

# MEMORY(IES) DRAWN: THE REPRESENTATION OF EXILE IN THE ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY: JOSEP (AUREL, 2020)\*

ROBERT ARNAU ROSELLÓ

## I. INTRODUCTION: ANIMATION AS DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL

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In recent decades, contemporary documentary cinema has undergone a profound transformation that has expanded the traditional conception of the genre, which has always been closely associated with the indexical value of the cinematographic image and its supposedly analogous relationship with reality. This transformation, resulting from multiple hybrid productions, has pushed the genre's original boundaries so that it now overlaps with other apparently unrelated and even supposedly opposing forms (Arнау, Sorolla and Marzal, 2023). In this regard, although documentary and animation have had parallel histories that have rarely intersected, the relationship between them is by no means new. However, in recent years there has been a powerful resurgence of the connection between them, reflected in the development of a heterogeneous corpus of productions presumably classifiable in a category of its own: a new hybrid creative space, experimental by nature, characterised by the use of discursive strategies that allow filmmakers to reflect on memory, war, and its traumatic consequences. This article offers an analysis of the relationship established between imagination, subject-

tivity, and memory in the animated documentary (or documentary animation, depending on the author concerned), exploring its process of construction of the truth effect (Zunzunegui and Zumalde, 2019: 27), with particular attention to the unique nature of the authorial voices that emerge, the key role played by traumatic experiences of the past as catalysts in this type of film, and its particular processes of signification. From this perspective, the Spanish animated film *Josep* (Aurel, 2020) offers a fascinating case study because of a visual composition resulting from a complex coupling of reality and imagination, documentary and animation, memory and narrative, which places it at the creative cutting edge of contemporary documentaries produced in Spain. With a polyphony of narrative, expressive, diegetic, visual, intertextual, and meta-referential elements in the construction of its visual enunciation, and consequently, in its processes of signification, *Josep* is a key film in the animated depiction of Spanish exile in the wake of the Civil War, based on the dialectical (post)memory established between Josep Bartolí's drawings and Aurel's animations. The use of documentary animation as the story's main expressive element inspires reflection on the nature of such animation and its capacity to affirm its own value "documentalising", which is comparable

to that of the traditional (and sacrosanct) photographic document.

## 2. THE NATURE AND SPECIFICITY OF THE ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY

The animated documentary is completely ignored in classical film theory. Indeed, neither Nichols (1997), nor Renov (2004), nor Winston (1995) make reference to it, apparently forgetting that John Grierson himself, one of the pioneering directors of the documentary genre, was a great promoter of collaborations between documentary filmmakers and animators. Plantinga (1997) is the only pioneering theorist whose approach permits a consideration of the animated documentary as a potentially viable means of representing reality. However, on the question of its specific nature, DelGaudio (1997) is the first author to assert its unique identity, initiating a debate about the possible emergence of a new genre with her suggestion that animated documentaries develop a representation and reconstruction of reality in a new register that is based not so much on mimesis as on the subjectivity and personal testimony of the creator. Along the same lines, Wells (1997; 1998) proposes a definition for the complex territory occupied by this genre, describing the animated documentary as a production that uses animation with a kind of testimonial or documentary objective, thereby providing a conceptual foundation for subsequent research on this particular creative space. On the other hand, Lawandos's conception (2002) focuses on analysing the nature of the animated documentary, identifying a certain iconic quality that approaches indexicality with its own expressive mechanisms, although by means of a very specific code. More recently, Kriger (2012), Martinelli (2012) and Honess Roe (2013) have all pointed to a subversion of the classical documentary's pretension to indexicality as one of the main hallmarks of animated documentaries. The work of Honess Roe (2013), which constitutes

the first systematic study of this particular relationship between documentary and animation, proposes a characterization of this unique burgeoning genre that is now so widely quoted that it may practically be deemed the standard definition. For this author, the animated documentary is the product of the intersection of the modes of representation of the documentary and those of animation. She defines it as an audiovisual work produced digitally, filmed, or scratched directly on celluloid with three main characteristics: "(i) it has been recorded or created frame by frame; (ii) it is about *the* world rather than *a* world wholly imagined by its creator; and (iii) it has been presented as a documentary by its producers and/or received as a documentary by audiences, festivals or critics" (2013: 4). Although this definition is the most oft-cited in this specific field of study, it must be acknowledged that it suffers from a few limitations that cannot be explored in detail here due to questions of space. As Moral Martín argues, "the wordiness of the definition does not conceal certain epistemological limitations that undermine a clear delimitation of the category. Indeed, the moment we begin to explore each of the three conditions, the first doubts begin to appear" (2024: 42). In any case, for a more comprehensive understanding of the concept, the studies by Ward (2005), Khavaji (2011), Formenti (2014) and Skoller (2011), or more recently, Murray and Ehrlich (2018) and Ehrlich (2021) are essential, as they lay firm foundations for a more extensive analysis of the phenomenon. In Spain, only a few authors have considered this field, such as Català (2010), Vidal (2011) and Cock (2012), who make incidental reference to the existence of a hybrid space between documentary and animation. Other studies of relevance, such as those by García López (2013; 2019), Sánchez-Navarro (2013; 2019), Burgos (2015), Fenoll (2018, 2019), Moral Martín (2020), Moral Martín and Del Caz (2021), Martí López (2020), Lorenzo Hernández (2021), Martín Sanz (2021) and Zylberman (2022), have specifically

treated the animated documentary as an object of study, but only partially, focusing in each case on specific aspects of the phenomenon.

