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**A Cultural Studies Approach to Space, Time, Affect and Ethics in
Joe Sacco's Documentary Graphic Novels**

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Statement of the Authorship

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I, Tahani BEKAKRA, declare that the content of this thesis is completely my own work and has never before been presented to a university or other academic organization with the intention of earning a degree. I certify that all data in this thesis was gathered, organized, and presented in complete accordance with academic standards and moral guidelines. I also confirm that I properly acknowledged and referenced any borrowed ideas in this thesis.

Signature



Dedication

Dedication

To my mother and father, with love and gratitude.

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

The present thesis examines Joe Sacco's documentary graphic novels—*Safe Area Gorazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia (1992-1995)*, *The Fixer*, *Paying the Land*, and *Journalism*—as works that blend entertainment with serious cultural commentary, challenging conventional journalism and mainstream media practices. Situated within cultural studies, the research focuses on the graphic novel's unique book-length format, which bridges art and literature, and adopts a formalist approach to analyze Sacco's use of visual elements such as the panel, the frame, and gutter. By emphasizing aesthetics, the study highlights how Sacco's innovative word-image interplay creates urgency, immediacy, and emotional depth, compelling readers to engage empathetically with stories of conflict and crisis. Moreover, through the thematic lenses of space, time, affect, and ethics, this research demonstrates how Sacco's graphic novels serve as both engaging narratives and powerful tools for understanding human experiences in dire circumstances, ultimately showcasing the medium's potential to reshape journalism and cultural discourse.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Affect, Comics Journalism, Cultural Studies, Documentary Graphic Novel, Ethics, Space, Time.

List of Figures

	Page
Figure (1): The Bon-Bons Scene.....	72
Figure (2): Drina.....	73
Figure (3) : The Uncanny Frame.....	77
Figure (4): The Right to Look! To Shoot.....	78
Figure (5): The (Dis)appearing Frame.....	80
Figure (6): The Positioned Frames.....	82
Figure (7): The Aspect-to-Aspect Panels.....	86
Figure (8): The Panel as a Space for Untold Stories.....	87
Figure (9): The Punctum.....	89
Figure (10): The Punctum.....	91
Figure (11): The Diegetic Space.....	92
Figure (12): The Gutter.....	94
Figure (13): The Bloody Gutter.....	95
Figure (14): The Testimonial Gutter.....	99
Figure (15): The Habitus of Gorazde.....	106
Figure (16): Mapping the Bosnian War.....	113
Figure (17): Mapping the Bosnian War.....	114
Figure (18): Visual Simultaneity.....	123
Figure (19): Communicative Narration.....	128
Figure (20): Neven : The Superhero.....	131

Figure (21): The Tape Recorder.....	138
Figure (22): The Monotonous Rhythm of Post-war Sarajevo.....	143
Figure (23): Memory Rhythms.....	145
Figure (24): Visual Historying.....	152
Figure (25): Visual Historying.....	153
Figure (26): Speaking to the Specter.....	157
Figure (27): The Visor Effect.....	158
Figure (28): The Visor Effect.....	159
Figure (29): The Spectrality of the Photograph	161
Figure (30): Haunting Places.....	163
Figure (31): The Clone Image.....	166
Figure (32): The Facial Close-Up.....	180
Figure (33): The Yamozha Legend.....	181
Figure (34): The Testimonial Zoomed-in-Face.....	183
Figure (35): The Aggressive Face of the Residential School.....	186
Figure (36): The Aging Face of the Nun.....	189
Figure (37): The Transmission of Traumatic Memories.....	193
Figure (38): Alcoholism.....	196
Figure (39): Embodied Simulation.....	200
Figure (40): The Ecological Sublime.....	203

Figure (41): Empathy.....	205
Figure (42): Emotional Solidarity.....	209
Figure (43): The Multisensorial Experience.....	211
Figure (44): Juxtaposing Justice.....	221
Figure (45): The Inaccessibility of Law.....	223
Figure (46): The Bullet’s Trace.....	228
Figure (47): The Destruction of Alerity.....	229
Figure (48): The Suspension of Morality.....	229
Figure (49): Maternity.....	235
Figure (50): The Ethics of (Dis)order.....	238
Figure (51): (Un)framed Hospitality.....	241
Figure (52): Can the Musahar Speak?	245
Figure (53): Can the Musahar Speak?.....	246
Figure (54): McCloud’s Definition of Comics.....	273
Figure (55): Looking for Comics Beyond Our Millenium.....	274
Figure (56): Time and Timing.....	275
Figure (57): The Zigzag Reading Direction.....	276
Figure (58): The Close-Up.....	277
Figure (59): The Facial Expressions.....	278

Table of Contents

	Page
Statement of the Authorship.....	i
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
List of Figures.....	viii
General Introduction.....	1
1. Background of the Study.....	3
2. Statement of Problem.....	6
3. Aims of the Study.....	8
4. Research Questions.....	10
5. Research Hypotheses.....	10
6. Methodology.....	12
7. Organization of the Thesis.....	15
Chapter One: The Cultural Turn in the Graphic Novel.....	20
Introduction.....	20
1.1 The Origins of Comics: A Mysterious Invention of the Comic Strip.....	22
1.2 The Development of the American Comic Book: The Superhero as a Popular Culture.....	29
1.3 Overcoming the Comics’ Aesthetic Anxiety.....	34
1.4 The Graphic Novel: The “Weighty” Comic Book Takes More Risks.....	37
1.5 The Documentary Graphic Novel: A Literary Movement of History Drawing	45

1.6 Joe Sacco: The Revival of the Comics Journalism.....	46
1.7 Thinking Outside the Box with the Documentary Graphic Novel: Doing a Cultural Studies Approach	52
Conclusion.....	63
Chapter Two: The Spatial Conflict in the Graphic Space of Joe Sacco’s Graphic Novel <i>Safe Area Goražde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-95</i> (2000)	67
Introduction.....	67
2.1 The Graphic <i>Opsis</i>: Spatializing Responsible Seeing in <i>Safe Area Goražde</i>.....	69
2.2 The (Dis)appearing Frame: Framing the ‘Right to shoot! to look!’.....	75
2.3 The Panel, the Punctum, and the Place: Goražde’s Lives and Landscapes.....	84
2.4 The Gutter: A Space for the Spaceless.....	93
2.4.1 The Bloody Gutter.....	95
2.4.2 The Gutter: A Testimonial Space for Traumatic Memories.....	98
2.5 Goražde: The Habitus of War Location.....	101
2.6 Goražde, the (Un) Safe Area: Between Hostility and Hospitality.....	106
2.7 Mapping the Bosnian War Graphically.....	109
Conclusion.....	115
Chapter Three: Drawn Times of the Bosnian Conflict: The Graphic Time Between Narrativity and Historicity in Joe Sacco’s <i>The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo</i> (2003)	118
Introduction.....	118
3.1 <i>The Fixer</i>: A Historiophoty of The Bosnian War.....	119
3.2 Visual Simultaneity in <i>The Fixer</i>: A New Representation of Time.....	121
3.3 Neven: An Unusual Narrator of the Bosnian War Times.....	124
3.4 The Dynamic Graphic Narrative of <i>The Fixer</i>.....	133
3.5 Rhythmanalyzing the Bosnian War.....	139
3.6 Deviating From the Abstract to the Self-Reflexive Historical Representation of the Bosnian War in Sarajevo in Sacco’s <i>The Fixer</i>.....	149

3.7 Speaking to the Specter: Keeping the Bosnian War’s Ghosts Alive.....	154
Conclusion.....	166
Chapter Four: Effective Representation through Affective Expression in Joe Sacco’s Graphic Novel <i>Paying the Land</i> (2020)	169
Introduction.....	169
4.1 The Turn to Affect in Joe Sacco’s <i>Paying the Land</i>.....	172
4.2 The Facial Close-Up: Unveiling the Face of the Cultural Genocide.....	176
4.3 The Visual and Verbal Transmission of Affect: Intergenerational and Environmental Embodied Emotions.....	191
4.3.1 The Intergenerational Transmission of Anger and Post-memory.....	191
4.3.2 Ecological Affects: Embodied Simulations and Sublimations.....	197
4.4 Empathy: A Sense of Justice.....	204
4.5 Iconic Solidarity or Emotional Solidarity?.....	207
4.6 The Multisensorial Character of <i>Paying the Land</i>: An Aesthetics of Suspension.....	207
Conclusion.....	212
Chapter Five: Graphic Ethics in Joe Sacco’s <i>Journalism</i> (2012).....	216
Introduction.....	216
5.1 Juxtaposing Justice Before and Outside the Law.....	218
5.2 War as a Mockery of Morality in the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict.....	225
5.3 Feminine Recurrent Alterity in the Chechen War.....	230
5.4 The Ethics of (dis)Order in the Iraq War: Sequence Matters.....	236
5.5 (Un)Framed Hospitality in Sacco’s “Migration”.....	239
5.6 The Truth about the Subaltern “Dalits” in the ‘Passe-Partout’ Gutter.....	242
Conclusion.....	247
General Conclusion.....	249
List of References.....	255
Appendices.....	273

Résumé.....	279
الملخص.....	280

General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

2. Statement of the Problem

3. Aims of the Study

4. Research Questions

5. Research Hypotheses

6. Methodology

7. Organisation of the Thesis

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Since its first emergence on May 5, 1895, the date of the publication of *The Yellow Kid* by Outcault, American comics started to be highly appreciated by the people, but critically perceived by academics and scholars. The immediate acceptance of comics in the American context was sensed from the very beginning and this is manifested by the cartoon historian Becker (n.d.) who reported this public reception of the *Yellow kid* by stating that it represented “that first gentle wave of mass hysteria which accompanies the birth of popular art forms” (as cited in Berger, 1978, p. 99). However, this hysteric reaction of the people was trivialized and greeted with derision by academics and critics who saw that comics cannot transcend to the highly valued materials of literature notably the canonical works of literature or the mature forms of the popular culture. These critics thought and repeated constantly the idea that comics as cultural products are not worth analyzing because they are designed to be enjoyed. In short, comics have been stigmatized and marginalized and the idea of ascribing literariness to comics as the other finest American literary works “would probably elicit an angry glare from a number of the cultural cognoscenti” (Lopes, 2009, p. xi). Such a low regard and negative attitude to the comics has created a challenge for this creative form of art to rise, to challenge, and even to compete with other forms of art.

To survive and to be taken seriously as a literary genre, American comics witnessed various changes throughout more than a century of history. The American comic developed from comic strips and cartoons to comic books and then to graphic novels. In addition, this dynamicity of change especially in the form is accelerated by film adaptations of comics and graphic novels by the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century. Despite this variety in the form, “the perception of the genre has primarily remained distorted towards comics” (Thomas, 2010, xxx). However, the conventions that define a certain genre are socially

constructed and thus they are arbitrary and subjective. This idea is highlighted by Thomas (2010) who argues that the parameters that distinguish the novel by Dickens *A Tale of Two Cities* from the serial comic book of Moore and Gibbons *Watchmen* operate within lines drawn according to certain contexts and certain power structures (p. xx). Accordingly, we can consider comic books and graphic novels as genres that are like the other genres because they provide the reader with different and complex conventions such as the combination of the image and the text, new subjects, new themes, and new characters.

Therefore, comic books and graphic novels as a challenging genre to the canon represent a crucial element in the American culture and thus in the field of 'cultural studies.' The wider spread of contemporary culture forms and especially of comics evokes the popularity of the cultural studies. On the one hand, many critics refuse to embrace the popular culture forms as media of study and hold to the idea that the canon that is a category of literature created in the western culture and mainly the European culture is the only legitimate cultural form worth of study. On the other hand, other critics like Guillory see that the canon as a western culture does not convene with the American culture and that these 'great works' are embraced as the 'cultural capital' of the dominant fraction's ideational orientations (2000, p. 220). In this case, the American culture can no longer be constrained within the boundaries of the canonical culture and instead it has to enlarge its horizons through acknowledging other cultural forms. For this purpose, the tendency of 'cultural studies' is founded to analyze the "subjects disdained by the traditional hierarchies of aesthetic value, or ones that in their exoticism stand outside the older canon" (Richter, 2006, p. 1325). That is, 'cultural studies' appeared primarily as an inevitable discipline that seeks out to study whatever is happening in the social world.

'Cultural studies' is a field of study that actually appeared in the 1950s in Britain out of leavisism, then developed in the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS founded in 1964) as an open-ended project and which involves and accepts various theoretical

influences. Precisely, 'Cultural studies' as an interdisciplinary field of study developed through the works of Hoggart and Williams who focused on the working-class culture in order to revalidate it. Thus, the aim of 'cultural studies' is to give voice to the voiceless and the powerless, and to the marginalized cultural forms. This aim is realized through its theoretical advances that are the result of the encounter with various theoretical legacies like Marxism, structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism, feminism, psychoanalysis, anthropology, and ethnography. This theoretical and thus methodological variety characterizing 'cultural studies' is due to the fact that "it is in constant and engaged interaction with its larger historical contexts and because it cannot be complacent about its authority" (During, 1999, p.17). In other words, 'cultural studies' has the ability to address all the topics that exist in any social context including literature because literature is an inseparable element from any culture in general.

Recently, the turn to culture and especially to popular culture in literary studies assures its inseparability from 'cultural studies' and not the inverse. Many people think that 'cultural studies' cannot converge with literary studies because of its analyses of popular cultural practices rather than the dominant or the elite cultural practices. However, Hall (1999) affirms the seriousness of 'cultural studies' as a discipline stating that, "It is a serious enterprise, or project, and that is inscribed in what is sometimes called the 'political' aspect of cultural studies" (p. 99). That is, the general turn to culture is an intellectual addition to the field of literary studies because it uses its 'knowledge' to realize a 'serious' project of change. Moreover, concerning the relation between 'cultural studies' and literary studies, the published pieces of opinions by the Modern Languages Association in 1997 confirm their interconnection and that "cultural studies was another wave within literary studies, and that the distinction between the two, being artificial, was to be downplayed" (During, 1999, p. 25). That is, the 'modesty' (to use Hall's word) of 'cultural studies' is inevitably necessary to approach issues

and subjects found in the everyday life whether these subjects are important or seem unimportant.

The ‘modesty’ of ‘cultural studies’ allows it to question the popular cultural practices that diverge between seriousness and entertainment like reading graphic novels. Here, graphic novels are primarily read in the American society for enjoyment, but the question here is “are they really produced to entertain or made for something more important?” In contrast to those critics who see graphic novels as merely entertainment products, others assume exactly the opposite like Thomas (2011) who argues that the high quality of the work in comics including graphic novels makes of them interesting media of study (p. 189). In addition, being read by a considerable number of people is a fact that deserves ‘serious’ considerations. In other words, graphic novels cannot be considered as pure entertainment, but rather they are literary works that can serve as a valuable conduit to a critical investigation in both literary conventions and popular culture.

Therefore, the present thesis intends to examine the graphic novels as aesthetic sources of both entertainment and change by placing them within the discipline of cultural studies. In fact, what is challenging in cultural studies is its open-endedness and its vagueness concerning the inconsistent theoretical scopes that it embraces. In this respect, Richter (2006) emphasizes that it is necessary to narrow the literary and social theory in relation to certain subjects in order “to make the questions they raise, the texts they choose, and the methods they follow comprehensible” (p. 1325). That is, it is very important to be selective when dealing with ‘cultural studies’ because of its multidisciplinary character.

2. Statement of Problem

The vagueness and multidisciplinaryity of ‘cultural studies’ entails the following question: how can we approach graphic novels which are perceived as cultural products and literary works situated within the cultural studies area of investigation? While the British ‘cultural

studies' limits its focus on studying popular culture and media culture, the Frankfurt school tends to emphasize the avant-garde art; however, both insist that "culture must be studied within the social relations and system through which culture is produced and consumed, and that thus study of culture is intimately bound up with the study of society, politics and economics" (McGuigan, 1997, p. 18). That is, the emphasis is placed on reception and consumption, production and distribution or the 'political economy' of culture, but, what about aesthetics?

'Cultural studies' has always been against embracing aesthetics as their primary subject adopting what Foster calls an "anti-aesthetic" stance. This skeptical view toward aesthetics is actually held against the autonomous status of art as something rebellious and disinterested as seen by romanticists and modernists, respectively. In explaining Foster's notion of "anti-aesthetics," Knight (2010) sees that aesthetics has always been marginalized by 'cultural studies' linking it more to the field of ethics and taste looking at art with suspicious eyes (p. 793). Corner (2003) as well describes the relationship of 'cultural studies' to aesthetics as being "troubled and contradictory" (p. 92). Moreover, the idea of the indifference of 'cultural studies' towards aesthetics is mainly influenced by Marxism. In this regard, Holm and Duncan (2018) maintain that "cultural studies needs to enrich its aesthetic palette" (p. 752). However, doing a cultural study that starts from aesthetics rather than the economic policy in approaching the documentary graphic novel especially that by Joe Sacco creates another problematic that of where does the aesthetic reside in the documentary? And how can the documentary graphic novel or comics journalism elicit pleasure or entertainment?

The documentary in general and the documentary graphic novel in specific has its particular aesthetics which is the 'realistic aesthetic.' The realist aesthetics does not only limit itself to pleasure but extends to include experience. The documentary film, Tv show, or graphic novel showcases realistic events through the use of certain artistic effects that help in the conveying of the content of the presented work. It has, as Zangwill (2010) contends, "a distinctively

aesthetic content” (p. 64). In other words, the realist aesthetics of the documentary graphic novel is an aesthetic experience identified by the combination of both form and content. Yet, the serious content of the documentary graphic novel especially that deals with conflicts and wars like Joe Sacco’s works suggests another problematic that of being entertained during the process of reading serious graphic novels.

Joe Sacco’s documentary graphic novels represent an interesting area in the world of comics creating a genre that is called graphic reportage. Unlike memoirs and autobiographical graphic novels, Sacco’s graphic reportages are about the realities of others; the fact that makes it a genre composed of many other non-fictional genres—namely the documentary, history, and journalism—stands out. The complexity of Sacco’s graphic novels in terms of both content and form as it belongs to the three aforementioned genres is negotiated by the blending of factual and fictional modes of representation producing a graphic depiction of the event that usually has to do with war conflicts, marginalization, oppression and natural destruction. However, the mixture of fictitious and factual elements or of art and journalism in Sacco’s documentary graphic novels poses questions on the truthfulness and credibility of its subject matters. That is, the aesthetic production enacted through the visual and the verbal in Sacco’s graphic novels problematizes the concept of documentary that is derived from Sacco’s subjective imagination and interpretation translated into a graphic narrative that in turn questions the credibility of history, journalism, and documentary and the entanglement and inseparability of these three factual discourses.

3. Aims of the Study

In analyzing the entertainment and seriousness of graphic novels as aesthetic cultural products, the centrality of comics language which is composed of the verbal and the visual will be emphasized by engaging in a critical analysis of the following graphic novels by Joe Sacco: *Safe Area Goražde: The War in Eastern Bosnia (1992-1995)*, *The Fixer*, *Paying the Land*, and

Journalism. For this purpose, the consideration of the semiotic analysis of these documentary graphic novels seems essential in “understanding both the affective appeal and the political labour of particular symbolic forms” (Holm & Duncan, 2018, p. 752). Therefore, in analyzing these works, this thesis aims at investigating four categories within culture as depicted through the use of comics language, namely time, space, affect, and ethics, respectively.

This thesis also aims at shedding light on serious topics ranging from war conflicts like the Bosnian war to the problem of resource extraction in the Canadian Northwestern Territories and the question of ethics in reporting journalistically and artistically people’s hardships. This means that this thesis is not just about the language of comics but also about the contexts that contribute in the production of these graphic novels; it is both textually and contextually framed. More specifically, the central themes of this thesis, namely space, time, affect, and ethics are discussed within specific contexts generating in this way spatial, temporal, affectual, and ethical critiques different in their perspectival directions. For example, exploring the concept of space is not just restricted to the graphic space but also to the space of conflict that is aesthetically, imaginatively, physically, politically, and geographically identified. Yet, the point of departure in this inquiry is always the comics language which represents the raw material that helps us in examining controversial concepts like space, time, affect, and ethics. For example, because the social psychological notion of affect partakes in biology and culture, it represents an interesting area of investigation as depicted in Sacco’s graphic novels. In this respect, Barker (2000) assumes that “it is certainly a mistake to see language as either wholly cultural or biological in its operations since it is patently both” (p. 49). Therefore, the style or the language of graphic novels opens up a number of ‘serious’ issues while providing entertainment to its readers. This thesis endeavors to examine Sacco’s documentary graphic novels as cultural forms that bear within themselves the necessity of a critical analysis of the cultural, political, historical, economic and social aspects of life in places and times of discomfort.

4. Research Questions

In order to bring the notions of seriousness and entertainment under an equivalent critical consideration, this thesis tends to read Sacco's graphic novels or cultural forms, namely *Safe Area Gorazde*, *The Fixer*, *Paying the Land*, and *Journalism* under the umbrella of 'cultural studies' and comics studies. To address this aim, the following research questions will be examined:

- 1- How can the aesthetic features of Sacco's comics journalism bridge entertainment and social responsibility?
- 2- How can the graphic space in Joe Sacco's graphic novel *Safe Area Gorazde* become a space for the Bosnian war and vice versa?
- 3- What is the relationship between temporality, narrativity, and history in the graphic narrative of *The Fixer* by Joe Sacco?
- 4- In what way does the concept of affect influence the convincing quality of Joe Sacco's graphic novel *Paying the Land*? Or how does the embodied affect transmit the question of the Dene people in the Northwestern Territories in Canada effectively?
- 5- What insights can be gained from tackling the subject of ethics in relation to Joe Sacco's graphic novel *Journalism*? And what is the relationship between Joe Sacco's comics journalism and the ethical discourse of reporting the miseries of other people?

5. Research Hypotheses

The interesting historical development of American graphic novel, which has seen its birth in the sweatshops and suffered from censorship regulations, sparks considerable interest. In other words, the astonishing growth of comics brings to the fore an ambitious desire to study this cultural form that is still dismissed in the American culture. Moreover, the American graphic novels established themselves as a unique literary genre with their creative and attractive elements from colorful and uncolored images, paintings and graphics to texts, themes,

and characters. Being part of the American graphic novel tradition, Joe Sacco's graphic novels or comics journalism represents an important source of inspiration with its innovative, creative, and different style of visualizing serious but aesthetically entertaining topics. Therefore, based on an interdisciplinary framework as supported by 'cultural studies' and on the theoretical and critical findings of comics studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- 1- It is hypothesized that Sacco's graphic novels, namely *Safe Area Goražde*, *The Fixer*, *Paying the Land*, and *Journalism* are cultural forms that do not only include stories from other parts of the world but also involve implicitly or explicitly the American perspective on such important and serious topics like the Bosnian war, the resources extraction in the Canadian Northwestern Territories, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the war in Iraq, immigration and many other topics. Therefore, looking at Sacco's works aesthetically is very crucial in highlighting the importance of cultural concepts like space, time, affect, and ethics in filtering the different views on such human catastrophes.
- 2- It is hypothesized that the graphic novel as a comics form has the formal capacities that enables it to be a serious literary genre.
- 3- It is hypothesized that Sacco's documentary graphic novels are aesthetic spaces that do not only map the spaces of war through its spatial properties like the panel, the frame, and the gutter but also draws times of conflict through its narrativity. In other words, Sacco's graphic novels—specifically *Safe Area Goražde* and *The Fixer*—illustrate the daily experience of space and time during the Bosnian war.
- 4- It is hypothesized that the visual and verbal language of Joe Sacco's graphic novels translates the affective aspect in people's lives especially their traumatic experiences as lived in the past. For example, Sacco's graphic novel *Paying the Land* explores the affective workings of the Dene people vividly and truthfully.

5- It is hypothesized that Joe Sacco's comics journalism complies to certain ethical principles that do not necessarily agree with the classical journalism taught in schools and universities. That is to say, Sacco's journalistic investigations put in the comics format are drawn according to certain ethical verities that are embodied aesthetically and subjectively depending on the subject matter of the story.

6. Methodology

The method by which this study will be conducted depends heavily on close readings of Joe Sacco's documentary graphic novels: *Safe Area Goražde*, *The Fixer*, *Paying the Land*, and *Journalism*, focusing on their aesthetic styles in order to link entertainment to seriousness. In addition, through using critical tools derived from the theoretical advances of 'cultural studies' and the comics studies, this thesis tends to display the inseparability of entertainment from seriousness which form together a continuous process of cultural change. The 'close reading' method is a literary critical method used by most practitioners of 'cultural studies' especially the founding fathers of 'cultural studies' like Hoggart who has adapted 'close reading' technique to his sociological analyses of the cultural practices of the working class in Britain. The literary method of close reading is thus freed from its textual imprisonment becoming a critical practice for scrutinizing the social life as lived by ordinary people. In this way, reading Sacco's documentary graphic novels closely involves not just reading words, images, frames, panels, and gutters but also exploring the culture behind the comics language. Therefore, the close reading technique is used in this thesis to analyze both the lived experience of war and exploitation in combination with its textual parallels. This insistence on focusing attention on the comics language is because language represents "the symbolic modality in which culture operates" (Hall, 2008, p. 8).

The interdisciplinarity of 'cultural studies' allows us to use a variety of theoretical approaches and concepts in order to uncover the cultural motivations behind Sacco's 'different'

journalism, the comics journalism. In this thesis, the combination between comics studies and other different critical concepts creates a certain framework that is based mainly on four central themes, namely space, time, affect, and ethics. Although the four themes are interrelated, this thesis aims at emphasizing each of them separately in order to see experiences of hardships, of how it looks and feels like to be living in war zones and places of dispossession and dispersion in detail. Looking closely at the four dimensions of such horrible experiences like the Bosnian war, the cultural genocide in the Northwestern territories, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Iraq war, the Chechenan war, and the illegal immigration of Africans to Europe is an aesthetic, cultural, economic and political task. In short, analyzing Sacco's documentary graphic novels follows the method of linking the text to its context of production.

Indeed, approaching Sacco's graphic novels from an aesthetic point of view does not mean neglecting the political side since the 'cultural studies' project from its beginnings is a political project that aims to make a change in the society. That is, the 'cultural studies' approach believes in the indivisibility of imagination and politics. In studying spatiality, temporality, affectivity, and ethicality in Sacco's journalistic graphic narratives, this thesis starts from the aesthetics part of the graphic novels to arrive to the political or the serious aspect of these 'cultural' works. Keeping culture as an important analytic category in studying space, time, affect, and ethics in Sacco's graphic novels is a practical way to criticize the culture of the American traditional journalism.

The cultural criticism that this thesis undertakes is inspired by Richard Hoggart whose methodology is based on literary analysis and ethnography. In this respect, Lee (2008) describes Hoggart's way of doing cultural studies as the following, "the two major techniques he employs, which were to be thoroughly exploited by cultural studies, are literary analysis and ethnography" and he adds that, "Certainly, one of his achievements was to extend literary critical methods to popular fields such as music, news media, and fiction. Ethnography, in this

case, is a personal ethnography of his working-class background” (p. 92). Hoggart’s interest in the working-class culture is not only personal but also social and political. In the same vein, this thesis focuses on one category of people who live in unordinary and frustrating circumstances like wars.

Because Sacco’s graphic novels introduce a new way of doing journalism especially war and human tragedies journalism, the ‘cultural studies’ approach characterized by its openness to a broad range of theoretical and methodological approaches enables a kind of cultural criticism to the traditional journalism which is after all a cultural practice that has a strong impact on people’s consciousness and knowledge. The relationship between ‘cultural studies’ and journalism is pronounced in many instances by cultural critics who against the rejection of ‘professional’ journalists continued and continue to approach journalism from a multidimensional standpoint. According to Meadows (1999), journalism represents a cultural practice that produces many kinds of effects. Similarly, ‘cultural studies’ is a contextualist approach that sees reality from different perspectives. The openness of both journalism and ‘cultural studies’ leads Meadows to think, “how can this broad framework help us in understanding journalism? Simply by encouraging us to look beyond journalism alone in order to theorise its place in the world” (p. 44).

Meadows (1999) emphasizes that the multidimensionality of reality and journalism necessitates a multidisciplinary approach like ‘cultural studies’ in order to grasp the workings of journalism. Through his comics, Sacco suggests a new method to practice journalism. He uses drawings in reimagining and reimagining the events he himself sees with his own eyes or told to him by people who lived the experience. By looking at space, time, affect, and ethics we become able to understand Sacco’s comics journalism as a cultural practice that produces new ways of doing journalism and imagining the unimaginable especially when the worst is lived by others and not us.

7. Organisation of the Thesis

With regard to structure, this thesis consists of five chapters, which shed light on the importance of studying Sacco's documentary graphic novels within 'cultural studies.' Every chapter addresses a specific cultural trajectory that offers the comics language the possibility to emerge as a necessary tool for an artistic point of view about what is happening in the world. That is, the thesis is organized in a specific way that allows the reader to understand the graphic novel in general and then to see how space, time, affect, and ethics are graphically represented within particular contexts.

Chapter One traces the development of the graphic novels throughout history from the comic strip to the comic book to achieve in the end the format of the graphic novel. In addition, it questions the literariness of this art form and highlights the role of graphic novels in making the cultural change possible thanks to its estimated acceptance by the academic public. Most importantly, Chapter One introduces the documentary graphic novel not just as a comics genre but rather as a literary movement of history drawing. It focuses precisely on Sacco's comics journalism and the possibility of approaching his works from a 'cultural studies' standpoint.

Chapter Two focuses on the question of 'war space' in relation to the aesthetic space Joe Sacco's documentary graphic novel *Safe Area Goražde*. This section discusses the ability of the graphic space to raise important questions on the topic of space in war conflicts and specifically in the Bosnian war. The graphic space corresponds to the different spatial elements of the graphic novel ranging from the frame to the panel and the gutter. Chapter Two also attempts to demonstrate how the Bosnian war space is aesthetically translated into a graphic space that is able to render this atrocious war into a spatial historical narrative.

Chapter Three revives the concept of time that has been neglected for a long time in literary criticism. In this chapter, war time(s) in Joe Sacco's documentary novel *The Fixer* is analyzed depending mainly on the narrative characteristics of the graphic novel. Moreover, the graphic

narrative unveils the narrativity and subjectivity of history, and at the same time, it highlights its importance in transmitting a multidimensional image about the Bosnian war in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. This chapter mainly captures the war time(s) in Bosnia visually and verbally as imagined and imaged by Sacco and the fixer 'Neven' defying the forgetfulness characterizing the factual representation of the Bosnian war.

Chapter Four delves deeper in the affective world of the Dene people in the North Western Territories in Canada as drawn in Joe Sacco's documentary graphic novel *Paying the Land*. It attempts to envisage how life feels like when one is culturally and economically colonized. This part of the thesis sheds light on the body of the Dene individual as drawn by Sacco and how feelings are literally and visually embodied. The traumatic experiences of the Dene people in the residential schools, along with the aftermath of this 'cultural genocide,' are affectively approached to explore colonization as a form of resource extraction. This approach reveals the affective (emotional and psychological) dimensions of colonization, which deeply impact the political, social, and economic lives of the Dene people, as well as their non-human surroundings.

Chapter Five investigates the ethical side of Sacco's journalistic reportages on important topics and events like the Iraq war, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and other issues in Joe Sacco's documentary graphic novel *Journalism*. This chapter examines the idea of values as depicted in words and images by Sacco. It probes the ethical experience of Sacco's graphic narratives taking into consideration the choices the author and his characters make and the circumstances in which they exist. Most importantly, Chapter Five takes into consideration the formal elements and techniques used in expressing the different ethical engagements with complicating themes such as wars and illegal immigration.

Finally, the General Conclusion restates the main idea discussed in the whole thesis with a focus on the general idea of the interconnection between entertainment and seriousness enabled

through the aesthetic style of Joe Sacco's graphic novels. It also underlines the importance of Sacco's documentary graphic novels in making the cultural change happens in the American culture and the mainstream culture of doing journalism and reporting people's plights.

This thesis, therefore, provides a cultural studies approach to Sacco's graphic novels by focusing on the spatial, the temporal, the affective, and the ethical dimensions of Sacco's documentary graphic novels. In effect, this thesis argues that the aesthetics of the graphic novel provides fruitful possibilities in visualizing and documenting realities and conflicts.

Chapter One

The Cultural Turn in The Graphic

Novel

Chapter One

The Cultural Turn in the Graphic Novel

Introduction

1.1 The Origins of Comics: A Mysterious Invention of the Comic Strip

1.2 The Development of the American Comic Book: The Superhero as a Popular Culture

1.3 Overcoming the Comics' Aesthetic Anxiety

1.4 The Graphic Novel: The "Weighty" Comic Book Takes More Risks

1.5 The Documentary Graphic Novel: A Literary Movement of History Drawing

1.6 Joe Sacco: The Revival of the Comics Journalism

1.7 Thinking Outside the Box with the Documentary Graphic Novel: Doing a Cultural Studies Approach

Conclusion

Chapter One

The Cultural Turn in the Graphic Novel

Introduction

In order to improve the human side or the empathetic aspect of the medical field, many scholars started to write graphic medical books that aim at developing the health humanities domain that is a combination of two different domains: medical education and humanistic critique. These graphic narratives, drawn by medical illustrators, teach physicians how to treat patients medically and personally. The hybrid form of the graphic medicine of words and images enables it to articulate simultaneously the medical education and the humanistic or ethical inquiry. Therefore, the simultaneous articulation of words and images in the medical graphic narratives creates a cultural performance that adopts the suppressed and the unexplored faculties of the sick's sufferings. The tradition of medical graphic narratives like *La Fabrique des corps: Des Premiers Prothese a l'humaine augmenté* by Heloise Chochois or *The Wandering Uterus* by Kriota Willberg goes back to the sixteenth century when Andreas Vesalius draws the first graphic medical texts like *De humani corporis fabricalibriseptem*. Reading or looking at these texts is an entertaining as well as educational experience because these texts are medical artworks pleasing to the eye, nourishing to the mind.

In his graphic novel *La Fabrique des corps*, Chochois as a medical illustrator recount in images and words the traumatic story of an unnamed young man, a student who loses his arm in a motorcycle's accident and as a way of recovery he meets in his fantasy after he wakes up out of coma the father of the modern surgery of amputation, Ambroise Paré who takes him in a historical scientific journey of physical and psychological recovery from his amputation trauma. In fact, Paré tells the young sufferer about the history of amputation, the neurological system of the phantom limb pain, the history of prosthetics, and finally the possibility for a

transhumanistic existence enabled by technological augmentation. In fact, this medical graphic novel intertwines fantasy with medical knowledge in order to approach a difficult to describe experience of amputation through its articulation of its hybrid integrations of art and empiricism. That is, the hybrid form of the graphic novel renders the difficult to frame in the amputee's experience of losing a limb more frameable.

Indeed, it is the hybrid form of the comics in general and the graphic novel in specific that plays an important role in challenging the ideologically constructed thoughts and beliefs, in defying the forbidden and in voicing the voiceless. Said (2001) points out to the liberating force of comics when he states, in his "Homage to Joe Sacco" for Sacco's groundbreaking graphic novel *Palestine*, stating that:

comics provided one with a directness of approach (the attractively and literally overstated combination of pictures and words) that seemed unassailably true on the one hand, and marvelously close, impinging, familiar, on the other. In ways that I still find fascinating to decode, comics in their relentless foregrounding— far more, say, than film cartoons or funnies, neither of which mattered much to me— seemed to say what couldn't otherwise be said, perhaps what wasn't permitted or imagined, defying the ordinary processes of thought, which are policed, shaped, and re-shaped by all sorts of pedagogical as well as ideological pressures. I knew nothing of this then, but I felt that comics freed me to think and imagine and see differently. (p. ii)

Accordingly, Said's distinctive elevation of comics with its distinguished and immediate word-image format over film cartoons and funnies indicates the serious content of comics that aims at making the reader think critically in a non-simplistic way about serious subject matters like in the medical graphic novel.

Seriousness is thus deeply rooted in the comics hybrid format of words and images. Drawing the human body aesthetically and authentically with ballooned speeches that carry within them medical information mingled with personal experiences of illness, trauma, and suffering fill us with urgency, directness and immediacy to respond responsibly and seriously. Moreover, the immediate seriousness of the image-word format of comics raises multiple questions that this

chapter will attempt to answer: to begin with, because I noticed that I used the concepts comics and graphic novel interchangeably, I need to answer this primary question which is: How can we demarcate the differences between comics and graphic novels? How can comics be an influential medium after the age of camera? Is it the hybridity of pictorial and textual elements that drive the narrative power of the graphic novel? If the language of the graphic novel is a combination of both images and words, how can we approach it? In other words, what are the methods and the tools that we can use in order to understand the symmetrical articulation of words and images in the graphic novel? The hybridity of comics leads to other important questions about the nature of comics: Are they a literary genre or artistic forms? Are they popular culture products or high culture texts? In order to establish a comprehensive reading of comics, we need first to tackle the historical origins and development of comics from the beginning(s).

1.1 The Origins of Comics: A Mysterious Invention of the Comic Strip

Whenever we think about the historical roots of comics, we tend to go back further in time thousands of years ago, to the pre-writing era, to the old Egyptian Hieroglyphic drawings, to the Tassili drawings in the Algerian Sahara to the Mexican Codex and the different drawn scriptures and engravings that were left from the old past when the conception of drawing was the most effective way of historicizing like the Bayeux tapestry: a 230 foot long tapestry about the Norman conquest of England in 1066. In this way, the image as a unit of language in the pre-writing era of the human history represents the human tied relationship with the picture and the visual in their communicative activities. The internationality of ‘comics’ if we can think of these anachronistic engravings as examples of comics, makes it difficult to pinpoint the origin of comics with accuracy. In this regard, McCloud (1993) claims that “I’ll gladly admit that I have no idea where or when comics originated” (15). However, according to Mainardi (2011),

“The modern history of comics is usually traced from caricature through the multiplication of frames, with the end result being our modern comic strip.”

The modern comics—in English referring to its North American variant, the newspaper comic strips, or the comic book; in French it is called ‘la bande dessinée’ in reference to the Franco-Belgian albums of comics—is originated in the popular prints that were stencil-colored woodcut prints of legends, saints and rulers; they were shortly-lived, and mostly popular in the rural areas in almost all the parts of Europe. These popular and single-sheet images were copied and reproduced from high artistic paintings. In the early nineteenth century, the main themes of the woodcut prints were religious subjects: they were used by people as a protection emblem that is why they were called “les images de preservation.” For example, in France, the woodcut print of Saint Agatha protects its displayer against the fire. Few decades later, the religious themes were replaced by the comic subjects. However, the single image had become gradually insufficient to tell the ‘whole’ story whether in the wood cut prints, the history paintings, and the books of illustration. Therefore, the sequential narration became the imperative way of telling popular stories that were actually first text-based stories.

In the nineteenth century, the book illustrators began using what is called ‘vignettes’ to accompany the text and bit by bit the number of vignettes became larger than the text which contracted to become just captions. The valorization of this sequential narration of imagery was due to the increasing interest in the art form of painting, so people preferred to ‘see’ all the important events painted rather than written in words. This preference of the sequential narrative imagery over the textual narration expanded to include the different media such as the press, the history paintings, and the medium of comics.

However, the comic strip as a separate art of expression and creativity without adapting previous artistic works celebrated the simple details of the everyday life by making use of both

the written text and the drawn image originates in Hogarth's bodies of comic works that arose during the time of mixing ironical picture narratives with the literature of humor and laughter in England. It was then Hogarth, the father of comics, who first explored this area of creativity, modernized the art of print, and established the grand markers of this culture of the printed image from the clear and the modeled line, the caricatured faces and bodies of characters, the use of speech balloons, etc. For McCloud (1993), "the sophistication of the picture-story did grow [...] reaching great heights in the nimble hands of William Hogarth" (p. 16). Despite its brevity, *A Harlot's Progress* (1732), a six engraving narrative series considered to be an original novel in pictures, inaugurated the eternal flame of Hogarth's creativity as a witty artist who inspired and still inspires the cartoonists in their works. Later works of Hogarth involved: *A Rake's Progress* (1735) composed of eight engravings, a drama of *Marriage-a-la-Mode* (1737) composed of six engravings, *Industry and Idleness* (1747) made up of twelve engravings, and finally a four engravings series of *Four Stages of Cruelty* (1750).

Hogarth's satiric tradition of drawn images traveled to the other side of the Atlantic and influenced the famous Richard F. Outcault whose celebrated work the *Yellow Kid* featured a swarming effect made up of condensed drawings of multiple characters grouped in public spaces like the spaces of the fairground, carnivals, and amusement parks. It also had a great impact on Winsor McCay whose *Little Nemo* is drawn in a Hogarthian capricious waving style after nearly two centuries. This style of drawing is called by Hogarth the style of 'variety' that embodies the variety of life itself and which raises in the reader a curiosity to explore and discover its intricacies in a serpentine line of looking. That is to say, according to Hogarth, the reader's eye finds beauty and pleasure in varying its spontaneous movement from one object to another in the comic page or in life in general claiming that, "The eye hath this sort of enjoyment in winding walks, and serpentine rivers, and all sorts of objects, whose, as we shall see hereafter, are composed principally of what, I call, the waving and serpentine lines" (as cited in

Smolderen, 2014, p. 6). Actually, Hogarth serpentine line is a path of the freethinking man who is not imprisoned within the geometrical lines of the institutionalized authorities. For Hogarth, the wavy line represents the path of liberation from the coercive rules of established powers.

Hogarth's liberating impact continued a century after his *A Harlot's Progress* to affect the Genevan cartoonist Rodolphe Töpffer, whose satirical picture narratives, or albums, from the 1830s played a pivotal role in determining the formal theories of comics. However, Töpffer's style is different from Hogarth's noble style because of the nineteenth century's Romanticism, which favored primitivism over classicism. In other words, while Hogarth made his art by colliding the contemporary news with the classic style, Töpffer preferred the childlike style, the graffiti, the caricatural drawings, the Gothic, the grotesque, and doodling. In fact, the question of 'doodles,' or the child-like drawings of characters, preoccupies a central place in Töpffer's theoretical principles, originating from the satirical etchings of the English illustrator George Cruikshank in the 1820s, and that would play a huge impact on the contemporary world of caricature and satirical illustrations.

