

A Drawing of the World: Documentary and Comic Book

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Paradoxical Modes

In the last decade a new form of comic book has emerged that claims status as documentary. By virtue of its relationship with the cinematograph, the documentary is the perfect heir of the mimetic-photographic-temporal-narrative tradition, while the comic book belongs to the opposite tradition, a hidden one, and, therefore, it is essentially the representative of a completely different mindset, even though it can use dramaturgical or narrative tools similar to those of its opposite. The paradox is even more evident from the point of view of the documentary film establishment, which watches astonished how a drawing medium claims the heritage of such a recognized cinema-photographic tradition.

The comic book is, in essence, anti-photographic. It dramatically severs the impetuous line that, from Renaissance painting to cinema, has been nourishing a type of aesthetics in which, around the mimetic vocation, the idea of visual transparency (the famous metaphor of Alberti's window) and that of the narrative-flow as an axis that vertebrates the representation of an equally translucent time blend together. Photography is the turning point where the pictorial graphic imagination becomes a technical expression of reality itself, which it drops on the threshold of film movement and, therefore, of the temporal paradigm. The comic book is contrary to this development, and causes an unexpected bifurcation that connects with the path of the pre-Renaissance polyptych and, therefore, with a forgotten anti-Aristotelian imagination that is opposed, in the field of the image, to Leonardo's famous recommendation about the appropriateness of artists painting only one place, one time, and one subject, equivalent to Aristotle's rule of the three unities (those of action, time, and place that should structure dramaturgy, according to his *Poetics*). In photography, this rule is part of the apparatus and, therefore, unavoidable, unless the images are subsequently recomposed; in comics it is the exact opposite. If the photographic technique is Aristotelian by nature, that of comics is essentially anti-Aristotelian, even though eventually the deep attraction of mimetic realism brought the classic tradition of comics to imitate, in a more symbolic than naturalistic way, the spatial transparency and fluidity of temporary-photographic media.

This deviation of comics from representation's hegemonic trend, which occurred long before the equivalent avant-garde ruptures in painting and literature, is important because it indicates the existence of an imaginary being suppressed by established aesthetics, and it underlines the enlightening power of visual forms. The comic book's tendency to mimic classic narrative by diluting the presence of the page in favor of a series of vignettes arranged as lines of a text shows precisely the relevance of the page's global space that this distribution is trying to diminish. Some authors will soon notice the importance of this global space. For example, in *The Yellow Kid* (1895) by Outcault the dramaturgy of the entire page is the one that usually predominates, while in Topffer comics, created more than half century earlier, the vignette's structure is the one always used.

The tension between an integral stage of pictorial characteristics and a time based narrative disposition never disappears in the comic book as it does in classical cinema, where the potential of the image tends to fade into the flow of film temporality. No matter how traditional a comic book structure is, the reader is always provided with a double presentation consisting of the page as a whole and the particular succession of frames. The exceptions are the daily strips in newspapers, in which the one-dimensional linear arrangement dominates. But since comics have reached their mature expression with the graphic novel, in which the dialectics between the two forms of exposition is constant, we must consider the daily strip as an exception that leads to a dead end, despite its impact and long history.

The crucial originality of the hegemonic disposition lies not only in the fact that we can find two basically antithetical forms of representation in it, such as image and logos, but also in that this dialectic synthesis embodies two cognitive vectors of first magnitude which traditionally have been kept separate, namely the symbolic and the imaginary. This has been stressed by Snow's hypothesis of the separation of the two cultures, scientific and humanistic (Snow, 1993), and by the theory of the diverse functionalities of the two cerebral hemispheres, constantly promulgated from many different areas of knowledge (Jaynes, 1976).

Its particular expository mode turns the comic book into a laboratory in which modern conceptions of adaptation in the era of hybridizations and intermodal operations can be tested. Comics have always been rather difficult to adapt to other media, unless the adaptations overlooked their special form and merely followed the plot or, much later, the visual texture. But neglecting the comic book's mode of exposition has become an emblematic procedure that highlights the shortcomings of certain actions that, usually carried out from a literary perspective, too often forget the phenomenon of the medium's characteristic form of exposition, as well as its function in the construction of the process of representation in general, whether textual or visual. This deficiency is very typical of adaptation procedures, especially those originated in the film industry, thus underlining the power of a kind of aesthetic imagination which has entirely neglected form in favor of content, despite the work of avant-garde movements. In the comic book, however, the form of exposition cannot be avoided, which means that this medium becomes a symbol of the general problems of adaptations, especially those of transfers among visual media or those in which at least some visual factor is involved.

Drawn Landscapes of the Self

Jeff Adams, one of the first to explore the genre, associates comic book documentaries to graphic novels, conceived as extended comic books, and quite rightly points out that "all authors employ autobiographical devices that serve to privilege narrative authenticity and to certify documentary truth as they perceive it" (Adams, 2008:11). The personal subjective style is predominant in travel chronicles (Delisle, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2012; Wild, 2009) and autobiographies (Satrapi, 2003, Tatsumi, 2009). This brings us to a problem that the documentary film itself also faces, which has also steered towards subjectivity in its contemporary manifestations. The question is whether it is possible to maintain a form traditionally characterized by its objectivity when it diverts towards the contrary. To this question, we should add, in the case of comics, whether we can consider as documentaries some of the procedures that diverge from the photographic paradigm, to which the documentary form, essentially cinematic, has been traditionally ascribed.

There are other procedures within the comic book documentary which are closer to the classical documentary form, whether they address the historical perspective, as in *Il Delitto Pasolini* (2010) by Gianluca Maconi, or they adapt the observational form, as in 'Portfolio' (2009) by Tricia Van den Bergh: a series of illustrations of Washington Square in New York, sketched vignettes showing several empty parts of the plaza at different times of the day. This minimalist exercise is similar to Peter Kuper's work, although in this case the style is much more baroque and shows a more diverse panorama of the city. Because of its emblematic condition, it is also worth noting the proposal by Alex Holden, 'West Side Improvements' (2009), a historical chronicle about the underground graffiti movement in New York's abandoned railroad tracks under Central Park. We should also not forget the political comics by Joe Sacco (2003, 2005, 2007 & 2009) in which travel chronicles are sometimes combined with historical accounts.

The New Subjective Realism

One of the most amazing transformations of the contemporary documentary has been what we can call the subjective turn, by which it incorporates subjectivity and emotions, something that was basically banned in the field earlier. Bill Nichols's initial classification of documentaries stopped at the "auto-referential" mode (1991), which he later extended to the performative one, a fact that acknowledged the opening of the field to subjective and emotional development. But, despite the influential work by Nichols and

others, such as Michael Renov's study about subjectivity in this kind of cinema (2004), it cannot be said that the phenomena has been analyzed in its full importance. It is in the films of several filmmakers, like Ross McWelvee or Alan Berliner, where the most dramatic changes can really be detected. At the same time that this paramount transformation in documentary occurred, the world of comics has reached its total maturity through graphic novels whose main characteristic is its autobiographical nature. We therefore have two contradictory media that, more or less at the same time, developed paths towards a subjective kind of expression never before applied in their respective universes. Simultaneously, a third way intertwined with the two modes of exposition emerged which, even though it was equidistant, from a thematic standpoint, from the previous ones, nevertheless constitutes a fusion, both aesthetic and dramaturgical, of the two media: the comic book documentary.

Comics, after being able to move easily through the genres of adventure, war, melodrama, fantasy, humor, among others, seemed unable to penetrate into the territory of documentaries, always attached to the supposedly irrefutable testimonial mode that characterizes the photographic medium; a medium that, furthermore, is led by the not less mimetic quality of the moving image. But, remarkably, at the time when documentary film discovers the subjective aspect of reality and comics are also developing an interest in stories that are both personal and subjective, the two worlds seem willing to meet. It looks like this common ground of subjectivity has succeeded in generating communicating vessels between two modes that are basically very remote one from the other.

