

Representation of History, Violence and Socio-Political Issues in Select Graphic Novels

A Research Proposal Submitted to
Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan.

For the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Faculty of Arts, English

Submitted by
Kiran G Rohit
Seat No: 1808210

Under the Supervision Of
Dr. Rakesh Rao
Principal
B.P.B. Arts and Commerce College,
UNJHA.

1. Introduction

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, Graphic novels are stories that is presented in comic-strip format and published as a book or written and illustrated in the style of a comic book. However, there is ambiguity in academic related the term Graphic novel and Comic books. some of suggests that Graphic novel is a fancy name for Comic Books and some of them find a thin line between these two forms. To be considered a Graphic novel, rather than a picture book or illustrated novel, the story is told using a combination of words and pictures in a sequence across the page. The term “graphic novel” is generally referred as a book in a comic format that resembles a novel in length and narrative development. It can tell any kind of story, just like their prose counterparts. The format is what makes the story a graphic novel, and usually includes Text, Panels, Gutters, Dialogue Box, Thought Balloon, Caption, Sound Effects. If we trace the history of graphic novels we find that stories has been told through pictures for centuries like early cave drawings, hieroglyphics, medieval tapestries or the famous Bayeux Tapestry can be thought of as stories told in pictures.

In recent times, the growth and popularity of the graphic novel across the country have led to an inquiry into this form of the graphic novel. Graphic novels had been already a popular form in America, France and the UK. The beginnings of which is traced to Will Eisner’s 1978 short story collection, *A Contract With God*. It is a new area of research that makes new researchers to take an interest in the form of graphic novels. There has been done so much research on graphic narrative but there areas which remain unexplored like Representation Of History, Violence, Social Issues and Experience of untouchability so the Researchers selected Graphic novels deals with these Issues.

For the purpose of Researcher's Research, the novels that He takes up are *Palestine* by Joe Sacco, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, *Bhimayana: Incidents in the Life of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar* by artists Durgabai Vyam, Subhash Vyam and writers Srividya Natarajan and S. Anand and *A Gardener in the Wasteland: Jotiba Phule's Fight for Liberty* by Srividya Natarajan. These Graphic novels narrate the story of History, Violence and socio-political issues.

Since the publication of *Maus* (1980-91) it is associated with the theme of the History. World historical events have been represented within the frame of the graphic narrative and how these narratives serve to uphold the principles of the "People's History" type of historical narrative, thereby providing counter-narratives to the more powerful, so-called "historical facts". History in the graphic narrative is a persistent theme as "the visual dimension of the graphic novel contributes substantially not only to our understanding of history but also to a larger question of how history can be represented" (Nayar 2016, p. 14). "The following section will elaborate on this category of graphic narrative by focusing on primarily four tropes through which history is represented in the graphic narratives: firstly, de-centering the center of historical facts/ documentation; secondly, amalgamation of the public and private spheres of history; thirdly, projecting history through the frame of irony and satire; and finally, history through the canvas of nostalgia and memory." (Antarleena, 2017)

2. Title of Study

The title of the present research is the Representation of history, violence and social-political issues in the selected graphic novels. In this research, the prime focus is on the root cause of violence in select graphic novels. How do the Graphic Novels, New phenomena in literature deals with an issue of Indian caste system. This research also tries to answer the questions like how does the graphic novels represent socio-political issues of Israel- Palestine in a sequential art form like graphic novels and how does the graphic artist documentize people's history in Maus.

3. Review of Related Literature

This study is aimed to explore the major issues of life through graphic novels like history, violence and socio-political issues. The researcher went through many sources that can help decide the research topic meanwhile, which he came through subject like “ Representation of History in the Indian Graphic Novel: An Analytical Study of History through the Frame of Graphic Narratives”, “The Political is Personal: Postcolonial Identity Crisis and Resistance” and “Visual Rhetoric Literacy Series”, “Colliding memories: The Israeli-Palestine in the graphic novel of Joe Sacco”. “An analysis of the bhimayana: experiences of Untouchability- a departure from the history book Heroism of india”. There has been done much research on the genre of graphic novels. However, they left untouched in one space and that are of violence, Social issues and politics. This research focuses on graphic novels as a serious form of literature.. The researcher also takes help of other reference works, which can direct towards better perspectives to make the research more effective.

4. Objectives

Objectives of this research are:

- To explore the history of graphic novels
- To understand the depiction of violence in the graphic novels
- To study the socio-political issues in the graphic novels
- To decipher politics behind the graphic novels
- To analyses the plight of Untouchable through a new emerging form like graphic Novels

5. Hypothesis

The researcher has undertaken the study of this newly emerging form of literature, “Graphic novel”. The Researcher is sure that the investigative study and analysis of the proposal titles will be helpful in creating a responsible narrative in the historical background and traces creative exploration of form, it would also make it easier to understand the depiction of violence, socio-political issues, being covered and political mindset behind its creative process.

6. Research Methodology

The study is based on qualitative research methodology where discourse analysis, text analysis and critical interpretation will be done to understand different narratives of graphic novels deeply. The conceptualization of the research will be accomplished by applying the theories of violence, and other social theories.

7. Chapterization

1. Introduction to The History of Graphic Novels

The first chapter will explain the origin and development of graphic novels from picture stories to the comic and a genre called a graphic novel. “Since the days of prehistoric man, people have been telling stories using pictures instead of prose. From the cave paintings of the Cro-Magnon to the hieroglyphics of Ancient Egypt, graphic storytelling has been in use as a popular means for communicating thoughts and ideas.”(Graphic Novels)Here, Researcher introduces his selective five graphic novels.

