

ILLUSTRATING EVENTS: A STUDY OF HISTORY, MEMORY AND TRAUMAINGRAPHIC NARRATIVE

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ABSTRACT--*Dealing with history and trauma in a limited space of that comics offer creates urgency for a sustained discussion of the form of the comics as well as the content. The readers/viewers are engaged in seeing the sequence of events through the panels. Reading the images and the texts create a challenge to come to a complete understanding of the text. But the contemporary graphic novelists/artists have dealt effectively with the medium of verbal-visual space. The paper deals with three texts, Art Spiegelman's Maus, Joe Sacco's Palestine and Malik Sajad's Munnu: A Boy From Kashmir. These texts span across different geo-political contexts which also helps in probing a comparative study of this genre. The personal, the historical and cultural trauma and the role of memory have been discussed in the paper and how the meaning is produced through images and a few dialogues in a limited and compact panel.*

Keywords-- *history, trauma, graphic narrative, memory*

I INTRODUCTION

And we came here to the concentration camp Auschwitz, and we knew that from here we will not come out anymore. We knew the stories- that they will gas us and throw us in the ovens. This was 1944..We knew everything and here we were. (*Maus 1*, 159)

Visual depth and the art of detailing in representation are the factors that shaped the comic books since the early part of the twentieth century. Many comic books had the element of fantasy as they were meant primarily for entertainment. The realistic issues were more or less detached from comic books and less focus was given to artistry. The comic book acted as a medium for representing the popular culture and distancing oneself from the reality in a popular medium was a requirement of this genre. Earlier the controversial issues like sexuality, social taboos etc were censored by the Comics Code Authority but gradually due to the rise of the underground press in America, some comic artists defied the traditional practice of working solely with fantasy. These artists were interested in reflecting serious issues of society and politics. In the 1960s the artists of the American underground helped in shaping the tenets of the graphic novel as it is known today. The issues that came to be dealt with in graphic novels are the complex strands of history, war, revolution, memoir etc. Though issues like the attack on Pearl Harbour, the Great Depression, World War II, dropping of atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Communism, the Korean conflict, Cowboy culture were dealt with in DC and Marvel Comics, but these issues were

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dealt with less dexterity in them. Representation of historical as well as individual events and experiences were given a different dimension by the graphic novel artists of the post war era. There was experimentation in the form as well as the content of graphic novels. In the 1980s and 1990s there were serialised comic strips which were compiled and then they were termed as graphic novels. Artists who have contributed to this genre, to name a few, were Art Spiegelman, Harvey Pekar, Hugo Pratt, Enki Bilal, Alan Moore, Eddie Campbell, Dave Gibbons whose work originally appeared in serialised form and later by 2000 the episodic form gradually got erased and the long voluminous works emerged as graphic novels. Craig Thompson, Chris Ware, David Mazzuchelli, Neil Gaiman, Paul Auster, Joe Sacco and Marjane Satrapi were other writers of the late twentieth century who have experimented with the form and content and their work contained a socio-political critique. This paper aims to explore the trauma inflicted upon the individuals by historical events such as the holocaust, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the prolonged insurgency in Kashmir. The texts chosen for this purpose are Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Joe Sacco's *Palestine* and Malik Sajad's *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir*. The experimentation in form and content will be discussed in the paper and to understand the grammar of the graphic novel the paper will make use of sign theory. The paper also tries to probe the challenges before the graphic novelists in the depiction of mental states through images and reduced dialogues.

History is an interaction with the past and through this interaction the multidimensionality of a past event is sought to be grasped. While talking about history and the past one pertinent question comes to mind is whether the past can be truly and completely understood. Trauma, among other things, is associated with socio-political disturbances which affect the individual. In literature and criticism trauma studies got a new dimension in 1996 with the publication of Cathy Caruth's book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. In this book Caruth talks about the constraints in representing the traumatic event and how lived experiences at a particular point haunt the victim even later. She defines trauma as:

Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. (Caruth, 11).

The definition states that trauma is a delayed experience which affects the individual by the recalling of the catastrophic event. This way of recalling the experiences is evident in the character(s) of the novels which will be examined in the paper.

