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The Author in the Historical Graphic Narrative of *Palestine*: A Post-Narratological Perspective

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Abstract

Historical accounts about past events across the world reach us through various media and serve the function of building perception and ideology regarding those events. One such medium is multimodality. In this regard, graphic novels, in a few decades, have proved their worth and have come out as an adult-friendly medium among other mainstream media because of its unique and vibrant combination of verbal-visual modes in the postmodern world. Keeping in view worth and value of the graphic medium, the research intends to explore how historical graphic narrative of *Palestine* is constructed by its ‘author’ in a particular way to influence the readers’ beliefs, ideologies, attitudes, and perceptions regarding a particular event of history. The study is carried out in the light of post-classical narratology that focuses on ‘interpretation’ and not just on the structure of the narrative in a text. The research interprets the role of the author in the light of his usage of narrative devices— narrator, focalization, frequency, order and visual elements to create a particular version of history in the selected graphic novel. Textual analysis by Alan McKee is used as a research method. The analysis of the aforementioned novel suggests a pivotal role of the ‘author’ in writing a historical narrative. Joe Sacco in *Palestine* shows American solidarity with the weak and oppressed through the manipulation of narrative devices. Sacco’s journalism also establishes the positive role of American journalism in taking side with the powerless and deprived i.e. Palestinians.

Keywords:

Historical graphic novel, post-classical narratology, narrative devices, intentions of the ‘author,’ textual cues

Introduction

Historical accounts about past events across the world reach us through various media and serve the function of building perception and ideology regarding those events. For instance, a particular historical account, the mainstream one, informs about the atrocious and inhumane act of Americans bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the two cities of Japan, during World War II. Though the situation might be different in some other account, the marginal one, of the same event which we did not come across. Similarly, the historical event of 9/11 would be the result of the extremist Muslims to some while to others it would be the result of the terrorists, based on what account they have met with.



This leads to two further points. First, historical accounts offer a particular view of the past events which creates particular versions in any medium of communication illustrating the constructed nature of history. Second, these accounts can be multiple versions of the same event too. The research, however, does not intend to compare different versions of the same event. What it intends to explore is how particular versions are formed regarding historical events and what role the author has in framing a particular version that formulates our perceptions and beliefs. The study attempts to do so without questioning the veracity of the version under scrutiny, for it cannot be done without consulting its sources and that is not the concern of the study too.

The research draws on the graphic novel *Palestine* to collect data through the lens of narratology. A graphic novel is an off-shoot of comics which is sequential art. Hillary Chute (2008), while defining the graphic narrative, draws the difference between a graphic novel and comics in that the former is a book-length work while the latter is in the form of series with a progressive storyline for the subsequent forms (p.453). Graphic novels, in a few decades, have proved their worth and have come out as an adult-friendly medium among other mainstream media because of its unique and vibrant combination of verbal-visual modes in the postmodern world predominantly driven by multimodality. Various studies, for instance by Michael Maloy, Steven Hoover, Thusha Rani Rajendra, have attested its significance for disseminating historical events and the current trend of its incorporation in the school curriculum for such purpose. The present study intends to valorize the worth of this medium for research which, at present, is not a frequent object of analysis for graphic narratives (Mikkonen, 2011, p. 638).

Defining Narrative

As a researcher, Peter Huhn's definition of a narrative really appealed to me, for it clearly lays bare the panorama of narrativity. He defines narrative as:

. . . a communicative act (narration) through which happenings—including existents such as characters, places, circumstances, etc., within the story world (fictional or factual)—are represented and thus mediated through a given verbal, visual or audio-visual sign system. This representation is inevitably shaped—in the selection, combination, perspectivization, interpretation, evaluation of elements—by the agency producing it, ultimately the author. . . . (Huhn et al., 2009, p.1).

Defining Narratology

“Narrative theory is primarily a set of approaches to texts that can be considered to be, partially or wholly, narrative” (Bal, 2004, p. 1). These texts can be either monomodal or multimodal cultural artifacts such as novels, films, paintings, dramas, computer games, and the like that tell a story which can be understood, analyzed, and evaluated through narrative theory which is internationally known as narratology (Bal, 2009). It is noteworthy here that even if the passages that contain narrativity are present in primarily non-narrative texts, for instance during an exchange of greetings, can still be analyzed through the analytical instrument of narratology. However, the text



i.e. *Palestine* which has been selected for the current study is prototypically narrative and, thus, can be analyzed holistically.

Literature Review

Narrative History/ Historical Narrative

History in the form of narrative that we come across today went through a couple of other forms in its evolution. Hayden White (1987) addresses these forms in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* and states that initially history was in the form of the ‘annals’ and later in the form of the ‘chronicle’ (p.4). The former consists only of a list of events ordered chronologically that lacks a structure of relationships with meaning (p.5). For instance, this form does mention in the list that in 712, the flood came and in 720, Charles fought against the Saxons but it does not explain or explicitly comment on why flood came and why Charles fought against the Saxons (p.7). There is a void between the events in the historical list. The latter, on the other hand, is not a chronological list of events, rather has a structure. There is a chronological organization “by topics and reigns” which “cannot, therefore, offer the kind of meaning that a narratologically governed account can be said to provide.” Furthermore, it lacks closure, “the summing up of the ‘meaning’ of the chain of events with which it deals that we normally expect from the well-made story.” For instance, “History of France” by Richerus lacks narrative closure, for it breaks off with the flight of one of the disputants for the office of archbishop and “throws onto the reader the burden for retrospectively reflecting on the linkages between the beginning of the account and its ending” (pp.16-17).

What above-mentioned forms lack is provided by the form of narrative. Narrative history encompasses a narrative that endows meaning to the historical events through perspective and has “the force of a moral judgment on the events it related.” “The demand for closure in the historical story is a demand,” White suggests, “for moral meaning...” (pp.21-22) and this moral meaning shifts when there is a shift from one event to another within a particular narrative. “Where, in any account of reality, narrativity is present, we can be sure that morality or a moralizing impulse is present too” (pp.23-24).

What Hayden White does is he makes a strong case for narrativity in history by illustrating its power to lend moralistic meaning to historical events. Without this factor, 9/11 happening would simply be a destruction of the towers instead of the terrorist attack, the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would merely be a destruction of the two cities instead of anti-humanitarian act, the speech of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg would just be a heap of words instead of a tribute to sacrifice, and so on.

Historical Graphic Novels

In the west, historical graphic novels are being used in the classrooms to teach history and are being lauded for offering a better understanding of the past happenings. Many researches are oriented to bring this development to the forefront. Michael Maloy (2016), for instance, attempts



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to bridge the gap between the immigrants or English Language Learners (ELLs) and native-born American students in American public schools by attesting that if graphic novels, dealing with immigrant experiences, are given to non-English Language Learners in order to come to terms with the challenges of ELLs, their understanding increases. ELLs are those students who are unable to “communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who qualify for specialized instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses” (pp.1-2). Maloy argues that the vast majority of teachers in the U.S. are white who have not received significant training in how to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (p.2). Therefore, art and illustrations accompanying narratives in graphic novels provide an ideal platform, both for teachers and students, to understand the unique experiences of immigrants such as narratives of *American Born Chinese*, *The Arrival*, *Vietnamerica: A Family's Journey*, *Escape to Gold Mountain* and *The Four Immigrants Manga* (pp.10-11).

Alyson E. King (2012) directs the attention to a notable change happening for the past few years relating to the historical events being portrayed in an increasing number of non-fiction graphic texts. Such non-fiction narratives are being used to teach history in Canada and the U.S., an attempt to allow students to see history in pictures. Although film and photographs are used regularly in university and high school history classrooms, graphic stories are getting more popular and mainstream. Canada's History Society produces a history magazine called “Kayak” which makes use of this style for children (p.189). Not only does this visuality help to lend such texts a sense of authenticity, but it also helps students to retain the content because the context is more overt when depicted as images as well as words (p.214).

One interesting feature of Clark's (2013) study is that one of the participants from preservice teachers finds new historical actors regarding the historical event of the American civil war that took place at Gettysburg in *Gettysburg: The Graphic Novel* by C.M. Butzer. She notes that this graphic novel enables her to peep into the condition of female nurses and town's people at the time of the war which is normally missing from the traditional narrative, thereby offering a unique insight into the circumstances and forces that shaped this event (p.497).

In addition to offering a better understanding of the past, historical graphic novels have an aesthetic side too. Elizabeth Bridges (2015), in this regard, brings to light a unique aesthetic function of graphic novels relating to nostalgia. They can serve as a cure to nostalgia by recounting the past narrative in a picturesque form. She makes Friedrich Schiller's cure for nostalgia as the basis for her research on two German graphic novels: *Kinderland* and *Treibsand* dealing with the late GDR i.e. The German Democratic Republic existed from 1949 to 1990. She argues that by representing the past, graphic novels offer an aesthetic pleasure to those who strongly cherish it by giving an opportunity to do catharsis of their closed emotions. Rather than visiting the places of the past which are dear to those who feel nostalgic about them, a cure prescribed by Schiller,



historical graphic novels offer a “rehearsal of return” through the visual-verbal narrative of those places as a substitution (pp.343-344).

Under postclassical spirit, the graphic medium is now being looked at as a rich container for carrying postcolonial issues and has a powerful potential for the critique of colonialism in postcolonial literary studies. In this regard, Rose Brister’s (2014) study argues that Joe Sacco’s *Palestine* is a powerful graphic narrative that “contributes a spatial and sonic record of territorial occupation to the Palestinian national narrative.” Owing to the several combinations of “panel shape and sequencing, text, and page space” (p.106), the graphic medium is prioritized by Sacco to manifest the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian spaces during the years 1991 and 1992 (pp.103-104). For instance, Sacco demonstrates Israel’s brutality through the series of panels of how a fifteen-year-old resistance fighter is badly beaten at the hands of Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and it is the graphic form which is providing space and time for the action to move from one panel to another to depict “moments of spatial anxiety” Palestinians are confronting in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (pp.107-109). Furthermore, the medium is malleable enough to convey what the author intends readers to know and feel. Sacco’s enclosed, phobic feelings during his walk through Palestine, a foreign, horror-stricken space, has been portrayed through his “downcast eyes, sweat, and fast pace” without crafting “even a fraction of blank space on the page, which has no margin and no gutter” in order to make the reader feel the same (p.112).

Brister further discusses the potentialities of graphic medium for the critique of colonialism by highlighting the sonic representation of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and brutalities done by Israeli Defense Force, thereby contributing to Palestinian national narrative. “If Sacco strives to capture loudness in his comics, *Palestine* is an exemplar of this desire” (pp.113-114). The medium does not merely capture scenes of conflict, poverty, and desolation, it also captures the sounds of the conflict. For instance, the chaos of a skirmish between Palestinian youth and IDF soldiers has been conveyed through tilted, overlapped panels and sound pictures such as “Rat-tat-tat-tat.” “The gutter echoes the black lines within the panels that Sacco uses to suggest the motion of the youths running.” Such medium-specific features have been availed to give an insight into how Israeli-Palestinian conflict sounds like (p.114).

Moving further, historical narrative in the form of prototypical fiction is also distinctive in its own right. It is also being used for pedagogical purposes in the west and it seems that it is little cared whether a narrative is fictional or non-fictional. Since the study has relevance with historical fiction, a brief review of literature in this regard is given in the next section to shed some light on the present argument.