### **3. DOCUMENT, SUBJECTIVITY, AND DENUNCIATION IN JOSEP (AUREL, 2020)**

It is important to acknowledge from the outset that the feature film analysed here is a unique, atypical work, whose hybrid and markedly experimental nature renders it difficult to classify according to any of the established genre categories of the audiovisual industry. This is of course one of the things that make it such an interesting object of study. Amidst the extraordinary thematic and technical diversity of the vast corpus of animated documentaries produced in the last decade, *Josep* stands out for its way of bringing together a range of highly disparate approaches, expressive elements whose combination reflects the many different ways of representing reality in animated images, with forms of expression drawn from the fiction film, animation, and documentary genres. This film, directed by Aurélien Froment (under the alias Aurel), relies on a particular way of structuring the story as a basic pillar in the development of the narrative around which the different plotlines pivot, while explicitly and repeatedly breaking away from the linear approach to adopt a branching (or rhizomatic) construction developed in keeping with the type of enunciation and the mechanisms used to mobilise it, as will be shown below. The story told in the film is placed in a real historical context, at the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the years immediately after it. This period serves as a historical anchor for the narrative and the graphic testimony of a character who is also real, the Catalan artist Josep Bartolí (1910-1985), who had been largely forgotten in Spain. Towards the end of the war, in February 1939, the French government set up concentration camps to deal with the waves of Republican refugees entering the country to flee Franco's dic-

tatorship. The chances of survival were slim: "The human river continued to flood France. Nobody had foreseen it or prepared for it" (Montseny, 1969: 22). Among the countless prisoners was Josep Bartolí, a brilliant artist and dedicated Marxist who had fought against the Franco regime, whose graphic testimony serves as the basis for the story. His life in the camp, his drawings, his friendship with one of the gendarmes, and his escape and subsequent exile in Mexico and the United States are the story's main plot points. During his exile in New York, he becomes involved in one of the most avant-garde artistic environments of the era, where he begins publishing his drawings and illustrations in periodicals such as *Holiday Magazine* and the *Saturday Evening Post* and he even works in the film industry as a set designer. In 1973, he receives the prestigious Mark Rothko Award for Fine Arts, in recognition of the significance of an oeuvre characterised by an interest in political and social issues that will continue to be a focus of his work until his death in 1995, in the same city that received him as an exile fifty years earlier. However, Aurel's film is not just a biography, but also a grim portrait of the treatment of Spanish refugees (Lorenzo Hernández, 2021), depicted specifically through Bartolí's experiences and his work, in a filmic metonymy that portrays a part as a means of representing the whole.

The film also employs various techniques in order to play with different expressive forms, based on a combination and manipulation of elements such as temporality, meta-referentiality, and narratorial confusion. An example of this is the painstaking work of weaving together different time-frames, which disrupt the narrative with constant shifts back and forth in time between the different stages of Josep's life, with a chromatic treatment constructed around dialectic and contrast: the anguish of exile, his escape to France over the Pyrenees, the deplorable living conditions in the French concentration camps, his flight to Paris and detention by the Gestapo,

and finally, his successive exiles in Tunisia, Mexico, and New York. This mosaic of scenes of his life unfolds in a cinematic time that wanders between past and present, deliberately departing from a linear narrative to weave together disparate spaces and times and even taking a certain degree of licence with the representation, for example, of the chronology of events. The whole story is narrated from the perspective of the present (anchored in the contemporary moment of the production of the film itself), when the gendarme Serge, now an old man, reconstructs the story as he tells it to his young grandson (who is now also a budding illustrator). This interplay of seemingly disordered and disconnected temporal layers develops as the story progresses to offer a multidimensional view of Josep's character, his historical-geographical context and, by extension, what he symbolises: the Spanish Republican exile.

This playful approach is equally evident in the masterful manipulation of the enunciation, or in the explicit confusion of narrators that propels most of the story and catches the viewer off-guard with a clever diegetic twist. From the very beginning, the film establishes an identification between the narrator and the protagonist, so that it seems (or is made to seem) that the narrator is Bartolí himself; however, in an unexpected twist we discover (well into the development of the narrative) that it is actually Serge, a French gendarme who befriends Bartolí and becomes the story's co-protagonist. This twist is neither inconsequential nor accidental; on the contrary, it underpins the story, which thus abandons the point of view of the victims to adopt instead the point of view of the perpetrators (although with the key nuance that this perpetrator is a benevolent one who does not take part in the repression imposed by the French state and ends up becoming a close friend of Bartolí). This could be said to constitute the shift from the victim's to the perpetrator's trauma proposed by Morag (2013), which highlights its psychological effects and "demands a complex

negotiation of the mismatches between post-traumatic memories" (Sánchez-Biosca, 2016: 14).

