This one describes processes rather than positions, and in this way adds a temporal dimension. In his examination of the Burrell and Morgan grid, Stanley Deetz, an American professor dealing with organizational

communication, offers an alternative. He remarks "Most of the revisions of Burrell and Morgan begin, as did they, with a philosophy of science based in representational views of language and a subject/object dualism" (Deetz 1996, 119)⁶. To change this, he developed a grid of his own, shifting the focus to interactions.

His dimension unfolds between two extremes, one of which is called Local/Emergent, the other being Elite/A Priori.



6.2. (Deetz 1996, 198)

This position organizes the researcher's language and methods in relation to the researched. Does the researcher bring his language and method *a priori* into play, and keeps it consistent throughout the process, or does the language and method emerge through the (local) contact with the researched? In that quality it is comparable to Friedrich Schlegel's claim in literary criticism: The language and criteria emerge from the object of critique (see Chapter 5). The process between

⁶ 'Representational' refers in his use to the fact, that language represents something. It must not be mistaken with 'Representational Knowledge' as in Heron and Reasons extended epistemology I will scrutinise later in this chapter.

the researcher, his *modi operandi* and the context lies in the core of this dimension.

What changes, Deetz writes, is that the grid "acknowledges linguistic/social constructionism in all research positions and directs attention to whose concepts are used in object production and determination of what is problematic." (Deetz 1996, 196). And secondly, the grid focuses on the type of knowledge produced, is it more "book knowledge" or "street wisdom". This is not to evaluate, but to render goals and social constructions visible.

The other dimension of Deetz's grid shows Consensus and Dissensus as two extremes. It offers a structural analogy to the politically-motivated dimension in Burrell and Morgan. The lower dimension focuses on consensus, if the researcher works within a field of structured knowledge and continues to use the structure. The dissensus, in turn, works to disrupt the structures as a productive practice. They stand for unity and difference, for continuity and rupture in relation to existing social orders.

Within this dimension four fields form with the labels: Normative, Critical, Interpretive, and Dialogic. Each offers an "orientation to organizations, a way of constituting people and events in them, and a way of reporting on them" (Deetz 1996, 198). The normative dimension takes *a priori* positions to be contested by reality. It fights in a modern, technical and strategic way disorder and aims at expertise and control in predominantly economic settings. The upper right, the critical domain, represents also the use of an *a priori*

structure, but aims to unmask domination with a political perspective. In a suspicious and therapeutic style it fears authority and can be called late modern.

Moving on to the left side of the schema, its structure is not set *a priori*, but emerges from the local field the researcher operates in. In the lower corner, consensus aims to recover integrative values in a friendly, committed way embracing the community. The romantic, pre-modern take uses hermeneutics and ethnography as tools. Finally, if the local and emergent method meets the dissensus, a dialogue is needed. Conflict is addressed in a playful manner, bringing diversity and creativity into the organization thereby lending legitimacy to marginalized voices. The ironic and ambivalent style can be called postmodern.

Having described Deetz's moving targets, I return to the chessboard. It is even more challenging now. My intention to go back - as Ranciere suggested - and re-read Modernism to reach a different relation between forms of knowledge, and text and picture, is undoubtedly a pre-modern approach, looking to uncover and re-cover integrative social values. Following that, it belongs in the interpretive paradigm. But in that it critiques at the same moment structures, which have prevented this move, my position crosses the postmodern field towards a critical attitude.

I hasten to move on from Stanley Deetz and to consider other definitions, specifically those which assist in defining the means by which to move between the paradigms.

6.2.3. How the Paradigms Interact.

A further critique of the Burrell and Morgan model can be found within the discourse of intercultural communication. The grid focuses less on ontological world views, but rather on their interaction and use in communication. It moves towards epistemology. It offers, among four other ways of dealing with fixed paradigms, also a dialectic perspective. The other three ways are: liberal pluralism, interparadigmatic borrowing, and multiparadigmatic collaboration (Martin/Nakayama 2007).

Broadly-speaking, the three terms are sufficiently self-explanatory. It is the dialectic perspective than interests me foremost and it is to this concept that this discussion now turns. With a dialectical approach "We can begin to see epistemological concerns as an open ended process, as a process, that resists fixed, discrete bits of knowledge, that encompasses the dynamic nature of cultural processes" (ibid, 81).

The interdependent and complementary aspects of the seeming oppositions they call on, is reminiscent of the dialectic which unfolds between Schiller's form and matter (ibid, 82). The focus and types of interaction between the paradigms may they be thought of as static as in Burrell & Morgan, or as process-based as in Deetz. Interaction needs defined positions, and the danger to drift off in a stream of constant flux is imminent. Still, some relief is offered by the possibility that knowledge emerges from paradigmatic exchange. The oldest way to describe this is as dialectic.

6.3. Dialectic.

I regard dialectic as *modus operandus*, but a dialectic form of thinking and arguing is also a paradigmatic statement and synthesizes divergent positions. As a mode of knowledge production, it is like the martial art known as Aikido: Two bodies become one system of energy. One leads a received energy, a hit or a push of the other fighter, through one's own body and returns in a transformed way.

To link dialectic to organizational studies, a good way is to call on Karl Weick. John van Maanen analyses Weick's thinking in his text *Style as Theory* (Van Maanen 1995, 138). He identifies the main features in the style of Weick, one of which he terms *dialectic reconstruction*. He shows how dialectic is played out to demonstrate how something and its opposite can be true at the same time. To recount one example, Weick argues that ignorance and knowledge go and grow together in organizational settings. Ignorance grows with the availability of knowledge in an organization: every force produces a counterforce. "The self-cancelling paradoxes work to depict an organizational world that is in continual flux, a world that is always becoming" (ibid, 138).

One of the underlying ontological assumptions of dialectic thinking is that reality is contradictory, moving, connected and dynamic. Everything consists of opposing sides and one is in a constant negotiation between an idea and its verification, which in turn becomes another un-verified idea.

The Hegelian understanding and terms are thesis, antithesis and synthesis⁷. Synthesis becomes a new thesis again which is challenged and modified by the antithesis. As a result of this, "something becomes an other; this other is itself somewhat; therefore it likewise becomes an other, and so on ad infinitum" (Hegel 1816, §93).

The constant movement of becoming to be something and ceasing to be something - leaving a changed being or thought behind, has been described wonderfully by Hegel. It is worth quoting these words in their entirety: "The bud disappears when the blossom breaks through, and we might say that the former is refuted by the latter; in the same way when the fruit comes, the blossom may be explained to be a false form of the plant's existence, for the fruit appears as its true nature in place of the blossom. (...) But the ceaseless activity of their own inherent nature makes them at the same time moments of an organic unity, where they do not contradict one another, but where one is as necessary as the other; and this equal necessity of all moments constitutes alone and thereby the life of the whole" (Hegel 1807, §2). This permanent creation and re-creation he is suggesting, undoubtedly have roots in his Romantic thinking - before he became the "pillar of Prussian state philosophy" (Guillet de Monthoux 2004, 33). Guillet de Monthoux's train of thoughts once again engages the historical perspective on thinking, with a sketch of where we are now with dialectic, and why. It is helpful to follow him for a moment.

⁷As taken from Fichte who in turn drew on Kantian ideas.

To bring Hegel and his take on dialectic into play should be understood as distinct from the Marxian take on dialectic. If Hegel had already turned away from art as an active agent for knowledge creation, with Marx even the structural presence of techniques Hegel borrowed from the arts were submerged (Guillet de Monthoux 2004, 31). It took a long time to reach a historical position enabling a new approach. The post-modern wave dismantled modernist grand narratives.

The situation teamed up with the political framing conditions. "Finally, following the postmodern criticism of Marxist modernity and the fall of the Berlin wall, modern Europeans were liberated from the most vulgar Hegelianism that long banned art and aesthetics from the academic curricula of both management and social science" (Guillet de Monthoux 2004, 34/35). This statement teams up with the cracks in the strategic white cube built around modernist art.

But here dialectic is of interest, and its re-emergence outside the simplified cage of State-Marxism. It offers in turn a political perspective of respect for the other side, without discarding it as *the other*. And ultimately and most important, a breathless thrill of curiosity towards new perspectives which might be distinct from one's own is embedded in dialectic. Dialectic as a way to move and as a method enables me to oscillate between art and science, between pictures and text. It is therefore the hinge I have been seeking to move from paradigmatic grids and their critique towards a method. It is, again, at the same time an ontological assumption.

6.4. Types of knowledge - Extended Epistemology

I have navigated a landscape of ontological assumptions and the ways in which they are organized in the first part of the chapter. Now, I focus on epistemology. Having dialectic as a method for discussing and acquiring knowledge, the following question arises: Which type of knowledge? Epistemology generally distinguishes in *knowing that* (propositional knowledge), *knowing how* (as the way how to do things) and what has been called *acquaintance-knowledge*), as knowledge to recognise objects and persons. The first two types are of primary interest as far as I am concerned as they relate to the differing takes I have linked to art and science in my chapter on history.

Promising for my undertaking is to use the epistemology suggested by James Heron and Peter Reason which originate in social science and is well known in the organizational studies discourse. They suggest four types of knowledge, among them propositional knowledge (relates to *knowing that*) and what they call presentational knowledge (relates to *knowing how*).

Heron and Reason come from an holistic world view, trying to bring disparate parts of culture and humankind together. That seems to be the driving force behind the epistemological undertaking of integrating all types of knowledge into a system. What I read in some of their texts is not only the New-Age time lingering on in their wording, it is also a relation back to Romanticism: "Mind and the given cosmos are

engaged in a co-operative dance, so that what emerges as reality is the fruit of an interaction of the given cosmos and the way mind engages with it" (Heron/Reason 1997). This terminology might today sound bewildering. But whilst postmodernism deconstructed modern beliefs, this holistic world view filled a void and gave rise to valuable conclusions, much in the tradition of Romanticism. I can build on their extended methodology driven by that spirit today. So it comes as no surprise that dialectic also plays an interesting role in their thinking: Peter Reason draws a wide circle of dialectical capacities by stating that dialectical thinking may be metaphoric and poetic rather than literal, and "it is demonic and ironic rather than logical" (Torbert in Reason 1993, 12). The capacities of dialectic, to transgress rational limits in confronting something with its opposite has a long tradition, and also proves beneficial for the negotiation of sense in the comic. I would not agree that dialectic cannot be used as a precise and logical tool. To mention a profound cornerstone, Hegel has unfolded the understanding of dialectic in his *Science of Logic* (1812-1816). Dialectic turns an expression towards itself, refers and even demands its opposite in its formal existence, its own categories. That can be language, as the most common tool, and in that sense, "dialectical thinking is 'post-linguistic'", and "it is aware that the map is not the territory" (Reason 1993, 12). The media loses an assumed transparency, and offers a view on its presentational qualities. This establishes a good starting point for epistemological deliberation.

In terms of the paradigmatic grids I have discussed, Heron and Reason relate to a participatory paradigm, with a balance between the individual and its perception of the outer world. Following Merleau-Ponty in his argument, Heron and Reason accept perception as participation and deduce a dialectic interaction crossing four types of knowledge (Heron/Reason 1997, 278; 280).

The dance with the universe, the everyday face-to-face encounter is the point Heron and Reason depart from, and they call it experiential knowledge. They offer us three types of knowledge following from it: presentational knowledge, which is linked to all forms of artistic expression in a sensual way, propositional knowledge as knowing 'about' something, ideas and theories expressed in informative statements as science would do it; and, ultimately, practical knowledge as knowing 'how to' do something is related to skill and competence (Heron/Reason 2001, 144-155).

Donna Ladkin and Steve Taylor have followed this epistemology to a helpful conclusion: "There are similarities between the way art is used to illustrate essence within presentational forms, and the way theory is used to illustrate essence in more propositional forms of knowledge" (2009, 55-69). They see both types in their given specification, limitations and their mutual supplementation. Taylor and Ladkin locate the difference in the convergent generalizability of theory, and the divergent generalizability of the arts.

Managing relations between statements (convergent) and fields of ambiguity (divergent) in some respects also defines the way the comic operates. Pictures are messengers offering a wide range of possibilities to deal with ambiguity, while text has the capacity to come closer to factual statements. It is, again, a matter of degree not of type.

This means that fields of ambiguity appearing in the presentation have to be organised, measured and weighted against each other. This organizing is a proposition of its own right; a *grammatical* proposition. I will focus on visual grammar shortly.

It can be said, that staying within the field of presentational knowledge, one would remain in the field of craft; if propositional organization comes into play, the message becomes art. The dialectic interplay between the propositional and the presentational is the essential movement I address in my thesis.

Heron and Reason draw a pyramid, where the basis is experiential knowledge, clothed into expressive spatio-temporal forms of imagery by presentational knowledge on the second level, making propositional knowledge graspable to begin with: "Propositions themselves are carried by presentational forms" (Heron/Reason 1997, 280). On top of the pyramid rests the practical knowledge, as fulfilment of the prior forms of knowledge. I would like to add that practice leads to experience, and the pyramid will turn into a circle. I do focus predominantly on presentational and propositional

knowledge from Heron and Reason's epistemology. They relate to the two types which have drawn attention in general epistemology as stated in the begin of this section. However, the more relevant reason for me is the following: They are the 'mediated' forms of knowledge, needing a medium for transfer, as I will show in the next chapter. They still remain within the suggested circle between experience and practical application. Experiential and practical knowledge are unmediated in that they unfold in direct encounter with the world.

Talking about these knowledge types in relation to knowledge production in managerial practice, Daniel G. Spencer has written "... I believe, that the key lies in conceptualising the process in terms of the *dialectical* relationship between propositional and tacit knowledge in practice based knowledge construction" (in Barry/Hanson (ed) 2008, 464). He goes on to argue that this "Abductive dialectical synergy" between different knowledge types occurs in reflective circles as a synthesis of the objective and the relative. To use dialectic to unfold a plane of meaning between different types of knowledge is what persons do if encountering a problem or a surprise, synthesizing the given into a new assumption - abduction, which has to be tested against reality anew. That movement comes close to the circle I was seeking to mould from Heron and Reason's pyramid: Experience enters presentation, embeds proposition and gets tested against reality in practice.

Heron and Reason's knowledge types I have introduced here will build the epistemological point of reference if I talk about the capacities of the comic. I will argue, that among other possibilities it offers tools to include experiential knowledge on a new level into communication.

6.5. Wordings

Following the ontological and epistemological deliberation above, I turn now to look at terminology. This will relate directly to the types of knowledge, specifically as regards the visual element of presentational knowledge.

I will emphasise the distinction between picture and image, suggesting the use of picture for physical objects in front of our eyes and image for what is behind the eyes, perceived and imagined.

The second clarification - and I intend to explore this from various perspectives - concerns seeing, viewing and reading. It begins with the comic as the target of my research and the usual phrase 'reading' a comic. I prefer the notion of 'viewing' a comic. I will assert that visual grammar underpins the conscious decoding of pictures, leading to a distinction between reading and seeing a picture. Rudolf Arnheim and artists from the Bauhaus are called upon to assist in defining this grammar. Their teachings about the basics of perception are relevant too.

6.5.1. Picture and Image

The distinction between picture and image I do not regard as a paradigmatic statement; in my text it is a means of rendering language more precise. To divide inner from outer images, as Federico Zuccari did, for instance, in 1607 with *disegno interno* and *disegno esterno* has a long tradition (see Arnheim [1969]1997, 97-98). Rudolf Arnheim follows him, and proposes a comparable distinction in *Visual Thinking* ([1969]1997). I use the term 'picture' for all physical visual displays. 'Image', on the contrary, refers to inner images including visual imagination. In a paragraph about cognition as basis for the understanding of comics, Rolf Wigand writes: "An image is not just a picture in the head of the receiver (Fleming 1977, Paivo, 1976). Nor is an image a percept i.e. that which is experienced through the act of perception. An image, however, is an artefact of memory (Fleming 1977, Neisser, 1967)" (Wigand 1986, 43). I agree without reservation.

6.5.2. Reading a comic?

In common language it is said that one *reads* a comic. Why is this term commonly used, and why change it? The problem has been noted by David Carrier, a comic theorist and philosopher, who writes: "When seicento theorists and modern semioticians talk of reading paintings, they surely speak metaphorically - paintings are not texts" (Carrier 2000, 62). The headline of the fifth chapter in his book reads: "The Content of the Form; Or Seeing Pictures, Reading Texts, Viewing Comcs" (ibid, p.77). Unfortunately, he doesn't explain much about his division of words in the chapter. I will follow his suggestion and use *viewing* for the combined action of reading and seeing, but further elaborate on seeing pictures and reading text, by arguing that pictures are both seen *and* read, just as text is.

To claim that the comics can be *read* would treat the pictures in them like words. It would dissociate pictures from some of their attributes, and instead imply capacities which they are not capable of fulfilling. Reading is a form of interpretation which relies on knowledge of the language code. Looking at the text, the initial stimulus is the bodily/sensual; in this case visual impact. Decoding/reading of the text follows. The same takes place with pictures. I perceive a picture and progress to decode it, interpreting it as metaphor or otherwise.

The picture is read, in decoding iconic and symbolic signs in it, everything which can be literally described as *what is to be seen in them*, referring to a 'knowing that' as propositional knowledge.

But before, it has to be perceived physically, heard, seen or tasted.

The myth of the innocent perception is a first trap I seek to avoid; the perception is not prior to but already intertwined with interpretation. Rudolf Arnheim clarifies the complex incidence in vision before thought comes into play. "Visual perception, (...) is not a passive recording of stimulus material but an active concern of the mind. The sense of sight operates selectively. The perception of shape consists in the application of form categories, which can be called visual concepts because of their simplicity and generality.

Perception involves problem solving" (Arnheim ([1969]1997, 37). Whilst Arnheim's research relates directly to a retinal perception, art historian Ernst Gombrich comes to a similar conclusion when he despises the myth of the innocent eye (Gombrich [1960]1982, 138), and Nelson Goodman, following him states that "there is no innocent eye [...]. Not only how but what the eye sees is regulated by need and prejudice. The eye selects, rejects, organizes, associates, classifies, analyses, constructs" (Goodman [1968]1976, 226). The shapes and forms Arnheim alludes to constitute what can be called 'visual grammar' (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996]2006). To the extent that it can be dealt with consciously, all the activities Goodman discusses play on the level of visual presentational knowledge. The active dealing with visual grammar in the perception of a picture is an intensified way of seeing which can be called with more clarity: *seeing-in*. Seeing-in scrutinises a picture in a way which goes beyond assessing its

depicted subject/s. It scrutinises its visual grammar. In this sense, I claim that a picture can be read without 'seeing' it, (without 'seeing-in'). Contrariwise, it can be 'seen' (seeing-in) without reading it.

Both approaches are intertwined and cannot exist in isolation. They do relate to presentational and propositional knowledge, and refer to each other in bipolar circles. As with the innocent eye, no presentation turns into presentational knowledge if not organized by visual propositions. No proposition materializes, if not based on the knowledge as to how it should be presented. The dialectic between the two are the basis for their existence.

To overload one side with a bias towards one type of knowledge results in ontological disproportions.

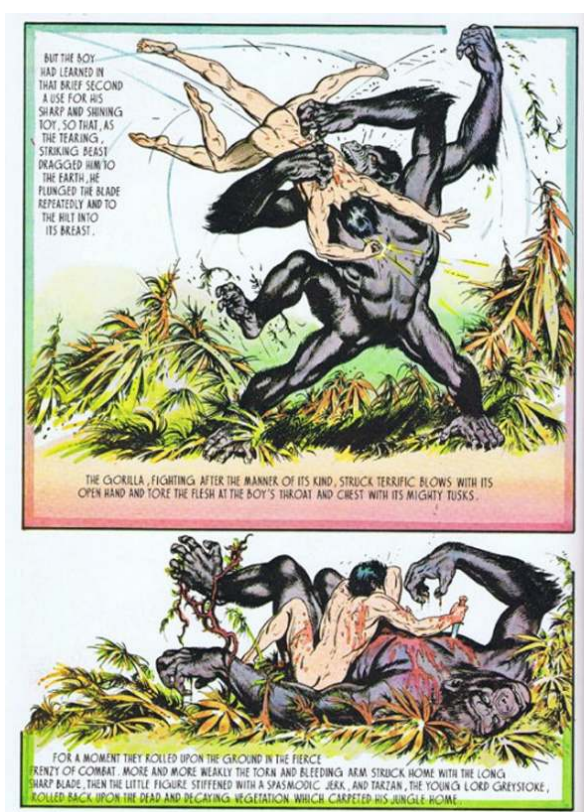
The disturbed exchange between the arts and sciences are caused by such disproportions.

Having clarified what it is I mean by *reading* and *seeing*, I now relate these to the comic specifically. The picture can be seen and read, and the text can be seen and read. The combined practice I call *viewing*.

I offer some examples to demonstrate this.

6.5.3. Seeing-in. The role of visual grammar

Seeing-in applies predominantly to images, but also to text as regards both its visual appearance and the overall layout of a page.



6.3. Burroughs, Hogarth (1972) no pages given

I can open a book, and just 'see' the pages without reading the words. With some visual knowledge I am able to see *into* it – its typeface, its spacing and the messages of its visual appearance. The amount of information I can deduce from seeing a text is, in the case of a book, likely to be less significant than the amount of information

gleaned by reading the text.

It is the other way round with pictures: If I read them, I am likely to get less information than if I am able to see them(seeing-in).

In the case of a comic, the text balloons are read. In the picture, the action depicted is read: 'Tarzan jumps'. Further reading, in accordance with the comic conventions, indicates

that he is moving quickly because there are speed lines trailing him. Internalised codes are called upon. I have seen hundreds of speed lines of Tarzan and understand that in this case he moves in different directions at the same time. I build on an inner library of speed lines. The speed lines are still a readable sign. They do have a good deal of visual significance beyond this however. They develop visual speed; they constitute a counter-position to the colour planes, and they structure the void.

The colour planes are still readable in some sense but as signs are much vaguer. They relate more than the speed lines to the physiological quality of perception and are dominated by visual grammar. The transparency of the pink colour, its brushstroke structure, the smoothness and the gliding of shades host more information than what the colour plane could literally tell. The pink could, for example, signify a relation to a gay community. Reading has drifted over into seeing. I look at hairs on the arms of the gorilla; the manner in which a third arm is attached to signify movement; I see the compositional circle intruded by Tarzan, and his knife in the crossroads of the two diagonals. I admire how the artist has played the speed lines against the colour fields, and enjoy the colour composition. I can dwell in the picture way beyond the point at which its readable information is exhausted. An extensive retrieval of information is undertaken: Structuring and organizing as Goodman and Arnheim described it take place. Seeing-in oscillates between conscious and internalised knowledge of visual grammar.

In seeing there are also conventions at play, such as recognising a style and associating it with a certain attitude. The style forms a complex cultural code and is built in the way visual grammar is applied.

What exactly constitutes visual grammar, the basis of presentational knowledge? Examples from the specialists in the arts will assist in answering this question.

I enter the studio of a painter, let me assume its Caspar David Friedrich to stay loyal to the theme of Romanticism. This picture leans on an easel. It is common practice among painters to put the painting upside down on the canvas, and to continue working on it that way for considerable amounts of time. I assume he did this too.



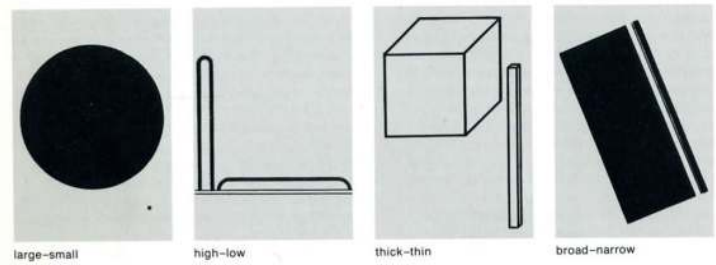
6.4. Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840),
Turned upside down: *Sunset (brothers)*, ca. 1835,
Oil on canvas, 26 x 31,
State Hermitage Museum St. Petersburg

The relation of shapes, balance of patterns and colours, and every part of the visual grammar of the picture becomes more dominant as it is when the observer is distracted through the depicted objects. How many dark shapes on the left are needed to balance the dark shapes on the right. The knowledge resides between visual psychology, Gestalt theory, visual linguistics and artistic knowledge. Again Arnheim, working on the

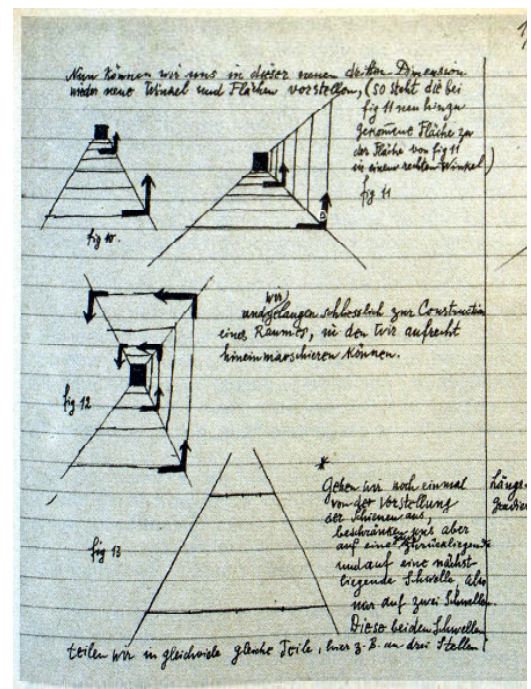
intersection of those fields: "A picture is a statement about visual qualities, and such a statement can be complete at any level of

abstractness" (Arnheim

([1969]1997 137). These visual qualities are organized and structured by visual grammar. The term is not only used in a formal way, as grammar taken as a set of linguistic rules might suggest. I use it in the way Kress and van Leeuwen do, where visual structures correspond with interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction. Visual grammar covers all pictures from oil painting via photography up to the comic strips and diagrams. It moves on from the 'universal' aspects of semiotic principles towards the culture-specific aspect of their application ([1996]2006), 2-4). Small parts are connected via a grammar into larger (visually) sense-making units. That is the case with visual elements such as lines, dots, shapes and colours. Authorities from visual arts will help to clarify this further. A comprehensive access to this type of visual knowledge from the side of the arts one obtains



6.5. An example for basic visual grammar, as understood in the Bauhaus. From Ittens Basic Course. (Itten 1963, 10)



6.6. Klee, Paul
Sketch from his 1921/22 teaching course at the Bauhaus, concerned with general gestalt principles. (Klee, ([1905-40] 1987, 226)

by looking at the literature related to Bauhaus. Johannes Itten's famous teaching books *Design and Form* (1975) or his *The Elements of Colour*, (1990) both of which he developed throughout his life, beginning its public appearance with the famous *Vorkurs* (Basic Course) (1920) on general Gestalt principles at the Bauhaus. Other examples are Paul Klee's ([1905-40] 1987) and Kandinsky's (1926) writings on form, colour and gestalt in the same context. Josef Albers *Interaction of Colour* ([1963] 2006) is another well known example. Associating these principles of visual organization with Bauhaus is an automatism, since the Bauhaus discourse was and still is in parts dominating this discussion and has delivered milestones of this knowledge.

To see how complex information displays are organized, one only has to look on a Hieronymus Bosch painting with its hundreds of little figures and shades. They are grouped by visual features such as colour interaction, spatial distribution, likeness of forms, closed and open forms, pointing lines, density, openness and so on. The way in which these principles are used is usually referred to as style. Every style throughout the centuries has made different use of the principles. Heinrich Wölfflin, in his *Principles of Art History* (1915) has written an influential account of their formal use and organization. As he says, he does not analyse the beauty of Leonardo and Dürer, but rather the elements with which such beauty has taken shape (Wölfflin [1915]1983, 21).

Back in Caspar David Friedrich's studio, I turn the painting back, and understand better those two dark shapes: Standing persons with the fancy hats of the time, admiring the sunset. Now I can 'read' the picture. It says: Two persons in a landscape with sea and islands look at a sunset.



6.7. Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), *Sunset (brothers)*, ca. 1835, Oil on canvas, 26 x 31, State Hermitage Museum St Petersburg

But the primary impact is produced by the painting's visual quality, its visual grammar, and the 'seeing-in'. We can 'dwell' in the picture again and again.

Knowledge of visual grammar in perceiving a picture leads to deeper seeing of a picture. This visual knowledge has to be acquired like learning to read and to write. Visual grammar pertaining to colour and shape is abstract. They present abstract concepts, not only residing in the style-set, but also within each work. In this way, pictures are capable of communicating abstract concepts in that they impersonate them in their visual grammar. They do not talk about them, but emanate them in their visual presence. The divergent interpretation of their sensuous appearance has to be organized and structured in order for it to make sense. The field of language can be - but does not have to be - touched by this form of information retrieval.

Learning visual presentational knowledge and its application leads eventually to a propositional knowledge, which resides primarily outside language. It dodges language. A good painter with a highly developed ability to visually organize a surface is rarely able to discuss the painting's content. Michael Polanyi's *tacit knowledge* comes to mind. He had written in his 1967 book *The Tacit Dimension*: "I shall reconsider human knowledge from the fact that *we can know more than we can tell*" (Polanyi 1967, 4; italics from original). He goes on, and covers the knowledge types of Heron and Reason. Gestalt is understood as actively shaped experience, a process driven by the pursuit of knowledge. This process is for Polanyi the indispensable key to knowledge gathering (ibid, p.6).

Moving away from Friedrich's studio, I'd like to recall the knowledge types from Heron and Reason introduced in the last chapter. It takes visual grammar to organize a picture; this is what constitutes presentational knowledge, as the reading of the picture links with propositional knowledge.

Presentational knowledge is required for the physical 'making', producing and showing. This is not only apparent in art, but also in crafts, dance, cooking or writing. If language is the most precise tool to communicate propositional knowledge, it still uses presentational forms. If they are taken into account and used, the text turns into literature. I will come back to this in relation to the literary turn and its impact in writing.

6.5.4. Reading, seeing and beyond: Indwelling

Romanticism, Social Science and Art

If reading an image and seeing it is combined into viewing, it comes close to a technique termed empathy or indwelling. Both terms have been used by Michael Polanyi in his search for the *Tacit Dimension* braiding tighter the net between Social Science and Art.

Indwelling has an interesting and chequered history, reaching back into the 19th century. It originates in "Verstehen", *Understanding* as one of the cornerstones of Wilhelm Dilthey's (1833-1911) work, in which he sought to distinguish what was to become human science from natural science. By investigating and understanding the social world, one participates and takes "part in the constitution of its 'objects of experience'" (Strati 1999, 59). Understanding as hermeneutical term, and its specific development into empathy became important as a founding stone in social science, owing a lot to Max Weber's use and critique of it (Strati 1999, 58-59). It was later Michael Polanyi, who developed the concept in relation to *tacit knowledge*. He extended on empathy and used the term *indwelling*, to describe the way how Tacit Knowledge is produced and operates. "It brings home to us that it is not by looking at things but by dwelling in them, that we understand their joint meaning" (Polanyi 1967, 17). *Indwelling* in turn was an influential term in art theory in the first half of the 20th century. I will expand on this shortly.

I will allow for a brief historic detour, since it clarifies links into the history of thinking with special cross-

references between social science and art. Strati notes:

"Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) has emphasized that Romanticism viewed interpretation as a part of human existence, and thus anticipated contemporary hermeneutics by influencing Dilthey's philosophy of life and his contribution to the discipline" (Strati 1999, 59). Schleiermacher (1768 - 1834) was influenced in turn by Friedrich Schlegel (1772 - 1829) together with whom he published *Athenaeum* (1798-1800). Schleiermacher was part of the romantic movement. It is no incident, that Schlegel, as I wrote earlier, promoted the text-immanent critique of literary and other production. He thought of media and genre cross-overs what he termed *Progressive Universal Poetry*. It is an intriguing axis of thought: The link from Herder and his historic relativism, via Schleiermacher and the Romantics, to Dilthey and Weber in the social sciences. Action Research or Social Constructionism to name a paradigm and a research methodology of today, would not be possible without that tradition.

It can be credited to Antonio Strati, who formulated the fruits of this tradition and applied it to organizational studies (Strati 1999). He discusses at length the history of the concept of empathy, and the various approaches and critiques in 20th century science. Strati concludes with an update of the theoretical presuppositions of the empathic understanding of organizations. Due to the particular possibilities of its medium, I will later claim that the comic

offers to construct messages capable of involving the viewer emphatically.