Narratology and Graphic Novels/ Graphic Narratives

For the past five to ten years, there is an increasing intersection between scholarship on narrative and research on comics and graphic novels. Recent meetings of the Modern Language Association, the American Comparative Literature Association, and the International Society for the Study of



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Narrative have increasingly formulated papers and sessions in this regard. Such cross-disciplinary attempts are made owing to “the continuing expansion of interest in storytelling via words and images” and interest of narrative scholarship in such forms that offer medium-specific tools to be considered in the existing models of narratology. By the same token, narratology offers ideas that can be brought to bear on graphic narratives to explore their richness (Gardner & Herman, 2013, p.3). Therefore, this intersection is “beneficial to both fields” (Gardner and Herman, p. 6). “Strangely enough, however, a medium-specific comics narratology still appears fairly underdeveloped when compared to literary and film narratology, even though there has been an increasing interest in the intersection of comics studies and narrative theory in the past decade or so” (Thon , 2013, p.67). Some researches are reviewed below.

Being aware of the form’s richness, Jan-Noel Thon explores various contemporary graphic narratives in his study with respect to their narratorial possibilities and primarily seeks an answer to the question “who’s telling the tale in graphic narrative?” (p.67). For that matter, Thon draws on the notions of Gerard Genette related to the narrator and asserts that Genette’s distinction of narrators at different levels of the story such as extradiegetic or intradiegetic and their involvement in a narrative such as heterodiegetic or homodiegetic is equally applicable to narrators in the graphic narrative (p.72). He examines Alan Moore and Kevin O’Neill’s *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* where there is an extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator who is “limited to giving spatiotemporal coordinates” at the beginning of the novel with little use of narratorial voice. Contrary to it, Neil Gaiman’s *The Sandman* employs an “extensive use” of narratorial voice where the narrator is extradiegetic heterodiegetic (p.74). Thon also analyzes the narratorial situation in which narrator is extradiegetic homodiegetic such as in Craig Thompson’s *Habibi* (p.76). Through his study, Thon finds that in graphic narrative narrators can be either “framing or non-framing” i.e. their respective verbal narration is either illustrated by representation in the form of words and images or it is not (p.85). Lastly, in a brief section, he poses a question that if no voice or body is identified as the narrator who the source of that narrative would be. For that, he employs the notion of a “hypothetical author” discarding the idea of “implied author,” for it has become “too vague” to be useful by now (p.88).

Robyn Warhol (2013) explores how diegetic levels of an autobiography, a memoir about the author herself/himself, work differently in a graphic narrative form from a traditional prose one by examining Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home* (p.3). She finds that there is an additional dimension to the diegetic levels in this autographic multimodal narrative contrary to those which exist in prose autobiography and that lies in the “pictures.” In the light of Genette’s terminology, the intradiegetic (the world inside the story i.e. of the younger self) and the extradiegetic (the world inhabited by the autodiegetic narrator i.e. of the older narrating self) levels exist in *Fun Home* like an “ordinary” prose autobiography but the visual representation of emotions, attitudes, values, and conflicts of the younger self is something the typical monomodal narrative is bereft of. “*Fun Home* shows how the addition of the visual images to the verbal narration that occurs in autobiography can produce a



depth-effect to characterization that goes beyond what prose autobiography typically can achieve” (pp.3-4).

This depth-effect, Warhol explores, lies in that the graphic medium in general, and the novel under study in particular, provides in detail sights, sounds, and even smells visually which need few words for description. “The wordless tableau says more about the emotional dynamics between the two characters than could be expressed in many pages of homodiegetic narration” (pp.11-12). Furthermore, the “aural dimensions of dialogue” lie in the visual representation. For instance, in *Fun Home*, the vocal sounds such as “he shouted,” “we whispered,” “I cried out” do not lie in the verbal text. Similarly, various smells have been depicted through the mention of “menthol” from a man’s cigarette, “diesel” from the back of the bus, “putrefaction” from a garbage can, and so on (p.12).

Kai Mikkonen (2013) underscores medium-specific features that contribute to the subjectivity of the character or the narrator in graphic narratives. Mikkonen focuses on the character’s subjectivity, “the presentation of subjective consciousness through narrative perspective” (“Subjectivity,” p.102), though he acknowledges that subjectivity in graphic narratives entails that of an author and cartoonist. The cartoonist’s subjectivity illustrates the use of the graphic line, lettering, or the spatial organization of the page. However, character’s subjectivity is presented through a variety of devices such as perspectival techniques, narrative voice (external/ internal, explicit, implicit), the presentation of dialogue and thought, the technique of following as thoughts and feelings are revealed through a sequence of images, “and other means of visual showing such as facial expression, gesture, body language, gaze, and the character’s position in the image in relation to other visible objects (“Subjectivity,” p. 101).

The Gap

Keeping in view worth and value of the graphic medium as testified by the existing literature, the research intends to explore how historical graphic narratives are constructed which have the power to influence the readers’ beliefs, ideologies, attitudes, and perceptions not only regarding those events of the past but also regarding the people of differing ethnicities of nations associated with those events whom they do not know personally.

Also, the research pays special attention to the role of the ‘creator’ i.e. the author or more specifically, in the context of the study, the role of the novelists in forming versions that have been selected for the study. Existing literature does explore ‘narrator’ and his identification at different diegetic levels in the narrative but obviates ‘author,’ seeming to be the proponents of the older, classical school of thought that focuses solely on the structure of the narrative text where there is no apparent author. Contrary to it, the study contends that a text, here a narrative one, is a product of a rational being with a mind and heart who holds the discursive power to give structure to the historical events and who holds the so-called “facts” which are at his mercy for the ascription of positive or negative meaning. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate his/her part in the meaning-



making process of historical events. Furthermore, the research avails recent and up to date narratological developments for the study of historical graphic narrative of *Palestine* whose structure has hitherto not been explored to draw meaningful inferences related to its version.

Materials and Methods

Theoretical Rationale

“A theory is a systematic set of generalized statements about a particular segment of reality. That segment of reality, the corpus, about which narratology attempts to make its pronouncements consists of ‘narrative texts’ of all kinds, made for a variety of purposes and serving many different functions.” A theory facilitates readers to articulate an interpretive discussion of what they understood while processing a narrative artifact (Bal, 2009).

The theoretical framework that has been selected for the discussion of historical graphic narrative of *Palestine* comprises a set of approaches taken from the domain of postclassical narratology. It is done because the study is not merely text-oriented that can only be articulated by classical narratologist’s text-oriented approach under the spirit of formalism and structuralism. Rather, the study is utilizing textual cues to go beyond the texts to explore the role of the author in the narrative discourse of a particular historical event. Therefore, the research intends to synthesize a theoretical model that draws on ideas from post-classical narratology.

Starting off with the classical narratologist Gerard Genette (1930-2018), the study employs his narratological insight as the foundation for the discussion of historical graphic narratives. His seminal work deals with the textual analysis of the discourse (Pavel, 2004, p. 37). “The work of Gerard Genette in the field referred to as ‘narratology’ represents one of the most important contributions to narrative theory, considered as a branch of literary theory, in the second half of the twentieth century” (Patron, 2006, p. 118). Genette’s *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980), a translated English version by Jane E. Lewin, was originally published in French as *Discours du recit* (Prince, 2010, p. 4). Genette presented five narrative categories for the analysis of the narrative: order, duration, frequency, mood and voice. Genette devised two chief modalities of the regulation of narrative information (mood): distance and perspective (1980, p.162). This category of mood came under significant criticism. Mieke Bal, an influential narratologist, had reservations and identified “confusion” in his delineation of mood (Bal, 2004, pp. 269- 270). In a similar fashion of foregoing criticism, other critics, too, expressed their discontentment over Genette’s category of focalization or point of view. One of Horstkotte and Pedri’s stances against Genette’s delineation of this concept is he did not show any concern with the intradiegetic source of focalization. He dealt only with the filtering of information at the extradiegetic level (2011, p.332). Peter Huhn remarks that Genette’s distinction between who sees? (focalization) and who speaks? (voice), no matter how useful it may be to overcome the confusion between the two, tends to obscure their inherent connection (Huhn et al., 2009, p.3).



Keeping the above criticism in view, Genette's narrative category 'mood' is dropped out of the current study and Mieke Bal's narrative insight with regard to focalization is to be utilized. Bal's theory presents an extension and modification of Genette's (Berendsen, 1984, p. 140). With regard to the issues of focalization, her intervention is considered to be "the most persuasive and enduring" (Ciccoricco, p. 257). Furthermore, Bal's innovative introduction of visual narratology in her second English edition, published in 1997, is "attractive" (Horstkotte & Pedri, p. 333), for "...it marks substantial gains for focalization theory that help pave the way for nuanced readings of multimodal texts" (Ciccoricco, 2012, p. 258). Therefore, Bal's third English edition, published in 2009, is availed to take her expertise for the current study.

In a recent decade or two, under the spirit of cognitive narratology, focalization is interpreted in cognitive terms. Horstkotte and Pedri (2011) propose a conception of focalization as a cognitive operation (p.332). David Ciccoricco remarks: "...models and concepts derived from a cognitivist framework hold tremendous promise to endow focalization theory with both greater clarity and scope" (p.256). Keeping in view this facet of the development, the research supplements Bal's critique on focalization with the cognitive insight of the prominent narratologist, David Herman. Although relatively little research has been done with respect to the concept's usefulness in visual narratology, particularly in graphic narratives, Herman's scholarship is noteworthy in this regard (Horstkotte & Pedri, 2011, p. 331). Kai Mikkonen (2011) also acknowledges Herman's significant contributions to the field of comic studies (p. 638). Therefore, the research draws on his idea of 'qualia' given under the heading "The Nexus of Narrative and Mind" in his work, *Basic Elements of Narrative* published in 2009.

Textual Analysis

The research employs Alan McKee's textual analysis for the selected historical graphic novel owing to his "straightforward attempt." McKee guides the reader systematically about this method— "what it is, why it matters, how it works, how it is done." "Written in an accessible and engaging style, this step-by-step guide to textual analysis should be obligatory reading for newcomers to the discipline" (Wang, 2004, pp. 538-539).

Definition and Description

"When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (McKee, 2003, p.1). A text can be a film, a television programme, magazine, advertisements, clothes, novels, and so on that produces meaning. This kind of analysis enables researchers to collect information about how other human beings make sense of the world (p.1). This process of making educated guesses about the text can be explained through the metaphor of "forensic science." Forensic scientists do not see a crime committed, for when they arrive on the spot, it is no more there. All they can do is "sift through the evidence that is left" and make an educated guess about what happened based on that evidence. By the same token, analysts have only texts to make sense of the happenings (p.15). The analyst



of today did not undergo American civil war but he/she has a text acting as a material trace of that event about which educated guesses at some of the most likely interpretations can be made.

McKee suggests that a number of elements from the text relevant to the interest of the researcher are selected for the analysis which would help in making likely interpretations (pp.73-74). Every text has some elements that are more important than others and therefore it is suggested not to analyze every element. Otherwise, it would lead the researcher away from the likely interpretation of the text (pp.75-76).