Moreover, Töpffer experimented with the form of the comic genre by using the progressive action drawing style, which was of a predominant importance in the romantic era. This concept was invented by the German playwright Lessing, who argued in his significant essay *Laocoon* that the theatrical documents should be based on drawing the progressive stages of the actor's actions. In *Laocoon*, Lessing criticized the German poetry for being descriptive, insisting on the fact that poetry should be based on action, rather than description, in order to claim its distinctiveness from painting. For him, like Homer's poetry, the German poetry needs to be founded on the progressive action that, if translated in a painted tableau, would be a sequence of schematic images of the different phases of the action. Accordingly, Lessing's essay inaugurated, besides the theory of gestures and theatrical action of the German dramaturge Johann Jacob Engel, the visual language of the actor's action. Following Lessing's and Engel's

graphical approach to drama and acting, Töpffer wrote his first comic strip *Mr. Vieux Bois* (1827) using theatrical attitudes that focus on the actor's bodily postures. His interest in recording the characters' body motions, resulted from their emotions, is formulated in his pivotal work of *Essay on Physiognomy* (1845). Despite the fact that Töpfferian comic strips did not establish a clear theory of comics, as Smolderen (2014) notes, "the visual language of progressive action that he put together combined all the systems, all the injunctions, and all the models that characterized, to his eyes, the stupidity of the industrial world" (p. 47). Töpffer's rhetoric of progression and ironic transgression was used to satirize the ideology of progress as embraced and propagated by the industrial revolution. Eventually, the Töpfferian little comic novels with their ironical tone, wavy frames of the panels, and the handwritten captions continued to shape the twentieth century graphic illustration especially in England and France during the 1840s and the 1850s but by the end of the 1950s, the Töpfferian genre of the printed novel disappeared and entered a new world of publication, which is the newspaper.

The adaptation of the Töpfferian graphic novel of *Histoire de Monsieur Cryptomane* in the Journal of *L'Illustration* in 1845 by the graphic illustrator Cham, the pseudonym of Amédée de Noé, marked the evolution of the comic form from being published in the form of little books in the nineteenth century to being a press pieces of drawings. Although Töpffer was wary about the technical changes that would fall upon his novels, he believed that it was necessary to transport his art to the newspaper form in order to make his art a part of the life of the newspaper and its readers. That is, from the 1840s, Töpffer's model of comics started to be copied in the international press of periodical illustration in the United States of America, Germany and of course England. In England, the press was divided into periodicals of serious subject matters like the weekly magazines of the *Illustrated London News* and the *Graphic* and periodicals of humorous content like *Punch*. In the 1860s and 1870s, there was a slow growth in the picture stories, but in the 1880s, the symbiosis of the comic strip with the press started to flourish which

created a harmony between the press and its readership. In the serious magazines and journals, as Smolderen (2014) contends, “editors would generally come to view comics as an *institutional* feature par excellence—the feature that most directly reflected the interests of the press as a *periodical* institution” (p. 80). In other words, the seriousness of comics is embodied in its treatment by the ‘serious’ press as an institution that is legitimated by specialists from different fields of study like, psychology, sociology, and press, and who wrote articles of high level about the essentiality of comics in strengthening the human behaviors.

Therefore, the marriage between serious journalism and the culture of the satirical image gave rise to the journalistic picture-story genre. This genre is based on the reportorial drawing that is driven by a realistic sensation of the different places transferred by amateur correspondents. In effect, the comic journalism was the only device for transporting the reader graphically to these far places even during the age of photography. In addition, the comic journalism merged the old with the new graphic styles like the line-drawings of photography, x-rays, the microscope and the chrono photography. For example, Sir William Schwenck Gilbert’s comic illustration “A Drop of Pantomime water” published in *Graphic* in 1870 is drawn in a microscopic format that represent a whole world of cartoony characters in a microscopic image of a drop of water. This combination of the scientific with the humorous gave the comic illustration a serious character that is self-referential drawing attention to the contemporaneity of the comic art: it makes the reader laugh and think at the same time.

The comical journalism or the funnies, however, mixed between the old devices of the comic art or the hieroglyphic language of the comics like emblems and allegories, which characterized specifically the American popular press in the beginning of the twentieth century, inaugurates the modern comic strip. That is, the use of abstract graphic emblems like speech balloons, shock stars, speed tracing lines helped in attracting the attention of the reader. In this way, the comic strip became a center of attraction that “does not need to say anything meaningful; it merely

needs to *attract*” (Smolderen, 2014, p. 104). Making things look different and fantastic to the reader’s eye constituted the main aim of the popular comic strips or the yellow press by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

The commercial competition between the different American periodicals encouraged the exaggerated formal experimentation of the comic strip in order to entertain the audience, whose taste dictates the continuity or the disruption of any serialized comic story. We can say that R. F. Outcault, the author of *The Yellow Kid*, was the first cartoonist who laid the ground for this tradition of the comic strip as a commercial serial form of entertainment. Outcault drew mainly his ‘cute’ characters in an attractive style so that the public became attached to them and awaits their news every week. According to Smolderen (2014), “Outcault puts us in on the trail of one of the strangest mutations brought about by the competitive jungle of the newspapers: a drift toward *cuteness*” (p. 108). The use of big rounded eyes became a new comic feature of funny stories by the end of the nineteenth century. These innocent eyes grew gradually by time until it turned out monstrous in the Japanese manga and the Disney cartoons. Moreover, Outcault took this genetic trait of saucer-like eyes from the famous Canadian illustrator Palmer Cox and who in turn was influenced by the ‘cute Gothic’ style of the German comic artists in the nineteenth century like Wilhelm Busch.

Interestingly, W. Busch’s comic strip of *Max and Moritz* had greatly influenced the American cartoonists like Rudolph Dirks who drew his *The Katzenjammer Kids* according to Busch’s style of romantic Gothicism that is based on the preference of the folktale and the attractive and suspenseful and progressive succession of the wordless images which gave the reader the opportunity to be the ‘oral’ commentator and the narrator of the story. These wordless images often formulate the mischief gag specifically the hose gag which was the original model of this type of comic strips during the modern times in the American newspapers. The ‘hose gag’ is a prank about a gardener who is watering the garden while suddenly a rascal boy steps

on the hose leading the waterer to inspect the nozzle of the hose and in doing so the boy lets off the hose causing the water to spray the gardener. This comic genre of the ‘mischief gag’ was later on embraced by the cinematographic industry in the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century and the wordless images of the comic strip turned out to be motion pictures like in Charlie Chaplin’s short films. Eventually, the logic of the progressive action of the mischievous gag comics envisaged the creation of the technology of the moving image establishing a strong relationship between the comic strip and photography.

The emergence of photography and chrono photography in the late nineteenth century led to the decline of the use of the wood engraving, and instead, the hand drawn comic images started to be reproduced photographically. The entrance of photography into the world of comics changed many diagrammatic stylistic features of the comic strip, so the images were equally framed, and the gaps between the frames gained more meaning as they were temporally regulated. It was Arthur Burdett Frost who first experimented or tinkered with the comic form using the chronophotographic devices featuring precision in the page grid and the temporal framework. Therefore, the modern comic art is marked by the sequential narration that encompasses all the different audiovisual media such as photography, cinema, and television. In addition, the audiovisual adaptation of comic strips speeded up the growing burgeoning of this medium, and although the comic strip was European in its invention, it was the American cinema and television that popularize it internationally.

1.2 The Development of the American Comic Book: The Superhero as a Popular Culture

The history of the American comic book can be described, as Lopes (2009) points out, as “a roller—coaster ride than the smooth evolution of a new art form from infancy to maturity” (p. xii). In other words, it is difficult to trace the history of the American comic book in a linear line of development since it had never experienced neither fully infancy nor reached a solid maturity. The American comic book went through many ups and downs in its long journey, and

what this journey can say about this cultural medium is that it “existed” and still “exists,” and the differences that can be traced in this history is the industrial, political and cultural forces and factors that affected its decline or its rise. Accordingly, we can say that the history of the American comic book is divided into two ages, as Lopes concluded, the industrial age and the heroic age.

Like the French scholar, Pierre Bourdieu, Lopes (2009) used the historical classification of the heroic age in naming the American comic book historical period from 1980s to the present. Pierre Bourdieu used this concept in his historical analysis of the nineteenth century French literature to describe a period of time when the Bohemian literary men revolted against the Bourgeois rules of art that controlled the commercial, as well as the aesthetic, values of the literary works. In doing so, they were able to establish their own “principles of autonomy” (Lopes, 2009, p. xiii). For the American comic book, the heroic age started when its fans and creators established a strongly independent subculture of the American comic book that demanded the deserved respect for the comic book as an autonomous art form. This subculture, forged through the celebratory writings about the comic book by the comic book fandom, succeeded in recounting an alternative story to that of the official culture outside the comic book field of books, academic journals, and magazines.

In addition to the comic book fandom, the ‘comix’ movement reclaimed the independence of the American comic book by taking the comic book production from the mass market to the ‘direct’ market, due to its charismatic and antiauthoritarian character, whose ideological directions gave the American comic book its international recognition. The heroic age came after what Lopes (2009) calls the industrial age, the age when the comic book was treated as merely a commercial product used for entertainment purposes. The industrial age refers to the poor working conditions of the comic book industry, as the production of this artistic form took place in the sweatshops with low financial profits and with restricted publishing opportunities,

caused by the anti-comic book crusade of censorship launched by the psychologist Frederic Wertham, who attracted the public attention to the threat of the comic book on the American youth. This age was characterized by the speed in the comic production of comic bookstand. What was most important is the quantity rather than the quality, as the beginning of the comic book coincided with the Great Depression, so the young cartoonists, especially from the Jewish community, needed money and thus they were deliberately taken advantage of. In the end, looking at the history of the American comic book from a contextual perspective demonstrates that the market regulations and its forces affected the content and the form of the comic book and of course its production and consumption. Yet, focusing on the surrounding circumstances of the making of this art form should not reduce the importance of the makers whose styles informed the different stages of the comic book's growth.

Historicizing comics based on the comic creators' styles of drawing and cartooning is also noticeably crucial for capturing the major changes that occurred on the medium throughout the years. Comics as a process of formation is shaped by its creators who innovated 'attractive' characters and stories for the purpose of satirizing political events and entertaining newspapers' readers in their Sundays. In the United States of America, these Sunday comic strips turned out to be by the 1930s, comic books that took the format of colorful magazines. These magazines varied according to the variation of the comic genres namely, mysteries, adventure, and romance. Such diversity of the comic content invokes its adoption by publishing companies such as DC and Timely that will later be renamed as Marvel.

However, the comic book flourished in the moment when, as Weiner (2012) notes, "Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, a couple of Jewish couple kids from the Midwest, created Superman, ushering in a new tradition, in heroic storytelling" (p. 14). In fact, *Superman* explodes the world of comics and gave the superhero genre a dominating power that was intensified by the adaptation of superhero comic books like *Batman*, *Captain America*, *Captain Marvel*, and

Popeye into films, plays, and novels. These superhero characters proliferated all over the world and marked the childhood of many generations. In addition, the superhero comic book played a huge role in the Second World War as a patriotic propaganda that drew a heroic image of the American soldier in the minds of its audience even before the real participation of Americans in the war and that lasts until now. Yet, after the war the superhero cartoonists were confused about the content of their works, as the source of their daily productions was the war and its suspenseful news. Now, their works start to have a mediocre quality with the exception of few cartoonists such as Jack Krolewicz with his *Plastic Man* and Jack Kirby who was called ‘the king of comics.’

For the purpose of broadening the field of comics, cartoonists like Jack Kirby included new genres, namely romance, funny animal, crime, horror comics and science fiction. Consequently, there was a shift in the type of the targeted audience of the comic books in the United States of America by the 1940s, as a new category of audience appeared and was named “teenagers.” Moreover, this broadening in the comics’ appeal led to a broadening in the industry of comics as new companies emerged notably among them the EC Company. This company revolutionized the comics world with its striking horror books that demonstrated the dark side of the American society in the 1950s. The EC company that signified Educational Comics with its owner Max Gaines in the 1940s was transformed to another EC company with another signification after Gaines’ death: instead of indicating Educational Comics, the EC became Entertainment Comics under the ownership of Gaines’ son in the 1950s. The young Gaines bombarded the American audience with audacious themes such as: divorce, political corruption, and murder. What is mostly remarkable about EC is its production of the magazine *MAD* that would revive the satirical spirit in the comics art and bring the deserved respect for the comics artists with its highly elevated comic styles, innovated by genius cartoonists.

MAD was EC's comic book before the enactment of the Comic Code that was the result of the book *Seduction of the Innocent* (1945) by the psychiatrist Fredric Wertham who criticized the subversive violent attitude and immoral content of the American comic book which caused the suicide of many teenagers and the youth's decadence and delinquency calling for making restrictions and surveillance over any produced comic book. As a result, the comic cartoonists followed the rules and started to tone down violent scenes avoiding disrespectful stands against authorities and in doing so they lost their credibility and thus their public.

Yet, it seems that the American comics will rise again thanks to the Superhero comic book that regained its glow in the 1960s with the appearance of DC and Marvel companies which held this genre tightly. For example, while the DC cartoonists created big groups of superheroes in an unending fight with big groups of super-villains, the Marvel comics were funny comics that associated the superpowers of their characters with the nuclear bombardment events since the 1960s was the nuclear age. Moreover, the fast growth of the superhero comic book was accompanied by a growth of the comics fandom which was a movement of the comics fans who made gatherings in which they talked about their favorite comic books which led to the creation of comic fanzines: magazines about comic books written by the genre's fans.

While DC and Marvel companies formed the legitimate commercial face of the American comic book, there was another movement that worked in the shade against all the laws of the Comic Code. This anti-comic code movement is the underground comix movement that crossed all the red lines drawn by the comic authorities and inherited the horror and science fiction legacies of the EC comic company. Moreover, this movement tackled new topics as it expressed its anti-war sentiments for the Vietnamese war and used new styles of cartooning such as the autobiographical comic book. The crystallization of this underground comix movement was achieved by the creation of the "Zap Comics" by the cartoonist Robert Crumb which popularized the genre of the comic book that was sold in the corners of the streets in adjacent

with rolling papers or black light posters rather than in the bookstores because of their anti-conventionality. In the 1970s, however, the ‘homeless’ comic book found its home in specific comic book stores and entered the comic shop market with positive vibes of the comics public.

Despite its public success, the underground comix movement ended and disappeared leaving behind many influential traces that would appear in most contemporary cartoonists’ works principally through Art Spiegelman’s magazine *RAW*. By establishing a strong market system in the publishing world, the comic book developed and started to take itself seriously and chose the book-length form to envelop its drawn stories. In this way, the comic book was replaced by the “graphic novel. “Therefore, the comics world grew through time to include the comic strip, then the comic book and finally the graphic novel. Entering into this vast world requires first defining comics, the field that incorporate comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels so, what are comics?

1.3 Overcoming the Comics’ Aesthetic Anxiety

Defining comics has always been a controversial topic that attracted various critical responses. Every comic artist, commentator, or critic defines comics according to certain criteria: the fact that restricts the aesthetic competences of comics. We tend generally to refer to McCloud’s (1993) famous definition of comics which says that, “comics (kom’iks) n. plural in form, used with a singular verb.1. juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (p. 20). McCloud assumes that his definition encloses all the main features that distinguish comics from the moving images of films and television with the exception of the single panel comics since they do not comply with the idea of sequentiality. However, in his article “Defining Comics?” A. Meskin (2017) criticizes various definitions of comics suggested by different comic critics among them Greg Hayman and Henry John Pratt, David Kunzle, Will

Eisner, Scott McCloud, David Carrier, and Kendall Walton. Meskin found out that their definitions are too limiting because of their focus on the pictoriality, the sequentiality, and the narrativity of comics. Concerning McCloud's definition, Meskin (2017) sees that this dictionary-like definition is unsatisfactory and "too limiting" (p. 370) because of its focus on the functional aim of the comics which is exclusively artistic ignoring hence the non-artistic or educational comics. Meskin argues that comics are not "essentially" pictorial sequential narratives because they include, besides pictures, texts. In addition, they might be non-narrative like Robert Crumb's "Comical Comics" that were drawn specifically to reject the assumption that comics are fundamentally narrative, as he arranged rarely related panels. Moreover, McCloud's definition is ahistorical because it does not take into consideration the historical context(s) in which the comics are produced and consumed.

The insistent attempts to define comics show the aesthetic anxiety that most comic lovers suffer from in their discourses in order to justify the distinguished artistic nature of comic. Instead, however, they strangle comics causing its death rather than re-birth that is why it would be better if we, as Meskin (2017) contends, "get beyond the definitional project" (p. 376). This crippling desire to define comics is an unavailing and a simplistic practice because of its complex history and the variety of its formalistic criteria. This idea of the futility of definition is well argued by Delany (2005) who suggests:

But whether literary or paraliterary, no artistic genre can be defined. Genres are far more complex. Nor does any have a single origin. They are *always* the result of a multiple forces and many events in the world. Because we might be talking about a single aspect, we might want to highlight on historical moment in its development rather than another, but that's the best we can do. To assume we're doing anything more authoritative than that – for the entire modern phenomenon is just critical arrogance and/or selling short the complexity of the phenomenon under discussion. (p. 149)

Because of the exclusionary and simplistic aspect of definitions, Delany (2005) suggests another concept that is more useful than the notion of the definition; this notion is the "functional description" because it is more "welcoming and often function inclusively, along

with other descriptions” (p. 154). As comics readers, we come across the comics’ various descriptions in different moments of encounter during the process of reading: for example, at a moment we meet Eisner’s description and at another moment we encounter McCloud’s description. Therefore, defining comics is an old-fashioned approach that we must skip over in order to give comics its deserved poetic value.

However, divisions in comics definition extends to the divisions in the comics scholarship between the different comic genre works especially between the superhero comics and the non-fiction genres. Indeed, the comics’ aesthetic anxiety or fear from the aesthetic hierarchies that divides culture into high and low cultures created divisive feelings among the comics scholars. For example, we find some comics critics who are fans of the superhero genre like Saunders prefers to write on this type of comics while someone like Chute has chosen the non-fiction literary comics including confession, memoir, and journalism drawn by single artists rather than the genre-driven or Marvel and DC comics namely: funny animal, horror, crime, romance, western, and science fiction written and illustrated by teams of creators. Their preferences differ according to the critic’s ideological direction; for example: in her reply to Saunders’s description of her criticism as divisive in its nature for its dismissal of the commercial comics, more specifically, both Marvel and DC’s productions, Chute sees that choosing the non-commercial “graphic narrative,”—the term she uses in describing the book-length comics— is justified by the fact that the contemporary alternative comics were mainly shaped by the comix or the underground comics that were dominantly non-commercial comics because they were countercultural comics (Saunders & Chute, 2009, p. 294).

Interestingly, this divisive atmosphere in the comics scholarship offered many possibilities to explore this world of drawn stories. That is to say, the variety of the comics led to the variety in the comics studies. According to Bahl (2015), the comics is a subject of four different studies: the literary studies which are led by Hillary Chute, Gardner, and Charles Hatfield; the

theoretical studies which are associated with Cohn, Groensteen, and Postema; the pedagogical studies that are authored by Bakis, Jacobs, and Carter; and the studies that are composed in the comics form like McCloud's *Understanding Comics* (p. 178). Therefore, the sustained and various critical analyses of comics open up more doors for the readers to understand comics, rather than looking for precise definitions in a way to prove the artistic value of comics because despite the many attempts to incorporate the comic works in art institutions like museums, galleries, and publications. The relationship between comics and the art world is, as Peltz (2013) states, "complicated and [...] emotionally fraught" (p. 8). This problematic relationship is mostly caused by an "internalized bitterness" (Beaty, 2012, as cited in Peltz, 2013, p. 9) on the part of the comics artists and the comics critics whose narrow approach to comics focuses only on the form of comics with a neglecting of the comics consideration as a medium that involves many genres and many styles bypassing. Hence, the definitional trajectory treats comics as a raw material for a true art, ignoring in this way the fascinating aesthetic journey of comics from the newspaper comic strips moving through to the comic book to achieve the contemporary graphic novel which is unquestionably and recognizably a form of art.

1.4 The Graphic Novel: The "Weighty" Comic Book Takes More Risks

Historically speaking, the graphic novel flourished within two hypes: the first was in the late 1980s with the publication of the 'big three' graphic novels of Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight*, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's *Watchmen*, and Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. The second hype started from 2000 onward with the publishing of a new comic genre, which is the auto-biographic memoir like Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, David B.'s *Epileptic*, and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* (Hescher, 2016). Moreover, the contemporary graphic novel diversifies to include other subgenres such as the reportage and the historical comics, and the steam punk. Precisely we can say that the name of the graphic novel was used even before it became popular when Will Eisner used it in describing his comic book *A Contract with God and Other Tenement*

Stories. The term of the graphic novel, according to Isaac Cates, was used before by fanzine writers like Richard Kyle as early as 1964, Richard Corben in his *Bloodstar* in 1976, and George Metzgerin in his work *Beyond Time and Again* in 1976.

Most interestingly, Eisner's appropriation of the term came from his correspondences with Jack Katz, as Kunka (2017) found out, in the 1960s in which he describes his new comics project *The First Kingdom* as a 'graphic novel' (as cited in Cates, 2020, p. 83). Eisner's use of the term was a way to convince the American publishing house of Bantam Books to publish his work, and although this publishing house dropped this new naming of the comic genre later, the "graphic novel" as a concept was never ignored by the critics and the readership. Eisner's description of his comic book as a graphic novel was actually not a coincidence as he intended to liberate the comic medium from the various limitations imposed on its artistic potentials and to use it as a "vehicle for personal and political statements rather than as a medium restricted to regurgitated genre stories" (Weiner, 2012, p. 32). That is, in order to go beyond the comics field as an entertaining landscape, the cartoonists such as Eisner and Spiegelman had to write and draw 'weighty' graphic novels that tell long stories of political and personal concerns.

Both, Eisner's *Contract with God* and Spiegelman's *Maus* are composed of different short stories that are narrated in a simultaneous way and that are thematically interrelated. While Eisner's graphic novel portrays the lives of Jewish individuals from the working class during the Great Depression of the 1930s. *Maus*, on the other hand, is Spiegelman's parents' story of survival from the Auschwitz Holocaust. Spiegelman's *Maus* is a complicated story that involves three interconnected stories: the first is Spiegelman's parents' story of their life in Poland and then their capturing by the Nazis who imprison them in the Auschwitz concentration camp. The second story is about Spiegelman's father's haunting traumatic memories of the Holocaust. The third revolves around Spiegelman's reconciliation between his father's past and his own life. Spiegelman's innovative style of drawing in black and white ink using animal characters to

present his human characters took his work beyond the comics field. The serious treatment of the Holocaust survival using animal figures subverted the usual funniness of the animal stories in the comics world. Instead, the animals in Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survival Tale* are not droll, they are melancholic and tragic as they take a part in a tragic story of the human execution of the Jewish people who are drawn as mice, the Polish as pigs and the Nazis as cats. They are serious animals like George Orwell's animals and Frantz Kafka's cockroach. Eventually, winning the Pulitzer Prize (1992) for Spiegelman's sequel *Maus II: From Mauschwitz to the Catskills* boosted the popularity of the graphic novel especially among the non-comic readership.

In addition to Eisner and Spiegelman, Robert Crumb, the creator of the 'Zap' magazine in 1968, has greatly influenced the development of the graphic novel as many contemporary cartoonists reproduced his autobiographical style of cartooning prominently among them is Joe Sacco with his masterpiece of *Palestine*. It is noteworthy to speak about *Palestine* when the topic is the graphic novel because it was the first time that an American cartoonist delves in the complications of the deeply rooted middle east conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians in a form of the graphic novel. Like Spiegelman's *Maus*, Sacco's *Palestine* excavates the Palestinians' daily lives as human beings without exoticizing or othering them, but by giving them the voice, and by interviewing them and involving them in the storylines of *Palestine*. It is of duty, therefore, to emphasize the importance of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Joe Sacco's *Palestine* in breaking out of what Weiner (2012) calls, "the comic book ghetto" (p. 52), and in envisaging a sophisticated format of picture storytelling namely, the graphic novel.

Since the publication of Spiegelman's 1992 Pulitzer Prize awarded graphic novel *Maus*, an underground-inspired comix, the comics gained a higher place in the high culture as an art, especially painting and literature, as critics started to be interested in exploring the functions of its visual and narrative elements. Generally, the different conferences that were held in the name

of comics treated the comics works from a literary perspective. This literary interest in comics is also paralleled with a visual concern that attracts the attention of the comics artists who are increasingly affected by the avant-garde artistic styles of painting especially the impressionistic styles that is why Eisner mentions once that, “I realized [...] through studying Turner, that cartoons were nothing more than informed impressionism”. Spiegelman (2012) also adds to this idea stating that, “The avant-garde in comics is moving very much toward the visual side of comics [These are] Gary Panter’s kids” (as cited in Peltz, 2013, p. 9). Spiegelman is speaking here about the comic artists participating in his ‘comix’ magazine *RAW* that he created with his wife Françoise Mouly departing from the underground comix tradition, which opened widely the door for unrestricted comics of formalistic and narrative self-expressions that were seriously and luxuriously registered without a need to be funny. This seriousness is not only restricted to the type of the topics discussed in the genre of the graphic novel but also in the complexity of the formal tools that are used for the purpose of telling a specific story. In other words, the narrative complexity is what makes the graphic novel a special form of comics different from the comic strip and the comic book and gives it a great respect in the cultural domain.

Undoubtedly, the label “graphic novel” boosted the social and the cultural acceptability of the comics works despite the fact that many cartoonists rejected the use of the word “graphic novel” in describing their works such as Alan Moore, Spiegelman, and Joe Sacco just to name few. That is to say, the skeptical view of the comics cartoonists towards the “graphic novel” did not prevent the continuing success of this genre that represents the dominant comics form in these days. That is why, our interest in this thesis is to explore the specificities of this medium that added recognizably to the American culture as a different and a new comics variation from the previously existing comics and comix works.

The significance of the graphic novel lies in its great impact on the different fields of humanities, especially the literary history, the popular culture, and the visual culture. Reading

the graphic novel from the second hype of the comics history gives us the impression that it is different from the first hype graphic novels such as *Maus*, *The Dark Knight*, and *Watchmen*. The particularity of the contemporary graphic novel is thus clearly declared by the same cartoonists who once criticized it like Spiegelman who once answered Witek (2007) who asked him if we are still living in a “post-underground” moment, or we shifted to a new moment of the graphic novel:

We’re moving toward something else. The underground comix couldn’t have happened if there weren’t comics before that to build from, so it’s really one river, and it depends on what you’re looking for. You can place the watershed moments at different spots along the river. Certainly, there’s a breakthrough that happens in the sixties, where cartoonists aren’t any longer obligated to tell a joke or to tell an adventure story. So, the social commentary that had been part of comics earlier in their history begins to make a stronger entry into the narrative parts of comics stories [...] there’s another very strong thrust toward well-structured, tempered narrative. That thing that the word “graphic novel” was probably born for [...] this thing of trying to tell a more nuanced story than before. (p. 289)

Spiegelman’s words demonstrate that the currently produced graphic novel is conspicuously different from the preexisting comics formats. Spiegelman adds in the same vein that the graphic novel now shows an increasing interest in the visual element and a rapid movement towards the conservative content with an intentional avoidance of sexual content (Witek, 2007, p. 286). It aims then to shed light more on the story and the storytelling rather than showing the libido representations turning away hence from the anti-conventional policies of the previous underground comix.

If we assume that the graphic novel has gone through two phases: the underground comix phase and the post-underground comix period, the comic book as a term is hence left behind, and the graphic novel as a serious adult comic genre is unquestionably different from the kids-oriented comics in form, content and publishing conditions, including the publication format and the means of production and distribution. Firstly, in terms of form, both the graphic novel and the comic book share the same two major formal properties, which are the page layout and

narrative. That is to say, besides the idea that the graphic novel in its beginnings was originally a series of published comic books like Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and Moore and Gibbon's *Watchmen*, the graphic novel and the comic book have the same way of storytelling that corresponds to a sequential reading of juxtaposed images arranged page by page. However, unlike the comix, the recent graphic novel does not tend to break the traditional ways of cartooning trying instead to be more conventional keeping the classical layout of comics in order to give more attention to the stories they are telling and to raise their readability yet at the same time they aim to be stylistically recognizable creating their own individuality in the world of comics. Moreover, speaking about the narrative aspect of comics, and contrary to the comic book which tells its story through its verbal and visual elements, the graphic novel made some changes at the level of storytelling by adding a speaking and a visual narrator who tells the story subjectively.

Secondly, the graphic novel is characterized by its adult or serious content in contrast to the superhero comics which are child content comics. This does not mean that there are no graphic works for children like Neil Gaiman and P. Craig Russel's graphic novel of *Coraline* (2008). The seriousness of the graphic novel is manifested by turning away from the fictional genres moving towards realistic accounts which are often autobiographical or semi-autobiographical experiences of the real life such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*. In addition, the graphic novel brought to the light through its realistic content new genres of comics namely, the documentaries, the reportage or history. These genres, as Baetens and Frey (2015) suggest, "are more object-than subject-oriented" graphic novels (p. 13). That is, unlike the autobiographical graphic novel, the reportage, the documentary or the history graphic novel are based on journalistic techniques that look at the human experiences with objective lenses. The documentary graphic novel can be best exemplified by Joe Sacco's works. In fact, we cannot draw a line of total separation between

these categories as all of them involve a kind of blending of imagination and reality, of history and autobiography and this suggests the rich variety of the graphic novel.

Thirdly, the publication package is another difference between the comic book and the graphic novel. While the graphic novel, as its label indicates, adopts the format of a book or a novel, the comic book has a preference for serialization or episodic publishing. The one-shot publication is more favorable for the cultural acceptance of the comics works and at the same time it is unfavorable in terms of commercial benefits and in terms of constant interaction with the popular world of comics as drawing a graphic novel requires an intensive and long labor. Finally, the comic book and the graphic novel are also asymmetrical in their ways of production and distribution. While the comic book especially the underground comix was published and distributed by independent publishers, the graphic novel is usually published and distributed by famous and strong bodies of publishers like Penguin, Faber and Faber, Pantheon, Fantagraphics, and Drawn & Quarterly, Farrar, and Straus and Giroux.

Despite these differences between the comic book and the graphic novel, the division between them is nonessential because the strong connection between the graphic novel and the comic book rejects the idea of the newness of the graphic novel. Moreover, this assumption refuses the consideration of the comic book as merely a populist rather than a literary form especially when we speak about the Alternative comics that originated from the underground comix and that subsequently laid the solid ground for the development and the flourishing of the graphic novel.

Moreover, the marketing history of the comic book and thus the graphic novel is very crucial in the treatment of the comics art. This history is marked by the serialization it was serialization that saved the sustainability of comics. Critics in general tend to ignore serialization especially when they talk about the graphic novel as they ignored it when they speak about the novel. Like

the novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that was divided into volumes and published throughout months in literary magazines such as some of Thackeray's and Dicken's works. The preference of the literary critics for the collected form of novels is similar to the comics critics' interest in the graphic novel as a monumental form of art rather than a partly issued comics. In this vein, Hatfield (2009) expresses his suspicions around the comics/graphic novel chasm arguing that, "the widespread adoption of the term *graphic novel* [...] unfortunately tends to hide the complexity and the precariousness of comics publishing, obscuring the long form's dependence on the serial" (p. 154). Moreover, despite this neglect of the serial origins of the graphic novel as well as the French *bande dessinée*, the Japanese manga, for example, remains at a large scale serialized because serialization brings the comic creators the deserved economic and the public support that would help them pay off the publishing costs of their works. It is then necessary to acknowledge the serial history of the graphic novel in order to achieve a literary as well as popular appreciation. Therefore, splitting the graphic novel from its populist roots in order to gain a literary acclaim means neglecting the long struggle of the previous comics forms to reach the bookstore's shelves.

However, the graphic novel is unquestionably the only comics form that pursued the literary ambition with a strong storytelling thrust that is mostly interested in realistic social issues. For example, Eisner (2001), the pioneer of the graphic novel, mentions that his comics art is inspired not just by the painting techniques of the famous painter Diego Velasquez but, as he points out, "Velasquez I liked because he was a master at internalizing characterizations. He was telling stories about life with his people." Eisner was thus interested in art that tells realistic stories of people surrounding him and this for him the core of the comics art. Touching upon real rather than artificial experiences is the ultimate role of the comics art. In addition to that, in representing these real experiences, the cartoonists are nonjudgmental but rather faithful to the truthful happenings just like Eisner who claims that, "I'm not a moralist. I'm not really writing

books to define human morals. I consider myself doing *reportage* [emphasis added], reporting to my fellow man the things I see” (Fingerroth, 2011, p. 207). Seemingly, the graphic novel is a reportage or a documentary that is tightly engaged with reality and social critique as a distinct form from the superhero comics.

1.5 The Documentary Graphic Novel: A Literary Movement of History Drawing

Seeing the graphic novel as a genre is a misleading way to define this art because it comprehends various genres: nonfictional like the memoir, the autobiographical, and the historical, and the fictional like the horror, science fiction, and allegorical fantasy. That said, the book-format of the graphic novel should not oversimplify its complex variety in using its comics potentialities. Therefore, the graphic novel can best be described as a ‘movement’ as Campbell (2010) argues in his “Graphic Novel Manifesto” when he defines the graphic novel as “a movement rather than a form. Thus, we may refer to ‘antecedents’ of the graphic novel, such as Lyn Ward’s woodcut novels but we are not interested in applying the name retroactively”. Campbell refers here to the contemporariness of the graphic novel as a movement that has historical influences but at the same time creates another new and different era that is in an ongoing process of literary maturation that would expand the readership of the graphic novel not just because of its form but more importantly because of its focus on the human existence, so it is not drawn to entertain, but to report people’s concerns, hopes and feelings. Among the most interesting graphic novel’s genres that mark this movement is the documentary graphic novel. In this thesis, I share Hillary Chute, a comics critic, the interest in exploring the mechanisms of drawing history especially of traumatic wars. In this respect, Chute (2017) assumes that, “post 9/11, we are living in a ‘*Golden Age*’ of *documentary* [Emphasis added].”

In fact, drawing about disastrous events, that caused traumas in people from all over the world, makes the documentary graphic novel a distinct genre. Moreover, the popularity of the

documentary graphic novel in a digital age lies in its hand-drawn nature that attracts the attention of the reader because of its appealing immediacy and directness, as if the reader is directly and naturally enabled without any mediating tools to interfere in the drawn narratives. In this respect, Chute (2017) states that, “Despite whatever leaps are being made in screen technology, there has always been something urgent and immediate about putting pen to paper, especially in the context of resistance or speaking truth to power.”

The immediate impact of comics contributed greatly in revising historical events through what is called the documentary graphic novel that attempts to revive the people’s memories about their personal experiences in these events especially those events that have no physical traces. The major cartoonists who contributed in the development of the documentary graphic novel are: Art Spiegelman, Joe Sacco, and Keiji Nakazawa. These comics artists recreated their own experiences with major historical events. Nakazawa and Spiegelman, for example, were parts in a direct or indirect way to their drawn stories. In his *I Saw it*, Nakazawa recounts from a sixth years old boy’s eyes the horrible images he saw during the nuclear bombardment of his Japanese city of Hiroshima in the sixth of August 1945. While Spiegelman retells the story of his father, Vladek’s experience in the Auschwitz camp. Joe Sacco’s art of memory is different from both Nakazawa and Spiegelman because his role in his word and image narratives is a reporter who interviews people from different nations about their experiences in traumatic events. Briefly, while the documentaries of Nakazawa and Spiegelman are local and autobiographical, Sacco’s documentary graphic novels are international and journalistic. Sacco’s graphic novels are recognized as what is called ‘comics journalism.’

1.6 Joe Sacco: The Revival of the Comics Journalism

Joe Sacco is undoubtedly one of the cartoonists who took the comics field forward through his well-crafted and sophisticated comics journalism. Sacco was born in Malta in 1960, and moved later to Australia, Los Angeles, New York, and finally Portland, Oregon. Sacco’s fame

started when he won the American Book Award in 2001 for his big graphic novel of *Palestine*: the graphic novel that took Sacco to the middle east where he spent two months in Palestine and Israel where he conducted many interviews with people from both sides of the conflict. Sacco moved next, after the Bosnian war, to the Balkans area where he practiced his journalism and interviewed the Gorazdan survivors from the Bosnian war in order to realize his graphic novel of *Safe Area Gorazde*, then he moved to Sarajevo where he collected the data for his new project of *the Fixer*, his second comics work on the Bosnian war.

In 2009, Sacco drew his second Palestinian-Israeli conflict graphic novel entitled *Footnotes in Gaza*: a condensed project that took seven years to be accomplished because of the extensive investigations he made in order to know more about the massacres that happened in November 1956 in Rafah and Khan Younis, two neighboring villages in Gaza. Sacco's latest graphic novel is *Paying the Land* that resulted from his travel to the frozen North in Canada. This graphic novel is set in the resourceful and rich Canadian Northwest territories populated by people called the Dene who are owned, instead of owning, by the land. The misuse of the concept of development in this area led to inhuman practices that affected severely the indigenous culture of the Dene who are coercively displaced from their land and their identity. Sacco's interest in different peoples from different cultures enriches the American comics repertoire and takes the graphic novel from the local to the international that is why we can say that Sacco brought to light something new to the world of comics which is the international graphic novel driven by the journalistic style.

The relationship between comics and journalism is very old since the newspapers and the magazines were the embracing vessels of the comics art. Yet precisely, new journalism is considered as a major influence on Joe Sacco who argued that the only book that convincingly depicted the original mood of the Vietnam war was *Dispatches*, a new journalistic book, by Michael Herr (Chute, 2014, p. 153). New journalism was, as Ridgeway (1971) notes, "a reaction

[...] to the established mass circulation press and to the culture and politics the press represents” (p. 585). It was a sixties cultural movement that reacted against the monotony of both the American journalism and literature. After the Second World War literary men prominently among them Philip Roth found out that realistic literature is no longer satisfactory for the new context of the fifties and sixties and hence, it must be replaced by journalistic endeavors. In other words, the realistic is nearly impossible as Hellman (1977) asserts, “In this situation both the mundane and the extraordinary fail to satisfy a sense of the realistic” (p. 414). The stylistic techniques used by realist writers like the characterization that depends on the common clothing and thinking codes is not sufficient to understand the individual in the contemporary experience after the Second World War where truth becomes questionable.

Therefore, the literary men went in two different ways in order to depict the actual social life more adequately despite the credibility crisis of the contemporary experience. The first group including John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, and Donald Barthelme constituted what is called postmodernists or as Scholes (1967) called them “fabulators” (as cited in Hellman, 1977, p. 415). These writers were more into the imaginary, the fantastic, and the fragmentary. Meanwhile and conversely, the second group of writers of novelists like Truman Capote, and reporters like Tom Wolfe, Hunter Thompson, and Jimmy Breslin at this time took the direction of new journalism, the direction of direct confrontation with the actual giving away the imaginary and the realistic all together. The new journalists criticized the “fabulators” for their escapist mode of writing, so they moved toward combining both the literary techniques of the novel writing with the investigated journalistic content. The aim of new journalistic writers was to extend the horizon of the narrative’s credibility that is based, as Hellman claims, “on the basis of verifiable sources and personal integrity” (p. 417). The authorial intervention in new journalism is very indicative for this type of literature, so we can say that a certain literary text

is a new journalistic text if the author takes a part of the story as a witness or as a participant in the investigated human experience.

Thus, unlike the “fabulator” who employs his imaginative potentials inwardly to create the fantastic, the new journalist uses his imagination according to the external events he is writing about. He is then, “governed by a sense of how the events he encountered were constellated, how they affected his own feelings and thinking, and how they constituted a concrete human experience for him or other people involved” (Hellman, 1977, p. 418). This self-expression of the event takes a specific literary form that makes the new journalistic text different from the classical realistic text and that depends on the use of the frame that attracts the reader’s attention to the literariness of the work and at the same times its accuracy and factuality. In other words, the new journalist focuses on the factuality of his content while highlighting the fictionality of the form and perspective. The formative fabrication and the self-conscious artificiality of the new journalist literary work provides the reader with a new insight towards the recounted event because imagination has the power to give sense and seriousness to the world contrary to the conventional journalism that depends on preconceived, prepackaged, and insufficiently explained ideas and insights.

Therefore, the new journalist literary work is designed according to the flesh-and-blood writer’s own verified humanly experienced and imaginatively re-remembered narrative of the witnessed event. However, the authorial intention of the writer does not restrict the story’s perspectives, but rather it allows various and opposed points of views to co-exist discordantly without any border delineating. That is, what distinguishes the new journalist literary work from the conventional journalistic text is the variety of opposing and even contradictory perspectives and this allows the readers to draw their own conclusions by nudging them to the truth rather than forcing it upon them. According to Heyn (2001), “we can recognize nonfiction by a concomitant recognition of *competing versions*” of the story” (p. 330). Moreover, the new

journalistic literary text is characterized by its ability to provoke the sensuality of the reader and this is clearly assumed in Lehman's (1997) words as he argues that the historical event is felt because of "the alchemic reaction that arises when texts operate on blood-and-flesh characters" (p. 181). Therefore, speaking about real people or actual characters using fictional literary tools creates a completely different emotional effect on the reader.

It is clearly understood then that the new journalistic style of reporting based on the contextual evidence is the main influence of Sacco's comics journalism. Dropping the reader into the complexity of the contextual details makes him see history from various angles. The contextual intricacy of historical moments is not only related to its different perspectival spaces, but most importantly associated with a cyclic repetition or a linear continuation of the past and the present. Sacco travelled to different places in the world from the Middle East through the eastern Europe to the Northern Canada in order to report through the word and the image serious conflicts between opposing parties that led to catastrophic consequences concluding that "it's almost as if history bleeds" (Chute, 2014, p. 145) and what happened in one corner of the world in the past is happening in another place of the globe in the present or it repeats itself in the same place continuously like in the case of Palestinians.

In addition, Sacco's journalistic comics are actually drawn based on the photographs that he captured during his terrain research. Using the drawing of the photograph is another journalistic feature of Sacco's comics. The photograph represents the 'model' (Bazin, 1960, p. 8) for the cartoonist in the comics journalism because of its objectivity and accuracy and because it provides a rich and engaging visual storytelling experience. Yet, the relationship between these two media, comics and photography, is not a relationship of addition but rather of relationality. The journalistic comic cartoonist like Joe Sacco absorbs and reconfigures the potentials of photography in order to make the images of his works. Rendering photographs hand drawn images rather than using the mechanical produced images reveals the flexibility of comics to

engage with other media. The cartoonist does not only copy the photographed picture but also uses his own imaginative and intuitive images streaming through his mind. That is, what the journalistic cartoonist does is that he enlivens the already captured photographs announcing their afterlives by transforming them into new storytelling images that create the possibility for new interpretations.

The importance of the rendering of photographs into hand drawn pictures lies in the slowness of the process of drawing that is well searched and well verified. Therefore, while the photograph captures a lost moment in the past, the hand drawn image reconsiders and communicates its content critically as Eden Gallery (2021) contends, “Timeliness is a crucial difference between photographs and drawings. Photography is an immediate reaction that catches an exact moment in time, while drawing is a meditation.” That is to say, while the immediacy and the singularity of the photograph create a kind of ambiguity, the slowness of the sequentially drawn images in the comics journalism offers an accurate study of the scene.