According to Strati, there are three basic types of empathy. The researcher can empathically understand the motives of the organizational actor. To share posteriori an imagined experience is a second technique. The third is to gain emphatic insight via participant observation. In an imaginative way, the researcher plays out different perspectives of the organizational actor and organizational process. The style of the resulting text and its reading as a process is capable of producing new information.

The dominant features of empathy are to be cognitive in that the researcher seeks to understand inner reasons and intentions of the organizational actor. This is extended to aesthetic empathy, concerning intentional actions that cannot be translated without distorting them into cognitive action. Ultimately he calls on emotional states of experience as important features for empathic research.

In that Strati highlights the importance - but also the limits - of an empathic understanding of an organization, he extends in turn the scope of what constitutes an organisation on one hand, and the available interpretative tools on the other.

In terms of understand art, I will follow a route comparable to that which Dilthey follows. Dilthey's *Verstehen*, understanding and empathy appeared in Theodor Lipps' work, as Strati notes as well. Lipps was a German philosopher, cultural historian and psychologist. He was later admired by Sigmund Freud. He popularised the term *Einfühlung* in the 1880s. This

term can be translated as *empathy* or, more precisely, *indwelling*. For Lipps, "a person appreciates another person's reaction by a projection of the self into the other. In his *Ästhetik*, 2 vol. (1903-06), he made all appreciation of art dependent upon a similar self-projection into the object" (Britannica, 2009).

Interestingly enough, his concept became popular and made a big impact in the art world. In 1907, Wilhelm Worringer wrote his doctoral thesis in Art History in Bern, and called it: *Abstraktion und Einfühlung: ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* (*Abstraction and Empathy: Essays in the Psychology of Style*) (Worringer [1908]1981). The book became an immediate success. With just 40 pages of theory and another 70 pages given over to examples, of its time it is the most widely read book in art theory. It greatly influenced research and has been translated into numerous languages (Franck in: Worringer [1908]1981, 118). The influence encompasses practicing artists as well; Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Emil Nolde to name just two.

Drawing from Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel he developed the original concept of empathy as a technique for understanding a universal human trait. Empathy was defined as one type of relation man would develop towards the world and especially to works of art. There is an inner drive predisposition for empathy as there is towards abstraction. For Worringer, abstraction constituted the counter position to empathy. Indwelling is possible, he argues, preferably in styles like

naturalism and realism, where one can project oneself into the work. On the contrary, there is the drive towards abstraction, which he describes in the psychologistic fashion of the days. The overly-complex world caused 'World anxiety' or 'spiritual space awe', resulted in people taking refuge in stylistic simplification. Artworks not as complex and aberrant as the world 'out there' are of help, providing simple conventions, abstractions, reductions and ornaments as psychological refuge. Stylistic simplifications in Byzantine or Egyptian style or in Celtic traditions are called upon as examples. Worringer sums up quite different times and features under this concept. In 1919 he himself had described the problems of this argument. He did so again, more explicitly, in his own preface of the 1948 edition (Franck in: Worringer ([1908]1981, 122). It was the simplicity and beauty of his concept - an abstraction in itself - which made it so successful. To fear the chaos of the outer world can easily be understood as driving force behind all comforting construction of theorems and formulae across disciplines. For instance, this chapter began with paradigmatic grids, they form a part of this simplifications.

The work of Wilhelm Worringer not only demonstrates empathy located between social science and art. Worringer's use of the term 'indwelling' is related to, but different from the term 'empathy' as used in Strati. I do not have the space to discuss Worringer's tension between abstraction and empathy, although it could be a promising road in relation to the

different drawing styles in the comics. I have called on it as a viewing technique of art, going beyond a merely symbolic reading, to enforce the seeing-in.

Empathy and indwelling were introduced to understand the act of viewing a comic. The viewer dwells in an image, and together with the reading of the corresponding text constructs coherent scenery and action, which is empathically enacted in our self. The viewer is 'pulled in'.

Polanyi introduced the term *indwelling* to help describe the way in which Tacit Knowledge is produced. "It brings home to us that it is not by looking at things but by dwelling in them, that we understand their joint meaning. We can see how an unbridled lucidity can destroy our understanding of complex patterns. If we look long onto details or use a magnifier, we lose eventually the idea of the whole entity" (Polanyi 1967, 17).

6.6. Summary

I have distinguished the 'seeing' from the 'reading' of pictures. Seeing is based on visual elements. Gathering presentational knowledge about it, the knowing *how*, is fostered by propositional feedbacks. In this way, presentational knowledge can reach a sublime level of seeing, which I term seeing-in. On the other hand, a picture can be read, in the descriptive mode of what is on it. The similar argument of reading and seeing applies in different allocation to text in the comics, may it be captions, balloons or free floating text. They can be 'read', but do have their visual

appearance which leads to 'seeing' the text. To denote the combined activity of reading and seeing, I use the term 'viewing', which is especially significant in relation to the comic.

7. Pictures and text

7.1. Introduction

What are the cultural conditions for accepting pictures as information? The question will lead me in this chapter to the historic schism between pictures and text in our culture. The “denigration of vision” (Jay 1993) came along with the sensual quality of visual expressions on one side and the immateriality of text on the other. The undervaluing of visual tools is related to its capacity to host predominantly presentational knowledge, and the epistemological value it is given. Different types of knowledge have been kept apart, hybrid combinations of text and image have long been seen as negative in the generation of knowledge in western culture. As a founding text of media theory, Lessing’s *Laokoon* demonstrates this separation. This is one reason why the visual literacy is relatively low (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996] 2006) compared to the number of pictures we are surrounded with today.

I will go through pictures in different fields of research, focusing specifically on organizational studies and visual sociology.

The chapter will end by examining the contrary position: If the presentational knowledge became a problem for pictures in the epistemology of culture, what about the presentational side of text? It was the so called *linguistic turn* that focused on the formal aspects of language as part of text. With the dawn of poststructuralism its influence has drifted into writing and is of rising importance.

Some people have long been wary of pictures, whereas for others they have held a near magic force. In western culture, the relationship between pictures and text is comparable to the pendulum swinging between idolatry and iconoclasm. The Golden Calf and its destruction is an iconic moment in history. Moses comes down from Mount Sinai, holding the Ten Commandments carved in stone tablets in his hand. He sees the Israelites dancing around an image, the Golden Calf, shatters the tablets, and goes back, to get a copy. He brings the stones down again, and on which the third of the Ten Commandments is inscribed: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Bible; Exodus, 20: 4). The moment, when any given picture turns into an idol seems here still to be a central one, but already Saint Augustine in the 5th century goes further: He condemned *concupiscentia ocularum*, "ocular desire, which diverts our minds from more spiritual concerns", as Martin Jay states in his book with the telling title: *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-century French Thought* (Jay 1993, 13).

How this denigration has become inscribed into the discourse of western knowledge I will look at now.

7.2. Laokoon

Lessing's *Laokoon* (1766) is a seminal text of what was to become media theory. One of his central messages is that literature is responsible for succession (time), and visual art hosts the simultaneous way to tell things (space). This distinction is established as fundamental, despite the fact, that their internal relation where also for Lessing obvious. Having in mind the contemplation of artworks depicting human bodies, he wrote: "All bodies, however, exist not only in space, but also in time. They continue, and, at any moment of their continuance, may assume a different appearance and stand in different relations. Every one of these momentary appearances and groupings was the result of a preceding, may become the cause of a following, and is therefore the centre of a present action. Consequently painting can imitate actions also, but only as they are suggested through forms" (Lessing, [1766]1892, 115-116)⁸.

In contrary, actions as a matter of time need a physical agent, and a space to take place. I deduce that painting inherently 'contains' time, and literature 'hosts' space.

W.J.T. Mitchell analyses Lessing's text and its aftermath, stating that pictures contain a temporal dimension while text contains a spatial one. But this insight is dismissed as secondary, to keep up an ideal of unblended purity of space

⁸ „Doch alle Körper existieren nicht allein in dem Raume, sondern auch in der Zeit. Sie dauern fort, und können in jedem Augenblicke ihrer Dauer anders erscheinen, und in anderer Verbindung stehen. Jede dieser augenblicklichen Erscheinungen und Verbindungen ist die Wirkung einer vorhergehenden, und kann die Ursache einer folgenden, und sonach gleichsam das Zentrum einer Handlung sein. Folglich kann die Malerei auch Handlungen nachahmen, aber nur andeutungsweise durch Körper“.

and time (Mitchell 1986, 100). It is Descartes' intention to trace phenomena back to primary principles which enforces the separation of space and time in media. Principles are non-substantial. Descartes' mistrust in the senses found its way into Lessing's argument: Lessing goes into details about poetry and painting, and ultimately, the problem surfaces: poetry has a "wider sphere" because of "the infinite range of our imagination and the intangibility of its images" (Lessing, [1766]1892, 56)⁹.

Mitchell summarizes dryly: "In theory, we should be able to get along without space, without painting, without bodies, in a realm of pure temporal consciousness" (Mitchell 1986, 109). Lessing seems to exploit the iconophobic and iconoclastic traditions which run through western philosophy. In contrast to reason, science, criticism and logos – the idols of the senses must be declared "dumb", "mute", "empty", or "illusory" (Mitchell 1986, 113).

I am not comfortable attributing the blame solely to Lessing's text, but my task in this section of the thesis is to ask why knowledge in pictures had – and continues – to struggle for credibility. Lessing was not iconophobic but his underlying distrust in the senses and in pictures is defining for a dominating stream in western thinking. Given the impact his work has had, it was perpetuating the mutual exclusiveness of pictures and text, which can be followed up into Modernism. To understand pictures and text the way how they relate space and

⁹ „bloss aus Erwägung der weitem Sphäre der Poesie, aus dem unendlichen Felde unserer Einbildungskraft, aus der Geistigkeit ihrer Bilder, die in grösster Menge und Mannigfaltigkeit nebeneinander stehen können, ohne dass eins das andere deckt und schändet, wie es wohl die Dinge selbst oder die natürlichen Zeichen derselben in den engen Schranken des Raumes und der Zeit thun würden.“

time together, creates a 'hybrid' media - carrying a pejorative undertone. This does imply that something pure or ultimate exists or is possible, and it would be desirable to reach it. In Modernism, this was to become a central target for the arts. Clement Greenberg, one of the most influential critics in the American post war art world, defined it as the goal to which each work of art should aspire: "Each art had to determine, through its own operations and works, the effects exclusive to itself" (Greenberg, [1960] 1993; 86).

7.3. Pictures and Visual Structure in Books

This line of theoretical discussion is especially relevant to the comic, as exemplified by the status visual features are accorded in relation to text. Indebted to this tradition, the comic was for a long time understood as a medium exclusively for children or amusement.

A comparable attitude still prevails towards the use of pictures in books. Pictures are found in schoolbooks or educational brochures. Popular handbooks use visual tools like icons, frames and bold lines to structure their information. Generally, however, a disparaging attitude prevails towards visual devices in literary texts. Even the visual structuring of a text through paragraphs and bullet points can give some readers the perception that it is not 'serious'.

In German a beautiful term exists for texts hostile to visual structuring. *Bleiwüste* which would literally translate into *desert made from lead* - quoting the lead letters once used for printing. To cross the lead dessert seems to be the

masochistic quest before a certain maturity in literacy is granted. Serious books may contain pictures as examples, visual data, or on the cover. A portrait of the author might be found on the back cover. A portrait of the author? Why? Wouldn't a description of his face do? But if it comes to pictures in a narrative or non-narrative construction related to the text, the book loses its credibility.

This predisposition can often mean that publishers of scientific books, who obviously have little regard for graphic design, seem to compete for the worst textual layout. This approach is likely to be rooted in the mistrust some of their clients have towards books which look visually sophisticated. True value is not to be found in such 'superficial' things as graphic design. Despite many researchers with more complex interests, mutual exclusiveness is often perpetuated. Practical possibilities of reproduction and copyright questions add to the problem.¹⁰

I will give another example to make the problematic relation between visual material and its description in text obvious. If a text deals with and analyses something visual (e.g. a door, picture or chair) many authors would not regard it as necessary to actually *show* the reader the object they are talking about. One finds descriptions of it, reconstructing it verbally. And still, if the picture is printed, authors would mistrust the eyes of the reader, and go on regardless to

¹⁰ It would be interesting to discuss this idea of copyright in a wider cultural context. If on one side the practice could be discussed as a structural exclusion of a visual discourse, different possibilities could be possible. As it is in written text, pictures could be as a rule produced by the author and re-narrate the visual content they refer to. Only in certain circumstances and limited quantities come as a visual 'quote' which needs a copyright.

describe what one sees. It reminds me of the patronising gestures of the early stages of ethnography, and the stance which was taken towards the *savages* and the *tribes*. The visuals are taken as wild and childish entities, they have to be taken care of, and are understood as only to come into real existence, if talked about.

Ethnography has moved on from 'savages' as patronised zoo animals to a more differentiated position today. Regarding pictures, given all the noise about *pictorial turn* and *iconic turn*, also here some movement seems to have developed. But there is still a long way to go, as Kress and von Leeuwen conclude: "The problem which we face is that literate cultures have systematically suppressed means of analysis of the visual forms of representation, so that there is not, at the moment, an established theoretical framework within which visual forms of representation can be discussed" (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996] 2006, 23).

Technological determinism bolsters the hegemonic position of language and text. Text can be better distributed, mass distributed and reproduced since Gutenberg's invention of the moveable types. Although wood cutting, copper engraving and other techniques were developed for the print and distribution of pictures, the print and distribution of text has always been one or two steps ahead.

It was only at the end of the 20th century, that the print and distribution of pictures caught up with that of text. Yet the position of text seems to be reinforced again by the

impossibility of digital 'search' into the content pictures. After investing considerable efforts into so called *content based image retrieval* without discernable results, search engines can still only list pictures by tags which are small text 'labels' accompanying the pictures. Tags are undoubtedly a clumsy tool to discuss pictures, and already this resistance towards search engines in the internet perpetuates the difference. I could call the resistance an unconciliatory quality of pictures, especially towards the hegemonic code of language. It can at first be seen as a possibility, as a locus of hope to take different ontological routes. That visual communication was not subject to policing and has developed more freely (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996] 2006, 5) is another reason for their potential.

The way in which to deal with pictures across different disciplines as a source of knowledge has become recognised as a promising field. This I explore below.

7.4. Traditions of Organizing and Interpreting Pictures

Despite this problematic relationship between text and pictures, pictures have been deployed in various ways across all fields of academic knowledge. I will describe how pictures are deployed within different fields of science, focusing specifically on organisational studies. From drawing and painting to photography and graphs pictures help organize information using visual grammar. Whereas text presents information sequentially, pictures present information spatially.

7.4.1. Ways to Deal with Pictures

Graeme Sullivan (2005, xiii) distinguishes three traditions of interpreting and organizing visual material. First, sociology, anthropology and cultural studies; second, art history, art theory and art criticism; and third, a research genre he sees in arts-based educational enquiry. The third relates to his background as professor in art education.

I will modify his schema, and take into account the use of pictures in the natural sciences as well. This is helpful to understand the position of social science concerning the use of pictures between natural science and the arts.

I begin with pictures and image-making techniques in the natural sciences. In medicine or physics they are part of standard protocol. They are integrated into the same argumentation and appear under the same system of references as language and text. These range from x-ray pictures in medicine, to geological imagery, coloured schemata, graphs and charts. Advanced knowledge about visual perception, both in terms of producing and interpreting these pictures is required to ensure they are capable of carrying the correct data (see Klanten et al. 2008; Tuftee 2004; Zakia 2002; Barry 1997) I will look more closely at forms of information visualisation in chapter ten.

Second, and as regards sociology and ethnography, this is the field that relates most fundamentally to organizational

studies (see Ball and Smith, 1992; Rose, 2001; Pink, 2001). I will focus on this in the subsection to follow this. .

The third approach to the use of pictures moves me from sociology via cultural studies into art history and theory. Where the term *art* comes into play, and how this is to be valued, has been the nucleus of ongoing struggle. Cultural studies, art history, art theory and criticism do not produce pictures themselves, but transfer them into a textual discursive space with rules comparable to the ones the social or natural sciences offer.

Photographers and visual artists constitute the forth category. They see images in their original discursive format. This is different to the production of pictures in the natural sciences. They produce images and focus on the medium itself. It can be accompanied by text. For example, newspapers and other media use a combination of text and photographs; the internet is largely based on this mixture of media. Forms of conceptual art also tend to combine text and pictures.

Still a good deal of artists do not read non-fiction and would reject any attempt by others to label them as 'intellectuals'. Their relationship to text is a fractured one.

These four 'traditions' describe the different ways in which to deal with pictures. I continue now to describe the second approach, as wholly relevant for our purposes, in more depth.

7.4.2. Pictures in Organizational Studies

Visual sociology and the neighbouring fields of visual ethnography and anthropology have shaped the way in which pictures are used within organizational studies. It was focused predominantly on photography and has little to say about drawings. However, most of the issues (e.g. visual grammar, the relationship with text and the construction of meaning) central to drawings are similar to that of photography.

The use of pictures in these fields has a long tradition and goes back to the early days of photography and colonial ventures for archival purposes. In the form of drawings, however, it goes back further still. Cultural Anthropology and Ethnography in the first half of the 20th century used photography (e.g. Bateson and Mead 1942). But in search for objectivity, visual descriptive documentation and content analysis came under attack. That concerned its so called 'seductive power', the construction of meaning through the researcher and ultimately the visual media as influence on the produced information.

That pictures are not 'clean' information resources was the problem that always lurked behind attempts to use photography. Within this nexus, pictures didn't feature in organisational studies until the 1980s. In the early 1970s the use of pictures increased significantly in the field of sociology (Leonhard 1986, 2-4). In 1982 the *International Visual Sociology Association* was established and issues the journal

Visual Studies (Routledge) devoted to the subject with three issues per year.

The interest in pictures was enforced by increasing interest in qualitative methodology in organizational fields, which had until this time been overlooked, "deemed by writers on organisations to be irrelevant to the business of maximising efficiency and task driven behaviours" (Page & Gaggiotti, 2010). The term *organizational aesthetics* (Strati 1999, Linstead & Höpfl 2000) became an umbrella for research on non-rational aspects in organizations, which also focused on a diversity of arts-based methods among others (Warren 2008, Taylor & Ladkin 2009). Ultimately, Networks like *Invisio*¹¹ focus today solely on the use of visual material in the context of organizational studies, and have greatly improved research and its recognition in the context.

They all work to bring back aspects into research lost in a solely positivist rational perspective. Max Weber had already seen in 1922 that rational/logical understanding needs a counterpart to grasp the emotional context through a sympathetic participation in the action (Strati 1999, 54). It was one of his tools to distinguish sociology from the natural sciences.

Strati called on empathic understanding as an effective method to understand organizational life (Strati 1999, 58). With its distinct rendering of knowledge, visual material constitutes a means of fostering empathy. A summarization of the distinction

¹¹ <http://www.som.surrey.ac.uk/invisio/>

can be found in Anne Marie Barry's book on visual intelligence: "verbal language is abstract, essentially linear, and achieves its functionality by the application of culturally derived codes once removed from direct experience". Visual information, however, "is holistic, immediate, and experientially rooted" (Barry 1997: IX). To advance empathy, then, is one feature of pictures.

7.5. Authenticity and Photography

Photography in the social sciences has long struggled with the question of authenticity and continues to do so today. To grant pictures their own right as utterance produced problems especially in the struggle against 'hard' science (see Pink 2001, 9-14). Pictures are not data in a quantified sense as numbers are. There is an information spill-over, there is more besides and beyond the depicted object, and there is the visual grammar of colours and shapes. Authenticity directly links the value and status of photographs to an assumed truth. Ball and Smith (1992) provide an insight into the problem of interpretation of images as visual data. As much as they champion the use of pictures, problems arise: "Photographs of people and things stand as evidence in a way that pure narrative cannot. In many senses, visual information of what the people and their worlds look like provides harder and more immediate evidence than the written word; photographs can authenticate a research report in a way words alone cannot" (Ball/Smith 1992, 9). The term *authenticate* repeats very unfortunate that photographs seem to hold a certain

truthfulness, a neutral relation to reality, which text as media is not suggesting with this immediate force. This force renews the discussion about the seductive danger of pictures I mentioned earlier.

But as Sullivan observes "...the use of photography as merely a visual index as described by Ball and Smith severely misinterprets what a photograph is" (Sullivan 2005; 63). To reduce photographs to a visual index leaves qualities of pictures lying idle, like visual grammar I introduced in the last chapter. Worse, if not noticed they disturb the intended information retrieval.

In a similar problem Douglas A. Harper writes: "Indeed, the quality of being 'visually arresting', derives from meaning in the culture of the photographer rather than the culture of the photographed, and, as such, reflects a stylistic influence that needs to be overcome rather than emphasized" (Harper in: Leonard (ed) 1986).

I do not believe, that it is possible to overcome it, and my interest lies rather in consciously emphasizing it, and bringing its forces into use.

There is a lot going on beyond the indexical function of a picture. The basic two influences to be kept in mind are the author and the viewer. In this sense pictures are embedded in the discussion on the influence of the researcher on the subject matter, and its interpretation by the reader/viewer (van Maanen, 1988; 75-85).

In drawings, an 'author' is immediately recognisable; the claim of authenticity disappears; the seductive power of

authenticity is not existent. Nevertheless, the imaginative seductive power produced by all pictures stays imminent, though under different preconditions. The focus both on the author and the viewer increases.

Two books giving an up to date comprehensive overview of the current use of pictures in the social sciences are *Visual Methodologies* by Gillian Rose ([1999] 2001) and *Doing Visual Ethnography* by Sarah Pink (2001).

The interpretation of picture is what it is: an interpretation, as Gillian Rose says. There is no way out of this tautology. Her way out of the problem is methodology. In the social sciences the interpretation has to be justified against a fixed type of context. This can be achieved through methodology (Rose, 2001; xiv). Content analysis, Symbolism, Structuralism, Cognitive anthropology, Ethnomethodology: these different techniques for the interpretation of pictures carry different types of findings. Gillian Rose gives in her book a detailed description of methods, while Sarah Pink focuses more specifically on the issues themselves. Consequentially, Pink introduces reflexivity as a central tool implying that the researcher is entangled in the emerging knowledge which both influences and is reflected from the interpretation of the visual material. The book has its limits, as Graeme Sullivan notes: Sarah Pink "has very little to say about the *creation* of new knowledge using visual means that might be undertaken within a research perspective" (Sullivan 2005, XV). I am wary of the term *creation* so as not to get trapped by the

unfortunate relationship which is often claimed to exist between artists and creativity, but I endorse his statement nonetheless.

7.6. The message-aspect as unifying perspective for pictures and text. Roman Jakobson's Model.

Different types of expression like pictures and text can be looked at simultaneously if we see them as messages. Both are messages based on grammar. I will use Roman Jakobson's communication model, which looks at messages and their constituting features. Jakobson's model developed out of a structural linguistic position, but can be attributed to a wider semiotic position, in which linguistics is understood as part of semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996]2006, 6). The model highlights the importance of codes and social context involved. I draw on his model because it offers a widely used and robust schema for discussing different types of messages, while maintaining both the message itself and its context.

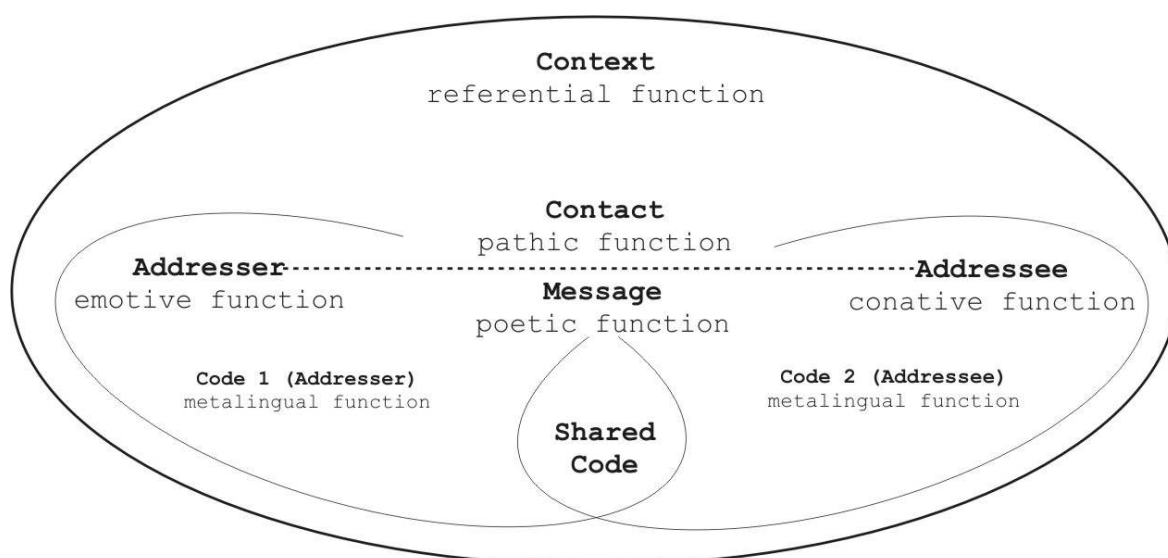
The model describes six different functions of the message. It can focus predominantly on the addressee (receiver), the addresser (sender), on the code of the message, on the establishing of the contact, or on the message which focuses on itself (Jakobson 1960, 350-377).

Jakobson drew on the organon model by Karl Bühler (Bühler (1933]1982, 75-164), diversified it further, and added the

poetic function, which is of special interest here. The poetic function is one reason to use Jakobson's model.

The character of a particular message depends, then, on which of the six features it focuses. A message which focuses on the addresser or sender is called an *emotive message* or *expressive message*. The addresser's own attitude towards the content of the message is emphasized. A yelp of pain would be a good example of such a message.

If the addressee or receiver is at the centre, it is called



7.1. Roman Jakobson's model. Graph by the author.

conative and any didactic talk caring about the receiver falls in that category. The focus on contact (or channel) produces a *pathic* function, focusing on the possibility of the communication, like saying *Hallo?* on the phone.

The code relates to a *metalingual* or metasemiotic function, scrutinising the shared code as basis for understanding. '*How did you mean this?*' would be a question belonging in this category. The focus on context produces a *referential*

function, the denoted, cognitive or simply the external content of the message. Finally, to put the message itself at the centre of attention produces a *poetic function*, which could also be called aesthetic or rhetorical.

A message of reasonable complexity ordinarily contains each of the six features to various degrees. Usually one is the dominant feature, resulting in the character of the message as described, and the other features are subordinated to it. This dominant function is subordinated to the question: With what intention was the message transmitted? (Chandler, 2002; Hébert, 2006)

Any expression is the move from experience to the making of a new expression. An expression, which stands as experience in its own right. Scientific observations are written down using conventions of other scientific expressions, and in this context it is understood to stand as such uttering in its own right as text, following its own conventions as text.

Conventions, which have by nature to be different to the conventions in the field of experience. The conventions of an academic text are different to the conventions of a social situation. "Language does not stand in a one-to-one relationship to (partially) non linguistic phenomena such as behaviours, thoughts and feelings (Gergen and Gergen, 91)" (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; 112).

Writing conventions and methodology suggest a high level of self-reflexive awareness. Despite this, a momentous difference between the scientific and artistic traditions seems embedded

in the direction of the focus, reminding us of the *what* and *how* distinction between Romanticism and Enlightenment. A research report would focus on the *what*, embedded in an awareness of the conditioning through the media. An art piece as documentation focuses on the *how*, locating the information in the form, risking to miss out on substantial information concerning the *what*.

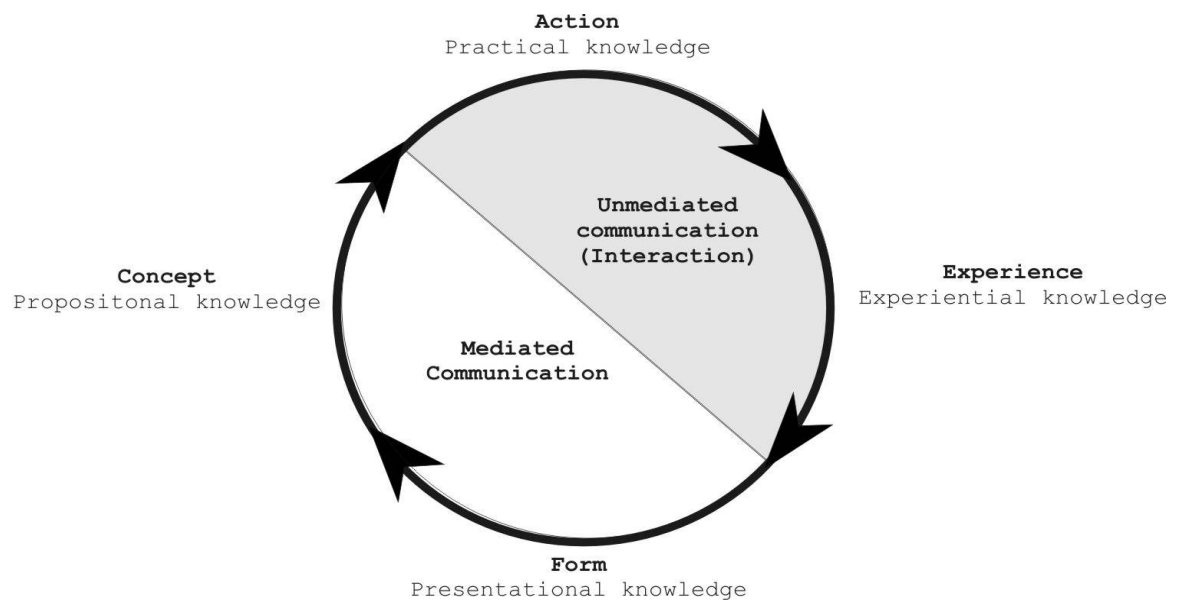
Roman Jakobson's communicative functions deal with the relation between those different functions of a message.

Following Jakobson's argument, having the context in focus, a research report would be a predominantly referential message. The comic, if planned to be an art piece, focuses more specifically on the message itself, and so could be called a poetic message.

Jakobson paid special attention to the relation between the poetic and the referential function. He states: "Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focused message, briefly a corollary feature of poetry [...] The supremacy of poetic function over referential function does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous" (Jakobson 1960; 370/371). Ambiguity: hence, the divergent generalizability of Taylor and Ladkin (2009, 55-69) is related to the poetic function of the message.

7.7. Linking knowledge types to the message functions

Roman Jakobson's message model was used to compare the communication structure of a message focusing predominantly on its own structure (poetic function) with a type of message focusing on its referential function. My interest lies in relating that to the type of knowledge which is hosted by the message, and to use that as a tool to scrutinise the abilities of the comic in comparison to writing in science.



7.2. Graph by the author.

To close the circle, I suggest linking Jakobson's message - model to the epistemology of Heron and Reasons and its knowledge-types. Which type of message has a relation to which type of knowledge?

It is not the knowledge forms as such which I address, it is the behaviour, the interaction or communication related to it. In this sense, the epistemology is brought back to its roots of interaction, as developed from the participatory inquiry paradigm.

Practical knowledge links to action, which in turn causes

experience and experiential knowledge, both being forms of direct interaction with the world. They offer a form of unmediated communication. Presentational knowledge as being linked to form, offers mediated communication "as this grasp is symbolized in graphic, plastic, musical, vocal and verbal art-forms. It clothes our experiential knowing of the world in the metaphors of aesthetic creation" (Heron & Reason 1997, 6). Ultimately, propositional knowledge is mediated, based on presentational modes. Presentational knowledge "is expressed in statements and theories that come with the mastery of concepts and classes that language bestows" (ibid, 6).

How could this tie to Roman Jakobson?

A message, focusing on its own form, is interested in presentational knowledge, in the way how it structures its form. A relation between presentational knowledge and the poetic function of a message is set.

A parallel is still also surprisingly evident if I focus on a traditional understanding of positivist writing in science, which links with the referential side of the message, focusing on the context. The plan in such writing was to not get blurred by the other parts of the message. The author's emotive function is declared non existent, the shared code assumed to be universal, language and its poetic function rendered transparent as medium. Even the conative function targeting a certain addressee - which certainly always plays at least a personal and political role in the publication of a

text - was only granted limited access. The addressee is often stated as contribution to 'knowledge as such'.