To further the discussion regarding the definition of trauma Cathy Caruth writes about the etymology of the term trauma "the originary meaning of trauma itself (in both English and German), the Greek *trauma*, or "wound," originally referring to an injury inflicted on a body. In its later usage, particularly in the medical and psychiatric literature, and most centrally in Freud's text, the term *trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind."(Caruth, 3). The mind of the individual remains wounded for a long time as the images of trauma keep on haunting the survivor. This is evident in the graphic novels where the mind remains wounded long after the event. To study the representation of trauma in a graphic novel the paper shall have some recourse to semiotics. A semiotical discussion is necessary in a graphic novel as it helps to understand the various signs like gestures, postures, facial expressions etc through which the communication of mental states is possible.

Semiotics is a study of signs which communicate meaning. Ferdinand De Saussure's theory of sign talks about the sign as a composite of the signifier and the signified. A signifier stands for the material component and the signified stands for the conceptual aspect of the sign. Charles Sanders Peirce, an American semiotician and philosopher introduced the triadic concept of signs. He discussed the relation between sign, its object and its interpretant. He has discussed the sign in the form of a trio that is divided between icon, index and symbol. This triadic system of signs is relevant in studying the graphic novels. The visual world of the graphic novel is a combination of various shapes and lines. These signifiers help in the meaning making process of the text. The study of the sign system will be undertaken at length in the thesis as such a discussion is not feasible in the scope of this paper.

In the graphic medium the "self" of the character-victim-survivor is captured in the images and their thoughts and emotions are caught in the speech bubbles. The emotions, passions, sufferings and loss are transcribed into expressions through various signs of gestures, postures, movements and facial actions. The physiognomy of the pictures with the interdependence between the word and the image explore the response of the characters which is carved out meticulously by the artist. The Swiss cartoonist, author, painter and caricaturist Rodolphe Topffer's idea on physiognomies states that "There are two ways of writing stories, one in chapters, lines and words, and that we call "literature", or alternatively by a succession of illustrations, and that we call the picture story." (Quoted in E.H, Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*, 284). A written narrative differs from a picture narrative on the ground that a picture story is a confluence of both seeing and reading and the discursive text limits itself to words. This paper shall also engage with the challenges before a graphic medium which has to render meaning with only a few words at its disposal. There are gaps in the meaning of the narrative which the readers have to fill in.

In the graphic novels mentioned above the readers /viewers are in constant confrontation with the pictures of loss, death and trauma. There is a distortion in the faces of the characters which is common in the projection of caricatures and this is seen in the characters of *Maus*. The way of depicting Germans as cats and Jews as mice is a process of distancing the readers from the actual characters. In the history of caricature it has been seen that the victim's face is transformed into that of an animal "or even a lifeless implement" (290, *Art and Illusion*). The mental states of the characters are reflected through various signs of facial expressions like the position of the eyebrows, the shapes of the chin, eyes bulging out etc. In this context I would like to quote Will Eisner who writes in the Introduction to *Expressive Anatomy for Comics and Narrative* "I have always felt that the mind is the primary instigator of human conduct. This premise is arguable, but I believe it is a useful basis for understanding and portraying human motives in storytelling. I offer as a support a statement made by a famous biologist Sir Julian Huxley who said: The brain alone is not responsible for the mind though it is a necessary organ for its manifestation."(Eisner xi). Caricature is generally associated with exaggerations but it is not always about exaggerations. David Low in his book *British Cartoonists* cites the cartoonist Hogarth, "To him caricature was not an art of calculated and balanced exaggeration of individual characteristics, but an amusing aberration consisting of drawing the features of persons with any sort of similitude in objects absolutely remote in their kind." (Low, 9). Spiegelman created caricatures to designate the trauma of the holocaust as well as the trauma of his father who was a survivor of the catastrophe. The use of animal figures is an exaggeration but it helped in representing the stark

reality. Peter Haidu in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and Final Solutions* (as quoted in Jennie Adams's *Magic Realism in Holocaust Literature: Troping the Traumatic Real*) writes:

What is an event? What is the event? Is it a single event? How can one abstract from the enormous multiplicity of actions the notion of a single event, how can the event in its non linguistic aspect make its way to language and representation? (Adams, 27)

An event like the holocaust and its visual rendition, the trauma of the survivor cannot be grasped through images and a few dialogues only. Spiegelman in the novel is scripting history through the stories of his father. It is thus a reproduction of reality which has various gaps in the meaning making process of the text.

In Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, the trauma of the individual is depicted through a confluence of text and image and the readers play a role of visually experiencing the trauma. The mental state of the characters can be deciphered from the speech balloons and the signs of communication associated with them. The communication is made possible by the gestures and postures and facial expressions in the progression of the panels. The use of diagrams in the form of maps plays a vital role as it acts as an icon that helps in decoding the meaning of the narrative. The incorporation of the maps in the narrative gives a clear idea of the conflicting boundaries of the nation. In *Maus* the writer/artist has represented the history of holocaust in a story telling method. Art's father Vladek is the character-victim-survivor of the holocaust and his experiences are penned down by his son, Artie. The story begins with the panel where Artie is going to meet his father after a long time as he wasn't very close to his father. Artie asked his father to tell his story of surviving the Holocaust in which he is interested to work for his comic book. Artie visits his father often and the flow of the narrative goes back and forth. The pages of the novel are filled up with black and white sketches and some frames and figures are blackened for rendering the dark history of Nazi occupation in which Vladek was a victim. The inception of the Nazi rule is depicted by the swastika cross which was embossed in the Nazi flag. The Jews looked at the flag with bulged out eyes in an utter fright. Vladek was a war prisoner and he has undergone an array of exploitations, humiliations, and deprivations in the concentration camps. Vladek has lost one of his eyes in the war and after operation he survived with the glass eye. The prisoners were ordered to work incessantly with shovels in the camps to dig the earth. In the panels the picture of the prisoners is blackened which depicts the darkness surrounding their existence in the camps. The condition of the workers can be understood better by the dialogue "...and every night they marched us back, counted us and locked us in." (*Maus*, 108) The marching went on under the oppression of the Nazis and the constant marching depicts marching towards an uncertainty. The description of marching with a uniform is found in the second volume, Chapter 3 where Vladek tells "So the march was going and going, forever we marched. And the ones what didn't fall down, we marched." (*Maus*, 243)



Figure1: The March was going.

Vladek also hallucinated about his dead grandfather who used to console him in his dreams. Hallucination plays an important role in trauma studies as it depicts the disturbed mental state of the victim.



Figure 2:Don't worry

The description of hallucinations in the graphic panels can be found in the other two novels too which will be discussed in the paper. The mental state of Vladek is visible in the novel through his position of sitting by keeping his head bowed low, drooping eyes, resting the hands close to his chin etc which reflects his melancholic mind. The mind of Vladek is caught in the web of the traumatic thoughts and experiences which the war inflicted upon him. Recollecting the traumatic experiences creates a psychological disturbance in Vladek's mind and one cannot forget that he was made to remember what Spiegelman wants to document. In this context the paper resorts to Cathy Caruth who writes in her book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*,

To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. And thus the traumatic symptom cannot be interpreted, simply, as a distortion of reality, nor as the lending of unconscious meaning to a reality it wishes to ignore, nor as the repression of what once was wished.(Caruth,5).

Trauma thus is inexplicable and cannot be adequately conveyed. It is not a flight from reality; it is rather a return to reality, return to memory; it is a "return of the repressed" as Caruth states in her *Trauma, Narrative Unclaimed Experiences and History* (Caruth, 13). Even the readers are traumatised by the images of death, destruction and the distress of the victims. The image of the train serves as an icon in the novel and it is drawn in a pitch black colour that stands for the overwhelming darkness. The Nazis loaded the Jews in the train and they sent them from one

camp to another. It is the carrier of the corporeal beings who are allowed to board in a huge number in the compartments leaving very little space to breathe. In the novel *Vladek* talks about his experiences in a train and we find such descriptions as “It was such a train for horses, for cows. They pushed until it was no room left. We lay one on top the other, like matches, like herrings.”(*Maus*, 245). The blackened picture of the train is thus an artistic strategy to understand the darkness that has encompassed the victims. The train also stands as a metaphor of the brutality of the Nazis who reduced the human beings to the level of animals. The inhuman experiences can be cited from dialogues of the panel “If someone had to make urine or a bowel movement, he did where he stood.”(*Maus*, 246). The dehumanising of characters is evident in Spiegelman as well as Malik Sajad. The dehumanizing of the characters was a necessary tool to grasp the existence of the human beings in such a catastrophe.

II RESULTS

The narrative acts on different layers as Spiegelman stands in between the brutal history of the holocaust and its victim and survivor. In this context I would like to quote Hillary Chute who writes in the book *Disaster Drawn* “*Maus* immediately establishes itself as a narrative concerned with the communication of testimony, however confusing it may be for the son, who becomes the interlocutor to the survivor witness trying to visualize his father’s experience as the opening narrative act of the story, he comes up against the dominance of the photographic public archive.”(Chute, 158). Spiegelman stands as an interface between the trauma of holocaust and its survivor. He is like an interlocutor of presenting history as a whole and the trauma of his survivor-father in particular.