The fact that the documentary is interested in the intimate world, through biography, autobiography and self-portrait, does not mean that it automatically distills subjective images as such. Many documentary films that relate to these genres are using dramaturgical tools very similar to those of the more traditional documentaries, such as interviews, descriptions, etc. On the other hand, comic book images are subjective by nature. Moreover, all graphic styles used by comic books are eminently emotional, at the same time that they are leading exponents of a phenomenon that is characteristic of late modernity, that is, the reversal of the relationship between what is considered external-objective and internal-subjective. This is something that occurs in modern societies, more or less contemporary to early Freud's psychoanalytic research (which in turn is a clear symptom of this phenomenon) and the birth of cinema, literally understood as a factory of dreams.

Comic book images are driven by emotion because, from the beginning, they have related to melodrama, the most popular symbolic form of the late nineteenth century (Fell, 1974), just as we can observe in early cinema as well. Besides, of all images, comic book ones are the ones most closely related to the psyche: "the surface which exposes the comic embodies an interior space or rather the representation of a space which is found in any transaction involving the body and its limits" (Tisseron, 2000).

The true subjective images of the contemporary film documentary are to be found in some of the generic derivations of the current phase of its history, such as found footage film or home movies. The use of archive material by these particular types of documentary films involves a *mise-en-surface* of those components of visual memory which had previously been used by the historical documentary or the TV reportage in a merely illustrative and therefore mechanical way. By allowing these images to express themselves outside the original context and the constraint of specific expository needs, either they lose their referentiality or it remains in the background, while a symbolic or allegorical condition that until then had been buried emerges. "It denies the transparency of culture", says Catherine Russell regarding found footage film, when exploring a kind of ethnography considered experimental (1999:238).

But above all, this kind of images reveals a great and unexpected emotional power. In this sense, they can be considered true pictures of the social unconscious, and this is because in their appearance they carry with them the deeper layers of memory, and they connect emotionally with the subjectivity of the viewer. Russell is right when she stresses the fact that "appropriation, as an aesthetic practice, is a discourse of the uncanny" (1999:252), because when the footage is taken from the archives it loses its familiar condition and shows instead a disturbing aspect undetected until then. On the other hand, we must take into account that in the comic book this social unconscious was being revealed in a very straightforward way through familiar superhero series, which were able to build a powerful contemporary mythology openly connected

both to the social psyche of the societies that produce it and to those who use it.

With found footage, the testimonial and referential photographic condition of documentary images loses its strength. The essence of these images is no longer their link with reality but their ability to express formally, which allows them to refer more to the real than to the merely realistic. The reality factor is still present but tempered by its visual force; in this way, the order of the documentary image factors are reversed. The contrary occurs in the comic book documentary: the expressive potential of its images recoils slightly because of its testimonial will. Despite the symmetrical condition of both events, it cannot be said that the power with which the phenomena manifest themselves is equally balanced in them: I believe that the archive images of the modern documentary lose their realistic status in a greater degree than that gained by the documentary comic book images. Similarly, we should consider that the expressive strength of comic book images is in general greater than photographic ones, since the draughtsman, no matter how realistic his or her style may be, always engages with reality at a superior level than the mere capture of its surface. But in either case, an interesting transfer between realism and graphical expressivity of an eminently emotional type occurs. This transfer defines a phenomenology and gives a solution to some of the paradoxes that can arise from the idea of a comic book with documentary characteristics.

Let us consider, however, that between these two poles there is a not less unusual mode which has also excelled in recent years: the animated documentary. This mode is perhaps the one that best represents the realistic-emotional images that are occurring in different areas and most of the time can be related to the new paradigm of digital imaging. The animated documentary also highlights the importance of a crucial factor in the game of oppositions and synergies that we are investigating: that is the movement in images. It is crucial because, on one hand, movement is related to emotion (in a similar way as music is related to both movement and emotion), and, on the other, it is an indicator of realism. The fact that the comic book lacks movement seems to resist, along with its non-photographic condition, the possibility of considering it a true documentary.

The Problem of the Expository Mode

One of the most original features of Walter Benjamin's thought is his interest in expository modes of knowledge (Benjamin, 1928), which he considers closely related to philosophical truth, as opposed to the scientific method for which the problem of the composition of knowledge is a secondary feature that could be even be considered pointless. In philosophy, "the form of exposition and the 'true content' are mixed in an unavoidable way, and both are absolutely dependent on history" (Jarque, 1992:105). Regardless of whether Benjamin was wrong in accepting science's view of itself and considering that it is truly exempt of the problem of exposition, his discussion on the ways or forms of presentation lacks the necessary breadth because it is limited to the realm of discourse, something surprising in a philosopher so interested in the image as himself.