Another example can be found in the lack of motion in the film's animation, replicating the illustrations of Bartolí that serve as the source of the images. Indeed, the static quality of the graphics makes this more of an "illustrated" film than an "animated" film (if we restrict the definition of "animation" strictly to images in which the characters move). This quality reinforces the identification between the two graphic approaches (Bartolí's drawings and Aurel's images) and evokes a pre-photographic visual regime as an essential foundation of its discursive construction. The static condition of the comic drawing in its documentary form is pre-photographic, but at the same time it reflects the influence of the motion picture on visual forms, both moving and still (Català, 2011: 56). In this respect, it is possible to distinguish two categories of sequences that are diametrically opposed in terms of their treatment of time through the animation: one that makes direct reference to the past in the French camps, which is more static and uses an earthy colour scheme of dark, muted tones with somewhat discontinuous 2D animation based essentially on the immobile nature of the drawings of human figures; and another that portrays the present of the narrative (the time when the story is being told), which uses a very broad palette of intense colours and a notable variety of hues, as well as more fluid animation, with much more obvious movement. In this way, the filmmaker deliberately eschews the style of hyperrealism that dominates contemporary 3D animation in a quest for textures and effects that resemble those of other pictorial techniques, such as the watercolour painting.

#### 4. SELF-REFLEXIVITY, META-REFERENTIALITY, AND ENUNCIATIVE INTERTEXTUALITIES

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At this point, it is worth delving further into some of the aspects discussed above and focus the analysis on the self-reflexive, meta-referential, and intertextual quality of the story and how this multifarious nature is reflected in the film's visual enunciation. The ways in which the story is organised and the elements used in its construction reveal the main discursive strategies of the film, which thus becomes a kind of multi-purpose laboratory for testing out a diverse range of techniques and bringing together disparate elements (of the text itself or of other texts) around the narrative core. On this basis, the film functions as a self-reflexive essay on memory that examines its own disjointed nature using certain specific techniques. Two film sequences encapsulate this operation particularly well. The first is a sequence that serves as an anchor for the reflection offered explicitly in the sequence that follows it. Serge recalls a night on the seashore in the concentration camp with Josep in which we see Frida Kahlo in bright, intense colours, emerging from the waters of the Mediterranean to ask Josep to light her cigarette while he is talking to Serge. This completely implausible scene constitutes a moment of magical realism that fuses reality and fantasy to evoke both the central theme of the film—the power of the imagination (in drawing or illustration) as a means of chronicling reality—and the unique nature of documentary animation, with its ability to combine significant relationships and statements

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#### THE FILM FUNCTIONS AS A SELF-REFLEXIVE ESSAY ON MEMORY THAT EXAMINES ITS OWN DISJOINTED NATURE USING CERTAIN SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

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like this in a remarkably natural way. In the second sequence, which is located in the present (the contemporary time-frame, when the story is being told), Serge tells his grandson of the trip he made to Mexico with Josep to visit Frida Kahlo. At this moment, his grandson asks him whether she is the same woman who visited them in the camp, as depicted in the previous sequence. And it is here that the film itself reveals its perspective, through the protagonist himself, when he replies: “No. how would she get into the camp? Your memory is off.” The reference to memory here is direct, exposing its selective, elliptical, zig-zagging, essentially narrative nature, with all that these qualities imply. All memories, including the protagonist's (and thus, the memory on which the film relies), suffer distortions that are often involuntary, although no less biased for being so. This is a courageous and risky assertion, as it may make the spectator doubt the veracity of the text itself. Precisely to avoid this possibility, the story is constructed with a chronology possible only in cinematic time, overlapping different superimposed time-frames that alternate in a logic that is neither linear nor causal, to pose this essential conundrum without ever resolving it. What is the nature of memory? The answer to this question, it is understood, is left up to the spectator. It is an honest, technically elaborate ethical approach that places us squarely at the epicentre of a debate as complex as it is necessary.

The film also functions as a meta-referential essay on the art of drawing, constructing its own story on the basis of graphic and/or visual elements characteristic of (and specific to) animation and illustration. Like other animated documentaries, it offers a reflection on drawing (essentially, the image) through enunciative elements that are inherent to its very nature. There are numerous examples of this throughout the film, although there are certain sequences that depict the relationship in a subtler way. Right from the beginning, some of the essential dialectics of the mise-

en-scène are hinted at artistically. In the opening sequence, while the popular song “A las Barricadas” (an anthem of the anti-Franco resistance that symbolises the Spanish people’s active struggle to defend democratic values) plays in the background, the greyscale images and the darkness of the scene contrast with the presence of a single colour: red, which spreads over the ground until it reaches a white shirt caught on a tree branch, flapping in the wind. It is the colour of blood, violence, pain, and executions. The scene gradually gives way to gently falling snow and silence, white blankness to the sound of a quietly blowing wind. This scene expresses the essence of exile: surrender (the blood-stained shirt as a white flag) and imposed silence, the acceptance of defeat, the collapse of a political project, and the loss of hope for survival. Despite their capitulation, they are killed or crammed into concentration camps, dehumanised. But Bartolí manages to survive despite the devastating shock he suffers, and over the course of his life he will be able to move from the black and white of his drawings to the colour of his later paintings, in which red is assigned a special value, just as it is in the film. The symbolic value of red and its use in transitions between sequences as a kind of chromatic evocation of blood, as well as in other dramatic elements of the

story (such as the Algerian guards’ hats, known as fezzes or tarbooshes), locate us fully inside the pictures Bartolí painted in New York, revealing how the use of colour unfolds in his work after the trauma of exile.