Textual analysis does not claim to make the correct interpretation of any text as there is no single correct representation of any part of the world. Different groups might interpret each text in different ways and they are all reasonable interpretations (p.63). Statements on a lighter note about the black might appear offensive to a black man but the same might be a joke to a white man. “Doing textual analysis, we’re interested in finding out likely interpretations, not in deciding which of them is the most correct one” (p.63).

“Textual analysis is useful for researchers working in cultural studies, media studies, in mass communication, and perhaps even in sociology and philosophy” (p.1). Culture is not just about how one dresses up, it is also about one’s ideology—ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and so on and the texts being cultural artefacts represent culture of the concerned social groups. For instance, historical texts represent what happened with people in the past, the culture of the people associated with those events, their values, thoughts, and actions which altogether make particular versions. The usefulness of textual analysis for the current study is, therefore, vital which is dealing with the particular version of historical event informing the culture of various social groups too.

Results and Discussion

Palestine presents the first intifada—an uprising—of the Palestinians against the Israeli occupation of their territories in the years 1991-92 through the journalism of the novelist, Joe Sacco, who is a journalist too. He is primarily seen as the extradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator—telling the story of the diegetic world and is part of it as a character—who probes into the lives of Palestinians under occupation by moving from one place to another. The version establishes the image of Palestinians as victims and Israelis as oppressors. There are ample instances in the novel in this regard. For instance, when Sacco visits the hospital in Nablus, a city in Palestine, he comes across a number of cases of intifada which depict their painful fate of being victims at the hands of the Israeli soldiers. Panel 1 and 2 (given at the end) show the agony through which a Palestinian is going through because of the bullet he has received in his small intestine and liver during his protest against Israeli occupation. His facial expressions are revealing his qualia i.e. what it’s like to get deep wounds of the bullet. His closed eyes, frowning on the forehead, and stretched jaws exposing his teeth all convey his intense torment. The focalization of the narrator who is standing near the victim, his focalized object, reveals his concern too. He remarks: “He don’t look so good. . . .” The latter’s pain does not let the narrator, the journalist, to take his picture. He has got “a private wound” too as revealed through the focalization of the narrator. The expressions of the



10th MRIC
8-9th October, 2025
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mother reveal her qualia too i.e. what it is like to witness a son in gruesome suffering. Furthermore, panel 3 depicts a school girl in Nablus who has got “multiple fractures” because she is shot in the schoolyard as revealed by the narrator. Not only this, but it is also told that a child has died and one more is injured in that incident. This visit of the narrator to the hospital, therefore, establishes Palestinians as victims of the brutalities of the Israeli soldiers.

The narrative within the diegetic world i.e. metadiegetic narrative unveils significant details about the conflict between Palestinians (Arabs) and Israelis (Jews) that led to the intifada which the diegetic narrative—the first narrative—deals with. The narrator of this second narrative is also Sacco himself but now as intradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator—telling the metadiegetic narrative but is not part of it. It further establishes the identity of Palestinians as victims and Israelis as the usurpers of their lands and rights. It is revealed that Jews did everything to expel the Arabs who had been living in the territory designated as Israel after their civil war in 1948. The narrator focalizes the Zionists (the Jews), the focalized object, in the following words: “It’s hardly a secret how the Zionists used rumors, threats, and massacres to expel the Arabs and create new demographics that guaranteed the Jewish nature of Israel” (pp.41-42). In addition to it, the narrator’s reference to the directions of the Israel’s first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, to his advisor further lays bare the dark intentions of Israelis and their image as oppressors. He quotes Ben-Gurion’s internal focalization: “In each attack, a decisive blow should be struck, resulting in the destruction of homes and the expulsion of the population...Palestinian Arabs have only one role left—to flee” (p.42).

This version presents significant details about the Israeli soldiers and their barbaric conduct with Palestinians in the occupied territories which all add up to the portrayal of the victimization of the Palestinians at the hands of the Israelis. The extradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator narrates what happened when Palestinian women and children protested against the Israelis and their occupation in Nablus. The panel 4 conveys a powerful image of how Israeli soldiers are exercising their power against the vulnerable Palestinians. It depicts the soldiers in uniforms holding cudgels for clubbing and whacking those women who are raising their voices against Israeli atrocities. Their bent postures and facial expressions reflect qualia i.e. what it is like to suffer the cruelties of the Israeli soldiers. Their stretched jaws depict their screams out of pain while those of the soldiers depict their roaring anger with which they are dealing those women. Army jeeps can be seen for taking them for trials on account of their protest.

The plight of the Palestinians is further accentuated through metadiegetic narratives when Palestinians themselves tell the atrocities committed against them by the Israeli soldiers in the prison without knowing what crime they did on account of which they were punished. The three prisoners whom Joe Sacco interviews tell what happened to them over there. One of them, Yousef, tells his experience at Dhahriya prison where he was beaten until he and his mates complied with making “animal noises and noises like a train” while “soldiers were having a barbeque nearby, including women soldiers” (p.83). Furthermore, he shares his experience in a cell where he spent



10th MRIC
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(Multidisciplinary Research International Conference)
University of Wah



eleven days with thirty-five other mates. His internal focalization, as a character, reveals that they had a “barrel toilet” which, one day, had become full that it resulted in drenching the prisoners in the excrement when fat fellow climbed onto the barrel toilet. He further focalizes in the following words: “The soldiers came after half an hour, and they gave us soap and water to clean with, but we spent five days with the smell” (p.83). The panel 5 depicts the scene and the facial expressions and the body postures of the prisoners convey qualia i.e. what it is like to be in excrement. Their bulging eyes and their screaming gesture channelize their inner repulsion towards the situation in particular and towards their deplorable fate in general. Yousef further tells that when he was shifted to ANSAR III, the largest prison meant specifically to deal with the intifada cases (p.82), all the inmates were again subjected to torture but of different kind. When they were paying tribute to Abu Jihad, founder of the Palestinian revolutionary group—Fateh—who got assassinated by the Israeli commandoes, outside of their tents, “a lot of soldiers appeared with automatic weapons” (p.90). His internal focalization as an intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator further reveals: “Then they started shooting in the sky and throwing tear gas... The prisoners started throwing stones, their shoes. In the kitchen we were throwing onions. It was a half hour riot. Some prisoners were wounded by rubber bullets, but the Israelis received our message” (p.90; ellipsis in original). The panel 6 describes this riot where the soldiers can be seen throwing tear gas, loading the gun, and firing in the sky. Tanks are there too to target the prisoners. One other victim of the Israeli prison, Iyyad, shares his story of torture under Israeli control. He tells that once he was moved from Dhahriya prison to a tent and then to a room where he was remained for a week. He focalizes in the following words: “It was 3x4 meters, with 21 persons. The metal door faced the sun from noon on. The ventilation was very bad, just a coin-sized hole in the door for injecting gas in case of riot” (p.84). The panel 7 illustrates the plight of the Palestinian prisoners who can be seen in a wretched state. Their facial expressions convey qualia i.e. what it is like to suffer without having done any crime. The frown of the first, the head down posture of the second, eyes wide open with gazing up face of the third, the thinking posture of the fourth, and the gloomy eye of the fifth prisoner in the foregrounded position all add up to the victimization of the Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli soldiers.

In addition to it, the version also sheds light on economic exploitation of Palestinians at the hands of Israelis. In Gaza, an Israeli occupied territory of Palestinians, Sacco visits the warehouse where the tomatoes are packaged and comes to know that Gazan tomatoes are exported to Europe through the shipping in Israel. The internal focalization of a Palestinian-American on Israeli role in the export of Gazan tomatoes is insightful. He says: “What the Israelis do is leave them at the airport for days, or ship them only after their own produce is shipped...Often, by the time these tomatoes get to Europe, they’re spoiled...The packagers and farmers back here have to pay for it, and their reputations are damaged...” (p.172; ellipsis in original). The only solution, he further tells Sacco, is to label the Gazan tomatoes as Israeli tomatoes so that they can be exported and the



10th MRIC
8-9th October, 2025
(Multidisciplinary Research International Conference)
University of Wah



Palestinian workers get the work to earn the livelihood. Otherwise, the situation is gloomy for Palestinians and their products (p.172).

Amidst the foregoing images of Palestinians as the victims of the oppression of the Israeli soldiers, the version unveils a crucial role of the Americans in helping out the Palestinians. They have been presented to be on the side of the Palestinians in Palestinian-Israeli conflict. For instance, it has been informed that Americans in the form of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) are working in occupied territories to do their best for Palestinians. Sacco as extradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator tells about the school administered by UNRWA in Balata (p.46). Not only this, but Americans are also serving the Palestinians by teaching and educating them. There is a reference to an American named Larry who teaches English in Gaza Town and Sacco meets him and spends some time with him (p.151). Furthermore, Sacco tells about his visit to the local UNRWA clinic that has antenatal department, the laboratory, and the X-ray room meant to serve the needs of the Palestinian refugees in Balata (p.48). American doctors are also working to serve the Palestinians through their medical knowledge. For instance, the American pathologist is called in by the family of one victim, Mustafa Akkawi, of Israeli barbarity in the prison to conduct an autopsy (p.101). It has also been informed through the focalization of intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator, a seventeen year old boy named Rifat, how he was saved by a U.N. ambulance when he was shot by the Israeli soldiers in the stomach. He tells in the following words: “Just then a U.N. ambulance came by chance. It took me to Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza Town...” (p.203).

In addition to it, the version foregrounds an active role of American journalism in bringing to the forefront the case of the Palestinians. Sacco as a journalist gives voice to the Palestinians by taking their interviews while spending two months in the Occupied Territories. He goes from one place to another to know the Palestinian side of the story. He could have given an equal coverage to the Israeli side of the story by giving as much voice to the Israelis as he has given to the Palestinians and by spending an equal number of days in Israel as he has spent in the Occupied Territories. But Sacco spends only a day in Tel Aviv, a city in Israel. He does take the Israeli take on Palestinian-Israeli conflict but he listens to it through the Palestinian lens. For instance, when Sacco is in Tel Aviv he comes across two Israeli women who fear to visit the Arab markets and one of them calls it “too dangerous,” Sacco’s focalization portrays a positive image of the Arab markets. He asserts: “Nothing will happen. It’s really colorful. There’s all these stalls and shops. Nothing’s ever happened to me” (p.256). Later on, he goes into the debate with the two ladies and presents the Palestinian side of the story. When one of the ladies calls Arabs (Palestinians) “crazy” who have started wars with the Israelis, Sacco states: “I understand, but you have extremists in Israel, too” (p.263). Furthermore, when she further focalizes the things from the Israeli side, Sacco, the journalist, puts forward the Palestinian point of view as he has witnessed the life under occupation quite closely. When she focalizes that life under occupation is better for the Arabs than they were before, Sacco’s focalization is noteworthy: “I think that’s sort of a myth. The territories



10th MRIC
8-9th October, 2025
(Multidisciplinary Research International Conference)
University of Wah



are economically suppressed. They're a captive market and a source of cheap labor for Israel..." (p.263). All the instances reinforce the positive image of American journalism in bringing to light injustices, cruelties, and hypocrisies of the powerful to the weak that are happening around the world.

One other fundamental narrative device that usually goes side by side with the narration of the narrator is focalization. It is Sacco's focalization together with the focalization of the Palestinians at extradiegetic and intradiegetic levels that reveal injustices and cruelties of the Israelis. Furthermore, it is through manipulation of focalization that informs the reader the services of Americans be it in the form of the organizations such as UNRWA and UN or individual efforts to educate Palestinians such as those of Larry as discussed above and Sacco's journalism to bring the case of Palestinians to the world. It is not merely the perspective of Sacco that reveals this but also of the Palestinians that makes us believe that America, being one of the super powers, is doing its best to alleviate the sufferings around the world.

Frequency has also been manipulated to formulate this version of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sacco as a novelist employs singulative narrative i.e. narrates the injustices and cruelties of the Israeli soldiers to the Palestinians as many times as he comes across the stories of the Palestinians. He does not skip them by narrating just one of them nor does he narrate the same event many times. He rather brings to light different stories of the different Palestinians but of the same torture and cruelty in order to establish that Israeli oppression is not a one-time practice. It is made to a level of custom practised in the daily life by the Israeli soldiers to beat, to exploit Palestinian men and women by usurping their rights and to put them in jail on account of crime which they have not done. Singulative narrative has also been employed for the portrayal of the workings of Americans in the Occupied Territories to create this effect that Americans are serving the Palestinians at various levels and in different forms. Sacco mentions separately the role of U.N., UNRWA school, clinic, American educationists such as Larry and American pathologist. He does not skip any instance nor does he repeat any particular event to impose it on the readers by mere repetition. He rather lets them perceive by themselves the crucial and positive role of America in Israeli-Palestinian conflict through various instances of the version in this novel.

Order is one other narrative technique that is manipulated to arrange the events of the story in the narrative. Sacco does not follow chronological order of the events of the story. He rather employs non-chronological events, anachrony, to reveal the things at appropriate moments. He uses extensive analepses, both external and internal, to refer to the events happened earlier than the present point in the story. The painful and traumatic experiences of the Palestinians inflicted by the Israeli soldiers have been conveyed through internal analepses, so-called since their reach—temporal distance—is located inside the temporal field of the first narrative, in the form of narration by the Palestinians themselves. Hence, they have been revealed later in the narrative whose first narrator is Sacco. Sacco's focalization as a narrator revealing 1948 events when Zionists (the Jews) expelled Arabs from Israel constitute external analepses. They are so-called



10th MRIC
8-9th October, 2025
(Multidisciplinary Research International Conference)
University of Wah



since their reach is located outside the temporal field of the first narrative which is dealing with intifada of 1991-1992. Such analepses are meant to enlighten the readers about the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that led to its current situation.

Being a visual medium, visual elements have also been manipulated to create this version. Herman's notion of qualia helps us understand characters' feelings and thoughts. Their gestures, postures and movements complemented with the verbal mode all guide the readers to draw inferences as discussed above. Palestinians as victims, Israelis as oppressors, and Americans as the saviors of the oppressed all have been suggested through visual factors as well.

In a nutshell, *Palestine* propagates the Israeli- Palestinian conflict during the years 1991-92 whose roots go back to 1948 civil war between Jews and Arabs. Sacco intends to bring to the forefront Palestinian side of the story which reveals victimization of the Palestinians by the Israeli soldiers on a large scale, be it physically, emotionally, or psychologically. It is also intended to show American solidarity with the weak and the oppressed who in this case are Palestinians. The services of Americans in the Occupied Territories are noteworthy. Sacco's journalism also establishes the positive role of American journalism in taking side with the powerless and the deprived. All of this version has been conveyed through the manipulation of narrative devices such as person i.e. narrator, focalization, frequency, order and visual elements as discussed above.

Conclusion

The study validates that there is an agency behind the production of a historical narrative which is in the form of a writer, in general, or novelist, in particular. He has the steering wheel of the historical version to take it to where he wants. Historical version in *Palestine* has been created by the novelist through the manipulation of various narrative techniques such as order, duration, frequency, focalization, voice, and visual features. Novelists have the power to employ any technique that is suitable for their purpose i.e. what they want to convey. If a novelist wants to glorify Abraham Lincoln's speech, he would employ those narrative techniques whose manipulation enhances the spirit of his address. Similarly, if he wants to show the sufferings of Palestinians, he would employ those techniques whose manipulation affirms it such as manipulation of frequency and narrative levels as discussed above.

Furthermore, manipulation is not being taken as a term with negative connotation which is prevalent in contemporary era. Rather, it is taken simply as handling or treating something and here it refers to handling narrative techniques. Mieke Bal (2009), one of the prominent contemporary narratologists, has also taken manipulation simply as treatment. She says in her third edition of *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*: "Manipulation originally meant simply 'handling,' 'treatment,' and even though its modern sense has shifted to include more unfavourable connotations, the original meaning is still synonymous with 'operation'" (chap. 2).

However, the research suggests the use of critical thinking while dealing with historical narratives. This would allow one to be more tolerant and less hateful of different social groups, nations and their perspectives and ideologies. It would not be bad if somebody says that both sides,



10th MRIC
8-9th October, 2025
(Multidisciplinary Research International Conference)
University of Wah



Pakistan and India, had killed, burnt, and looted people of each other's sides at the time of partition instead of nurturing hatred and animosity against each other for being the sole culprit. In the west, multiple texts on the same topic are being discussed in the classrooms to teach history. The purpose is to allow students to question 'whose values are being promoted in different versions?' Another strategy is to read the text from a resistant perspective i.e. perspective opposite to that of the author to understand past happenings in a better way (Behrman, 2006, p. 492).

