

Drowning by Images



“A sunset in the North Pole”

When many people thought that Folklore would not survive globalization times and slowly die, the Internet came, and, not only blew a new wind on it, but also allowed new ways for propagating common factors among certain groups of people.

And text is not the only way to spread these modern legends-the Internet traffic of images is of humungous proportions. Maybe we could even say that the Internet made some types of Folklore more democratic and more accessible to many more people on the globe.

Some people say we live in a visual era, some others say that the Middle Ages were the visual era- since the rate of illiteracy was much higher and the only ways to convey information, especially the biblical teachings, were the oral tradition and the use of images.

Anyhow, what matters is that we have always been fascinated by images- in particular the photographic one. Among other reasons, we could speculate that we love images because they produce an immediate emotional and intellectual reaction, they are fast to read and they cross language barriers.



“Tourist on top of WTC seconds before the crash”

Since its invention in 1839, Photography has served many purposes, but the representation of reality has always been its stigma. Even though manipulation has always been available, people, most of the times, chose to believe as real what they saw in the photographic image, only now and then, there would be severe talks about manipulation, but mostly when it concerned the journalistic document.

Nowadays, software products related to image alteration are accessible to almost everyone; we might as well conclude that more photos have been modified than ever before.

The reasons for creating fake or hoax images may vary from boredom at the office, need for attention, repressed feelings of artistry, to just playing a prank for pure entertainment. The fact is that these images flow with the same velocity, sometimes even faster than real, un-altered images, so, it is in the hands, or better, in the eyes of the viewer to decide if they are fake or not.



“Helicopter being attacked by white shark”

On the Internet, I have seen a great white shark attacking a helicopter; the sun setting in the North Pole, and even an innocent tourist on top of the World trade center just seconds before the infamous crash in 2001 and, I have to admit, not without pleasure, maybe even that one compared to listening to folk stories told by my grandmother who lived in a remote farm in a land very far away.

These are a few examples of hoax images circulating the Net and creating a new kind of Folklore- exploring our experiences of reality, our fears and dreams; and much more adapted to our times: of faster distribution, easy to decipher and, above all, more globalized.

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