The relationship between Aurel’s images and Bartolí’s drawings is the basic element that sets the tone and the graphic texture of the film. The identification between the two styles is expressed through various techniques, articulated by means of a wide variety of strategies, combinations, and

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appeals to the spectator. On this basis, the film asserts the documentary value of its source material as the main argument for its own existence and connects with certain artistic traditions that it expressly evokes. One of the clearest examples can be found in a shot of a gendarme assaulting a woman, taking advantage of her weakness and helplessness (evoking the rape, abuse, violence and

generally inhumane treatment faced by exiled Spanish women in France). This shot is effectively a copy of a drawing by Bartolí that portrays these abuses, whose figurative expression alludes to the visual motif of the abused naked woman in the iconographic tradition of European painting, exemplified in Gentileschi’s *Susanna and the Elders* (1610). Here, Susanna represents the exiled woman, or the besieged Spanish Republic itself, brutally stripped of its legitimacy (Image 1).



Image 1. Gendarme and a woman. Shot from the film *Josep* (Aurel, 2020) and original by Bartolí



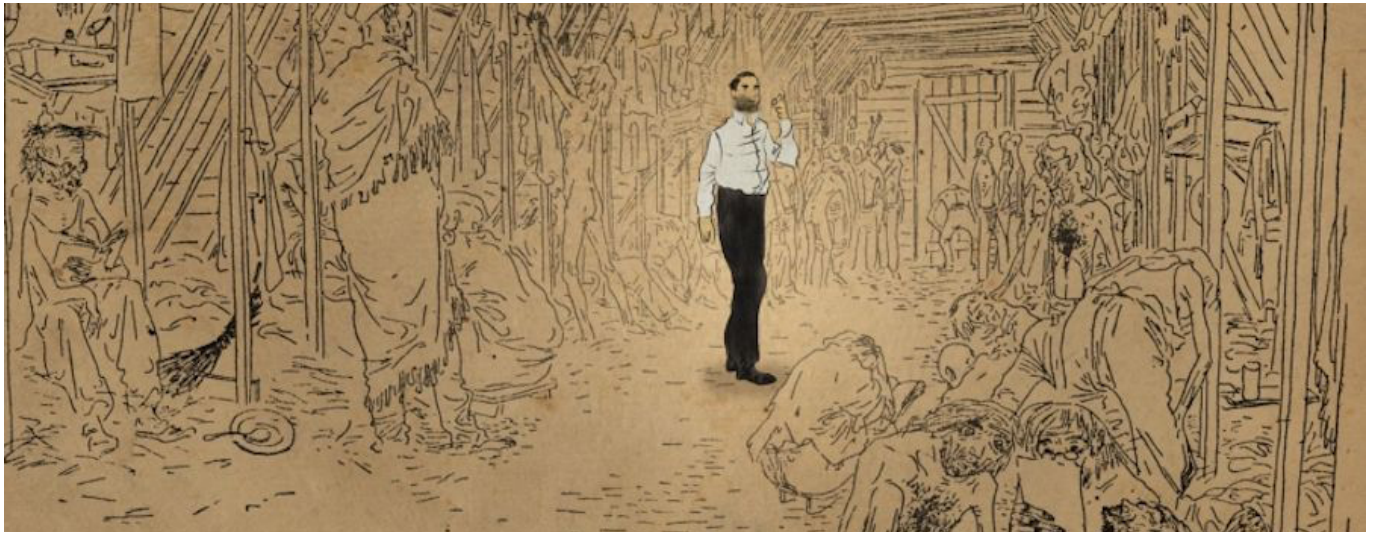


Image 2. Josep in his own drawing. *Josep* (Aurel, 2020)

On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge a fundamental fact of the film's discursive construction, i.e., that the integration of Bartolí's drawings into the body of the narrative necessarily vests them with new meanings. This is due not only to their placement in a new narrative context, in a new text, but also to the very fact of their insertion into a cinematic discourse, now converted into film shots, whose meaning is determined by their position in the syntagmatic chain that characterises cinematic language (Sánchez-Biosca, 2010). This new semantic context gives each of Bartolí's drawings a specific meaning that is not subordinated to the meaning of the story but completes or complements it and synthesises the sequences into which it is inserted. The meaning thus arises out of the combination of these two main elements to establish a dialogue based on their particular contribution to the intentions of the text. On one level, the design, size, angle, and composition of many of the film's shots are based on drawings by Bartolí that never actually appear on screen themselves, such as the images of the concentration camp and the prisoners behind the wire fence. Other shots are literal reproductions of Bartolí's drawings that are juxtaposed by means of lap dissolves with the originals, which thus become filmic material. On a second level, the mean-