In the field of comic book aesthetics the importance of the exposition mode cannot be stressed enough because all its main features, from narrative to page architecture or disposition, are related to a structure that is always in the foreground, contrary to modernism's classic narrative tendency to hide it. Authors like Benoît Peeters or Thierry Groensteen already emphasized the problematic dialectics that comic books establish between the frame and the page. Benoît defines four types of drawing boards (planches), depending on the dominance of the narrative or the dominance of the whole structure. And, then, in a further classification, he considers that these general structures can be: conventional, decorative, rhetoric or productive (1998:41). But Groensteen believes that "it is impossible to continue to speak of the drawing board in order to designate the complete group of panels arranged on a page" (2007:30). Instead, he advances the concept of the "hyperframe", that "is to the page what the frame is to the panel" (ibid.). In order to understand the possibility of a comic book documentary we must study the dramaturgy of comics at this level, and in order to be able to do this, it is necessary to understand the concept of the expository mode. We must also consider that the documentary's capability to describe reality is enhanced in comic books by the way they are able to manage spatial disposition, which can be considered a completely new kind of space.

Classical rhetoric calls *dispositio* anything that concerns the order of discourse, while syntax is the part of grammar that deals with the order of words. Both areas refer to a linear arrangement of elements. Nevertheless, in grammar, this linearity is nuanced when syntax studies the structure of sentences as a whole, as this kind of construction generates higher levels of order. Therefore, it is likely to be detected by a visual imagination rather than by a textual one, although theory and analysis do not deal with these problems very often.

In the field of the image, these phenomena are usually absorbed into the narrative structure; therefore, the most relevant visual samples can be found in cinema and its derivatives. For instance, we detect them in scenes (succession of shots) and in sequences (succession of scenes). Priority is given, thus, to linearity, although the relationship between shot, scene and sequence promotes a certain architectural organization. But since this kind of configuration can also be detected when, in texts, we deal with the relationships between word, phrase and paragraph, the visuality of the phenomenon remains somewhat nuanced.

The expository mode is thus comparable to the rhetorical figure of *dispositio*. But even if it is obvious that something is lost in an approach as simple as this one, it is not possible to detect what is missing while we remain positioned in the traditional linear perspective of a narrative, or neo-narrative, type. The fact that rhetoric divides *dispositio* into two categories, called *ordo naturalis* (a composition that follows the natural order of things) and *ordo artificialis* (a composition arranged according to the author's fancy), could lead us to the error of thinking that the answer lies in this second category. The *ordo artificialis* allows for a freer composition and, therefore, adapts better to Benjamin's idea that it is within the *arabesques* that trace the digressions of philosophical treatise where the true content is being produced. But this distinction is not enough, because when we make it, we are still moving within the thin line of chronological order, and, no matter how many turns this line takes, we continue to be prisoners in just one dimension and incapable of imagining what lies beyond. If we consider, however, rhetoric's *dispositio* and the concept of the expository mode are in the realm of discourse what the *mise-en-scène* is in the field of dramaturgy (and, by extension, in the field of the image), a series of new possibilities will open before us to fill the void we are detecting.

Comics give us the opportunity to study a structure capable of dealing with the complexities involved in the extended phenomenology of expository modes. Whereas in film the linear arrangement of images tends to hide their spatial character, relegated to the realm of a *mise-en-scène* often regarded as an essentially pro-filmic operation, in comics the linear order is unbrokenly expressed in the spatial order. Therefore, the succession of vignettes in classic comics establishes the basis for the architecture of the page, and gives a temporal configuration to it while, at the same time, this page is the foundation for a layout that spatially organizes the various vignettes. In this way, speech and figure combine in an unusual manner, beyond the simple fact that comics are made up of images and words, which is, by the way, quite relevant.