Things have changed a great deal in parts of research writing, as I will show now in the last part of this chapter, but as a folio I cling to a kinship between the referential part of a message and propositional knowledge. In social science a rising awareness of the poetic function of the message has brought language as media and its conditions into focus. The amalgam of propositional knowledge and presentational knowledge is lent attention.

By giving an overview of this move in the last part of the chapter, I describe the inversion of this process towards artistic expressions and their abilities.

7.8. Writing in science. Linguistic Turn and Literature

The reflection of language as dimension in scientific writing has been growing from what is summed up under the umbrella-term 'linguistic turn'. Linguistic philosophy unfolded during the 20th century, exploring the ontological question as to what extent the world is constructed by language. Logical positivism (Rudolf Carnap, and related thinkers like Wittgenstein, Russell and Popper)¹² and so called ordinary language philosophy (Moore, Austin, Ryle)¹³ mingled after the second world war and formed a theory cluster of growing density. The problem of knowledge became a problem of semantic analysis: how is the word used? What is the language game, the logic of the concept?

The book edited by Richard Rorty under the title *The linguistic turn* in 1967 contains a number of now classic texts on language philosophy. But its real efficacy on thinking and ultimately on writing in social science was unfolded through poststructuralist writers like Kristeva, Derrida and Foucault from the 1970s onwards.

It became widely accepted that reality did not exist outside of language. Rather, text was seen as a means of constructing a (textual) reality. It has been acknowledged that language acts as active agent in writing, and is not a transparent medium (Nünning, 1998; 312-313).

The discussion originated in language philosophy had reached the practice of the engaged researcher. Alvesson and Deetz

¹² (Rudolf Carnap [1891-1970]; Ludwig Wittgenstein [1889-1951], Bertrand Russell [1872-1970], Karl Popper [1902-1994])

¹³ (George Edward Moore [1873-1958], J. L. Austin [1911-1960], and Gilbert Ryle [1900-1976])

bring this understanding of text close to literature and draw on a number of other scientists: "The research texts produced, even if anchored in ambitious empirical studies are literary products. Social reality never determines exactly how words should be composed in a journal article. Text follows conventions for writing and persuading (Calás and Smircich, 1988; Clifford, 1986; Jeffcutt, 1993; van Maanen 1988)" (Alvesson and Deetz 2000, 112).

In what regarded traditionally as literature, central concerns of text formation include, for example, Homer's Hexameter, Shakespeare's sonnets, and specific forms of plot construction. This is somewhat different in the sciences, if the goal is a referential message aiming to communicate propositional knowledge. In difference to that, research focuses on the referential function of the text. Text which claims its own right can be understood as getting in the way. It is deeply understandable, if Richard Rorty¹⁴ remarks in a desperate, romantic longing: "Writing is an unfortunate necessity. What is really wanted, is to show, to demonstrate, to point out, to exhibit, to make one's interlocutor stand at gaze before the world" (Rorty 1982, in Czarniawska, 1999; 1). Rorty's quote is taken as a marker for those interested in transcending language. What had been taken for granted previously - that language is just a vessel - had evaporated into a desire.

¹⁴ Rorty turned away from his position in 'Linguistic turn' soon after its publication.

If the focus in Roman Jakobson's terms, has long been on the referential function, language as a structuring agent had made its entrance. Presence and force of the other functions, especially the poetic function, became acknowledged, and that they can improve the performance of the message. Czarniawska summed it up in *Writing management* (1999, 2) "The realization, that writing is the organization researchers' main activity seems to be growing, together with reflection upon how they write, and what textual devices they use, or could be using in writing."

Höpfl provides a good example of the deliberate use of language in scientific writing. In *On Being Moved* (Höpfl 2000) she not only deals with the language of and in organizations, she refers explicitly to and uses this language. She comments: "In order to break the body of the text, a number of liberties are taken with language" (ibid, p. 15). The term *body* already implies physicality, and calls an entity beyond the script's first impression into existence. The body is build up through text, a fortress, and a subversive force seems to be planted within it. *Liberties* are relational - liberated from what? Liberties from the constraints of a special type of writing, as the text moves on to tell me. "It should be immediately apparent to the reader that there is an implicit contradiction between the thrust of the texts and the direction of the authorial voice..." (ibid, p. 16). The text talks not just about a research topic, it emulates it with its own body of text. Wonderful braiding of a poetic and a referential function is

the result. Rooted in a context of scientific writing, it adds yet another layer of formal - poetic - self reflection, by commenting on the self-explanatory tradition of writing in this context.

Self-explanation and explicit referencing as an authoritative gesture constitute one of the structural differences to art works. This gesture constitutes the author in a more visible relation to the work and the context. In the tradition of the Romantics, the work of the writer or artist is understood as grouped around the author and imminently linked with the context. In difference, in a tradition of the social sciences, explicit links are favoured in the system of quotations.

The question of literary quality in research texts moves one closer to the question of narration which I have to address at this point briefly. Yiannis Gabriel writes about the different types of knowledges produced: Stories "do not present information or facts about 'events', but they enrich, enhance, and infuse facts with meaning. This is both their strength and their potential weakness. Stories will often compromise accuracy in the interest of poetic effect, itself an expression of deeper fantasies, wishes and desires" (Gabriel 2000, 135). The statement does different things simultaneously: it adds credibility to stories as sources of information. Gabriel believes that it is both what we need for a truthful understanding of a certain event (factual knowledge) and a type of knowledge which 'infuses meaning' by being emotional and symbolically charged.

Subliminal justification has thus sneaked in; the wording assumes that emotions are not seen as information. Emotions, fantasies, desires; is this not the material which is crucial for understanding social behaviour? The statement adds credibility to stories in a social scientific context, postulating that there is a type of accuracy which can be compromised by poetic effect. The poetic function is, as I have shown, not necessarily 'accurate' but constitutes another dimension of the message which conveys a sense of presentational knowledge.

7.9. Summary

How do text based research papers describe organizations, and what could the comic do? What are the cultural conditions for accepting pictures as a serious type of information anyhow? These two questions have led me in this chapter to explore the dichotomy that separates pictures from text in our culture. The pendulum between iconoclasm and idolatry points towards a deep rooted suspicion towards pictures. The mistrust in pictures has spread towards other visual possibilities and tools, giving visuals the aura of being seductive on one side, and of being savage and childish on the other. The use of pictures in the social sciences has suffered from this problematic for a long time. I have given an overview of its development from visual ethnology to a diversified use today under the renewed interest in pictures in research. I have thus turned away from this cultural/historical discussion, to weave picture and text together. One way in

which to examine pictures and text and their different features on the same scale is to look at them as messages. I have used Roman Jakobson's model, with a special emphasis on two of the six characteristics he believes underscore messages: the referential function and the poetic function. They can serve as basic features to define research writing in science - predominantly referential; and the comic, as art form being focused on its own form being poetic. Ultimately I have linked these two message functions to propositional and presentational knowledge, showing, that the poetic aspect of a message offers a special tool to access presentational knowledge, while the referential aspect of a message engages with propositional knowledge.

I concluded the chapter with a section on writing in the sciences. Due to the high self reflexivity in writing in the social sciences, language as medium - and with it the poetic function of the message - has now entered the discourse. This has provided the discourse with a firmer means of accessing presentational knowledge.

Suggesting a symmetrical and inverse structure, this leaves the question I will address in the following chapters: If the comic is granted poetic function and presentational knowledge, what are its abilities if it comes to referential function and propositional knowledge?

8. Visual organization of information

8.1. Introduction. The comic as Map, Chart and Organigram

In this chapter I will critique two approaches to visual information in relation to Organizational Studies.

I will discuss Edward Tufte, a prominent researcher into efficient data displays. If his attempts to enhance visual literacy among the users of data displays is a laudable effort, a hidden agenda lurks in his books. In seeking transparency of the visual media, his position seals off presentational knowledge, reducing it to a supplement. This critique highlights what data visualisation in the context of the comics does not try to attempt: to optimise visualisation of quantitative data.

The second approach I explore is that developed by Robert Horn. He is a scholar and practitioner who has created a tool for the visualisation of organizational problems. His 'Information Murals', as he calls them, demonstrate what the spatial distribution of information and its simultaneous availability could offer. The pitfalls of it will, however, become obvious as well.

8.2. Disclaimer: Potential Dangers Ex Ante

Practitioners have to draw organigrams of organizations; data sets have to be synthesized into graphs. People have to be informed, and visual tools can help doing that. The goals vary and cause the pictures to change: demonstrating, coaxing, decorating and researching being their main scopes.

With these research problems in mind, Steve Conway in his paper *Visualizing Social Networks* at the SCOS conference 2010 pointed to the problems arising with the use of organigrams. Visualisations are often likely to derange data or cover up poor data sets, perpetuating the 'seduced by picture' problem. If on one side visual reduction might help to focus on special aspects of a research topic, the staggering difference between a complex organisation or text and a coarse visualisation becomes too often obvious. The problem has been recognised, as has the potential in an improved work with visuals (Freeman 2000a, 2000b).

Also David Boje states "Visualisation maps of networks can facilitate new ideas" (Boje 2001, 68), but he again is careful of using them. Although its structuralist position is a source of strenght, it is also a source of danger in terms of mapping a story network onto a graph (Boje 2002, 62). With a pattern of data on display, one tends to forget the individuals behind it. The columns or pie charts displaying GDP, for example, stand for much more than numbers and even a chart displaying the number of deaths from cancer across the United States does not bare much emotional resemblance (Tufte 2001, 17-19) to the reality of cancer victims and their families. But this is not their task; they seek to demonstrate an idea of knowledge in which data and emotion is uncoupled. To some extent, this approach makes sense, but it also neglects an important dimension which offers a different understanding. Both acknowledgement and usage of the presentational element in the

display can constitute a way in which to include additional dimensions.

Both graphic and conceptual design serve as a hub to bring visual knowledge into information visualisation (Tufte 1997; 2001). "Composition must ensure comprehension; that is the simple and elegant mantra in the design of complex data explanations" says Ferdi van Heerden in the preface to *Data Flow: Visualising Information in Graphic Design*, a comprehensive book at the cutting edge of contemporary design (Klanten et al 2008, 8). He continues: "Inevitably, however, designers will stamp a part of their personality on the way the data is presented (...) Each designer has an inherent cultural 'operating system', through which he or she turns meaning into expression, yet the language of data and science is open-ended and culturally neutral."

I do not agree with the attribute of neutrality to data and science but the personalization of expression stands unquestioned. To have this personal stamp obvious and visible is a priceless advantage. It keeps the author visible and does not convey assumed neutrality. Where the persons are lost behind numbers and graphs, the responsibility of the author becomes visible in the way the data are presented. Graphic design at its best is knowledge about the transfer of propositional knowledge into presentation. But it would be naïve to assume there is no reverse influence. Someone who has set out to minimize this reverse influence is Edward Tufte. I will look now at his way of optimising graphic design as the most efficient means of displaying data.

8.3. The Visual Display of Quantitative Information.

A researcher who has left a big footprint in data visualisation research is Edward Tufte. He has published comprehensive and well designed books and extensively lectured on the subject (Tufte 1983; 1990; 1997; 2006). Tufte joins scientific knowledge of methods and statistics with passion and knowledge for art.

His books do not only talk about pictures but they show them. Together with his clarity and simplicity of concepts this is probably one of their success factors. The books display Tufte's awareness of their physical presence and design, and no matter what one is going to make of their content, they have conferred a clear message long before one starts to read. He lectures on colours, on how a hierarchy of visual difference is built up, on the big-small difference, that colours in the wrong place destroy the recognition of another colour, he talks about graphic structures and how they guide attention. Details of visual grammar are there, and the books move beyond a standard schoolbook for making charts.

With this knowledge, Tufte constructs principles of excellence for graphs. His central scope is to maximise the density of information, and to avoid graphic design blurring the data instead of envisioning them.

Graphic excellence - he talks about statistical graphics - "Graphical excellence is that which gives to the viewer the greatest number of ideas in the shortest time with the least ink in the smallest space" (Tufte 2001, 51).

In order to draw a graph, data is needed. The set of data has to be distracted from the field. Second, the data have to be mapped. For the first step of this process, one has to turn to presentational knowledge.

Information Visualization is a comprehensive reader from the side of natural science about pictures: "Raw data comes in many forms, from spreadsheets to the text of novels. The usual strategy is to transform this data into a relation or set of relations that are more structured and thus easier to map to visual forms" (Card; McKinlay; Shneiderman (eds) 1999, 17).

The term *transformation* means taking out a special aspect, which is suitable for a special type of visualisation. On the other side the graphic designer takes the set of relations and casts it into a visual form. The complexity of their visual grammar comes into play, and expands the field of possible recognition for the observer.

Tufte is well aware of the aesthetic dimension of data visualization, but ponders about his take on it. If occasionally the artfulness of design makes a graphic worthy of the Museum of Modern Art, as he says, it is essentially the mission of statistical graphics to help people reason about quantitative information (Tufte [1983]2001, 91). He goes on: "Visually attractive graphics also gather power from content and interpretations beyond the immediate display of some numbers. ... Such performances can be described and admired but there are no easy compositional principles on how to create that one wonderful graphic in millions" (Tufte [1983]2001,

177). Power beyond the immediate display of some numbers is what I am after, and there is a way to get there. The one wonderful graphic in a million is no intangible miracle, if seen in the reference frame of artistic knowledge. As he says, we talk about art. It is only art; there is no problem in talking about it. I suggest that knowledge of gestalt principles for the visual display of data is used to begin with, but not ended with. It is as if one learns to write, and leaves it at just scribbling letters, never moving on to write a text, let alone to produce literature.

The idea, that there would be an ideal visualization continues the idea of an ultimate foundation. It reminds us of the longing in the arts for an eternal painting that resembles the theme of the ultimate foundation in science.

But he is describing one possibility among many, to operate visual displays of information. It is the one related to the idea of efficiency in the sense that the media would be transparent. The danger of re-establishing a positivist take on the subjects through visual tools emerges, instead of using visual tools as a door-opener for getting grip on a wider range of knowledge.

Driven by effort for clarity, something else happens on the other side: the graphic distinctness is advocating the 'dumb' eye. It is to ask visually as little as possible of the observer. Trying to render the medium invisible, it plays in the hands of the idea that data is a commodity which can be passed on without any change. In this sense, Tufte actually

tries to bring visuals back to where language was believed to be before the linguistic turn.

Given the often unsatisfying level found in data visualisation Tufte's work is a blessing. His knowledge about visualization is vast, and he belongs in the rare species of people able to talk about it and to visualize it.

So I close with a conciliatory quote, which actually contradicts a lot of his principles. It does take the direction I am heading towards: "When principles of design replicate principles of thought, the act of arranging information becomes an act of insight" (Tufte 1997, 9).

To bring the section to a close, I show two versions of a data display, and the contention between the different types of information contained within it.

In a chart, a colour can convey information, as for instance a red bar chart in a graph. One reads the colour, in comparing it with the given legend, for example, comparing what the red bar signifies as opposed to the blue bar. Nevertheless, one also sees the colour, the red as colour unfolds a visual impact and makes a difference to other colours, holding aggression or linking it to a different set of styles.

The drawing below demonstrates the point I wanted to make in this section. The quantitative information retrieval remains stable, but the context in which the information is embedded engenders different influences and produces a different overall message. To address it instead of trying to oppress

it, it offers not only more clarity for the quantitative data but it can also broaden the range of representation by including different types of information.

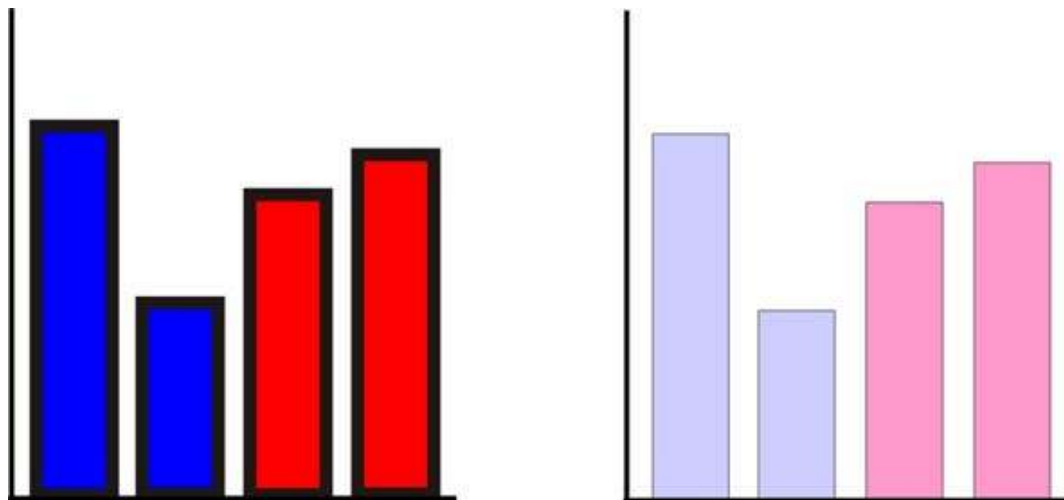


Figure 8.1.
Information relative to its special task of demonstrating numbers remains stable,
the overall message differs greatly due to colour and line thickness.
Drawing by the author.

8.4. Organigrams

One of the central types of graphs Edward Tufte looks at in terms of their visual efficiency is organigrams. An organigram is an umbrella term for diagrammatic displays used in organisational contexts. They do not focus primarily on quantitative data as charts and graphs do but symbolize structures, connect people, places, resources or processes. Typically, they combine different types of visual material, symbols, text and pictures into a more complex representation. They use the spatial distribution of the units on the page for symbolizing their interactions as a type of map.

One is familiar, for example, with scenario maps, strategy maps, argumentation maps or emotional maps. Mind mapping has become a favourite toy in conferences and workshops, and has proven to be a helpful tool in terms of brainstorming. Other areas include network maps (Freeman 2000a, 2000b) and visual displays of business models and processes.

Organigrams fall into taxonomies and flowcharts in which different types of information are displayed. Taxonomies focus on hierarchical relations; flowcharts on processes which usually have both input(s) and output(s) (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996]2006, 84). Network maps as a third category are a special type of taxonomy with multiple interconnections.

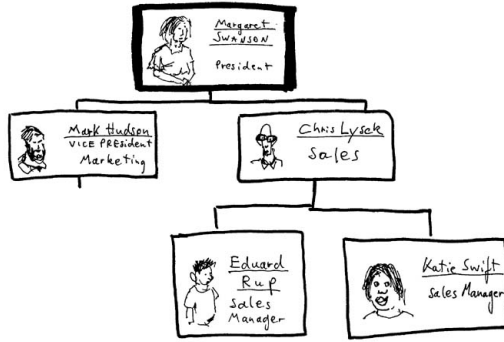


Figure 8.2.
Drawing by the author.

Emphasising 'showing' rather than 'telling', the hierarchical taxonomy shown here conveys relatively simply what would have taken a number of sentences. The picture-typical way to

organize the elements economizes the time and effort to present certain types of information. Nevertheless, lines in diagrams as connecting 'vectors' (noun) and 'actors' (nomen) in the simplistic way shown here are not capable of conveying the characteristics of the relationship (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996]2006, 59-65). The problem is exacerbated if the diagram is not static but narrative in which the lines are intended to depict action or movement between the actors (ibid).

I will demonstrate the visual significance of even a basic display such as the hierarchical taxonomy shown here. Usually, it is read top-down for two reasons: It follows reading convention, and it originates in one frame and ends in many.

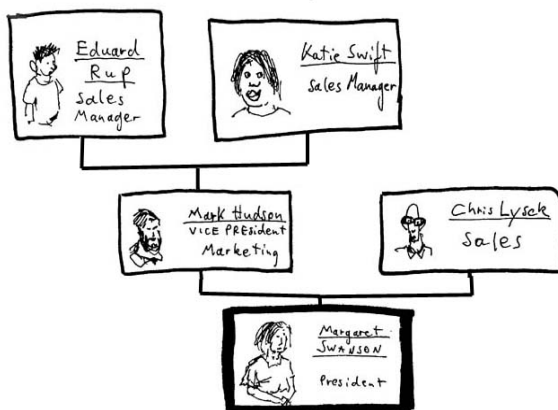


Figure 8.3.
Drawing by the author.

What is going to happen if the same chart is drawn the other way round? The structural relations are the same, but all of a sudden the employees appear first in the reading order. Is

this representative of the critical management studies perspective? It is a simple change of spatial positions, making a fundamental difference. If such a method is applied for looking at organizational processes, the conclusions are drawn the other way, and different insights are likely to emerge.

From this short overview I move on and pick an example of a more complex representation of organizations. This example helps us understand both the benefits and the problems.

8.5. Robert Horn and his Information Murals

8.5.1. Horn's Visual Language

Robert Horn has developed the visual display of organizational questions into a tool. This tool draws on the possibilities presented by taxonomies, flowcharts and network maps. This makes him an interesting case in furthering our understanding of the limits of the traditional approach. He is a political scientist and consultant who was for years a visiting scholar at Stanford University's Centre for the Study of Language and Information. His research focused on knowledge management and information design.

What Is Driving the Emergence of Visual Language?

The modern world of high technology, global business, and telecommunications has brought together a group of influences that is driving the increased use of visual language. This page illustrates just one way to map these influences. The arrows can be read as "drive(s)." Only the major driving forces and connections are shown.

As the world increases in complexity, as the speed at which we need to solve business and social problems increases, as it becomes increasingly critical to have the "big picture" as well as multiple levels of detail immediately accessible, visual language will become more and more prevalent in our lives.

As we explore visual language together, I encourage you to meditate on the implications of the forces and phenomena outlined here. What will they mean for our communities, our schools, and our workplaces? How will they influence our views of ourselves?

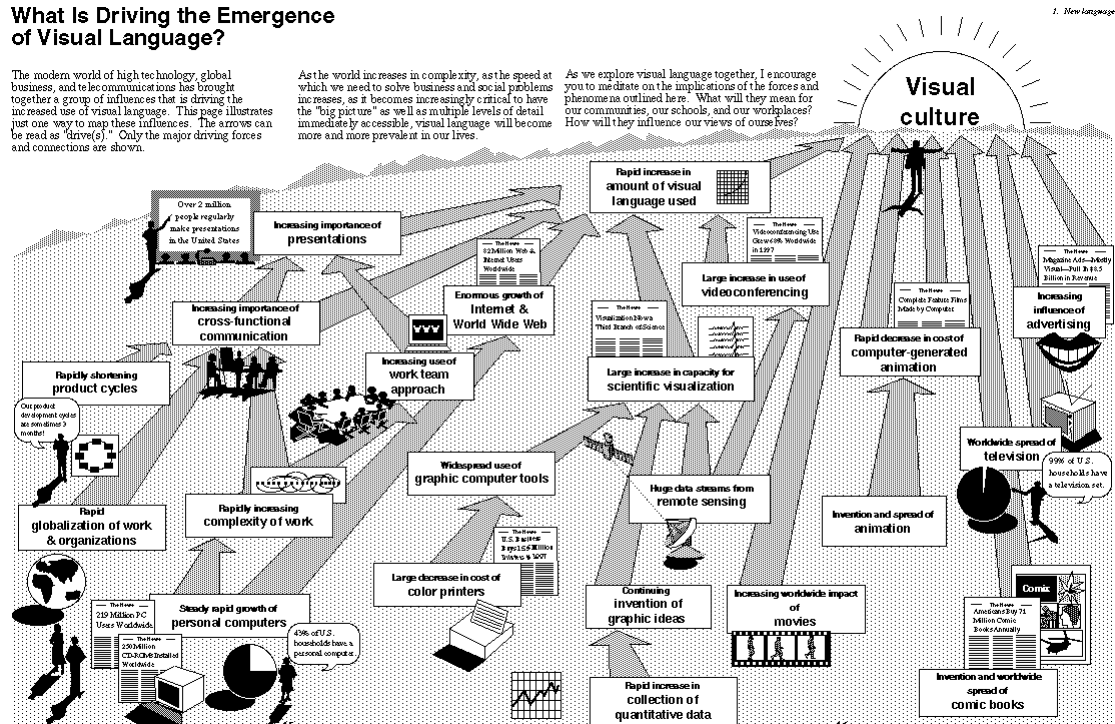


Figure 8.4. Page 15/16 from Robert Horns book: *Visual Language: Global Communication for the 21st Century*.

Map by Robert Horn, 2001, taken from his website <http://www.stanford.edu/~rhorn/>

He terms his tool 'Visual Language' and founded a company which markets his ideas in 1983. In 1998 he summarised the ideas in his book *Visual Language: Global Communication for*

the 21st Century. His free websites are the sources from which the material presented here is taken.

Horn breaks his displays down into basics and formulates a toolset to work with. This morphology of the Visual Language lists three different elements, he calls them 'primitives':

- Words: single words, phrases, sentences, blocks of text;
2. Shapes (which do not resemble objects in the real world): points, lines, abstract shapes, shapes between the shapes and;
3. images (resembling objects in the visible world).

The primitives have properties: value, texture, colour, orientation, size, location (in 2D and 3D), motion, thickness and illumination.

In bringing these qualities to the fore, he transfers visual grammar to the formal quality of clip art and moves on to describe how to combine the basics with complex displays.

His visualisations are turned into information murals containing considerable amounts of information. They can be looked at from the distance to get larger relations or the observer can focus more closely to garner finer detail. They revolve particularly around complex problems, what he calls 'mess': "Social messes are far more than complicated problems. They are very complex; ambiguous; highly constrained; tightly interconnected, economically, socially, and politically; seen differently from different points of views and worldviews; and contain many value conflicts" (Horn, 2005).

Horn explains in this paper that the information murals

provide 'scaffolding for bigger thoughts', in enabling the researcher to simultaneously visualize multiple strategies and a time line.

Timely context, social context, market context, and whatever context might be relevant is kept visible. The context is literally 'contextualising'. He relies on the governing principle in all visual displays of some complexity. When looking on an isolated detail one remains aware of the entire display on the periphery of vision (Carrier 2000, 62). That

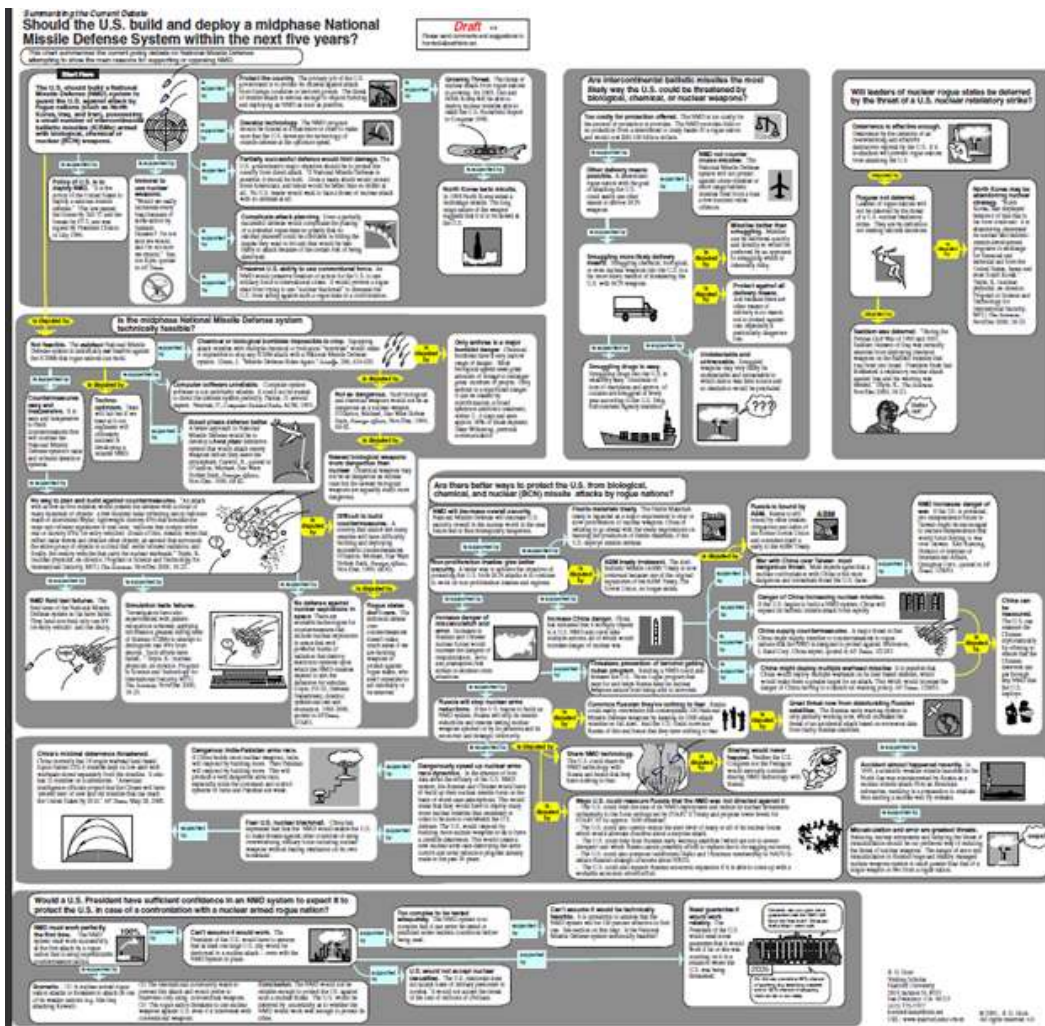


Figure 8.5. A map of the National Missile Defense Debate of the US, produced in 2001. It is version 6 of a draft.

Map by Robert Horn, 2001, taken from his website <http://www.stanford.edu/~rhorn/>

the information units are packaged in discrete information 'chunks', makes them moveable and storable. The map of the National Missile Defence Debate shown here gives an impression of the cross-boundary causality maps or mess-maps. With the two other illustrations it gives a good impression of Horn's work.

What are the key features? They are supposed to provide an orientation in the totality of data, conveying detailed information as part of the second reading. A kind of layered deciphering takes place. The route through the mural and the speed is defined by the viewer, who can go back and re-read and jump directly to another place to compare. It keeps context and relations visible. The murals can bring a timeline into play, along which the constellation unfolds.

Ultimately, the little logos and drawings can operate as a mnemonic anchor, linking certain information to a picture. This to enhances memory. These are the basic mechanisms on which Horn's murals rely.

8.5.2. Limits of Horn's approach

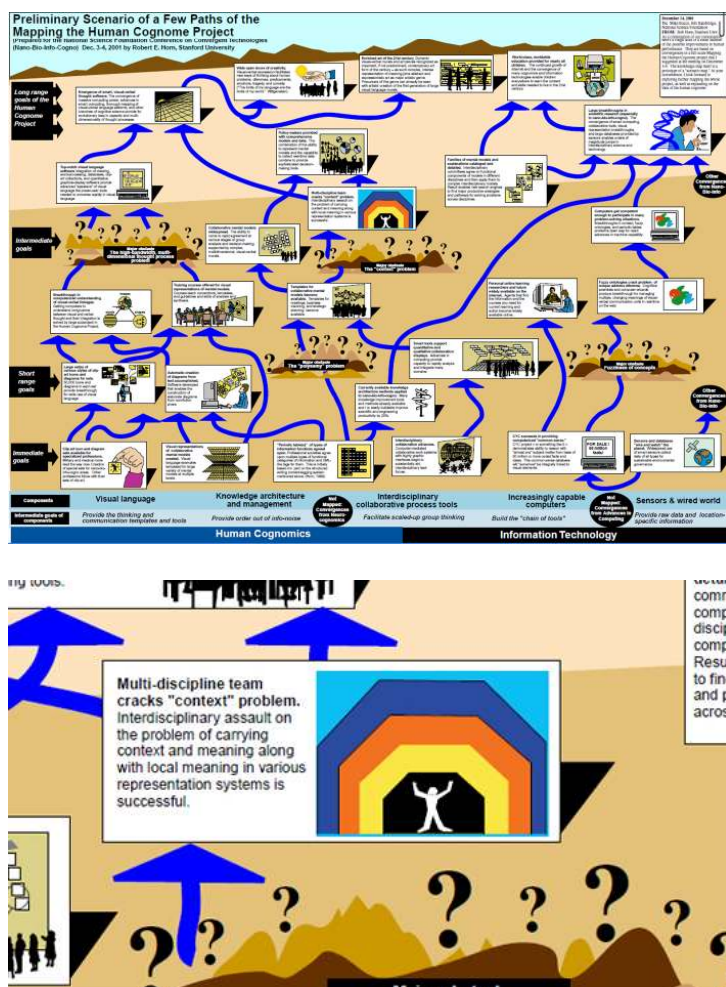
Horn founds his mess-maps on the coherence of larger displays. How they internally communicate is determined by the management of the visual units.