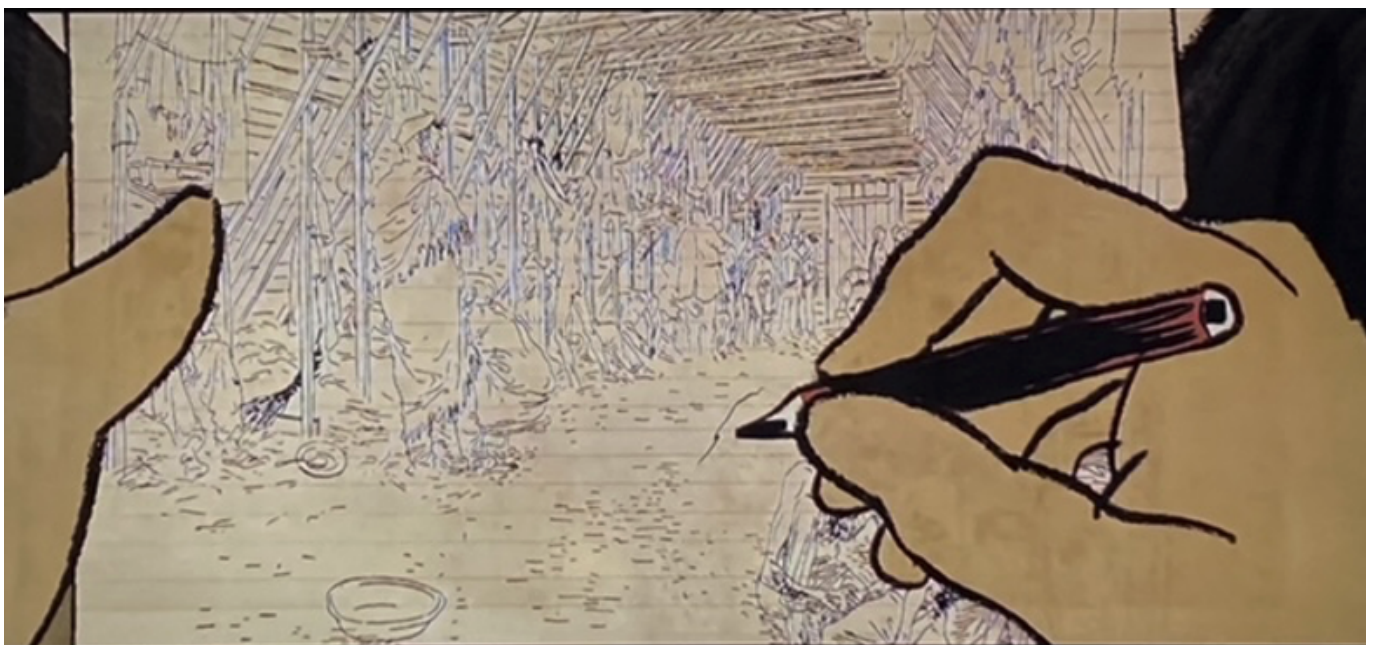
ing emerges out of the way the two graphic styles are edited together, such as the sequence in which a group of children in the concentration camp catch a dog. The sequential arrangement of the film's illustrations with Bartolí's drawings generates the ultimate meaning of the story. While the film's images (Aurel) show the dog being captured, the drawings show the boys eating meat, and then the remains of the corpse. If we consider the materiality of this particular enunciation, the film's message is clear: the harsh reality is left to Bartolí to portray. Once again, there is a contrast between colour and black and white, between the fine line and the rough sketch. On a third level, the film deploys two distinct strategies to construct its meaning: on the one hand, through a combination of the two elements, not by means of the editing or by juxtaposition, but through an incorporation of both, an intervention of one in the other (as when Bartolí himself walks inside one of his drawings of the prisoners' barracks) (Image 2); and on the other hand, through the animation of Bartolí's original drawings, such as in the case of the process of building the concentration camp, a unique document of that macabre work that portrays the materials, stages, and forced labour involved in its construction in considerable detail (Image 3).

Both the time-frames and the settings of the story, and even the characters, are embedded in a very deliberate chromatic conception expressed in the tonal arc of the film. From the very beginning, with the appearance of the film's title, *JOSEP*, in white letters on a black background, the filmmaker hints at the lack of colour in Bartoli's drawings of the camps, which are expressed in pure black and white tones that are "harsh, violent, that's what things were like there," as Josep himself explains later in the film. Greyscale images, the technique used for horror, predominate in the traumatic sequences. However, colour emerges in certain sequences. The progressive appearance of a subdued colour in the camps introduces a tonal modulation (dull, earthy, predominantly brown colours) that leads finally to the vivid manifestation of luminous, saturated, intensely bright colours (in the sequences with Frida Kahlo in Mexico and also in the scenes showing his paintings in New York). This chromatic dialectic expressed on screen functions as a visual translation of Josep's psychological states in the periods that these sequences represent: the terror, pain, dehumanisation, and trauma of the concentration

camps in contrast to the freedom, art, and activist memory of exile in Bartoli's life. In the materiality of the images themselves there are visual signs of this duality of art and life that defines his career and an explicit assertion of the value of drawing as documentary material.