The ambiguity of the single photograph is emphasized by the Polish cartoonist Fras (2017) who, in his research to draw a comic album entitled *Martial Law* about a real story of boy who is looking for his father who was killed by the Polish army, found the photograph after long research on a website: the photo was for a group of men carrying on their shoulders the boy’s father’s dead body. Yet shockingly, this picture was the same picture he had seen in a newspaper, precisely in a vodka advertisement and the carried person was treated as if he was drunk. When the owner of this advertisement campaign was asked about the incident, he answered he thought that the man was drunk so his friend carried him back home (Fras, 2017, p. 76). This incident questions the accuracy of the photograph and shows that photographs should never be taken seriously in isolation or in anonymity of its characters and its photographers. Moreover, the sequentially slow narrativity of the comics images gives the readers a more immersive and emotional experience than the photograph. Therefore, “the

created image allows for different methods of visual communication than the captured image does” (*Picture It*, 2015). More importantly, it is the combination of images and words that makes the comics journalism or the documentary graphic novel an adequate source of facts.

1.7 Thinking Outside the Box with the Documentary Graphic Novel: Doing a Cultural Studies Approach

The graphic novel as a term is a combination of two respectable forms of art in the twentieth century: the graphics and the novel. In other words, the graphic novel corresponds to its two major elements: the image and the words, respectively. Chris Ware expresses in one of his interviews with Chute (2014) that all what he knows about the relationship between words and images in the comics world comes from the American cartoonist Ernie Bushmiller who is famous for his comic strip *Nancy* (p. 221). In *Nancy*, the words and images work hand in hand to effectively convey the gag. In the process of designing his comic strip, Bushmiller starts with the words then he illustrates them. However, For Art Spiegelman, the best way to produce comics is Chester Gould’s method used in his comic strip *Dick Tracey* and which is based on letting “the words and pictures each on their own journey” (Chute, 2014, p. 221). That said, despite their different paths and their placement in the process of producing the comic art, the words and images are complementary elements in the graphic novel.

Moreover, the performing of the words in comics is completely different from any other literary genre like the novel or the poem. In the graphic novel, “the text typically functions not as a narrative component separate from the pictures, but rather as a part of those pictures” (Cook, 2012, p. 288). This idea insists that comics are mainly pictorial as the text is treated as an image. The centrality of pictures, yet, does not neglect the importance of the text in forming the comics works. However, the visual and textual combination of comics was the reason behind its critical acclaim as an artistic and a literary form deserving respect and study. The comics studies which represents the field interested in comics gained several analytical assets

especially from what Mitchell (1994) calls “the pictorial turn” (p. 17) –a term he used to kill the “post-modern,” to describe the current age of biocybernetics reproduction, and to be associated with all of Rorty’s historical classifications of the philosophical discourse that was interested consequently in beings, ideas, and things— opening up more spaces for studying a broader range of visual articulation.

Although writing about comics has a long history since Töpffer’s “Essai de Physiognomie” (1845) but it was, as Heer and Worcester (2009) describe it, “improvised and impressionistic in its approach” demanding a thoughtful revisiting (p. xii). Unfortunately, because of their dismissal, it took more than one hundred years to shed light again on comics through the work of the French cartoonist Barthélémy Amengual called *Le Petit Monde de Pif Le Chien* in 1955. Meanwhile, a lot of books were written about photography and cinema despite their newness in comparison with comics. It is because comics took the form of books, intellectuals saw them as a real threat to the tradition of book writing. The rejection of comics is actually caused by a refusal of the illustrated image that has always been put in conflict with the word. In other words, the image-text relation has always been a site of social, political conflict. However, the comics’ literal use of both the text and the image challenged the hierarchical order of the semiotic systems. In other words, the comics reversed the commonly accepted order among the semiotic systems that advocates the supremacy of words over images.

Despite the fact that the ancient Greeks used the word “graphein” to mean both to ‘write’ and to ‘paint,’ the modern western culture devalued the visual forms of expression because of its logocentric ideologies that deny the coexistence of two opposing forces at the same level of value treatment. The attack on the combination of the text and the words is pronounced by many great writers who are considered as utopian purists such as the French Quignard who points out that:

Literature and the image are incompatible [...] The two forms of expression cannot be juxtaposed. They are never apprehended together. [...] When one is readable, the other is not seen. When one is visible the other is not read. Whatever the proximity imposed upon them, the two media remain parallel, and it must be said, that these two worlds are, for eternity, impenetrable to one another. [...] The reader and the spectator will never be the same man at the same moment, leaning forward in the same light to discover the same page. (as cited in Heer & Worcester, 2009, p. 10)

The impossibility of this verbal-visual blend is successfully challenged by the comic art.

Historically speaking, the necessity of joining the words and the images was discovered by the gag cartoonists, starting from the 1920s, who found out that their gags were funnier when a caption is added to the cartoon. In this respect, Harvey (2009) argues that,

gag cartooning achieves its apotheosis when neither the picture nor the words have humorous meaning alone. The picture sidles into a reader's consciousness as a kind of visual puzzle, meaningless until reading the caption 'explains' it. The picture likewise 'explains' the caption" (p. 29).

Harvey's idea emphasizes the mutual interdependence of the image and the text: the absence of one of them makes it difficult to grasp the message of the gag and hence put the image-text combination beyond comparison.

Eventually, speaking about this relationship between words and images takes us to the next question which is the same as Mitchell's question (1994): "what difference do the differences (and similarities) [of words and pictures] make?" (p. 116). In order to study the impact of the visual/verbal blending on comics' effectiveness, it is necessary to look at this image/word marriage from a pragmatic dialectical perspective away from any kind of linguistic and semiotic considerations based on a univocal pattern of interpretation because the words and the pictures contaminates each other in all the forms of art as there is no purity in arts in literal and figurative senses. While reading texts in "imagery" terms is an old tradition in literary studies, reading images as texts is a recent trend in the art history. In describing the relationship between words and images, Mitchell (1981) like Heath, in the psychoanalysis of film theory, adapted Lacan's term of "suture" denoting the "junction of the imaginary and the symbolic" to their studies of

visual arts (p. 86). That is to say, the subject or the spectator is stitched into the symbolic order of the film and comics language and culture. This process of ‘stitching’ is about the self-identification of the subject, which corresponds to the imaginary realized through the presence of images, with the symbols and signifiers that exist in the written text in the purpose of creating a seamless and unbroken experience that seamlessly blends images and texts, thereby drawing the viewer into the comics world. Here, the cartoonist uses both pictures and words in order to stitch the viewer into the diegesis, or narrative world, of comics.

However, this process of suture is never complete because the viewer’s desire remains unfulfilled, driving them to continue seeking fulfillment through other comics. Therefore, we can say that the interplay, the co-presence of words and images in comics as an “art of tension” (Hatfield, 2009) allows the ongoing process of exploring and representing the fundamental lack or absence that drives human desire and experience. For sure, the graphic novel as a dynamic ‘imagetext’ (Mitchell, 1994) form of art has its distinct “secret language” (McCloud, 1993) that allows the continuing co-workings of pictures and words that make up the wholeness of its story, but how can we dig up its secrets of survival and success despite the overwhelmingly dominating technological visual media? Do we really need a specific theory to approach its formal and thematic intricacies?

The specificity of the verbal and visual relations in comics and especially the documentary or the new journalistic graphic novel imposes its laws on the critic’s methodology of reading this unique medium. Thinking about applying a certain theory on the documentary graphic novel represents a moment of turbulence because of its openness to many different theoretical possibilities as it might belong to multiple fields of study. The fact that leads us to think about it outside the box which means that we can see and say that there exist countless ways of conceiving the documentary graphic novel thanks to the success of the interdisciplinarity and plurality that cultural studies brought to light. As a part of the visual culture, the documentary

graphic novel can be considered as a key site of investigation for cultural studies scholarship that examines how this visual medium influences our perceptions of the world and how in turn is shaped by its formalistic elements and by the broader social, political, and economic forces.

Because the documentary graphic of novel is primarily looked at by its readers, visibility as a way of making images visible and texts sayable is not a self-evident operation. In other words, visibility must be taken seriously and not for granted in order to make sense of the drawn images as well as of its accompanied texts in the graphic novel. In this way, images are not simply frozen representations of the world, but actively contribute to our understanding of it. In this respect, the French philosopher Rancière (2007) argues that, “the image is never a simple reality” (p. 6). He also coined the term “imageness” (p. 4) in order to emphasize the dynamic power of the image, rooted in its ambiguity, in shaping our perceptions, in constructing and challenging dominant ideologies and their power structures.

Rancière’s concept of “imageness” (2007) highlights the importance of taking images seriously and critically examining the ways in which they are used in the different visual media. According to him, “imageness” describes the dynamicity of the operations that produce images as they vacillate between two meanings: the first meaning refers to the resemblance to the original, not necessarily the exact copy of the original reality, the second meaning is art produced exactly by “an alteration of resemblance” that varies astonishingly in its shape (p. 6). That is to say, art is composed of images that figuratively express, through words, the invisible, and images, the unsayable. Accordingly, Rancière’s “imageness” (2007) can be defined as a system of the image that “represents a relationship between the sayable and the visible, a relationship which plays on the analogy and dissemblance between them. This relationship by no means requires the two terms to be materially present. The visible can be arranged in meaningful tropes; words deploy a visibility that can be blinding” (p. 7). In fact, Rancière’s words can be directly applied to the documentary graphic novel that is constructed through the

correspondent or the contradictory interplay between the sayable and the seeable, between materially written words and drawn images. In this way the artistic arrangement of words and images in the documentary graphic novel creates new possibilities of seeing the world, disrupts the traditional narrative structures, and even challenge dominant ways of understanding political, social, economic, and cultural issues.

The challenging potentiality of the marriage between words and images in the documentary graphic novel makes it possible to imagine a distinct new starting point for thinking of it as a new object of cultural studies. Despite the fact that many critics prefer the emerging discipline of “visual culture studies” in studying visual media instead of cultural studies, this does not deny the truth that visual culture studies is an appendage of cultural studies as Hal (2002) suggests, “‘visual studies’ represents a wide array of criticism that draws on film theory and media analysis; in effect it is the visual wing of ‘cultural studies,’ the study of popular and subcultural forms of expression” (p. 90). Hal’s suggestion confirms the idea that ‘visual culture studies’ developed from cultural studies. Therefore, I see that in order to give the graphic novel its aesthetic and cultural value, it is better to start from its formal and content properties and put them into cultural studies rather than adapting the visual culture studies inspired by film and media theories.

Moreover, the ethnographic turn in cultural studies is strongly present in the documentary graphic novel as it is interested in the uniqueness of culture in different societies. Like ethnography, it is also interested in preserving both the ethnographer’s or the cartoonist’s reflexivity and the alterity of the reported other. In addition, starting from cultural studies as a “blurred genre” of criticism (Geertz, 1980, p. 165) allows us to study the documentary graphic novel culturally and critically as an ongoing process of interpretive research with the purpose of creating “an ever more encompassing, solidly constructed, empirically validated stock of ‘received knowledge’” rather than just “contributing to the accumulation of science for

science's sake" (Ang, 1996, p. 238). That is to say, doing cultural studies research is not a practice of explanatory interests but rather a continuing process of practicing what Fiske (1987) calls "cultural democracy" (as cited in Ang, 1996, p. 242) by involving the audience in an ethnographic investigation of any social, political or cultural issue.

Indeed, the documentary graphic novel as a cultural practice potentially merits a specific attention because it resembles the first works that initiated cultural studies like *The Uses of Literacy* by Hoggart (1957) - a sociological study of working-class culture in post-war Britain- which focuses on a specific category of a historically bounded people giving it all the attention it deserves. This specificity in focus is also emphasized by Hall (2006) who said, "one of the things that cultural studies has taught me is, indeed, the importance of historical specificity, of the specificity of each cultural configuration and pattern" (p. 4). Studying cultural issues within a specific historical framework in documentary graphic novels is described by Joe Sacco as "anthropological comics" (Chute, 2014, p. 142). Therefore, in terms of subjects, the anthropological sense of the documentary graphic novel gives importance to the space and the time of the reported events.

Moreover, in formal terms, the text-image blending in the documentary graphic novel highlights the centrality of time and space because artistically speaking the visual is spatial while the textual is temporal. The spatial arts are thus the arts that are interested in the space and the arrangement of objects within it. Examples of spatial arts include painting, sculpture, photography, and installation art. These arts are meant to be viewed from a fixed point of view, permitting the viewer to ponder the relationships between the various elements and the space they occupy. Temporal arts, on the other hand, represent the arts that are primarily concerned with the time and the passage of it like music and literature. These forms of art are often meant to be experienced over time. These two categories are discussed by several thinkers like Nelson Goodman, Rudolf Arnheim, and the eighteenth-century German philosopher, critic, and

dramatist Lessing. Lessing (1887), for example, made this distinction between the spatial and temporal arts in his famous essay *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766) by comparing painting and poetry in terms of their use of time and space. He says in this respect, “The rule is this, that succession in time is the province of the poet, co-existence in space is that of the artist” (p. 109). Although Lessing is a proponent of the “compartmentalization of art” (Moramarco, 1987, p. 24), his differentiation between painting and poetry is important because it allows the viewer and the reader to experience these two different arts from different aesthetic and perceptive perspectives even in mixed genres of art like in comics.

Therefore, the spatiotemporal structure of the graphic novel refers to the ways in which time and space are represented and experienced in the story. In contrast to the traditional novel, for example, the graphic novel uses visual images to represent time and space in a more dynamic and complex way. For instance, graphic novels can use multiple panels on a page to depict different moments in time simultaneously, or they can use a single image to convey a sense of movement or change over time. They can also use non-linear structures, such as flashbacks or time jumps, to create a more complex and layered representation of time. Likewise, graphic novels use visual images to represent space in a more immersive and interactive way. They can also use detailed backgrounds, different angles, and perspective shifts to create a sense of depth and movement. In addition, they can use page layouts and panel sizes to create a sense of pacing and rhythm within the story. All these spatiotemporal characteristics apply to the documentary graphic novel.

Since the documentary graphic novel is concerned with issues that are historically or spatiotemporally complex and intriguing, its image-text style creates affective experiences for viewers. The spatiotemporal form of the documentary graphic novel demonstrates an interesting intersection of time, place, and emotions regarding both the reported individuals and

the viewers. Discussing the relationship between space, time, and emotions highlights the importance of considering diversity and complexity in documenting graphically traumatic experiences of war and displacement. This verbal-visual interaction actually raises two important questions: how do the physical details of publication in the documentary graphic novel reflect the cultural status of the work? And how do they affect the viewer's experience? In order to answer these questions, I use the cultural concept that best fits this spatiotemporal relationship and its affective results, which is de Certeau's concept of the "everyday life." According to During (2005), "Michel de Certeau, a Jesuit priest and a historian of Christian mysticism, whose book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated into English in 1984, had an enormous impact on cultural studies in the late eighties and early nineties" (p. 29).

Since most documentary graphic novels especially Joe Sacco's works deal with war and conflict conditions in different places of the world, the everyday life is an important cultural trajectory in discovering the ways in which individuals navigate and make sense of their everyday experiences. In the case of Sacco's documentary graphic novels which are the objects of this thesis, the everyday life concept allows us to know more about the process of meaning making those individuals in zones of war and conflict produce as a kind of "poaching" or "bricolage" (de Certeau, 1984, pp. xii, xv). The "everyday life" concept also demonstrates the active role of individuals in constructing meanings rather than just being passive recipients of cultural meanings and practices.

In addition to highlighting the role of individuals in shaping cultural practices and meanings, de Certeau also emphasizes the role of space and time in everyday life. He suggests that individuals can use space and time in a subversive and creative ways to challenge the power relations embedded in spatial arrangements. He also suggests that time is a crucial component in the production of cultural practices and meanings, and that our experiences of space are always contextualized within specific temporal frameworks. De Certeau (1984) uses the term

“tactics” (p. xix) to describe the cultural practice in which individuals use time to navigate and reappropriate spaces in ways that are not intended by those in power. According to de Certeau (1984), “tactics” is opposed to the term of “strategies.” While “tactics” are creative, inventive and spontaneous techniques and actions that individuals use to make use of resources available to them in order to achieve their goals and resist the constraints imposed by institutions and social structures, “strategies” are premediated and calculated plans of institutions and organizations to maintain their power and control over individuals and groups.

De Certeau also suggests that tactics are temporal while strategies are spatial. Tactics are temporal because they are oriented towards short-term and immediate goals, while strategies are spatial because they are focused on maintaining power over a specific space or territory. One of these strategies is history-writing or historiography that is employed by the powerful to impose a particular version of history and memory on society, while suppressing alternative or counter-memories and histories.

History writing is another common theme between de Certeau’s model of cultural studies and the documentary graphic novel because both emphasize the use of the archive and the interviewing of the other in order to show the impossibility of history writing and instead to rewrite or redraw a more truthful account of the past based on the voicing of the voiceless. The relationship between “History” and the documentary is deftly described by Highmore (2006) who states that “What gets called ‘history’ (a school subject, a professional practice, a type of a television program and so on) consists of ordering and commenting on documents” (p. 23). De Certeau’s ideas on historiography resemble those of Roland Barthes and Hayden White who argued for the heresy and the literariness of history calling for an epistemological awakening. That is to say, in order to study history, we need to question the archival heritage that is the result of the process of re-writing history or historiography. We need to take into consideration that we are dealing with the dead, with the past, with something that does not exist anymore.

We also need to question the illusionary objectivity of historical documents that is enforced by the use of the third omniscient narrator and suppressing the 'I' in their discourses.

Therefore, in order to understand the historical accounts of different cases from different social groups as drawn in the documentary graphic novel, it is important to deal with the documentary graphic novel as “an art of making” (Ranci re, 2007, p. xv) that depends on the ‘ways of operating’ in which a heterogeneous marginality that “has become a silent majority” (Ranci re, 2007, p. xvii) acts in times of war displacement, and dispossession especially the ways in which they implant their memories in an organized system of historical facts.

These memories are unlocked and made vivid through emotions. This takes us further to explore the interconnectedness between emotions and memories and how they are constructed and influenced by cultural contexts, including cultural practices, ideologies, and representations. Speaking about the role of emotions in shaping social practices and structures introduces us to a new shift in cultural studies called the “affective turn.” This term has been first introduced by Clough and Halley (2007) in their book, *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* in which they emphasize the role of emotions in constructing the social. The term ‘affect’ is used broadly to refer to a range of bodily sensations, feelings, and emotions, which are seen as fundamental to human experience and behavior. The affective turn has been described as a shift away from a focus on language, discourse, and representation in cultural studies, towards an emphasis on embodied experiences, affective intensities, and non-representational modes of communication. This shift reflects a growing recognition of the importance of emotions and affect in shaping social relations, cultural practices, and political processes. In the case of the documentary graphic novel, the affective turn attempts to explore the unspeakable by evoking the gaps and silences that the body or as Clough (2007) calls it “archiving machine” (p. 3) remembers. Clough (2007) also insists on the importance of the affect in analyzing the different serious events happening in the world claiming that:

The increasing significance of affect as a focus analysis across a number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourses in occurring at a time when critical theory is facing the analytic challenges of ongoing wars, trauma, torture, massacre, and counter/terrorism. If these world events can be said symptomatic of ongoing political, economic, and cultural transformations, the turn to affect may be registering a change in the cofunctioning of the political, economic, and cultural, or what Brian Massumi . . . dubs the ‘social.’” (p. 1)

The turn to the affect is actually connected to body reactions towards past events especially traumatic ones. Moreover, the “affective turn” is interested in revealing the repressed and ghostly histories by attending to the affective bodily changes of the human being that indicate its aliveness. Therefore, looking at the documentary graphic novel from an affective perspective will be an interesting practice of criticism that aims at exploring the unknown and highlighting the complexity and the nonlinearity of the historicizing process specifically in wars and conflicts.

Turning to the affect leads us directly to think about the ethical aspect of the documentary graphic novel. Drawing others’ plights and sufferings especially in Sacco’s journalistic graphic novels is based on certain ethical principles that attempt to maintain the alterity of the other intact. In order not to violate the dignity of the others who have experienced difficult conditions in places of war and conflicts. Among the important figures who approached the question of the ethics of alterity is Emmanuel Levinas who sees that looking at the other’s face must be ethnically, culturally, politically, socially, and economically unbiased. In other words, in drawing the other’s hardships, Sacco attempts to give his graphic novels an ethical taint that renders Sacco’s comics journalism distinct from any other kind of visual reportage.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the origins of the graphic novel by following the formal and material development of comics. There are different factors that contributed to the various changes that occurred through time on the comic strip, then the comic book, and finally the graphic novel.

These factors are usually governed by the economic conditions of production and distribution, in addition to the social and political changes. This chapter focused on the graphic novel in general and the documentary or the journalistic graphic novel in specific. Most importantly, it attempted to showcase the strong link between journalism and comics by highlighting Joe Sacco's revival of this relationship in his graphic novels. While journalism has been the discipline that embraced comics in the past and made it popular, Sacco's graphic novels grew up to nurture journalism making it a popular art of reportage. Sacco's comics journalism is not only about reporting important events happening in different wars all around the world, but rather about how life feels like in wars. In order to understand the everyday life in wars as drawn in Sacco's graphic novels, 'cultural studies' with its interdisciplinary character enables us to see the strong relationship between the graphic novel as a form and journalism as a method of gaining knowledge about different cultures and peoples in war and civilizational conflicts. Space, time, affect, and ethics are the four paths that the 'cultural studies' approach to Sacco's graphic novels will take in order to give the experience of war, dispossession, and displacement its human value.

Chapter Two

The Spatial Conflict in the Graphic Space of Joe Sacco's Graphic Novel *Safe*

Area Goražde: The War in Eastern

Bosnia 1992-95 (2000)

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The Spatial Conflict in the Graphic Space of Joe Sacco's Graphic Novel *Safe Area*

Goražde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-95 (2000)

Introduction

2.1 The Graphic *Opsis*: Spatializing Responsible Seeing in *Safe Area Goražde*

2.2 The (Dis)appearing Frame: Framing the 'Right to shoot! to look!'

2.3 The Panel, the Punctum, and the Place: Goražde's Lives and Landscapes

2.4 The Gutter: A Space for the Spaceless

2.4.1 The Bloody Gutter

2.4.2 The Gutter: A Testimonial Space for Traumatic Memories

2.5 Goražde: The Habitus of War Location

2.6 Goražde, the (Un) Safe Area: Between Hostility and Hospitality

2.8 Mapping the Bosnian War Graphically

Conclusion

Chapter Two

The Spatial Conflict in the Graphic Space of Joe Sacco's Graphic Novel *Safe Area*

Goražde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-95 (2000)

Introduction

The space whether it is real or imaginative shapes the conscious as well as the unconscious in the human mind. Therefore, it can either expand or absorb the human energies. This flexibility allows it to be an active element in the process of meaning exploration. Indeed, in the literary field, the identity of real spaces is influenced by the symbolic representation. That is, the spatial knowledge in literature redirects the ideological faculties in the reader. That is why the Orient, for example, as a material space becomes a different, a distant, and a pleasant space in the western literature because of what Edward Said calls 'imaginative geographies.' This latter illustrates the importance of space in the continuing of the imperial project as an economic, political, and military monster that is still operating under the guise of globalization and that is fed by spatial conflicts. However, writing and 'writing back' are not sufficiently effective in addressing the question of space and spatial conflicts in the age of the image. That is why E. Said, for example, writes his graphic book *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* in which he uses photographs of Palestinians by the famous photographer Jean Mohr in order to describe the dispossessed and dispersed character of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation.

Additionally, before Edward Said, there is a long history of illustrated books that documented war like Robertus Valturius's *De Re Militari* (Art of War) (1472), Jacque Callot's *Les Grandes Misères et Malheurs de la Guerre* (1633); being influenced by Callot, Fransisco Goya made his series of *Los Desastres de la Guerra*. Following Goya's model, the photographer Otto Dix produced his series of *Der Krieg* (the War) in 1924 in reporting the

World War I (Chute, 2016, p. 8). The World War II was also an inspiration for the rising of the comic book as a form of fictional comics especially the superheroic genre. For example, in the 1946 issue of *Action Comics*, Superman is holding a camera flying in the air and filming an atom bomb test. In fact, Superman's action of filming is an act of witnessing that shows how war witnessing is deeply rooted in the comic culture. Therefore, war reportage played a major role in the emergence of comics and the war press as Chute (2016) notes, "At every corner of its history, comics or its antecedents, takes shape in conversation with war" (p. 11). Finally, these graphic forms of war documentation gave rise to the current documentary graphic novel.

The documentary graphic novel as a 'serious' literary form is one type of many other different types in comics that is based on testimonial 'drawing' that records witnesses of 'real' events. Usually, these drawn events are traumatic happenings; they might be familial or national. The concept 'documentary' can be defined as "the creative treatment of actuality" (Gierson, 1933, p. 18). It is also usually linked to the word 'document,' so we can say that the documentary treats actuality by using documents as evidential sources; these documents might be 'official' or 'human' documents. Therefore, the documentary is a combination of the official or the archival and the human document.

Among the most celebrated documentary graphic novels in the comic field, we have Joe Sacco's work *Safe Area Gorazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-95*. It recounts the conflict of the three-year Bosnian war of the Serbs and Croats against the Muslim Bosniaks between 1992 and 1995, and that led to the massive killing, massive raping, and massive dispersing of tens of thousands of Bosnians. In this graphic novel, Joe Sacco sheds light not on Sarajevo, the capital of the country, but on a small village called Gorazde where the eastern Bosnian war is microcosmically described in a verbo-visual language. Therefore, in order to study spatial conflicts using a geocentric eye, it is necessarily important to link the real space to the imaginative one and this can apply to the literary medium of the graphic novel.

Linking the real to the imaginative space and the documentary to the aesthetic in studying the spatial conflict in the graphic novel of *Safe Area Goražde* by Joe Sacco arises multiple questions: What is the graphic space? What are the graphic tools that contribute to the spatialization of the conflict in Sacco's *Safe Area Goražde*? How does the graphic or comic space mediate the Bosnian war productively? And most importantly, how can war be an entertaining subject?

2.1 The Graphic *Opsis*: Spatializing Responsible Seeing in *Safe Area Goražde*

In his renowned article entitled “Spatial Form in Literature: Toward a General Theory,” Mitchell (1980) brings spatiality to the front-line of literary critical perspectives by redefining the term according to its sensual modes of production as touch and vision. The visual spatialization corresponds to what Frye (1957) calls the “opsis” indicating “the spectacular or visible aspect of drama; the ideally visible or pictorial aspect of other literature” (as cited in Mitchell, 1980, p. 547). That is to say, the “opsis” is the picture we draw while visualizing a literary text following a rhythmical arrangement that is based on the simultaneous and perceptual movement of body and spirit. Being characterized with movement reverses the traditional view of the place or the space as being static fields of real or imaginative interactions.

Therefore, the spatiality of literature is effectuated by the oscillating movement between the ‘real’ place and its imaginative construction. The fact that makes the artistic space of any literary text unrestricted to any defined borders: it is “metamorphic, irrational, heterogeneous, fragmentary, or stable, solid, and reassuring” (Mitchell, 1980, p. 551). Indeed, the uniqueness of the literary space lies in its fluidity and transformation that spring from the material as well as formal imaginations: the first re-creates the external or material world and the latter forms a world generated from the internal; from the heart (Bachelard, 1983, p. 1). These two distinguished but interrelated imaginations contribute to the production of the graphic novel and specifically the documentary graphic novel.

In effect, being defined by McCloud (1993) as a “juxtaposed sequential visual art” (p. 7), the visual in graphic novels or comics in general is prior to the verbal. Besides, the visibility of the invisible or the marginalized is clearly evoked through the images rather than words in the graphic novel. Moreover, the making of the visible out of the invisible in the graphic novel and especially the documentary graphic novel occurs throughout the ‘opsis’ or the graphic ‘opsis’ which is the vision that makes reality visible throughout the spatial forms of the documentary graphic novel like the panel, the page, the frame, and the gutter. These graphic spaces represent the language of the graphic ‘opsis’ or the graphic vision as an ordered entity. In the regard of the ordering power of the ‘opsis,’ Voegelin (1990) maintains, “the *opsis*, the vision, is Plato’s technical term for the experiential process in which the order of reality is seen, becomes reflectively known, and finds its appropriate language symbols” (as cited in McGuire, 2020, p. 99). We can adopt Voegelin’s idea and claim that the documentary graphic novel is a literary medium that visualizes harmoniously reality according to the graphic ‘opsis’. Therefore, the documentary graphic novel is a result of a noetic vision that is caused by seeing reality in an aesthetic way. The question that arises here is: how can the aesthetic or the beautiful mediate the ugly reality of war conflicts like the Eastern Bosnian war? The answer to this question is that graphic spatiality furnishes the framework for the aestheticizing of the war conflict and this happens through the unifying power of the graphic ‘opsis.’

Like many documentarians’ visual artistic works, Joe Sacco’s graphic novels are drawn according to the witness’s seeing. It is resulted from a combination of reportorial and intimate witnesses. That is to say, the cartoonist reports what the witnesses saw and he also reports what he sees with his own eyes, the eyes of the artist or the aesthetic eyes. This self-insertion of the artist’s visual witnessing in war reporting goes back to Goya who in his *Disasters of War* writes first-person comments like: ‘This I saw’ in order to ensure the credibility of his drawings about the Peninsular war, and which reminds us of Nakazawa’s documentary graphic novel *I Saw It*

about the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the WWII. Besides the verbal declaration of war witnessing, the contemporary artist-reporter marks his own presence by drawing himself in the battlefield, and this is a major characteristic of Sacco's works. In addition, being there on the page indicates the direct visual apprehension and expression of the conflict as if the cartoonist presents the first-hand information of the conflict directly to the viewer signaling the independence of the graphic novel as a literary form.

Eventually, the graphic space motivates the connection between the form of the graphic novel and the visual witnessing of the cartoonist and the war survivors. Reporting spatially what Goraždans saw and what Sacco sees is a process of re-tracing omitted historical moments in the Bosnian war. That is, the authenticity and the specificity of the documentary graphic novel lies in its dependence on the visual witnessing that is the core of the interviewing operation. Sacco (2002) emphasizes this particularity by stating, "I go out and interview people about their stories, but I also have to ask questions most prose journalists don't ask: *visual questions* [emphasis added]." For Sacco, visual questions give the witness an opportunity to participate in the 'drawing' of the event and this is what prose journalism lacks. Sacco's criticism of media coverings of Goražde confirms the importance of the 'visual questions' in avoiding the immediate forgetfulness of Goražde that is mispronounced by the journalists themselves as "Gora-wah?" and which was according to Sacco (2000) "getting CNNed! NPRed! And BBCed!" (p. 6).

Moreover, unlike other journalists, Sacco's self-immersion into the storyworld of the Bosnian war as perceived from the town of Goražde breaks any distance between him and Goraždans. In this regard, Sacco (2000) criticizes the UN convoy of photographers for their humiliating "Bons-Bons" policies of distribution to the children of Goražde as they throw candies in order "to capture the predictable mad scramble" (p. 131) (See Figure (1)). In contrast to what his colleagues see, Sacco finds out that "the children in Goražde could make their own

bon-bon decisions” (p. 132) after being approached by a child who “didn’t want no stinking bon-bon” and asked him for a smoke instead. We can say that the visual witnessing of Sacco is conducted with responsibility which is absent in the irresponsible and manipulative ways of seeing by the ‘spectacular’ media who see what they ‘want’ to see.

The following figure shows how journalists use the humiliating Bon-Bons strategy to make Gorazdan children contribute in the making of their journalism:

Figure (1): The Bon-Bons Scene (Sacco, 2000, p. 131)



The responsibility of Sacco’s visual witnessing permits and even requires the use of the language of simultaneity to express different and even contradictory facets of the Bosnian war. In the section entitled “Drina,” for instance, Sacco challenges the traditional modes of historical recording through exposing paradoxical spaces simultaneously (See Figure (2)). In the pages of this section, he juxtaposes two contradictory and provocative scenes that are presented in a heightened fashion.

The following figure illustrates the simultaneous visual representation of paradoxical spaces. It shows how the label “Drina” connotes both death and smoking:

Figure (2): Drina (Sacco, 2000, p. 108)



Arriving at Goražde, Sacco discovers the strong addiction of the people there to smoking the cigarette named “Drina” and by contamination he becomes a cigarette smoker for the first time in Goražde. The Drina smoke is a national cigarette produced in Sarajevo that replaced the shortage in the Marlboro and Lucky Strikes cigarettes. Soldiers, teachers, and nurses are paid for their services in “Drinas.” The name “Drina” comes from the famous river with the same name bordering the Serbian side from the Bosnian one which includes three towns: Visegrad, Goražde, and Foca. Visegrad and Foca were ethnically cleansed in 1992 by the Serbian army who slaughtered Bosnians and threw them in the “Drina” river and the rest moved to Goražde which is now a “safe area” for refugees from these two towns.

The repetition of the word “Drina” on the four panels placed on the surface space of background image, picturing the unwelcoming of Sarajevo ‘civilian’ citizens towards the refugees from the ‘primitive’ eastern Bosnian, indicates the echoing of the word “Drina” in a deadly silence: DrinaDrinaDrinaDrina! Moreover, the floating of the dead bodies on the ‘Drina’ river in the first panel on the top of the right corner of the page produces a silent image that can say nothing without the images in the panels bordering it from left and below in which two nurses from the municipality of Goražde and three ‘civilians’ from Sarajevo are carelessly smoking Drina cigarettes from which the smoke is rising making a visual noise that disturbs the stillness and the silence of the Drina river’s undeniable atrocity. Indeed, the placement of the four panels in a slanting direction on the background image seems like sticking ‘recollected’ photos on a wall in order to rethink, refigure, and register the memory of the ‘Drina’ river killings spatially. The spatialization of such memory is made timeless and eternal through the sloped framing of these panels that made the whole page a unified and an independent idea or memory.

2.2 The (Dis)appearing Frame: Framing the ‘Right to shoot! to look!’

Interestingly, what renders a journalistic graphic novel like *Safe Area Goražde* independent, serious, and ‘literary’ rather than ‘commercial’ is the picturality of the frame: if the frame is hand-drawn, the work is independent. Therefore, the spatial form and the materiality of the frame shape the visual immediacy of the graphic space and engage, or reengage, the viewer with the realities of the Bosnian conflict. In effect, documenting the Bosnian war is enabled by the frame(s) that gives the witnesses the freedom to speak out and to testify their visual memories of the war without any restrictions. That is, despite its seemingly closeness and flatness, the frame enjoys an openness that resides in its flexibility and molding ability to capture each witness’s historicizing particularity. Such elasticity of the frame provides it with self-reflexivity which is “constantly enacted through the point of view of its most basic syntactical element, drawn frames (Chute, 2016, p. 208).

Moreover, the simultaneity of these drawn frames gives both the inhabitants of the graphic space and the viewer the privilege to take various perspectival reorientations of their perceptions. Oscillating between physicality and imagination, the frame travels from one space to another. In linking the film art to comics through their expression properties namely: the window, the frame, and the panel, Smith (2013) maintains, “at times they float with the abstraction of metaphor, while at other times they act like grounded physical properties of a medium” (p. 221). In other words, the frame cultivates an open imagination of meaning understanding because of its material substance as well as its metaphorical poetics. However, the frame in comics is particularly different from the cinematic, television, and computer windows because of its hand-drawn origins away from any technological interventions, and this enables the frame “to position art as a realm apart from the rest of the real world, an arena where aesthetic considerations reign supreme” (Smith, 2013, p. 222). Therefore, the frame marks the

artistry of the documentary graphic novel and functions as a “weighty *crystallization* of reality into art” (Cohn, 1977, p. 23) as if the frame enhances the esthetic contemplation of reality.

Marking the specificity of the Bosnian war requires certain framing processes that give it an aesthetic fingerprint. That is to say, framing the Bosnian war in *Safe Area Gorazde* creates something different or unusual from what we are used to know about war. In other words, the frame in *Safe Area Gorazde* defies any idea that reduces the Bosnian war to be considered ‘like’ any other war. In this respect, Allmer (2006) describes the frame as:

the sign of the creation of the other (perhaps this is why Lacan sees the initial division between me and you in the mirror stage)— less so because of the mirror, but more so because of the frame [. . .] creating a betweenness which is truly the territory of ghosts, of the closely knit relations between heimlich and unheimlich. (p. 125)

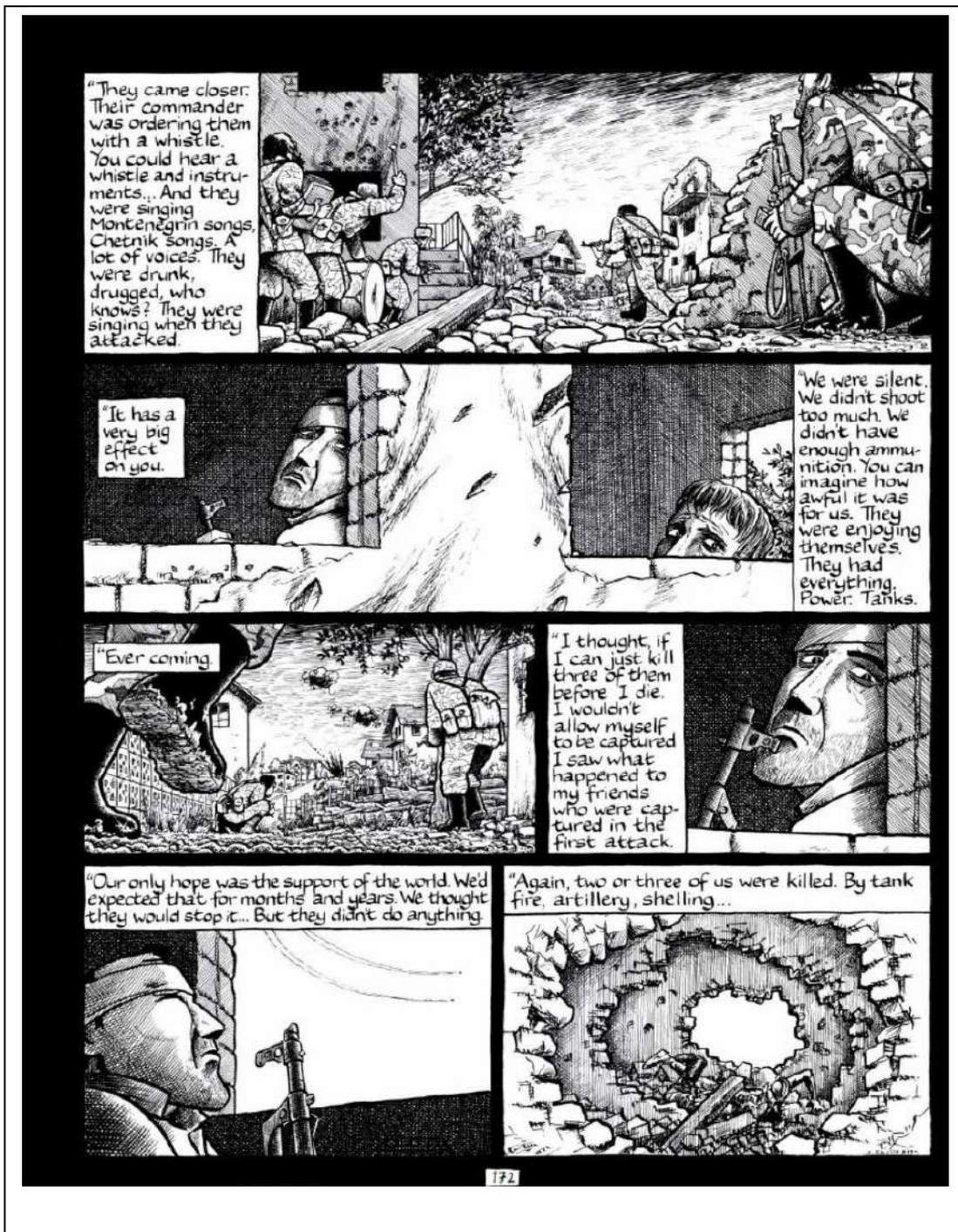
Therefore, the frame is a spectral space where the ‘homely’ and the ‘unhomely’ meet.

The ‘othering’ of the Bosnian war can be noticed in the section entitled “The 94 Offensive” as recounted by Edin who tells us the story of this historical event as he was a part of it. This offensive happens in February 1994 when the Serbs switched their heavy weapons from Sarajevo to the Gorazde enclave and launched a horrible attack on Gorazde, a UN declared safe area. In defending his town, Edin joins the fighting lines that chose to hide inside the evaded houses and shoot from its windows or frames (See Figure (3)). In page 172, Edin and his friend are looking silently and fearfully from the house’s ‘frame’ to the outside where the Serbs are singing and playing music while shooting and destroying Gorazde with their heavy tanks. In the panels where Edin and his friend are doubly framed by the graphic or comic frame and by the houses’ windows, there is a between-space that belongs to the uncanny (to use Freud’s term) referring to both the ‘homely’ or the familiar, and the ‘unhomely’ or the strange as both becomes awkwardly strange with instable boundaries. The uncanny anxiety that appears on the faces of Edin and his friend comes from looking through the window; i.e., the ‘homely’ frame, that is

haunted by the ghosts of its forcefully ‘displaced’ inhabitants and the dead fighters, transforms into a frightening frame through which a bullet can enter and kill Edin or his friends.

The following figure shows how the graphic frame becomes an uncanny frame in the Bosnian war:

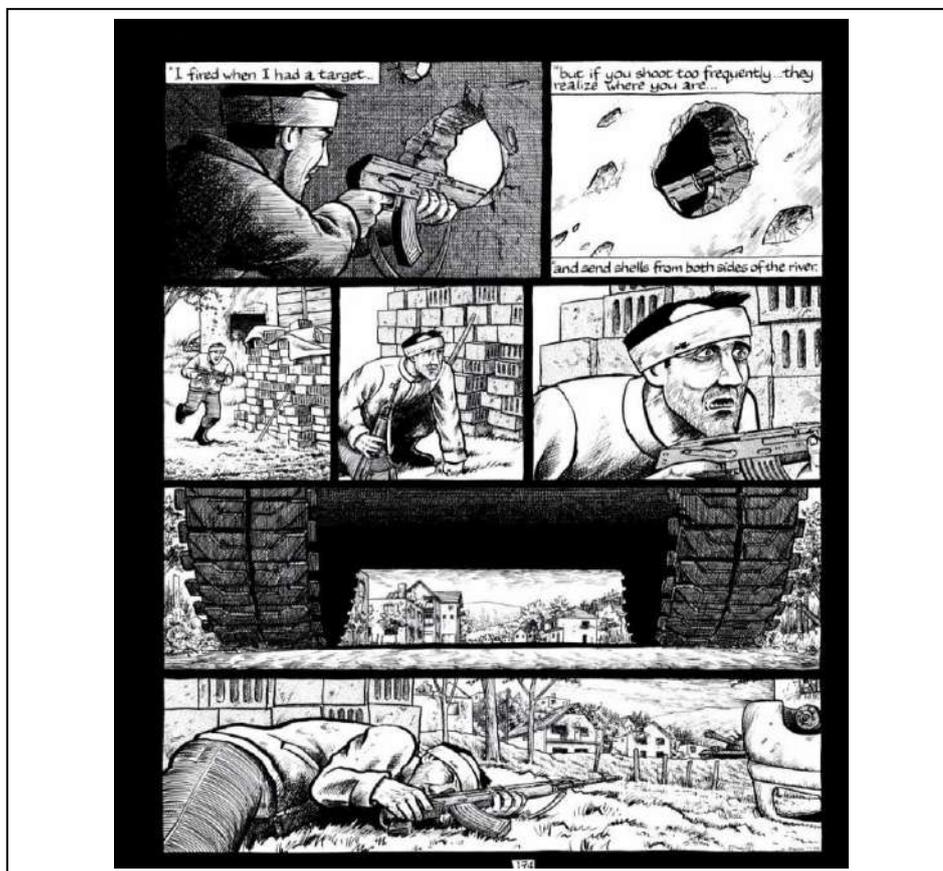
Figure (3): The Uncanny Frame (Sacco, 2020, p. 172)



The graphic frame and the house's window (s) conjure up a certain union by sharing the same borders at the edges of the panels. They are gathered together to reveal the artificiality of the opposition between the graphic space and the war space, between survival and death. We can see the dissolving of the boundaries between survival and death 'framed' in the last panel at the right bottom of the page and the first two panels in page 174 (See Figure (4)). The first demonstrates the result of a bombardment of a window by a tank fire killing two or three of Edin's friends as it creates many circular frames that entrap our vision in the endless circles of the 'uncanny' caused by the death of these men inside the 'homely' space. However, the second shows how the tank fire caused a hole (a frame) from which Edin obtains his right to 'look' first and then to 'shoot' as he states, "I fired when I had a target" (Sacco, 2000, p. 174).