At first glance, the displays show a large quantity of text giving detailed information. To get an overall orientation is difficult, the size of the frames is alike; the size of the text similar; and the distribution of the textual units on the

page is relatively even. Information hierarchy is only in a very limited sense graspable. In figure 8.4. the movement towards the horizon is the only clear visible movement. The sun and the words 'Visual Culture' are the central markers. In the 8.5. there is no discernable orientation at all. The 'scaffolding' for the bigger thoughts is not there on the visual level. Layered deciphering is reduced to an amount of text which is distributed equally in a non linear way. A timeline is visible in 8.4., also as move towards the horizon in the picture. Picture 8.5. does not have a timeline. The use of visuals as enhancer for memory is only in a very limited way visible; their shapes, colours and directions do not organize the space, or produce visual relations across space. Distant relations are difficult to establish. An outstanding example is the use of the two pie-charts in 8.1. They connect via space, and both pertain to related topics, the distribution of equipment in US households.

Those are the central problems. They are enforced from an unexpected corner: Horn's declared goal is the practical application of his information displays for everybody, organizations, schools, consultants. But if complex computer programs are praised as a tool for the democratisation of design (Horn, 1999, 27), I have to add that the knowledge of their application is not as easy to consume. In this case convincing looking graphic programs and the ease to produce visuals have once more baffled the user. In an unfortunate way, a professional power play emerges. Horn speaks elsewhere about the tension between technical communicators, managers

and graphic designers to produce together a sense 'making visualisation' (Horn, 1999, 25).



8.6. Preliminary Scenario of a Few Paths of the Mapping of the Human Cognome Project.
Map by Robert Horn, 2001, taken from his website
<http://www.stanford.edu/~rhorn/>,

I take this to be one reason why designers are kept out of his process. As helpful a decision as this might be to avoid additional layers of questions and power play in the production of an info mural, it circumvents the full entry of visual power. But it goes further. Visuals come into play,

subverting intentions, relations rather visually blurred than cleared.

The murals produce what Tufte would call 'visual clutter'. In this example of the Human Cognome Project (8.6.), the mushroom-like blue arrows turn the page into an optical art piece. This is an interesting turn, demonstrating the force of the visual, but I assume it not to be intentional. If I allow myself to freely associate my impression: The blue on brown in

the curved formation is psychedelic. The movement evokes snakes or GIs under the influence of narcotics crawling through a desert towards the mountains in the distance. The visual attractor is a person imprisoned in the black centre of a colourful shape, formed like a bunker in the centre of the picture. The blue movements cross brown knolls, which look suspiciously smelly with all those little curved lines of the question marks on top.

I do understand those impressions as counterproductive to Horn's intention.

Horn offers an interesting approach to organizational problems whereby he transforms them into a visual display. However, the knowledge about visualisation remains low, despite his interest in the basic toolset. It leaves bare visual grammar as a resource for insight

Relating Horn's Mess-maps to propositional and presentational knowledge, it becomes obvious that his propositional knowledge is not based on presentational knowledge. Propositional knowledge is suspended in the air with no foundation, before falling to the earth whereupon it shatters into fragments.

8.6. Summary

I have compared both the benefits of and limits to the use of visual tools. First, in examining Edward Tufte and his research on information displays, I have agreed with his rigorous demand for knowledge as regards visual media. He developed an simple formula for assessing the effectiveness of

data displays. The less ink is used; the less space is used; the better the graph (Tufte 2001, 105).

Even though Tufte acknowledges the visual power of a graph beyond its ability to display data, presentational knowledge is not used as source of information. On the contrary, by solely focusing on the efficient relationship between data and the display, he tries to renders the medium 'transparent' so as to make the force of the visual disappear. Compared to language as medium, it is comparable to returning to the period prior to the linguistic turn.

After Tufte I focused specifically on to visuals in organizational studies, and ultimately took Robert Horn to illustrate both benefits and problems of visual method. His work offers promising roads to use information mapping as a descriptive tool. Unfortunately, in reality his maps show weaknesses by blurring the data rather than organizing it. The knowledge transfer between the graphic design/art approach and the managerial/organisational approach is prevented. The flow between presentational and propositional knowledge is ultimately severed, resulting in a very unfortunate breakdown of the efficiency of the display.

9. The comic

9.1. Introduction

If I view my thesis as a spiral, I have covered the circumjacent fields, closing in on the treasure within. That treasure is the catalyst for this journey: the comic.

So far I have developed a historical framework transcending the ontological positions of social sciences and art. I have focused on the use of both pictures and images comparing them to the use of text.

To find a position where pictures and text can be located within the same perspective, I have described them as 'message' in the semiotic tradition of Roman Jakobson. I have suggested that a focus on the poetic function grants access to representational knowledge, while a focus on the referent is more strongly linked to propositional knowledge. In the previous chapter I have pointed to possibilities and problems arising with the use of visual displays in organizational studies.

I now refer back to my original questions: How can the comic as media describe organisations and processes? What is its potential, its strengths and weaknesses? What are its links to written text on the one hand, and to the use of pictures in the social sciences on the other?

The questions originated in my own comic, the *Pink Suit* which was itself about the *Manager in Residence* project. But The *Pink Suit* only covers fragments of what is possible in the

medium. I have to extend my scope to other comics as samples and data. Considering all the great masters of the comic art, I take a modest position as regards the actual quality of the *Pink Suit* comic.

I here examine the comic history and give an overview of the comic theory which is a relatively young field of enquiry. Definitions of the comic offered by various authorities will be scrutinised. In considering these various definitions, I settle on the following for the purposes of this thesis: *The comic is constituted by visual units in deliberate sequence spatially arranged in order to communicate.* After introducing the units, I will spend some time scrutinising their mutual interaction. 'Closure' is the term used for the moment, where sense is made *between* the units. I will establish a relation to the sensemaking process as known in organisational studies. Closure between the units makes sense of them, and it turns disparate units into a narrative. Data presented by a comic usually come in the form of a narrative. It changes the way how this data are perceived, especially in science. Narrative strategies are not new, and in organisational studies they are a topic with significant precedence.

The general literature review and definition of the field here ends with a detailed review of two books which have shaped my understanding of the comic for the purposes of this thesis. Thierry Groensteen's *The System of Comics* from 1999, which was translated in 2007 from French to English and Stephan

Packard's *Anatomie des Comics* from 2006, which is only available in German. They both describe a similar understanding of the complex interwoven way in which a comic page relates its text and picture units into one larger picture. I will describe in some detail the visual grammar Groensteen analyses to give the reader an understanding of the functions of the medium. Stephen Packard in turn raises different concerns as implied by the subtitle to his book: *Psychosemiotic Media Analysis*. The extensive review of the two books here offered further bolsters the theoretical underpinning of my project.

This will ultimately lead me to a description of the various units of a comic: frames, balloons, captions and other units. Their joint operation is what constitutes the comic.

9.2. Reading the Comic to Children

I here recount a short story about how to read the comics to pre-school children, which has taught me a lot about its communication structure.

I used to read Asterix and Donald Duck to my children, Karl and Josefine, who were 3 and 5 at the time. Now they can read themselves, but still I learn a lot from observing how they digest the comics. They initially flick through the whole comic, observe, and then read the text, until they have eventually 'swallowed' the whole book.

So a few years ago, I was reading comic books to them. Every character in the comic speaks in the 'I' form. So whilst I was

reading aloud, I had to assume the guise of each character for the dialogue to make sense. "Now this person is speaking, and not this one." Sometimes pointing to the character in question, while speaking its dialogue, would suffice. In this way, my pointing finger became the impersonated tail of the speech balloon. Encountering the first *whoff!* and *bang!* I had to make a decision: Am I going to do a sort of reading performance or am I going to preserve my dignity? Reading out with a normal voice the *boom!* of an explosion is ridiculous. So - do I just ignore it? The problem grew if, from the corner of my eye, I realised that one or both of my children were looking at a completely different frame anyway. Are they relating the dialogue I am reading to the wrong character or scene? An additional little frustration thus emerged. They obviously ignored the timeline and the 'z - shaped' narrative convention (i.e. reading left to right and top-down). What we ended up with, is a sort of information 'soup', partly textual and partly visual, and a process by which we would fashion this information into a plausible narrative. My children understood the narrative; there was no doubt about this. But the way in which this was achieved has relatively little to do with a linear interpretation. Their interpretation was, rather, both plurivocal and intermittent.

9.3. Comic and its Cultural Conditioning

The combination of text and image has long been maligned in literary canon, as Lessing's *Laookon* and its insistence on purity of time or space demonstrates. Equally Clement

Greenberg's demand for media-specificity is comparably hostile to combining text and image. It wasn't until the second half of the 20th century that the comic as medium once more attracted serious interest. The comic has matured in the past few decades, and has become a subject of academic study (Kunzle 1973, Fresnault-Deruelle 1977, Groensteen [1999]2007). The apparent low culture characterised by brainless superheroes, big breasted women and plots oriented exclusively to children have become less commonplace. Although not everyone is interested in the comic books produced for a mature readership, they may still enjoy newspaper strips such as *Calvin and Hobbes* or *Dilbert*, and appreciate a semantic quality beyond purely escapist or light-hearted enjoyment. But there is still a deep mistrust of the comic. A 'subversive' quality still is imminent, if the comic is to be characterised. This is an issue, if it comes to the question of what the comics could bring to the context of an organisation. It is doubtful, for example, that an annual report published as comic strip in a traditional enterprise would be well-received.

Something even more structural than the cultural connotation is at play. The comic suspends the textual code but claims to communicate on a comparable basis. The textual code loses its grip, is elevated like a child, which is lifted to give it a kiss and pedals in the air. Martin Schüwer, a German comic researcher, remarks that the comic is either understood as fundamentally subversive, or discredited as an art form (Schüwer 2002, 208). In both senses, I believe that the comic

represents fresh epistemological possibilities for communicating and understanding organizations. This subversion of the governing code is an issue not only for the cultural perception of the comics, but is also essential for the way in which it operates (Packard 2006, 95).

Having again outlined a cultural perspective on the comic, I move on. I am not aiming for a historical analysis, nor is my intention to establish an approach enmeshed in the discourse of cultural studies I am interested in media theory and communication. If I look at the full range of picture-text combinations I include material which does not fall under a more traditional definition of the comic. For that reason I establish my own definition of comic in this chapter.

9.4. The comic Research: State of Affairs

There is an extensive literature which has dealt with visual narratives in art history and cultural studies. The relationship between text and images is of interest in various disciplines semiotics, psychoanalysis, perceptual theory and art theory are among the most prominent fields. Nevertheless, the comic, as a special interest area, is a (young) field of research in its own right.

Ernst Gombrich is one of the early theorists of visual culture to have had an interest in the comic. In chapter ten of *Art & Illusion* (1960) in which he explores *The experiment of Caricature*, he deals with the physiognomic experiments. Another noteworthy example is Umberto Eco in *Apocalypse*

postponed (1964). He discussed the comic in the context of a critical assessment of mass culture and examined in particular the myth of the comic figures Superman, Steve Canyon and Charlie Brown.

Historical and critical approaches to the medium were beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, with some comprehensive books published in the late 1960s and early 70s: Couperie (1968) and Horn ([1970]1976)) are two examples. Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle, a French researcher in a semiotic tradition, outlines four distinct steps of this development: The 'archological' age of the 1960s, where nostalgic authors exhumed readings from their childhoods; the socio-historical and philosophic age of the 1970s; a structuralist approach; and the semiotic and psychoanalytic age of the 1980ies (Groensteen [1999]2007, 1-2).

David Kunzles' (1973) *History of the Comic Strip*, belonging to the socio-historical age, is regarded as a milestone. It understands the comic as a medium with a deep historic precedent. He relates it back to the medieval Bayeux Tapestry, and connects it with more general art history.

Analytical approaches to the reading of the comics - apart from exceptions such as the phänomenological perspective of Schnackertz (1980) - have often taken a semiotic perspective as Varnum and Gibbons note: "It has become commonplace in Europe to look at the comics through the lens of semiotics theory" (2001, 13). Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle (1977) is linked to the Paris School of semiotics. He applied linguistic

concepts to the comic. He was followed by Alain Rey, Benoît Peeters and Thierry Groensteen (1999). These researchers all publish in French, indicating that the French discourse is – given the time of publication and the sheer amount of texts – ahead of the game (Munier 2000, 11). With the exception of Groensteen's book, which was in 2007 translated into English, they are mostly unavailable in English. German scholar Stephan Packard published the compendium *Anatomie des Comics* (2006), in the semiotic tradition. He combines Peirce and Lacan to analyse comics. His book had some precedent in Germany, foremost Ulrich Krafft's *Comics lesen* (1978) and the works by Andreas C. Knigge. In 2008 Martin Schüwer published a profound comic analysis in his habilitation *Wie Comics erzählen* (How comics narrate) focusing especially on space in the comics.

The approach to comic studies in the United States has been, to date, mostly historical or oriented to cultural studies as Varnum and Gibbons complain: "In the United States, however, comic has traditionally been considered a lowbrow medium," (2001, X) There are exceptions, such as Donald Ault from the University of Florida, who worked extensively on William Blake's poems and drawings and consequentially went on to deal with the comics. His personal contact with Charles Barks, the creator of Donald Duck, has proven especially prolific (Ault 2003).

Nevertheless, it seems the biggest impact to the American discourse came not from scholars, but by comic artists themselves in the 80s and early 90s. In recent years more

academic scholars have turned to examine the comic. The start of the comic-discourse in the US could notably be marked with two comic artists who published their findings in comic form: Will Eisner and Scott McCloud. Will Eisner's book *Comics and sequential art* (1985) is an insightful compendium, and McCloud's book *Understanding Comics* (1993) has become a reference of particular note. His book is systematic, but it cannot be called scientific in a conventional academic sense. He is a practising master of the comic as well as a reflexive thinker. This makes the book a pleasure to view.

9.5. What is Comic? Early History and Definitions

There are many definitions of what constitutes a comic. Each places a emphasis on different characteristics. For example, a definition of the comics may or may not include sequential use of pictures (excluding one-panel cartoons); the combination of text and picture; text below the picture or within the picture as balloon; hand drawn material which excludes photo novellas; animation; prehistoric cave paintings and medieval illustrated books. Kunzle suggests in his definition that the comic has to give image priority, otherwise it ceases to be defined as the comic, and becomes an illustrated text. "Although the comic strip is essentially a hybrid form, part verbal and part pictorial, the latter must be considered as its primary feature" (Kunzle 1973, 2).

Kunzle implies a further definitional restriction in requiring that the comic must be published in a mass medium. Indeed, a part of the comic literature links its invention to the

history of the mass media. The flourishing newspaper market in the 1890s surely contributed to the growth of the comic.

Ultimately Kunzle demands: "The sequence must tell a story which is both moral and topical" (ibid, 2).

However narrow this definition becomes, Kunzle does not insist on a feature, which is important to other comic scholars as defining element: The speech balloon. Kathrine Kordoc insists in her essay on sound in Asterix-comics, that this is a fundamental element of the comic: "... what is unique to comics is the use of balloons in which most of the words are contained. In picture books, stories are illustrated, and often, the words more or less mirror what is shown in the picture. In advertising, the words often act as an "anchor" for the image, as Roland Barthes has pointed out, in order to direct the readers' interpretation of the ad. But comic is a different "game" altogether, where the text and the image share a symbiotic relationship" (Kordoc 2001, 172).

The balloon is a good starting point to analyse the medium of the comic. Although, I do not agree that it is *the* defining feature, as I will later explain.

Constructions comparable to speech balloons can be found through the whole history of painting and drawing, for instance in the hand-illustrated Books of Hours from the 12th to the 15th century (Kunzle 1973). The later political cartoons



9.1. James Gillray

Anti-Saccharites, -or- John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar.
1792, Watercoloured etching, 28 x 38 cm

of the 18th and 19th century are well known. In Great Britain James Gillroy, for example, made use of speech-devices, balloons or banners originating from specific characters

It was Richard F. Outcalt, in his comic *The Yellow Kid* which was published in the late 1890s as part of the *New York Journal*, who was first to systematically use speech balloons. This comic is often credited as the birth of comic as it is understood today.



9.2. Richard F. Outcalt, *The Yellow Kid And His New Phonograph*
New York Journal, 25.10.1996

Nevertheless, most writers agree on two important predecessors from the 19th century: French artist Rodolphe Töpffer, (1799 – 1846) and the German Wilhelm Busch (1832 – 1908). Busch left a huge oeuvre and has in this sense made the bigger impact of the two. He also drew wordless picture strips and was a significant influence on later comic artists, especially through his immensely popular *Max and Moritz* tale. Nevertheless for many Töpffer is the more interesting artist. In Gombrich's chapter on caricature in *Art & Illusion* in 1960

(Gombrich 1996) he noted, that Rodolphe Töpffer began to draw comics because of problems with his eyes. He was to become a painter, but since he could not distinguish between fine shades he turned to writing stories. Later, with a taste for visual language, he discovered that he could also use a pen for 'drawing' stories.

This is a telling story: The birth of a medium out of trouble with the eyes. Töpffer's ingenious production was encouraged by Goethe. Goethe had seen the strips in 1830 through Eckermann's agency, and received from Töpffer himself a second parcel containing more drawings a year later. Goethe thought them "thoroughly original" and full of wit and encouraged Töpffer to publish his drawn strips. This is what Töpffer did in 1833.

Gombrich does not tell us much about the way in which the comics operate sequentially. But he looks at Töpffer's ideas about physiognomy, a popular issue of the time: "...Töpffer comes out with a psychological discovery - you can evolve a pictorial language without any reference to nature, without learning to draw from a model. The line drawing, he says, is purely conventional symbolism. (...)Moreover, the artist who uses such an abbreviatory style can always rely on the beholder to supplement what he omits" (Gombrich [1960]1996, 286).

A brief look at Töpffer's work suggests undoubtedly that he knew exactly what he was doing. At first glance, his drawings seem to be lapidary doodles with only a symbolist value of telling a story. But he knew visual grammar and how to make use of it in order to narrate and to achieve his intended effects. In the given example the symmetry of the double page catches the eye – the woman on the far left and far right – fainting and with her handkerchief; the two dog-inserts as the *buffo* part constitute a repetition, a visual rhyme; and the two main actors corresponding across panel borders by leaning towards each other.



9.3. Rodolphe Töpffer

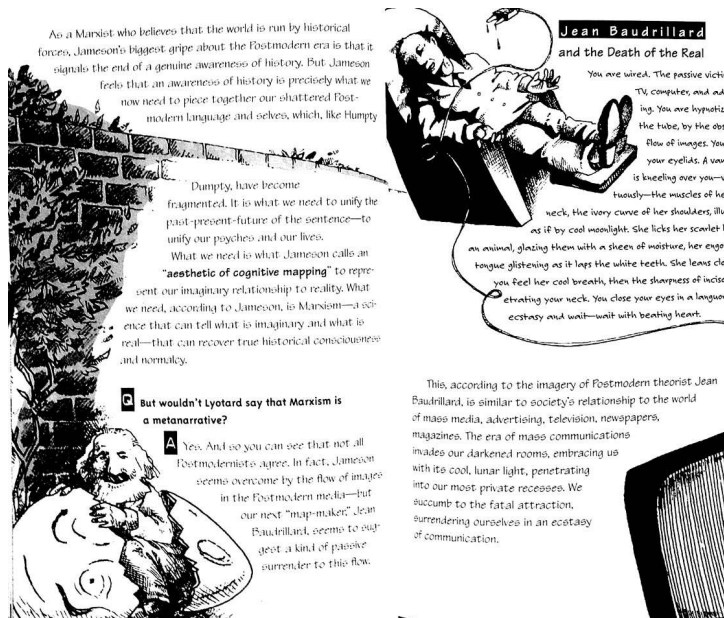
Monsieur Jabot, page 40 and 41 (original) Published 1833.

Repro taken from Töpffer (no year given)

An early milestone of the comic is *Little Nemo* by Winsor McCay which appeared between 1905 and 1914 in both the *New York Herald* and *New York American*. Regarding the sophistication of his visual tools it remains today one of the most outstanding examples of the comic art.

During the 20th century comic art has had a chequered history. It came into use both in terms of education and propaganda; it entered the mass market in the United States in the 1930s and

1940s with Walt Disney on the one hand Marvel's Superheros on the other. Its coming of age came in the 1960s after which it became a subject of academic research.



9.4. Example from the For Beginners - series. Powell/Lee 1998, 40-41

Finally, I here dedicate a few words to educational, documentary and comics beyond the classic fiction/narration/entertainment nexus. This is of special interest,

since the intention of my thesis is to scrutinise the use of the comic as a means of representing organisation. Three sub-genres can be defined where the borders between non-fiction and fiction become permeable.

First, there are historical comics,¹⁵ the use of which is reminiscent comic in the educational realm. There was a whole wave of educational comics in the 40s, 50s and 60s.¹⁶ Pictures

¹⁵ for a history of the use of historic comics in the U.S. see Witek, Joseph (1989) *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman and Harvey Pekar*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi a comprehensive overview about history in comics and its educational possibilities has been written by Gerald Munier. Munier, Gerald (2000) *Geschichte im Comic*. Hannover: Unser Verlag

¹⁶ A part of the educational comic collection is available digital at the UN Library at: <http://contentdm.unl.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=/comics> Interestingly, one of the pioneering persons in American comic business tried to make his publishing house big with educational comics, but failed: "The very inventor of the comic-book pamphlet format, Max C. Gaines, nearly went broke trying to sell educational comic books to school systems, and after his sudden death his son and successor, William Gaines, morphed his

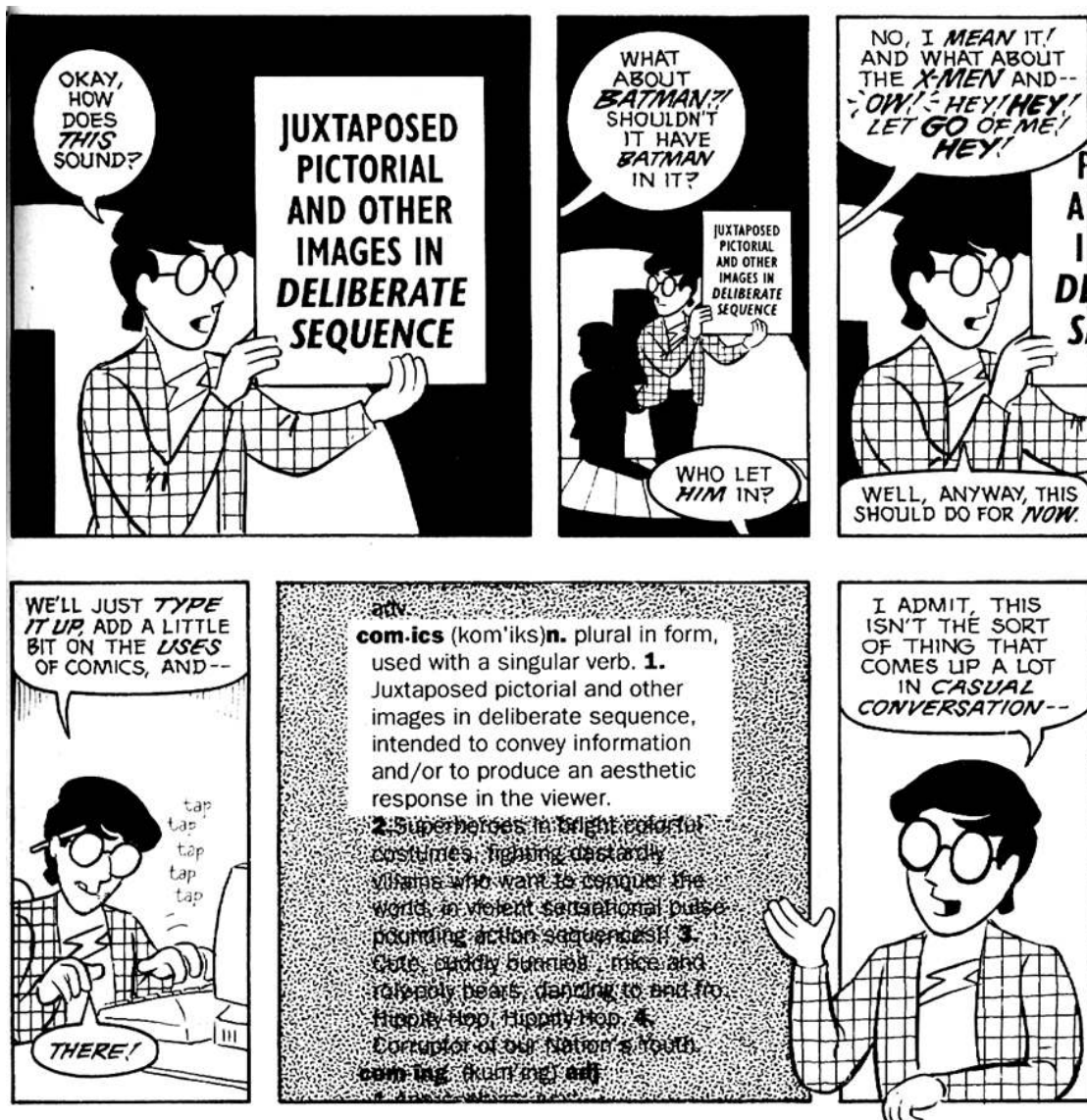
and little strips remain a permanent feature in educational literature. The *FOR BEGINNERS* series published in the U.S. since 1975 is probably the most famous educational form for adults using a combination of pictures and text in comic-like format to convey complicated subjects (see picture 9.4.). Examples include: *Einstein for Beginners*, *Plato for Beginners*, *Post Modernism for Beginners*. Pictures in this series assist in making statements and textual content memorable, and combine knowledge with entertainment.

The second category of non-fictitious comics is biographic comics. The sub-genre of autobiographic comics has become fashionable in underground comics in the 1970s and 1980s. This genre transgresses easily into fiction. Eddie Campbell's *Alec* (1984) ranks among the most widely known pieces in this genre. Historical and political subjects gained recognition. Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986 volume II, 1991 volume II) retraces his father's story, in which he survived the Holocaust, is a milestone. It marked a fundamental broadening of the possible subject areas with which the comic can successfully engage. The potential for the comic to engage with politics and other 'serious' subjects gained recognition (Munier 2000). Marianne Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2000-2004) is probably one of the best known recent examples. Finally, in non-fictional comic, there

father's failing "Educational Comics" into the celebrated and notorious "Entertaining Comics." Witek, Joseph. "From the Margins of the Margin: Seeing Educational Comics." . [ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies](http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v4_2/witek/). 4.2 (2008). Dept of English, University of Florida. 9 Jul 2009. <http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v4_2/witek/>

is comic journalism in which artist Joe Sacco is a prominent example. I will analyse his work later.

How do the authorities in the field define the comic? Scott McCloud, the already mentioned American comic - theorist, comes after some discussion to the conclusion in picture 9.5.



9.5. McCloud 1993, 9

Later, he will come to a shorter conclusion, focusing more on the process and less on the hardware. He says: *Closure Is*

Comic, intonating the way to connect the different units constituting the comic (McCloud 1993, 67).

Will Eisner, who has coined the influential term *sequential art*, has offered three explanations: "GRAPHIC NARRATIVE: a generic description of any narration that employs image to transmit an idea. Film and comics both engage in graphic narrative. COMICS: The printed arrangement of art and balloons in sequence, particularly as in comic books. SEQUENTIAL ART: A train of images deployed in sequence" (Eisner 1996, 6).

All those definitions share certain characteristics. There are pictures; they are related to each other; and they can be accompanied by text. All the other conventions are not regarded here as necessary to define a comic: whether or not there are frames and how they are arranged on the page. For example, Japanese Mangas frequently operate with completely open page structures. Also Will Eisner uses full page compositions without frames (Eisner [1985] 2008, 65). There are wordless picture stories, and most authors agree on including these in the definition of the comics. Whether or not to include photo stories is more contentious. Both the amount and type of text which goes along with the pictures can also become a problem: How much text can a comic bear before it turns into an illustrated book? For Kunzle, that pictures dominate is a defining feature of comic: "There must be a preponderance of image over text" (Kunzle 1973, 2).

I suggest that it is not a question of amount of text, or the extent to which image predominates, or whether or not images are hand-drawn or based on photography. One counterargument to the assertion that the comics must be predominantly picture-based is to be found in the comic literature itself.

Groensteen ([1999] 2007, 74), for example, shows that comics without pictures do exist. Text can be formed in different shapes, colours, distributed in frames on the page, impersonating different voices and communicate in way, that is based on its visual aspects (see figure 9.11. as example). It is this spatial organization of the page, that is at the heart of my definition of the comic. Eisner's sequential structure can be extended to a text-based comic in a way that the overall image of the page remains the prevailing feature.

There are discrete batches on the page - frames, balloons, captions - and they are arranged sequentially. "Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence" is how McCloud puts it, giving credit to the semiotic approach in distinguishing "pictorial and other images", including the visual appearance of text. I suggest reducing it to the term *units*, which includes all types of discrete batches communicating across the page. They are predominantly, but not exclusively, in a sequential order.

In his semiotic approach, Stephan Packard gives this phenomenon the name *macroproposition*. The spatial distribution of units stands at the heart of Groensteen's approach as *spatio-topological system*. Groensteen says: "If one wishes to

provide the basis of a reasonable definition for the totality of historical manifestations of the medium, (...) one must recognize the relational play of a plurality of interdependent images as the unique ontological foundation of comics" ([2000]2007, 17).

A last aspect, which is often incorporated as part of a definition, I would like to exclude: narrative. Narrative is not a necessity (Packard 2006, 95). Examples from educational comics demonstrate this. Neither fiction nor narration are conditions for a comic (ibid, 297).

So what do the visual units like balloons and pictures do? They relate and communicate. I would suggest a mixture of McCloud's definition, leaving out his second part: "[That comic is] intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer."

The definition of the comic embraced for this thesis is as follows: *The comics are visual units in deliberate sequence, spatially arranged in order to communicate.*

9.6. Units of a Comic. An Introduction to Their Function

Having defined the comic for the purposes of this research, I offer now an introduction to its units, remarking on the way in which they operate.

9.6.1. Pictures

Pictures in the comic are traditionally embedded in frames¹⁷. A classic Donald Duck comic consists usually of lined up frames - called *strips* - in a neat order on the page. Starting from this order, there are numerous transgressions of the frame structure in the comics: open page compositions and interlinked frames, visuals crossing frame borders. Everything is possible and is used. But regardless as to how open the frame structure, the visuals are grouped in units which relate sequentially to each other.

Cultural 'seeing' conventions play a major role in the organization of the page. The artist uses them to ensure the viewer can follow. But if the reading convention from left to right reverses - as in Japanese comics - it poses substantial problems to the European viewer (Carrier 2000, 57-58).

Pictures allow for an instantaneous overlook of what is happening - both in terms of single frames, and in a more complex sense, the whole page. The page as whole constitutes a second order of picture; a composition of different units. The viewer orients himself visually within the structure of the page, and gets additional information of style - which

¹⁷ Despite all the different forms, concerning the visual units on a page, I will for simplicity stay with the common terms *frames* or *panel*, although there might not be an actual frame.

locates the comic in a wider cultural context. Is it an adventure strip? An experimental comic? A children's story? Within the picture one recognises a setting (a landscape or a house for example) - characters and the related text devices. Pictures are most efficient in engaging the viewer instantaneously to the heart of a story. Visuals allow the plot to move quickly and without moderation in different positions, from macro to micro, from public speech to thoughts and off-scene explanations. The so called 'establishing shot' which offers an overview of the scenery, is used frequently in the comic. For example, the viewer might find him- or herself all of a sudden in the year 2200 on another planet. This is facilitated by a single picture. Then, the artist starts to add additional information provided by the details in the picture, the text and the following frames.