Beyond the considerations outlined above, it would be impossible to overlook an operation employed in the film that gives rise to a synthetic meaning, supported by a symbolic parataxis that facilitates a clear interpretation of its enunciation. During a brief moment of transition between the first sequences of the film, a shot shows an aircraft squadron forming a swastika as it advances toward the French flag flapping in the wind. The symbol formed by the planes literally engulfs the flag, placing the Nazi regime and the collaboration of occupied France on the same level, with the impending fusion of the two symbols. But it need not only be read in this literal sense, as it may also be understood as a perfect encapsulation of the process of assimilation, conversion, and dehumanisation of a country whose treatment of Spanish exiles reproduced many of the stigmatising actions of Nazism (Image 4).

Image 3. Drawing Barracks. Josep (Aurel, 2020).





Right from their initial conception, the intertextual relationships established with other texts are direct, as they are presented as explicit quotations in the film's visual enunciation: the book *Campos de Concentración 1939-194...* (Bartolí and Molins i Fàbrega, 1944), an album containing Bartolí's original drawings and text by Narcís Molins i Fàbrega, which was published in Spain in 2007, more than 60 years after the publication

of its first (and only) edition in Mexico; and the book *La Retirada. Éxodo y exilio de los republicanos españoles* (García, Bartoli and Bartoli, 2021), written by Josep's nephew in tribute to his uncle. As intertextuality operates at different levels in different sequences throughout the film, it is worth highlighting the significance of some of these references (implicit citations) made by the filmmaker because they determine the iconographic nature of the film itself, not only because of the presence of Bartolí's illustrations as subjective yet probative elements, but also because of the repeated artistic references. On the other hand, the conversion of some of the perpetrators into animals (pigs in this particular case) at certain points of the narrative connects the text to Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus* (1986), whose storyline is closely related to the plot of *Josep*. The animalisation of these characters constitutes a graphic expression of the fact that the French gendarmes suffered greatly under Nazi rule, but in turn inflicted indescribable suffering upon their Spanish prisoners, much like the collaborationist Poles in *Maus*.

But the film also makes use of the tenebrist chiaroscuro that characterises Baroque art in Caravaggio's style, specifically Gerrit van Honthorst's *Christ before Caiaphas* (1617), to express the abuse of power through the use of light, and the photo-

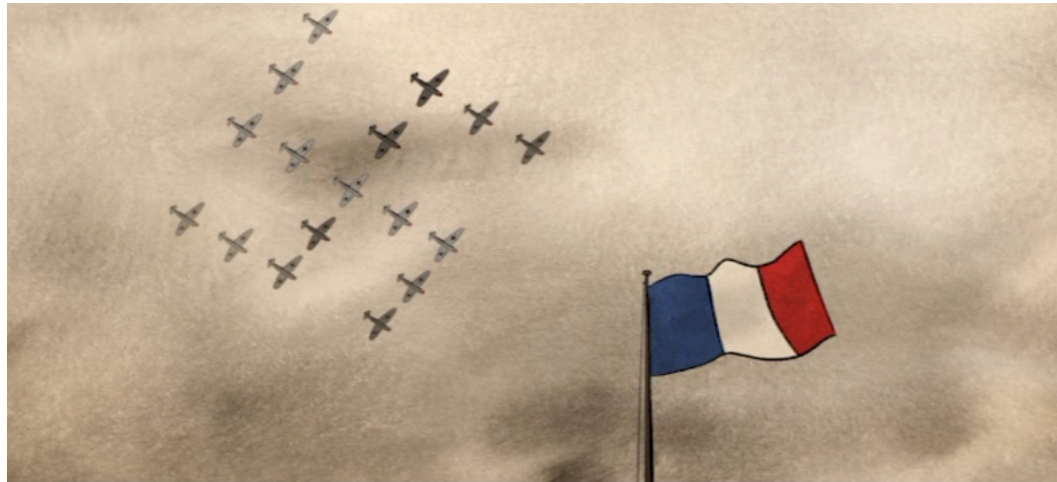


Image 4. Aircraft and Flag. *Josep* (Aurel, 2020).

graphic iconography of the concentration camps represented by Francisco Boix's photographs, to cite just a few examples.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS: THE DRAWING AS AN INDEX, FORMAL VARIATIONS OF THE EXILE'S MEMORY