2. Representation of History and Violence in “Maus”

In this chapter, the Researcher will analysis the graphic novel Maus by Art Spiegelman. “Maus is a graphic novel by American cartoonist Art Spiegelman, serialized from 1980 to 1991. It depicts Spiegelman interviewing his father about his experiences as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor. The work employs postmodernist techniques and represents Jews as mice, Germans as cats, and Poles as pigs. Critics have classified Maus as memoir, biography, history, fiction, autobiography, or a mix of genres. In 1992, it became the first graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize” (Wikipedia Contribution). Here Researcher will analyze it through historical aspect and violence depicted in the graphic novel.

3. Depiction of Violence In Joe Sacco’s Graphic Novel “Palestine”

In this chapter, the researcher will do an intensive reading of Joe Sacco’s graphic novel Palestine. “Joe Sacco’s Palestine was originally published as ten-part series of comic books in 1993. “An angry investigation of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, it is told through his own eyes and drawings, as a visiting journalist. Subsequently republished in book format in

2001, it also brought Sacco from relative obscurity into wide public focus. Palestine won the American Book Award in 2003. Sacco, a Maltese-American, had up to this point moved geographically around the world, and professionally between bit-jobs, journalism, and comic book publication.”(Martin Barker, 2012)

4. **History and Social-Political Issues of Iran In “Persepolis”**

This chapter will critically study *Persepolis* a graphic novel by Marjane Satrapi. *Persepolis* is Marjane Satrapi’s memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. In powerful black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the story of her life in Tehran from ages six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah’s regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq. The intelligent and outspoken only child of committed Marxists and the great-granddaughter of one of Iran’s last emperors, Marjane bears witness to a childhood uniquely entwined with the history of her country.

5. **History and Caste Violence in “Bhimayana” and “A Gardener in the Wasteland: Jotiba Phule's Fight for Liberty”**

This Chapter deals with Caste violence and History of untouchability as told through these graphic novels. In India we find Caste Violence just because of Casteism, These novels are associated with the issues of Untouchability. “Untouchability is a menace and social evil associated with traditional Hindu society. It is being practised since times immemorial and despite various efforts made by social reformers such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar; and despite there being provision on abolition of untouchability in our Constitution, the evil is still in

practice in our country”.(Untouchability in India) These Both Selected graphic novels deal with great Dalit figures like Dr B.R Ambedkar and Jotiba Phule and their experiences as being born and brought up in Dalit families. A Gardener in Wasteland based on Jotiba Phule’s book Gulamgiri. These Novels negotiate about the violence faced by Dalit Community. These graphic novels Present Sharp criticism against Orthodox Hinduism.

6. Conclusion

The concluding chapter will be mainly focused on whether the objectives of this research have been fulfilled and how the researcher attempted on a graphic novel as an emerging form of literature through the presentation of its historical trajectories. Later, the chapter will conclude the critical analysis of the representation of history, violence and socio-political issues discussed in all chapters by taking different graphic novels. The last chapter would be of, Violence Inherited by Dalit Community.

Suggestion For Further Studies:

Apart from History, violence and socio-political issue this study can be done through the points of allegorical studies, alternative history of authors, humanitarian concept. There is suitable theory for Graphic novel is Reader response theory through this Researcher do analysis of graphic novels

7. References

Primary Sources:

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus : a Survivor's Tale*. New York :Pantheon Books, 1986-1991.

Nayar, P.K. (2016). *The Indian graphic novel: Nation, history and critique*. London: Routledge.
Natarajan, Srividya. *A Gardener in the Wasteland: Jotiba Phule's Fight for Liberty*. Translated By Aparajita Ninan, Navayana Publishing, 20AD.

Vyam, Durgabai, et al. *Bhimayana: Incidents in the Life of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar*. Navayana, 2011.

Sacco, Joe. *Palestine*. Fantagraphics, 1993.

Satrap, Marjane. *Persepolis*. L'Association, 2000,2004.

Secondary Sources:

Wikipedia Contributors. "Maus." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 18 May 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maus.

Tychinski, Stan. "A Brief History of the Graphic Novel." *diamondbookshelf*, @DiaBookshelf, <http://www.diamondbookshelf.com/Home/1/1/20/164?articleID=64513>

Basu, Antarleena. "Representation of History in the Indian Graphic Novel: An Analytical Study of History through the Frame of Graphic Narratives." *IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities*, Volume 4 – Issue 2, Autumn 2017, pp. 25-39. iafor.org,

<http://iafor.org/archives/journals/iafor-journal-of-arts-and-humanities/10.22492.ijah.4.2.03.pdf>.

Barker, Martin. "The Reception of Joe Sacco's Palestine." *Participation Journal of audience and reception studies*, Volume 9, Issue 2, November 2012, pp. 59-73. *Participation.org*, <http://www.participations.org/Volume%209/Issue%202/6%20Barker.pdf>.

"Untouchability in India - Discrimination, Abolition and Present Scenario."

IndiaCelebrating.com,17 Feb. 2018, www.indiacelebrating.com/social-issues/untouchability-in-india/.

Name of Research Scholar:

Kiran G Rohit

Signature:

Date:

The Supervisor:

Dr.Rakesh Rao

Principal,

B.P.B. Arts and Commerce College, UNJHA.

Date:

Signature: