

Drawing the Mind: Breaking the Discourse on Mental Health

Maico Mariën

Abstract

This article problematizes the discursive ways mental disorders are perceived through a close reading of Joshua W. Cotter's comic *Driven by Lemons*, which is a diary Cotter kept shortly after his diagnosis with bipolar II. The way he depicts this journey draws out, what Jean-François Lyotard termed the "figure," which emphasizes destruction over structure.

By using Jason Helms's method of oscillating between looking *at* and *through*, this paper highlights the ways *Driven by Lemons* reveals the figure and, in this way, is able to disrupt dominant discourses. Thus, it highlights the important ways comics can draw out nuances of mental disorders and challenge the main discourse in place.

The definitions of psychological disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2013, *DSM*) are oftentimes helpful due to their superficiality and textual accessibility, but these very things result in the loss of the individual and their sensorial experiences upon which the diagnosis applies. For instance, someone with ADHD might experience different nuances or difficulties than those stipulated in the *DSM*, even though that person's ADHD can still largely overlap with the corresponding diagnosis in it. This is both the strength of the *DSM*—many mental disorders are easily identifiable, and a treatment plan is quickly given—and its weakness, because what does not correspond to the diagnosis and the treatment—the nuances of the individual—are ignored or made to fit the general diagnosis in order to start treating that individual according to the outlined plan. In other words, such representational thinking renders sensorial and unconscious experiences discursive, leaving little room for any difference in the patient's experience that might challenge their diagnosis (Williams 129). The difficulty, of course, is that no psychiatry handbook can fully account for every nuance of each individual with a mental disorder, yet a different way of looking could help to account for these nuances and bring back the sensorial in the diagnosis. A way of looking that can especially be found within comics, as I will argue in this paper.

The argument above about the loss of individual nuances largely mirrors the argument made in the field of “graphic medicine.” Graphic medicine, as stipulated by M.K. Czerwiec et al. in the *Graphic Medicine Manifesto*, “is the intersection of the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare” (1). The *Manifesto* was written and drawn by a variety of artists (15) and researchers in fields such as the medical humanities (9), gender studies and literature (5). These writers were dissatisfied with medicine's tendency to only acknowledge one ‘universal’ subject—for instance, a single diagnosis and its side effects, relate to a single subject but is applied to each individual, thus multiple subjects, matching the symptoms—as they believe that there is no such subject and that comics are one of the ways to provide credence to this claim. In essence, what this intersection allows for is to interrogate “the representation of physical and emotional signs and symptoms with the medium [of comics]” (1) as well as being “a movement for change that challenges the dominant

methods of scholarship in healthcare, offering a more inclusive perspective of medicine, illness, disability, caregiving, and being cared for” (2). Graphic medicine is, therefore, a field that seeks to expand upon “narrative medicine”—the study of medicine through (fictional) textual narratives—by adding the affordances offered by comics. In my view, the most important affordance of comics is that they can function disruptively, in the sense that the visuals do not necessarily have to correspond to the text, that the panels do not have to follow upon each other to create a ‘stable’ narrative and that the reader is required to ultimately make sense of a single page and the comic at large—a tendency that a comic can disrupt and problematize. This affordance can invoke change and interrupt dominant methods. Here I follow Czerwiec et al. in arguing that comics should be used for change by disrupting the status quo and, as a result, are to provide a fruitful addition to the education of medical professionals (1).