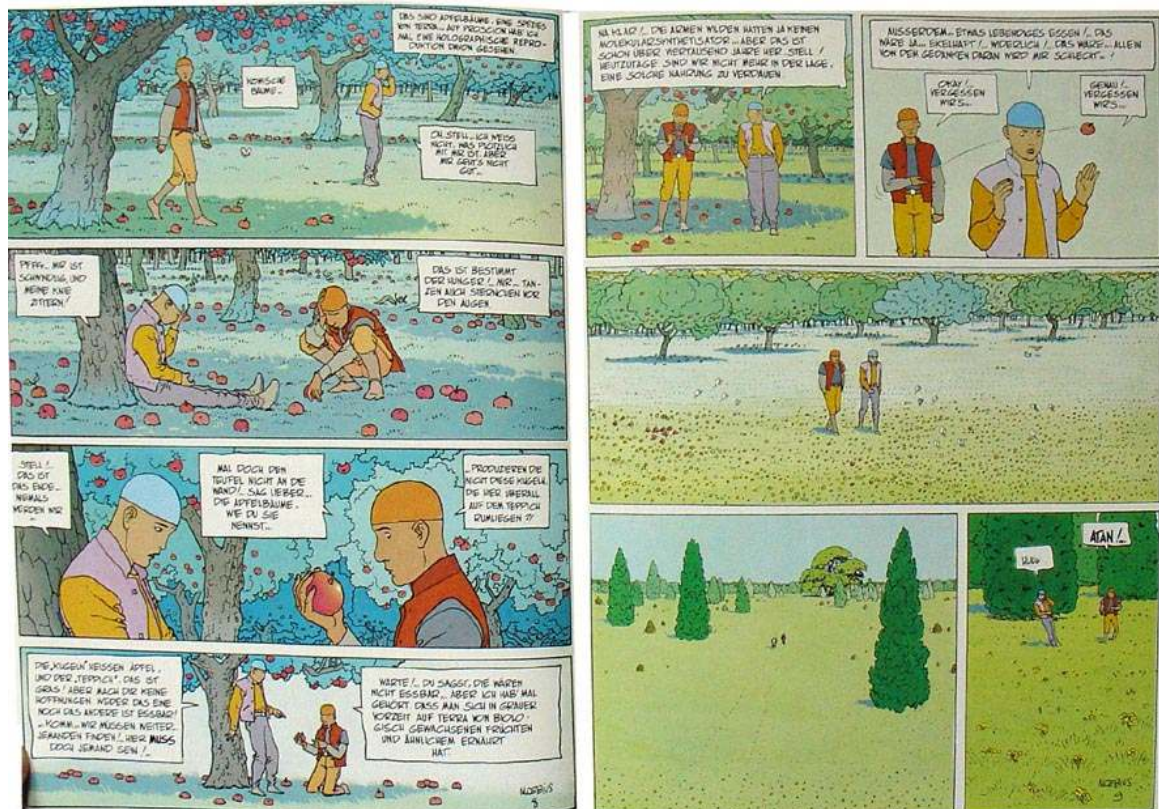
Pictures organize and distribute the actors and the related text. Their positioning turns the page into a map of action. To do this, pictures are repetitive, in that they have to pick up time and again features of places, objects or characters, in order to produce coherence and for the narrative to make sense. To recall a figure or place is labelled *iconic solidarity* (Groensteen[1999] 2007, 19).

Characters very often have a typical attribute which make them recognisable, it may be a colour, a funny hat or a weapon. This necessity to repeat parts of former frames can produce a visual rhyme, an insistent iterative repetition. In written text we are confronted with a similar need, it is only less

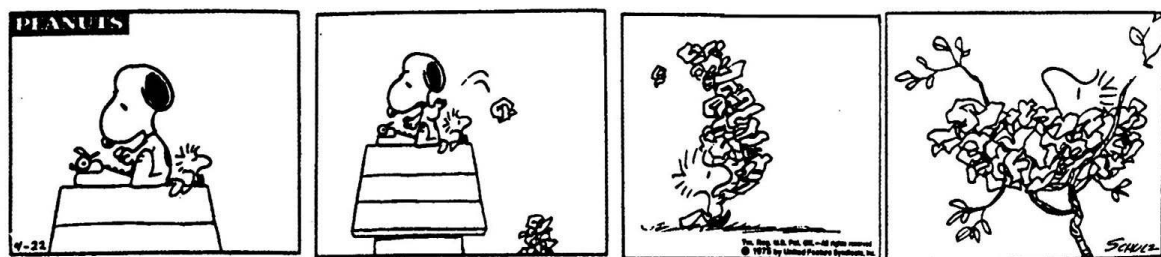
costly there: The acting figure has to reappear, either by name, or other substitutes. In pictures, this is not possible and the figure has to be shown completely. In turn, this need enables the artist to permanently show new facets of the figure, and to enrich the associative repertoire as the viewer proceeds with the narrative.

If iconic solidarity focuses on the identification, a visual relation on the level of perception plays into its hands. It is part of the visual grammar and could be called visual solidarity. For instance all round shapes on a page or all red dots, all groups of distinct visual feature are subliminal or consciously connected across the page.

Iconic solidarity can be realised in a stereotypic and repetitive way as in a Snoopy cartoon (picture 9.6.), leading to a kind of visual alphabet. It can also be done in a visually rich and painterly way, as in a comic by an artist like Moebius (picture 9.7.).



9.6. Moebius 1989, 10-11



9.7. Schulz, Charles M. [1978] 2000, no page given

But no matter how visually dense the pictures are, whether or not they provide 'readable' information, they link in a sequential way. The viewer has to move from one picture to the next, moulding them into a narrative. This is the process called 'closure' (Groensteen 2007, 41; McCloud 1993, 60). A complete typology of closure types has been developed by McCloud (McCloud 1993, 60-83).

9.6.2. Text in The comics

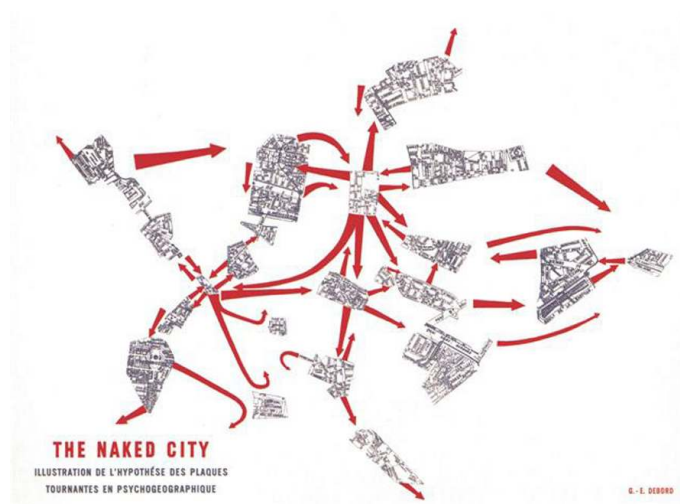
Text in the comics is in some sense more complex than pictures. This is especially true as regards its double function; that the text has a visual dimension. For this reason I here discuss the visual dimension of text. In so doing, a link between the comic as 'low brow' medium is established to different streams of cultural history dealing with the visualisation of text. This is a branch of the family tree I discussed in my chapter on history.

9.6.2.1. Text and its Visual Dimension

Influencing the meaning of written text by its visual appearance is an ancient technique. The form of text was and is dealt with in what is called today 'visual poetry' and is at the heart of what graphic designers do.

Acrostics, anagrams, coloured or illuminated text, emblems, text labyrinths, patterns and shaped poems are other such examples.

Karl Kempton, one of best specialists on visual poetry today and publisher of *KALDRON: An International Journal of Visual Poetry*, states that forms of visual poetry have been found in nearly all cultures. He continues: "Except for the impact of modern technology, it is probably safe to say that all approaches to the visual poem after 1900 can be found somewhere in the past from rock art to proto-writing and



9.8. Guy Debord and Asger Jorn
The Naked City: illustration de l'hypothèse des plaques tournantes en psychogéographie. 1957
 (Sadler 1999)

ideogrammatic,
 hieroglyphic and
 alphabetical writing
 on fixed and portable
 objects" (Kempton
 2005).¹⁸
 In the 20th century
 this rich history has
 continued. A famous,
 if slightly earlier
 example, is that of

Stephan Mallarmé and his poems. He placed the words on the page so to allow multiple non-linear readings. We will find this technique used also with philosophers and writers. Jaques Derrida's book *Glas* (1974) is another well known example. Kubism, Futurism and Dadaism had made extensive use of words in visual constellations. Eugen Gomringer, e.e.cummings and Ernst Jandl are prominent names of poets who have both deconstructed and reconstructed language by visual means. In the 1940s and 50s the work of the Lettrists and later leading into the work of the Situationists are key movements towards the use text visualisation. Guy Debord's psychographic map *The Naked City* which he produced as a silkscreen together with artist Asger Jorn is one such example (Sadler 1999).

¹⁸ His Magazine Kaldron was started in 1976, and published till 1997 in paper, from than on as online magazine, and still exists to date.
<http://www.thing.net/~grist/l&d/kaldron.htm>

Visual poetry or concrete poetry is a flourishing field today, formed by a transgressive interest of writers, thinkers and visual artists.

It is obvious for me to link the way in which the comic deals with text to these traditions, even though the relationship is rarely explored explicitly in the comic literature. This is not only due to the fact that many prominent comic authors give the picture a defining priority but also because of genre borders, and the high-art/low-art problem.

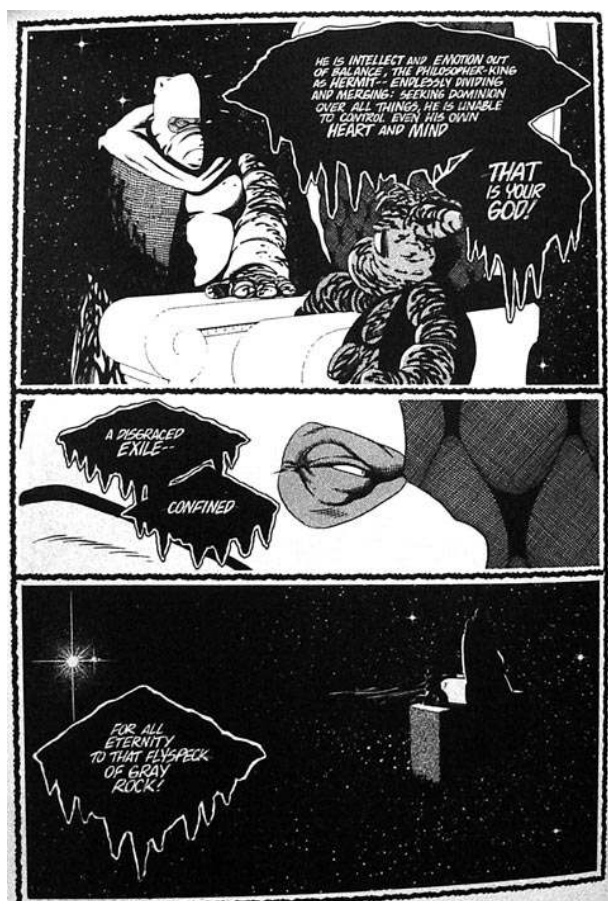
Having redefined the perspective in this way, I examine now the specific ways in which the comic engages with text.

There are three basic types of text devices in the comics.

First, balloons - speech balloons and thought balloons.

Second, captions and a variety of smaller utterances as running text. Third sounds, hints and other words floating in the picture.

These not only show conventional symbols in the form of text, they are conventions themselves.



9.9. Sim/Gerhard 1996, 16



9.10. Goscinny/Uderzo (1965)2004, 19

David Carrier wonders how these “seemingly complex conventions associated with word balloons were, without any explanation, mastered rather quickly by everyone who read them” (Carrier 2000, 45). A lead is given to the viewer by iconic qualities of the speech devices, they can indicate the mood, volume or type of voice. For instance icicles on a speech balloon are a clear sign of an emotionally frosty talk (see fig. 9.9.). There is a whole array of additional means of modulating text. Typical modulating include the size of the text. Large

text tends to correspond to a loud voice small or thin typography for a quieter voice. All physical and visual

aspects of the text can be subject to modulation. By way of example I show here a frame from an Asterix comic. In *Asterix and Cleopatra*, the Egyptians speak, of course, Egyptian, hence, the typeface is hieroglyphic. (see picture 9.10.).

Colours can be used in a similar way. The modulation of the typeface can expand into a completely visual form of the word. These are where the pictorial aspect of the text grows and may even eventually overpower its literal significance.



9.11. Saraceni 2003, 19

All this adds up to a group of features which try to re-incorporate dimensions which are lost or weakened in the transfer from oral speech to written text. These features provide a relatively coarse classification of text compared to the fine tuning undertaken by a person modulating speech. This is

evident in the weak emotional content of a typed interview. Given the range of possibilities to modulate written text visually, these techniques even in the comic are astonishingly rare. Chris Ware, one of the most celebrated comic artists of the recent years, states: "The way text is used visually in comics seems to me to be so incredibly limited. It's the one avenue in comics that seems to have been more or less

completely untouched. I mean, when you have all the tools of visual art at your disposal, then why put words in balloons?" (interview, Groth in Varnum/Gibbons 2001).

Ware exploits with an admirable sophistication the visual quality of text.

In brochures, books and academic texts there is bold lettering, italics, bullet points and so on. This however, represents a poor set of tools for the academic writer compared to what is possible.

This visual dimension is experienced simultaneously to the reading. The reader crosses the borders from a timeline of reading into spatial simultaneousness; the reader becomes a viewer.

The change that happens here is fundamental. It adds simultaneous perception to the linear reading of text, which can support or contradict the text-based message: a message which can, due to its complexity, both engage different aspects of the subject, and activate different modes of perception in the viewer simultaneously.

9.6.2.2. Text Devices: Captions, Balloons, and Other Forms

Text in the comic can be divided into three basic forms: captions, balloons and other free floating forms of textual snippets. For simplicity I use the term *balloon*, whatever shape they might take.



9.12 Drawing with caption only:
Wilhelm Busch (1864) detail from
Hans Hucklebein.

Captions

Captions are usually lines of text at the top or bottom of a frame. They have been used in a systematic way for much longer than balloons. The great predecessors of the comic in the 18th and 19th century relied on them exclusively.

Captions can be used to convey the voice of the narrator; to introduce the story; to add additional information to the either action in the panel or the text in the balloons. In the *Pink Suit* I made extensive use of captions, especially for introducing the story on the Enterprise-level on the first page. Depending on their extension, captions bring the comic closest to illustrated books. Their meaning applies to the whole frame, or even to a number of frames, simultaneously. The characters in the story are not normally 'aware' of what is said in captions; the information is provided outside of the the comic's core narrative.

Balloons

The character is aware of what is said in speech balloons, the second type of text device. The two sub-categories are speech balloons and thought balloons, and they come in a range of different forms and types.

Balloons are islands of language floating on top of the picture, "But the speech balloon itself, though visible to us like the other depicted elements, is not normally an element in the depicted space; we can see it, but the depicted character cannot" (Carrier 2000, 44). This remark indicates the construction of the two corresponding accounts already introduced with the caption: One takes place within the narrative, the second between the narrative and the viewer. Nevertheless, speech balloons take place within the picture, and can usually be 'heard' by the figures in the story. Hence, some information only the viewer gets and sees, thus rendering him or her in a god-like position.

To sum up so far: Captions take place outside the narrative space, balloons within it. Speech might be heard, though is again only visible to the viewer. But the balloon as visual object is not visible to the figure in the story; it is a visual element on the level of page organisation.

The speech balloon is spoken within the picture, it is in this sense an audio-message, and the viewer re-enacts them by reading. In this way, words form a soundtrack to the pictures. (Groensteen [1999]2007, 83; 130; Khordoc 2001)

Text Outside Balloons

The third type of text in the comic resides outside balloons and captions. "Mainly, words found outside of balloons consist of sound effects or onomatopoeia. These certainly convey sound, undoubtedly to a greater degree than any other linguistic message in comics" (Khordoc 2001, 168). The sound

is embedded in the context and, with the help of deliberate positioning within the image, the origin of the sound may also be indicated. '*Booom*' and '*Bang*' use letters, hence they belong to the symbolic sign system of language. They are located between onomatopoeia in forming a certain sounds with letter conventions, as a German dog barks WAU and an English dog WOOF. To add sound is probably the most used function of floating words in the picture. However, there are others such as comments, inflective forms and attributive annotations.

The visual level of the text consists of position on the page, its size, shape and colour. Those words are conditioning a whole picture; they do to the picture what bold lettering does to words. The visual aspect might overpower the literal aspect, but ultimately rests on it. The words, '*Boom*' and '*Bang*'; they re-install the power of text in an unexpected moment, within the visual. The general picture-text integration is for Carrier also significant: "To reduce the comic to mere words - or conversely, to treat it as merely a sequence of images - leaves aside what defines this art form, the integration of words with pictures" (Carrier 2000, 38).

9.7. Connecting the units.

After having introduced the units, their mutual relation preoccupies me foremost.

As I have shown in my introductory story with the children, there are significant layers of viewing, reading and re-viewing on the part of the viewer. The process starts typically with a brief flicking through the pages, focusing on visuals. Text which demands linear and thus progressive deciphering is only read during the second phase. This order is seen as perceptive automatism largely independent of positions of the balloon and the speaker

(Groensteen[1999]2007, 75). After reading the text, it can trigger a second look at the character, and the pictures get re-viewed. In other terms, if the character interprets the text it is no less true that the text, in return interprets the character. A type of reciprocal adjustment is carried out, a filtering of the diverse possible readings (Groensteen[1999]2007, 76).

Text and picture limit mutually the possible range of interpretations. The viewer has to negotiate between these interpretations, leading to a more complex making of sense. From a phenomenological perspective "...verbal and symbolical assignments narrow the spectrum of possible constitutions, they reduce at the same time the expectations towards relations in the future" (Schnackertz 1980, 46 116)¹⁹.

¹⁹ Translation by myself. „Indem verbale und symbolische Anweisungen das Spektrum der Konstituierbarkeit verengen, reduzieren sie zugleich die Erwartungsmöglichkeiten hinsichtlich der kommenden Zusammenhänge.“

Within this mutual influence a third entity of sense emerges which cannot be reduced to the sum of pictures and text. It is what Roland Barthes has called *relay* in *Rethoric of the Image* (Barthes [1964]1977, 32 - 51). This intertwining, mutual steering or 'dance' (McCloud) is a defining feature of comic (McCloud 1993, 156; Carrier 2000, 38).

Their relation can be specified, balloons are anchors in the floating chain of pictures. They are their 'quilting points'. The picture frames of the comic form a chain, or what Will Eisner has called a *train of images*. Each picture constitutes a time reservoir, and slows down the slippage between the pictures. The viewer's attention circles within the picture before it slips on to the next one. This movement expands further through the visual cross references on the page. Connecting the units constructs meaning, in most cases this is the moment where narration emerges.

This is a moment for me to stop, and tie a first bridge over into organizational studies. Sensemaking and narration are both terms which have come to play an important role in organizational studies. It is thus advisable to take this into account, and I do now.

9.7.1. Sensemaking and Closure

In this subchapter I will compare the process of 'sensemaking' for an organisational actor with the 'closure' a viewer has to undertake in moulding the units of a comic into an intelligible totality.

Sensemaking is a term with a rich history in sociology and organizational studies. Researchers such as Starbuck and Milliken (1988), Louis (1980), Dunbar (1981), Feldman (1989), Westley (1990), and Thomas, Clark and Gioia (1993) have explored this subject. Karl Weick ranks among the most prominent. As early as 1969 he first dealt with the subject in *The Social Psychology of Organizing*.

To connect information in a way which is socially acceptable and credible is the task of a good story (Weick 1995, 61). The connected but filtered information is 'less accurate but, if the filtering is effective, more understandable' (Starbuck & Milliken 1988).

Meryl Louis locates the origin of the sensemaking process in surprises, in which something does not fit in the pattern of the expected. She writes "It is crucial to note, that meaning is assigned to surprise as an output of the sense-making process, rather than arising concurrently with the perception or detection of differences" (Louis 1980; as quoted in Weick (1995), 4). Sense appears as the narrative, which links unexpected and unrelated events and dominates them.

Weick distinguishes interpretation from sensemaking.

Interpretation he sees as the translation of a given text into other words; to make it understandable. The events before and

after interpretation - which is part of the sensemaking process - are left out in this case. *Before* interpretation comes the unexpected event within any process, the *surprise* Meryl Luis intonated. And *after* interpretation it is of interest as to how the findings were made more "explicit and sensible": "Sensemaking is about authoring as well as interpretation, creation as well as discovery" (Weick, 1995, 8). This forms an ongoing process of retrospective production of plausibility. Weick has suggested a tripartite schema of intersubjective, generically subjective and cultural sensemaking. Other researchers begin more individually, to "define sensemaking as a 'process in which individuals develop cognitive maps of their environment" (Ring and Rands 1989, 342). This division indicates a movement between a personal, emphatic means of sensemaking on the one hand and the reaching of a social agreement standing for the way in which the individual is embedded in its social and organizational context on the other.

In a comparable process, the different units of a comic are organised into a sensemaking whole. A sensemaking story is produced and enacted by endless moments of closure between the different units. Each frame represents a surprise when viewed against the previous one, and so requires an active knitting of sense. Comic specialist and philosopher David Carriers puts it this way: "How, from discrete images, do we generate a continuous narrative? Two images already constitute a narrative, for their meaning is inscribed in the succession.

In understanding how those pictures are connected, we imagine some appropriate action. (...) We construct and check a narrative that makes sense of the scenes" (Carrier 2000, 30). Through this process of closure, the story space comes into being and is assumed to be coherent.

9.7.2. Kaleidoscopic View

The frames of a comic are windows into the story space. With their different takes (close ups, distance shots, short closures between frames and long ones); a kaleidoscopic perception is achieved. Splitting a comic page into frames celebrates the fragmentation of the view, the discontinuity of perception. The additive character of many frames on the same page has a divergent quality. Different routes into the story space are suggested in terms of persons, frame, scale and speed. This reminds me of an understanding of organizations as envisioned by Barry and Elms: "Expressing multiple, possibly conflicting viewpoints, these narratives will probably be more choral-like, three dimensional, self reflexive, and dynamic" (Elms & Barry 1997, 446). To organize this kaleidoscopic way of entering is the everlasting challenge of the viewer demanding a high degree of participation. Closure is the effective tool that activates the reader to comprehend the totality of the story space.

A satisfying narrative is only formed if from the discontinuous enunciation and the "intermittent monstration", the viewer is able to form an "uninterrupted and intelligible totality" (Groensteen 2007, 114).

In order to operate meaningfully, organizational actors have to make sense of the organization as a coherent entity as well. They perceive their organization from within. Interpreting the ambiguities of an organisation is a part of sensemaking. March and Olsen state: "... most of what we believe we know about elements within organizational choice situations, as well as the events themselves, reflects an interpretation of events by organizational actors and observers." And they further suggest that the interpretations are made "in the face of considerable perceptual ambiguity" (March & Olsen 1976, 19). What the organizational actors get as information for that purpose is usually a plurality of fragmented inputs on different levels: from formal descriptions of tasks and production benchmarks, to personal observations and informal communication with other organisational actors. In practice, the actor has to weave them together into a patchwork, deduce from them towards a coherent whole, and connect them into a sensemaking narration about the organization. The organization thus gets imagined as a story space.

9.7.3. The Gutter

The borders between pictures, known as gutters, are the visible ruptures, asking the viewer to be covered up and ironed out. The viewer is urged to plait the threads offered by the pictures. To create the story - to make sense of it - involves the 'healing' of these ruptures. Gutters as 'scars' of the narrative are always in danger of opening up again.

For Scott McCloud, this process of filling the gaps - making sense between the units in perception through closure - *is* comic: 'If visual iconography is the vocabulary of comics, closure is its grammar. And since our definition of comics hinges on the arrangement of elements --- then, in a very real sense, comic *IS* closure!' (McCloud 1993, 67).

Closure is helped by repetition. Parts of the picture are repeated to produce coherence, as stated above. The same characters appear again; the same surrounding can be recognised: It is the oscillating movement between repetition and difference which offers clues to closure. The clues are similar to Weick's 'small clues', which are enlarged and connected in his process of sensemaking (Weick 1995, 133). If the enlargement of the clues makes sense, the context is scanned and scrutinised. Does the hand in the foreground of the former picture fit with the person in the next one? Is the face the same? Is it therefore the same person? This continuous alternation between particulars and explanations produces the circle which gives form and substance to the story (Weick 1995, 133).

Leaving a picture for the next, one glides in the gutter over an undefined field and approaches the next frame. The gutter as a 'magic place' is regarded by Benoit Peeters (Groensteen 2007, 113) as a space to produce virtual images, called 'ghost panels'. These are a type of stepping stone. Groensteen sees the gutter as a place, in which a 'logic conversation' resides, leading to a coherent statement (ibid). For the

observer, the gutter is a field of temporary blindness. It constitutes a temporary erasure of visual abilities between the frames. The split second before the next image is projected onto the screen in the cinema is a moment of darkness, where the inner eye has to see. The inner eye is usually overpowered by the light of the external pictures and has to produce images in accordance with them. In the moment of not seeing anything, and being surprised to find nothing between the two pictures, the viewer is thrown back onto its inner eye, the 'vision' and the memory of the visible as Derrida has put it (Derrida[1990]1993, 28). Memory, experience and inner eye are indeed giving the lead in suggesting a story to the disparate information units of a comic. The blind moment becomes a moment of human dimension, an isolated moment full of promise. It is a romantic moment, in the sense of the individual, which has contracted into its inner self, and can expand from there, throwing the personal sensemaking out. The oscillating movement between these intimate moments and a social sensemaking constitute the deciphering and viewing of a comic.

9.7.4. When Pictures Narrate.

So when do pictures start to connect into a story? When does the viewer's activity - his search for sense making and closure - begin to turn a display into a narration? And what is it that changes on the level of information in the context of organizational studies if information is offered in the form of a narrative?

I will devote several pages to these questions. Data in a narrative form is an aspect coming unavoidably into focus if dealing with a predominantly narrative media and scrutinising it for its communication value. On the other hand, it relates to narration in organizational studies as a way to successfully connect information in a way which is socially acceptable (Weick 1995, 61).

9.8. Narrative Theory in Organizational Studies

Narrative theory had begun to spread to the social sciences from ethnography, where a culture could be examined by listening to subjects' stories. It is no surprise that John van Maanen, a key figure in ethnography, suggests: "The best literary tales display a fascination with language and language use and make the phrase 'active reading' more than a cliché. Such possibilities spill over into academic worlds" (Maanen 1988, 136).

Academic research in different fields of social science turned its interest to stories to harvest new insights (Gabriel 2000, 3). The narrative turn took off in organizational studies in the 1990s with an array of texts exploring the phenomenon. Barbara Czarniawska (Czarniawska-Joerges), Mary-Jo Hatch, David Boje, Pierre Guillet de Monthoux and Yiannis Gabriel are among the key players in this regard. *Good novels better management* has demonstrated how literature can contribute to the understanding of organizations, and the use of novels and stories has become widespread practice beyond the conventional

use of case-studies (Czarniawska-Joerges/Guillet de Monthoux (ed) 1994).

Philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard have made similar suggestions. In his *The Postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge* (1979) Lyotard stated: "I do not mean to say that narrative knowledge can prevail over science, but its model is related to ideas of internal equilibrium and conviviality next to which contemporary scientific knowledge cuts a poor figure (...)" (Lyotard 84, 7).

To use narrative in organizational studies has broadened the way how people look on organizations. It extends the range of data and has produced different methods to process them.

Yiannis Gabriel writes about the different types of knowledge produced: stories "do not present information or facts about 'events', but they enrich, enhance, and infuse facts with meaning. This is both their strength and their potential weakness. Stories will often compromise accuracy in the interest of poetic effect, itself an expression of deeper fantasies, wishes and desires" (Gabriel 2000, 135). This statement does different things at the same time: it adds credibility to stories as source of information, but also in relation to scientific value discredits poetic effect which he connects with fantasies, wishes and desires. Nevertheless Gabriel believes factual knowledge which 'infuses meaning' with emotion and symbolism is required for a truthful understanding.

We can assume that Gabriel did not have in mind Roman Jakobson's poetic function of the message when writing this,

but the way he puts it comes close. The poetic function is, as I have shown, about engaging with presentational knowledge rather than ensuring accuracy as regards the referent.

Disparate units of information require the viewer to make sense of them. Narration is a way to do this. In the sense that the viewer has to actively construct the narration, close identification with the characters is required. This affords an emphatic insight into the story.

Referring back to Antonio Strati's way of making use of empathy in research, the "architecture and style" can evoke the "sensuality and allure" of organizational life (Strati 1999, 72).

To include the viewer emphatically in the construction of a narrative is one of Stephen Packard's central concerns in his semiotic analysis of the comic. He wrote one of the two books I turn to now for a review. Both of them develop the basic functions of the comic I introduced earlier in this chapter.

9.9. Two Key References for this Thesis - Literature Review

After this basic introduction to the units of the comic, I will introduce two books in more detail. Both have been mentioned already a few times. My doctoral thesis is most indebted to Thierry Groensteen's *The System of Comics* (1999), which was translated from French to English in 2007 as well as Stephan Packard's *Anatomie des Comics* (2006), which is unfortunately only available in German. Both focus on the

construction of the whole page. Groensteen terms this *spatio-topological system*.

Packard coined the term *macroproposition* for it. Both of them understand the organisation of the comic page as a diagrammatic system.

But Packard with his 'pschosemiotic' take on the subject, focuses particularly on mirroring the viewer within the figures of a comic, and offers a hub towards the emphatic activation of the viewer discussed earlier.

9.9.1. Thierry Groensteen: The System of Comics

Groensteen is an acclaimed French comic scholar (b. 1957), with a background in communication studies. His approach gives the visual aspects priority, paying attention to the mutual influence the units of a comic have on each other. That is the core of his criticism towards semiotic dissection: it is difficult, if not impossible, to start with small units and build from them more complex units, especially if they are visible on the same page ('in presentia' to each other). In visual perception, the panoptic field never ceases to enrich the central focus through peripheral information. The central focus is always influenced by them (Carrier 2000, 62).

Spatio-Topological-System. Pictures and Frames.

Groensteen analyses the way in which units organize and structure a page in the second part of his book. In this sense, he develops a grammar for the comics. He scrutinises what he calls the "Spatio-Topological-System" of the page,

before meaning induced by symbolic content of pictures or text comes into play. This is a procedure comparable to turning a picture upside down.

This system constitutes a structural grammatical prerequisite: various panels add up to a page, each taking its form, area (size) and site as defining parameters. Together they are framed by the 'hyperframe', leaving the margin of the page as its peripheral zone.

Each single picture is restricted by its frame, and Groensteen distinguishes six different functions of the frame: closure, separation, rhythmic function, structuring function, expressive function, and a 'readerly' function.

The first two are concerned with the separation of visual material into units, so that it can interact with each other (closure).

As for the rhythmic function, the size and site of frames can suggest visual analogies, as I have shown in the Töpffer example. The two pictures with the dog, for instance, constitute a visual rhyme.

Looking at the shape, its structuring function becomes clear: most frames are rectangular, and when compared to free formed, round or other frame shapes, the resulting structure can be grasped. Discussing the use of rectangular frames in a straight structure, René Descartes' influence on the view of the world is apparently relevant "...pages, using no other types of frames than the canonical squares and rectangles, do not correspond to a "zero degree" of spatio-topical expression but, on the contrary, express a vision of the world founded on

the notion of order, on Cartesian logic, on rationality”
(Groensteen [1999]2007, 49).

The expressive function confers both shape and number of frames. For example, a long horizontal frame is more suitable for depicting a lonely wide desert, and a high vertical frame might be appropriate for someone dropping from the roof of a building.

Ultimately, he comes to the readerly function: the frame distinguishes the framed from the not-framed, and highlights and guides the reader. “A frame is always an invitation to stop and to scrutinise” (ibid, 54) as Groensteen tells us. After the basic functions of the single frames, he examines the strips, which are the horizontal lines of frames on a given page, and moves on to the balloons, the container for words. The balloons are subject to the same six functions as the frames, but subordinated to them because they need a framed panel in which to be grounded. The panel, however, can exist without balloons (ibid, 68). The balloons sit on top of the picture, obscuring parts of it. They are two-dimensional, whilst the picture infers a third dimension. Sitting on and in the picture, the balloon confines the picture from within. And, in transgressing from the textual space into the pictorial space – by means of the tail, the balloon is attributed to a character. “No balloons exist that do not refer, and cannot be attributed, to a known or supposed speaker” (ibid, 75). They form together a binomial unit, mutually limiting their interpretation, working in a

"reciprocal adjustment, a filtering of the diverse possible readings." (ibid, 75).