It is for these reasons that the peculiar arrangement of comics makes us face the problems of adaptation between discursive modes and figurative modes in a very illuminating way, since most of the time these adaptations are done, as we have already pointed out, without considering the expository modes of the media involved. And this is due to the fact that visual perspective is always deferred in favor of discourse. This is a striking characteristic of modernity tradition, as has been pointed out by several authors, among them Martin Jay (1993), Lyotard (2011) or Did-Huberman (1990). Moreover, Jonathan Crary (1992, 1999) has theorized the changes that vision went through the nineteenth century in a way that could be further explored to understand the emergence of a medium as peculiar as comics.

In film adaptations of literary works, for instance, the transfer usually takes place at the level of anecdote, imposing an ideal *ordo naturalis* of chronological character, regardless of whether this composition matches the order in which the original narrative is actually organized or not. Aside from some exceptions, such as *Hulk* (2003) by Ang Lee, or *American Splendor* (2003) by Berman and Pulcini, most film adaptations of comics have forgotten the original expository mode, missing the opportunity of experimenting with it. However, there are at least two areas in which this experiment takes place. One is the split screen, a dispositive employed early on by Griffith, Lois Weber and especially Abel Gance, that

has come back thanks to the features of digital procedures; the other is the area of Internet comics, among which are Scott McCloud's works, which transcend the typical disposition of comics, exploring the peculiarities of their own structure.

The Hybrid Image

Among the aforementioned dialectic oppositions that characterize comics - between image and word, between global graphic structure and linear narrative structure - we can now add a new one: the one established between the still image and the moving image. Cinema has concealed this problematic relationship because of the peculiarity of its moving images. Photography could then be considered a deficient medium, because of its lack of movement. In this sense, comics also appeared stuck in what looked like a clumsy attempt to imitate what in film was genuine, namely, movement and the passage of time.

This error of this point of view with respect to photography may seem pretty obvious now, but it is not very likely that film or television viewers would be willing to grant any kind of superiority to the expository form of comics. Moreover, if nowadays we consider photography a genuine medium despite its lack of movement it is mainly because of its connection to painting, not because some merit of special relevance has been detected beyond the fascination that its alleged mimetic potential still causes. Proof of it can be found in the fact that, as soon as newspaper media have migrated to the Internet, they have tended to replace the still image of photography by the moving pictures of video. A variant of this trend is the wrongly called photo-essay, which consists in a collection of photographs that is nothing more than a slide projection which merely increases the panorama that each one of them can present. Although this may seem like a poor solution to imitate movement (the same could be said of comic books, and it would be just as naïve), we must not neglect this practice because what it actually indicates is a reverse media tendency towards the comic book's mode of exposition. This is also evident in so-called Web documentaries, in which the dialectic between still and moving images is developed in a more complex ground than the one of Web newspapers and magazine.

The traditional concept of progress, which controls modern imagination, has led us to think that the creation of the various media is organized in consecutive steps towards an increasing excellence in the representation of reality. This is why one might consider that photography is lesser than cinema, since it was invented earlier. Time becomes surreptitiously a moral issue that even affects the appreciation of aesthetic value. The avant-garde has been the main bearer of this moral conception of time, since for its followers the new has always been better. But it not stop there, as modernity has been a state of mind in our culture for a long time now, and we still tend to judge the validity and even the veracity of things according to their distance with regard to present time.

Accordingly, films would be nothing more than moving photographs, and would increase their realism through the same progressive impulse, gradually adding sound, color, and finally three-dimensionality. From this standpoint, comics have little to gain, since to the deficiencies of photography in reference to the lack of movement, they would have to add an even more crucial one: their non-photographic character. Comics would thus recede to earlier times, prior to the quintessential modern technique, photography, and become aesthetically archaic.

Once movement has been technically reproduced, the lack of it may be more of an asset than a flaw, since stillness, in a universe of moving images, goes against the typical process of the spectator's alienation that occurs when he/she is carried away by the overall appearance of reality given by kinetic images. The interruption of movement, as shown in Godard's cinematic essays, is a first-degree hermeneutic tool that not only emphasizes the epistemological potential of still images but also that of moving images, when movement is not a simple distillation of reality, but a way to reveal this reality. In this sense, the stillness in a motion picture not only denaturalizes representation, but, as Brecht and Eisenstein claimed, it also promotes reflection and encourages the viewing of images from different perspectives. On the other hand, movement, once freed from the mimetic bondage, becomes a way of interrogating the image, and it didactically displays its depth. In consequence, movement and stillness become epistemological as well as

dramaturgical tools.