Moreover, it offers the patient, as well as relatives, a possibility to create an “‘unofficial’ iconography of medicine” by drawing their own experiences and, in this way, use comics to challenge the “official iconography” within the medical discourse these patients find themselves in (Williams 129). As Ian Williams, one of the authors of the *Manifesto*, argues, the official iconography exists in the validity of the “language of healthcare” (129), so, for instance, in its textbooks—such as the *DSM*—discussions, articles or, most importantly for this article, images.¹ In turn, this discourse trickles down to the general public, who take over the official iconography to be able to identify “the ‘normal’ from the ‘abnormal’” as well as to know what ailment is depicted in an image (129). Depression, for example, is very recognizable because of this iconography, but, following the argument put forward in the *Manifesto*, imagines just one subject and, therefore, possibly excludes other symptoms, causes and the lived experience itself. Through their ability to show a multitude of ways a subject relates to their diagnosis—for instance, reality, fantasy, metonyms or text—comics, due to the way they

¹ Due to the focus of this paper I only briefly mention the influence and dominance of the *DSM* and similar books on mental health care and the consequences of its use in psychology. For further discussion, see Vanheule’s *Diagnosis and the DSM* (2014) and Stolorow (53-69).

can incorporate such a diverse set of elements simultaneously, can highlight the discrepancy that exists between these subjects. Hence, even though I am by no means an expert in psychology, I, and other readers, can still identify a subject created from the official iconography and, in turn, understand how comics challenge this subject.

In this paper I will expand upon this discrepancy by looking at Joshua W. Cotter's *Driven by Lemons*—which is a diary in comic-form he kept after his diagnosis with bipolar II—by asking the question: How does *Driven by Lemons* challenge the official iconography in its depiction of bipolar II? Bipolar II is a mental condition typified by the shifting of two episodes in a person: the “hypomanic episode,” consisting, for instance, of an abundance of energy, less need for sleep and erratic behavior (*DSM* 132), and a “major depressive episode,” which is marked, for example, by the onset of depression, low energy and lack of interest (133). The condition can be difficult to live with, as Cotter himself said during an interview: the diary was “an attempt, once again, to make sense of what just happened to me” (“Talking Comics”). Nevertheless, next to the solace writing his diary brought him, it also eroded the certainty he once felt in knowing himself and his place in the world. In the same way I approach *Driven by Lemons*, by seeing it as a document confirming bipolar II as Cotter's diagnosis as well as a comic that deviates from this diagnosis by showing his lived experience. To do so, I first explicate the theoretical framework as put forward by Jean-François Lyotard in *Discourse, Figure* and the way it can be applied to comics through Jason Helms' method of looking *at* in contrast to looking *through*. Helms uses the “figure,” as put forward by Lyotard, as a non-representational way of looking *at* things, whereas “discourse” is the representational way to look *through* things. These ways of looking unconsciously oscillate between each other and can either create meaning or disruption. By consciously bringing this oscillation forward, thus switching between looking *at* and *through*, the disruptive qualities of comics can be brought forth and the risk of a purely representational reading is minimized. This method will eventually be used to close read one page spread and one page of *Driven by Lemons*, thus highlighting the ways it brings forward Cotter's experiences with bipolar II and how

these tend to disrupt the official iconography existing around it. Finally, I argue that *Driven by Lemons* puts forward the importance of drawing the mind in addition to reading the mind, by making visible the aspects of a mental disorder that are either difficult to put into words or are omitted from a diagnosis due to its difference from the norm. In turn, this highlights the importance of comics within medical discourse—an argument that follows from graphic medicine—as well as offering the field of graphic medicine a new way to theorize from comics.

Different Ways of Looking

To establish the ways in which comics are able to break away from the official iconography in any discourse, and the medical one specifically, it is important to first get a clear view of what exactly is “discourse” and its counterpart—which, I would argue, comics render visible—the “figure.” In *Discourse, Figure*, Lyotard argues that the dominant mode of looking and interpreting the world is one of discourse, meaning that everything is interpreted and signified according to a schema that is set apart from the thing it is representing. For instance, the main formula in Lacanian psychoanalysis—originally derived from Sigmund Freud—is “*the unconscious is the discourse of the Other*” (Lacan 45, emphasis in original).² This formula works on several levels: first it transforms unconsciousness into discourse and, in extension, to something that can be understood using discourse, upon which follows that the unconscious transformed into discourse offers privileged access to the Other, in this case being the patient. However, Lyotard argues against this view, stating that: “To transform the unconscious into discourse is to bypass the dynamics [...]. One does not break free at all from metaphysics by placing language everywhere; on the contrary, one fulfills it, one enacts the repressions of the sensory [...].”

² While I mainly refer here to psychoanalysis, the same allegation can be held against psychology. In cognitive behavioral therapy, for example, unconscious drives are made visible and treatable through the use of “Socratic dialogue,” meaning that elevating the unconscious to discourse by talking or writing about it allows the psychologist and patient to gain insight into non-discursive processes (Kazantzis 350). While such treatments can be very effective, it can fail to take into account other non-discursive factors, such as the context which can foster certain mental ailments, which was, for instance, an accusation made against psychology by Mark Fisher in *Capitalist Realism* (19).

(9). It is a fallacy, following Lyotard, to look upon language as a gateway for an understanding unmarred by any underlying assumptions. Rather, the structures discourse imposes upon such an understanding can leave out unaccounted factors, reduce unique and non-discursive elements to a mold that fits these structures and hinder creative furtherment that looks beyond the structures at play.

Lyotard's answer to discourse is to return power back to the eye, to the figure. The figure can be gleaned in, for instance, paintings, because

as [Paul] Klee put it, it has to be *grazed*, it makes visible, giving itself up to the eye like the exemplary thing it is [...], since it makes visible seeing itself. What is more, it makes visible that seeing is a dance. To look at a painting is to draw paths across it, or at least to collaboratively draw paths, since in executing it the painter laid down, imperiously (albeit tangentially), paths to follow, and his or her work is this trembling, trapped within four wooden slats, that an eye will remobilize, bring back to life. (9, emphasis in original)

In this way, “[t]he painting is not something to be read” but something to be seen (9). To read the painting is to render it discursive and to structure it. However, these structures are undone not by reading a painting but by looking at it. The eye can keep on discovering new paths and draw upon the disperse elements it presents, paths that precisely defy the structures laid down upon it by discourse. In much the same way the figure is present within daily life: it is a question of looking rather than reading. What this difference between looking and reading exposes as well is that the figure is not necessarily antithetical to discourse but an oscillation of it, the other side of its coin. Much like a painting, a text is first seen before it is read, where the reader can (re)discover the figure in its very letters and what they signify beyond what they represent (9). In this way, discourse and figure form a complex relation, merely separated by the comma—as present in the title of Lyotard's book.

By making this oscillation explicit, the destructive elements of the figure—what Lyotard terms, taken from Freud, the “death drive” (355)—can be utilized to decenter present structures by refocusing on the different paths that show themselves, on which new structures can allow themselves to be built—called “Eros” (355). The focus on this constant interplay should prevent us from favoring structure over the sensible and to embrace creative interpretations rather than adhering to already established ones. Taking this interplay identified by Lyotard as a starting point, Helms devised a method that oscillates between looking *at* and looking *through* a comic. However, it should be mentioned that even though Lyotard is Helms’ main theoretical interlocker, Helms’ idea for a method that oscillates between these different modes of looking is actually derived from Richard A. Lanham’s *The Economics of Attention*, in which Lanham argues for a “revisionist thinking” to “put pressure [...] on our own thinking” (256). Any technology that highlights this pressure through the oscillation between different modes of looking can inspire new creative ways of thinking. Helms’ main contribution here is to put comics forward as such a technology. His method in particular argues that when looking *at* a comic, its formalistic qualities should be highlighted and brought to light, such as the ways the lines are drawn—are they thin or thick?—and the placement and thickness of the words (“Toward an *Oscillatio*”).³ Looking *through*, on the other hand, is a mode to identify what is happening in a panel or page, so asking questions like: what is the meaning of it in the entirety of the work, what is happening in the panel / page, and what does it portray? According to Helms: “Meaning exists in oscillation between these two modes” (“Toward an *Oscillatio*”), it is just that when reading we are usually not aware of the way our looking *at* influences the way we are looking *through* an object and vice versa. Therefore, by making it explicit, meaning can be retraced, challenged, and put forward in an entirely different way than was previously the case.