The following figure Note. The image illustrates how the frame gives Edin the right to look and shoot:

Figure (4): The Right to Look! To Shoot (Sacco, 2000, 174)



Accordingly, the frame in *Safe Area Goražde* asserts the Bosnian witnesses the ‘right to look’ that is according to Mirzoeff (2011) is a claimed right by the colonized who has been controlled for centuries by the colonizer’s ‘visuality’ (p. 2). He also views visuality as “an early nineteenth-century term meaning the visualization of history” rather than “a trendy theory word meaning the totality of all visual images and devices” (p. 2). In this sense, the ‘right to look’ re-visualizes counter-historical accounts through the spatial framing of the graphic space against the visualized history enforced by the spatializing of the space into the authority space and the subjugated space. Therefore, the graphic frame motivates the enactment of the ‘right to look’ through its self-referentiality that is marked by its heightened presence or accentuated absence or deepened disappearance.

Safe Area Goražde is marked by the ambivalence of its frames which are over casted by the blackness of the background of the pages concerned with the testimonies and memories of the Bosnian witnesses about the Bosnian war in order to reproduce the gloomy mood of this traumatic event. In the section entitled “Disappearance,” for example, the frames of the panels disappear in the deep darkness of the backdrop of the three pages of this section which reflects the frightful, and enigmatic mood of the disappearance of the Serbian neighbors of Sacco’s Bosnian translator Edin who recalls this event (See Figure (5)) through a series of (dis)appearing framed panels that re-member Edin’s memory in a zigzag fashion.

The omnipresence of Edin’s narrative voice and image in all the panels of this section represents his autonomous claim to the ‘right to look’ which is according to Mizereoff (2011) “a claim to the real” (p. 26). That is to say, Edin’s autonomous realism about the Serbian disappearance from Goražde on the fourth of May 1992 is manifested through the rhythmic arrangement of the frames that announce steadily the beginning of the Bosnian war as Edin’s mother states when she wakes up him on the morning of this day, “wake up! the war has started” (Sacco, 2000, p. 68). Moreover, the autonomy of Edin’s testimony is enforced by the frame’s

ambivalence: it is neither present nor absent. Therefore, the strangeness of the frame(s) creates an autonomous space that cannot be violated or penetrated by the viewer.

The following figure illustrates how the disappearance of the frame coincides with the disappearance of the Serbs:

Figure (5): The (Dis)appearing Frame (Sacco, 2000, p. 68)



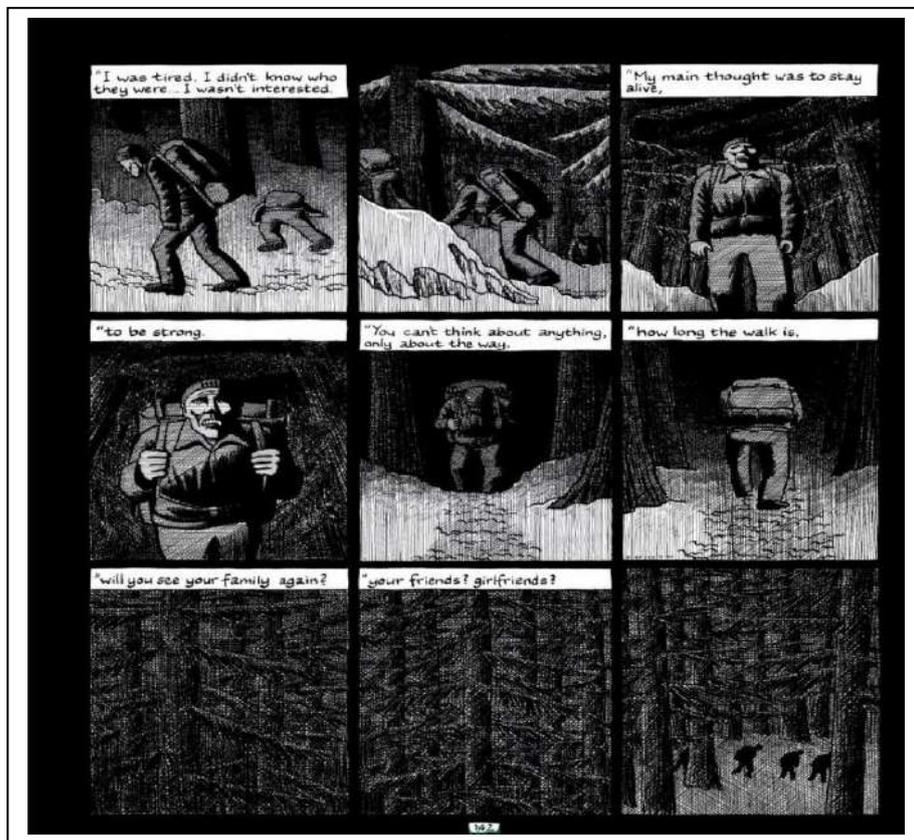
Indeed, the autonomy of this section is asserted by the frame's strangeness that in turn expresses the strangeness of Edin over the disappearance of his Serbian neighbors in the page (See Figure (5)) that shows in its middle zone three successive panels ordered from left to right exhibiting the gradual suspicion of Edin from using the phone to call his Serbian friends to going to the street moving from a group of people to another in order to confirm the information. This rhythmical narrative directionality is decided by the frame's gradual zooming out: in the first panel, what is framed is only Edin picking up a phone making calls to his Serbian friends; however, in the two next panels, the frame zooms out the scene to contain more objects: Edin is sitting with two of his Muslim friends in front of a car investigating about the truth of the 'disappearance'. Then in the third panel, the panel shows more people and more objects in the background picturing Edin talking to two people riding a car who confirmed the 'disappearance' story. The frames in this section declares the 'right to look' for Edin who testifies the beginning of the Serbian war microscopically, from an autonomous, subjective perspective that is shielded by the frame's bars and splits creating visual spaces that cannot be unseen.

In the morning or in the night, in light or in darkness the frame exhibits an immense capacity of the visual transmitting of the Bosnians' testimonies of war and hunger with their accuracy as well as intricacy. In the section entitled "White Death," Sacco reports the visual witnessing of Edin's experience with hunger, starvation, or the 'white death,' referring to the unavailability of flour that is the basic ingredient in making bread, during the Bosnian war and specifically by the end of 1992. In order to overcome this desperate situation caused by the obstructions and the prohibitions made by the Serbs against the UN aid convoys of food and medicines, the Goraždans from the nearby villages and people from the down town start to exchange their goods: the latter give the furnishings of their apartments in exchange for the villagers' vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes, and corn.

However, for the refugees from Visegrad who were dispersed by the Serbian military forces, they could exchange nothing because of their destitute situation. Therefore, they are the first to go to Grebak, a Bosnian army mountain, from where they can get food and medicines which are supplied from Trnovo. Yet, in order to reach Grebak, they have to cross through a risky Serb-controlled territory. What was harder than going to Grebak, though, is returning to Goražde with loads of supplies in the dark and snowy conditions. In page 142, Edin's experience of 'return' from Grebak to Goražde is expansively framed from various angles in order to demonstrate the hardness of this trip (See Figure (6)). The page is divided into nine equal rectangular frames: in each of the first six panels, Edin is captured in a particularly specific position within "positioned frames" (Groensteen, 2007, p. 47).

The following figure shows the ability of the frame to position Edin in order to demonstrate the difficulty of his trip to Grebak looking for food:

Figure (6): The Positioned Frames (Sacco, 2000, p. 142)



The sameness in the frames' parameters in this page presupposes the existence of a certain kind of a rhythmical repetition of an icon or an image and this is the case of this page as the character of Edin is repeated in the first six panels from left to right. That is, the hosting character of the comic or the graphic frame has an expressive function that corresponds to its content as Groensteen (2007) contends, "the frame of the comics panel can connote or index the image that it encloses" (p. 49). The repetition that the frames connote corresponds to the repetition of the image of Edin walking through the snowy road carrying twenty-eight kg of food. Yet, the difference between these panels lies in the optical angle of framing the moving body of Edin: in the first and the second panels, the frames encloses Edin from a transversal angle walking with difficulty as his back is bent over because of the heavy weight of his bag, while in the third panel, the frame positions Edin frontally from a lower angle, then in the fourth frame, Edin is framed from an eye-level position as he encounters us with his freezing face and his snow-covered clothes trying his best to stay alive and not be damned to the 'white death' like many Bosnians who were defeated by the coldness of the snow. In the fifth and the sixth panels, the frames zoom out the image of Edin from the front and back in order to highlight the forth and back snow footprints of 'hungry' Bosnian men. In the last three panels of this page, the frame opens up the view from a high vantage point picturing pine trees in the first two panels then moves horizontally in a slow motion to show the dark shadows of unknown 'hungry' Bosnian men.

Therefore, the comic frame in this page is a magical moving frame that cannot be seized as it is hidden by the darkness of the background of the page or the contextual background of war and hunger. In addition, the frames in this page are drawn with equal dimensions and this gives the page a sort of equilibrium at the level of form and content. Effectively, the balanced framing of this page produces a meticulous spatial representation of the Grebak trip of hungry Bosnian men during the Bosnian war that is drawn according to Edin's memories about this experience.

Interestingly, the shifting capacity of the frame in this page does not happen only at the level of the graphic space but also at the level of the color as it changes from black to white. This chameleon-like capacity of the frame to shift between the black of the night and the white of the snow emphasizes the prevailing blackness of the page. However, the heightened blackness of this page is not only created by the night but also by the feeling of hunger that is the driving reason behind this murderous experience. The darkness of hunger is best described by Hamsun in his first novel *Hunger* (1890) when the hero is seized by the blinding force of starvation:

I remained for a while looking into the dark--this dense substance of darkness that had no bottom, which I couldn't understand. My thoughts could not grasp such a thing. It seemed to be dark beyond all measurement, and I felt its presence weigh me down. I closed my eyes and took to singing half aloud and rocking myself back and forth on the cot to amuse myself, but it did no good. The dark had captured my brain and gave me not an instant of peace. What if I myself became dissolved into the dark, turned into it?

This overwhelming darkness of hunger that possesses Hamsun's hero demonstrates the strong relationship between hunger and darkness that is transformed into a dominantly black colored comic or graphic page marked with the selecting borders of the frame that is "dissolved into the dark" or maybe "turned into it" in order to panelize Edin's 'past' experience in a particular place with all its details.

2.3 The Panel, the Punctum, and the Place: Goražde's Lives and Landscapes

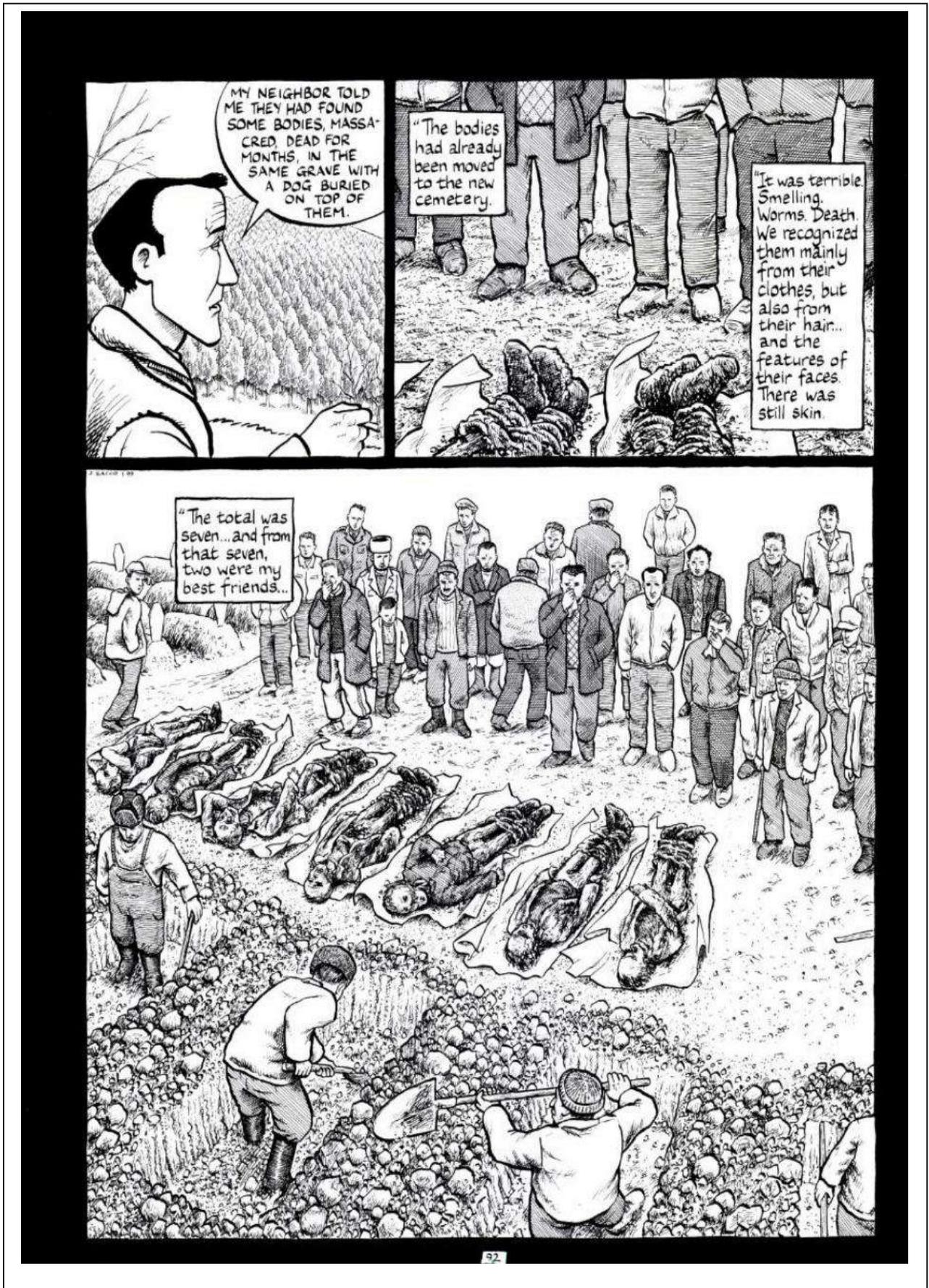
The variety of the panel's spatial coordinates in *Safe Area Goražde* permits the spatialization of collective as well as intimate experiences of the Bosnian war. In this graphic novel, the importance of the panel lies in its capacity to shake the idea that conflict zones are not completely absorbed by the nihilism of death and hopelessness but rather vitally animated by the quotidian details of its inhabitants 'lives. Moreover, being "the base unit of the comics system" (Groensteen, 2007, p. 34), the panel is significantly meaningful even when it is set alone on the page like the pages containing images of Goražde's landscapes.

In *Safe Area Goražde*, Sacco draws Goražde from different angles in order to emphasize the specificity of this town and to display the topography of this place. He draws the landscape panels from sharp angles that show Goražde as a large and empty space when it is zoomed out and confined and teeming place when it is zoomed in. For example, the first two horizontal panels in page 3 present the town of Goražde from an aerial point of view as a desolate place deserted from any lively creature. The flatness of these panels indicates the international neglect towards what is happening to Goražde. However, when the Goraždan town is zoomed-in in the next page, the vertical panel is confined and overcrowded by Goraždans who are standing on both sides of the road waiting for the UN convoy of journalists to arrive. This panel shows that Goražde is not a deserted space but rather a “deserved space” (Sharp, 2010) peopled by specific individuals with specific facial, body, and clothing features.

The ‘deserved space’ is not only given to the living landscapes, but also to the death landscapes of Goražde where the dead are also meticulously drawn within large panels like in pages 92 and 93. In page 92, the panel in the right top of the page and the horizontal panel at the bottom of the page belong to the fifth category of panel-to- panel transitions named by McCloud (1993) as “aspect-to-aspect” transition because “it bypasses time [...] and sets a wandering eye on different aspects of a place, idea or mood” (p. 72). In other words, the transition from the right top panel to the bottom panel, from the fragmented image of the worm-covered legs of two rotten dead bodies to the whole image of the burial of these cadavers in the presence of their neighbors, friends, and families sets a mood of disgust and a sense of the death landscape. The aspect-to-aspect transition of these two panels emphasizes the particularity of each character appearing in the image whether a living person or a dead body as there is no one resembling the other (See Figure (7)).

The following figure shows how the aspect-to-aspect transition of panels provides the Bosnian corpses with a space to appear:

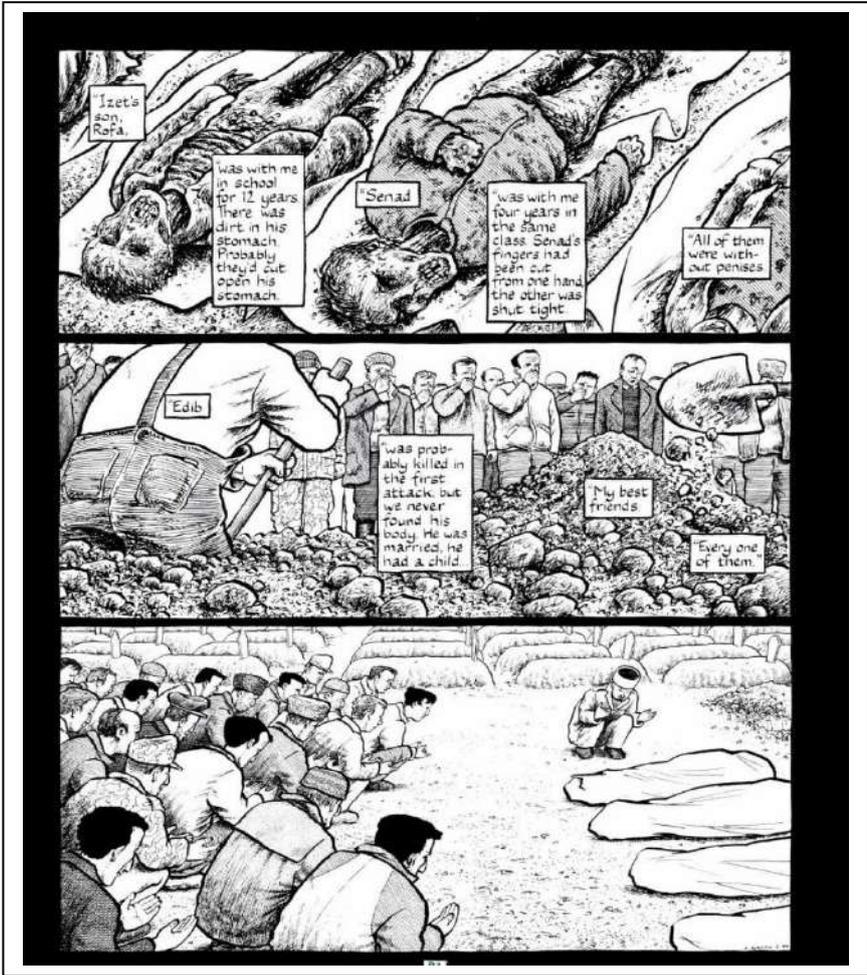
Figure (7): The Aspect-to-Aspect Panels (Sacco, 2000, p. 92)



In the next page, this aspect-to-aspect transition continues with the first panel which complete the fragmented image of the previous page and that includes Edin's detailed reading of the rotten corpses of two of his friends, Rofa and Senad who were like the other dead men castrated. However, Rofa's body is marked by his rotten stomach and Senad's corpse is distinguished by his cut fingers of one hand and the closing of the other hand (See Figure (8)). Thus, the death landscape does not only refer to the burial place but also to the body of the dead that bears the marks of the traumatic events of the Bosnian war. These marks that constitute the overlooked details of the untold stories of what really happened during the Bosnian war are communicated through the space of the panel.

The following image shows how the panel represents a space for untold stories in the Bosnian war:

Figure (8): The Panel as a Space for Untold Stories (Sacco, 2000, p. 93)

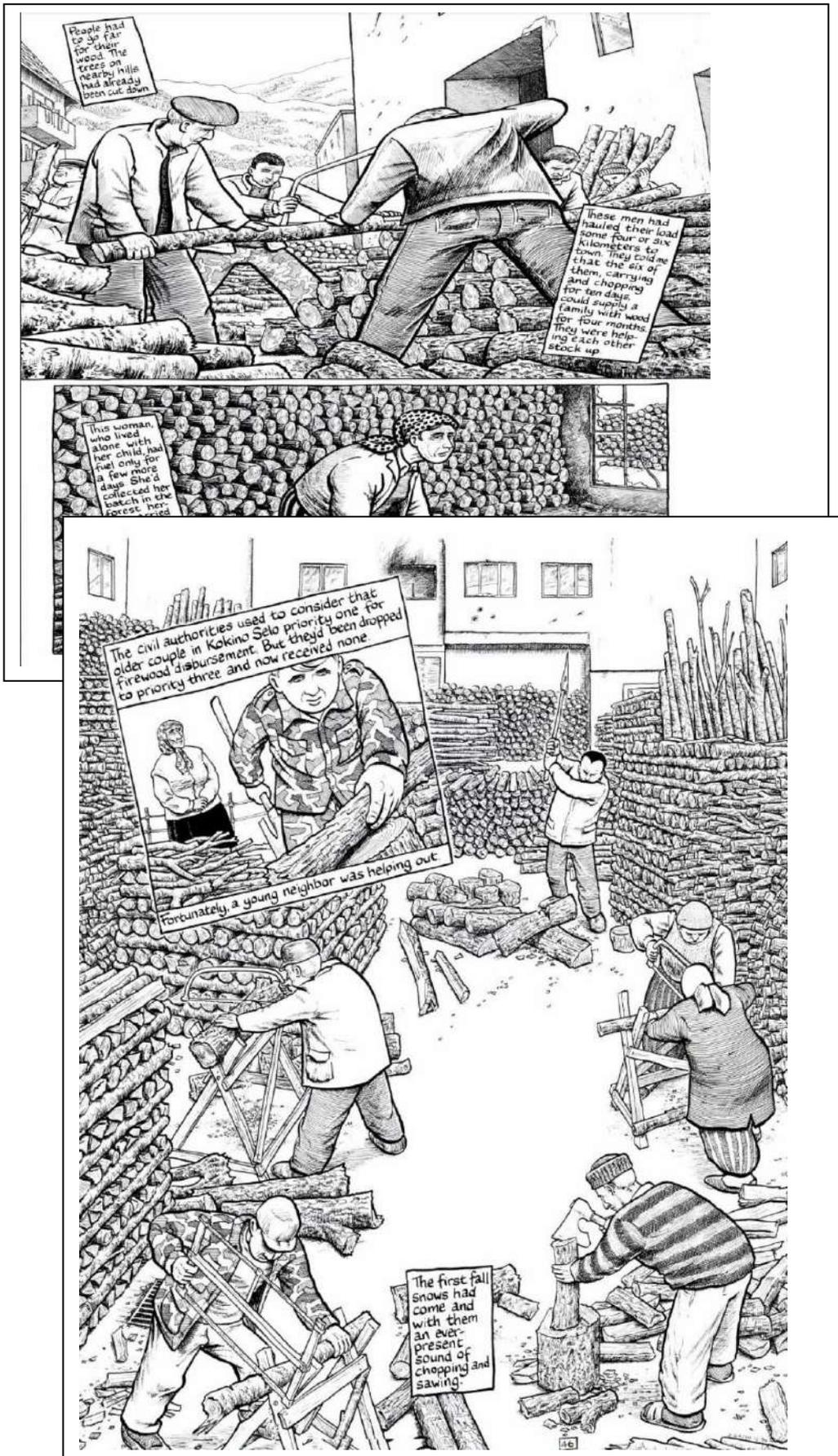


Indeed, the panel's detailed portrayals of Goražde's landscapes shed light on the various aspects of the conflict space. In one of his interviews with the Pakistani journalist Yusuf, Sacco (2007) expresses his interest in places by stating, "In my work, I'm just trying to create the flavor of a place I've been." Providing a richly detailed sense of the place with all its particularities is a major character in *Safe Area Goražde*. Indeed, through his photo-realistic style of drawing, Sacco evokes vivid and precise articulations of Goražde's both landscapes and lives. He draws Goražde as a war surviving town inhabited by survivors. This can be seen in page 14 where Sacco captures a dystopian landscape enlivened by the people's will to exist. This panoramic image is drawn "because Goražde had lived" (Sacco, 2000, p. 14). The constant wood cutting and stacking that appears in this image is extensively drawn in the section of "The Deep Dark," that depicts Goražde's miserable conditions as there are no heaters, no running water, and no electricity. Nevertheless, the continuous and dense drawing of the wood chopping and stacking in pages 45 and 46 signify the Goraždans' insistent determination to live on (See Figure (9)).

Moreover, the chopped and stacked wood image appears frequently in many pages as a partial object but an indispensable detail to the overall images of Goražde's streets. According to Barthes (1982), what attracts his attention to any photograph is the detail or what he calls *the punctum* (p. 42). That is, the punctum is a 'fascinating' object that provokes, disturbs and disrupts the viewer's consciousness. It is also "not restrictedly intentional, and probably must not be so; it occurs in the field of the photographed thing like a supplement that is at once inevitable and delightful" (Barthes, 1982, p. 47). In other words, the photographer does not put this detail intentionally into his field of capture but rather its active presence is imposed on the whole photograph.

The following figure show the chopped wood as an indispensable object in the daily life of Goraždans during the Bosnian war:

Figure (9): The Punctum (Sacco, 2000, p. 45-46)



Proceeding from Barthes' definition of the "punctum," we can regard the chopped and stacked wood image as the "punctum" of many images in *Safe Area Goražde* (See Figure (10)). In page 6, for example, the detail of the chopped wood at the background of this teeming panoramic image from the right side and the left side, to use Barthes's words (1982), "rises from the scene, shoots out it like an arrow and pierces me" (p. 26). The detail of the chopped wood interrupts the general theme of the image which is about the arrival of the convoy of the journalists to Goražde in order to cover what happened and what is happening there. Hence, it re-activates the viewer's passive consciousness leading it to see other details that arises our curiosity to know more about Goražde. Additionally, depicting the chopped wood is, according to Sacco, a crucial detail that "is going to be lost to history if no one documents it" because it belongs to the "discontinuous past" that cannot be repeated in the present and has no future or has a "dead future" (Eldridge, 2016, p. 129). It is this discontinuous temporality of the punctum of the chopped wood that breaks the continuity of the suffering of Goraždans who find temporary repose in their houses where the Bosnian conflict is penalized and panelized.

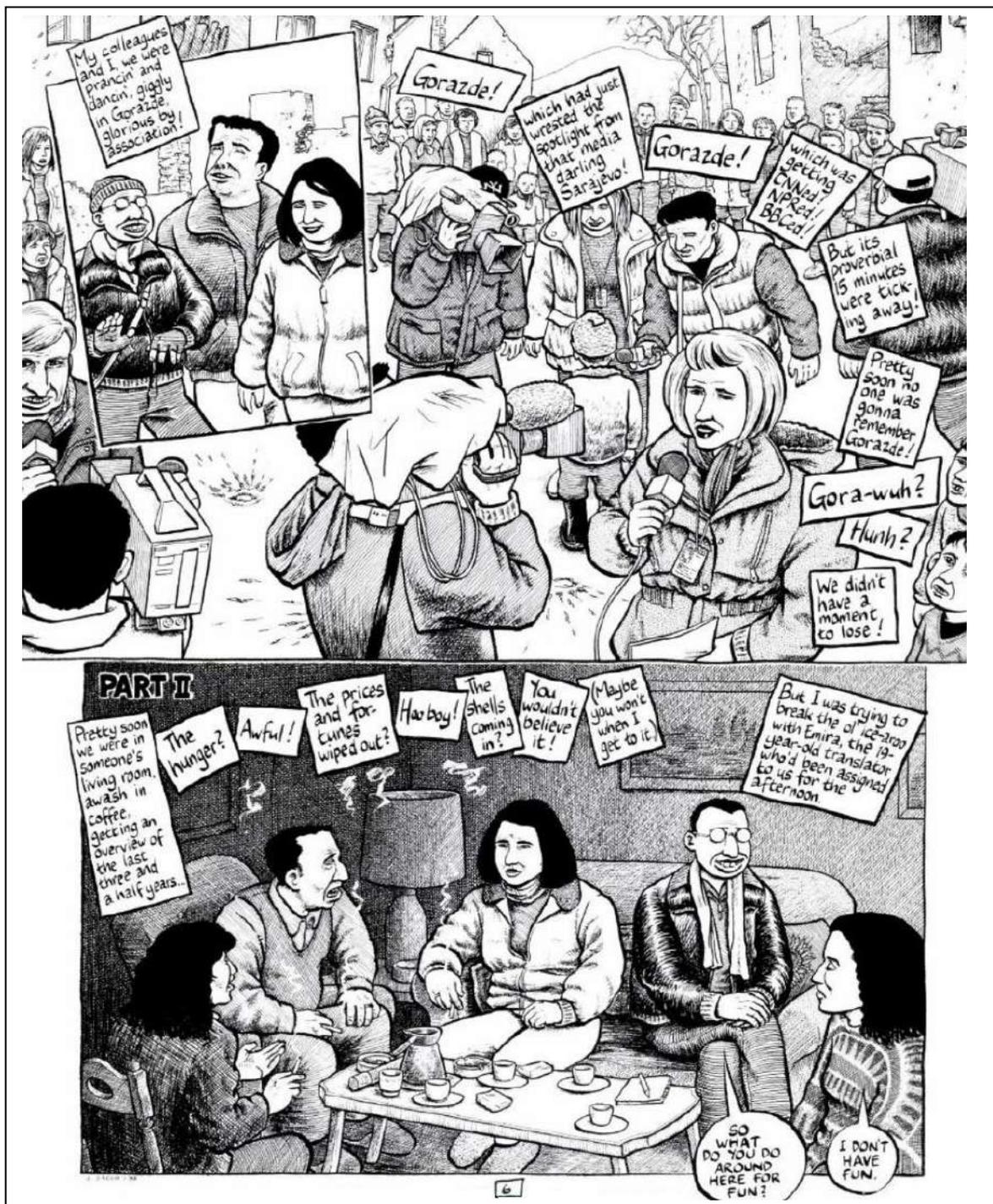
The Goraždan house is a place where the liaison between the past and the present is woven. It is the 'home' of memorial protection and historical production. That is, in order to condemn the Bosnian war, the Goraždan house protects and accepts the incomplete and fragmented memories and hence testimonies of its inhabitants about this war. It is also a place of security even when it is destroyed by the "domicide" (Porteous, 2001) of the war machine because it creates an expansive space or a poetic space garmented by the dweller's unforgettable memories that are spatialized by the punctum.

The importance of the Gorazdan house in re-inking the Bosnian war is clearly indicated by Sacco's choice to curl up comfortably in Edin's dismantled house rather than the hotel when he states, "I'd moved in with Edin and made his place home base on my visits. That hotel I told

you about? A war-zone racket! Freezing in there to boot! Edin's house at least, had one heated room and plenty of couch space" (Sacco, 2000, p. 33).

The following figure displays the punctum of the chopped wood in the background of the images:

Figure (10): The Punctum (Sacco, 2000, p.6)



Despite the fact that Edin's house is close to the Serb-controlled area, Edin's family is strongly attached to their 'home' because of the primitiveness of its details as Edin states when he is asked by Sacco if they are scared of being very close to the enemy, "We've got everything here. A big garden, plenty of fruit, vegetables, eggs, the cow gives us milk, cheese" (Sacco, 2000, p. 34). That is, the power of the house image in Edin's mind exceeds that of the outside images of violence and threat because as Bachelard (1969) asserts, "in the life of a man, the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are unceasing" (p. 6-7). It is then the poetic depth of the house that allows the historical re-inking of the Bosnian war as it provides habitation for the testimonies of the war's survivors.

The following figure demonstrates different parts from Edin's house:

Figure (11): The Diegetic Space (Sacco, 2000, p. 35)



However, the poeticity of the Goraždan house cannot be grasped without the “diegetic space” that is constructed by the reader and which constitutes the imaginary space where the characters of the graphic novel are living and acting (Lefèvre, 2009, p. 157). Therefore, the “diegetic space” of Edin’s house is imagined through the piecing together of the separate panels of the page 35 that contain detailed images of the different rooms of the house from the living room to the kitchen to the balcony (See Figure (11)). Constructing the “diegetic space” does not only depend on the visible but also the invisible which is not shown within the borders of the panels but rather imagined in-between the panels, inside the space of the gutter. That is to say, we draw a complete image of Edin’s house by reading the frame-gutter architecture of the graphic space.

2.4 The Gutter: A Space for the Spaceless

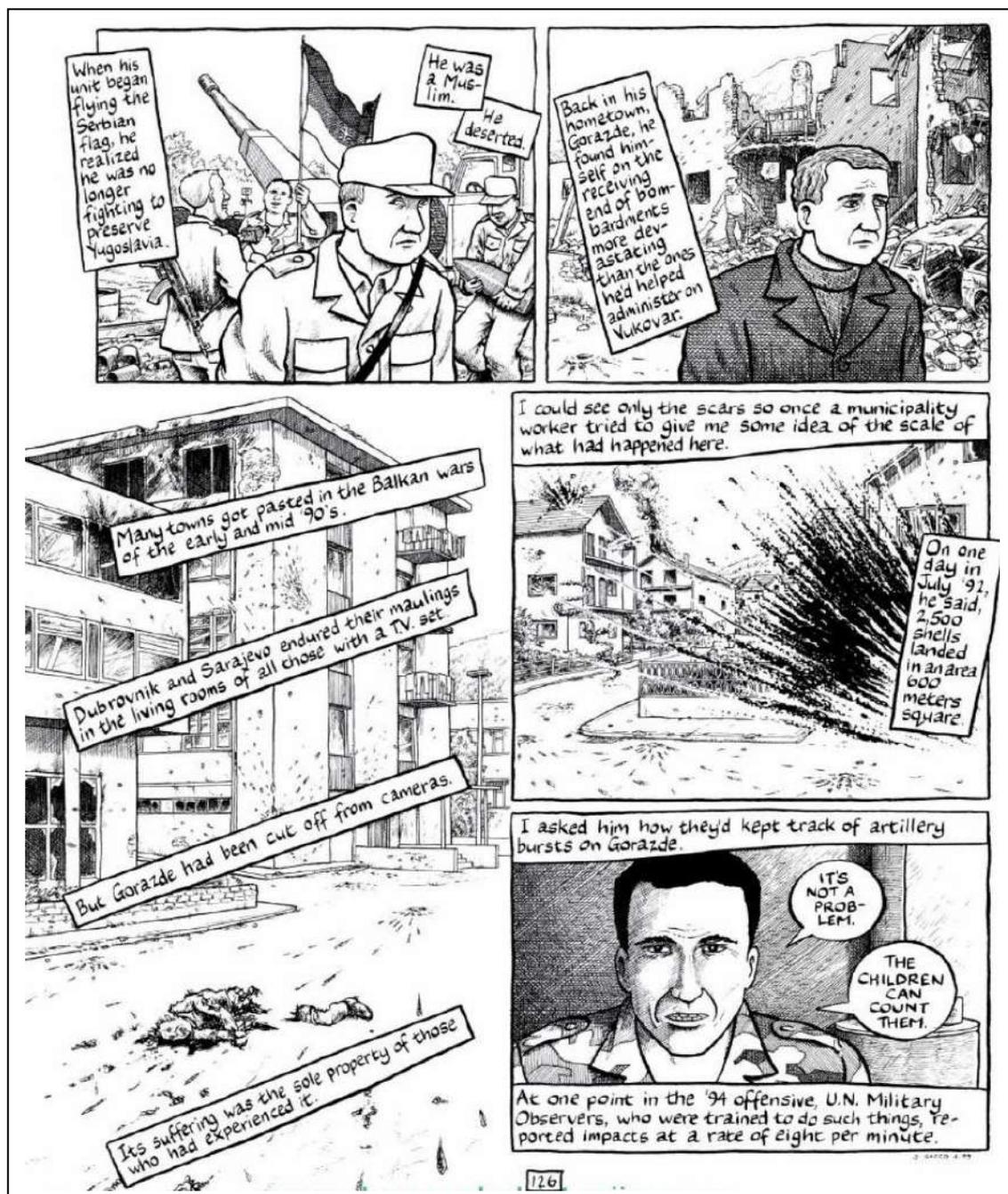
Dwelling on the incompleteness of each panel, the privileged space of the comic page is interrupted by the claustrophobic and labyrinthine isolation of the gutter where the invisible is constricted. In addition, “Despite its unceremonious title,” as McCloud (1993) argues, “the gutter plays host to much of the magic and mystery that are at the very heart of comics” (p. 66). In *Safe Area Gorazde*, the gutter is the space of the people who are killed, silenced forever from telling their stories, the space of the spaceless, so it becomes our responsibility to fill in the gap.

In page 126, operating on both horizontal and vertical axes of the comic page, the compressed gutters separating the four panels release an impaneled image of the dismembered body of a Goraždan man who is killed in a total silence because “Goražde has been cut off from cameras” (Sacco, 2000, p. 126) unlike the big cities like Sarajevo and Dubrovnik whose sufferings were covered by different TV stations (See Figure (12)). The four panels are about the absence of official media coverage of the bombardments of the town of Goražde as explained by a Goraždan military who volunteers in the Yugoslav people’s union army in 1991

and when he finds out that this army is fighting for the Serbs, he retreats and returns to his town, Goražde, where he “could see only the scars” (Sacco, 2000, p. 126) of the bombardments as the war is at its end.

The following figure shows how he gutters produce the unpaneled image of the imputed Goraždan man:

Figure (12): The Gutter (Sacco, 2000, p. 126)



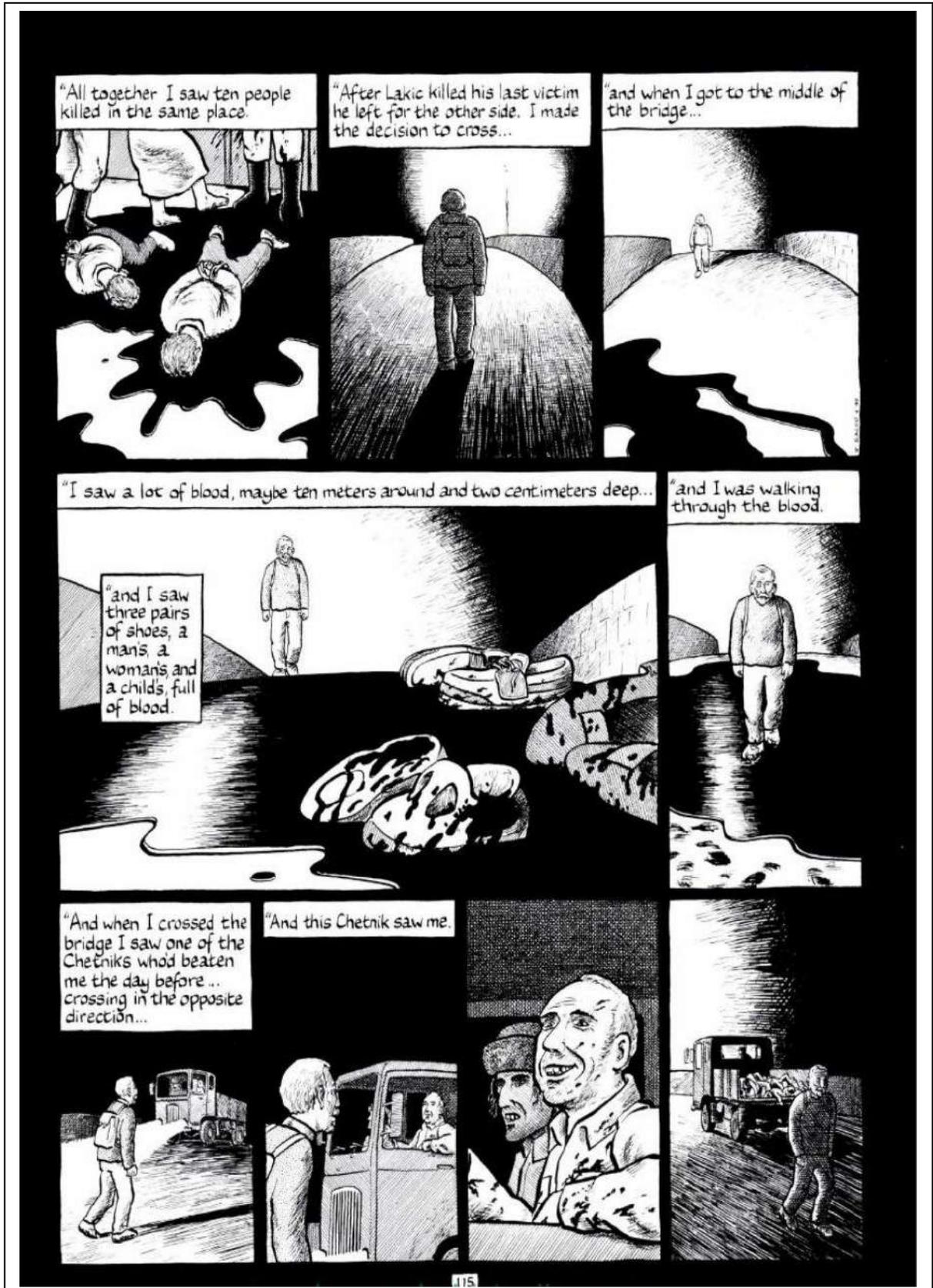
The invisibility of Goražde as a conflict zone is rendered visible through the gutter's interpretive capacity to overlay the historical verities on the page. The gutters in this page do not only link between the different panels, but also gives meaning to the absence of the scenes that precede and succeed the bombardment of this Goraždan man. We can suggest an implied narrative continuity of the drawn image by imagining the man running in the street looking for his lost daughter when he gets attacked by many shells and he dies or he may be saved and lives with amputated legs and cut hands. The space of the gutter transforms the visual absence of what happened before and after the bombardment into a meaningful presence because of the interplay between what is already shown through images or words and what is absented in the void of the gutter.