Even if pictures are seen before the viewer proceeds to read the text, it is the text which is the anchor in a clear timely succession where each character 'lives' in the moment in which its balloon is read. In moving from one balloon to the next, several detours are possible and nowhere is it defined how much time the viewer should spend before proceeding to the next balloon. Groensteen calls these text-anchors of the narrative "stages to be respected between each reader is free to wander around" (ibid, 81).

Both the form and position of panels and balloons build the basis of the reading protocol that is the implied order in which to interpret the content of a page. This is what Groensteen terms spatio-topological system. A typology of these systems is introduced. Benoît Peeters, who writes both comics and comic-theory, has suggested four basic types of page layouts: a conventional layout - frames of constant format; a decorative layout - where "the aesthetic organization prizes every other consideration"; a rhetorical layout - where "the dimensions of the panel submit to the action that is described"; and a productive layout - where "it is the organization of the page that appears to dictate the story" (as quoted in Groensteen [1999]2007, 98). In reality these categories overlap. Groensteen nevertheless suggests a slightly different, more general categorization. Two main questions govern it: Is the layout regular or irregular? And:

Is it discrete or ostentatious? The parameters can be combined into four categories: regular & discrete, regular & ostentatious, irregular & discrete (Peter's rhetorical layout) or irregular and ostentatious (ibid, 98).

Text

Groensteen moves on to look on the text elements in the comic.

He distinguishes between a function of dramatisation, a realist function, an anchoring function, a relay function, suture, a controlling function, and a rhythmic function.

The function of dramatisation is fulfilled for instance by a
scream, if somebody drops

from a building. It is part

of the realist function:

People talk, they are not

mute. With balloons a comic

is transferred from a

silent movie into a vocal

one.

I have already discussed

the anchoring function of

text. Suture - a term used

by Benoît Peeters -

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connects disconnected
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9.12. Hergé [1932]1947, 57

pictures, and helps to produce closure. It is seen as a sub-

function of relay by Groensteen. Relay occurs if text and

picture complement each other, in that they intertwine to

produce meaning on a higher level. Roland Barthes introduced

the term for the complementary relationship of pictures and text, and even mentioned comic as particular example (Barthes [1964]1977, 41).

The controlling function is concerned with steering the narrative. The oft-quoted '*Meanwhile...*' belongs in this category, or '*ten years later*' in the caption at the beginning of a chapter. Finally, there is the rhythmic function.

"...[C]omics play with a "temporal gap between the perception of the image, which is almost global and quasi simultaneous, and the course of verbal signs, which is slower and in all cases more gradual." (Groensteen [1999]2007, 132) A piece of dialogue can, for instance, be incorporated into a panel to slow down the pace with which the comic is viewed. An example of this technique is shown here from a 1932 Tintin comic.

Arthrology

In the second part of his book, Groensteen begins to work with 'grammar'. The interaction taking place he calls *arthrology*, containing all parts of the visual and textual linear and non-linear seeing and reading of a comic. A restrained arthrology looks on the linear viewing of the comic, following the text-anchors. In my example of Rodolphe Töpffer, restrained arthrology takes place if I read from left to right, and (potentially) cover up what I have not yet seen. Sense produced by this linear deciphering is restrained, whilst the general arthrology takes into account all the cross-panel references like the leaning towards each other of the figures or the visual rhyme of the dog-panels. On the stage of

restrained arthrology, the text takes the lead, whilst in the general arthrology the visual dominates.

In trying to understand how a story is constructed, Groenssteen spends a considerable amount of time "regarding the threshold of narrativity" (ibid, 103), to define the moment, where all these units start to tell something (and he compares it to film and text).

Narrative unfolds in a comic on three planes. First, the single frame. The single frame might host a complex picture that it is narrative in itself, or it might just 'show'. A face or a landscape. Groensteen calls this elementary stage *immanent significance*. Second: syntagmatic relation composed of the three panels: the former panel, the panel itself the viewer looks at, and the next panel. The reading is informed by before and after, the semantic relations form an arthrologic mini - chain. The third plane is called *sequence* and is concerned with relations across distances.

Sensemaking moves from panel to panel and relates them through closure. This process "forms over time an "uninterrupted and intelligible totality" (ibid, 114), the story space. In this movement, the comic operates with both resemblance and difference to construct meaning. Since each picture repeats parts of the former, "...[C]omics are founded on the dialectic of repetition and difference, each image linked to the preceding one by a partial repetition of its contents" (ibid, 115).

Reduction to its immediate narrative message is a mechanism which overshadows much interpretation of the comic. Spatial relations, colours, and feelings induced by the picture add to the information relevant to for the plot. Groensteen discusses Mangas, in particular, where the viewer frequently finds material, not directly relevant to the plot, "but their precise function is elsewhere: decorative, documentary, rhythmic, or poetic..." (ibid, 116).

Groensteen establishes a balance between the symbolic information the viewer can read from the picture, and the visual dwelling in the picture. If in every picture the "enunciative quality" is preferred, its richness is flattened and the focus remains on its immediate narrative function. "Only descriptive reading, - attentive, notably, to its graphic materiality - and an interpretive reading allows the image to deploy all of its signifactions and resonances" (ibid, 127). This is a phenomenon I have examined in dealing with visual grammar and the relation of reading and seeing or seeing-in. Groensteen is aware that only the two types of knowledge in a joint viewing produce adequate information.

General Arthrology

Groensteen's overall aim is General Arthrology, which embodies the full communication method the comic offers.

The central movement is *braiding*, which "...responds to a model of organization that is not that of the strip nor that of the chain, but that of the network" (ibid, 146). Braiding unfolds

in two dimensions simultaneously: synchronically, across space on the page, and successively, with the reading of the comic. To clarify the purpose of braiding, Groensteen calls upon a distinction between series and sequence: Whilst the sequence is driven by a narrative project, the series goes further, and focuses on visual and semantic relations of the pictures. In this sense, braiding is not actually necessary to understand the story. But a purist story breakdown like 'Superman has a fist-fight with a burglar on the roof of a building' is not only *not* exciting, but actually misses the main point of what makes up Superman. Braiding infuses and enriches the plot with other types of knowledge. It is here where I see the potential of the comic, as distinct from other forms of representation.

Viewing a comic is to knit and braid more and more threads into a network of relations, which is kept stable and present through the pictures. Panel and page create pockets of a synchronic production of meaning.

Each panel has spatio-topical coordinates conferred by page layout, and chrono-topical coordinates (*when* it occurs), suggested by the breakdown of the story. Braiding thus gives them what Groensteen calls 'hyper-topical' coordinates, embedding them in several reference systems across the story and the pictures. The frames for braiding, with rising amplitude, are strip, page, double page and the whole album. The first three work *in presentia*, the last *in absentia*, because one has to turn the page and so no longer has the reference picture in view.

There are numerous ways in which the viewer can braid the page. These can be guided by similar colours, analogue shapes, symmetries, pointing perspectives and lines. Deciphering the text, the viewer discovers more and more detail in pictures and adds them to the understanding and impact of the comic. In his conclusion, Groensteen makes the 'narrative drawing' to his defining centre. "For the narrative drawing, showing and telling are one and the same thing. The narrative drawing does not return to a referent, but goes straightaway to being a signified" (ibid, 163). And he acknowledges the movement from the sequence which is purely driven by narrative to the series, which includes all dimensions. "Undoubtedly, there are moments in comics, where narrative pressure is released. Pierre Sterckx spoke of images where "the story marks a truce, the narrative no longer exerts its tyranny of cascading new developments, the hand of the illustrator can marry the damming of the story, opening up the stroke, amplifying the forms and above all their intervals. The aesthetic evolution of comics for the past quarter of a century has been toward the direction of liberating the image" (ibid, 163). It relates to the seemingly unnecessary material in Mangas which is, on the other hand, necessary to reach a higher level of complexity. In doing that, by including material which is not obviously linked to the story as the viewer might assume it, they suggest a need for a different ontological world construction.

9.9.2. Stephen Packard: *Anatomie des Comics*.

Stephan Packard's *Anatomie des Comics* (Anatomy of the Comic) from 2006 is also worthy of consideration. Packard's subtitle *Psychosemiotic Media Analysis* indicates his interest.

His central thesis is that the comic character is a sign, which fills up its iconic form by an indexical relation to the viewer, animating the viewer to imitate and retrace the comic character. The graphically more abstract (open) comics motivate this imitation by dissecting the comic character into a diagrammatic image and simplified reduced parts of the body. That calls on an imaginary mirroring, facilitating the emulation by the viewer (Packard 2006, 288).

Packard's book is a fascinating, if somewhat impenetrable, semiotic analysis of the comics. It can be subject to Groensteen's critique, who argues that to break down the comic into small signifying units does not assist in its understanding. "For the particular subject that is comics, the operativity of the micro-semiotic is revealed to be, in practice, extremely weak" (Groensteen [1999]2007, 5). But Packard is well aware of the dissection-trap Groensteen cautions against. After a breakdown into signifying units, he focuses on their interaction forming a complex composition. Despite his sometimes overly-scientific language, Packard has a refreshing and inspiring taste for innovative thinking. He introduces both Lacan and Peirce for analysing the comic. The comparison between Lacan and Peirce is the formal analogy between their models (Packard 2006, 32). The combination of Peirce and Lacan with their triadic theories is impressive and

adventurous. It indicates the extent to which aesthetics of geometry are embedded in thinking.

I have to add a personal comment here as regards methodology. In developing my thesis, I have eliminated a chapter on Peirce and a whole section on Lacan. This is because the complexity of their systems would require a whole thesis to do them justice. My approach emphasises a more horizontal and painterly way in which to manage knowledge. Even more important is the gravitation unfolded by their systems. Instead of talking about the comic as a tool at the crossroads of arts and science, the my text became something else, pulled into a kind of black hole. It either becomes a part of a Lacanian system - the Lacanian approach has recently been applied within the organizational studies field and represents an interesting discourse - or it disappears in the totalitarian maelstrom of semiotics. This is not the kind of analysis I seek.

For my undertaking is it enough, to understand the way how Packard draws the viewer of a comic via a lacanian understanding emphatically into the plot of the comic.

The link between Lacan's *Imaginary*, *Symbolic* and *Real* to the comic was suggested already by Donald Ault a few years ago. In a paper dating back to 2000, but rewritten and extended in 2004, Ault compares the symbolic with the textual parts in the comic; the imaginary with the pictures; and the real with the cuts of the frames on a comic page (Ault 2004). Packard takes a comparable route, but goes into much more detail and

develops Ault's earlier gesture into a theory. With Peirce's semiotic understanding of the comic as is the starting point, this becomes a complex theoretical mixture.

Packard takes the psychosemiotic understanding of the term *sign*, where the sign does not exist without the person interpreting it. The act of interpretation is a sign in itself, addressing the relation between signifier and its object. The signified is realised within the observer, and hence a psychic process. The symbolic in Peirce and Lacan's understandings share the idea that conventions are realised. The comparison of Peirce and Lacan offers a congruency between icon and the imaginary, the symbolic with the symbol and to relate the index with the real.

Lacan's arbitrary and language-based means of identifying across the *barré* in the mirror stage can only relate to an equally arbitrary relation between signifier and signified in semiotics. Hence the undertaking would be limited to symbolic signs. To relate the iconic and the imaginary, the visual has to be unlocked. This is especially complicated given the significance Lacan attaches to language. In order to open up, Packard takes a look on the concept of the gaze introduced in Lacan's *Seminar XI*, and extends it into Sartre's related understanding. Packard concludes by suggesting the gaze as non-verbal variant picking up all the functions of the mirror-stage, and enabling him to extend the tripartite analogy into the visual.

The triad of a sign needs to be complete to be operational.

Lacan's argument is that a sign is not active without an observer; Peirce's argument is more formal: only a triadic structure can expand. A sign refers to another sign, the object becomes a sign in itself, and the references become a cascading network of triangular shaped signs.

Packard goes on to examine whether or not the iconic deficiency he claims can be completed by finding an indexical part in the sign.

In the identification of the viewer with the comic character, he finds the missing indexical relation. An imaginary equation of the viewer with the acting character in the comic fulfils this (Packard 2006, 125). "This moment and the paralleling constitution of the *own* and the *other* equates with the *imaginary* aspect following Lacan" (ibid, 127).

The identification of the viewer with the cartoon character is steered partially by the level of abstraction in the drawing. A drawing can reduce a face to two dots for the eyes and a line for the mouth. Only the spatial relation between them is what makes them a face, or what turns, as Peirce would have it, the diagram into an icon. Packard reaches the following conclusion: "We do understand the cartoon"²⁰ (*cartoon* means the

²⁰ with the term cartoon he means the acting figure, the character in the comic. He follows partially a move, Scott McCloud has made. This is in some respects rather problematic. Scott McCloud talks at length about Cartoon, McCloud (1993) p. 27 - 60. He identifies cartoon as a quality of simplification and typification of drawings, especially of figures. A realistic drawn figure is not a cartoon, while a dot-dot-line face is understood as a cartoon. McCloud builds one of his main concepts on the idea, that the abstraction of the icon enables more and better identification of the viewer with the character (the cartoony character) and to be part of a world of ideas. McCloud relates this to the attraction towards letters and language signs. The simpler a drawing is, the closer it gets to language. "The ability of cartoons to focus our attention on an idea is, I think, an important part of their special power, both in comics and in

comic character, authors note) as a sign, which fills an iconic form through an indexical relation to the receiver's imitation in the imagination of his/her own body" (ibid, 133).

After discussing the way in which this indexical relation is realised, Packard scrutinises both the characters and the number of levels of signification they are represented by - mouth, eye, clothing, and attributes. How much similarity is needed to recognise the figures again, and how much they are allowed to differ. Recognizable and recurring features are a condition for a coherent comic strip, supplying repetition, rhyme and redundancy.

In his following chapter Packard breaks down comic pictures in domains of signification: the figure, the objects, the spatial signs and the untouched or one-coloured background. He scrutinises carefully how meaning is introduced and is assigned to certain parts of the picture. A similar distribution of meaning takes place if he advances from the single frame towards the interaction between the comic units on a given page, his *Macroproposition* or *Comicproposition*. He defines it as diagrammatic sign. The oscillating movement between a part and the whole is how the comic ultimately

drawing generally. --- Another is the universality of cartoon imagery. The more cartoony a face is, for instance, the more people it could be said to describe." (McCloud, (1993) p.31) If this is undoubtedly true, his conclusion that the simpler a face is, the more identification potential it has is questionable. Only a look on the shape of the avatars populating the web speaks a different language, not to talk about the amount of male users enjoying female identities. Also the success of realistic comics is not to be explained by this, a rather realistic Tarzan-comic for instance seems to call upon the *Tarzan in us*, and doing this by being detailed about it. Packard discusses this potential by the terms 'open cartoons' and 'closed cartoons', meaning the more open - abstract - a cartoon is, the less effort it takes to retrace the character in the comic. The more closed - realistic - a character is, the more effort is needed, to activate the viewer to participate and reconstruct the figure.

operates (Packard: Primary hybridisation). To see the page composition as a diagrammatic sign is a helpful approach. The organization of the panels on a given page suggests a 'multiple reading' protocol and constitutes a diagram which goes beyond the iconic and symbolic content of the single frame.

Ambiguity and vagueness keep Packard busy, since a lot of signs in the comic do not have a clearly-defined referent. Ambiguity is defined as a type of openness, which is not yet decided, but has the potential to be. So through braiding and circling, ambiguity could turn into clarity.

9.10. Summary

What has this chapter brought to my thesis? I concluded with Stephen Packard's psychosemiotic analysis of the comic. It has shown the psychological involvement of the viewer in the comic. The viewer is indexical mirrored by the comic characters. It leads to an emphatic identification with the actors and the narrative. Narrative knowledge is not uncommon in organizational studies. In the case of the comic, narrative is achieved by connecting the units of a comic through the processes of closure and sensemaking. I have braided - to use Groensteen's term - those two termini, sensemaking as originating in organizational studies and closure as originating in the comic literature. Structural analogies became obvious and opened a way to understand the comic as medium which can maintain the diversity of organizational life, assisting in an emphatic understanding as Strati sees

it. Thierry Groensteen's book presents the visual grammar of the comic, layering it into the page as a complex system of references. It is the book Robert Horn would need to read to make full use of the potential in his visual language. The composition of a comic page is ultimately an interdependent system with a diagrammatic element, implying a comparison to organigrams and other representations of information.

I replace both Packard's *macroproposition* and Groensteen's *spatio-topological system*, with the word *composition*.

Composition covers exactly this. It is simpler and is a word I am familiar with as an artist. It implies the active and deliberate use of visual grammar and presentational knowledge.

Before, I gave a partial but detailed insight into the comics, I had introduced the units like frames and balloons and the different types of text.

In the beginning of the chapter, I defined the comic, and looked on the authorities in the field, and delineated the current shape of research in terms of the comic.

This chapter has constituted a thorough introduction to the medium of the comic. Furthermore, it has tentatively outlined areas of enquiry within the field of organisation studies in which the comic may prove ultimately illuminating.

10. Analysing the comic

In this chapter I analyse in depth examples from comic literature.

I scrutinise, how the comic uses visual grammar to construct sense. This insight will constitute the basis for the conclusions in the next chapter.

I looked for a small number of poignant examples which were representative of the capacities of the medium. I do not conduct quantitative research as regards the different types of messages or tools in the comic literature. I do however included an examination of the different approaches to the comic, but I cannot give an overview of the contemporary discourses in the comic world.

Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* belongs to the visually scant short newspaper strips; Robert Crumb's *Short Story of America* is an iconic poster-shop motive rooted in Underground Comic; Joe Sacco is a politically engaged comic journalist; and Chris Ware's graphic novels push the boundaries of visual storytelling. The examples I explore offer a good insight into the basic ways in which the medium operates, such that I am able to scrutinise the potential for the comic in the context of organizational studies.

10.1. From simple lines to complex pictures - Peanuts

Following the last chapter I begin my analysis with the Snoopy strip which was analysed in Stephen Packard's book.

His semiotic approach to reading these scant drawings as signs is extended by scrutinising the underlying poetic function of

the visual message. Schulz's Snoopy figures are positioned on one end of the scale between visually scant material and lavish, painting-like drawings.

The Peanuts strip standardises expressions, and a window or the corner of a table is sufficient to sketch out the



10.1. Schulz [1978]2000, No page given.

The original was published in the form of a linear strip, as reproduced here. In the book it is taken from nevertheless, the frames are printed in three lines in an rather unorganised way on the page. I was not able to find out if this was done with the permission of the artist or not. Some of the visual features are lost in the transfer into another order of the frames.

surrounding. Semiotic analysis has broken down pictures into smaller units, looking for the basic vocabulary of visuals in this context, much like hieroglyphs. Groensteen characterises this process commenting on German scholar Ulrich Krafft:

"...categorizing Donald Duck as the head within the body, the eye within the head, and the pupil within the eye. (...) the elementary units distinguished by Krafft correspond to 'sub-entities' of iconic signifiers (...)" (Groensteen [1999]2007, 3).

This focus is interesting in understanding the subtleties of visual reading, but runs the risk of losing an understanding of the medium (Groensteen [1999]2007, 5), and is in danger of reducing the structure of textual reading to visual reading (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996] 2006, 19).

Packard's reading of the comic will be reviewed (Packard 2006, 216-219) and I will expand on it. His terminology is followed,

which is self-explanatory and makes the context of his thinking obtainable.

Packard explains that the graph of the typewriter paper is an attribute of the Snoopy sign in the first panel, then becoming independent object-graph in the second, whereupon it activates the little bird called Woodstock. In the third panel, the papers become an attribute of the Woodstock sign, and in the last part of the spatial graph (the surrounding). *Situation1 - desire - action - situation2* constitutes the plot structure in the four frames.

The crinkled paper in the strip and its visual appearance in relation to meaning is interesting. How much does it operate as a sign, and how much as a drawing? Looking on iconic and symbolic qualities, Packard suggests that on this high level of abstraction signs have moved away from their iconic origin. It does not look like crinkled paper anymore, but has become a symbolic sign, much like a word for it.

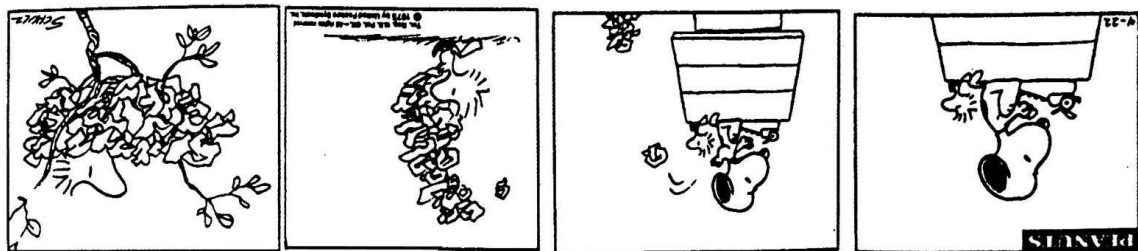
This transfer happens regularly in deciphering comics. Whilst the re-definition of a word takes effort on the part of the reader, comparable definitions take place on the visual level more easily, but they are less definitive. The drawing - or to maintain Packard's semiotic terminology the *sign* - cannot be as definitive as a word. The picture can rely on the visual grammar beyond the iconic and symbolic level.

In this case, the crinkled piece of paper in the second frame can only be identified using knowledge imparted in the first frame. The same is evident for the next and final panel. What

is fundamentally different to the word-sign *crinkled paper* is that its visual appearance is new to us and dominates the symbolic meaning. The word sign *Crinkled paper* is composed by letters, with their appearance being too familiar to make any significant visual impact.

The picture demonstrates the crinkliness of the paper in its lineature and the way it is played out by the artist. It is challenging and rewarding to understand this visual impact in a visual reduced comic such as Snoopy, where one might assume that it does not contain any visual quality beyond its pure sign value.

For a clearer understanding, I turned the strip upside down. One notices the strong visual impact of the clean horizontal lines as Snoopy sits on his pyramid-like tower (which is the roof of his kennel) and tries to write with his typewriter. The roof implies a solid, throne-like structure. The straight black blot of his ear gets smaller in the second panel and dissolves into the grey produced by the crumbly lineature of the crinkled paper. These are the central foci of visual gravity. The title PEANUTS is perfectly placed in joining the first constitutive panel with its blackness. In the third panel, the rumpled pages shape an askew tower. This vertical



10.2. The same strip, turned upside down.

shape builds a new, fragile structure as opposing the horizontal lines of the first two frames. Snoopies old scripts are recycled into something different. Schulz shows the transfer from the text product into a nest in a graphically different appearance. In the last frame, the grey structure unfolds and 'nests' in the pure sense of the term. What is still questionable, because it could crumble in the third panel, becomes a comfortable, if still visually-alternative structure in the last panel. The nervous lineature spreads over an area of a quarter of the panel shaping a horizontal plain, and the lines of the tree anchor the shape confidential in the image space, building four legs, and in the crossroad protrudes Woodstock's noose. The symmetric composition of the strip is highlighted by the two pieces of falling paper in the two central panels, and they are linked by the continuance of the grass line in panel three and the double line in panel two. This braiding and 'general arthrology' visually interlock the panels.

I return to a symbolic reading, and in so doing take precedence from Stephen Packard's book. Iconic similarity of the crinkled paper is nearly lost, only by learning it in the first and second panel I know what it stands for. But the symbolic meaning is not alone, it is extended on and embedded in its visual crinkliness, however subliminal or conscious it might be. To put it in other words, presentational knowledge hosts propositional knowledge. The binomial relationship between the symbolism carried by its visual quality empowers the visual language of the comic to go beyond a symbolic

reading, to raise visual propositions from the apparent ambiguity.

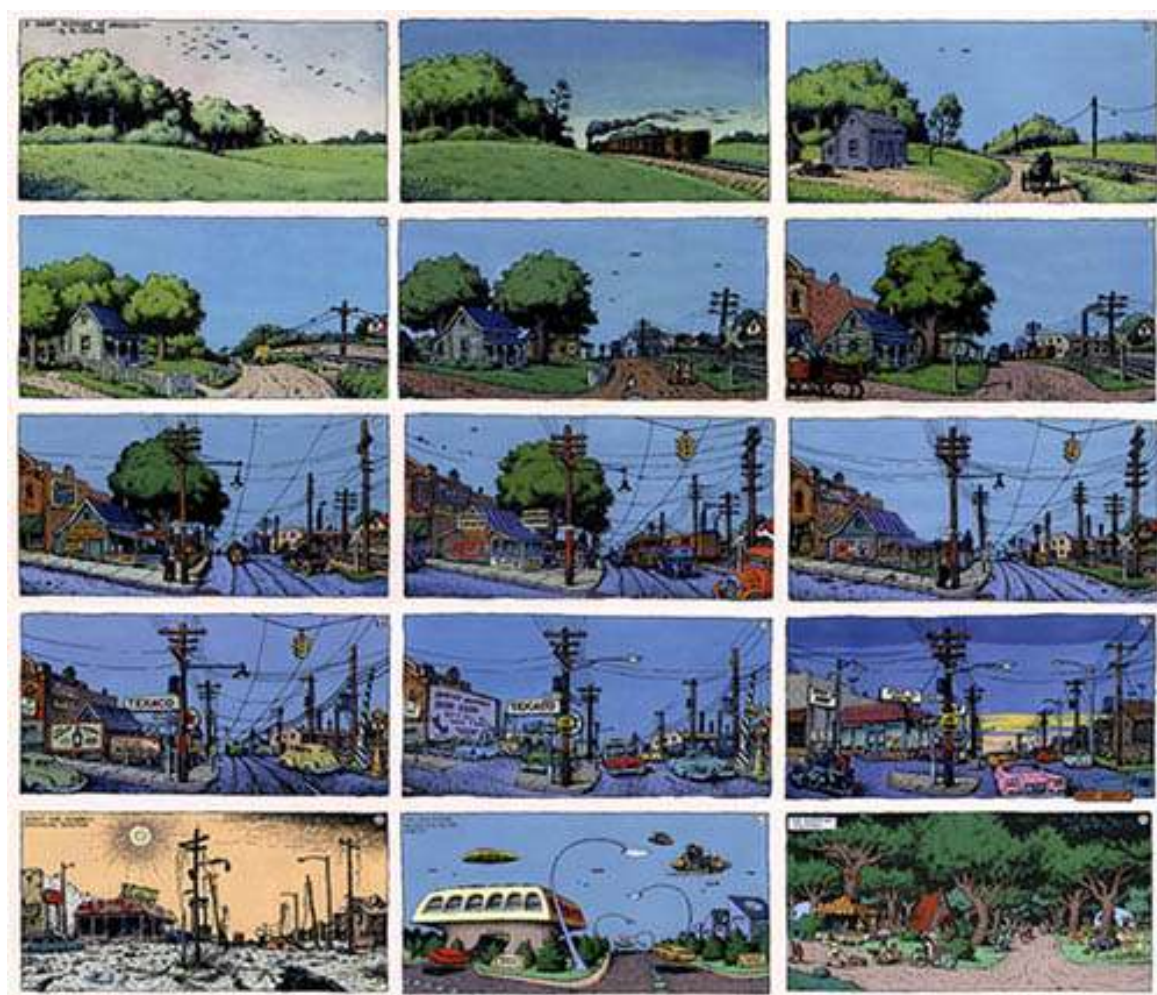
10.2. Seeing time - Simultaneousness

In *Laokoon*, Lessing attributed time to text and space to the visual arts. I have shown that this separation cannot be maintained. But of course both time and space are managed differently in visual arts than in text. How the comic deals with time is of foremost significance in the in-depth analyse I undertake now. Different organizational processes can be shown parallel on the same page and still interconnected, timing and speed can be modulated. The viewer's choice to navigate through the page forms an essential part of these possibilities. Simultaneity of vision, presenting a manifold, offers selectivity.

Time connects in two basic ways. First, in terms of the 'inner time' of the narrative or the time in which the story unfolds; second, the time of perception, the process of viewing the comic. In relation to the viewer, present time moves with his or her eyes. The moment the viewer looks at a picture and activates it, this is the present, the frame on the left is the past, and the frame to the right is the future (McCloud 1993, 104).

Simple time

In the first example I examine an icon of the comic history, one which has made it into poster shops: Robert Crumb's *Short story of America* (1979/97). It offers the plainest time construction possible, fifteen frames arranged in neat lines and all the same size. It is thus a good place in which to begin our analysis of time. There is no text to complicate it, and if one follows the z-shaped reading order there is only a linear change-over from one picture to the next.



10.3. Robert Crumb, *A short history of America* (1979/97)
(The three frames in the bottom line have been added in a second version in 1997)

The work can be imagined as slight show, one image projected after the other. It can be found on the internet made into this sort of a short motion picture. In a film a defined period of time is permitted to scrutinise one picture, before the next is presented. The amount of time dedicated to each picture is decided on by the editor of the film, not by the viewer. This authority is handed to the viewer in the case of the comic. Memory becomes important in the film. Former pictures have to be remembered; pictures cannot be compared backwards directly. Did the house on the left appear in the last picture or is it new? At which moment did the telegraph posts appear? The processing of the pictures is different between film and the comic; in the comic the viewer becomes the film projector himself: "Motion in the movies is made possible by the projector; in the comics, motion appears through our becoming, so to speak, human projectors" (Coleman 1985, 56).

In the comic, the viewer gets to see the pictures simultaneously on one page, so it is immediately obvious how the story is going to run; the number of pictures together with their structure is information readily available to the viewer. In one second an overview is given.

The backward and forward braiding of a page develops successively an understanding of coherence and sense different from that which takes place in film. The going-back and looking-again continues until the marginal utility of the

process has decreased to the point at which the pictures are exhausted of their information.

Reading the pictures, exhausting symbolic information, and collecting them into a tapestry of information all assist in the construction of the plot.

Having said this: viewers can 'dwell' in the picture after the marginal utility of literal information has dropped significantly. The empathic correspondence with the picture is maintained and the imagination stays in active modus and forms a backdrop against which the suggested plot is negotiated again and again. The picture is never empty. Colours, shapes, visual analogies (visual rhymes) all keep the viewer busy. The fundamental difference to a movie or a text is, as McCloud sums it up: 'Both past and future are real and visible and all around us!' (McCloud 1993, 104)

10.3. Second look. Hosted time. Picture and gutter.

Having offered a basic understanding of time, I turn now to look at action, understanding a comic page as a diagram of activity. The comic is not a static art, it feeds on changes, movements and activities. It shows them, constructs them and evokes them. If I look back to the simple lines connecting nodes in a network map, knowledge transfer appears to be a promising option.