³ The text from Helms that I am referring to is entirely digital, so it does not contain any page numbers. That is why I am referring here to the title of the chapter the information is taken from, in order to make it more easily locatable for the reader in Helms’ work itself.

This method comes especially to the fore when reading comics, because they foreground the role the reader has to play in creating meaning through their use of the gutter. The gutter is, usually, the white space between two panels which, even though it is usually blank, displays action by the use of the imagination of the reader (McCloud 69). For instance, the movement of an axe is not actually shown in a comic but is implied through the sequential positioning of two panels—one depicting the axe and the other one showing the axe hitting a piece of wood—and the gutter in between them. Even though the movement is not shown, the reader imagines it happening between the panels in the gutter. Therefore, the ease of reading comics largely depends on their sequentiality—the way a narrative is formed purely through sequence—and on the correspondence of actions between the panels. However, comics can utilize different ways of depicting action, happenings or atmosphere which do not depend on pure sequentiality but rather depend on the reader to make sense of them and tie them together (McCloud 70-2), whose interpretation can in turn be defied by the comic. This goes against the presumption that comics “are easy to read” (“Comics, Differend, *Synthesis*”). Rather, following Helms, comics “create ethical readers by training them in interpretive instability and hermeneutic hesitation” (“Comics, Differend, *Synthesis*”). Meaning in a comic is not necessarily stable and is always created through the participation of the reader, which makes comics ideal to challenge any structure that is laid upon them. For instance, as will become apparent in the next section, *Driven by Lemons* defies being read as merely a representative work showing the workings of bipolar II by stretching such reading to a point of breaking. In other words, *Driven by Lemons* shows not the discourse of bipolar II but rather the Difference that exists between its official representation and the specific manifestation of the condition in the comic.⁴ By doing so, it is able to highlight new features by focusing less on the diagnosis itself and more on the

⁴ Even though Lyotard does not explicitly mention Gilles Deleuze in *Discourse, Figure*, Jason Helms argues that Lyotard’s use of Difference here is taken from his work, especially from *Difference and Repetition* (“Nonreflection”). This means that Difference should not be regarded as posing as an opposition between two different poles, but rather as pointing out the way these poles resemble each other whilst remaining different from each other.

way it affects the person living with it and those around them in different formalistic ways.

Loss of Self

As previously mentioned, *Driven by Lemons* was the diary Cotter kept after his diagnosis with bipolar II.⁵ The comic is drawn from start to finish—even usually typeset sections such as the legal information and table of contents are fully drawn—and is directly taken from Cotter’s original diary without any edits (“Talking Comics”), which can, for instance, be gleaned from numerous spelling mistakes in the text heavy parts of the comic (9-10) or in the still visible corrections, such as striped out words, made to the comic (45). Even the cover is a scan of the original diary and does not include any biographical information except for the title and publisher on the spine. The rest is included on a separate strap bound around the front cover. In this way, the comic is a direct testament to Cotter’s journey by granting the reader an intimate, and at times voyeuristic, look into Cotter’s experiences with bipolar II. According to the *DSM*, bipolar II is, briefly summarized, the mental disorder ranging between “hypomanic” and “major depressive” episodes, and in order to be diagnosed with bipolar II someone has to have at least experienced both episodes (132-3).