Now let us consider a medium that can only mimic movement, such as comic books. While the drawn nature of comics seems to push them away from photography, and therefore from the chance of working as a documentary, the truth is that the documentary gaze is older than the corresponding photographic technique. We can accurately say that the photographic camera is the embodiment of this kind of gaze, more than the gaze itself being a consequence of photography. There is no doubt that, as Benjamin claims, the invention of photography involved a process of diminishing the links between representation and the subject, but this is just one of its aspects, the one modernity has proven more interested in emphasizing because it feeds the topics on which its own imaginary is based. When Benjamin speaks about the relationship of the artist's hand with the artwork he says that "for the first time in the process of pictorial reproduction, photography freed the hand from the most important artistic functions which henceforth developed only upon the eye looking into the lens" (Benjamin 1935:19). The process by which the body is separated from the technically made artwork ensures, supposedly, the highest degree of objectivity (a concept, by the way, conceived almost simultaneously to the invention of photography) (Daston and Galison 2007). If we accept this idea, comic book documentaries would not exist in the first place; their production depends largely on the artist's hand, no matter how far technology intervenes in the reproduction process.

But this approach thrives in the mechanical conception of image creation. It ignores the role of the gaze born from a spatial imaginary that, despite the increasing power of images during the XIX and XX centuries, materializes in a relatively recent time, and still causes many resistances. While it is true that, from a technical standpoint, photography appears to eliminate subjectivity, this is not so clear from the perspective of a gaze developed in a pre-photographic era. This same gaze has expanded into the post-photographic paradigm that today includes the digital image. If we accept a genealogy of the gaze that goes beyond the mere technical intervention, we will be able to take one step further in understanding the possibility of the comic book documentary.

Digital technologies have put an end to the era of the vision that began in the Renaissance, with the techniques of perspective, and culminated in the XIX century with photography. During this period, especially during its last phase, seeing was believing. From this obvious link between vision and belief which expressed the fact that everything that could be seen was believed, epistemology slipped towards a more surreptitious connection: certainties adopted visible forms. This is then the genealogy that, from photography and film, leads to the classic documentary.

The new comic documentary is being structured more like an exercise of the memory rather than the confirmation of a presence. In this sense, it connects more directly with the classic documentary of a narrative type than with the forms that emerge around *cinema vérité* and television. Comics do not have the aloofness and the referential qualities that photography has at a basic level, but are linked more directly to the imagination through a metaphorical functioning of an emotional condition. The type of evidence they offer is openly interpretative. The documentary's presumed "I was there" and "it happened this way" lose their absolute character and are refined without losing consistency. In fact, the draughtsman *was there*, and what he or she is telling really happened, *happened in the way* he or she narrates it. But it is clear, although not specified, that it is a point of view. The drawing thus becomes not so much the antithesis of the frame, but its complement. Drawing is not opposed to photography but its amplification.

Paul Ricoeur emphasizes the inconsistency of the testimonial approach that emerges from the culturally established equation between seeing and believing (Ricoeur 2000). Benjamin already tells in his writings that the eye, faster in capturing than the hand in drawing, is situated, with photography, at the center of the production of images (Benjamin 1935), so that, when looking through the lens, image and vision become closely related, leaving aside both the photographic technique and the phenomenon of gaze. Ricoeur indicates that "the suspicion (of testimony) actually unfolds along a chain of operations that begins at the level of perception of a life scene, continues with the retention of memory, and ends by focusing on the declarative and narrative phase which reinstates the features of the event" (Ricoeur 2000:202). Therefore, the confusion between looking and seeing, is added to the one existing between

seeing, remembering and telling, and dramatically undermines the foundations of documentary objectivism. This turns drawn documentaries into an outstanding alternative to documentary photography because, due to their characteristics, they dilute the typical illusionism of the latter and push its functions towards more fundamental epistemological and hermeneutic approaches. They also introduce imaginary and emotional aspects in their dramaturgy, which through their aesthetic value, increase the epistemological strength of the documentary mode, rather than undermining the effectiveness of their proposals.