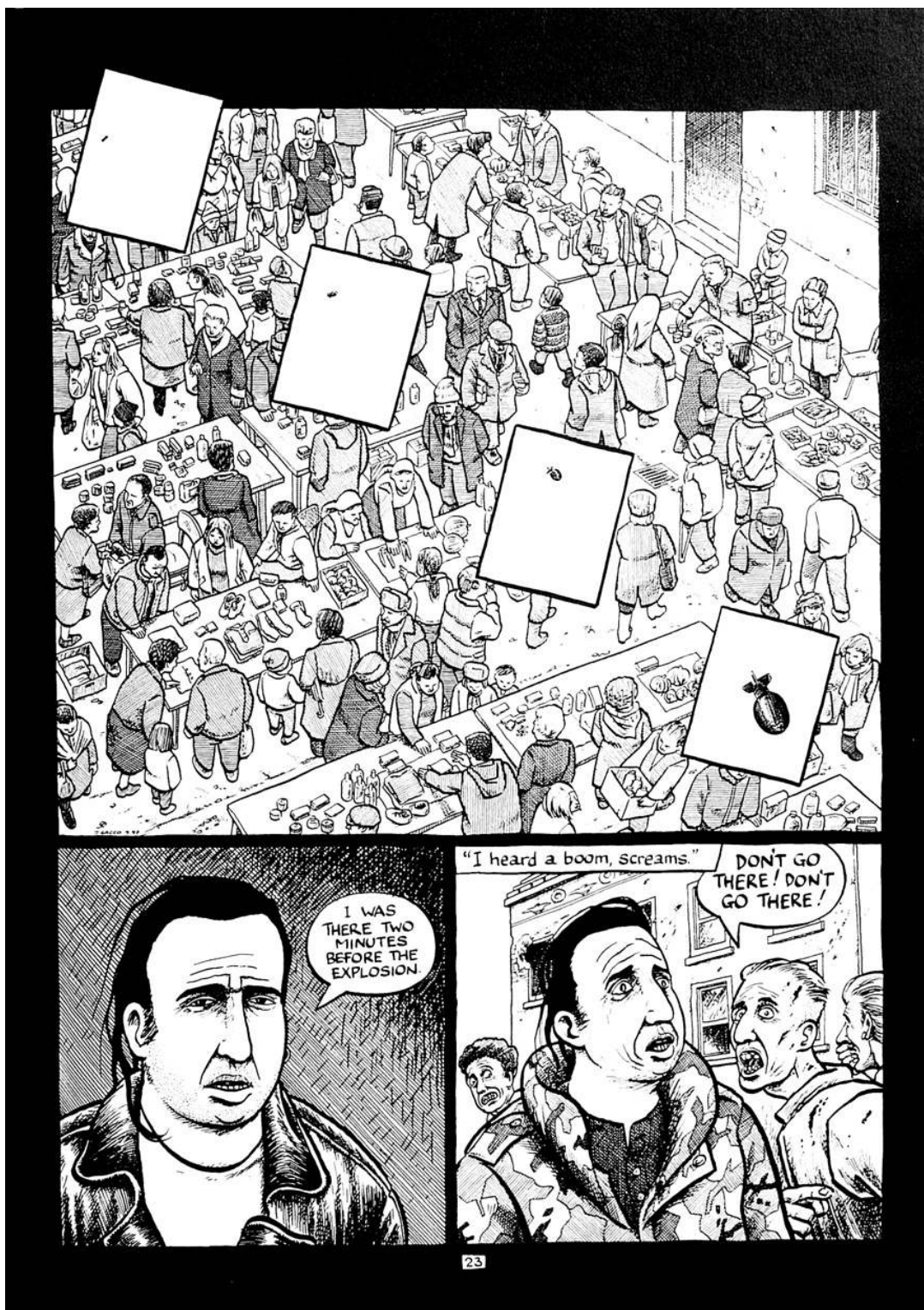
As example, I take a page from Joe Sacco's documentary comic *Shoba* (1997). His page gives me the opportunity to look at a variety of time constructions. Furthermore his work is an

example of comic journalism, and so is comparable to the work of an ethnographic researcher. Working as a journalist, Joe Sacco is famed for bringing the genre of comic journalism and documentaries into the comic world. In his case it is related to the tradition of autobiographic comics, since Sacco himself usually appears in the stories. Sacco became widely known with the book *Palestine*, a comic about his time in the region in 1991. *Shoba* is one of the stories from *Wars End: Profiles from Bosnia* (1995 - 96), and is based on a real character. This character is artist Nebojsa Seric-Shoba, whom he met at the time in Sarajevo. Sacco has turned his impressions into a story which gives us in forty pages an insight into the Yugoslavian war of the time.

The first page I examine hosts a variety of time constructions which I turn now to analyse. Its main picture shows a busy marketplace, punctuated by four smaller pictures.

Time is constructed through different means in this scenario.

First in the reading order, the large picture shows the



activity in a market. No clear time frame is set. The intra-frame time of the picture is an ongoing condition, a busy place. The little stories at the market, sidetracking the overarching plot are marginal microstories offered to the viewer. The viewer can go back and look again. With a second or third look he or she can retrieve more literal information from the picture.

Composed on top of the large picture are four smaller pictures. On reaching the last one, the viewer clearly understands that a bomb gets dropped. It falls simultaneously to the microstories of the market taking place. The placement of the small pictures within the large picture defines in a diagrammatic way the place where the bomb is dropped in the marketplace.

The four small images show a split-second each, and have a moment between them. Since they relate to the larger picture, the duration of this larger picture is at least as long as the sum of the small pictures indicate.

The time span between the large frame and the picture on the lower left hand side, showing Shoba, is not given. His speech balloon reads: *I was there two minutes before the explosion*, but the image itself seems to be much later. He tells his story in retrospect, from what could be the 'present' in the narrative. If I move from looking at the market - which is my 'present' at the moment I look at it - to Shoba on the lower left, I move into another 'present'. If Shoba is activated and

speaks, I become him by reading: *I was there two minutes before the explosion.*

That this picture is different from the others is recognised at least on a subliminal level. This is signalled through its different background shade. Shoba's different clothing in the two pictures will become obvious at a second glance. From this it follows that the top image is representative of the 'past'. The time indicator of the two minutes in his picture is relevant for the third picture. It shows Shoba meeting people with blood stained clothes and frightened faces. This event takes place roughly two minutes after the events depicted in the top picture.

This page offers a first look at the time levels of the story, and the viewer moves between various time levels, defining always his present anew by looking at the picture or enacting the comic figures therein.

The duration of panels themselves is always relative to the depicted scenario and the amount of text which accompanies it. The duration of the picture on the low left is - at least - as long as it takes to say the words: *I was there two minutes before the explosion.* If a dialogue is contained within the panel, the intra-frame time of the panel is at least as long as the dialogue takes (McCloud 1993, 95).

The text in a frame can last longer than the action depicted. Superman in the middle of a leap engages in conversation the enemy he is going to hit. This action obviously lasts only a split second, but the conversation much longer. This interesting feature makes a focus on communication processes

possible, driving and changing a process which looks simple.

Dialogues and language as driving force in a process can be highlighted.

The frame itself functions as a time reservoir, a place where a certain time span is deposited and unfolds relative to other frames. It hosts a group of dialogues and activities.

A second example from the same comic will enrich the analysis of time.



10.5. Sacco 2005, 8-9

On this double page the scene is at a bar, which had been introduced two pages earlier. The four frames on the top row form an ongoing conversation, and again last as long as it takes to enact the speech. They are additionally connected by overlapping balloons.

The head-bangers on the lower left dominate visually the double page and characterise the whole situation as frenzied. They not only crush their heads through the frame of the picture, but also cut through the border of the page of the book. Ouch!

A relation between the story space of the story and the space outside is suggested, further emphasising the violence of the movement. It constitutes a movement with duration, like a film loop which is switched on as long as the viewer remains focused on this double page.

Within the time architecture of the story, a frame of the storyteller as in the first page I looked at is found: Shoba on the right facing the observer. He tells a story about the first winter of war, enacted in the picture on his right and below him.

To add yet another layer of time, I know already by having reached page eight of the overall comic that it is autobiographic of Joe Sacco, and his inner voice retells the story. In this page it concerns the remarks on the head-banging pictures which come from Sacco, and it is he who reports the dialogue in the top frames. He is also in the bar, and one sees him depicted by his round glasses in the upper frames. That moves everything else into an account of what Shoba told him. In the narrator-picture of Shoba his first addressee is not the observer, but Joe Sacco. I see Shoba in the moment, as he told his story Sacco. Shobas talking positions gets removed into a moment in the past. If I

activate the frame by reading it, I take Saccos position, and listen in present to Shobas account.

All these time positions can be represented simultaneously, and the viewer switches back and forth between them collecting information to unfold a plane of meaning. It is nothing less than a linear and causal plot, and gives an open structure which demands a high degree of participation from the observer.

The page holds different stages of a process simultaneously visible, making it available to comparisons. The observer can realize influences between the times, and braid a narration. If I read Shoba's laconic statement on the top (*You should try to kill somebody sometime. It's like drinking a beer*), I review his face, look again down on Shoba's face, to scrutinise, how somebody looks, saying something like that.

10.4. Conclusion on time

Reading convention dictates the organization of the comic units. The Z-shape of reading - left to right and top down - represents the usual approach in the Western World (Arnheim 1969; Zakia 2002). French comic scholar Thierry Groensteen summed this up under the term *restrained arthrology* (Groensteen 2007, 22). It describes the successive reading following the tiers of frames, the so called *strips*.

The story receives a maximum of - for this media - possible timely organisation if the viewer reads the captions and balloons in their suggested order. The range of possible

interpretation they imply is constrained by their sequential progress. This type of reading only covers a part of time constructions, as I just have shown with Sacco's pages. Extending this quasi-linear reading, *General arthrology* stands for the extension into simultaneous cross referencing on pages and across the whole story. Reading a text unfolds along with the time the reader spends. I compare it to a tube, through which the reader moves, a tube offering space for possible interpretations. For a comic, I suggest the metaphor of a perforated tube. The viewer can peek into it or take shortcuts by jumping out and getting in again. The frames are like perforations, they are the windows onto the world of the story. It's all visible and open, but still directed. Given the nature of the picture as a time reservoir, and the simultaneousness of several time zones on a page, time lines in the comic are not linear.

10.5. Braiding the map.

To see and read time has already made use of the cross referencing on the page. I will now go deeper into the diagrammatic reference structure of the composition on a page. I demonstrate Groensteen's spatio-topological system by analysing some of Chris Ware's drawings. His style is much less naturalistic than Joe Sacco's and comes close to symbols. Ware, born in 1967, is without doubt one of the most prominent comic artists to date. For his 380 page graphic novel *Jimmy Corrigan - The Smartest Kid on Earth* (2001) he was awarded numerous prizes, among which was the *American Book Award* and *The Guardian Prize*. What makes him interesting for us is not his fame, but his deliberate interest in the comic as a visual language. Within a sort of preface to *Jimmy Corrigan*, he prints a fake newspaper article titled *New Pictorial Languages Makes Marks*. He writes: "With the many recent technological breakthroughs in pictorial linguistics (as exemplified by airline safety cards, battery diagrams, and feminine protections directions), such heretofore-dormant skills of Comic Strip Apprehension (or CSA) are being reawakened in the adult mind, paving the way for the explosion of more complicated literature which almost certainly looms within the next decade" (ibid, 1). This statement is self-ironic and honest at the same time, and he frequently pushes the boundaries in his work, extending comic conventions and incorporating all types of visual information. In our chapter on speech balloons, I quoted him speculating on why it is

comic artists still use balloons when they have so many alternatives at their disposal.

I am going to examine two different works by Ware, with two approaches to visual language.

The first is based on a diagrammatic structure, providing graphs and lines and arrows of related actions and thoughts. This is rather unusual for a comic. I include this example as a link between info-graphs and narrative comic.

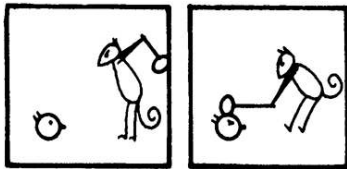
The second example is a narrative comic. I will examine the visual cross page references in the spatio-topological system and the way its braiding works.

10.6. The basics of perception, according to Chris Ware

10.6.1. Two little boxes

In Ware's introduction to Jimmy Corrigan (2001), he gives comprehensive *General Instructions* including a worksheet to be completed and sent to the author. Section four of those *General Instructions* is called *Technical Explanation of the Language Developing Skills*.

There are two frames with his cartoon characters *Squimby the Mouse* and *Sparky the cat*, which only depict the head of a cat. Five questions are asked about our abilities to make sense of the little drawings. What he does is to describe the basics of visual sensemaking. It is too long a quote to cite in its entirety here, I limit it to the first and last paragraph, to give an impression.



10.6. (Ware 2001, 1)

"1. Do you see a) two boxes printed in the midst of text filled with a confusing arrangement of outlined shapes that are utterly

incomprehensible, or b) two boxes printed in the midst of text on a page with tiny pictures of mice and a cat head inside them?" (Ware 2000, 1) He asks then if we are able to commit closure between the frames: do we see the same mouse - in two different situations - or if we see two different mice, he asks for the direction the resulting movement operates and if we perceive the action as occurring in the present or in the past. Ultimately he reaches a level of empathy and ends with "5. if b), did you feel a) sorry for the cat head, or b)

not?". If we have answered all questions with b, we are "sufficiently well-versed to continue".

The two Squimby and Sparky frames are taken from a larger sort of chart, which in turn is a reproduction of one of his earlier works from the ACME Novelty Library. This complex graphic I analyse now to gain an insight into the possibilities of visual organization.

Chris Ware's line drawing looks like a wiring diagram for an early computer. No color, no gray shades, not even black shapes ... Only lines, the utmost form of graphic reduction. It looks, technically, non-narrative and so not expected in the context of a comic book. Little guidance as regards perception reading order is offered; the drawing displays a confusing homogeneity. Much as the eyes eventually get used to darkness, having absorbed the stylistic information, I begin to see visual differences between the shapes.

I recognize a small differences in the size of the frames; there are circles, squares and two clouds, and Ware has at least allowed himself three different types of lines, thin, thick, and dotted. There are a few numbers, some symbols, a large circle and a large square.

That is the toolbox with which a visual system unfolds in front of my eyes.

Looking again for guidance, I see the large circle, and realize a lot of lines. I am brought to a stop by a coherent block of frames in the lower part. A train of frames in the top part of the composition catches my eye. The whole is partially formed of both vertical and horizontal orientation, but it is not related towards straight outlines as offered in a page layout. It seems to be a self-contained structure. This, then, is a rough first impression. I look more closely at the display in the single large circle, which dominates the composition: Squimby hitting Sparky with a hammer.

The diagrammatic lines have made clear that this is not a comic strip in the conventional sense.

Where to start? There is no start and no end. To enter a visual field, and by doing so, establishing a path of interpretation in a field of signification is a crucial process of sense making. My time as observer unfolds in linear fashion; I read one detail after the other.

My viewing is subject conventions, like cultural conditioned left-right or top-down, or more general perception-related rules of visual grammar. Large-small, strong color difference - weak color difference are among them (Zakia 2002). The guidance of the viewer's attention through a visual field transforms a personal timeline into a field of permanent signification.

In *Squimby and Sparky*, Chris Ware tried to avoid most of these obvious attention-guiding techniques and baffles with a near flat display.

At a second glance I realize that many lines and arrows end up at the dominant circle, but none originates in it. The circle presents the result, *Squimby* hits *Sparky*. I am obliged to trace meaning back from the end of a given chain. A research modus is switched on in the observer by hiding the information path in an overarching visual structure. I am forced by Ware to become a detective. But I have to put in significant effort to go beyond this basic interpretation. This is enhanced, in a physical way, if I am obliged to grab a magnifying glass,

since the original graphic is - as I have indicated - much smaller than reprinted here.

Three dotted lines lock onto the large circle itself. By virtue of their symmetrical position, the two on top suggest to me that they belong to the same order. The one below links to the central square of seven such squares in the top tier of the big box. It is the same mouse as in the large circle. In the tier of seven frames it belongs to a symbolic display of a live circle as I realize. Because it starts with a baby on the left, and ending with a corpse on the right indicated by the conventional curved line for stinking hovering over it.

I move on and find that the seven-frame strip is joined through a secondary frame with the next seven-frame strip below. This shows the life circle for a being, which seems to develop its adult existence as a cats head. Through analogy to the first strip I am entitled to deduce this unlikely story of a life circle.

The two characters in the large circle are located with this simple device within their live span, and the entire two top strips are through a funnel of dotted lines again linked up with the central frame of the strip below them. That's where the whole life span is located, and it is implied that these are the ages of the earth. Far left, a mouse with a stone-age club, then later a top hat before ending with the depiction of a mouse in space wearing an oxygen helmet. Having settled this, the whole story is located in terms of evolution.

The characters of our central icon are thus located in time.

Going back to the two other dotted lines on top which form another funnel towards the only thought-cloud in the system, it is implied that the picture is representative a mouse's imagination. On top, the mechanism of visual perception, including the wavelength of light, is explained and related to the frames of a mental movie.

The time span between the raised hammer and the hit itself comes into focus on the left, indicated with the help of a clock and a ghost panel with a dotted outline. Action is related to both book and film. In the book, I imagine the movement, and in the cinema I see the movement consisting as represented by several sequential pictures. I learn more about sound, and senses. Ultimately the little diagram of circles should be of interest, which results in a head of the mouse in a small circle (top right of the big circle). This diagram suggests that the character is half mouse and half man. Self referential to the diagram, explaining that the diagram resides between a conventional symbol system like language and a naturalistic depiction of a mouse or a mans head.

By way of summary, the viewer has realized now that circles stand for the metaphoric use of the drawing, and square frames for the use of the drawing as picture itself.

The pictorial display operates with an utmost efficiency - the block of frames on the lower left hand side is a stunning example. A stone-age club is all it takes to confer ages. The

club would not, however, confer anything without the related symbols of a top hat and a space helmet.

To depict little figures only as lines performs another trick: It makes the visual language obtainable. The recognizable, iconic drawings are paralleled to the frames: They are made of the same material, just lines. The frames are not the frames; the frames are part of the drawing. The framing is elevated or even displaced. The composition is framed by the white page, by the physical book; it is framed by the magnifying glass I hold in my hand. In the flipping back of these page to see the display again Ware reaches an astonishing physicality of the display by its utmost reduction. Derrida wrote in *The Truth in Painting* about the function of the parergon, the framing function, and Kant's example of the golden frame (Derrida, Jacques [1978]1992 80). The ornament becomes in this case so important that the golden frame advances to be the ultimate object. In this case the movement has taken place in the opposite direction: The importance of the frames has been aligned with the pictorial drawings. The dialogue between the poetic function of the message and its representational function has become extremely dense. The feedback loops between them are fast and short because they have come so close to each other.

Support is seen as a central function of the parergon; the frame supports its center. Derrida suggests that the place, the mountain on which the temple is build, does not belong to its parergon, but that the columns do. If I take the columns

away, the temple disintegrates; if I take the mountain away, it does not.

In this sense, the frames in the composition - the columns - are very strongly integrated and without them the composition would disintegrate.

Visual solidarity across the composition relates circles with circles and squares with squares. Ware's visual efficiency evokes a scientific diagram, and both quotes its visual traditions and operates them. He delivers a red herring in that Tufte's ink/information ratio is realized: The most information with the least possible ink.

It refers to the reality of Squimby and Sparky as creatures of their story space. It is a scientific diagram in relation to the reality within this space. That is all it can do, and it is its inner logic which explains things. No subtitles, no caption, no legend is required. A legend transfers authority, as Ramirez puts it nicely: "The fact, however, is that maps have legends, which are to maps what dictionaries are to discursive language. Even if context does affect meaning, as it does in discursive language, a red line across the map does mean a two lane highway, whereas a note in music means nothing in and of itself" (Ramírez 1991, 70).

A legend is a helpful tool for reading visual displays, but its authority binds the viewer to read it in a particular way. It is not a red line anymore; it is a signifier for a highway suggesting that nothing follows off it being red - and not for example not green. In Ware's case, the monopolization of meaning brought about by the use of a legend is avoided.

Ware's Squimby and Sparky diagram explores the relationship between the poetic and the referential function of the message. It brings them very close together and demonstrates that they are made of the same substance. Both cover representational aspects, and reach for propositional suggestions. There is only a minimal dislocation between their focus. If the parergon is removed, the structure crumbles. It is an integral part of the structure.

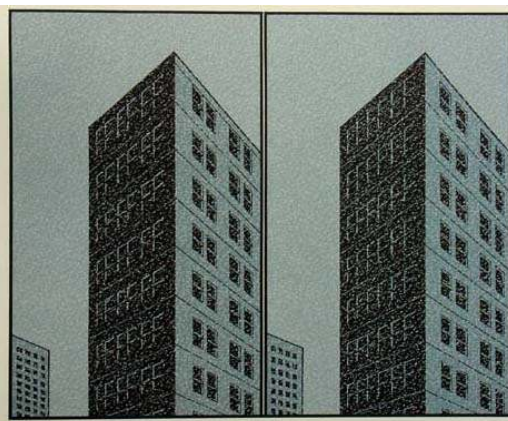
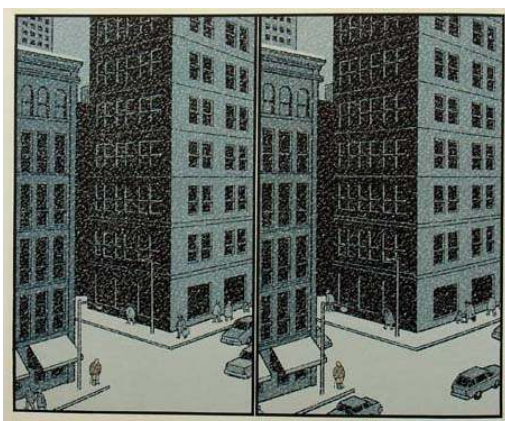
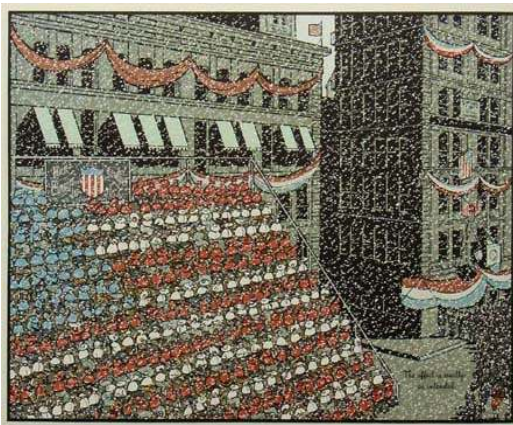
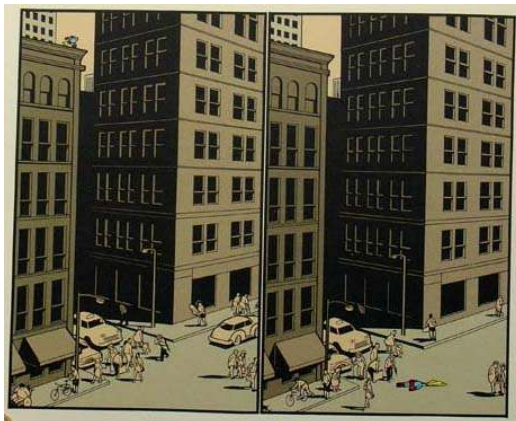
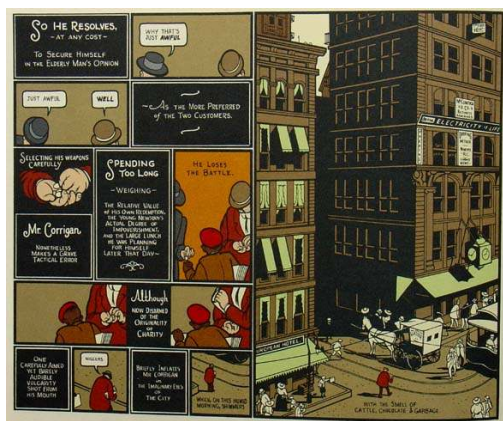
10.7. Narrative Maps.

Following the schematic presentation of Squimby and Sparky, I look now to the narrative braiding of the composition. I divide it into braiding 'in presentia' and 'in absentia' consistent with Groensteen's Arthrology. Restrained Arthrology was the linear making of sense, lending a lead to the anchoring function of text, while in General Arthrology the visual takes the lead in that it focuses on cross referencing within a page (in presentia) and throughout the whole album (in absentia).

10.7.1. Braiding in absentia

Throughout a graphic novel, spatial situations, narrative situations, faces or color combinations are regularly represented in the interests of maintaining continuity.

The most eye-catching braiding in absentia occurs in Chris Ward's *Jimmy Corrigan* (2001) through the re-occurring image of a street corner. It is a fixed place in the story space of the graphic novel and serves as metaphorical indicator of time and mood. The turn of the century, the blaze, newer times, street celebrations or seasons are indicated. The mental space of the characters is interwoven with it.



10.8. The street corner appearing in Ware's book as example for an obvious braiding in absentia. The white paper snippets in the air from the parade are repeated in the falling snow on the low left. Only on the end of the book, the view is raised.

(Ware 2001, page size 14,5 x 18 cm, no page numbers given)

A second example for braiding in absentia, giving orientation in occurring not through objects but through colors was practiced by Hergé in the classic Tintin comics.

The viewer only becomes aware of braiding if flicking through the book quickly. Usually it works on a subliminal level in that the viewer is well orientated in the timing of the stories. Hergé changes the dominating colors - usually the color of the neutral backdrops of walls in the rhythm of 1 - 5 pages, and through the extremely repetitive use of the same figures or object with a typical color.

I can conclude from this look on braiding in absentia, that it does improve the orientation within the story and joins a conscious level of recognition with a subconscious level, as in a primary recognition of the colors. It relates different points or figures across the story, and is a tool to guide attention.



10.9 Hergé 1966, 2 -31

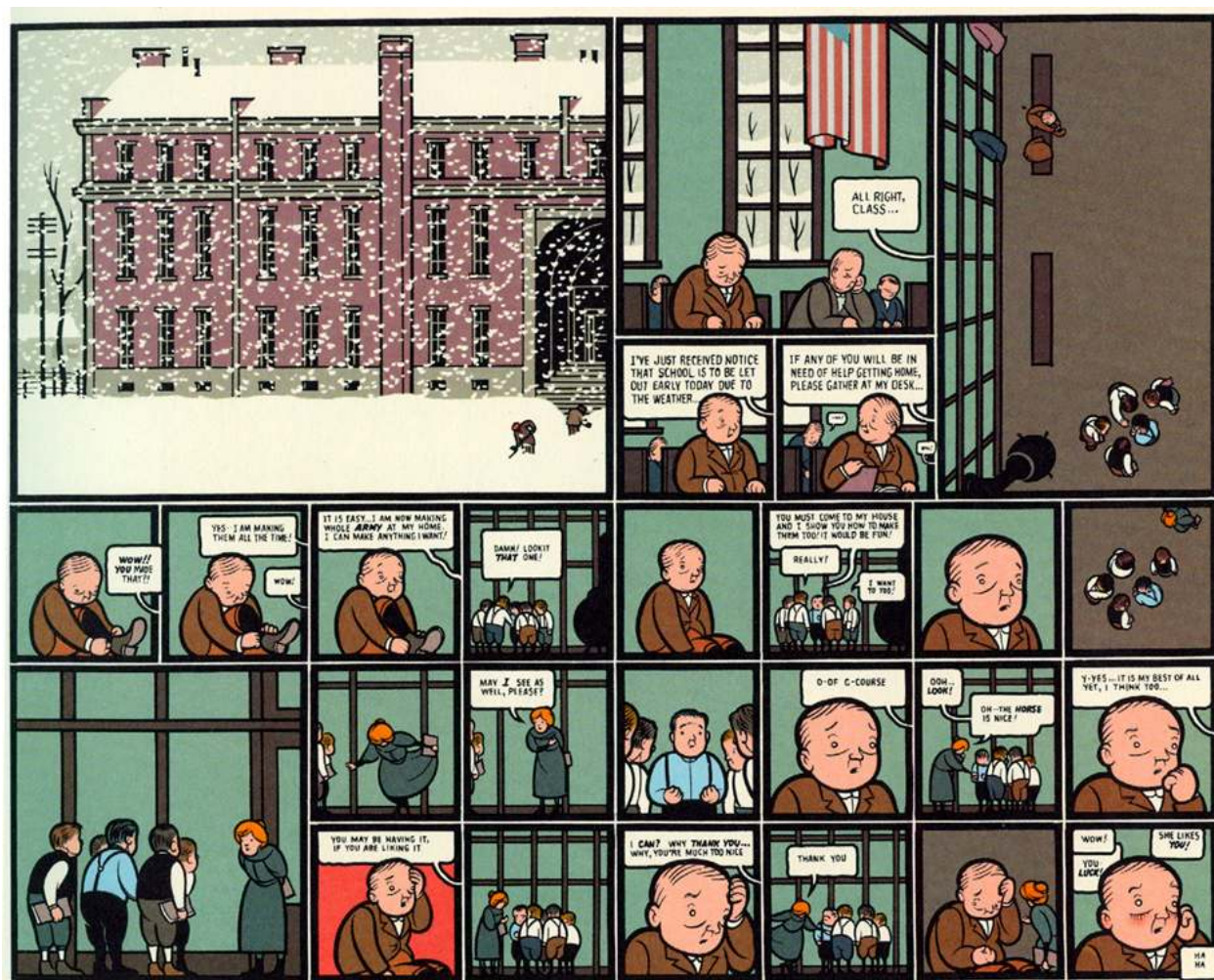
The division into colour zones is obvious, expanding between 1 and 5 pages, and fading into each other. A dominating object reoccurs frequently and together with a dominating background colour provides a subliminal colour braiding in absentia (also in presentia) and offers orientation within the story.

10.7.2. Braiding in presentia

As a final example, I am going to scrutinize a page by Ware as narrative map, as a display of an organizational situation. I have saved this standard situation as the highpoint of my analysis. The selected page is a classic setup of characters, embedded in a rather conventional frame structure. It enables me to analyze the medium's potential in relation to a social situation.

First, I will provide an overview as representative of the first glimpse. Then I will examine restrained arthrology, following the reading convention and the textual anchors (balloons).

Finally, I will review the page in its entirety, focusing on what Groensteen calls general arthrology.



10.10 Ware 2001, no page numbers given (no 237)

The top left shows the location, a large house. It is snowing outside; a peaceful winter scene is presented. This scene is retained as an overarching representation as I start to decipher the rest. What catches the viewer's attention? The repeated depiction of a child's head and another child in brown clothes dominates the page. The use of square frames implies figures on a chessboard, indicating a rigorous organisation. The little quadrates jostle and create a firm juxtaposition to the white of the snow shovelled outside. The square with the red background stands out. I move from seeing to reading. But before I do this, I have noticed a bright American flag, thanks to its colours. The high windows I just

saw from outside repeat formally the squares of the frames and link the inside of the story space with the frames on the actual page by formal analogy.

The page has organized itself so far through distribution of space, in a small - large difference, repetition, and colours. It is a static composition, most lines are parallel to the horizontal and vertical, the window and grid structure within the frames adding to the intention of the frames.

I move on. What is the whole 'caboodle', which is so small, that I can not immediately make sense of it between the children's faces? A group! A group of people, and there is a girl with orange hair. So what is going on? I read the balloon in the red picture: "You may be having it, if you are liking it!" This doesn't tell me much, except that a general group discussion is going on. I need restrained arthrology and undertake a linear reading, to make more sense of it. I stumble across the larger picture on the top right, which sticks out through a large plain colour field, and a strange image, which is not obvious immediately. On closer inspection I realize it's the same room but viewed from above. I am able to deduce this from the similarity of the colours and the grid structure. A group of people stands there. I realise that this is the group of children in the small frames, and, - yes - there is the child with the brown clothes sitting to one side of the image on a bench. I then, finally, begin to read.

Before I examine the textual element, what do I have so far?

It only took me a few seconds to orient myself in terms of the

visuals I have just discussed in detail. I have a group constellation in an organization; I have a context established and a spatial map. A single person versus a group of persons, all subordinate to the flag above and the invisible manager. I only hear his voice below the flag from off-scene. The flag subordinates, the snow snows, the quadrates jostle. A form of communication can be recognised between the group of children and the single child. My position as viewer is with the single child, his face is represented by a close-up. I am therefore 'near' to him. A girl plays a role in the distance in reference to the group.

It is freezing outside. I am happy to be in the warm, social entity the schoolhouse provides, also held by social rules as well. So while the little stove in the top right picture produces heat, I begin to read.

It is akin to betrayal to retype the text in the balloons in my text here. However, for reasons of clarity, the text in the balloons is typed. The teacher comes from off: "All right, class ..." "I've just received notice that school is to be let out early today due to the weather...", "If any of you will be in need of help getting home, please gather at my desk...". The single child is in focus, so he hears it, but the voice is coming from the right indicated by the tail of the speech balloon.