However, what is interesting is that Cotter does not explicitly mention bipolar II in *Driven by Lemons*, so the most direct way to make the connection between his diagnosis and the diary is from interviews or secondary sources, which is not to say that this cannot be done based on the diary itself. It is already this exclusion that challenges the official iconography of bipolar II, as the inclusion of Cotter’s diagnosis could have brought about many assumptions which are now absent from the work. For instance, the neat division between different episodes seems to be absent from *Driven by Lemons*, whereas the *DSM* explicitly foregrounds this division as one of the key grounds for diagnosis; it is here that the figure can already be said to challenge the discourse of bipolar II laid

⁵ Another comic which deals with the diagnosis of bipolar II, albeit in a more direct way, is Ellen Forney’s *Marbles* (2012).

upon the comic. Where the label of bipolar II could have provided a distance for the reader due to the structure of it—episodes, depression, hypomania—it is its exclusion where recognition between Cotter and the reader can occur unmarred by the structure of his diagnosis.

The work itself consists of three main parts, each of which seems to be loosely connected to one another. Throughout the comic an anthropomorphized rabbit, presumably Cotter, can be identified. The first part—“Migraneur”—seems to detail a breakdown, the second part—“Scope Creep”—Cotter’s admission to a hospital and the final part—“You Got the Power”—Cotter’s discharge from the hospital and how his recovery is going from that point. Be it as it may, the reader is never sure if this division is as neat as presented here, due to the comic’s abstractness which disallows, at times, any recognition of a division between what is materially happening to Cotter and what is fantasy or hallucination. This makes *Driven by Lemons* a disorienting reading experience, where many assumptions regarding its narrative, as well as the linearity that the reader wants to impose on it, are challenged and done away with. For instance, Cotter is still having, what I presume to be, hallucinations in the second and last part of the comic, even though they ought to be gone once he was discharged from the hospital. I glean this from the last part of the comic especially, where a God-like figure in the sky is shown telling him: “You got the touch” (96)⁶ and the sky that parted from its passing reveals strange mechanizations (97).

Formalistically, the comic works with an array of different drawing styles, verging from abstract to more realistic drawings. Furthermore, it switches extensively between different panel layouts with the notable exception of part II, which is mostly done in a 12-panel layout. Such switching also applies to the use of color and black-and-white in the comic. The use of color is sporadic and tends to highlight elements outside of the reality created by the black-and-white drawings, meaning

⁶ This God-like figure is most likely Dionysus himself, as he is similar to the figure shown in the preface of the work who is identified as Dionysus (1). The identification with Dionysus is interesting and cannot be overstated, as he is, following Friedrich Nietzsche, aligned both with mental instability, the dissolution of barriers and artistic power (18-9). By the portrayal of Dionysus, *Driven by Lemons* highlights the close alignment between what is considered ‘abnormal’ and the creative potential that can stem from it.

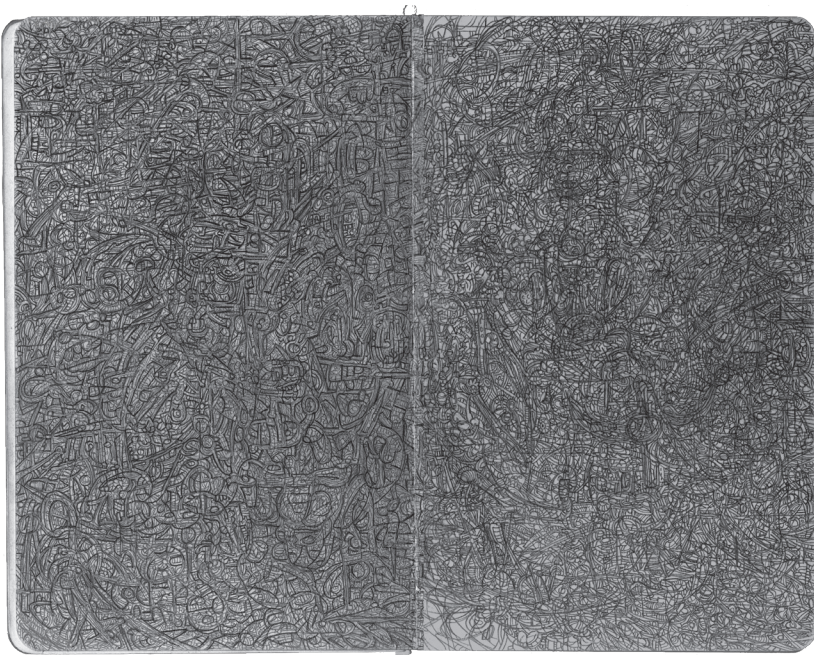


Figure 1. - Cotter 28-9

that an overabundance of color shows the protagonist outside of a reality (37). All these different elements put together in one comic make it difficult to approach *Driven by Lemons* as a coherent whole, especially considering that it precisely works against such clarity.

When looking *through* Figure 1—which appears in the first part—for instance, it supposedly reveals the start of Cotter’s breakdown. The mess of lines was already seen on earlier pages and is now slowly taking over the world inhabited by Cotter’s rabbit-like figure (21-4), until eventually the lines take over the whole page (25-31) and, subsequently, are also depicted in the rabbit’s thought balloons (32). What this signifies is a total break with reality and language. The world around the rabbit is reduced to chaos and replaced by lines, thus marking the inability to interact and communicate with the world properly. Even his own thoughts are jumbled, which means that the rabbit becomes alienated from even himself. Such signification shows its correspondence to the

discourse surrounding bipolar II, as it highlights the difficulty in concentration that exists in, especially, the manic episode (*DSM* 133).

However, when looking *at* these two pages the discourse makes a turnaround into the figure, as they reveal themselves not to be just chaotic. In the lines several shapes can be identified, for instance, a figure that looks like a rabbit can be found on the bottom right of the page spread. Nonetheless, each shape can also easily be undone again by focusing on a different element or line in figure 1, thereby losing previously identified shapes, which leads to doubt as to whether or not the shape was even there in the first place. Here, the comic is actively performing the need for clarity and the inability to obtain it, since the harder the reader tries to look at the page spread, the less likely it is that they can make any sense of it. What this signifies on top of the alienation earlier identified is both a lack and abundance of focus. Shapes can be identified when focusing on them but are undone when focus is redirected elsewhere, thus making a coherent whole impossible.

The same motif is taken up again in part two, which starts off with abstract shapes and figures (42-8) until eventually a hospital room and bed are fully drawn out (48-9). Looking *through* these pages, they seem to depict Cotter's hospitalization, his subsequent treatment after his breakdown and the 'return' to a shared reality. A return that Cotter has difficulty with due to his loss of language (46), and the abundance of realities that show themselves in figure 2 (45). Figure 2, seen on the next page, contains the following text:

They got comfortable, and it wasn't long before [...] They were saying the same about [...] Metallic blue severe static cold [...] Deceptive and expanding [...] Beautiful and all-consuming [...] They always manage to hook their claws in [...] A [...] Convincing [...] New [...] Reality. (45, ellipses added to show panel breaks)

It is unclear to whom Cotter is exactly referring here, but it can be implied, due to this page's position in the rest of the work, that he is in the midst of the process that returns him to a shared reality. Most of the sentences