2.4.1 The Bloody Gutter:

In effect, the gutter offers the reader the opportunity to participate in the drawing of Sacco's *Safe Area Goražde*. According to McCloud (1993), the reader's participatory role in meaning construction requires him "to work as a sort of in-betweener – filling in the gaps between panels as an animator might" (p. 88). In other words, the gutter grants the reader a meaning-construction agency to speculate about the missing details and to supply continuity requisition for the stories that could fill-in the gaps. In an attempt to encounter and to communicate with the victims of the Bosnian war, we need to assume that every gutter in *Safe Area of Gorazde* is filled with blood; i., e. we must believe that there is, using McCloud's phrase (1993), "blood in the gutter" (p. 60). We can see this blood seeping from the panels to the gutters in all the pages in the section of "Around Gorazde," but in page 115, the blood of the killed Bosnian Muslims in Visegrad by the Serb forces floods the page and floods our minds blocking us from thinking or even breathing (See Figure (13)).

The following figure embodies McCloud's phrase "the blood in the gutter":

Figure (13): The Bloody Gutter (Sacco, 2000, 115)



Unlike what is known about the gutter as a space where narration stops to allow the reader to take a breath and to speculate the possible expectations of the storyworld tranquilly, the gutter in this page becomes a bloody stream of uncontrolled and fragmented questions about the nature of the human being. In this sense, the gutter becomes a space of “claustrophobia and isolation” that, according to Labio (2015), “points to a lack of interconnectedness” (p. 336). The reader feels lost in the limbo of the gutter unable to connect the panels to each other because he cannot see. He sinks in the darkness surrounding the Bosnian Muslims who are killed at night on the bridge then thrown in the Drina River in 1992.

This feeling of loss and ambiguity, though, does not contradict the idea that there must be something in the gutter in order to complete the incomplete. However, drawing a whole image of the fragmented parts of the graphic page does not always happen since in the bloody gutter, there is no room for committing what McCloud (1993) calls “closure” which is defined as a “phenomenon of observing the parts but perceiving the whole” (p. 63). The “closure” is impossible because in the gutter we encounter death and silence and thus we cannot “depend on the gutter for our very survival” (p. 63). In this sense, the bloody gutter is filled with unanswerable questions concerning the slaughtering stories of innocent civilians whose ghosts will be stuck forever in this permanent void that annihilates the viewer because the bloody gutter is worthy of contemplation rather than completion.

The gutter as an essential component of the graphic novel allows the reader as well as the creator to manipulate space in a way that is unique to the medium. In Goražde, this space can never be ignored because it provides a visual pause for the reader to reflect on what has just happened. The gutter is thus never just a blank or empty space, but rather it is a plenitude of possibilities. The gutter is a space that creates multiple spaces; it is a space for every underrepresented person in the story of the Bosnian war; it is a space for lost or unconsidered memories.

2.4.2 The Gutter: A Testimonial Space for Traumatic Memories

In order to understand the traumatic memories of Goraždans during the Bosnian war, it is important to know that traumatic memories re-membered through testimonies are fragmentary marked by gaps and gutters. This incompleteness is emphasized by Felman and Laub (1992) who claim that the era in which we are living is an era of testimony, a constructed speech that “does not offer [...] a completed statement, a totalizable account of those events” (p. 5). The compartmentalized form of *Safe Area Gorazde* communicates the traumatic memories of the Bosnian people and shapes the meaning of the Bosnian war. What we see and read in the panels and what we imagine in-between the panels do not represent the truthful memory but a possible representation of the memory. Therefore, if the panel’s meaning depends on its content and shape, the gutter or the void between the panels is an independent space of meaning construction.

In addition to Rasim’s war testimony, Munira’s testimonial account provides significant methods to analyze the role of the gutter in showing the fragmented nature of memories. As a pregnant woman who has just one month to go, Munira is sent from Gorazde to a special department for pregnant women in Foca. After the Serb forces take over the town, Munira and the other Muslim women are stuck in Foca. Munira tells the story of four women’s repeated raping by the Chetniks (See Figure (14)). In fact, what is shown in the panels in page 117 is the act of taking them away by force from the hospital and the most horrible acts of violence and abuse are left in the gutter space. Figure (14) depicts six panels from the left to the right with the three last panels showing the violent abduction of two women from the hospital room. Because of the need to complete the missing visual and textual lexicon of women’s abduction, the readers intervene to participate in forging the traumatic memory of Munira. While Munira states that they took four women in the second time, what we see in the panel is three women.

The inconsistency between what is said by Munira and what is drawn on the graphic page mirrors the fragmentary nature of the traumatic memory.

The following figure shows Bosnian women being abducted by the Serb military men:

Figure (14): The Testimonial Gutter (Sacco, 2000, 117)



Although Munira was not one of these abused women, but still the incoherence of her traumatic memory about Bosnian women's repeated rape by the Serbian military gives the gutter possibilities to embrace the silence of what cannot be told and the incoherence of what can never be complete. Thus, the ruptured structure of the graphic space and especially the presence of the gutter complies to the unconventionality of the traumatic testimony which is "marked by what is not there: coherence, structure, meaning, comprehensibility" (Andrews, 2014, p. 155). The atrocity of sexual violence in war times is impossible to be represented in images or words and that is why the gutter takes the role of a host to such terrible experiences.

Nevertheless, drawing women's sexual harassment during the Bosnian war through Munira's testimonial account is not sufficient because Munira was not one of the four women who experienced sexual violence. I suppose that Joe Sacco did not find a woman who can give her testimonial account may be because women's testimonies on rape during wars are discredited and dishonored through shame. In this vein, Gilmore (2017) asserts that "antifeminist views on sexual violence and sexual agency exist alongside women's acts of testimony within the jurisdictions where they bear witness" (p. 2). The testimony of women victim of traumatic sexual violence is usually seen as unreliable in both legal and social settings.

The official and social rejection of women's testimonies on their traumatic experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence prevent these women from telling their stories to the world and sinks them in a deep sea of silence. Especially in a Muslim environment, it is really hard for women to communicate their experiences of sexual harm. In the case of Bosnian women's traumatic experiences of sexual harm, we can say that Munira's testimony is very important in maintaining the dynamicity and the movement of Bosnian women's testimonies. What is withheld from the reader concerning the traumatic experience is conditioned by social standards and this is the reason for the silence and lack of graphic descriptions of what happened to them. It lets the reader imagine his or her worst of abuse and violation.

The absence of a direct witness from a victim of sexual violence during the Bosnian war reflects the impossibility of representing traumatic experiences. This limitation in representing the traumatic experience of Bosnian women is marked by the presence of the gutter which defies the deafness towards the sufferings of other people. The gap involves the intervention of the reader in the transmission process of the traumatic stories of the witnesses. Although our houses are poured with sounds and images of other people's pains on every day's basis, the reality of these people's pain does not pierce our skins because we are excluded from their narratives. We are passive voyeurs and spectators who take other people's pain for granted. Sontag (2004) comments on the futility and passivity of looking at photographs of dead people in wartime noting, "We [...] don't understand. We don't get it. We truly can't imagine what it was like. We can't imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. Can't understand, can't imagine" (p. 113).

The incomprehensibility of people's pains through images is claimed in the gutter, a dark void that invites the reader to revive his powers of mind to imagine what happened to those four women. Failing to imagine the traumatic memories of those four women evokes the gutter as a site of crisis of meaning. If the gutter is the graphic space or a semiotic space for the dead, the forgotten, the spaceless, the fragmented memories of the war survivors, Goražde represents the social space, the place or the location of these living survivors, a specific place of a specific culture.

2.6 Goražde: The Habitus of War Location

Conceiving the area of Goražde culturally entails looking at it as a location of culture produced from the different social, economic, and political changes during the Bosnian war. The question I ask in this section is what does make Goražde a specific place that manifests a culture of survival despite the turmoil of the Bosnian war? In answering this question, I suggest

that Goražde should not be seen as just a site, a geographical location, or a soulless stage of performances. According to Lee (1997), the specificity of spatial location is usually ignored because:

For modernity what matters most are the connections, the similarities and the lines of continuity across space, rather than the distinctions and differences which may separate particular spaces, whether these be engendered by the universalizing tendencies of capital and the market or the imposition of national or international systems of governance and polity on localities and regions. It is arguably, then, from this tradition that locality and the specificity of place, as the embodiment of uniqueness, is sacrificed. (p. 129)

That is to say, the strong attempts to retain the idea of the particularity of place as an interesting topic of discussion are due to the economic impulses of globalization that aim at erasing the differences between peoples who inhabit ‘specific’ places.

In order to emphasize the centrality of the cultural location of Goražde, I suggest using the concept of “habitus” invented by the French sociologist and the influential figure of ‘cultural studies’ Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1984) defines the “habitus” as a “subjective but not individual systems of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class” (p. 190). He also refers to the habitus as “systems of predispositions characteristic of the different classes and class fractions” (p. 6). The inhabitants of the habitus internalize certain social and cultural thoughts and become henceforth particular subjects of that habitus who have particular ways of seeing the world and responding to it. However, the habitus of certain place is not the same in all times but rather it changes overtime because of the historical changes that happen even if these changes are slight “the habitus is always in a state of becoming and never one of simply being” (Lee, 1997, p. 133). This applies to the histories of peace and war, so we cannot say that the habitus of a peaceful place is the same habitus of this place undergoing war conflicts.

Based on the idea that each place has its habitus applies to Goražde, the central geographic location of Sacco's graphic novel *Safe Area Goražde*. What does make Goražde a distinct place from Sarajevo, for example, although both experience war? It is then the habitus of Goražde that is different from the habitus of Sarajevo that creates such distinctions. Goražde was a UN designated safe area since the beginning of the Bosnian war not abandoned by the UN forces like the enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa which were controlled and ethnically cleansed by the Serb military in the aftermath. In the summer of 1995, the UN convoys of journalists were let to get access to this besieged area by the Serbs because of the NATO bombings against the Serbian forces who refused any attempts for peace settlement or at least fire-cess. In these circumstances, Sacco finds Goražde, a specific locality controlled by international decision makers.

The interferences of the UN and NATO institutions demonstrates that moving in and out of Goražde is not equally permitted for everyone: Goraždans or Bosnians do not have the same degree of physical movement like the American, the French, and the British journalists. This is what Massey (1993) calls "the power-geometry of time-space compression" (p. 61). This means that movement of bodies is regulated differentially as we see that the Western journalists are more allowed to move than the Bosnians who are imprisoned by this same power. The UN and the NATO institutions are the holders of the politics of mobility and access in this area of Goražde as "the peace talks were set to take place in Dayton, Ohio" (Sacco, 2000, p. 3). The "Blue Road" constitutes the UN route to Goražde from Sarajevo in a Serb held territory. Sacco describes the difficulties he faced taking this road but every time he manages to get through this dangerous road saying "but I could leave" underlining the pronoun "I" in order to highlight his exception from the other Bosnians who cannot move along the "Blue Road." Sacco's exceptionalism vis a vis the mobility in and out of Goražde is strongly felt by him when he states:

they had to love me in Goražde. They had to want me [...] I was movement. And if they dreamed they would be on the Blue Road one day, too, they'd be arriving in Sarajevo or Paris or London, then they did so at their peril. (p. 65)

Understanding the local character of Goražde requires first seeing it from an eye-bird point of view, i. e., from a global point of view.

Goražde as a place that embodies the interconnection between the local and the global in times of wars and conflicts constitutes a place that undermines our usual understanding of the everyday life in a conflict area which makes of it a unique place. The representation of Goražde in Sacco's graphic novel *Safe Area Gorazde* demonstrates that it is a "heterotopia," a term coined by Foucault (1984) in his 1967 lecture. Foucault, later, revised this term in a published work entitled "Of Other Spaces" in 1984, referring to heterotopias as "places that are different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about" standing between utopias and real sites (p. 4). Heterotopias are thus places or sites of 'otherness' that embrace values other than our everyday norms like brothels, gardens, prisons, care houses, etc. Goražde destabilizes our taken for granted ideas about conflict areas as we imagine that these areas are as Sacco (2000) described the area while nearing Gorazde "a no man's land" (p. 1). The area of Goražde is a lively area inhabited by fifty-seven thousand inhabitants or survivors who conduct a normal life in a restricted way because they are imprisoned by the armed Serbs who surround the area from all the sides. This environment makes of Gorazde a heterotopic place that attracts the attention of the journalists among them Sacco (2000) who answers a Serbian student about the reason behind visiting this area saying, "because you are still here [...] not raped and scattered" (p. 14). Describing Goražde as a heterotopic place indicates its strangeness, otherness, and uniqueness again to emphasize the previously mentioned idea of the habitus of location.

In a section entitled "Silly Girls," Sacco depicts the relationship between the consumption of cultural goods and their taste for them. What is remarkable in Sacco's graphic novel is the obsession of Goraždan young ladies with the Levis's jeans. Despite the hard times they live in,

the only thing Goraždan girls ask Sacco to bring from Sarajevo is original or American-made Jeans from the Levis brand (See Figure (15)). According to Bourdieu, the consumption of cultural goods has to do with the educational upbringing of people. The taste of these Goraždan girls for the Levis Jeans which is a product of the American culture is ethically grounded. Their appreciation of the American cultural goods is based on the idea that the appropriation of the American culture is predisposed whether consciously or unconsciously in order to attain a certain social specificity or difference. It is the teacher of these girls who called them “silly girls” because of their irresponsible expenditure of money on buying Jeans rather than on books to learn English since they told him that they plan to go to America to study medicine.

The girls’ s needs to consume American-made products is also intensified because of the spatial distance of their residence which is Goražde from the center or the capital Sarajevo. In this respect, Bourdieu (1984) asserts that:

Relationships involving the variable 'place of residence' manifest not only the effect of cultural supply, linked to the density of objectified cultural capital and so to the objective opportunities for cultural consumption and the related reinforcement of the aspiration to consume, but also all the effects of the unequal spatial distribution of properties and their owners (e.g., possessors of high educational capital) , in particular the circular reinforcement each group performs on itself. (p. 105)

It is the deprivation of the Goraždans from the mobility of their bodies and the shortage of the cultural goods that reinforces the need for these things. In addition, the strong impact of the American culture on the Goraždan young culture is morally constructed as its appropriators want to classify themselves socially as a distinct class. Although the American cultural influence on the young Goraždan people is remarkable, it constitutes specifically a part of the ‘habitus’ of Goražde since it is not outside the world but in the world, and the specificity of the Goražde as a place does not mean that it is cut off from the global interconnectedness.

The following figure demonstrates two young Goraždan ladies asking Sacco to bring them jeans from Sarajevo because they cannot move out of Goražde:

Figure (15): The Habitus of Goražde (Sacco, 2000, p. 56)



2.7 Goražde, the (Un) Safe Area: Between Hostility and Hospitality

Being accustomed to a foreign culture indicates the non-violent character of Goražde. It is a place where people have always been friendly with other ethnic groups especially their Serb neighbors. Consuming American cultural products like jeans by those “silly girls” or music by Riki, the Bosnian man who loves to sing famous American songs, is an automatic effect of globalization. Embracing the American culture does not mean that the local culture is in a hostile competition with the foreign culture, but rather it indicates that a local place like Goražde can embrace different foreign cultures creating a safe area for cultural dialogue and diversity. In this respect, Maticha (2012) suggests that, “deeper levels of globalization reduce individuals’

trend toward ethnocentrism, softening their antipathy toward other cultures” (p. 441). The conviviality between the Bosnians and the Serbs before the war was the most remarkable characteristic of Goražde’s non-violent and multicultural character. Edin, the Bosnian friend of Sacco, recounts how surprising the hatred of the Serbs toward Muslim Bosnians is, while listening to the Radio, because they used to live together peaceably and amicably with them for centuries. And in an attempt to confirm this amicability even when his Serb neighbors left their houses to go to Serb-controlled areas, he watches their empty houses from any kind of rub or stealing asserting at the end that no one of the Goražde area approached the Serb’s houses.

How amiability turns to be hatred and hostility is the question that blows up the minds of Bosnian Goraždans? In the first attack on Goražde by the Serb forces that led to a forced dispersion of hundreds of Bosnians from their home town and the killing of more than two hundred persons, Edin was disappointed when he finds out that his neighbors who used to play with football and spend happy times with are the ones who burned his family’s house.

Despite the disappointments that fell upon the heads of the Bosnian Muslims in Goražde from their Serb neighbors, hospitality remains the aura that distinguishes it from any other place in times of war and ethnic conflicts. After the first attack on Goražde, the Bosnians succeed in regaining their place and receive refugees from other Bosnian villages mainly from Foca and Visegrad which were ethnically cleansed in 1992. Unlike the urban city of Sarajevo that rejects the coming of the eastern Bosnian refugees to their city because of their ‘primitivism,’ Goražde welcomes by the end of 1992 nearly sixty thousand refugees openly and warmly.

In addition to hosting refugees from other parts of Bosnia, hosting Sacco, the American journalist, represents the most remarkable part of the whole graphic novel, the way he is treated by Bosnians since he is treated as a guest, as Sacco (2000) states, “I was a guest of the Bosnian war” (p. 130). Hospitality or unconditional hospitality within hostility is what defines Goražde

during the turmoil of the Bosnian war. The unconditional hospitality that Sacco receives from the Bosnians is not only an ethical act but also a way to emphasize the importance of the place as something to be appropriated; it is a way to affirm the possession of the place. Because one cannot host another person except in his home as Derrida (1997) asserts:

to be able to welcome, perhaps one supposes that one is at home, that one knows what one means by being at-home, and that at home one hosts, receives or one offers hospitality, thus appropriating a place in order to welcome the other, or *worse* welcoming the other in order to appropriate a place. (as cited in Raffoul, 1998, p. 278).

Tragically, Goraždans host in an attempt to claim their appropriation of their houses and their town that was the only eastern Bosnian area not being cleansed ethnically. The idea of survival resonates whenever we see the images of the gatherings and the laughing faces of Bosnians with their guest, the American Sacco.

Goražde is a place that unveiled the truth about the real meaning of “safe area” concept. Although Gorazde was pronounced a safe area or a protected area from any Serb attacks by the UN and the NATO institutions, it was never protected against the 1994 offensive that resulted in killing more than seven hundred and wounding nearly two thousand persons. The indifference of the UN forces to this atrocious attack indicates its failure in this peacekeeping operation. Goražde is the place that questions the UN inaction toward the victims of the Bosnian war. This (un)safe area unveils the controversial relationship between peacekeeping and indifference that demonstrated the great influence of bureaucratic decisions on people’s fate. Barnett (1996) speaks about the bureaucratization of peacekeeping i.e., the decisive impact of the bureaucracies on the UN action or inaction in protecting civilians in the safe areas. These bureaucracies make their decisions based on the people’s materialistic and identical situations. Barnett (1996) simplifies this bureaucratic selectivity:

while those with political or economic power are routinely given greater care and consideration by the state, those who are identified as possessing the defining qualities

and characteristics of the community, including race, religion, and gender, will also receive better treatment than those who do not. (p. 132)

In the Bosnian war, the poor conditions and the Muslim identity of Bosnians determine the indifference of the UN and NATO forces because “indifference is a rejection of those who are different” (Herzfeld, 1992, p. 33). If the intervention of the UN to stop the domestic turmoil in Gorazde would affect its interest, it would choose the inaction rather than the action. This silence regarding the Bosnian case is broken by the mapping process that Sacco used in investigating the Bosnian war geographically.

2.8 Mapping the Bosnian War Graphically

Safe Area Gorazde as a graphic novel offers a rich mapping experience that combines the spatial grammar of the graphic novel and the cartographic epistemologies of its maps. According to Peterle (2017), “the spatial structure of the comic book enhances the parallelism between writing/reading and mapping” (p. 45). Mapping as a spatial practice is activated through the spatial properties of the graphic novel enabling the reader to read the text/image and the maps inserted within the graphic page simultaneously and comprehensively. In this way, the graphic novel becomes a “geographer” as Peterle suggests, “exactly like the literary text writes its own geography, the comic book is in its turn a geographer” (p. 46). In addition to providing effective representations of the Bosnian war, *Safe Area Gorazde* can be considered as a geographer of this war as it offers a truly mapping experience that locates the conflict’s unsafely safe places like the enclave of Gorazde.

The mapping experience that *Safe Area Gorazde* is restless embodying the restlessness of wars. It is performative because it uses mobile maps that change temporally and spatially. This mapping practice is not exclusively restricted to the cartographical insertions of maps but also analyzes these maps through walking in the streets of the places represented in these maps. It

is the shift from a Zenithal perspective of the map to the embodied vision of the world that makes reading *Safe Area Gorazde* an exceptional experience of spatializing the Bosnian war.

Safe Area of Gorazde is full of maps that take us, the readers, into the depth of the Bosnian conflict. The maps in this graphic novel are used as analytical tools to investigate the topographical circumstances of the Bosnian war in Gorazde and its surroundings. From his arrival to Gorazde until his departure, Sacco supplements his drawings and his captures with maps that locate the reader at the heart of the event. In the pages 19 and 20, the maps captivate the reader and immerse him in the conflict with its slow and gradual zooming-in strategy. The first map shows the republics and the independent enclaves of Yugoslavia before the break up. The second map zooms in the republic of Bosnia to demonstrate the locations of its different areas. The map is supplemented by framed commentaries that inform the reader about the ethnic diversity of Bosnia. The third map zooms in the Drina valley area in eastern Bosnian where the three main villages are situated: Foca, Gorazde, and Visegrad with Gorazde at the center of the map and the center of the Drina valley. Gorazde before the war was populated by two main ethnic groups: the Muslims and the Serbs living peacefully and harmoniously. Muslims represented the majority of Gorazde's population.

The seemingly natural circumstances of Gorazde that the map represents change to be restless and undulating all along the graphic pages. The maps inserted in *Safe Area Gorazde* are always put in a geopolitical context rather than cultural and social conditions. For example, the map in page 38 emphasizes the two only republics those are at the crossroad of getting independence from Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Serbia in the 1992. This map is contrasted with an image of the building of the Bosnian assembly and government. Inside this building two opposing views are protesting over the idea of breaking up from Yugoslavia held by the Serb side and the idea of staying a multi-ethnic republic supported by the Bosnian side.

The political disagreement is graphically drawn as the two next panels contain the profiles images of the faces of the opposing leaders: from the left, the leader of the Muslim party, Alja Izetbegovic, and from the right we have the leader of the Serb party, Dr. Radovan Karadzic. In this graphic page, the map leads and guides the whole reading of the page creating what Groenteen (2007) calls “iconic solidarity” that is defined as “the interdependent images that, participating in a series, present the double characteristic of being separated [...] and which are plastically and semantically over-determined by the fact of their coexistence *in praesentia*” (p. 18). The map, being placed as the first panel in the series of the four panels, offers a synthetic total vision of the Bosnian-Serbian disagreement that the other three panels detail and analyze. It is, then, the map that constitutes the focal vision that is enhanced by the peripheral vision of the other three images. The map in this page anticipates and conditions the knowledge of the Bosnian-Serbian conflict according to which the two opposing leaders variously involve.

The shift from the classical cartographic perspective, looking at the world from above, to the perspective of experiencing it in the field, allows the reader to see the Bosnian war in the enclave of Goražde from different points of view. The map does not only depict the abstract geopolitical aspect of the Bosnian war but also the humanistic aspect that includes the sufferings of the Bosnians from the lack of safety, food, and movement. Joe Sacco in this case is not just a cartoonist but also a cartographer who communicates the Bosnian conflict using maps that are never complete because they are context-dependent and this makes the process of mapping a “process of constant reterritorialization” (Kitchin & Dodge, 2007, p. 331). We see that the maps that Sacco inserts in *Safe Area Goražde*, especially when drawing the offensive of 1994 on the enclave of Goražde, are confined in a small area of the graphic page. The graphic page is condensed with images, texts, and frames, as an urgent and compelling act of locating the Serbs’ bombardments and their directions (see Figure (16)).

In fact, the two maps placed in the part “94’ Offensive” show the beginning and the end of the offensive consecutively. Therefore, if we omit all the images and the texts positioned between these two maps, we will have maps as objective and lifeless maps. One map with arrows going toward its center ‘Goražde’ designating the Serb attack of Goražde, and the second with arrows going from its focal point which is Goražde again denoting the pulling back of the Serbs from the town of Goražde. That is to say, the map can become an act of mapping only in its interactions with the characters that inhabit the areas demarcated in the map.

The map also maintains its process of mapping and reterritorialization regarding the Bosnian-Serb conflict when it is located not at the borders separately from the images of the destroyed areas in Gorazde but inside the framed images. Consequently, the map becomes mapping due to the aesthetic spatial techniques of the graphic novel that succeed in overcoming the map’s abstractness and conventionality that has always been described with negative attributes generating what Wheeler (1998) calls “mapphobia.”

Eventually, Sacco’s graphic novel of *Safe Area Goražde* uses the process of mapping in order to unveil the mainstream spatialization of the Bosnian war. Maps are thus used as both geographical tools that guide the reader in imagining the places of the Bosnian conflict from a cartesian point of view and as a way of involving the reader in experiencing the Bosnian war from a grounded perspective. *Safe Area Goražde* as a graphic novel holds a critical geopolitical position that aims at exposing the everyday interactions of Goraždans with the geopolitical event of the Bosnian war. In this way, *Safe Area Goražde* is doing a critical geopolitical analysis of the Bosnian war since it destabilizes the statist image of the map as a geographical and political instrument. That is, through its critical cartographic representation of Goražde as an ‘un’safe area of the Bosnian war, the graphic spatiality of this war ensures the complexity of the Bosnian-Serb conflict using nuanced readings of the events drawn within the frames of panels of the graphic page.

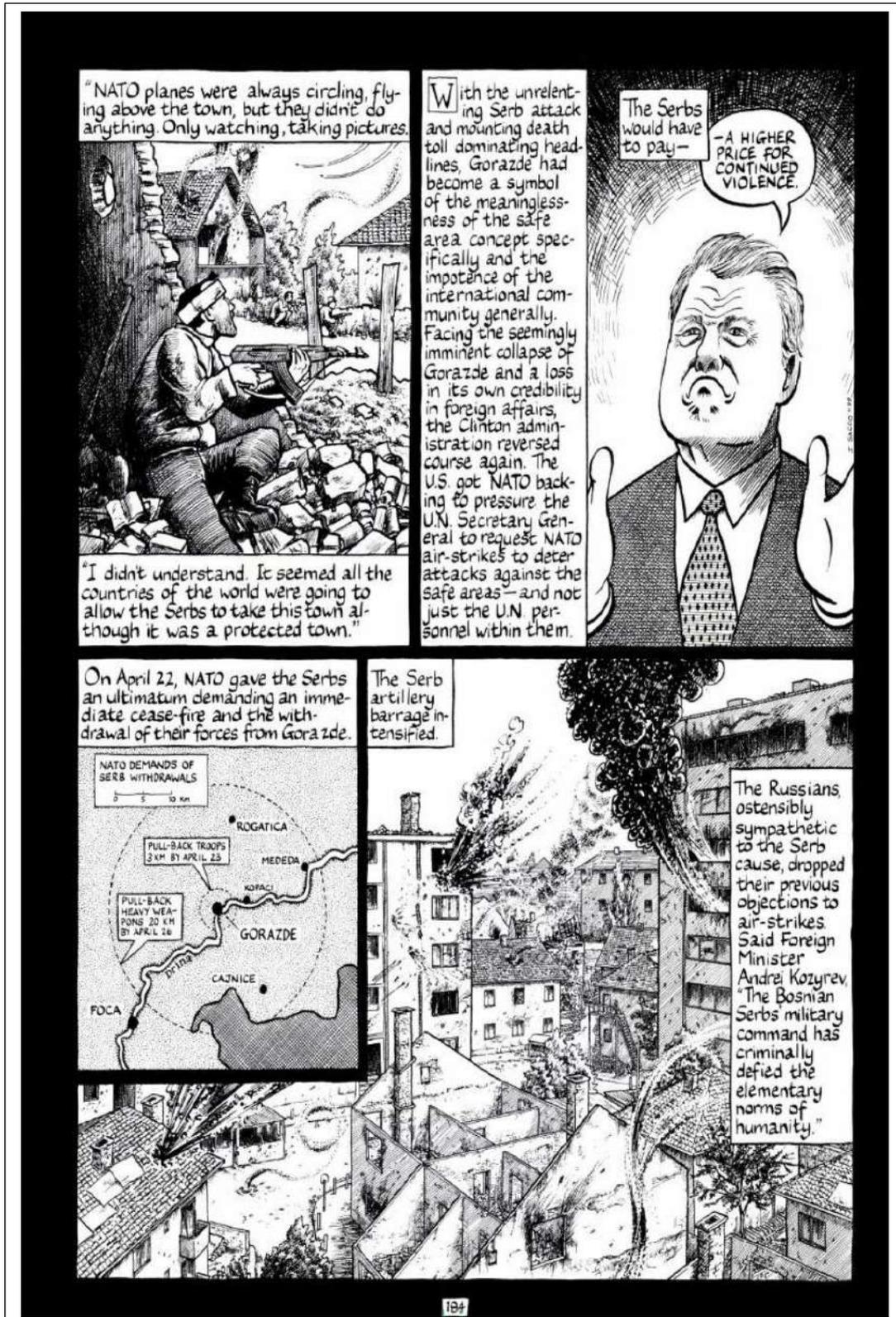
The following figure contains a map that shows the beginning of the Serb offensive on Gorazde (Spring 1994):

Figure (16): Mapping the Bosnian War (Sacco, 2000, 165)



The following figure contains a map showing the withdrawals of the Serbs from Goražde upon the NATO demands:

Figure (17): Mapping the Bosnian War (Sacco, 2000, 184)



Conclusion

This chapter investigated the Bosnian war as drawn in the graphic space of Joe Sacco's *Safe Area Goražde*. It emphasized the intricate relationship between the graphic space and the spatial conflict in Bosnia. The spatial properties of *Safe Area Goražde* such as the frame, the panel, and the gutter translate the Bosnian war in Goražde graphically and aesthetically. They represent the vessels through which words and images could tell the many stories of Gorazdans of the Bosnian war in their home town, Goražde. Goražde is the place where all the images of Sacco's graphic novel come from. It is the 'real' space that makes the graphic space possible. However, the graphic space of Sacco's *Safe Area Goražde* turns Goražde to an eternal space and a historical place. Sacco's graphic novel shows how Goražde is not only a 'safe' war zone marked on a static map, it is a whole package; it is the people and their culture of survival and temporal revival.

Chapter Three

**Drawn Times of the Bosnian Conflict:
The Graphic Time Between Narrativity
and Historicity in Joe Sacco's *The Fixer:*
*A Story from Sarajevo (2003)***

Chapter Three

Drawn Times of the Bosnian Conflict: The Graphic Time Between Narrativity and Historicity in Joe Sacco's *The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo* (2003)

Introduction

3.1 *The Fixer*: A Historiophoty of The Bosnian War

3.2 Visual Simultaneity in *The Fixer*: A New Representation of Time

3.3 Neven: An Unusual Narrator of the Bosnian War Times

3.4 The Dynamic Graphic Narrative of *The Fixer*

3.5 Rhythmanalysing the Bosnian War

3.6 Deviating From the Abstract to the Self-Reflexive Historical Representation of the Bosnian War in Sarajevo in Sacco's *The Fixer*

3.7 Speaking to the Specter: Keeping the Bosnian War's Ghosts Alive

Conclusion

Chapter Three

Drawn Times of the Bosnian Conflict: The Graphic Time Between Narrativity and Historicity in Joe Sacco's *The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo* (2003)

Introduction

The Bosnian conflict is not only restricted by the place of its happenings, Bosnia, but also by the temporal limits of its life as it begins in 1992 and ends in 1995. Being an important definitional property of any event, time can never be ignored especially when we speak about wars and conflicts. Knowing about the temporal context of such eventful conflicts opens more interpretive possibilities and puts them under perpetual attempts of revision and judgment. In literature, whenever we mention the concept of time, it is narration and narrativity that primarily comes to our minds to represent the temporal rhythms of any story whether this rhythm is linear or non-linear. When literature portrays conflicts that happened in the past or that still happens in the present and probably continues to happen in the future, we cannot say that these times are real times but we call them narrated times or simply the plot.

The narratives that speak about conflicts in the past are commonly known to produce a sort of historical accounts that attempt to register and explain this past. Generally speaking, we associate history or historical events with the past and only the past constricting it to only one temporal direction: the past. Even Munslow (2016) as an academic historian held this idea of the equivalence of history to the past stating that: "Before reading White, I had simply accepted (as I was taught) that the 'past' and 'history' were synonyms and hence, one could engage legitimately in 'the pursuit of history'" (p. 110). That is, it was White who uncovered the narrativity of the historical text rejecting all the assumptions that claim that history is an accurate account about the past founded on scientific and objective methods of research, scrutiny, and investigation. The past, based on White's theory, is therefore not exactly the same

as the historical account that is created by the historian. The historian writes a historical text according to the available sources, his ideological orientations, and his own narrative methods. The academic historians prefer the written text rather than any other form of texts because they see that this form represents the serious or the professionalized way of doing history.

The seriousness of the historical text as a written text rather than a drawn or performed text provokes the following questions that encompass the primary problematic of this chapter: Is there a temporality peculiar to the graphic novel, a temporality that is imposed by the form of the graphic novel? How drawing historical events in the form of a graphic novel unveil the narrativity of the process of doing history? And is it really possible to put history onto a graphic novel without losing the professional and the intellectual spirit of historiography? In order to answer these questions, this chapter assumes that history accepts the various forms of narrative representations and highlights the potential of Joe Sacco's graphic novel *The Fixer* to expose the narrativity of the historical account about the Bosnian war and thus confirms the relativity of history as it changes through time that is imagined and designed by its narrator or author.

3.1 *The Fixer*: A Historiophoty of The Bosnian War

Joe Sacco as a journalistic cartoonist attempts through his most acclaimed drawn graphic novels about the Bosnian war namely: *Safe Area Goražde* and *the Fixer* to surpass the superficiality of the tragic events that characterized the whole country for many years. In the previous chapter, we visited Goražde, that village placed in the shadow of the Bosnian war ignored by the international media "protected" by the UN and the NATO institutions. In this chapter, Sacco takes us to the Metropolitan capital of Sarajevo to expose a kind of microscopic representation of the Bosnian war as seen, remembered, or even imagined by the main character whose name is Neven.

Neven is an ancient paramilitary veteran and Sacco's fixer— the fixer is someone who helps the war journalists to get the scoop of the war, to get to a safe hotel, to have interviewers, and to take them to specific locations, for example, in exchange for a few hundred in hard currency per day. Being both a part in the military operations that happened during the Bosnian war and a fixer who knows the behind scenes of the war journalistic correspondences, Neven represents a rich source of information about the warlords who were a group of charismatic men who have a criminal past and who formed non-governmental paramilitary groups to defend Sarajevo against the separatist Serbs. These paramilitary veterans controlled the military operations of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo because of the weakness of the official Bosnian army who handed over its machinery to Serbia after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Being a part of these groups, Neven traces the complex history of that period of time when the warlords were in the front lines of the war making heroic achievements. Their victorious performances grew in them greedy sentiments leading to the commitment of unscrupulous activities against the Sarajevo civilians especially those belonging to the Serb ethnicity, like stealing their properties, expropriating their apartments, and extorting businessmen through coercion. Nearly the whole story of the *Fixer* is told from the point of view of Neven and this explains the repetition of the caption "Put yourself in Neven's shoes" as an insistent reminder of the narrativity of the historical account of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo.

The Fixer is a "historiophoty" (White, 1988) that tells the story of the Bosnian war in images combined with texts within panels marked with dates that are not ordered chronologically as we notice Sacco moves between the past and the present in a delicate way displaying the natural relationship between the visual narrativity of the graphic novel and the history of the real events that took place during the Bosnian war. In fact, Sacco draws *The Fixer* based on his visit to Sarajevo at the end of the war in 1995 and revisits it again after the war ends and things starts to stabilize in Bosnia in 2001. Using its visual language, the graphic novel of *the Fixer* is no

less than any written text in being able to portray the history of certain events. According to Rosenstone (1988), “if written history is shaped by the conventions of genre and language, the same will obviously be true of visual history, though in this case the conventions will be those visual genres and visual language” (p. 35). That is, to think of history on the graphic novel in terms of its own is very interesting because it opens up new trajectories on representing realistic events that happened in the past without restricting history documenting just to the written text.

Through its images, *the Fixer* is capable of conveying specific historical moments by creating a realistic sense. Therefore, we can say that the graphic novel has its unique powers of representation that struggle to have a place within a cultural tradition that preferred for a long time the written word. For sure, shifting the perspective of narrating history using images combined with words would create new possibilities for the reader to relate to the past.

3.2 Visual Simultaneity in *The Fixer*: A New Representation of Time

The visual simultaneity in the graphic narrative of *The Fixer* reveals the multi-layeredness of Neven’s historical account of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo. *The Fixer* is condensed with images that move backward and forward incessantly within a non-chronological order of events in a graphic narrative that is affected by the simultaneous appearance of different images and thus of different temporalities. Sensing the great complexity of the Bosnian war especially in the metropolitan city of Sarajevo is translated through imaging and imagining time in all its possible representability. In fact, the temporal fluidity characterizing the graphic narrative of *the Fixer* contributes to the rethinking of time during the Bosnian war. That is, the Bosnian war cannot be resumed in a form of annals or chronicles void of any narrativity that is a compulsory element of any historical account. The value of narrativity in representing the Bosnian war via the graphic narrative contributes greatly to the establishment of *The Fixer*’s authority.

Through images, we are able to visualize time as narrated by Neven who is the main narrator, the central character, and the creator of the history of this war. For example, on page 23 (See Figure (18)) Neven's present and past are juxtaposed in a cinematic style with the face of Neven drawn laterally as if watching himself on the screen of his memories in 1984, the year he finished his military service in the Yugoslav People's Army as a well-trained sniper. Then, he moved to the civilian life and in order to avenge his brother's murder by a group of criminals, he becomes a gangster who participates in unlawful activities like car jackings, bank robbery, quarrelling, and gun dealings. Neven is the type of paramilitary men who participate later in the Bosnian war to defend Sarajevo against the separatist Serbs. The question that must be posed in this case is: how does war look like when it is driven by paramilitary groups headed by criminals who contribute greatly to the shaping of the Sarajevo war's times?

The visual simultaneity enacted by the very specific semiotic channels of Sacco's graphic novel *The Fixer* affords different storytelling or historicizing possibilities. The idea of "simultaneity" was first employed by Einstein, in the field of science, and by Picasso, in the field of arts, in order to reflect the multitude of looking at events as Miller (2004) notes, "Einstein and Picasso [...] drew on apparently disparate fields, while working on the same problem—the nature of simultaneity [...] Both concluded that how you look at something, that's the way it is. There is no one true perspective" (p. 489). Misztal (2017) explains this interconnection between physics and aesthetics when it comes to the idea of simultaneity by the substitution of the "relativity theory" by Einstein himself with "Standpunktslehre," a German word that means "point of view" theory (p. 122). In this way, visual simultaneity corresponds to both the physicality of temporality as exposed without slowing down the time in a way that divides this time into different parts: past, present, and future especially when we speak about a historical event like the Bosnian war. The time of succession or the chronometric time is intensified to become manifestly exposed to the eye of the viewer who gets immersed

in all the temporal division as if he is looking at an eternal presence or a total attachment to the framed images exposed at once in just one graphic page.

The following figure shows how Neven's present and past are juxtaposed visually and simultaneously:

Figure (18): Visual Simultaneity (Sacco, 2003, p. 23)



Looking at time as it is fractured through the drawn lines that separates the images from each other namely through frames and gutters indicates the anachronistic nature of the Bosnian war as drawn in *The Fixer*. Splitting the temporalities of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo is a visible process that shows the constructedness of the past, a process that unveils the natural relationship between the individual or the narrator who is in this case Neven and the object which is the Bosnian war. Therefore, the visual simultaneity in the graphic novel of *The Fixer* is a natural reflection of how a person imagines or builds up the past starting from his current knowledge. That is, the story of the Bosnian war as told by Neven corresponds to what is naturally happening in his mind and it is materialized through the visual tools of the graphic novel. For example, the repetition of Neven's figure in the juxtaposed images is the main indicator that the narrative of the Bosnian war is produced visually with different temporalities moving between the present, the past, and the future.

The physical presence of Neven, the main character, all along the pages and images of *The Fixer* is not just spatial but also temporal as Lessing (1887) contends:

all bodies [...] exist not only in space but also in time. They continue, and at any moment of their continuance, may assume a different appearance and stand in different relations. Every one of these momentary appearances and groupings was the result of a preceding, may become the cause of a following, and is therefore the center of a present action. (p. 91-92)

In the light of this quote, Neven's appearance contributes to the reader's estimation about the time gap between two consecutive images. Neven is not just the main character of Sacco's graphic novel *The Fixer* but also the narrator or the teller of the stories and this provokes the question of how to approach a literary work that is not primarily a written text but rather a drawn narrative based on a combination of images and words?

3.3 Neven: An Unusual Narrator of the Bosnian War Times

Approaching *The Fixer* from a narratological point of view requires looking at Neven, a narrator who visualizes the Bosnian war in the capital Sarajevo with his particular narrative competencies. Usually, Joe Sacco's graphic novels put Sacco at the center of the narrative trajectories. He is often the main narrator and the main character of his own drawn stories since he plays the role of the journalist who interviews and reports the memories of the survivors in war times. Conversely, in *The Fixer*, Sacco chooses Neven as the main character and the central narrator of his narrative in order to temporalize the Bosnian war from a local vision, a vision that is totally different from the mediatized one.

Neven's vision of the Bosnian war is not restricted to the official version of the war but rather to an experienced vision that gives importance to the local narrator. The importance of the narrator in the comics art and specifically the graphic novel is apparent because unlike the film theorists who are controversial regarding the necessity or the non-necessity of the presence of a narrator in films, the comics theorists find it impossible to erase the narrator because "the enunciative mechanism of comics actually calls forth the notion of a narrator" (Groensteen, 2013, p. 83). That is, the narrative discourse in comics necessitates the presence of a narrator who is the responsible for telling the whole story. However, the semiotic particularity of the graphic novel as it combines words with images makes it difficult to adopt the narratological theories that are established to analyze written texts like Genette's concept of focalization.

In *The Fixer*, Neven represents the type of narrators that Thierry Groensteen (2013) calls "the actorialized narrator," the narrator who "appears in the story of which s/he is (or pretends to be) the enunciator" (p. 40). Although Sacco is the principal maker of the whole narrative, he attempts all along the narrative of his graphic narrative to mask his narrativizing role by shedding light on Neven giving him the parole through the use of speech balloons where the pronoun "I" is the speaker and through the use of the pronoun "you" in the framed

commentaries of Sacco upon Neven's actions. Sacco repeats the sentence of "put yourself in Neven's Shoes" several times at the beginning preparing the reader for the use of the second pronoun "you" later when he needs to conceal his narrative voice. For example, on page 22, Sacco takes us back to Neven's past exactly to 1984 when he moved to Paris to look for the gangsters who killed his brother. The graphic page starts with the caption "put yourself in Neven's shoes" then the narrative proceeds to tell us about Neven's adventures as a gangster using the second pronoun "you" in order to integrate the reader in the narrative discourse as a way of covering up the principal narrator who is Joe Sacco. What is told in the captions and what is shown in the images incorporates the reader in the narrative while if we look at the images alone without reading the captions this would give us the impression that the main narrator is Neven since he does not only inhabit the images but rather owns them with his imposing appearance.

Assuming that the principal narrator in *The Fixer* is Neven does not signify that he alone does the whole job of narration since the labor is divided between him and Sacco, the author of this graphic novel. Since *The Fixer* is a documentary graphic novel based on real events involving real characters, the narrator does not resemble the narrator of purely fictional graphic novels. In memoirs or journalistic graphic novels, the narrator is a multilayered personality who plays the role of a character, a narrator as in the case of Neven, or a narrator whose authorship is graphically embodied like the character of Sacco. Moreover, the division of labor between Neven and Sacco is clearly marked by the distinguishing working of both verbal narration that occurs at the level of captions and verbal-pictorial narration that appears in the panel in a form of thought bubbles or speech balloons and drawn images respectively. In other words, and using Thon's narratological analysis, the practice of narration in graphic novels is produced at three different but interrelated levels: the narratorial representation, the authorial representation, and the non-narratorial representation (Thon, 2013, p. 71).

The graphic narration for Neven and Sacco is like a ping pong game, when one says something the other responds in various ways of storytelling specific to the graphic narration: sometimes in a form of a speech balloon, a caption, or an image that shows the actions of the characters in the storyworld. This communicative narration that characterizes *The Fixer* can be noticed in nearly every page of the graphic novel. The first pages of the graphic novel introduce us to the narrative partnership between Neven and Sacco especially page 19 (See Figure (19)) where we see that the profiles of Neven and Sacco are zoomed in and placed on the sides of the top page separated by a third panel of a smoking pot and when zoomed out at the bottom of the page the image shows both men sitting on one table in front of each other in a way to mark the beginning of their collaborative narration of what happened in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war. Eventually, the narration in the graphic novel of *The Fixer* is the product of a continuous communication between Neven, Sacco, and the image. The graphic narration is thus a whole package of the three narrative forces: the narratological, the authorial, and the pictorial.

The relationship between Neven and Sacco is a relationship based on verbal interactions. Almost all the verbiage that exists in *The Fixer* is either produced by Sacco or by Neven. In fact, the enunciative mechanism in the graphic novel of *The Fixer* brings forth the idea of the narrator whose words constitute the whole story of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo. Although most comics theorists and critics like Groensteen and McCloud define comics by giving primacy and supremacy to pictures over words, in *The Fixer*, words are in the same level of visibility as the images. Omitting the images in the panels and just reading the words in the captions and the speech balloons makes it possible to understand *The Fixer* which indicates that the literary dimension of the graphic novel matters as much as the pictorial dimension.

The following figure illustrates the communicative narration between Neven and Sacco:

Figure (19): Communicative Narration (Sacco, 2003, p. 19)



Moreover, words give us access to the inner thoughts and feelings of Neven and Sacco that pictures cannot. However, we notice that when speaking about the events of the Bosnian war, the verbs in the speech balloons are usually used in the past tense which gives the impression that the literary narration is temporally detached from the real story including the captions that are placed outside the panels and thus outside the real time frame of the events. The idea of temporal immersion or attachment to the story, however, is more applicable to the image which is responsible for the pictorial narration. Besides Neven's and Sacco's words, the image informs the reader about the story and embodies the gestures, the thoughts, and the emotions of the characters in the panels or more accurately the witnesses of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo especially our main figure: Neven.

The image of Neven like any other image in *The Fixer* retains the testimonial validity of the Bosnian war. Although the image of Neven is practically drawn by Sacco, the author of the graphic novel, Neven's repeated picture in nearly every page of the graphic novel hides the idea that Sacco is the only one in control of the verbal-pictorial representation. As a result, the image of Neven becomes a self-reflexive picture that imposes its narrative dominance. He becomes eventually the hero of Sacco's graphic novel *The Fixer*: he is not a historian or a political man but a man like any other man. The ordinariness of Neven is transformed into an extraordinariness via the drawn image that enlivens the figure of Neven and idolizes him.

Neven is made visible rather than just read or heard and this visibility renders him someone whose account cannot be just believed. The power of the image to dominate, persuade, and overwhelm its beholders is discussed by several visual critics especially Mitchell (2005) who focuses on the internal power of the image rather than the external power; he attempts to find out that the incessive repetition of the image is the factor that generates the dominating power of the image. In fact, Mitchell tries through his investigations about pictures to answer the question of: what do pictures want? And in answering this question, he compares the desire of

pictures to that of the subaltern and specifically to women borrowing the answer from Chaucer which is “maistrye,” a middle English word meaning mastery (p. 76). That is, the subaltern model rather than the dominant model of the picture wants mastery over its beholder. Emphasizing on images as autonomous entities rather than as ideological instruments of political, social, economic, or religious power would be more effective in exploring what they really want to convey. In this vein, treating the image of Neven as a subject that is able to reflect on the Bosnian war would draw forth new and unknown information about this war.

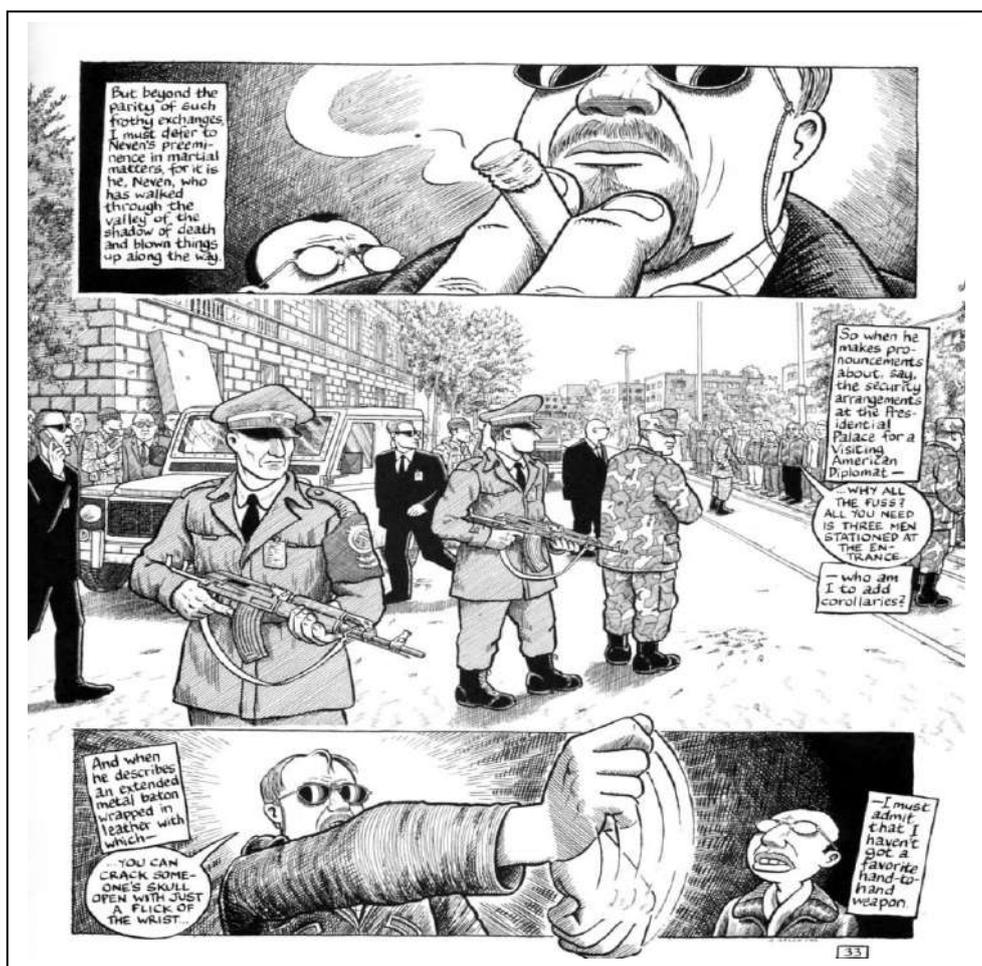
Neven is not only a narrator of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo, he is a superhero of *The Fixer*. This time, the superhero is not American, he is a Serbian-Bosnian superhero with American effects. In fact, the image of character of Neven fulfills the essential definitional elements of the superhero, a criminal superhero. The drawn image of Neven aggrandizes him: he is usually taller and bigger than Sacco like in page 33 (See Figure (20)) where we see Sacco looking up to Neven who is showing off his fighting techniques in cracking someone’s skull with a flick of the wrist. Sacco also describes in a romantic way Neven as his protector in a place where danger hovers everywhere stating, “With Neven, I’m like teenager on his first few dates—a little enthralled, a little infatuated perhaps, maybe a little in love, and what is love but a transaction [...]” (Sacco, 2003, p. 24). Sacco expresses in many instances his feelings of security and comfort when he is accompanied by Neven. Neven’s powers are not supernatural but rather natural especially the fighting abilities he endows but his narrative abilities are supernatural because of their uniqueness as no one would dare to talk about the Bosnian war with Sacco when he returns to Sarajevo in 2001 except for him.

No one want to talk with Sacco about what happened during the war in Sarajevo neither the court official, nor the woman whose parents were killed in the war and who cancels her meeting with Neven in the last minutes. Sarajevo after the war refuses any kind of talk about the war; it rather prefers silence even in its loudest places in cafés where “with every few steps one

relentless Eurobeat drowns out another, but all the relentless Eurobeats cannot drown out the silence, which is the most relentless thing of all” (Sacco, 2003, p. 2). This silence can be explained by White (1980) who suggests that, “the absence of narrative capacity or the refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself” (p. 6). That is, the leaning of the Bosnians towards silence is a cultural and human problematic that is caused by their uncertainty about the reasons behind the Bosnian war or a deliberate denial of what happened to them in the war. Amidst this overwhelming silence, however, Neven, the superhero, occurs to save Sacco from a journalistic failure telling him and the world about the Bosnian war’s story in Sarajevo.

The following figure display the grandeur of Neven “the superhero”:

Figure (20): Neven: The Superhero (Sacco, 2003, p. 33)



Nevertheless, the narrative capacity of Neven is paradoxical in a way that it permits a great variation in the mode of narrating Neven's adventures: he is a criminal hero who tells stories about himself and other war criminals. While Neven's super heroic powers are greater than Sacco and the reader, they are smaller than the other war heroes like Ismet Bajramovic, Yusuf Prazina, Musan Tapolovic, and Ramiz Delalic who are according to him great men. In addition, the paradoxicality of his character lies in the intermarriage between fixing abilities and his brilliance in narrating different temporalities before, during, and after the Bosnian war.

Undoubtedly, his job as a fixer helped in constructing this paradoxical personality since he sells human tragedies to different and various and if there is none, he makes them up. He always has his own version of the story and his version is more attractive because it is full of details, names, and suspense. For example, in the section entitled "Oct. 26, 1993", three versions of the story of killing the warlord Caco, the nickname for the paramilitary commander Musan Topalovic, by the official government are presented. The first one is by Alibabic, the intelligence and police chief who says that the operation of arresting Caco did not go as planned and this led to the capturing and then mutilating of nine policemen. The second version is told by the journalist Selimbegovic, who corrects the first version assuring that the nine policemen were not captured but killed first then mutilated. The third version of the story is Neven's and it is "from a certified source" as he claims. According to Neven, only three policemen were sent to negotiate with Caco in order to surrender to the governmental security namely: his cousin Srdjan Bosiljcic, Amir Hebeb, and Zoran Illic and amidst the negotiation someone called Zoran by his name which is a Serb name and not by his code and here Caco became angry and killed the three of them including the Muslim policemen. It is the elegant and wonderful nature of Neven's version that offers the readers an illusion of inexhaustibility that stands against the mundane and the reductively rational. Most importantly, Neven's storytelling satisfies the narrative curiosity that stands against death and forgetfulness.

3.4 The Dynamic Graphic Narrative of *The Fixer*

Fulfilling the narrative curiosity regarding the Bosnian war in Sarajevo should be informed by a particular temporal framework because narrativity cannot be without temporality and vice versa. The temporal framework of *The Fixer* has its own type of narration that deserves a specific attention because of its dynamicity. The graphic narrative of *The Fixer* is not tedious but rather it moves between different temporalities: the present, the past, and the future. Apart from the simultaneous temporality that characterizes the graphic narrative in *The Fixer*, the temporal dynamicity is something that denotes movement in time. This narrative movement temporality and the human beings in action treating them as temporal beings who change overtime building a specific narrative architecture for the graphic novel. Even the titles of the sections in *The Fixer* are marked with exact dates in a way that makes the temporal transportation smooth with a clear cut between the after and the before signaling the essential feature of narrativity that is sequentiality.

In fact, the story of *The Fixer* is built on a certain narrative mode that is cyclic as it starts and ends in the future, in 2001 and what is in between is told in the past tense like all western comics. This future directed narration in the Western comics is justified by McCloud (1993) who notices that unlike the Western comics, the Japanese comics, manga, “emphasize being there over getting there” (p. 81). Based on McCloud’s comparison between the Western comics and the Japanese manga, we can say that in terms of temporal presentations the manga are predominantly set in the present because of the use of certain devices that immerses the reader into the action like the detailed presentation of the action, while the Western comics are mainly drawn in the future tense.

However, the narrative structure of *The Fixer* is a mixture of both the eastern tradition and the Western tradition of comics; it is both cyclical and future-oriented. The present in the

graphic narrative of *The Fixer* is thus, as Deleuze (2005) suggests, “haunted by a past and a future, by a past which is not reducible to a former present, by a future which does not consist of a present to come” (as cited in Stamatopoulos, 2009). However, what is important in the story of the Bosnian war from a Sarajevan point of view is how all these temporalities (the past, the present and the future) coexist in a harmonious way that makes *The Fixer* a coherent work of visual art. In short, what is interesting in looking at the narrative is how different temporalities are linked in a meaningful way.

In effect, starting the story from 2001 and ending it at the same point of time emphasizes the idea that the sequentiality of events and actions is the object of any narrative analysis. Sequentiality is the main feature of narrativity as many narratologists assume like Toolan and Sternberg who see that sequentiality is an essential characteristic of narrativity. For example, Sternberg (2010) defines sequentiality as “the play of suspense/curiosity/surprise between represented and communicative time” (as cited in Amerian & Jofri, 2015, p. 188). The suspenseful character of sequentiality is what makes a certain text or in the case of *The Fixer* as a graphic novel not like any other descriptive or expository text that gives the reader just information about a certain topic without involving him in the discussion. While the curiosity and the suspense that sequentiality provides to the reader enables him to take a certain communicative and participatory position in the making of the narrative itself.

The centrality of sequentiality is even more emphasized by comics artists or critics like Eisner (1985) who called comics a ‘sequential art’ and drew a book with the same title. According to Eisner (1985), comics is a sequential art not just in its final form but also in the process of its making. For him, “the sequential art is the act of weaving a fabric” (p. 122). The fabrication of the graphic narrative is thus based on sequentiality; on imagining and imaging a certain order of events. Eisner’s term “sequential art” represents the starting point from which McCloud (1993) came up with a dictionary-like definition of comics that is: “comics

(Kom'iks): n. plural in form used with a singular.¹ Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/ or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (p. 9). Again, like literary narratologists who associate sequentiality with suspense and curiosity, comics critics find that the sequence of images is the source of its literariness, its artistry, and its interactive qualities.

The sequential narrative in *The Fixer* provides and contributes to a thought provoking and existential critique of the concept of time that has been always seen superficially in its linear form or has been explained from a scientific point of view in cosmology or physics. This idea is emphasized by Ricoeur (1980) who sees that narrativity and temporality are tightly related and their relationship is “reciprocal” and cannot be overlooked. Ricoeur (1980) argues, in this respect, “Indeed, I take temporality to be that structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity and narrativity to be the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent” (p. 169). Ricoeur’s conceptualization of time is influenced by Heidegger’s existential analysis of time that is constituted of three levels ordered from the deep to the deepest: the “within-timeness,” “historicality,” and “temporality.” This temporal division is applicable to the story of *The Fixer* where we notice that within-timeness or the time that corresponds to the presented real event leads us to another deeper temporal level that is historicality where the past is emphasized and recovered or re-collected. Then this historicality comes forth to achieve the deepest level of time which is temporality in its unified form composed of the past, the present, and the future.

The different dates that are ordered in an unchronological way in *The Fixer*: prologue 2001, 1995, 1984, 1991, April 1992, 1995, 1992, 1995, 1992, 1995, 1992-1993, 1995, 1993, 1995, October 26, 1993, 1995-1996, epilogue 2001 correspond to the different temporal adverbs namely: now, next, and then that has one referent which is the Bosnian war. The first level of time in this case is the time of the action or the event so every episode in the story’s plot

constitutes a within-timeness or a series of nows that are not abstract or isolated nows but rather nows that lead to recollecting the past seen macroscopically as a whole. For example, if we read the episode of the prologue 2001 alone when Sacco arrives to Sarajevo looking for Neven to know more about the life conditions in Sarajevo after the Bosnian war and to gather the missing pieces of the picture he is imagining about Neven and his story of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo and then read the epilogue 2001 alone when Sacco is looking again for Neven to get more details of him and his story and at the end to give him back his tape record, we notice that the time in each episode is a preoccupied present that is incomplete but if we combine these two episodes we get a meaningful idea about the end of this story or the future of the central event which is the Bosnian war. According to Ricoeur (1980) the narrative has two dimensions: the first is episodic and this has to do with the group of events that makes up the story and the configurational and this corresponds to the arrangement of these fragmented episodes to form a meaningful whole (p. 178).

The centrality of time in any narrative lies in the interplay between these two dimensions: it is this “temporal dialectic” (Ricoeur, 1980, p. 178) that gives the story its dynamicity. While we read each episode, we try to create or to invent a single thought or theme that links between the different episodes of the story. For example, the point that links between the prologue and the epilogue of *The Fixer* is time as both take place in 2001. The epilogue is temporally interrupted by the story of the Bosnian war as narrated and lived by Neven and which is vis a vis 2001, a story of the past until the end of the graphic novel where the prologue of the story finds its missing half in the epilogue. In fact, reading the story backward from the future moving to the past and ending it again in the future means reading time differently or more accurately reading time humanly. That is, putting the human activity in a narrative time means treating any human story in a non-linear way because of the intervention of memory in the narrative

construction of any story and this what happened in *The Fixer* as a documentary graphic novel that is mainly based on the memories of Neven about the Bosnian war in Sarajevo.

Sacco's interest in the past that generates the history is as much important as his caring about the future of the Bosnian war that is emphasized by his return to Sarajevo in 2001. Generally, when we speak about wars or singular events, we tend to focus on the past without scrutinizing the future of this central event. However, *The Fixer* affirms the importance of moving backward and forward in time in order to give the Bosnian war an extended temporal space to live on and get heard or mainly in the case of this graphic novel, to be seen. Moving backward to the past and forward to the future gives the Bosnian war specifically in Sarajevo a biography that details the in-between that exists between life and death, the life and death of this war. This nonlinear temporal movement in *The Fixer* puts the story of the Bosnian war in a state of becoming and this can be seen in several episodes of this graphic novel especially the episodes during the war and the ones after the war.

Sacco's multiple returns to Neven are a way of extending the narrative time or the narrative life of Neven's story for the sake of getting more information about this character and the Bosnian war. For example, this narrative prolongation uncovers the reality about the tape recorder that Neven loaned Sacco in the very beginning of the graphic narrative and which is the item that solidified their relationship and obliges Sacco to pay for Neven's purchases to discover in the end that the tape recorder is not Neven's thing which made him laugh (See Figure (21)). The tape recorder appears repeatedly in the graphic narrative and represents an important journalistic object for Sacco to record the different war witnesses upon which he could draw the Bosnian war in Sarajevo in a form of a graphic novel. The structural repetition of the tape recorder is voluntary as Sacco wants to question the reality or the truth of Neven's version of the Bosnian war. Another important effect of the tape recorder is that it helps in giving the story a sense of completion and a tightly woven structure since the story starts with

the image of Neven handing the recorder tape to Sacco and ends with Sacco giving it away to its main appropriator. Additionally, the constant repetition of the image of the tape recorder causes the story to move swiftly and elegantly to its conclusion. In other words, the repetition of the tape recorder helps the narrative to move in time forward and backward acting as a time machine. The tape recorder's importance also lies in enhancing the mood and the emotion of *The Fixer's* story and creating a special rhythm to this graphic novel.

The following figure demonstrates the moment Sacco realizes that the tape recorder that Neven borrowed him is in fact not his property:

Figure (21): The Tape Recorder (Sacco, 2003, p. 92)



3.5 Rhythmanalysing the Bosnian War

Being described as a sequential art, the graphic novel and any comics work has a rhythmic character that is primarily and at the first sight emphasized by the multiframe composed of the sequences of the frames with their variety in size, shape, and number. The rhythm in this case is the result of converting the spatial element of the multiframe to time as Groensteen (2013) suggests, “it is precisely at the intersection of these two dimensions, space and time, that comic art has developed its own rhythmic practice” (p. 137). However, the rhythm of the graphic narrative gives an impression that it is more temporal than spatial and that is why it is called the tempo.

The rhythm in the graphic narrative also signifies the vitality and vivacity of this art as it reflects the liveliness of the human being whose heart beats represent the first indicator of being alive. That is, the beating graphic narrative embodies the human experience in its fullest because of its continuous temporal movement. If the narrative rhythm is human in its essence, it would be unthinkable to reduce it to the idea of the speed of action or the speed of reading because of the complexity of the human experience. In this respect, Lefebvre (2004) refuses to reduce the rhythm to its mechanical attributes and instead he sees the concept of the rhythm as a complex term with obscure meaning:

We easily confuse rhythm with movement [mouvement], speed, a sequence of movements [gestes] or objects (machines, for example) Following this we tend to attribute to rhythms a mechanical overtone, brushing aside the organic aspect of rhythmmed movements. Musicians, who deal directly with rhythms, because they produce them, often reduce them to the counting of beats [des mesures]: ‘One-two three-one-two-three’. Historians and economists speak of rhythms: of the rapidity or slowness of periods, of eras, of cycles; they tend only to see the effects of impersonal laws, without coherent relations with actors, ideas, realities. Those who teach gymnastics see in rhythms only successions of movements [gestes] setting in motion certain muscles, certain physiological energies, etc. (p. 6)

The complexity of the rhythm comes from its incessant oscillations between binary oppositions: between the voiced and the voiceless, between laughter and tears, between peace and war. In

this way, rhythm cannot be easily captured or contained within a particular category because it is uncategorized.

Therefore, rhythm is everywhere in our lives and specifically in all types of art and literature. If the rhythm in poetry is marked by a word, and the rhythm in prose is constructed by the phrase, the rhythm in comics is primarily produced by the sequence of the frames and images. The notion of rhythm is central to the being of the comics art as Chute (2013) argues, “For comics is about *nothing* if not the rhythm established by its verbal and visual elements: the rhythms set up between successive panels, between words and images, between blank space and the plenitude of framed moments of time” (p. 380). Evoking the Bosnian war through the graphic rhythm in Joe Sacco’s *The Fixer* indicates an increased desire to mimic the lived experience as a way into understanding the realities of war.

In his graphic novel of *The Fixer*, Sacco undertakes a “rhythmanalysis” (Lefebvre, 2004) of the Bosnian war registering graphically the rhythms of Neven’s experience in this war. That is, Sacco is the rhythmmanalist who is attentive to every rhythm in the Sarajevan environment and especially to Neven’s distinct rhythms without disrupting them, i.e., he makes sure that every single rhythm in his story is distinctively located rather than dislocated. The rhythmmanalist in this case immerses himself in the world he is exploring just as Joe Sacco does in his journalistic investigations on the Bosnian war.

The physical presence of Sacco in the story of the Bosnian war allows him to learn about the rhythms of the Bosnian war. It is Sacco’s body that gives Neven’s story its particular temporalities because without the actual presence of Sacco in Sarajevo, the graphic novel of *The Fixer* would not retain and mark the traces of the Bosnian war. Lefebvre (2004) describes the body of the rhythmmanalist as a “metronome” (p. 19) in order to associate his mission of rhythmanalysis to his temporalizing capacities. In effect, Sacco’s physical existence in Sarajevo

and his meetings with Neven at different points of time comprises the main temporal framework that gives the story of the Bosnian war the opportunity to unfurl and to impose its rhythms on the whole graphic narrative. The war's rhythm that occurs via Neven's memories is what most attracts our attention because it is not usual, it is the abnormal. War represents a pathological situation full of visual and vocal derangement that demands a close listening to its sounds, to its cries, and its silences.

We notice that the rhythm in peaceful times after the war especially the first pages and the last pages of *The Fixer*, is eventless, boring, and very silent. Sacco (2003) describes the Sarajevan rhythm after the war:

In Sarajevo the pieces are back in place, too – never mind there's no work or money. The shops are open [...] The trams are running [...] The cafes are housing the idle and spewing a relentless Eurobeat [...] And with every few steps one relentless Eurobeat drowns out another, but all the relentless Eurobeats cannot drown out the silence, which is the most relentless thing of all. (p. 2)

Sacco's rhythm-analytical description of post-war Sarajevo reveals the continuous influence of the Bosnian war on people's lives that Eurobeats attempt to hide. Sacco notices that the high-pitched musical rhythms cannot conceal the crying silence reigning the Sarajevan atmosphere, a silence that is repressive and suffocating. Although, as Sacco (2003) states, "the pieces are back in place" the timeless haunting ghosts of the Bosnian war are still hovering around Sarajevo which makes it no longer the same as before.

Sacco records the heavy post-war time in Sarajevo as he feels visually by drawing horizontal or landscape images interrupted by framed images signaling the monotonous rhythm of the post-war Sarajevo. Sarajevo shows time through its tiredness, exhaustion, inaction, and waiting. For example, on page 3 (See Figure (22)), Sacco, the rhythm-analyst, sits in one of the cafes of Sarajevo trying to find someone who is able to break the unbearable silence regarding the Bosnian war and to dig up the buried secrets of the war in Sarajevo. The image of Sacco is

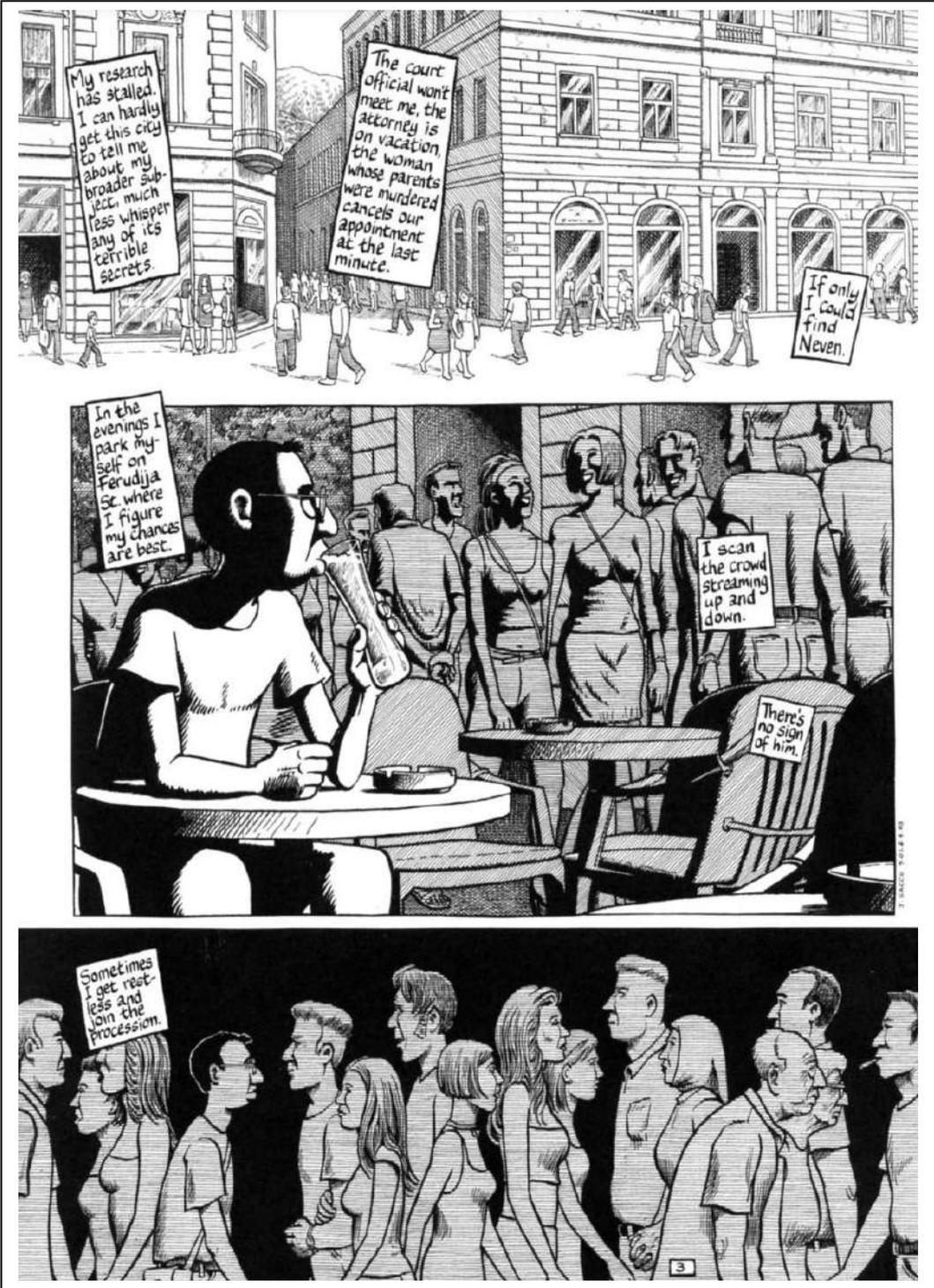
lighted up while the crowd who is walking in the street are shadowed which creates a rhythm of a detective work in an attempt to discover the unrevealed. This investigative rhythm turns to be completely secretive when Sacco gives up on finding Neven and gets contaminated by the crowd's monotonous streaming up and down all along the Ferudija street and gets shadowed like them. In fact, Sacco's bodily rhythms is driven by the rhythms of the Ferudija street as he abandons himself to its duration and this is manifested when he notes, "Sometimes I get restless and join the procession [...] When the column reaches the top of the street, it turns around and brings me back past the battling Eurobeats to the cafe from where I started" (Sacco, 2003, p. 3-4). This "secret rhythm" (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 19) is both physiological manifested through the monotonous walk of the crowd and psychological through their soundlessness.

The Graphic rhythm in the post-war Sarajevo that Sacco draws and perceives captures the time that seems unoccupied because of the poor economic situation. The images show that people are doing nothing; they are either walking in the streets, sitting in cafes, or playing outdoor chess. The monotonous graphic rhythm in post-war Sarajevo reflects the large amount of leisure time which brings forth many problematic questions regarding the aftermath of the Bosnian war. The rhythm analyst 'Sacco' describes living in the post-war Sarajevo as a waste of time twice stating, "Outdoor chess! A very interesting spectator sport! I recommend it! Especially if you're like me wasting your time [...] I am wasting my time again" (Sacco, 2003, pp. 7, 10). Sacco's sensitivity to time in the post-war Sarajevo is related to his attentiveness to rhythms because according to Lefebvre (2004), "the rhythm analyst concerns himself with temporalities and their relations within wholes" (p. 24). That is, the rhythm analyst is a good listener to the sounds of his surroundings and accordingly he becomes able to feel and reach the concreteness of time. For Sacco, the post-war Sarajevo is a "waste time" place, it abolished time. In this case, Sarajevo is temporalized, i.e., the place is rendered atemporal through its waste-time rhythms. Sarajevo is injected with atemporality. Such negative rhythms of silence

and nothingness are quickly interrupted by Neven whose rhythms changed the rhythm of the whole story.

The following figure show the monotonous rhythm of life in Sarajevo after the war:

Figure (22): The Monotonous Rhythm of Post-War Sarajevo (Sacco, 2003, p. 3)



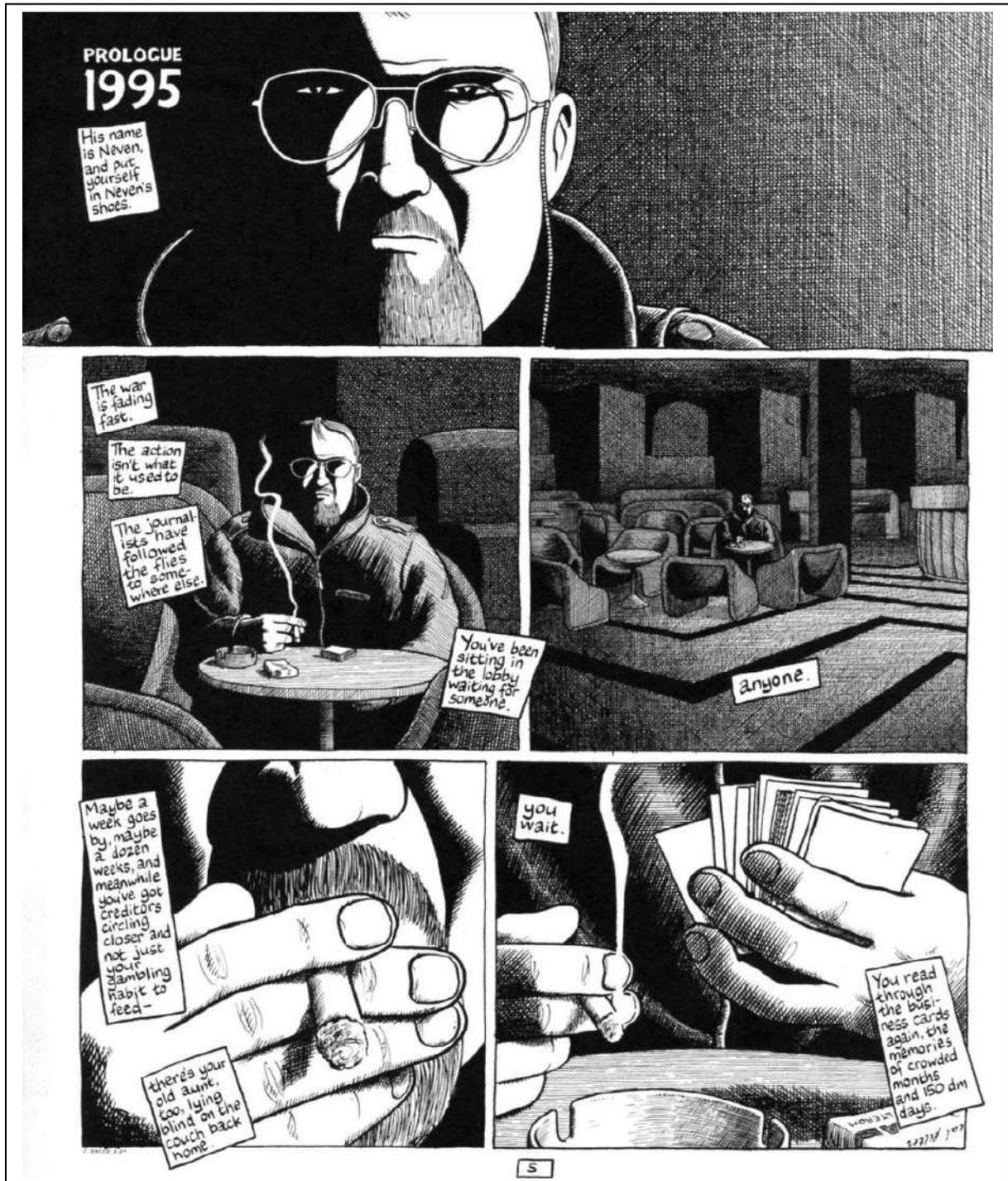
For Sacco, it is only through Neven's memory rhythms of narrating the Bosnian war in Sarajevo that we can grasp the temporalities of war. In order to understand the Bosnian war in all its diverse rhythms, the recollection of the different moments is indispensable. Remembering the Bosnian war in Sarajevo is an art and act of daring that solely Neven can practice. The war's mysterious and suspenseful rhythm begins in 1995 on page 5 (See Figure (23)) where we see Neven for the first time drawn in an exciting way in a multiframe composed of five panels exposed with a perceptual horizon that broadens gradually. This page shows a rhythmic hierarchy that is divided into three perceptual levels: the foreground level where we see Neven's image drawn in a large panel posited horizontally with his facial traits clearly made recognizable, the second panel represents the middleground level in which we notice that Neven's image is presented to us from a certain distance, while the third panel at the background level pictures Neven from a very distant point where we barely recognize him or rather if the first and the second panels were not there, we would not be able to perceive him. Then, in the fourth and the fifth panels there is a zooming in on Neven's bodily details: his hands.

The first three rhythmical levels are actually inspired by Brower (1993) who argues in her article "Memory and the Perception of Rhythm" that memory has an important role in musical perception using the concept of rhythm. Brower uses the psychologists' description of memory being composed of three reserves: sensory, short-term, and long-term stores (p. 21). Therefore, the first panel or the foreground panel corresponds to the sensory memories, the middleground panel matches the short-term memories, and the third panel correlates with the long-term memories. The fourth and the fifth panels represent the detailed memories. That is, the Bosnian war's rhythmical structure begins with a hierarchy of rhythms that affirms the covering of all the temporalities of Neven's memory about his lived experience of the war in the city of Sarajevo. Therefore, Neven's memory covers different temporal spots in the course of the Bosnian war that cannot be separated from each other because they form together the rhythm

of this war as perceived by Neven. Page 5 demonstrates this rhythmical pattern of remembering.

The following figure introduces the 'fixer' Neven to the reader:

Figure (23): Memory Rhythms (Sacco, 2003, p. 5)



The re-membering process is a journey into Neven's scattered memories in order to organize them according to the graphic narrative's tools. "Re-membering" is a concept that was first coined by Myerhoff (1982) in her anthropological study on a group of Jewish elders in the U.S and how they recollect their memories together as survivors of the holocaust. Myerhoff (1982) explains the use of the concept of re-membering as a way to draw attention "the reaggregation of members, the figures who belong to one's life story, one's own prior selves, as well as significant others who are part of the story" (p. 111). In *The Fixer*, the "re-membering" that Neven undertakes attempts to construct an interesting account of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo through recalling the events and the people who shared his story before, during, and after the war. In fact, before and after the war do not contradict the time during the war as all the three temporalities need to be in a simultaneous relationship producing thus a rhythm of Neven's whole life simply because Neven's memory constitutes his life; without memory there is no life. Therefore, it is Neven's memories that give the Bosnian war a life.

Besides discussing rhythm using the concept of memory which is explained through the size and site of the panels and the zooming in and out of the image, the colors of the images create a specific stylistic rhythm to the graphic novel of *The Fixer*. The rhythm is not only created through the content of the graphic narrative but also through the formal features that give this content a specific shape. This idea of rhythm in comics as being both formal and thematic makes it particularly a different narrative fashion from other rhythms in other types of narrative. In this respect, Groensteen (2013) points out:

In narrative comic art, rhythm is no longer part of the content in itself... but merely a mode of narration. To summarize, we can, with Isabelle Guaitella, say that we are most often confronted with an "intersecting play of iconicity and rhythm," which can be analyzed in aesthetic terms but also in terms of meaning production. (p. 135)

The iconic particularity of *The Fixer* creates rhythmical patterns that produce meanings translating the world of the graphic narrative into a purely temporal space where mainly

Neven's ideas and feelings swim simultaneously, harmoniously and unrestrictedly but systematically. As it is important to pay attention to the sizes, the sites, and numbers of frames in order to imagine a specific rhythm in the page, the coloring used in the whole graphic novel cannot be ignored or bypassed easily because of its importance in reflecting the mood and the rhythm of the story in the graphic narrative.

Not giving enough attention to color in the graphic storytelling is apparently an issue that many comics critics have discussed among them Baetens (2011) who sought that, apart from the economical obstacles, the absence of color from the comics criticism or as she called it the "color-blindness" (p. 113) towards colors in comics is due to two main reasons, the first one is ideological and the second is methodological. That is, the ideological reasons for not incorporating the question of color into comics' theoretical and critical discussions is due to the conventional opposition between the low cultural art of comic books that uses color in its aesthetic production and the high cultural form of the graphic novel that is distinguishably distributed in white and black.

Moreover, the color in comics is underdiscussed in the comics' scholarship due to methodological obstacles that are associated with the methods used in approaching comics and that lack color knowledge backgrounds because its practitioners are not trained in the field of comics making which makes comics criticism mainly influenced by literary and film theories in addition to other theories like art history and media studies. This lack in comics' education and training marginalized the notion of color as being considered as a supplementary element in the making of comics. Therefore, discussing the color in comics has become something of necessity and primacy because of its primordial capacity in enacting visual narration and inscribing a sort of uniqueness to the comics work and its creator.

Undoubtedly, the color in Sacco's graphic novel *The Fixer* is noteworthy because of the white and black that adorns its pages intensely imposing certain narrative rhymes and rhythms, perfectly fitting the whole mood and atmosphere of the Bosnian war. However, the color in *The Fixer* is not simply black and white but rather black and white and grey forming what is called chromatic monochrome denoting, using Baeten's words (2011), "the combination of black and white style with a supporting color" (p. 114-115). The monochrome is actually used to narrate the present and the past with one important difference which is the fact that the multiframe in the pages representing the present are in white, and those portraying the past are in black. A special emphasis on the monochrome style in *The Fixer* gives rise to an authentic analysis of war time(s) in Sarajevo. Based on Susan Sontag's and Roland Barthes's views regarding the use of the monochrome in photography and its authenticity vis a vis the past, Grainge (1999) concludes that the "monochrome is an aesthetic of the authentic figured around a basic quality of pastness" (p. 384). That is, the black and white color is tightly related to the idea of time not just the past, but also the present that is at the same time the future of that past.

In the *The Fixer* the black and white color combined with a journalistic tendency help in discussing the subject of the Bosnian war giving it a deep meaning and serving a significantly special rhythm that goes beyond the journalistic report to demonstrate that "an image has cultural significance in the broad construction of the historical identity. If colour reports, monochrome chronicles" (Grainge, 1999, p. 385). That is, the black and white contrast in *The Fixer* reflects the cultural identity of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo that is not like any other war, not even like the Bosnian war in other parts of Bosnia. In fact, the popularity of black and white in news magazines, for example, as claimed by the picture editor of Time Atlantic, Paul Durant, started with the black and white photographs on the Bosnian war in Sarajevo taken by the photograph Tom Stoddard in 1992 (Grainge, 1999, p. 385). Therefore, the monochrome representation is the cultural currency of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo and this is revealed

graphically in Sacco's novel *The Fixer*. Since *The Fixer* is mainly based on Neven's memories on the Bosnian war, the monochrome representation serves the refiguration of these memories that, in addition to the archiving of the present, constitute a legitimately authentic rhythm of this war's historical narrative.

3.6 Deviating from the Abstract to the Self-Reflexive Historical Representation of the Bosnian War in Sarajevo in Sacco's *The Fixer*

Joe Sacco's graphic novel *The Fixer* describes the Bosnian war in Sarajevo using words and images as it changes over time establishing a possible historical account shaped by the formal elements of the graphic novel. Although the idea of history is academic (a book, a journal article, or a lecture), this does not prevent this practice of constructing historical knowledge to take other non-academic forms like films, documentaries, and graphic novels. Rethinking the history of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo in a form of a graphic novel permits a mode of narration that Munslow and Rosenstone (2004) call "experimental historying." As a graphic novel, *The Fixer* revivifies the readers' sensibilities towards the Bosnian war in Sarajevo rendering this atrocious event from the past a reference point resisting in this way the postmodern amnesiac tendency towards 'other' people's painful experiences in wars.

Since "history is a multi-form narrative representation" (Munslow, 2016, p. 124), speaking about the Bosnian war in a form of a graphic novel identifies with a certain cultural impulse that dominates the time of its production, the late twentieth and twenty first centuries, in which many literary forms cohabit prominently among them the comic book and the graphic novel. That is, the historical narration of the Bosnian war using words and images matches the sensibilities of the contemporary age that is more inclined to the visual than the written. For this purpose, Sacco plays the role of a historian who seeks to find the "truth" (s) about the Bosnian war in Sarajevo; he attempts to reconstruct the past as history. Sacco 's historical work

is an experimental history that incorporates both Sacco's performances as a historian and the past as a content inhabiting the multiframe, the frame, and the gutters of *The Fixer*.

More accurately, Sacco's *The Fixer* gives the Bosnian war's time in Sarajevo a coherent form that aims at finding meanings to the realities of war as perceived by Neven and the official authorities, rather than seeking the truths of this war. In other words, the graphic novel of *The Fixer* intends to narrativize the Bosnian war in Sarajevo rather than narrating it achieving a narrative closure that dispels the historical blindness towards many details or real lived experiences during this war. Moreover, the graphic mode of representation that *The Fixer* depends on in portraying the Bosnian war in Sarajevo manifests the cultural or more precisely the political particularity of the Bosnian society. Being a historical event, the Bosnian war in Sarajevo has been universally presented as an extrinsic referent through the official news media especially the visual ones like TV and photography and through historical texts by professional historians, the fact that necessitates evidently other responsive or revisionary versions carried within a legitimate form of historical representation that is both visual and textual: the graphic novel.

Since the graphic novel consists of complex set of codes ranging from words and images to frames, gutters, speech balloons, and captions. The formal and informational richness of *The Fixer* produces a story on the Bosnian war in Sarajevo infinitely rich in variety and suggestion. In other words, *The Fixer* with its multilayered codes does not only convey information but mainly produces various meanings about the Bosnian war. Rather than detaching itself from the Bosnian war in Sarajevo, the historical narrative in *The Fixer* attaches its formal structure to the spirit of this war adding a multiplicity of explanations that help in producing meaningful sequences of images.

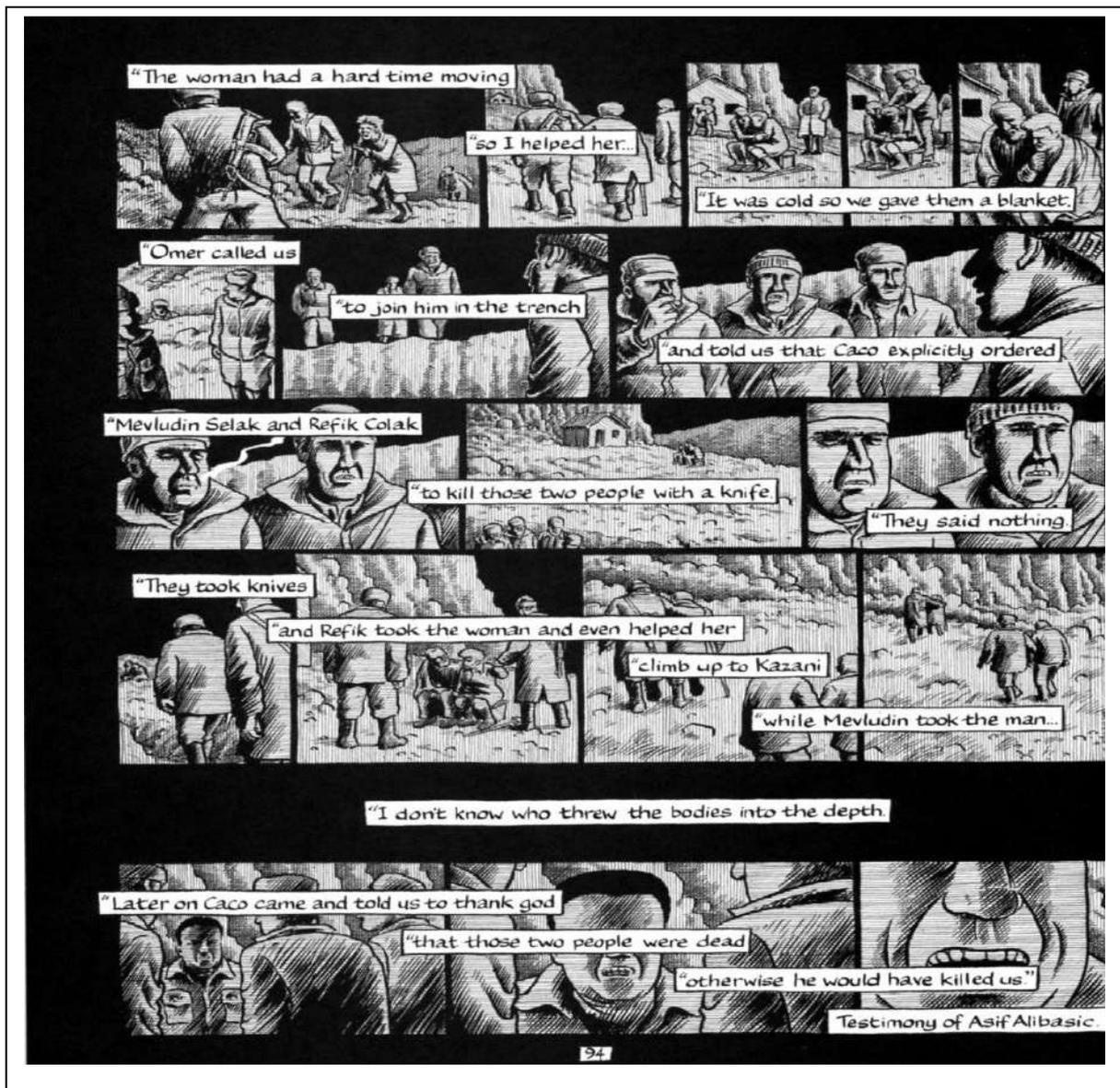
The graphic narrative in *The Fixer* communicates the difference between the chronologicalization of and the narrativization of the Bosnian war in many instances. For example, in the section entitled “1993-2001” the graphic narrative of *The Fixer* with its speech balloons, captions, its images, makes an extended narrativization of Caco’s condemnation by some parts and celebration by others in the period from 1993 to 2001. Caco is one of the most renowned military generals of the Bosnian war. According to Neven who is one of Caco’s many admirers, “Caco was framed. Whoever says Caco was killing people just because they were Serbs, He is lying; I’m ready to say that to anybody’s face” (Sacco, 2003, p. 93). Caco’s posthumous condemnation comes at the beginning from the government that claims to find a secret burial ground in Caco’s zone of control during the Bosnian war and where his Sarajevan Serb victims were buried in addition to many other criminal charges like rape, murder, blackmail, the confiscation of the UN vehicles. Quickly the government’s opinion on Caco changed in 1997, four years after his death, when they interred his remains in Sarajevo’s main military cemetery. Sacco comments on this sudden shift from condemnation to celebration stating in a caption rather than in a speech balloon “It seems Caco is being rehabilitated” (Sacco, 2003, p. 93). Sacco’s words are put in a caption and not a speech balloon in order to fit in the chronologicalization of the government’s position vis a vis Caco’s past reputation during the Bosnian war.

After the re-interment of Caco, the magazine “Dani” publishes the testimonial statements of a number of Caco’s soldiers in a trial that took place in 1994. For example, both the testimonies of Asif Alibasic and Samir Seferovic condemning Caco’s war crimes are graphically translated on pages 94 and 95. The written testimonies in “Dani” magazine are panelized and re-imagined which gives the abstract juridical paper of the Caco’s soldiers’ testimonies a self-reflexive identity. For example, Asif’s words are accurately imaged in a way that transforms a historical document into a meaning-full historical narrative. Every utterance is drawn and panelized according to the length of the sentence. The type of the action or the content of the utterance is

also translated graphically, for example, in telling the story of killing a couple of Serb elders under Caco's command and then throwing them to the depths of the mountain, Asif states, "I don't know who threw the bodies into the depth" (94) (See Figure 24). The caption that contains these words is placed in the gutter in order to perform the action of throwing the murdered bodies into the unknown.

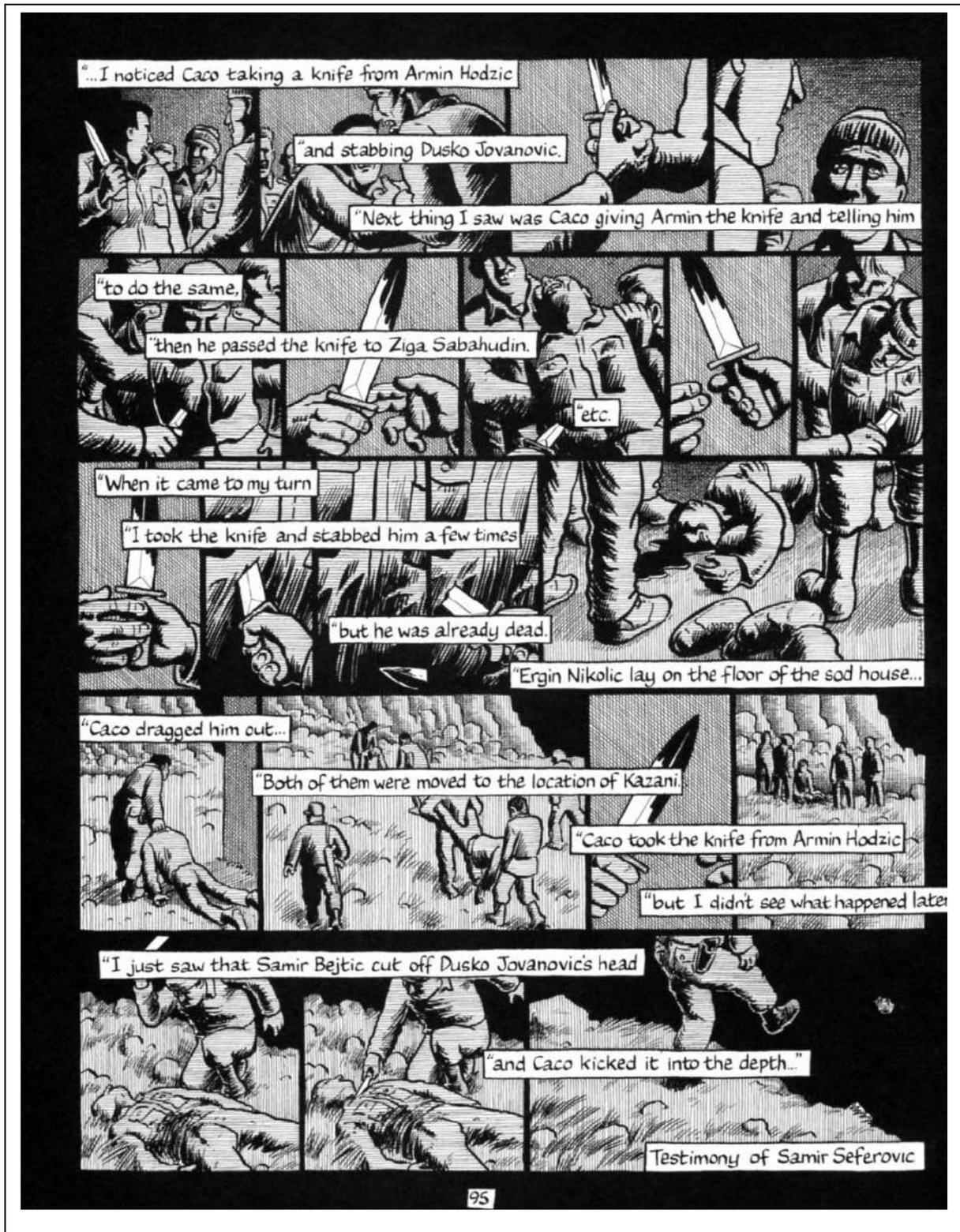
The following figure demonstrates the killing of a couple of Serb Elders as testified by Asif Alibasic:

Figure (24): Visual Storying (Sacco, 2003, p. 94)



The following figure demonstrates the killing of a couple of Serb Elders as testified by Samir Seferovic:

Figure (25): Visual Historying (Sacco, 2003, p. 95)



The number of killed Sarajevan Serbs varies enormously from one source to another. the Bosnian Serb propagandists estimate that ten thousand Sarajevan Serbs were killed by the Muslim-dominated forces, while Senad Pecanin, the editor of the “Dani” magazine contradicts himself claiming, “Nobody knows for certain, but obviously not less than a few hundred” (Sacco, 2003, p. 96). While the police official Alibabic asserts that the government until 2001 did not conduct a full accounting of the war’s victims in Kazani, and so far, they have found thirty corpses. The section “1993-2001” performs Caco’s military history during the Bosnian war in Sarajevo using poetic elements of the graphic narrative namely: the words, the images, the panels, the gutters, the speech balloons, and the captions. The performativity of the graphic narrative on pages 94 and 95 (See Figure (26)) allows the history of Caco’s condemnation between 1993 and 2001 to move beyond the abstractness of its chroniclizing methods to be more self-reflexive as White (1980) argues, “The narrative code is drawn from the performative domain of poesis rather than that of noesis” (p. 19). That is, according to White the narrativization of the historical event is a process of re-transcribing the real event or the chronicle into a story or rather a performance as Barthes (1977) asserts, “Narrative does not show, does not imitate [...] Its function is not to ‘represent,’ it is to constitute a spectacle” (as cited in White, 1984, p. 19). Caco’s story of condemnation is both a spectacular and spectral performance that gives the past of a dead body the “reality effect” (Barthes, 1989), to give it a complementary life that begins when everything is finished.

3.7 Speaking to the Specter: Keeping the Bosnian War’s Ghosts Alive

Without Neven’s haunting memories on the Bosnian war in Sarajevo, the graphic and the historical narratives in *The Fixer* would be impossible to exist. Neven is the only bearer of the inheritance of the Bosnian war that Sacco found; he is the only one who accepted to speak to Sacco about his experience in the war and about the generation that marked this war. He is the only Sarajevan who is able to bring the past back and present it again anew by conjuring the

spirits of the war's events and agents producing what Blanco and Peeren (2013) call "spectography" (p. 483). Because the history of this war is based on the spectrality of the past enacted through the process of re-membering and re-composing, a spectrological or hauntological approach to the graphic narrative in *The Fixer* is necessary to uncover the secrets of the Sarajevo war. Conjuring the specter is thus a difficult task that Sacco undertakes in order to make Sarajevo speak about its past exactly about what happened during the Bosnian war.

The specter in *The Fixer* is Neven whose job as a war fixer enabled him to guide Sacco through the ghostlike avenues of Sarajevo and its dark times of war. The spectrality of Neven is manifested when Sacco's repetitive arrivals to Sarajevo always correlate with a search for Neven who appears and reappears like a ghost haunted by the events of the Bosnian war. For Sacco, and for us as readers, Neven represents the carrier of an impossible history, a wounded history of a war buried in the depths of a suffocating silence. However, Neven's memories of the war cannot be restricted to the traumatic realm because of the social position he occupies during the war: he was first a military in the paramilitary Bosnian forces and then when he got injured, he became a war fixer.

In short, Neven's memories are spectral and spectacular memories, memories of survival and performance rather than victimhood. Huyssen (2003) argues against the unthinkable association of memory to trauma maintaining, "to collapse memory into trauma [. . .] would unduly confine our understanding of memory, marking it too exclusively in terms of pain, suffering, and loss. It would deny human agency and lock us into compulsive repetition" (p. 8). Accordingly, Neven's memories are mostly spectrally adventurous rather than traumatic enabling us to deal with the temporal dimensions of the Bosnian war without imprisoning them in the melancholic bubble of trauma.

The historical narrative in *The Fixer* is essentially generated by the act of speaking to the specter: Neven. Although Neven is present in flesh and blood in the storyworld, we can attribute the characteristics of the specter to his self in the past during the Bosnian war. Neven in the present is also possessed by his own specter, the old Neven, Neven the military and the war fixer who is out of place and time. The whole story of *The Fixer* begins by the waiting for the apparition of Neven: the first graphic pages show Sacco looking for Neven and waiting for him to appear (See Figure (26)). Neven is like Jacque Derrida's specter and Hamlet's father ghost. Derrida's idea of the specter is constructed from Shakespeare's *Hamlet's* ghost:

As in Hamlet, the prince of a rotten state, everything begins with the apparition of a specter. More precisely, by the waiting for this apparition. The anticipation is at once impatient, anxious, and fascinated: this, the thing ("this thing") will end up coming. The revenant is going to come. It won't be long. But how long it is taking. Still more precisely, everything begins in the imminence of a re-apparition, but a reapparition of the specter as apparition for the first time in the play. (Derrida, 1994, p. 2)

Neven's apparition, disappearance, and re-appearance in the story are always portrayed as if he appears for the first time and this is displayed in the fascination of Sacco when he meets Neven, the revenant.

Every time Sacco arrives to Sarajevo, he embarks in the mission of searching for Neven, the specter, to speak to him. Speaking to the specter and making him speak is thus the core of historiography and the only one whom the specter addresses is the performer or the actor, someone like Sacco who is not a journalist enslaved by the objectivity of his profession or a spectator who is satisfied by only looking at the specter. Speaking to the specter according to Derrida (1994) is almost impossible for "theoreticians or witnesses, spectators, observers, and intellectuals, scholars" who "believe that looking is sufficient" Derrida (1994) adds, "Therefore, they are not always in the most competent position to do what is necessary: speak to the specter" (p. 11).

The following figure shows Sacco waiting for Neven to appear since he is the only one who accepted to talk about the Bosnian war:

Figure (26): Speaking to the Specter (Sacco, 2003, p. 4)



Neven's spectrality is also manifested in what Derrida calls the "visor effect" as he has the power to see the world without being seen just like Hamlet's ghost whose helmet with the visor up creates a veil through which he sees the others while they cannot see him. Neven's visor effect comes from his sunglasses that make him both visible and invisible. For example, on page 24 (See Figure (27)) the first panel pictures Neven and Sacco walking in one of Sarajevo's streets side to side with Neven wearing sunglasses greeted by Sarajevans like a hero, a war ghost with a visor effect fascinating everyone in the street. Neven's visor effect makes people look at him maybe not out of admiration but of fear of the unknown, fear from being observed without meeting the gaze of the observer.

The following figure illustrates Neven's visor effect effectuated through his black glasses:

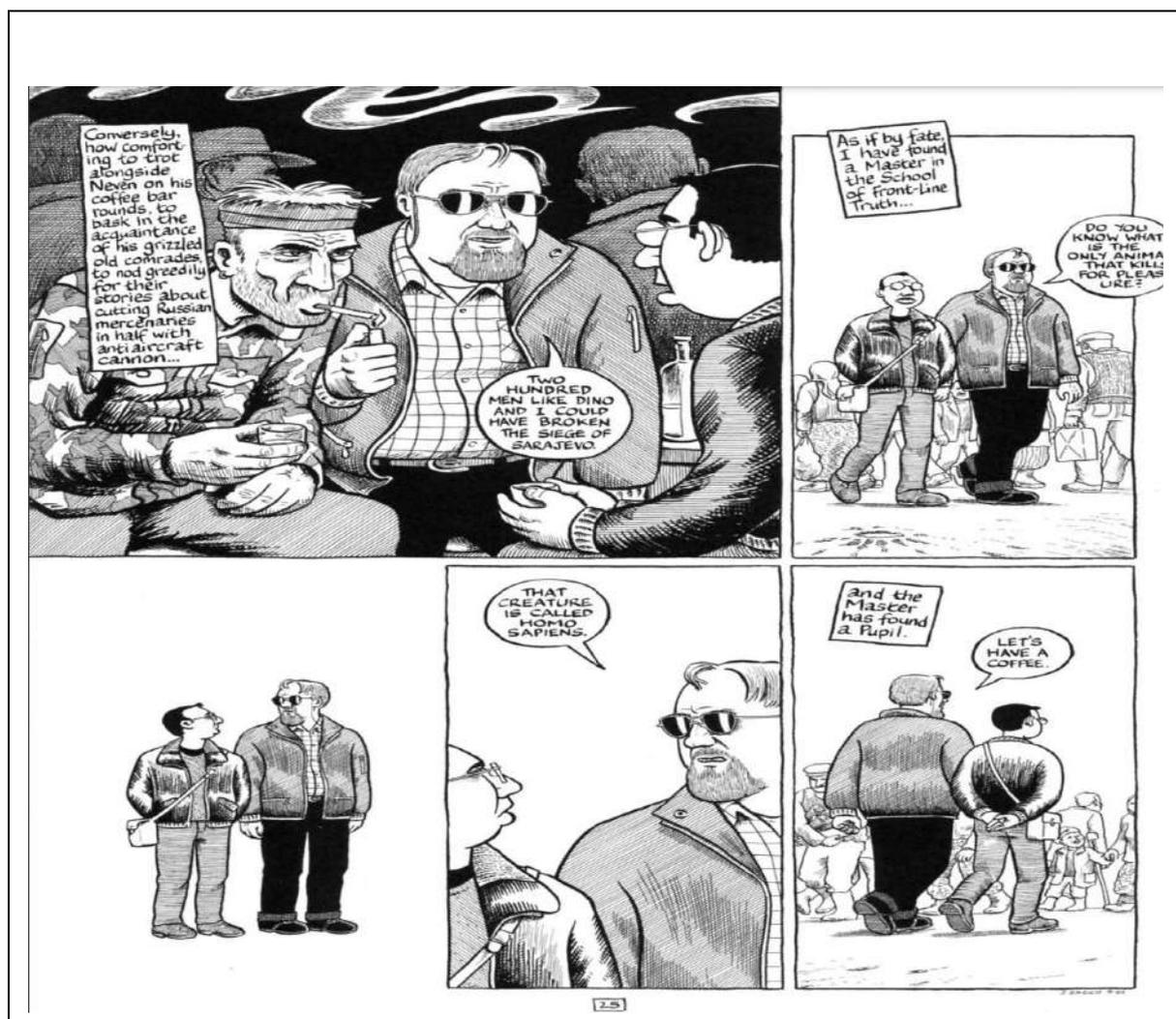
Figure (27): The Visor Effect (Sacco, 2003, p. 24)



Another example of Neven's visor effect appears in page 25 (See Figure 28) where we see Sacco and Neven standing in an unframed image looking at each other displaced in a time out of joint with Neven holding the visor's power viewing Sacco who is unable to see reciprocally to Neven. This out of place and time image interrupts the conventional linearity of history suggesting other possible alternate and competing fragmented perspectives of the history of the Bosnian war drawing the reader's attention to the narrativity of history. However, we cannot deny the fact Sacco's desire to know the truth of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo by speaking to the specter represent a longing for a coherent and correct narrative of history.

The following figure illustrates Neven's visor power:

Figure (28): The Visor Effect (Sacco, 2003, p. 25)



Therefore, Neven's spectral narrative is a haunting historical account that contains multiples ghost stories taking place in a spatio-temporally disjointed world, a world that belongs to the past but still haunts the present and continues to haunt the future through its residual traces. These traces are produced by the spectral machine especially the camera. Besides the drawn images that are reproduced from the photographs that Sacco has taken in the process of investigating the Bosnian war in Sarajevo, the photograph in *The Fixer* as drawn in its original form constitutes an important witness of the war realities. The photograph appears to have been laid on the top of the page ratifying the documentary nature of *The Fixer*.

Questioning the specter about the past cannot happen in our modern times without questioning the spectrality of the photograph that commemorates the people, and the places of that lived event. As evidence of his military participation in the famous battle where he with his colleagues confronted the 43 tanks attack, Neven shows to Sacco a photograph of him and his colleagues taken just before the attack as he claims. Neven shows this photograph twice: the first time appears on page 34 in 1995 at the near end of the war, and the second time the photograph re-appears in page 100 in 2001 (See Figure (29)).

In the first appearance of the photograph, Neven remembers the names of all who are in the picture, while in the second re-appearance of the photograph, Neven expresses an inability to remember the names of most of those guys, his comrades from Celo's unit specifically the ones who were killed in the war. Neven's relationship to the photograph is a life/death relationship. In the first time, Neven's comment on the picture is focused on the four of the photographed who survived the war, while in the second time; his focus is on his friends who have been killed in the war and whose names he cannot remember. Between the apparition and the re-appearance of the photograph, some names of the dead in Neven's memories departed despite the return of their specters. The unavailability of the dead men's names in Neven's mind indicates the necessity of simultaneity rather than temporality in dealing with the work of historical

development. That is why, Neven insists on listening to the war's specters before the war ends in 1995, in order to capture the war's times simultaneously.

The following figure illustrates the photograph's spectrality:

Figure (29): The Spectrality of the Photograph (Sacco, 2003, p. 100)



However, in 2001, with his return to Sarajevo, Sacco finds it hard to seize the development of the Bosnian war because the work is done temporally and conjuring the war's specters in the photograph becomes hard for Neven. Barthes (2000) calls the photographed object the "spectrum" because, as he says, "this word retains, through its root, a relation to 'spectacle' and adds to it that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead" (p. 9). That is, looking into the photograph is a haunting practice that Neven undertakes, diving into a spatio-temporal area between life and death. The presence of the photograph in the beginning of the story and its ending designates the spectrality of Neven's story that unfolds between life and death, "Life/Death: the paradigm is reduced to a simple click, the one separating the initial pose to the final print" (Barthes, 2000, p. 92). It is also the simultaneous nature of the graphic narrative through its visual properties that allows spectrality to engender a historical narrative full of haunting and haunted images of the Bosnian war as lived by Neven in a time and space already predestined to be spectral.

The "terrible thing" that Barthes associates with "the return of the dead" in the photograph is not only a temporal return but also a spatial revenance because history is rethought temporally and spatially simultaneously. The visual aspect of the graphic narrative in *The Fixer* accentuates the historical impact of the place in reshaping our views regarding the Bosnian war in the metropolitan center, Sarajevo. The places situated in a war zone reflect the dystopian character of war presenting chaotic as well as insecure scenes that engages a discomfiting spirit.

Spectrality and haunting are usually conceived as attached to places especially in gothic stories where the haunted house or the haunted town is at the center of the narrative. Whether in a house or the street, war places are haunting, haunted, and spectral not just in relation to their past but also to their present. These sites private or public are living and spectral inhabited by living cadavers or specters. For example, on pages 45 and 46 (See Figure (30)).

The following figure illustrates the haunting character of Neven's aunt's house:

Figure (30): Haunting Places (Sacco, 2003, p. 45)



Neven invites Sacco to his apartment with its unsanitary kitchen and a messy living room where his blind aunt is lying on a sofa totally unconscious of the chaos, the mess and the dirt surrounding her. This image, as Faber describes it, “hits us like a slap in the face, not gradually as prose do.” The spectrality and the strangeness of Neven’s ‘home’ reflects the uncanny that war spreads all over the places it occupies from the private to the public. This image drawn with a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) contributes in understanding Neven as a specter whose apartment cannot but be spectral; wherever Neven goes in Sarajevo, his spectrality contaminates the place he frequents.

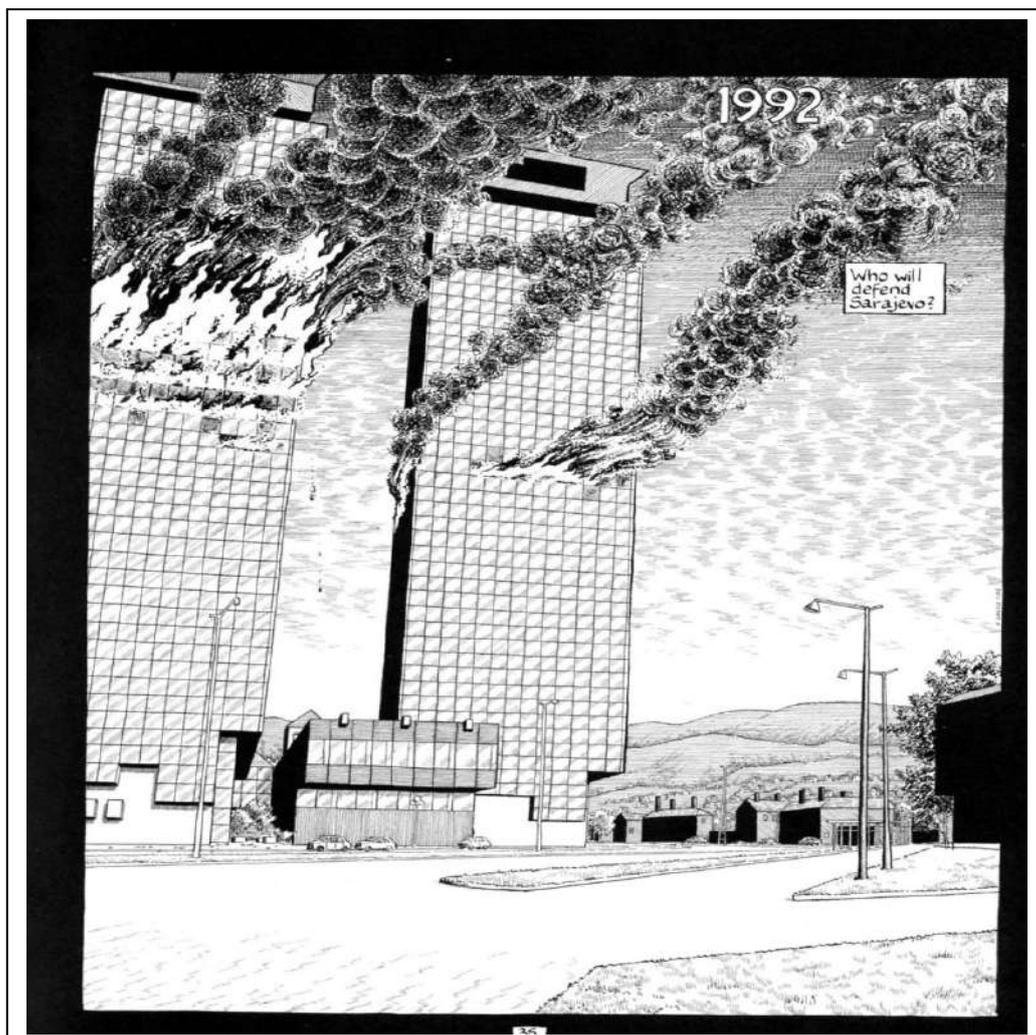
Moreover, because the specter and history are marked by repetition, there is a repeated image in *The Fixer* that revokes other similar images that took place somewhere else other than Sarajevo in the past and will be reproduced in other places in the future. This revenant image occurs in the first and last pages of the graphic novel and reoccurs on page 35 representing the burning of two adjacent tower blocks in Sarajevo in 1992 and on page 12 the same image reappears showing the two blocks after three years (See Figure (31)). This spectral image directly makes us think about the 2001 bombarded Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. This image can also be described as a “clone image” using the words of Mitchell (2005) who defines the clone according to “what Walter Benjamin called a ‘dialectical image,’ capturing the historical process at a standstill. It goes before us as a figure of our future, threatens to come after us as an image of what could replace us” (p. 25). That is to say, the clone image is spatiotemporally disjointed. Its appearance and re-appearance are unpredictable and out of time and place which makes it a threatening specter to the human future.

In fact, Mitchell’s concept of the “clone image” is inspired by the images of Dolly the sheep and the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center at the moment of their demolition. These two living images “exemplify the sensuous spectrum of image anxiety in our time, ranging from the overwhelmingly traumatic spectacle of mass destruction on the one hand to the subtle

creepiness of the cloned sheep, which as visual image, is quite unremarkable, but as idea is a figure of considerable dread” (Mitchell, 2005, p. 12). Therefore, the repeated image of the burning and burned two tower blocks in Sarajevo is an image that represents the beginning and the end of the historical narrative of the Bosnian war, respectively, or any war taking place in a modern city. Any war begins by a spectral image like the burning of the two tower blocks in Sarajevo which generates similar images in the uncertain future, the fact that makes time and history out of its regularity, ‘the time is out of joint,’ or rather history is out of joint.

The following figure illustrates Mitchell’s concept of the clone image which is the burning of the twin towers:

Figure (31): The Clone Image (Sacco, 2003, p. 35)



Conclusion

This chapter investigated the narrative and historical workings of time in the graphic narrative of Sacco's *The Fixer* as an isolated entity without subordinating it to the concept of place. It focused on the concept of time that is seemingly shrinking in the literary and cultural discussions, which tend to diminish it focusing rather on the space giving it all the attention. However, the temporal approach of the drawn narrative of the Bosnian war in Sarajevo as told from Neven's perspective proves that the graphic narrative with its sequentiality, enacted through the sequence of panels and pages, uncovered the narrativity of the historical discourse on this war. More precisely, this chapter prioritized the perspective of time over space in order to emphasize the inextricability of narrative, history, and representation. Moreover, reading Sacco's graphic novel *The Fixer* in temporal terms proved that words and images, when combined, formulate an anti-amnesiac account of the Bosnian war in the capital of Sarajevo. Most importantly, the form of the graphic novel worked hand in hand with the content in order to capture the temporal dimensions of this war. In other words, besides the content, the formal specificities of the graphic narrative like frames and color contributed greatly in exploring the simultaneity, the dynamicity, the rhythmicality, the self-reflexivity and even the disjointedness of time in the Bosnian war in Sarajevo as drawn and performed in Sacco's graphic novel *The Fixer*. Despite the uniqueness of Neven's experience of war, the visualized times of his story illuminated the subject of human brutality caused by feelings like hatred, anger, and greed.

Chapter Four

Effective Representation through Affective Expression in Joe Sacco's Graphic Novel *Paying the Land* (2020)

Chapter Four

Effective Representation through Affective Expression in Joe Sacco's Graphic Novel

***Paying the Land* (2020)**

Introduction

4.1 The Turn to Affect in Joe Sacco's *Paying the Land*

4.2 The Facial Close-Up: Unveiling the Face of the Cultural Genocide

4.3 The Visual and Verbal Transmission of Affect: Intergenerational and Environmental

Embodied Emotions

4.3.1 The Intergenerational Transmission of Anger and Post-memory

4.3.2 Ecological Affects: Embodied Simulations and Sublimations

4.4 Empathy: A Sense of Justice

4.5 Iconic Solidarity or Emotional Solidarity

4.6 The Multisensorial Character of *Paying the Land*: An Aesthetics of Suspension

Conclusion

Chapter Four

Effective Representation through Affective Expression in Joe Sacco's Graphic Novel

Paying the Land (2020)

Introduction

The human life as a temporal and spatial limited entity is subject to a variety of affective frequencies that translate autonomously and constantly the world as a complicated construct of emotions. This emotional complexity is what characterizes Joe Sacco's graphic novels as they delve deep into the question of the human existence and its intricacies. *Paying the Land* is no exception through which Sacco attempts to document the daily life of the Dene people in the Northwestern territories in Canada not just factually but also emotionally. Sacco's *Paying the Land* pushes the perimeters and the parameters of the medium of the graphic novel forward by allowing the emotional content to venture into its spaces. A lot of individuals are given a space in the work's pages to appear physically giving a particular emotive tone to their personal experiences. Thus, the affectual orientation of the drawn narrative about the Dene nation activates the humanity of the witnesses globally and experientially. Interestingly, *Paying the Land* is peopled with human faces especially the faces of the indigenous people called the Dene in the Northwestern territory in Canada. The Dene faces face the world with their own stories about a land that is theirs since a "time immemorial" and that is exploited and colonized since the discovery of its various attractive resources from timber and diamond, to oil and natural gas from the nineteenth century until today.

The white supremacist power puts its hand on their land resources without even knocking on their doors as if the Dene people do not exist and when the Dene start claiming their right to the land, the colonizing power starts its politics of destroying and disrupting the communal circle of the Dene culture by taking the children to the Christian residential schools where the

heart of the story of *Paying the Land* is palpating out of this abrupt and forced separation between the Dene individual and his culture. The complexity of the Dene's story is highlighted by Sacco who avoids simplistic classifications of the indigenous people as noble savages who prioritize the old ways of living over modern ones and rather insists on recording their different views regarding the questions of resource extraction and land claims using journalistic tools especially the interview, and the fact verification. Sacco's journalistic style is intertwined with a deep consideration of people's emotions expressed through words and images reviving the past, interrogating the present, and thinking about the future.

On a larger scale, the affective aspect of the story in *Paying the Land* can be discerned through two important phases in the history of the Dene people who lived in the Mackenzie River valley for thousands of years: the first is the pre-colonial period, and the second is the colonial era. The first period is drawn with nature in the background supporting the circular continuity of the Dene culture that is built on the principles of solidarity and unity or in other words on communality. The scenes or the graphic pages where the traditional Dene life are drawn reflect purity, innocence and incorruptibility that exist only in a utopian world where wrongness does not exist at all. In fact, what is drawn in these pages is a nostalgic memory of a past life by the Dene individuals who have been separated from their communal life in the bush during their childhood and sent to the Western residential school. That is, it is the child's affective memories that contribute greatly to the reimagining of the pre-colonial life in the Mackenzie River valley.

Moreover, it is the sublimity of nature which is preserved from the deforming machinery of development that gives the Dene's life before colonization a divine image. On the other hand, the discovery of the riches of land from diamond, oil and natural gas by the Canadian authorities has led to many changes in the once virgin land. Mining, road building, fracking, and pipelining have deformed the natural scenes and also the souls of the Dene people. The colonial period

has also changed the Dene's ways of life and what has remained of their Dene identity is their facial traits anything else has turned to be westernized. The Dene's retreatment from the wilderness to the established settlements in the industrial zones represents a total economic inertia and a drastic eradication of the Dene's cultural identity. The affective aspect of the colonial period is embodied through images expressing feelings of sadness, loss, and lethargy, which creates a gloomy atmosphere indicating a state of psychological, social, and economic intoxication and deregulation at the heart of the Dene society.

In addition to this general description of the affective features of Sacco's graphic novel *Paying the Land*, the various reviews on this work show a clear emphasis on emotions and feelings as translated through the different tropes in the graphic narrative. The words "felt," "feeling," "sense" or the words that signals a certain emotion represent the central focus of the various reviews on Sacco's graphic novel. For example, Edemariam (2020) chooses to entitle her review "A Triumph of Empathy" in order to put a strong emphasis on the sensational side of Sacco's work. According to Edemariam, Sacco's graphic novel *Paying the Land* enables us to travel through Sacco's meticulous drawings of everything existing in the Northwestern territories, a place where another type of war other than AK47s and mortar shells is taking place. It is, she points out, "an internal war, where the invisible threads that hold a human together – self-worth, community, language, even the ability to love— are deliberately cut away."

Even Sacco sheds light on the affective character of his work and the necessity of involving the Dene people's critical views on their situation:

A lot of people have a very solid critique. It might not be like an academic's critique of what's happened to them, but a *deep-felt critique* [emphasis added] that goes exactly to the heart in a way that an academic's critique does not really go to the heart. (The Nib, 2020, 36:26)

Sacco's comparison between academic and non-academic critiques on the subject of the Dene's dispossession of land and culture draws attention to the importance of drawing the Dene's affective experiences using their own voices and their own bodily presence rather than just abbreviating the Dene's predicament in a factual report written according the laws of academia. In short, Sacco rejects the vicarious equivalence and instead he celebrates the acknowledgment of the Dene's human experience.

Therefore, the affective quality of *Paying the Land* matters more than its technicality. This idea leads us to ask the following questions: because feelings cannot be expressed without form, how does the form of the graphic novel in *Paying the Land* enable the conveying of the Dene's affective experience of Western colonialism? And how does Sacco's drawings of the Canadian Northwestern territories and the Dene people's bodies represent expressively the affective trajectories of a land and a culture deformed by the policies of progress? More specifically how the graphic narrative in *Paying the Land* exposes the intrinsicality and the externality of the Dene's differentiated affective orientations regarding the question of maintaining the old ways of living or adopting modern ones? Finally, in which way Sacco's drawings create an efficacious feeling of empathy towards the Dene people in the reader? Answering these questions constitutes the bulk of this chapter that puts the notion of affect at the heart of its discussion. Yet, I need first to define the concept of affect that has gained a noticeable prominence in the different fields of humanities and social sciences before it has become an independent area of study in itself.

4.1 The Turn to Affect in Joe Sacco's *Paying the Land*

The strong turn to the notion of affect recently has given the human body an academic reconsideration in the humanities, social sciences and cultural theory, which for a long time has neglected or ignored the centrality of the human body in materializing the different social,

psychological, and political transformations happening at the everyday level and consequently the importance of the body in giving meaningful interpretations to these changes. The academic interest in the affect as an embodied experience has grown rapidly thanks to two seminal publications in 1995, Massumi's "The Autonomy of Affect" and Sedgwick and Frank's "Shame in the cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkin." These two works have sparked productive interest in the affect theory that is, as Trunan (2022) contends, "not a settled method or neatly delineated discipline" (p. 26). For Trunan, the multidisciplinary influences in the affect theory give it a fluid character that defies any kind of bordering.

Moreover, the affect theory moves the human body from the periphery to the center in order to observe how it acts and be acted upon. In this way the body is not just a vessel for the human spirit but a secret garden where the true nature of things resides. The prioritization of the human body in its procedural workings is clearly positioned in the two main trajectories of the affective theory namely: the Spinoza/Deleuze trajectory and the feminist/queer/cultural trajectory. The Spinoza/Deleuze orientation sees affect as an ongoing process of bodily transformation and change that have a capacious sociopolitical impact. According to Brian Massumi, Silvan Tomkins and the Deleuzian aligned theorists of affect; the affect is essentially autonomously a corporeal process as Massumi (1995) argues, "the affect is irreducibly bodily and autonomic" (p. 28). That is, the body is completely responsible for the affective resonances and intensities in the human being, i.e., the body is independently preconditioned to produce the affect without any sort of cognitive commanding. This makes the affect a completely separate system from the cognitive system.