In Joe Sacco’s *Palestine*, the trauma and the sufferings of the refugees are embodied in the existential crises which range from the conflict concerning the national borders, the grabbing of the land and the continuous protests which were yielding nothing. The structure of this novel is different from Spiegelman’s way of representation as the frames are not in square or rectangular panels every time. The panels are spread out along the pages. In some of the pages we get only long stretch of texts and a few pages are adorned with only pictures. The pages are densely populated by the refugees and their demonstrations demanding liberation. The trauma of the refugees is reflected by the signifiers like pale face, the emaciated bodies, the uniform, the lack of food, the barbed wires, guards, watch towers of the camp, the bloodshed. These signifiers engage in the linguistic communication between the readers and the characters and they help in discerning the mental trauma. Since 1948 the birth of the Intifada has reduced the Arabs into a homeless, jobless entity of the refugee camps. The natives were almost uprooted by the Israelis as they wanted to capture the land as Palestinians were known as the “uncivilized”(Said,8) as mentioned in *The Question of Palestine*. The inhabitants were clinging on to their land as the land was their identity though they were described as backward. Edward Said in his book *The Question of Palestine* wrote that “According to Israeli sources, in 1822 there were no more than 24000 Jews in Palestine, less than 10 percent of the whole, overwhelmingly Arab population. For the most part it is true these Arabs were usually described as uninteresting and undeveloped, but at least they were there.” (Said, 9). Undeveloped, uncivilized were the terms that have surrounded the existence of the Arabs. A nation and the people may be undeveloped but this is not the reason for uprooting them or making them suffer. The Palestinians needed a voice to claim their human rights and the writer’s jotted down accounts while visiting the camps and meeting the refugees as well as the photographic image stood to be a medium to voice their

trauma. There are instances which show the bombing of the Arab land by the Israelis. Sacco met an old man who fled from home in 1948 when the Israelis declared Independence. This account describes this old man's trauma; He says "The Jews came and occupied the village and arrested everyone left behind, including my father, who was an old man and couldn't move. I walked with my wife who was pregnant for four days. The Egyptian army refused to take us in trucks. The Jews bombed us. It was a black day when I left my land." (*Palestine*, 15)