An example of the comic documentary's direct contact with memory and imagination can be found in the travel stories of Guy Delisle. In these, recollections are expressed in a narrative form, as in classic documentary or traditional travel books, but with the peculiarity that, unlike in film documentaries, the images are the point of arrival and not that of departure. Also, contrary to the literary exercise, the drawings directly express mental images from memory rather than proceed to describe them in words.

The relationship between the supposedly conflicting paradigms of image and word is further complicated by the division that the photographic technique introduces into the first between imprint-image and symbol-image. The long tradition of the imprint in visual forms results in the photographic technique, where it seems to lose the mechanical aspect that had characterized the operations of that tradition. In photography, the concept of the imprint acquires an ethereal condition that puts technology on a second term and confuses the images produced by it with the ones from the human eyes, but with no subjective vector. The documentary film is the product of this conception, so that even when literature's narrative techniques are applied to it, the feeling that prevails is that the images are the direct correlation of reality, as if the process of narrating them were nothing but a way to organize them. The drawn images from comic book documentary are, however, mental images of memory that can be sorted narratively, following the classical tradition, or architecturally, as in the more advanced forms of the medium, when it uses pages to create space synthesis.

We are dealing with three types of images, depending on the "documentary" medium: the literary image product of the linguistic transformation of mental images (which are, in turn, the memory of a reality seen), the drawn image representing a visual reconfiguration of mental images of memory, and finally, the image as an imprint that wants to replace reality and become itself a memory record, as has often been said of the photograph. From these types, conversion processes almost always occur through narrative. For example, some classic documentary filmmakers staged what they had witnessed without the aid of the camera or what they believed to be a genuine display of something that had happened. In this type of documentaries, where the *mise-en-scène* has varying degrees of intensity, the documentary filmmakers are effectively acting as draughtsman regarding their relationship with the dialectic between reality and the mental images of it. In this case, the difference between the draughtsman and them, that is, between comics and filmmaking, resides in the fact that filmmakers remain faithful to the naturalism of photographic images and, although they may formally play with them, they aspire to adjust to optical reality as an indication of objectivity.

In comic books documentaries (although this is actually a feature of the medium in general), the artist tends to synthesize. The vignettes do not intended to simulate optical points of view as do film shots, but they try to respond to imaginary conceptions in which the optical mixes with the symbolic and in which the duration is expressed through conceptual layers linked to visual expression or to literary expression. The film shot conveys the feeling that the observer stands outside of a time related reality which goes on externally regarding him. On the other hand, vignettes, like paintings, build an internal and particular time. That is why the rhythm of the comic book syncopated, even in those cases where the succession of vignettes aims to mimic film flow. In a vignette, the draughtsman can concentrate the temporality that on film corresponds to a scene, and then all its elements act as vectors of this temporality, in addition to conceptually representing a number of factors that, in the comic documentary, have their roots in reality, once this has been processed by the imagination. But the draughtsman can also decompose a moment of time in various phases: in which case, the impression that this narrative's device gives is not one of temporary fluidity, but one of repetition. Even in those approaches in which comic book vignettes seek to faithfully imitate the structure of film shots by merging point of view with dialogue to show a

decomposed scenographic space, the vignettes' graphic synthesis remains above the imitation of temporality. This type of segments, located between the page and the vignettes, have rhythmic functions. This dramaturgical and narrative game takes place in the space of the page, which sometimes disappears behind them, while at other times it takes center stage and allows the reorganization of all elements found within it, thus promoting a dramatic higher order of an allegorical kind.

These kinds of overall depiction at page level directly visualize imaginary processes which, in the synthesis of the vignettes, are often hidden by their tendency towards naturalization, unless metaphorical factors overlap this predisposition. If vignettes are equivalent to scenes, the page can be compared to sequences or, more specifically, to shot sequences in which movement visualizes a temporality that clings and shapes a different spatial situation. This total structure anticipates the new spaces and temporalities of web documentaries, the development of which owes more to the comic book mode than to the cinematographic mode.

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