From the same direction comes in the next tier the conversation of the group. He listens: "Wow!! You mad that?!"; "Yes- I am making them all the time!", "Wow!"; "It is easy... I

am now making a whole army at my home. I can make anything I want!"; "Damn! Lookit that one!"; In the last picture the view has panned over to the group, and focuses now back on the child who listens. He pauses with putting his shoes on. A picture without a balloon, I see him resonating about the dialogue he just heard. Than again the group kicks in, with three balloons. The intra-frame time is longer, and the text expresses a lively group dynamic, and the desire towards the maker-of-things. "You must come to my house and I show you how to make them too! It would be fun!", "Really?", "I want to too!". The view focuses on the child. His name is Jimmy and he has his mouth open. His jaws have dropped. Tension between him and the group is imminent. The next picture is one of those wonders of comic communication. Below the larger top-down picture a similar is a smaller top-down shot. Without analogy to the top frame, I would not be able to make sense of this picture. The size of the characters are the same, as is much of their constellation. It is the difference, however, that conveys the important information: Another character is there, one with orange hair. Chris Ware timed the moment where the orange-haired person approaches to correspond with the establishing shot of the scenery on top, in the interests of visual analogy as related to a situation to occur later in the comic. Braiding is happening in presentia and across time. The final large picture depicts the encounter between the group - all looking to the right - with the woman facing them - and me, the viewer. They seem to stare at each other. There are no words. Then, the woman curtsies, and asks: "May I see as well

please?" The balance of power is not really clear. Her size together with the fact that she is carrying a portfolio implies that she could be a teacher, or an older girl. Her audacious but polite question is met by a silent panel showing the group. To be precise, it shows only one boy fully. The boy with the blue shirt, sidelined by the group in a symmetric composition, is singled out. This is not just a picture, it is an image of group communication! He seems to be the maker of things. His stuttering answer "O-of C-course" indicating indeed a distance of hierarchy - or male versus female? - I hear, whilst looking into the face of Jimmy. It repeats the jaws-dropped position from the first picture, and sits left below the first picture. A dialogue is established: "Ohh... look!" - "The horse is nice!" from the girl. The face of Jimmy again large displayed. His hand raised, a gesture of silent despair comments on what he hears: "Y-yes, it's my best of all. Yet, I think too...". I have reached the red-backdrop picture. "You may be having it, if you are liking it!" The boy offers the girl his horse, causing distress in Jimmy, who now grabs his forehead with his hand. A silent panel raises expectations: How is she going to react? "I can? Why thank you... why you're much too nice" she accepts, zoom in on Jimmy, more despair. Then the girl makes a curtsy: "Thank you". The last two panels of the page show Jimmy again, with resignation looking on his fingernails whilst the girl in the background leaves the scenery. The backdrop of this panel is brown, like the floor in the top-down shots. He is literally kissing the dust. The last picture finishes him off, and buries him under

a flood of off-scene balloons from the boys. I understand, that the girl is admired: "Wow!", "She Likes you!", "You luck!", "Ha Ha". Jimmy, who didn't even come into play, sitting silently absent from the group, blushes. If he blushes instead of the boy who is the 'luck', or if he blushes because of his own incapability to be the one, or to be within the group at all, remains open.

This is where my linear reading ends, taking all the textual anchors as the timeline.



10.11. Ware 2001, no page numbers given (no 237), turned upside down.

I have looked at the tools which are used to represent a group situation and the dynamics going on within it. I review the page as composition now, braiding in presentia across the page.

The page remains in front of my eyes as a representation of the situation.

As practiced in chapter six, I turn the page upside down to gain an 'undisguised' look at some of the tools of visual grammar used on the page.

The square structure of the frames 'hold' visual structure of the page and give it a firm expression.

Cross dividing the page into four equal parts is supported by a tiny dislocation. The two little quadrates in the top part of the page are slightly bigger than all the ones in the lower

half. There vertical outline does not continue.

This supports the horizontal dividing line, and herewith, a very static overall composition. The flagpole continues in one of the perceptively drawn crossbars of the window, cutting off the edge of the composition, and preventing the eye viewing too quickly and leaving the picture in the corner. A lot graphic means have been used by Ware, to show the viewer a firm, organized and restricted structure of the organizational set-up.

The pink circles of Jimmy's face unfold iconic solidarity and build a pyramid. The repetitions of the smaller, sitting, Jimmys form a sort of rhythmic line, ramming into the pyramid. On top of the pyramid towers the flag. I would go so far as to see the strange colour of the schoolhouse as a deliberate mix of the colours in the flag; an obvious colour relationship links them in terms of perception.

Visual grammar provides the structure for moving the sense which is made into the symbolic systems. It establishes both firm and weak relationships; it recalls, underlines, and emphasizes.

The structure signifies itself, posing an abstract diagram, might it be understood consciously or not by the viewer.

Presentational knowledge interplays with propositional suggestions. Symbolic reading covers the gestures of Jimmy, his face, the group in the distance, the snow and the flag. Ultimately, I reach the symbol system of text, and with text I

am entitled to anchor the plot in the composition and to establish stepping stones to bolster its timeline.

10.8. Summary

In this chapter I have closely analysed six examples of comic, focusing on the relation between the visual tools the comic offers and the story told.

I began with *Peanuts*, presenting a visually reduced style of drawing. Resembling a visual alphabet as Stephen Packard suggests, it still requires visual grammar on which to base its communication structure.

In the second part of the chapter, I examined the construction of time in comics. Simple timely closure from frame to frame was examined in relation to Crumb's short history of America. The viewer can see different times on display across the page and can compare them. An immediate overview of the narrative is given. With Joe Sacco's journalistic comics, I have shown detailed mechanics of time presentation. Different time levels comment on one other, the modulation of speed or the relation between activity and location becomes comprehensible. The 'present' moves with the eyes of the viewer from the readily available past and future laid open on the page.

I moved on to an unusual comic picture, a diagrammatic display created by Chris Ware. It demonstrates possibilities of visual language in a complex diagram with very reduced means.

On the other side, it poses with its utmost reduction to line drawings the question of where a frame ends and the display starts. The difference between a frame and the hosted message

is moved into the notion of support, as Derrida has implied by reference to his notion of the *parergon*. The frame turns into the supporting condition and constitutes the zone between outside and inside.

In the closing parts of the chapter I examined another of Chris Ware's pages. A situation in a school is presented, and the interactions are shown by pictures and speech, colours and spatial distribution.

Having analysed the means by which the comic operates, I will now examine its potential for representing organizations.

11. Conclusion

11.1. Introduction

In this, the penultimate chapter, I will examine the potential use of the comic as a medium to depict organizations and organizational processes. Eight features are suggested. In the final chapter to follow this, general conclusions about the contribution to knowledge will be drawn.

But for now, it is interesting to examine the tangible outcomes of the comic. Where does the knowledge from the different fields I have introduced match up? And does it make sense?

In the two previous chapters I looked at the units of the comic, and demonstrated their potential. With Thierry Groensteen ([2000], 2007) I showed the potential residing in comic's grammar. Within Stephen Packard's (2006) psychosemiotic approach, the psychological inclusion of the comic-viewer in the communication process added an important aspect. In chapter ten, I analysed examples from different comics to show how they work in practice.

The results fall into two related perspectives, which have surfaced during the course of this thesis. The first is concerned with the interconnected nature of representational and propositional knowledge. Roman Jakobson's message model provided both a referential and poetic function for the message as means by which the message might be unlocked. But this is not a feature which concerns only visual displays but

every medium of research. The second perspective emerges from the special aspects of visual representation.

11.2. Eight Features the comic Holds

I suggest eight different, but interconnected, mechanisms in which to use the comic to broaden the scope for presenting data within an organizational context. 1. Mapping: providing fast visual orientation, representing diagrammatic constellation and offering layered deciphering in different depths of information; 2. Contextualisation: the complete visual context stays visible on a comic page while reading it; 3. enhancing memory of the data; 4. Providing tools to manage and communicate ambiguity; 5. Visualisation of movement; 6. Visual modulation of text; 7. Cross-referencing: multiple relating of data against or with the timeline and its (spatial) organisation; 8. Drawing the viewer into an empathic understanding of the presented organization. Features hosted by the comic but not unique to it will be included, if a knowledge transfer from the field of the comic promises an improvement.

1. Mapping: Orientation, constellation, layered deciphering

Mapping is a means of depicting organisations. It hosts two related possibilities. First, division of the information into several layers. A fast orientation by providing an overview comes first, and can later be supplemented by more detailed information in a subsequent viewings. Second, these spatial relationships of the information units speak for themselves as

a diagrammatic constellation. The visual grammar embodies organisational relations as an extended form of a diagram. In terms of the first aspect, the viewer is oriented quickly simply by glimpsing at a comic page. A hierarchy of sizes, colour and direction organizes the page. Over distance, (in absentia), the viewer can re-locate a moment within a graphic novel with relative ease. After the first impression, the viewer can decide where to delve deeper in order to obtain more relevant information. Deciphering takes place in a layered way. Especially the amount of information provided by the pictures is open ended, the viewer can go back and discover new details, and 'dwell' in the picture.

The second aspect can be referred to as an enforced diagrammatic mapping. Relations between all colours and shapes in a picture - their mixes and distribution - can be read as an advanced diagram. Comparable use of pictures is common in empirical sciences such as medicine and geology. The making of such a "visual cardiogram" of an organization - and the subsequent decoding of it - requires learning.

These mapping effects are not unique to the comic. They do not need the comic and its narrative and sequential aspect, but are also possible through static diagrams or maps. However, the sophistication of diagrams used in organisational studies to date is not yet sufficiently developed.

2. Cross-referencing.

Cross-referencing is in some sense an extended feature of mapping. It is based on the understanding of the page as a diagram and making use of its function as a map. Thierry Groensteen analysed some of the underlying visual grammar, terming the page a *spatio-topological system*. I have analysed such systems in the last chapter.

To view the comic page as a diagram and to consciously move away from the reading protocol and cross reference other units and actions across the page is one of the comic's most intriguing features. It combines features from both text and diagrams. Cross referencing is also possible in diagrams and maps, but it is only in the comic where it relates to a timeline, to a sophisticated depiction of action and constructs non-linear possibilities as regards organisational process.

Iconic solidarity (Groensteen) was concerned with the recognition of a person or place. In cross-referencing, basic *visual solidarity* is primarily at work. Braiding across the page of comparable colours, shapes and patterns groups figures and shapes.

Different spatial relations are established. They influence the reading protocol. Events in an organisational process are connected and highlighted across time. A relationship between them can be demonstrated, while the whole set-up of the organisation remains visible and the process unfolds within it.

3. Memory

The comic seen as a map can relate to and support the imagination of cognitive maps about organizations.

The memory enhancing function of pictures is again in operation in other forms of visual display, arising from the *picture superiority effect* in memory research (Roedinger III; Weldon 1987, 152). Mnemotechnics has a special focus on the memory-enhancing function of visual displays (Yates 1966, McDaniel/Pressley (eds.) 1987). Maps and diagrams can be used as mnemonic devices. A map of a public transportation facility is an example. It helps effectively to understand and later to remember the ways, directions and intersections of buses or trains routes.

The advantages of pictures in learning and educational contexts have been recognised and are still in use. However, in western culture once a certain level of intellectual maturity is passed, pictures are often dismissed as irrelevant (Wigand 1986, 28-61). The comic can organize text and pictures in a memory-enhancing way. It relates topics, persons and/or processes with reoccurring visual features which function as mnemonic markers.

Chris Ware's schoolchildren scenario analysed in the previous chapter constitutes an example of a cognitive map. It forms a cognitive map for the viewer to use in order to remember the organizational process which has taken place there.

4. Context

While the viewer of a comic page reads the textual units and dwells in the picture deciphering more information, the context and relationship in which they are embedded remains comprehensible. Groensteen puts it this way: "This moment-to-moment reading does not take a lesser account of the totality of the panoptic field that constitutes the page (or the double page), since the focal vision never ceases to be enriched by peripheral vision" ([1999]2007, 19). Pictures provide a stable context, for ongoing attempts to make sense of the narrative. Markets, conditions, stakeholders and other permanent influences can be visually encoded and signalled to the viewer. One such example can be found in Joe Sacco's strip explored earlier, where the surrounding continually signalled war and destruction, whilst the viewer followed a narrative characterised primarily by Shoba's life.

5. Ambiguity and Vagueness

"Visual representation is a presentational symbol system where the whole is not equal to the sum of the parts, rather than a discursive system with a one-to-one signifier-signified relationship" (Taylor & Harris 2001, 4). This statement holds far reaching consequences for the nature of knowledge conveyed by pictures. The information cannot be imparted on a one-to-one basis, and produces ambivalences and vagueness. While looking at pictures the observer can decide on how long to watch, and when enough is seen. The open-ended process relates to the general ambivalent nature of visual signs.

Visual signs have a deficiency of specificity and denote a relatively large spectre of meaning (Oomen in Packard 2006, 261). Or, as Ernst Gombrich has suggested, pictures are ineffective hosts of abstract information and statements ([1960]1982, 132).

However, pictures are sophisticated systems of information, based on a complex visual grammar (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996]2006). Modulating this grammar turns the focus towards what Roman Jakobson has called the poetic element of the message. The second reason for ambiguity is closely related: a focus on the poetic side of the message "does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous" (Jakobson 1960; 370/371).

In this sense, it is a matter of accepting ambivalence and vagueness as condition of knowledge. Doing that, has results for the nature of knowledge, and figures as an epistemological conclusion. It is to formulate, send or receive a visual message as something I might come to understand "as a sophisticated modulation of vagueness", which never surfaces in the space of the textual, and retreats if attempted. It is based on visual grammar. If this type of message is accepted, promises to grasp and communicate vague and ambivalent moments in organizations. Furthermore, it trains the researcher to withstand the drive towards reductionism by offering tools to manage fields of ambiguity. This occurs in relation to - and accompanied by - abstract data, and form their overall appearance into a sense making structure.

6. Motion and time

Also unique to the comic is the potential to depict action *between* the units, and providing sophisticated tools to show action and movement. Transgression between the frames (closure) and displays of movement within one frame are the two basic types available to organize action and time .

In chapter eight I discussed lines in network maps and other diagrams representing relationships between the units (Freeman 2000a, 2000b). The use of different types of lines and different colours helps but remains as a clumsy tool given the complexity of relations. They reduce diagrams merely to clusters of nouns without verbs between them (Kress and van Leeuwen [1996]2006, 59-65).

As an approach to organizations, this is comparable to that embodied by structuration theory, which focuses more predominantly on relevant processes rather than on the static structure of an organisation.

Taylor and Harris have dealt with the problem of visualisation of the movements. They state: "the structuration approach has been limited by its inability to visually (and analytically) represent organizational structure in a compelling and rigorous way. Visualisation is important" (Taylor & Harris 2001, 3). They suggest an approach via language/action maps, which they see as superior to traditional organizational charts. This comes closer to an organisation understood as a cluster of communication acts or "a pattern of dyadic role

relationships" as they put it. They do not focus on the visual appearance of the maps as such, but show that visually representing the channels of communication within an organization is essential for understanding it. I mention Taylor and Harris here for three reasons. First, to relate to the study of organization moving away from static aspects in which it has combined "structural" and "interactionist" discourses as embodied by the "structuraton" approach. Second, to emphasise the importance of visualizing organizations as a road in the interests of understanding. Third, to focus on communication and speech embedded in the (visual) constellation. These are all possible within the medium of comic. If I look back on Chris Ware's comic strip relating to the school, it can be defined as a type of language/action map.

The acting figures in the comic carry the action. They are facilitated by drawing style, configuration of the page, colour, lines and all the other tools.

Visual grammar can transform nouns into verbs. This is illustrated in Joe Sacco's comic strip examined in the previous chapter. Movement and its quality is visualised. Closure between the units is modulated by the viewer. The type of closure relates to the distance between the actions in the frames. Whether a movement of a hand is dissected into four frames - or is represented in a single frame - reflects the desired focus required of the viewer. Importance of a moment is raised or diminished, time extended or reduced. The process can be moderated in terms of time. These tools offer both a unique

potential to focus on processes, time and action as well as the ability to host them in a message.

7. Visual Modulation of text

The visual modulation of text represents another potential of the comic. The use of terms such as *Booom!* and *Slash!* imbue text with a second level of meaning. This is the area in which a graphic designer works and is not new or unique to the comic. Visual Poetry and related areas work in the field as long as lettering has existed. Hence, it is not a new area but waits for its discovery. Comic artists are aware of its force, even though still not in the full sense as Chris Ware has remarked (in an interview, Groth in Varnum/Gibbons 2001). If Groensteen implies that speech provides the soundtrack for the pictures, he does not only mean the sound of the spoken word. He includes all audio dimensions and expressions which can be made visible through the modulation of the text. These qualities regain some of the features lost during the transfer of expressio from the oral textual domains (Groensteen [1999]2007, 130).

Another dimension to the term *soundtrack* is that it delivers a stylistic feature in that it provides a flavour for the spoken word. The way the people talk, all the *yeaahhhs* and *shut ups*, give an impression and it allows the characters to appear as authentic human beings, capable of talking as experienced in the organization.

It is only possible to envision what would be possible if the visual modulation of text is taken seriously and developed

into an accepted culture. The gap is perpetuated from both sides, if I recall the saying: *Graphic designers do not read*. Hence, they are not interested to make the relation between literal message and visual appearance either, but from the other side of the divide.

In the comic, the first attempts to bridge this gap are found. The comic endeavours to relate the appearance of words to their contextual function and value. The comic adds layers of ambiguity to factual statements.

8. Empathy

The comic as medium enhances an emphatic understanding of organization. Empathy is a term which has its history in organisational studies, and has recently been applied by Antonio Strati (1999) to the field of organisational aesthetics. Max Weber had described empathy as the counterpart to rationality . "Emphatic or appreciative accuracy is attained when, through sympathetic participation, we can adequately grasp the emotional context in which the action took place" (Weber, as quoted in Strati, 1999, 54).

There are two main elements in the comic which assist in cultivating empathy. First, the emotional involvement of the viewer in the picture originates in the sensual nature of the visual. This involvement grows, if visual literacy leads to seeing-in, and can harvest presentational knowledge.

The second element to the comic which helps foster empathy is the enacted inner theatre in the viewer. Comic characters all speak in the first person, they are activated through an inner

theatre which is staged in the viewer's imagination. By enacting information, the comic transforms information into narrative. In the little story which told how to read out aloud a comic to children, this became obvious: the reader orchestrates the narration. Comic characters are assigned voices by virtue of the balloons and become capable of making statements. The gesture of speaking turns them into social beings. Text in captions, which is not linked to a particular character, repeats the scheme in a reduced way: it embodies the voice of the narrator.

In Stephan Packard's semiotic understanding, the viewer of the comic interprets the signs of the comic by identifying with the comic's characters (see chapter nine). Scott McCloud draws a comparable equation, how the viewer is psychologically drawn into identification with the acting figure of the comic: the simpler and less naturalistic the drawings, the more readily the viewer is able to identify with them. The viewer is activated to complete the picture (McCloud 1993, 140-150). In this way, the viewer 'feels' the story and is drawn in to the situation and is able to gain an emphatic understanding of the organisational situation. Imagining oneself acting as if occupying someone else's persona - or adding one's own presence by means of the imagination to those of other participants in organizational life - is noted by Strati as one of the ways to comprehend meaningful social interaction in an organization (Strati 1999, 54).

A last significant feature of the 'inner theatre' is that the comic always takes place in the 'present', and never in the

past as I have shown. The figure lives in the moment viewed. Viewing it, is activating it. Having this 'inner theater' of the depicted organisational process in mind, advances the viewer's empathy of the organization.

11.3. Summary

In this chapter I have drawn conclusions from my research as to the communicative possibilities of the comic. I have applied it to the presentation and communication both *within* and *of* organizations. As stated at the outset of my thesis, I have not distinguished between the comic as potential tool of research in organisational studies or as a way to communicate within organisations. I have looked at the structural potential of the comic as medium. Eight points have been made:

1. Mapping: Orientation, constellation, layered deciphering;
2. Cross- referencing; 3. Memory; 4. Context; 5. Ambiguity; 6. Depiction of movement; 7. Visual Modulation of text; and 8. Empathy.

The eight points form an interrelated but disparate set of features.

Most of them are offered to some degree in other media.

Some of them appear in visual tools as photography or diagrams: mapping, context, ambiguity and memory. Movement can be described in detail with words; visual modulation of text is undertaken by every graphic designer. Empathy is an extended field with a rich history especially in the social sciences, and has been applied in various contexts since the

time of Max Weber. Cross-referencing relating to a comic page as spatio-topological system is, however, unique to the comic. But these eight features, in their constellation between picture and text, organize different types of knowledge into a time line. In this constellation, they are also unique to the comic. With this fusion between the perspectives on presentational knowledge and propositional knowledge the potential to interlock and communicate different data about organisations is a possibility only found within the medium of the comic. Comic artists have developed a set of tools which hold great potential to the visual presentation of organisations.

12. Concluding thoughts

This doctoral thesis here draws to a close. Although anfractuous, its objectives were realised by focusing on eight areas of potential for communication of and within organisations.

It is left now to examine the doctorate from the wider perspective introduced; to summarise; and to speculate on the future.

Prior to making overall conclusions I would like to quote the great Nelson Goodman. Goodman has spent a considerable amount of time trying to break down barriers between the sciences and arts. For Goodman, observers seek symbols for seeing, interpreting, and ultimately constructing the world of our experience. The sciences and arts contribute equally to the enterprise of understanding the world, or 'world-making' as he

would say. "The difference between art and science is not that between feeling and fact, intuition and inference, delight and deliberation, synthesis and analysis, sensation and cerebration, concreteness and abstraction, passion and action, mediacy and immediacy, or truth and beauty, but rather a difference in domination of certain specific characteristics of symbols" (Goodman [1968]1976, 246).

I too subscribe to this statement.

12.1. Review

My study focussed on reviewing *The Pink Suit* comic as part of the Manager in Residence project, using it as a starting point from which to examine the medium of the comic in general.

The pragmatic research question was: *What is the the comic format capable of communicating at the intersection of organizational studies and art?* Ultimately the question was not sufficient; it required elaboration. To answer the question, I had to describe the context and conditions for this question. I came to see the comic as a catalyst for research into different types of knowledge in its historic and cultural conditions. My thesis came to form a horizontal rather than vertical pattern of insight.

I showed that the counterparts of science and art are historical constructions which permeate one other. Romanticism and Enlightenment in the 18th and early 19th century have been identified as fundamental sources of these constructions. The rupture between different forms of knowledge became visible as a discursive divide and one which remains operational today.

Beyond the effected changes in ontological assumptions, this gulch constitutes the origin of the contradictions inherent to Modernism as characterised as the tension between deterministic paradigms and the ethics of Enlightenment. The divide is inscribed and perpetuated by institutional and political power, conventions and discursive traditions.

Jaques Ranciere's notion of the *Aesthetic Regime* has opened a way in which to think from a different perspective about this dichotomy, and to understand expressions -originating in either science or art - as a double function with autonomy on one side, and the functional transmission of information on the other. The comic is taken as example in which to explore this phenomenon.

The cultural valuation of pictures, and the way in which they host knowledge, determine their value in ontology. The predisposition to divide text and pictures in the interests of purity, as embedded in Lessing's *Laokoon*, fostered the denigration of vision as a bodily and sensual experience. As a consequence, presentational knowledge is constrained, leading to a disproportionate bias in favour of propositional knowledge. An example which illustrates this was found in Robert Horn's information murals, and - in the opposite way - in Edward Tufte's approach.

I offered an overview of the chequered history of the comic, and focussed on some of the extant theories proffered for its interpretation. As a relatively new field of research, it demonstrates an array of communication tools in the way its units are constructed and interact with one another.

Text-based information is structured and positioned according to a visually organized field. On the other hand, the visual can be legitimated by data provided through the text.

The comic enables the viewer to move between pictures and text; to suspend one in favour of the other. They have a dialectic relationship, giving the possibility to comment each other mutually, reaching with differing techniques and different density out to propositional and presentational knowledge.

12.2. Contribution to knowledge - Epistemology

In what ways does this thesis constitute a contribution to knowledge? Bound to its doctoral format, this thesis contributes primarily to the area of propositional knowledge. Within this area, it is to the field of organizational studies that this thesis has been specifically oriented.

Organizational studies is a field in which interest and knowledge of the presentational side of world-making is progressing.

In attempting to understand the comic, I focused on epistemology. As Goodman says, knowledge is a gliding field of competences between art and science, and they complement each other. Reinforcing the perpetual division of science and art is ultimately unhelpful. Approaching the question in the form of Heron and Reason's extended terminology implies a greater potential. In social communication, propositional and presential knowledge constitute a dialectical relationship with one another. It is only by examining them in

their entirety that we might gain an insight into our world-making.

Pictures have limited potential in making statements; statements are better served by text. Pictures are constituted by visual grammar, thereby hosting propositional elements of the overall message.

On one hand verbal language is abstract and linear; it functions through the use of culturally-derived codes removed from direct experience. On the other, visual information is holistic, immediate, and experientially-rooted (Barry 1997, IX). To team text and pictures up, can enhance our understanding of organisations, and return to it dimensions which are missing in the relevant discourse (Page & Gaggiotti, 2010). Among the missing dimensions is what has been called *Organizational Aesthetics* (Strati 1999, Linstead & Hoepfl 2000). Organizational aesthetics is an inclusive term for non-rational aspects of organization. It relates to the range of arts-based methods, including pictures, as offering genuine analytical potential tools (Warren 2008, Taylor & Ladkin 2009).

So what do I see as my contribution to knowledge? Defining adapters between the presentational and the propositional side of knowledge - as found in the comic - is what I have demonstrated. The comic has the capacity to enhance the direction and breadth of data representation. It can reach out and communicate types of knowledge which seem elusive for other mediums.

I have shown that without taking presentational knowledge into account, the cultural disproportions of Modernism cannot be cured. Pictures and their special ability to embed knowledge in presentational forms are fundamentally important in this regard. This is probably the central conclusion to my work: Regaining images for knowledge generation, raising visual literacy, and taking pictures seriously as a type of knowledge.

Pictures can help to fulfil what Antonio Strati sought: to communicate emphatic knowledge. He desired means that could "illustrate how the lived experience that undergoes reconstruction is still sensible life in organizations. In its architecture and style, therefore, the description must strive to recast the pathos of organizational life, its sensuality and allure, and not to emphasize a detachment and a distance that have never existed" (Strati 1999, 72).

12.3. Outlook

As with all methods or tools, the use of the comic requires practice. Drawing - or other methods to represent visual material - is a competence no more elusive than the ability to read and write. The ability can be acquired and refined. The 'mystery' of drawing has been a successful strategy of the (art) market and has bolstered the hegemony of a small cultural elite. It has helped turning a majority to visual illiterates, whose role is reduced to be adoring spectators of the arts. I believe - and I speak now as artist - that art can

do more than guarding its market by keeping the majority off its knowledge.

At the other end of this undertaking resides the denigration of vision and the cultural hegemony of text.

As a first move, the ring of fire around pictures constructed by Modernist predispositions has to be overcome. Once this is achieved, the ring of fire will vanish. Presentational knowledge has been hidden under the term 'art', but even under the enchanting force Modernism has build into the term, art is no miracle. Iconophobia is rooted in missing knowledge. The seductive potential of images applies only if knowledge about them remains minimal. A mode of visual learning needs to be established, similar to learning to write.

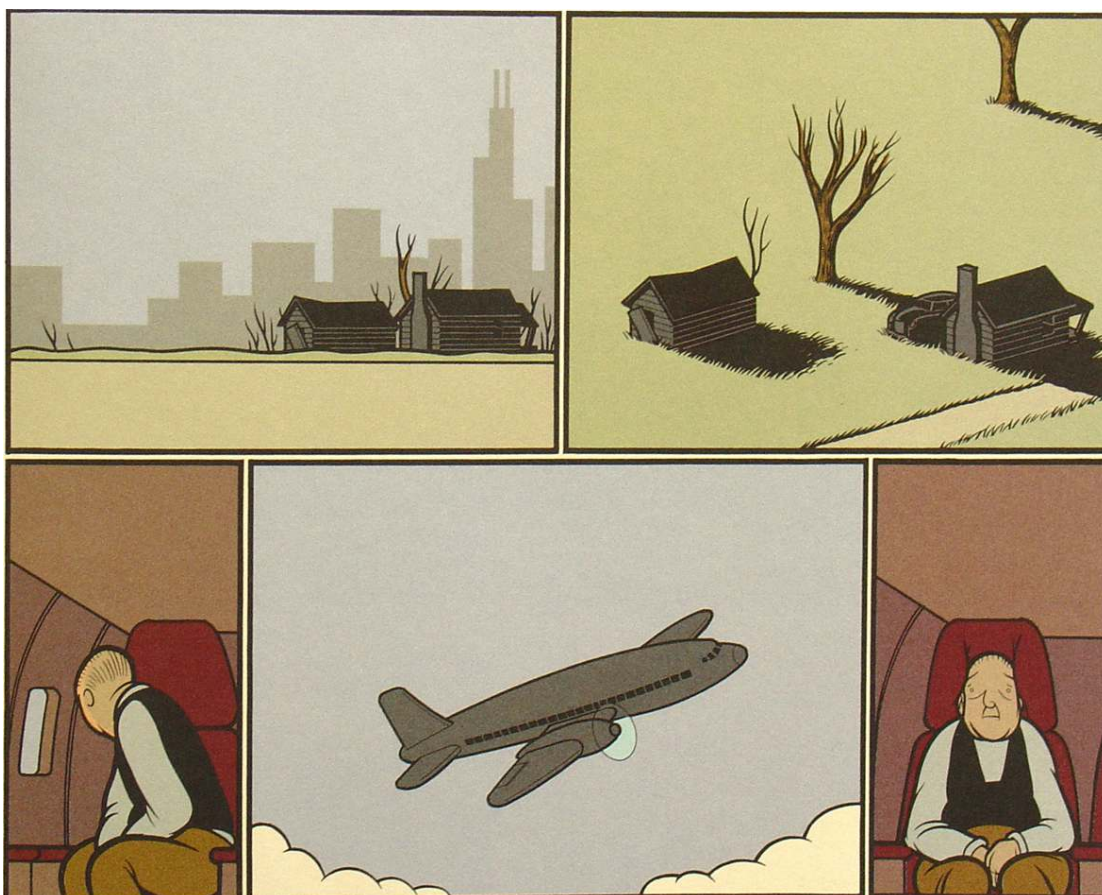
This is not easy and, presumably, unrealistic. *Old habits die hard* states the vernacular and it applies just as much to institutions and organizations as it does personal habits.

Yet, the requirements for knowledge are about to change; images appear more regularly not only in everyday life, but in many professional contexts as well. As regards the future, Kress and van Leuwen state: "Not being 'visual literate' will begin to attract social sanctions. 'Visual literacy' will begin to be a matter of survival, especially in the workplace" ([1996]2006, 3). Looking at visual applications in science, Kress and van Leuwen are aware that in the long run scientific theories will undergo revision in terms of visual literacy. A different kind of science will result once "the form of expression shifts from the written to the visual mode" (ibid, 31).

As with all experiments, my project to write a doctoral thesis in organizational studies as an artist has changed its path many times. I am relatively new to this type of research, and the three dimensional understanding I have of the cultural cosmos - especially in visual arts - was not matched in terms of my expertise in the realm of the social sciences. But more and more I began to see the structural similarities, and began to rely on my experience in how art projects unfold to overcome apparently insurmountable problems. Without the advice brokered by my supervisor to trust in myself, this would not have been possible.

I have learned that the artistic approach to research and knowledge is more deeply embedded in my epistemology and has coined my thinking than I had thought. An amalgam of it and social science methodology was hence forming my research. It has led me to a rather unexpected depth of insight as to the ways in which different ontological positions relate to one another. I return again to the principles of dialectics. In terms of social sciences, I am divided by the desire to fulfill a conventional approach on the one hand, but on the other, to produce something genuinely innovative. In terms of the arts, I am equally divided by the desire to undertake the project in accordance with a familiar project structure on the one hand, but on the other, I am attracted by the prospect of exploring alternative structures. Ultimately, my doctorate has settled somewhere in between these four approaches. I cannot

recall any other project, where the ground on which I am standing was so multi-layered and constantly shifting. The doctorate has not found its most fortunate form as I believe, it is nothing completed, polished. After all, the work forms a romantic fragment. But it holds for me sufficient insight to more than justify the effort. A finish always necessitates new beginnings. Next steps might include the design of comic-based applications, a demonstration of their value in empirical studies, and the publication of a book on 'how to use comic'. Another step would be to develop a series of pictures or comics to deal with the comic and to test-proof my findings. I would like to end this thesis with a quote, a visual quote by comic artist Chris Ware:



(Ware 2001, no page number given)