It is also argued that the research has inferred likely interpretations by making an educated guess of the textual cues since textual analysis does not claim to make correct interpretations as discussed earlier. Interpretations related to the intentions of the novelist of the selected historical graphic novel, therefore, are likely interpretations not the correct ones. David Herman (2013) in his groundbreaking work, *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind*, argues that inferences about the intentions of the author can be made based on the textual cues. "Narrative understanding depends on defeasible or possibly wrong ascriptions of intention to authors or story creators..." (p.36). Interpreters of stories use textual patterns to find answers to questions such as when, what, where, who, how and why aspects of a storyworld (p. 48). For instance, question like why does the author depart from a chronological presentation of events by including an analepsis or flashback? is noteworthy while engaging with the narrative text (p. 41).

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study focuses on how historical graphic novel *Palestine* has been constructed and what narrative techniques have been employed by the novelist in his graphic novel. Among all the narrative devices, focalization has been much discussed by the scholars in different eras as pointed out earlier. It can be explored further in future researches particularly its workings in the graphic medium. In addition to it, medium-specific features like color, size of the panels, angle, and sequencing can also be studied and explored in future researches under the rubric of transmedial narratology and by taking the insights of the prominent narratologists such as David Herman. Herman's phenomenal work on intentionality of the author is also recommended to be explored to strengthen the role of the author in writing a particular narrative.



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10th MRIC
8-9th October, 2025
(Multidisciplinary Research International Conference)
University of Wah



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10th MRIC
8-9th October, 2025
(Multidisciplinary Research International Conference)
University of Wah



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Panel 1



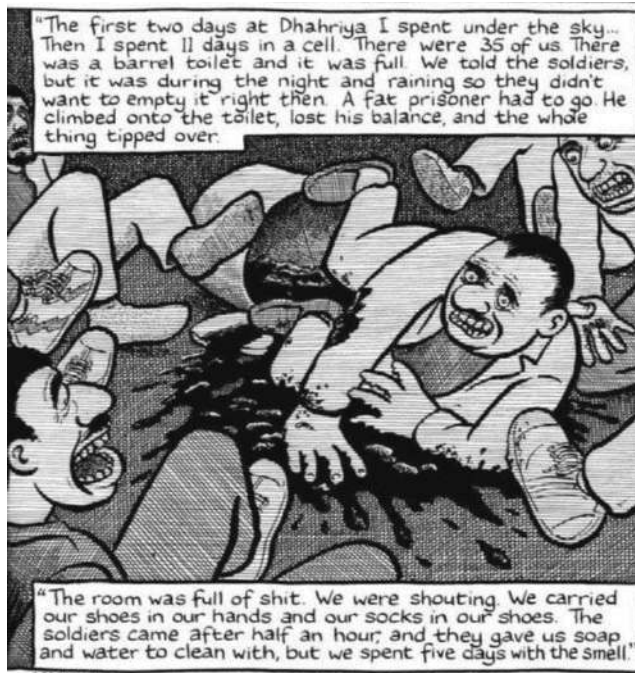
Panel 2



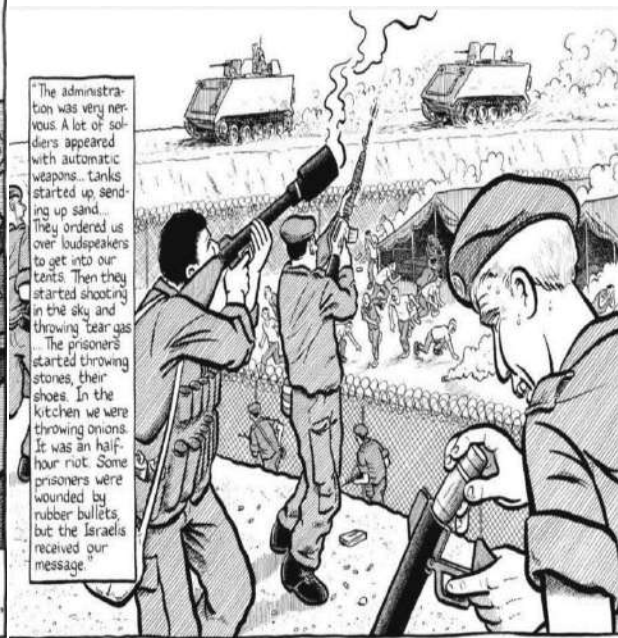
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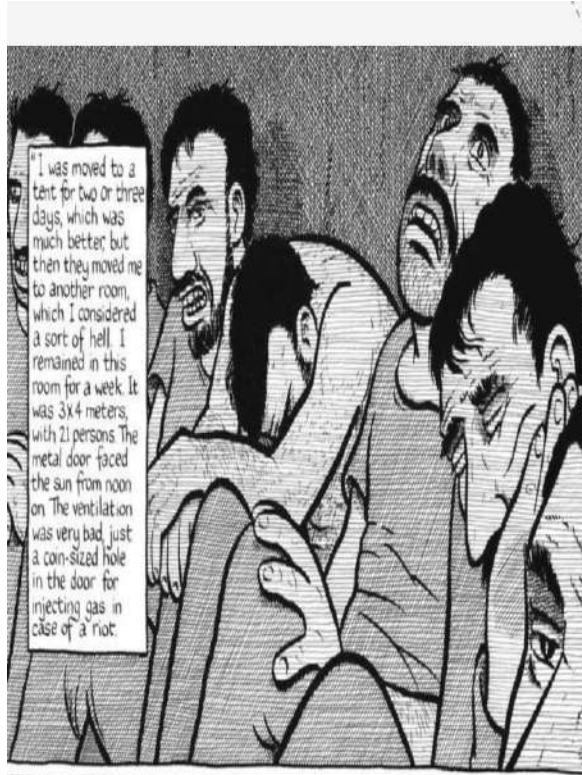
Panel 4



Panel 5



Panel 6



Panel 7