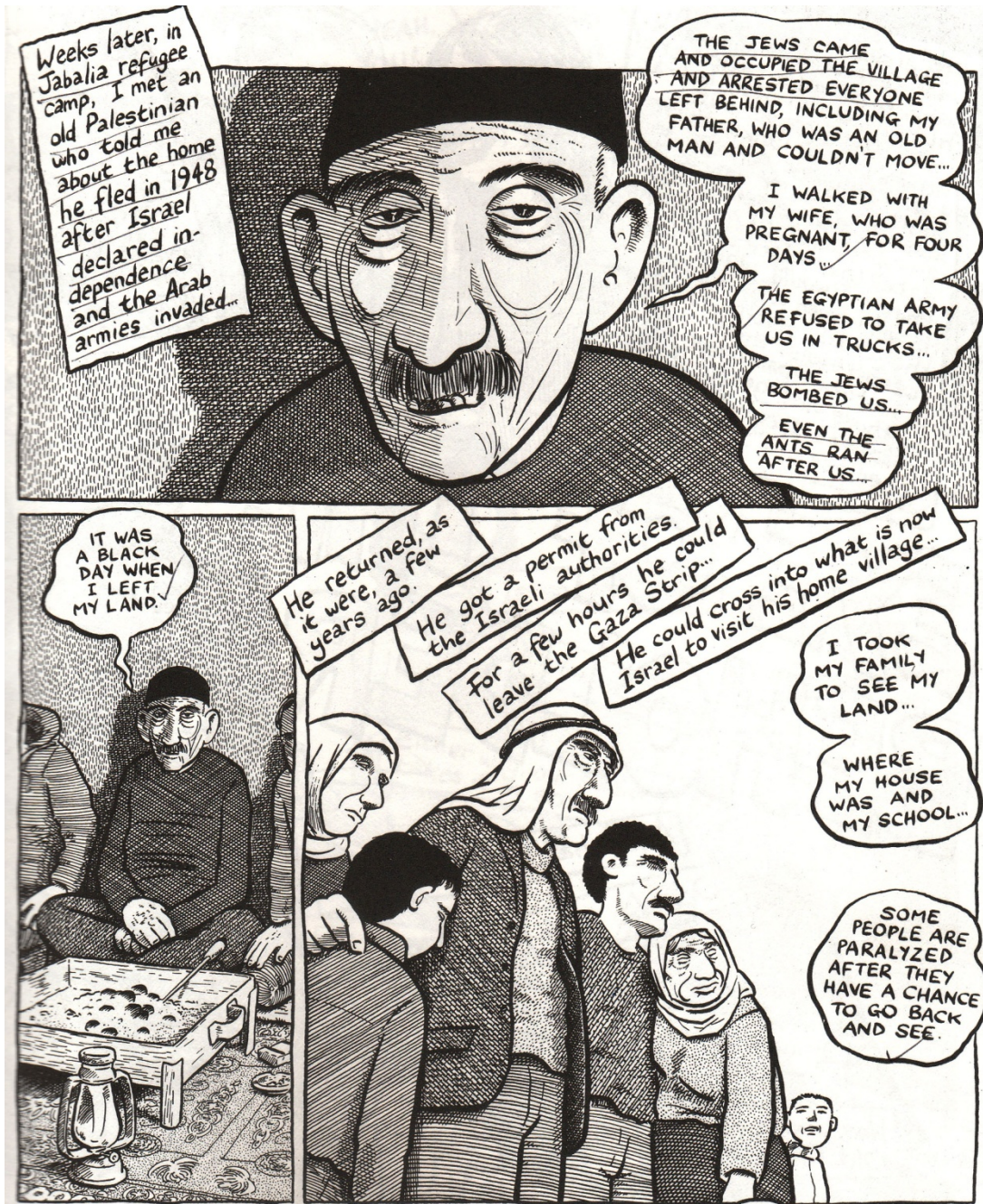


Figure 3: reflect the sad and drooping eyes of the natives.

The pictures reflect the sad and drooping eyes of the natives which signify their mental state. The bruises, the bullet scars are the signifiers of the wounded body as well as the wounded mind. They were beaten brutally and in some instances we can see that the intestines and the liver were shot.

The account of the Balata refugee camp was disheartening as the people lived in small tents and it was like a “shabby permanence” (*Palestine*, 42) of the Palestinians. There are facts written in the panels which cite “Close to 400 Palestinian villages were razed by the Israelis during and after the 1948 war...fleeing Palestinians were declared “absentees”..their homes and lands declared “abandoned” or uncultivated and expropriated for settlement by Jews.” (*Palestine*,42). This account reflects the facts that embrace the existence of the Palestinians. These facts are drawn out in the panels and we can see the anatomy as well as the facial expression of the pictures reflecting the bloodshot eyes which signify anger and it is substantiated by the screams and protests.