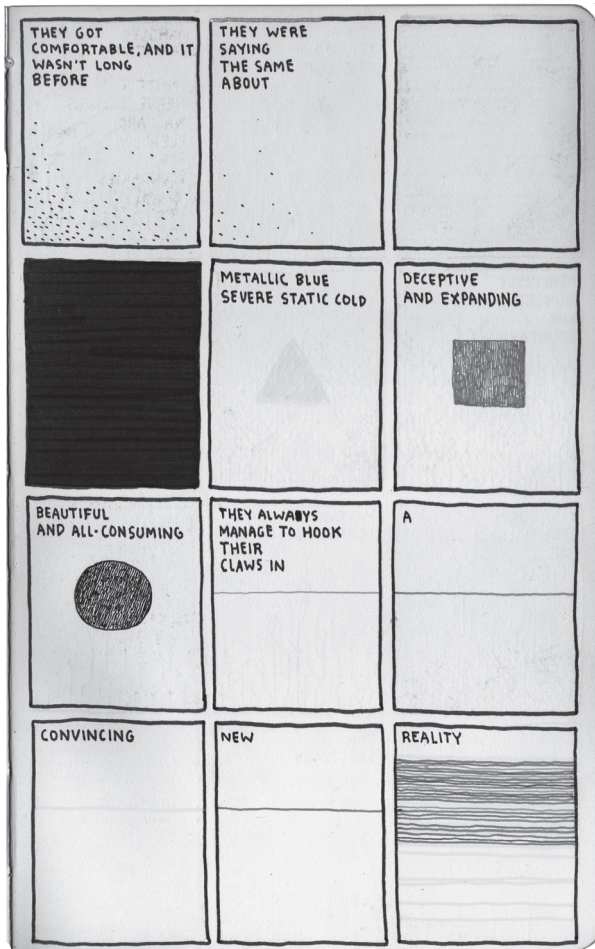


Figure 2. - Cotter 45

and words are complete and contained within one of the panels, with the notable exception of the abrupt ending of the sentence in the second panel. Nonetheless, the ending of this sentence can be assumed to be the word 'me,' as that is the word which seems to fit in the most. Thus, the "they" are reconstructing Cotter's identity as well as placing him within a (new) reality.

Looking *at* this page, however, “they” suddenly becomes more ambiguous. The first panel shows black dots accompanying the text which continue into the second panel and disappear in the blankness of the third panel, much as the end of the sentence itself, the presumable ‘me.’ An uncolored panel in a comic is remarkable in the sense that, as comic scholar Xavier Marcó del Pont argues in a paper on the use of white space in comics: “The significance of visual deprivation in a predominantly visual medium cannot be overstated” (260). A blank panel signifies nothing, because there are no visual stimuli to go about and create meaning from. The black panel following the blank panel, however, signifies something due to its coloring onto the page. The sudden break caused by the white panel together with the, presumably, missing word ‘me’ seems to signify not just a break with reality but also with a stable personhood, because there is none. The missing markings on the page, therefore, create a confrontation with the figure rather than discourse, as there is nothing for the reader to hold onto.

The realities that follow in the other panels—for instance the yellow triangle in panel 5 and the red square in panel 6—are grafted upon essentially an empty person. This feeling of selflessness is enhanced by the blank background on which each ‘reality’ is drawn. This is also strengthened later on in the second part of the comic, where some of the colors of figure 2 make a comeback, eventually culminating in a fight between two similar rabbits but each with a different figure and color (64-79). Thus, emphasizing that with a new reality a new individual could have come about as well, meaning that the individual seen at the end of the comic was not a necessity and could have just as easily turned out to be someone different. Such fracturing of the self, or having multiple selves, is regarded as abnormal due to its association with different mental disorders. Yet, Cotter shows such fracturing to have taken place during his treatment by allowing the reader to face the figure through the blankness of the panel, showing the effects that bipolar II can have on a stable subjecthood—which to my knowledge is not described as such in the *DSM*—and the possibility that a fractured self is not necessarily abnormal.

Conclusion

This paper has examined several of the ways in which *Driven by Lemons* draws the mind and provokes the figure through its aesthetic features. As I have shown, comics can challenge the official iconography of mental discourse through their affordances and their ability to disrupt the reading. By doing so, they break with the representational thinking of discourse and, instead, return to the figure through aesthetic experiences. By explicitly foregrounding this disruption by oscillating between looking *through* the comic—focusing on interpretation and discourse—and looking *at* the comic—focusing on the formalistic elements—*Driven by Lemons* was shown to almost perform Cotter's experience with bipolar II in a non-discursive way. It does so by using the reader's eyes as its actors, who needed to trace the lines in which new shapes could be found and who lost themselves again when confronted with the loss of a stable reality and self through the blank panels.

Such feelings are hard to describe and put into words, which is where *Driven by Lemons* in particular, and the comic-form more generally, shine. It can both challenge official iconography—for instance the trouble Cotter experienced with a stable self—which at the same time, allows the reader to experience, more or less, what it is like to deal with bipolar II disorder at its worst. In such ways, the drawing of the mind as done through and in comics is more apt at moving beyond language and into the realm of the figure. Hence, comics make the nuances existing in each individual and their struggle with mental disorders more palpable, resulting in a way for readers and, perhaps, medical professionals to look upon each subject separately rather than as representatives of a singular diagnosis and to take the differences between them seriously.

Works Cited

- American Psychiatric Association.** *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 5th ed., American Psychiatric Association, 2013.
- Cotter, Joshua W.** *Driven by Lemons*. Adhouse Books, 2009.
- . “Talking Comics with Tim: Joshua Cotter.” Interview by Tim O’Shea. *Comic Book Resources*, 3 May 2010, www.cbr.com/talking-comics-with-tim-joshua-cotter/.
- Czerwiec, M.K., et al., editors.** “Introduction.” *Graphic Medicine Manifesto*, The Pennsylvania State UP, 2015, pp. 1-20.
- Deleuze, Gilles.** *Difference and Repetition*. Translated by Paul Patton, Continuum, 1994.
- Fisher, Mark.** *Capitalist Realism: Is There no Alternative?* Zero Books, 2009.
- Forney, Ellen.** *Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, & Me*. Gotham Books, 2012.
- Helms, Jason.** *Rhizcomics: Rhetoric, Technology, and New Media Composition*. U of Michigan P / Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative, 2017, digitalrhetoriccollaborative.org/rhizcomics/index.html. Open access, creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. Accessed 26-01-2021. CC BY-NC 4.0 license.
- Kazantzis, Nikolaos, et al.** “The Processes of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: A Review of Meta-Analyses.” *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, vol. 42, 2018, pp. 349–357, doi: 10.1007/s10608-018-9920-y.
- Lacan, Jacques.** “Seminar on ‘The Purlined Letter’.” *Yale French Studies*, special issue of *French Freud: Structural Studies in Psychoanalysis*, translated by Jeffrey Mehlman, no. 48, 1972, pp. 39-72, doi: 10.2307/2929623.
- Lanham, Richard A.** *The Economics of Attention*. The U of Chicago P, 2006.
- Lyotard, Jean-François.** *Discourse, Figure*. Translated by Antony Hudek and Mary Lydon, U of Minnesota P, 2011.
- McCloud, Scott.** *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. William Morrow, 1993.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich.** *The Birth of Tragedy*. Edited by Raymond Guess and Ronald Speirs, translated by Ronald Speirs, Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Pont, Xavier Marcó del.** “Confronting the Whiteness: Blankness, Loss and Visual Disintegration in Graphic Narratives.” *Studies in Comics*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2012, pp. 253-274, doi: 10.1386/stic.3.2.253_1.
- Stolorow, Robert D.** “Phenomenological-Contextualism All the Way Down: An Existential and Ethical Perspective on Emotional Trauma.” *Trauma and Transcendence: Suffering and the Limits of Theory*, edited by Eric Boynton and Peter Capretto, Fordham UP, 2018, pp. 53-69.
- Vanheule, Stijn.** *Diagnosis and the DSM: A Critical Review*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Williams, Ian.** “Comics and the Iconography of Illness.” *Graphic Medicine Manifesto*, edited by MK Czerwiec et al., The Pennsylvania State UP, 2015, pp. 115-142.

Biography

Maico Mariën (1995) recently obtained his research master’s degree in Comparative Literary Studies at Utrecht University. He wrote his master’s thesis on the

ways comics can offer a theory of digital media of their own due to their ability to read these media disruptively.