Documentary animation is ultimately a tool whose potential lies in its ability to render the invisible visible through a kind of shifting between the real and the imaginary. It offers an image very different from the indexical dimension underpinning the documentary tradition and explores both reality and subjectivity from new perspectives, in a game of echoes and resonances that draws on techniques of other art forms and reconstructs them with its own codes. This new exploration reveals an urgent need to reflect on specific aspects of war and exile that have been neglected, undervalued, or completely forgotten until now. Evidence of this can be found in the existence of a number of films that have depicted the traumas of the Spanish Civil War and/or its consequences, such as *30 años de oscuridad* [30 Years of Darkness] (Manuel H. Martín, 2011), *Dead Horses* (Cavalls morts, Anna Solanas, Marc Riba, 2016), *El olvido* [Oblivion] (Xenia Grey, Cristina Vaello, 2018),

*Palabras para un fin del mundo* [Words for an End of the World] (Manuel Menchón, 2020) and *Josep* (Aurel, 2020). The original impulse of the pioneers of the genre who have explored traumatic events through animation, such as *Persepolis* (Vicent Paronnaud and Marjane Satrapi, 2007), *Waltz with Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008), *The Missing Picture* (Rithy Panh, 2013), and *Chris the Swiss* (Anja Kofmel, 2018) is now making its presence felt in Spanish documentary animation.

In this sense, *Josep* takes us on a kaleidoscopic journey through the life of Josep Bartolí during certain periods of his exile (especially his life in the French concentration camps and his subsequent emigration to Mexico and the United States) and the vicissitudes of his struggle to survive. His story is captured in a film that serves as an explicit condemnation of the cruelty, violence, xenophobia, and hatred directed at the prisoners in these camps, most of whom were anti-fascists. Based on a disruptive, non-linear narrative combining multiple time-frames, the film constructs a story in which the enunciation is repeatedly rendered explicit or subverted (for example, with the use of Bartolí's original drawings). The stratification of meaning described above takes shape in a kind of choral approach combined with a unique narrative complexity: the technique of playing with the different time-frames of the story is alternated with other elements of the enunciation, such as a carefully orchestrated narratorial confusion (explicit and deliberate), and the repeated use of intertextuality (painting, literature, documentary films, comics) that broaden the horizon of meaning in the film, connecting it with other text types and art forms. It is thus a polyphonic film articulated around the use of two types of drawings (Bartolí's originals and Aurel's images) that weave together different narrative time-frames subtly embedded in the different settings of the story. The narrative progresses on the basis of the multiple echoes that resonate between the story's different layers, but also with the aid of a vast palette of expres-

sive elements. These include the different types of drawings and their relationship with the animation that underpins the plot, the symbolic use of colour to bring dialectical chromatic contexts into opposition, and the sound design reflected in the soundtrack (an essential element that articulates the filmic narrative, which drawings on paper obviously lack).

Josep Bartolí is depicted in the film as an artist who develops an oeuvre of resistance and political protest in which the drawing assumes the role of a weapon, as an impulse, a vital need, and a testimony. His drawings serve as the substratum and graphic material of the film, positioned in formal terms between caricature, photography, and avant-garde art (a rare variety of graphic art that includes realist, expressionist, surrealist and hyperrealist features). His style is unmistakably personal, raw, adaptable and diverse, reflecting a unique gaze that defines an extensive and widely recognised pictorial oeuvre. His illustrations, which are given movement in the film, explicitly signal the brutality, violence, and trauma of exile, but more than just the index of a referent, they are the index of a gaze, and the element that encapsulates both his experience of and his personal perspective on the concentration camps and the repression that the Spanish Republican exiles suffered there. In short, the aim of *Josep* is not to reproduce reality but to document how it was experienced (Zylbermann, 2022). It is thus a film about the memory of exile and the act of drawing itself, in which Bartolí's drawing acts as the main character, justifying its insertion as indexical support for the animated story. The film text itself expresses this intention in its enunciation. The point of view is positioned between testimony to and denunciation of the brutality and repression suffered by Spanish exiles in the French concentration camps. The film reveals the hardships of Bartolí's exile while integrating his own drawings into the development and progression of the story in a way that reflects the indexical value of his

subjectivity as a probative element, beyond its explicitly personal, imaginary, and constructed nature.

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**IT IS A FILM ABOUT THE MEMORY OF EXILE AND THE ACT OF DRAWING ITSELF, IN WHICH BARTOLÍ'S DRAWING ACTS AS THE MAIN CHARACTER, JUSTIFYING ITS INSERTION AS INDEXICAL SUPPORT FOR THE ANIMATED STORY.**

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**NOTE**

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## MEMORY(IES) DRAWN: THE REPRESENTATION OF EXILE IN THE ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY: JOSEP (AUREL, 2020)

### Abstract

Although hybrid forms combining animation and documentary film have existed since the earliest days of cinema, in recent years there has been a resurgence of the connection between these two genres, the magnitude of which can be seen in the development of a heterogeneous corpus of productions that belong to a category of their own. The animated documentary constitutes a mixed and diverse creative space, open to visual experimentation and the use of discursive strategies that are markedly authorial, reflexive, and evocative of memory. In this sense, the Spanish film *Josep* (Aurel, 2020) offers a fascinating case study due to its particular characteristics, which are analysed in this article using the methodology of the film analysis to reveal its particular processes of signification and its firm commitment to affirming the indexical value of Josep Bartolí's subjectivity as a probative element, beyond its explicitly personal, imaginary, and constructed nature. The film's expressive material facilitates a dialectical, critical reading, whose meaning relies on a very precise formal organisation of its audiovisual enunciation that vindicates the memory of exile through drawing and animation, while condemning the brutality of fascism, repression, and war. Contact: rarnau@uji.es

### Key words

Animation Film; Documentary Film; Animated Documentary; Drawing; Exile; Memory; Spanish Civil War; Repression.