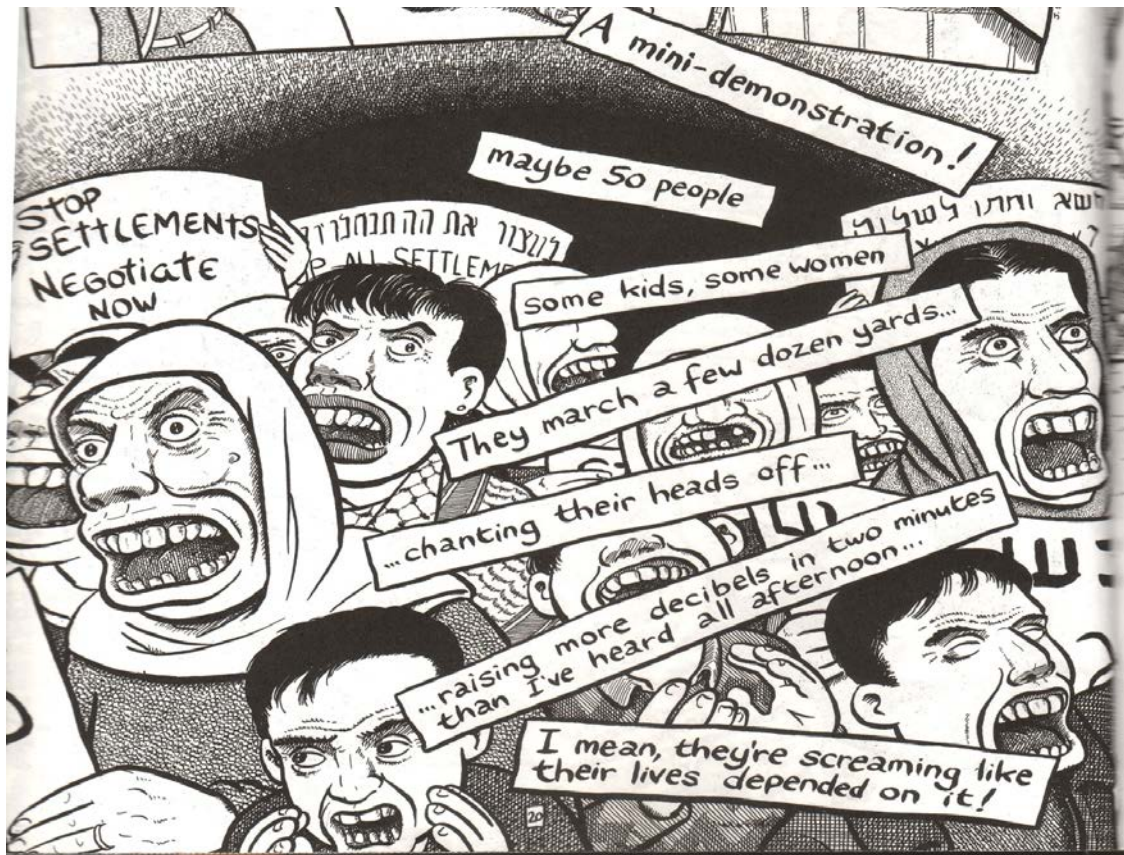


Figure 4:Comments.

There are some accounts which signify the trauma of the Palestinians where Shin Bet, the secret agent, resorted to interrogation of the prisoners and the vigorous punishments thereafter continued. There were some guidelines for undergoing the interrogation. Sacco met a woman who was described as “a tough cookie”(Palestine, 97). She was taken to prison and was made to stand in a closet which was 80 X 60 cm and her legs got paralyzed. Her face was hooded and was beaten when she leaned against the wall.



Figure 5: Sometimes.

The imprisonment was made for a purpose and it is evident from the panel where it is written that “The Shin Bet reckoned they could play the twin cards of gender and Arab culture against her. They implied a long imprisonment would ruin her marriage prospects.” (*Palestine*, 98). This process was named as “moderate pressure” by the Shin Bet who accuses people without any evidence and resorts to long interrogations. Another convict named Ghassan was arrested and was suspected of “belonging to an illegal organization” (*Palestine*, 103). He was blindfolded and his face was wrapped with a sack and he was tied to a chair for many days. He was not allowed to move and his positions were altered “every four or five hours” (*Palestine*, 108). Ghassan started hallucinating about his dead daughter, brother, and mother. Days together he was tightly tied with a chair and he couldn’t move.

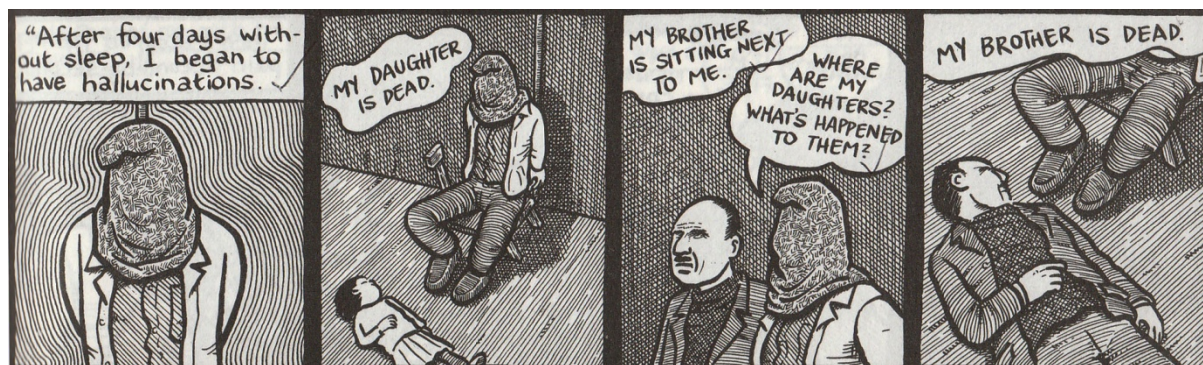


Figure 6: Dead.

The Jabalia refugee camp was a different experience with many refugees. It is described as “Gaza has the highest birth rate in the Middle East and according to some sources, Jabalia refugee camp is the most densely populated place on earth—65,000 people in two square kilometers.” (*Palestine*, 185) The frames depicting refugee camp tells the story of a few boys who are Muhammed, Hussein, Firas, Rifak. They were working for the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine. They protested against the Israeli soldiers despite their poor condition and a crippled body as they weren’t afraid of going to prison. They were of the opinion that “It’s not important if we go to

prison or not. This is prison for us.”(*Palestine*,195). To understand the plight of Palestine, in Edward Said’s words, is “The fact of the matter is that today Palestine does not exist, except as a memory or, more importantly as an idea, a political and human experience and an act of sustained popular will.”(*Said*, 5) In the entire account the role of the writer gripped the attention. Sacco has delineated brilliant etching out of the history but at the same time there are reflections of the visual culture which captivate the readers. The use of camcorders to capture history shows how the trauma is recorded in a thin film. The afflictions of the refugees are photographed and a photograph is a sign of filming reality in images. There are instances of taking an image of the refugee camp and Sacco says “I want a picture of the damage.”(*Palestine*, 184). The picture will remain as best perceived reality. Sacco was conscious what should be noted down and what should be left out. In chapter eight Sacco states that “We’ve hitched a lift, a donkey cart...another authentic refugee camp experience..good for the comic maybe a splash page”(*Palestine*, 217). Here Sacco is actually capitalizing on other’s sufferings or pain as raw material for literary and artistic endeavour.

The history of atrocity is more or less similar across the world. The strategies of depicting trauma in an Indian context have some commonality with the western practices and this can be traced in Malik Sajad’s *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir* .The disputed boundaries and the trauma of the individual set against the nation’s history is evident in this novel too. It is an account of a small boy and his journey from his childhood which was surrounded by the images of death to his adolescence and how he struggled to establish himself as a political cartoonist. The drawing and the sketches became a medium of protest against the atrocity and the right to self determination of the Kashmiris. Kashmir is a victim of the border dispute between Pakistan and India and the inhabitants have been fighting since independence for their human rights and the struggle still prevails. The tussle between India and Pakistan to annex the state of Kashmir can be understood by the following quote from Alastair Lamb who writes in the Introduction to *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy 1846-1990*.

The reality, however, has been something very different. India and Pakistan since the very moment of their birth have grown ever further apart; and their policies both domestic and international have evolved in increasingly divergent ways. One underlying reason for this perhaps, indeed, the most important, is undoubtedly to be found in the consequences of the dispute over possession of the State of the Jammu and Kashmir (Lamb, 1)

The dispute over possession of Kashmir has led to a profound traumatic impact on the inhabitants and the novel depicts the atrocity inflicted upon the children by the Indian army. In the novel the Kashmiris are drawn as Hangul (deer) the state animal of Kashmir. The deer stands for a hunted animal that is very timid. A deer is always pursued and it is a victim of the carnivorous animals. The use of animal figures embodying human attributes is evident in Spiegelman too and here we can trace the common element in representing the trauma arising out of a historical events and disputes between nations. Interestingly the Indian armies are drawn as humans unlike in Spiegelman’s *Maus*. This is perhaps a critique of the brutality inherent in human beings who have the tendency to dominate the weak and the powerless. The novel begins with the panel depicting the photograph of the family of Munnu and the icon of a finger pointing at Munnu’s mother, brother, and Munnu’s residence in Srinagar. The map of Kashmir is also depicted in an interesting way by placing India below and Pakistan on the left hand side and Kashmir in between.



Figure 7:Print.

Munnu's father was an artist who used to carve out pictures on the walnut wood. Munnu was very keen to paint and he also wanted to become a painter. The oppression and trauma can be understood by the depiction of the crackdown parade which is also known as identification parade. There are stampedes, crossfire and gunshots in this parade and Munnu being a boy of only five years is traumatized to a great extent. He is affected by the sight of his father and brother being beaten brutally in the parade and he feels dizzy and overcome by nausea. This is depicted in a panel which shows chequered boxes which represents the unconscious state of mind. Rampant killings continued in Kashmir and it was drawn symbolically by the image of an array of tombs signifying the martyrs. The school was also an institution of oppression. The students were flogged badly when they used to speak in Kashmiri as only Urdu was allowed. The slogans in the placards state "Speaking in Kashmiri is strictly prohibited. Come to Learn, Leave to Serve." (*Munnu: A Boy From Kashmir, 90*) Education was a burden for these children. The students were tortured brutally and it has led to isolation. Munnu was isolated and he resorted to carving out pictures in chalk. As Munnu grew up he began to draw political cartoon for the *Alsafa* newspaper depicting the school as an oppressive institution but it wasn't accepted by the publishers.

III CONCLUSION

The mental trauma of the small child is evident in the nightmares he used to see after the death of Mustafa, one of the characters in the novel. Malik Sajad has employed pitch black panels to depict the dark nightmares which he experienced during childhood. There is a soliloquy of Munnu who was sleeping at night under the blanket and he was disturbed by the darkness under the blanket which made him unable to sleep. There are some empty black

panels with a thought balloon speaking the mind of the child which says “Must be this dark in the grave, suffocating, even during the day. Merciful God and this is just a blanket, Mustafa can’t even break out of his grave. Too late. The idiots sealed it with concrete.” (*Munnu: A Boy From Kashmir*, 46) The idea of burying people after death haunted Munnu for a long time. Munnu couldn’t eat after this incident and whenever he was having a morsel of bread he felt as though he was eating the raw flesh like a cannibal. Munnu was constantly suffering from nausea and it is evident in one instance that he couldn’t enter a tent as he felt that the tent is a morgue filled up with the breathing corpses. The trauma seeped into his mind and he was unable to come out of it. There are big panels depicting the rise of the dead bodies in the form of ghosts. They are rising to protest against their sufferings. The slogans of freedom are depicted by the stretching out of the fists of the prisoners from the jail bars. Hangul is an endangered species and similarly the inhabitants of Kashmir can be said to be under the threat of becoming endangered.

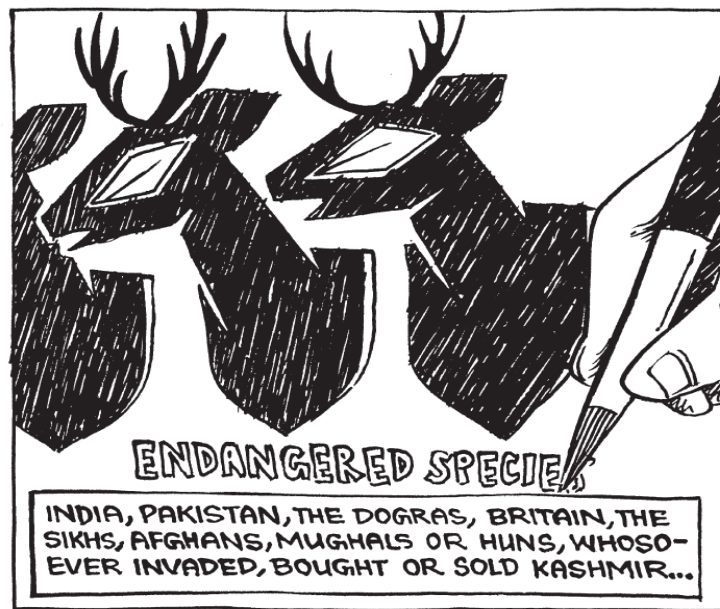


Figure 8:Endangered Species.

The life of the inhabitants is surrounded by darkness and despair. Apart from the trope of darkness, there is a trope of remaining hidden. Most of the houses are camouflaged by algae and bushes so that the armies cannot locate them. The bullet holes on the walls, the bloodstains, the curfews, the cross fire, the ambush, the slogans of azadi, the frustrations capture the spectacle through the graphic medium.

Graphic novelists in the west as well as in India have endeavoured to represent trauma associated with historical events in their works. Words as well as images combine in the graphic novel in the rendering of complex mental states. E.H. Gombrich in *Art and Illusion* states that “All artistic discoveries are discoveries not of likenesses but of equivalences which enable us to see reality in terms of an image and an image in terms of reality” (Gombrich,276). In the graphic novel various signs- gestures, postures, senses, movements are employed to convey meaning but signs also involve a certain distancing from the actual happenings and they may be read differently by readers

placed in different contexts. Also the magnitude of events like the holocaust and their manifold impact on the human beings can hardly be captured fully by any medium. Anyway the graphic medium is a different response to history as it articulates trauma through signifiers. An event is translated into pictorial language and reduced dialogues and thus it is a different mode of understanding/representing history and trauma.

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