### Author

Robert Arnau Roselló holds a degree in Audiovisual Communication from Universitat de València and a PhD from Universitat Jaume I (UJI), where he teaches in the Audiovisual Communication degree program. From 2006 to 2016, he was the Director of the UJI's Communication Sciences Laboratory (LABCOM-UJI). His publications include articles in academic journals and chapters in books, such as *Narrativas [mínimas] audiovisuales: metodologías y análisis aplicado* (Shangrila Textos Aparte, 2014), coordinated by Eduardo José Marcos Camilo and Francisco Javier Gómez-Tarín, *Posmemoria de la Guerra Civil y el franquismo. Narrativas audiovisuales y producciones culturales en el siglo XXI* (Comares, 2017), edited by Laia Quílez Esteve and José Carlos Rueda Laffond and *La crisis de lo real. Representaciones de la crisis financiera de 2008 en el audiovisual contemporáneo* (Tirant Lo Blanch, 2018), edited by Javier Marzal Felici, Antonio Loriguillo-López, Aarón Rodríguez Serrano and Teresa So-

## MEMORIA(S) DEL TRAZO. LA REPRESENTACIÓN DEL EXILIO EN LA ANIMACIÓN DOCUMENTAL: JOSEP (AUREL, 2020)

### Resumen

A pesar de que la hibridación entre animación y cine documental se ha fraguado desde los inicios del cinematógrafo, hoy en día asistimos a una revitalización del vínculo entre ellos, cuya magnitud se puede advertir en la emergencia de un corpus heterogéneo de producciones que se inscriben en ese terreno específico. Un espacio creativo mixto y diverso, abierto a la experimentación visual y al despliegue de estrategias discursivas de marcado carácter autorial, memorístico y reflexivo. En este sentido, el film *Josep* (Aurel, 2020) es un caso de estudio ineludible en el ámbito español debido a sus especificidades, que analizaremos a partir de la metodología del análisis fílmico para desvelar sus particulares procesos de significación y su firme voluntad de reivindicar el valor indicial de la subjetividad de Josep como elemento probatorio, más allá de su carácter explícitamente personal, imaginario y construido. La materia expresiva del film promueve una lectura dialéctica, crítica, cuyo sentido descansa en una muy precisa organización formal de sus enunciados audiovisuales que reivindica la memoria del exilio a través del dibujo y la animación, al mismo tiempo que denuncia la barbarie del fascismo, la represión y la guerra.

### Palabras clave

Cine de Animación; Cine Documental; Animación documental; Dibujo; Exilio; Memoria; Guerra Civil; Represión.

### Autor

Robert Arnau Roselló es licenciado en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universitat de Valencia y doctor por la Universitat Jaume I (UJI), donde es profesor en el Grado en Comunicación Audiovisual. Desde 2006 a 2016, ejerció como director del Laboratorio de Ciencias de la Comunicación de la UJI (LABCOM-UJI). Entre sus publicaciones, destacan artículos en revistas académicas y capítulos en libros, como *Narrativas [mínimas] audiovisuales: metodologías y análisis aplicado* (Shangrila, 2014), coordinado por Eduardo José Marcos Camilo y Francisco Javier Gómez-Tarín, *Posmemoria de la Guerra Civil y el franquismo. Narrativas audiovisuales y producciones culturales en el siglo XXI* (Comares, 2017), editado por Laia Quílez Esteve y José Carlos Rueda Laffond y *La crisis de lo real. Representaciones de la crisis financiera de 2008 en el audiovisual contemporáneo* (Tirant Lo Blanch, 2018), editado por Javier Marzal Felici, Antonio Loriguillo-López, Aarón Rodríguez Serrano y Teresa Sorolla-Romero.

rolla-Romero. He has also co-edited the books *Más allá del documento. Derivas y ampliaciones del cine de lo real contemporáneo* (Tirant Lo Blanch, 2023) with Teresa Sorolla-Romero and Javier Marzal Felici, and *Nuevos retos de la imagen: cuerpos, escrituras, voces* (Tirant Lo Blanch, 2024) with Marta Martín Núñez, Shaila García Catalán and Aarón Rodríguez Serrano. . Contact: rarnau@uji.es

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También ha coeditado los libros *Más allá del documento. Derivas y ampliaciones del cine de lo real contemporáneo* (Tirant Lo Blanch, 2023), con Teresa Sorolla-Romero, y Javier Marzal Felici, y *Nuevos retos de la imagen: cuerpos, escrituras, voces* (Tirant Lo Blanch, 2024), con Marta Martín Núñez, Shaila García Catalán y Aarón Rodríguez Serrano. Contacto: rarnau@uji.es

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