In short, for the first trend in the affect theory, affects are non-cognitive corporeal reactions. Shouse also insists on the importance of distinguishing between feelings, emotions, and affects in order to put the concept of affect in a separate realm of the human reactionary systems, "Feelings are personal and biographical, emotions are social [...] and affects are pre-personal.

[...] Affect is the body's way of preparing for action in a given circumstance by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the quality of an experience” (as cited in Leys, 2011, p 442). Although many affect theorists like Shouse attempt to differentiate between affect and emotion, leys (2011) suggests instead that, “the distinction cannot be sustained” (p. 434). While the first strain of the affect theory sees the affect as pre-personal, non-intentional and non-cognitive, the second strain, that of the feminist/queer/cultural affect theory, sees the body as the thing that connects the cognitive with the emotional as Ahmad (2010) argues:

Focusing on emotions as mediated knowledge cannot be separated from the bodily world of feeling and sensation [...] all those feelings that are crucially felt on the bodily surface, the skin surface where we touch and are touched by the world. (p.171)

Here, Ahmad puts the body and emotions in a reciprocal relationship based on a conscious acknowledgement; one cannot be without the other unlike Massumi and his followers who sees the affect as something above feelings and emotions, something that cannot be captured by the cognitive system. The affect theorists like Massumi tends to ignore the cognitive capacities in sensing the different emotions placing the body instead prior to the mind which is neglected in the processual working of the affect which is after all an intensive activation of emotion.

Thinking in terms of binary oppositions precisely the body/mind dichotomy attracts the critical attention of Leys (2011) who notices that, “There is a constant tendency among the new affect theorists [...] to adhere to this same false opposition between the body and the mind” (p. 458). Leys argues that the new affect theorists have turned their back to the traditional psychoanalytic theories of emotions like Sigmund Freud who sees the affect as an intentional embodied feeling. The old affect theorists think about affects in a more nuanced way as they combine the body and mind in explaining the production of emotions. In other words, the new affect theorists establish affect models according to which human emotions are classified ‘naturally’ using evolutionary principles. In order to support their views, they use neuroscientific findings selectively in favor of their opinion orientations that say that the affect

is bodily rooted. Specifically, in criticizing the Tomkin-Ekman “affect program” which claims that a number, six or seven, of emotions exists subcortically in the brain, Leys (2011) argues that this assumption is flawed and ungrounded. The inadequacy of the scientific evidence Tomkins and Ekman used in supporting their theory of the “Basic Emotions Theory” is criticized also by other psychologists who find out that the experimental evidence this paradigm relies on are not coherent (Leys, 2011, p. 439). If the affect has the potential to act and it is at the same time non-intentional, this means that the human actions are affectively drawn or rather non-cognitively drawn which is nonsensical since human beings are essentially distinguished from any other creature by their cognitive capacities. That is to say, according to Massumi and who follow him, our actions are controlled by our affects that make the decisions way before the mind intervenes. This idea has led to a lot of criticisms against the new affect theorists’ anti-intentionalist positions.

However, because there are some difficulties that may encounter anti non-intentionalist theorists of affect, Leys (2011) contends, “the anti-intentionalist positions may well maintain its dominance within psychology and the affective neurosciences for some time to come” (p. 472). One of these difficulties is when one favors “intentionalist interpretation of the affects” Leys says, “one finds oneself forced to provide thick descriptions of life experience of the kind that are familiar to anthropologists and novelists but are widely held to be inimical to science” (p. 471). This difficulty will be tamed in this chapter as we intend to link the affects of the Dene people to their lived experiences under the western economic and cultural colonization treating the notion of affect from a middle space that is, as Houen (2020) asserts, “reduced neither to cognitivism nor noncognitivism” (p. 5). Because what we see in the graphic novel of *Paying the Land* by Joe Sacco is images accompanied with words rather than scanned brains, the affect-centered analysis of the Dene’s story is based on the distinctive aesthetic of the medium of the

graphic novel that approaches and explores the dynamics of affect as reworked on the Dene's bodies and faces.

4.2 The Facial Close-Up: Unveiling the Face of the Cultural Genocide

“Doodling” or moving one’s hand randomly while drawing faces is one of the most inventive methods that comics has brought to art or more specifically that Rodolphe Topffer, “the father “of the modern comic in many ways” (McCloud, 1993, p. 17) has introduced to the world of visual arts under the label of “physiognomics.” Interestingly, Gombrich (1960) highlights the importance of the drawn face starting from Topffer’s pamphlet on physiognomics saying, “For any drawing of the human face, however inept, however childish, possesses, by the very fact that it has been drawn, a character, and an expression will be endowed with life, with a presence” (p. 272). Thinking of affect from the position of the Dene people is manifested through the ubiquitous presence of the Denes’ faces in a form of talking-head panel style. This ubiquity of Dene faces zoomed in makes the graphic novel of *Paying the Land* a space for an interfacial communication, the fact that gives this graphic narrative a curious and affecting character.

Sacco’s subjects in *Paying the Land* are highly individuated; his characters are well established as subjects and faces as each interviewee is rendered specific and unique. They are humanized through their regular presence on the page which makes them more familiar to the reader and at the same time distinguishes them as something other than one-dimensional victims of economic and cultural colonization. In fact, against the abstracting effect of the traditional journalism, Sacco’s comic journalism in *Paying the Land* is characterized with a visual density and distinction of the Dene people that opposes the reductionist synecdochic demonstration of the traditional journalism that draws the face neutrally just for a quick information skimming. Sacco’s drawings of faces in this work also go against McCloud’s comic principle of neutral

faciality. According to McCloud (1993), the cartoonish rendering of the human face is more integrating than the realistic drawing of the face which creates a kind of distance or “othering” between the reader and the drawn face. McCloud associates the cartoonish face to universality because it enables the reader to identify with the drawn character. However, the universality that McCloud is speaking about denies the specificity of every individual’s affective property. Although McCloud (1993) sees that “by stripping down an image to its essential ‘meaning,’ an artist can amplify that meaning in a way that realistic art can’t” (p. 30), the particularity of the human face is stripped of its affective and cultural identity, unfortunately. Therefore, maintaining the otherness of the Dene people is Sacco’s way of taking responsibility on conducting objective journalistic research on a land that is not his land and of a culture that is completely different from his culture.

Sacco uses the technique of facial close-up in order to showcase the individuality of each of his Dene interviewee’s experience of colonialism evoking the vibrancies of his/her inner world that is tightly connected to the outer world. According to the Hungarian film critic and cultural theorist, Balazs (2007), “Close-ups are film’s true terrain [...] the magnifying glass of the cinematograph brings us closer to the individual cells of life, it allows us to feel the texture and substance of life in its concrete details” (p. 103). The filmic technique of the facial close-up is adopted by Sacco for the sake of opening up a new territory for the Dene’s story to unfold on the graphic pages of the graphic novel *Paying the Land*. The face in this work represents a site of multiple flows of sensation, affect, and meaning especially when it is zoomed in. We notice that most facial close-ups are put at the center of the graphic page from which all the surrounding images and captions or speeches emanate. Each of the Dene’s facial images gives rise to a multiplicity of meaning expressed via images and captions expressing the polyphony of life.

This multiplicity of voices coming from one source that is the zoomed-in face occurs, for example, in part I “You Find Yourself in the Circle” which tells the story of the Dene people before the coming of the modernization machinery. This section is told by Paul Andrew whose face is visually emphasized attracting the attention of the reader. This section begins with an image of a newborn baby crying with his umbilical cord dangling reaching the adult’s hands which carry him and extending to the river’s shores where a boat is sailing against a background of a river situated at the feet of a series of mountains. This baby is Paul Andrew who begins his story stating, “My grandfather tells me that when they were travelling in a moose-skin boat, that’s when I came into the world” (Sacco, 2020, p. 3). Paul Andrew continues narrating his Dene lifestyle from his birth until he grew up into a strong young man absently, what we see is his words quoted in captions until page 7 where his adult face occurs at the center of the page and keeps appearing all throughout the pages of this section. Before Paul Andrew’s face occurs, there is a kind of emotional detachment or distance between the reader and the Dene culture until Andrew’s face is put in a side-on view allowing a sort of intimate accessibility to the inner world of the speaker or the interviewee. The facial close-up of Paul Andrew is necessitated by a conversational demand as we see that speech balloons coming in from Sacco and going out of the frame bordering the Andrew’s face. We understand then, that the facial close-up is a journalistic trope that creates an immediate intimacy with Paul Andrew and his story.

Riffling through the pages of this section with a focus on Andrew’s face, we notice that his mouth’s shape changes and moves indicating an active verbal narration embodied through his facial muscles. The changing shape of Andrew’s mouth is unleashed only through the technique of the facial close-up which is capable to convey Paul Andrew’s memories of a Dene culture rooted in a land way before the coming of the colonizer. This face-to-face encounter between Sacco and Andrew extends to the viewer fostering the emotional connections between the

viewer and the Dene culture described through Andrew's childhood memories, memories colored with positive emotions like security and joy.

Moreover, Paul Andrew's face represents a guide to the Dene culture; it suffices looking at his face to find the way to the other drawn scenes and images sometimes commented on by captions. While in films, it is the director that guides the spectator's gaze, in *Paying the Land*, it is the emphasized face that orients the reader's vision. Paul Andrew's zoomed-in face guides us to the hidden corners where the silenced moments of his life retain their secret mood. Therefore, the facial close-up dictates the way the Dene's story is told. For example, on pages 12 and 13 (See Figures: (32) and (33)), the facial close-up of Paul Andrew is situated at the opposite corners of page 12, but its directional instructions extend to page 13, where Andrew makes us travel through time and space—not only of a past time when the Dene society gives important consideration to the child's future, decided from a very young age, around the age of five, as Andrew claims. The child's future is either to become a hunter or a leader.

In the case of Paul Andrew, the elders of his community thought that he will probably become a leader and therefore they start teaching him about leadership. The facial close-up at the bottom of page 12 on the right guides our vision to the next page where Andrew tells Sacco about Yomozha's story of leadership. This story is actually an imaginary story about Yomozha who is a mythological Dene leader whose negotiating skills enable him to settle peace between animals and man "in those days [...]" where animals were giants. In effect, the facial close-up creates a spatial simultaneity and linkage not only of the present and the past but also of multiple worlds: the old world of the Dene, the actual and the mythological ones. Assembling all these multiple worlds in two graphic pages aims at creating a cosmic impression of the Dene life. This holistic impression cannot happen without the facial close-up technique that provides the medium of the graphic novel with the stylistic possibility of bringing together existing and non-

existing worlds on the graphic page, before our eyes, in order to sense the aroma of the Dene culture.

The following figure illustrates the facial close-up technique used by Sacco in order to present Paul Andrew's testimony:

Figure (32): The Facial Close up (Sacco, 2003, p. 12)



The following figure depicts the Yamo zha's legendary story:

Figure (33): The Yamo zha Legend (Sacco, 2020, p. 13)

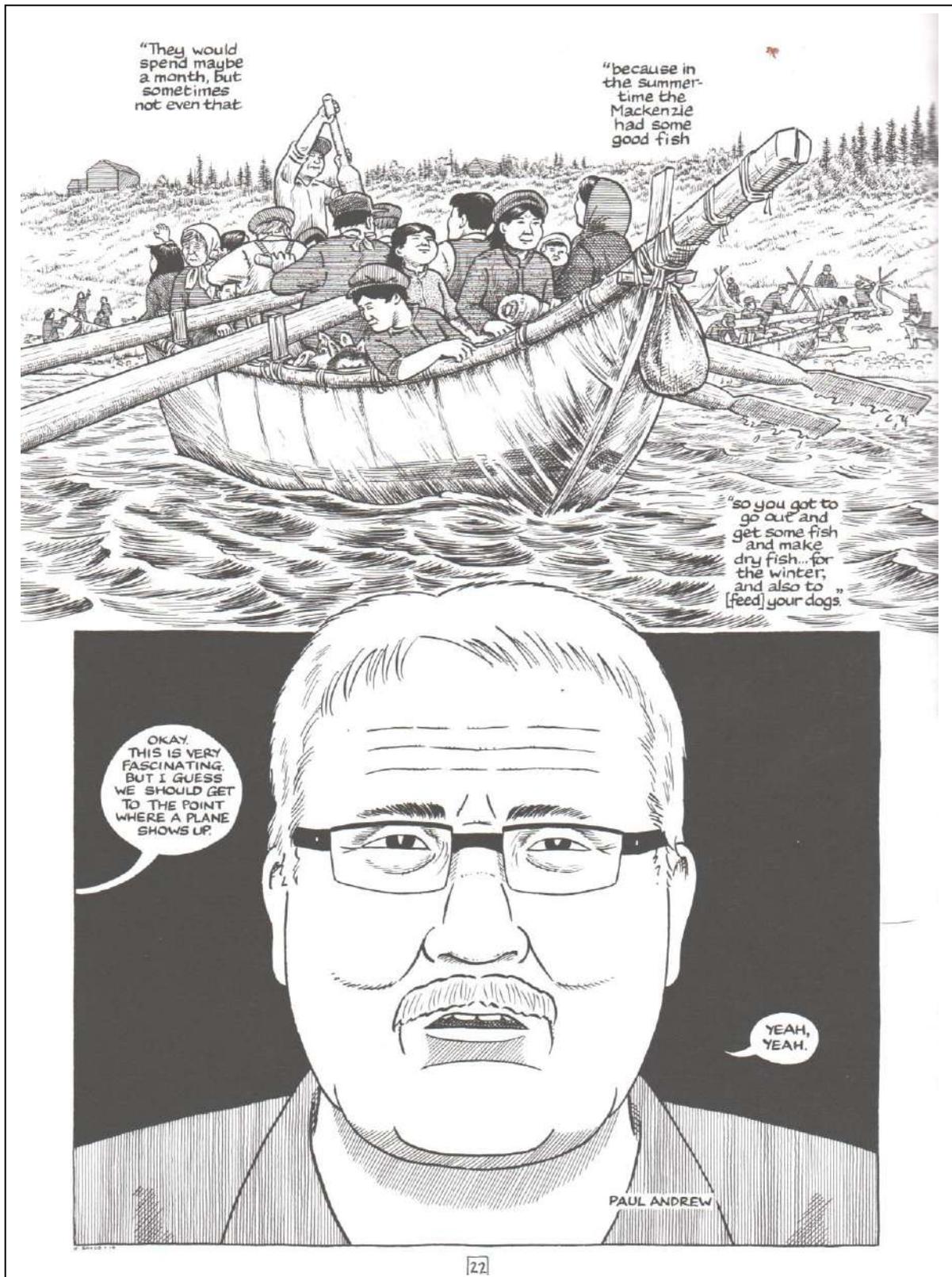


The larger the facial close-up gets, the closer the dramatic climax of the story in *Paying the Land* gets. In the end of the first part, Andrew's face is zoomed-in to occupy the half of page 22 (See Figure (34)) when the Dene's story arrives at its climax point which is "the residential schools." To end the first part of Andrew's story, Sacco, interrupts Andrew's narrative, "Okay. This is very fascinating. But I guess we should get to the point where a plane shows up" (2020, p. 22). At this moment, Andrew's facial lines congeal looking like someone who has just seen a monster; he is in a state of shock. The abrupt switch from remembering happy and fascinating moments in his life to remembering the toughest phase in his life is reflected on his facial expression especially the wrinkles around his mouth and eyes. For Balazs (2007), "the close-up of a face is frequently used as the climax of an important scene; it must be the lyrical essence of the entire drama" (p. 102). In this sense, the essence or the core of Sacco's graphic narrative of *Paying the Land* is the residential schools.

Sacco's project of *Paying the Land* which started as a magazine piece about source extraction ended up to be a graphic novel on colonialism especially cultural colonialism executed through the schooling system that represents the heart of the problem for the Dene people. Sacco states (2020) answering a self-posed question on the reasons behind the seemingly purposeless and desperate way of life in the Dene society culminating to alcoholism and domestic violence, "the answer is not simply that a bush people were unprepared for a rapidly changing world. Unmooring the indigenous people [...] was long Canada's official policy... that policy was heralded by the sound of air-craft engines" (p. 122). It is the memory of this sound that instills in Paul Andrew the feeling of shock and fear embodied on his zoomed-in face. Andrew's shocked face will stay suppressed for the two next parts before it gets released in the fourth part where we are able to meet Paul Andrew again to tell us about his experience in the residential schools.

The following figure illustrates Andrew's testimonial zoomed in face:

Figure (34): The Testimonial Zoomed-in Face (Sacco, 2020, p. 22)



Paul Andrew's face reappears in a section entitled, "A Savage Who Can Speak." The potentiality of the 'savage' face to speak out the affective meanings of the Dene's experience in the residential schools demonstrates a tight interrelationship between the face, the affect, and language. This interrelationship allows the reader to understand the link between Andrew's affects and his environment in its historicity. Following Russel's (1994) idea that, "Emotions are universally recognized from facial expressions" (p. 103), we are able to detect Andrew's emotions through his facial expressions. In this section, Andrew's face passes through various emotional states of unpleasantness from distress, grief and confusion to anger, frustration and contempt. For example, on pages 123 and 124, we see that Andrew's facial expressions are sad and confused, while on page 125 we can see anger accompanied by certain changes in the eyes look and the wrinkles around the mouth.

Andrew's facial expressions add multiple layers of richness and depth to the meaning of the Dene's story conveying a memory of suffering and trauma outside and beyond language. On the memory of Andrew's first encounter, at the age of eight, with the plane that will take him away from his family to the residential school, Andrew narrates the feelings he had at that time especially the moment when he refused to go with them and in order to stop his mother from crying, he gave her the chocolate bars given to him by the plane crew and suddenly one of those men took it from her forcibly and threw it back at him. Andrew says expressing his emotions at that moment stating, "I remember thinking, 'if I had my 22, I'd shoot you' because you don't treat my mom like that. And I remember the anger, and it was so unfamiliar" (Sacco, 2020, p. 125). Andrew's verbal description of this unfamiliar feeling which is anger is put in three separate speech balloons read in order from left to right surrounding Andrew's angry face which gives the facial expression a communicative potentiality that exposes the emotion of anger by creating an amalgam of all the verbal expressions in the three speech balloons simultaneously.

In fact, the simultaneity of the facial expression is more convenient to the complexity of Andrew's emotional display of anger that goes beyond the linearity of verbal expression. That is, the emotional simultaneity of the facial expression engenders a sort of polyphony that language cannot aspire to as Balazs (2007) argues, "facial expressions are more polyphonic than language" (p, 100). The facial close-up used in Paul Andrew's embodied memories fosters the testimonial working of Sacco's graphic novel *Paying the Land*, which makes the comics language richer and deeper able to provide a way into the functioning of the hidden inner of the Dene's soul.

Interestingly, the polyphony of the facial close-up does not only uncover the inner workings of the Dene individuals like Paul Andrew but also explores the driving affects of the colonizer's institutional policies especially those of the residential schools. Despite the fact that most of the graphic pages in *Paying the Land* are filled with the Dene faces, some faces from the other side that of the colonizer are drawn not in a testimonial mode. On pages 138 and 139 (See Figure (35)), the structural violence committed against the Dene children is drawn used the facial close-up that embodies all the evil that a human savage can hold against innocent children. On page 138, an anonymous nun carrying around her neck the cross which symbolizes the Christian institution of the residential school is drawn using the facial close-up that focuses on her face that bears all the hatred toward Valerie Conrad who describes the horrible violent treatment from her supervisor at the residential school at Fort Simpson. The parallel gradual facial close-up of the supervisor and Valerie Conrad with the first is showing a wrathful face and the second showing a crying face. This image of the nun beating Valerie interprets the affective workings of ruse and hatred that the oppressive system of the residential schools applies on the Dene children whose affective reactions of sadness, humiliation, and pain are embodied on their tearful faces.

The following figure illustrates the violence that the Dene children received in the Residential schools:

Figure (35): The Aggressive Face of the Residential School (Sacco, 2020, p. 138-139)



The facial close-up also transports affects through time and space. On page 139, Paul Andrew's sad face compares between the gentle child treatment in his Dene culture and the violent treatment of the priests and nuns in the residential schools. At the bottom of the page, Paul Andrew's adult face is put side to side to his child face upon which a priest and a nun are drawn with shouting mouths and angry faces. While the facial close-up on Paul Andrew on the top of the page is framed, creating a temporal and spatial separation between Paul Andrew in the present and his childhood past in the Dene community, on the bottom of the page, the faces of Paul Andrew the child and the adult are unframed. They are blended together with the shouting angry nun and priest on the top of the child head which indicates a temporal and spatial continuity of the traumatizing effect of the residential school on the Dene individual and community as well. The facial expression of sadness and contempt is the same on both faces as if time has been frozen for Paul Andrew who states, "[...] it's that emotional, that spiritual and that mental abuse that really sticks with you forever and ever" (Sacco, 2020, p. 139).

The facial close-up technique uncovers the atrocities of the cultural genocide practiced by the residential schools on the Dene children who grew up into traumatized individuals unable to regain their indigeneity and dignity. That is to say, the facial close-up demonstrates that the Dene question is still unresolved and that the problem in its origins starts as a binary opposition between the violent affects of the perpetrator and the shame affects of the victim and develops to become more complicated over time. However, the visual focus on the cross and the clothes in the drawn images of the unnamed nun and priest is actually a reference to the condemnation of the colonizing system of the residential schools rather than of the individuals themselves as Schmid (2022) points out, "Sacco notably presents the violent behaviors of residential schoolteachers as systemic rather than individual" (p. 114).

The direct address between the Dene survivors from the residential schools and Sacco enacted through the facial close-up device emphasizes the particularity of every individual's

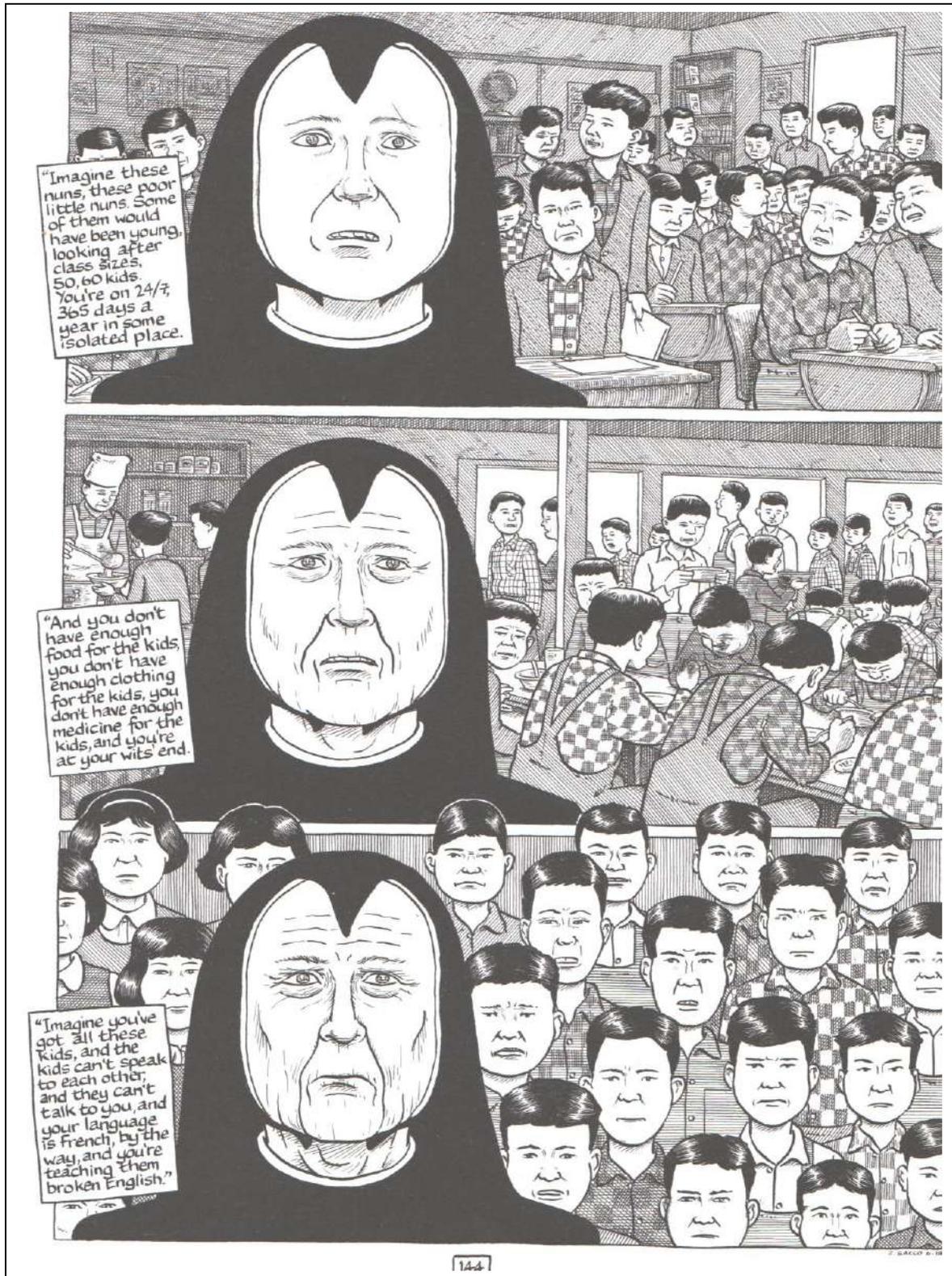
affective experience in these schools. However, the indirect address of the teachers in the residential schools aims at exploring the affective norms of a whole system that seeks to destroy the Dene identity at all prices. For example, on page 144 (See Figure (36)), the facial close-up captures the face of a nun as it ages through three successive rectangular frames from the top to the bottom of the page. The nun's face, in the three stages of its life, is in a situation of shock and helplessness. The nun's facial expressions of disability represent many of the nuns who were forced into the convent by their families at a young age around 13, 14, or 15 years old. Marie Wilson, who is a member in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, sheds light on the context in which these nuns were living in the residential schools and who "felt victimized themselves" (Sacco, 2020, p. 143) claiming that these young nuns had to take a responsibility that is way heavier than their physical and mental capacities can bear from teaching to providing for food and clothes, communicating in a broken English while their mother language is French with kids speaking another language (Sacco, 2020, p. 144). Moreover, the facial close-up on the nun's face does not only trace the decline of the nun but also tracks down the unquestionable end of the white supremacist residential school system that worked for almost 150 years to diminish the Dene culture.

In an attempt to eradicate the Dene culture, the Canadian authorities committed what is termed "cultural genocide" following policies designed by people like Sir John Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, who sees that:

Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men. (Sacco, 2020, p. 127)

The following figure illustrates the helplessness of the nun in the face of the residential school system:

Figure (36): The Aging Face of the Nun (Sacco, 2020, p. 144)



Another authority figure who made the residential schools mandatory per force in 1920 is Duncan Campbell Scott, a deputy superintendent of Canada's department of Indian affairs, whose intention is "to get rid of the Indian problem" he insists, "Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic" (Sacco, 2020, p. 128). The policies of the residential schools that are a combination of assimilation, acculturation, and christianization aimed at cutting the link between the Dene child and his community and culture.

Sacco adopts the term "cultural genocide" following the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRCC) which published in 2015 a final report that condemns the Canadian government and the residential schools for being guilty of 'cultural genocide' (Sacco, 2020, p. 149). However, as Wakeham claims, this term is considered to be "a qualified term not recognized in the international law" (as cited in Schmid, 2022, p. 118). According to Schmid (2022), the distinction between the biological genocide, a mass killing crime, as something real, and cultural genocide, as something unreal creates a state of injustice towards the indigenous people and regardless of the modifications that this term has been subject to, the term remains very important in describing the criminal acts of the residential schools in the Northwestern territories (p. 119). Effectively, this term is suitable to describe the horrible experiences of the Dene children in the residential schools from sexual abuse, physical and verbal violence, to a forced distancing from their community and their language which has a great impact on the (dis)functioning of their affect system that is deregulated by alcoholism, drug addiction, and domestic violence transmitted from one generation to another.

In short, the cultural genocide in the Northwestern territories cannot be denied because its traces are marked on the faces of its victims who are reported visually using the technique of the facial close-up, a device that provides the Dene people with the opportunity to construct a specific repertoire of a survivor testimony reclaiming a dying culture deeply connected to land.

4.3 The Visual and Verbal Transmission of Affect: Intergenerational and Environmental Embodied Emotions

In *Paying the Land*, the characters grapple with profoundly traumatic emotions, many of which stem directly from the harrowing legacy of residential schools, institutions that forcibly separated Indigenous children from their families and cultures, leaving deep scars on their psyches. These emotions—ranging from grief and anger to a pervasive sense of loss—are not confined to those who endured the schools firsthand; rather, they are intergenerationally transmitted, passed down through stories, silences, and unspoken pain, shaping the lives of subsequent generations who inherit this heavy burden. Moreover, these feelings are environmentally embodied, intricately tied to the land itself, which serves as both a witness to their suffering and a repository of their resilience, reflecting the complex interplay between the characters' inner turmoil and the physical world they inhabit. The landscape, once a source of sustenance and identity, now carries echoes of disruption and displacement, amplifying the enduring impact of historical injustices on their emotional and cultural existence.

4.3.1 The Intergenerational Transmission of Anger and Post-memory

The perpetrator/victim binary relationship between the teachers in the residential schools and the Dene children is transformed into another form of oppression when the victimized child grows up to become a violent husband or father. The oppressed is turned out to be an oppressor which makes the social life in the Dene society quasi-impossible. This transformation in social relationship is accompanied with a transmission of affects from the fathers to their children especially the affect of anger circulating within the social context.

The idea of the “transmission of affect” is taken from Brennan (2004) who sees that “the transmission of affect, whether it is grief, anxiety, or anger, is social or psychological in origin. But the transmission is also responsible for bodily changes; some are brief changes, as in a

whiff of the room atmosphere, some longer lasting” (p. 1). Brennan even goes further to suggest that:

In a time when the popularity of genetic explanations for social behavior is increasing, the transmission of affect is a conceptual oddity. If transmission takes place and has effects on behavior, it is not genes that determine social life; it is the socially induced affect that changes our biology. (p. 1-2)

That is, the transmission of affect is an unavoidable process that exceeds the psychological inner state of the individual to manifest on his body or his environment and moves to affect his surrounding which in turn does the same procedure. In fact, Brennan’s concept of the ‘transmission of affect’ defies the deterministic view of social behaviors construction. Aside from the genetic biological and neurological properties, social and environmental interactions have a noticeable influence on the individual’s affective experiences in life in general.

The intergenerational transmission of anger in *Paying the Land* is linked to the transference of violence from the first generation to the next one in the Dene society. Alcoholism and drug addiction worsen the intergenerational trauma of physical and psychological violence and sexual abuse. After their return to their Dene communities from the residential schools, the Dene youth surrenders to alcohol and drugs in order to forget about what they have seen and experienced in the residential schools and in order to soothe the estrangement they have felt in their original communities. Marie Wilson states, in this respect, “those who were abused in residential school sometimes visited the same crime upon their kin” (Sacco, 2020, p. 155).

An example of this “transference of dysfunction” (Sacco, 2020, p. 155) is William Greenland, a Dene victim of physical and sexual abuse and who himself becomes an alcoholic perpetrator. On page 115 (See Figure (37)), the image in the vertically marked frame to the left of the page depicts William Greenland in a pensive state of mind above his head a messy image of disembodied faces with mouths shouting, crying, or sipping wine, and hands holding a bottle of wine, slapping a child’s face, or pulling a woman’s hair violently. The image drawn laterally

reflects the lateral violence and the vicious circle of domestic violence, alcoholism, and child abuse within the Dene families. This circle represents a non-stop transmission of anger and pain. Greenland states, “It’s a cycle that goes around and around. My dad and my brothers and my sisters, all doing the same thing, being abusive, drinking, and drugs, and fighting at home [...] We don’t want this to continue with our children and our grandchildren [...]” (Sacco, 2020, p. 115). Stopping the transmission of trauma to his son is the main reason behind the healing journey Greenland undertakes to get rid of alcoholism. However, what cannot be stopped is the transmission of the traumatic memory which is a continuous process sometimes stopped individually, but not communally, by suicide commitment which is a social problem widely spread within the Dene society.

The following figure tells the story of Greenland with alcoholism and violence that were generationally transmitted to him:

Figure (37): The Transmission of Traumatic Memories (Sacco, 2020, p. 144)



Additionally, the traumatic memory of colonizing the land with all its perplexing affective effects is transferred from one Dene generation to another in creating what is termed by Hirsch (2008) “postmemory.” The postmemory is coined by Hirsch “to describe the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right” (p. 103). The relationship between the Dene people and the land is culturally distinctive from the Western conception of man/land relationship because for the Dene, man does not own land but rather land owns him. In other words, the Dene glorifies the land to the point that he pays it for its generosity, so the relationship of the Dene with the land is based on the principle of “paying the land” which is the title of Sacco’s graphic novel meaning offering the land gifts whenever you visit it. Even the word “Dene” refers “to the related group of First Nations whose culture is rooted in the land” (Sacco, 2020, p. 36).

Unfortunately, the land exploitation by the Canadian government has a long history since the time of fur trade until the discovery of earth’s natural resources; however, because the Dene land is nonagricultural, it was not convenient for settler colonization but for an administrative colonization through land treaties especially treaty 8 (1899 and 1900) and Treaty 11 (1921). Reading Treaty 11 reveals that the Indians gave away their rights to the land in exchange for five dollars a year, some fishnets, and bullets. The treaty contains words like: “to cede, release, surrender and yield [...] their rights, titles, and privileges whatsoever to the lands” (Sacco, 2020, p. 61) indicating a complete transference of land ownership to the Canadian government. The participants in signing this treaty from the Dene side insist that their land was not surrendered and what mattered for them is establishing a lasting friendship with the white with a promise that they will be able to live on their land permanently without any restrictions. In fact, because knowledge transmission for the Dene is made orally, the signed document of the treaty was not taken seriously especially by the old generation.

Legally speaking and from a western point of view, the treaty represents a traumatic event for the Dene people who lost its ownership forever. This traumatic memory is transmitted to the next generation who has launched a legal struggle to get back their land that was a target for source extraction operations, but unfortunately failed to do so because they themselves fell in the divide and conquer trap that divided their national sense of identity into a tribal one namely: the Gwitch'in, Sahtu, Tlicho, Dehcho, ana Akaitcho. The changes that happened to the land of the Dene people because of the insertion of pipelines, road building, and mining, creating nonpermanent job opportunities leaving people unemployed living on the charities of the government creates a sort of economic dependency and inertia that is not a characteristic of the Dene identity. The loss of land to the oil and natural gas industry means losing control over this land which leads to the loss of the Dene soul. That is, the traumatic event of land loss is transferred to the next generation as a postmemory filled with affects of despair and loss; a land that is poisoned with colonizing treaties and then by chemicals, undoubtedly, contaminates the people who live on it.

The transmission of feelings of despair and loss can be seen in the so many images of dead bodies from suicidal actions or excess of alcohol consumption. These dead bodies are faceless drawn in a shady style to show the marginalization of the subject of suicide inside the Dene society. On page 111 (See Figure (38)), the upside-down image of a Dene individual drinking from a bottle of wine gives a sense of dizziness that embodies the social feeling of loss: it is what Baudrillard (2002) calls a “psychedelic violence.” Although Baudrillard links this type of violence to drug consumption, we can adopt his concept to describe the excessive consumption of alcohol in the Dene communities. Baudrillard (2002) speaks about two types of psychedelic violence: the first one is anomic using Durckheim’s concept of “anomie” denoting that marginalized people drink alcohol or take drugs to escape from the hardships of life, while the second type is “*anomalous*” (p. 97) which is “no longer the effect of a society’s inability to

integrate its margins, but rather of an over-capacity for integration and normalization” (p. 97).

In other words, the anomalous psychedelic violence emerges suddenly from within seemingly homogenous societies as a consequence of over-organization and over-rationalization.

The following figure translates the problem of alcoholism, in the Dene society, visually:

Figure (38): Alcoholism (Sacco, 2020, p. 111)



In *Paying the Land*, both types of psychedelic violence are presented: the Dene people drink alcohol because they feel marginalized socially, politically, and economically and they also drink alcohol because of the over-organization that is imposed on their lives, an over-organization that imprisons them in an enclosed place of so-called developed industrial social spaces away from nature where the survival is for the fittest.

The second type of violence is generated from the over-protection of the Dene body because of the excessive availability of kinds of life facilities which makes the body vulnerable to depression and despair. Alcoholism in the Dene society is certainly a symptom of a systemic dysfunction as well as a reaction against a certain programming that aims at paralyzing the Dene people. Alcoholism as an embodiment of a transmitted depression is actually an indicative of a suicidal society. That is to say, Alcoholism just like drugs “are forms of exorcistic behaviour: they exorcise reality, the social order, the indifference of things [...] certain forgotten powers, drives and internal contradictions” (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 100-101). The exorcist potentiality of images of dead bodies and the upside-down image of a drunken Dene man reveals a deeply affective transmission of despair and loss rooted first in a loss of a land and a culture altogether.

4.3.2 Ecological Affects: Embodied Simulations and Sublimations

The transmissible nature of affect does not only appear on the intergenerational relationship between the Dene people but it also touches upon other entities especially the environment. *Paying the Land* is an environmental narrative because the Mackenzie River valley’s natural scenes are prominently present especially as background scenes. The material interactional character of affect as a concept is declared by Gregg and Seigworth (2010) who define affect as follows:

Affect arises in the midst of *inbetweenness*: in the capacities to act and be acted upon. Affect is an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation *as well as* the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities. That is, affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, *and* in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves. (p. 1)

In other words, the boundless nature of affect is based on complex interactions and exchanges between bodies and environments. Experiencing the natural world in Sacco's graphic novel affectively is a culturally specific act based on the Dene's conception of nature is enacted by the formal parameters of the graphic novel as a literary genre. The graphic narrative in *Paying the Land* presents the natural world in both ecotopian and ecodystopian modes. The story starts with an ecotopian imaging of nature as grotesque and beautiful manifested through the positive affective valence of the image especially in the first part when the Dene people are satisfyingly happy with their traditional mode of life. Then, it progresses and turns from celebratory accounts of the natural world to more disturbing apprehensions of the installment of pipelines and industries for extracting the natural resources establishing a sense of ecodystopia.

In the second phase of the plot development, the way resources especially oil and natural gas are extracted has environmental, economic as well as social impacts on the overall atmosphere in the Northwest Territories. In order to extract oil and natural gas, they use a technique that is called "fracking" which is not like the conventional drilling: it is about shooting with high pressure a toxic mixture of water and sand into shale rocks which creates fractures through which oil or natural gas flows into the well and up to the surface. The oil and gas industry has changed the ecosystem in the Northwestern territories which made the background scenes deformed by the industrial constructions and the machines. The dynamicity and responsiveness of nature to the turbulent conditions of ecological imbalance affects the emotional states of the Dene people who are most of the time feeling out of place, estranged and inactive. The industrial development in the Northwest Territories has also affected animals

like the caribou and the trout fish that are in a state of endangerment as their numbers are decreasing.

The environmental appealing feelings in the old generation of the Dene people are also transmitted to the new generation by way of experiential simulation. The Dene people used to live in the bush in the past which is something difficult to do in times of technological and industrial development but the embodied simulation allows the new generation to connect with their progenitors by means of mirroring their actions, emotions, and sensations. The embodied simulation has to do with the activation of the brain mirror motors in order to map others' emotional and affective experiences, and to have a direct access to their world. According to Gallese (2009), social identification is neurotically established through embodied simulation which is "a crucial functional mechanism of intersubjectivity by means of which the actions, emotions, and sensations of others are mapped by the same neural mechanisms that are normally activated when we act or experience similar emotions or sensations" (p. 520).

The social identification of the new generation of the Dene people with the old one is mapped through embodied simulation elicited by the graphic novel's word/image apparatus. In part IV, the Fort Simpson's annual Beavertail Jamboree weekend is a way for the new generation to identify socially with their Dene culture and their environment by way of embodied simulation. The competition consists of accomplishing some traditional activities like water boiling, the bannock making, women's wood chopping, open female axe-throwing using only tools available in the natural world. Page 98 (See Figure (39)) shows an embodied simulation of water boiling. This embodied simulation in forms of immersion and physical involvement is activated through the superimposed frames detailing the boiling water process from the wood cutting to the fire setting and finally the water boiling. The speed of the action is also simulated through the great number of frames that are set above each other. This sort of traditional festival or mirroring process or cultural imagination happens by pairing the youth and the elders in

order to make the simulation successfully fulfilled and to allow the new generations to form a sense of belonging to the Dene culture that is ecologically rooted.

The following figure illustrates the embodied simulation of the Dene cultural practices:

Figure (39): Embodied Simulation (Sacco, 2020, p. 98)



Understanding the Dene culture cannot be separated from grasping the ecological cycles of emotional or affective energies. Sacco's graphic novel draws nature in a non-idealized way; he draws the Dene people interacting emotionally, economically, and ritually with nature which creates an image of wilderness and nature as an entity tightly connected to the human and non-human realms. The traditional concept of sublime, an oxymoronic mixture of awe and wonder, as discussed by philosophers like Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant and then Romanticists posits the wilderness in a space of otherness, something that leads the self to feel overwhelmed. On the revival of the concept of sublime in ecocriticism, Hitt (1999) argues, "I believe that the concept of the sublime offers a unique opportunity for the realization of a new, more responsible perspective on our relationship with the natural environment" (p. 605). He then suggests a reconfigured version of the sublime that he terms an "ecological sublime" that "would offer a new kind of transcendence which would resist the traditional reinscription of humankind's supremacy over nature" (Hitt, 1999, p. 609). The ecological sublime builds on the traditional concept of the sublime which is about feeling awe and wonders in the face of grand and immense natural phenomena and extends to include the perilous and threatening conditions that the natural world is subject to in a time of technological and industrial development.

In *Paying the Land*, the feeling of awe is expressed for the magnificence of nature as well as for the urgency of its protection. Sacco expresses the grandeur of nature in many instances especially in Part II in the section: "This is a Winter Road" which is a road all along the Mackenzie River. In this section, the feelings of awe and wonder are visually and verbally displayed. For example, on page 25 Sacco and Shauna who is Sacco's guide in his trip to the Northwestern Territories are drawn with facial expressions of anxiety caused by the terrorizing discourse of silhouettes of Shauna's friends who are cautioning them about the dangers of taking the winter road. On page 26, the warning tone gets intense when they arrive to Fort Simpson as everyone is puzzled at the idea of going through the winter road; the speech balloons

of the warning voices say, “what?! You don’t have a two-way radio? How are you going to communicate with truckers in those narrow passes? Do you know what you’re doing?” (Sacco, 2020, p. 26). Fear from or ‘self-negation’ (Cochrane, 2012, p. 126) toward the winter road illustrates the inaccessibility of wild nature expressed through the senses of fear, humbleness, and unfamiliarity before nature whose power exceeds the human’s power.

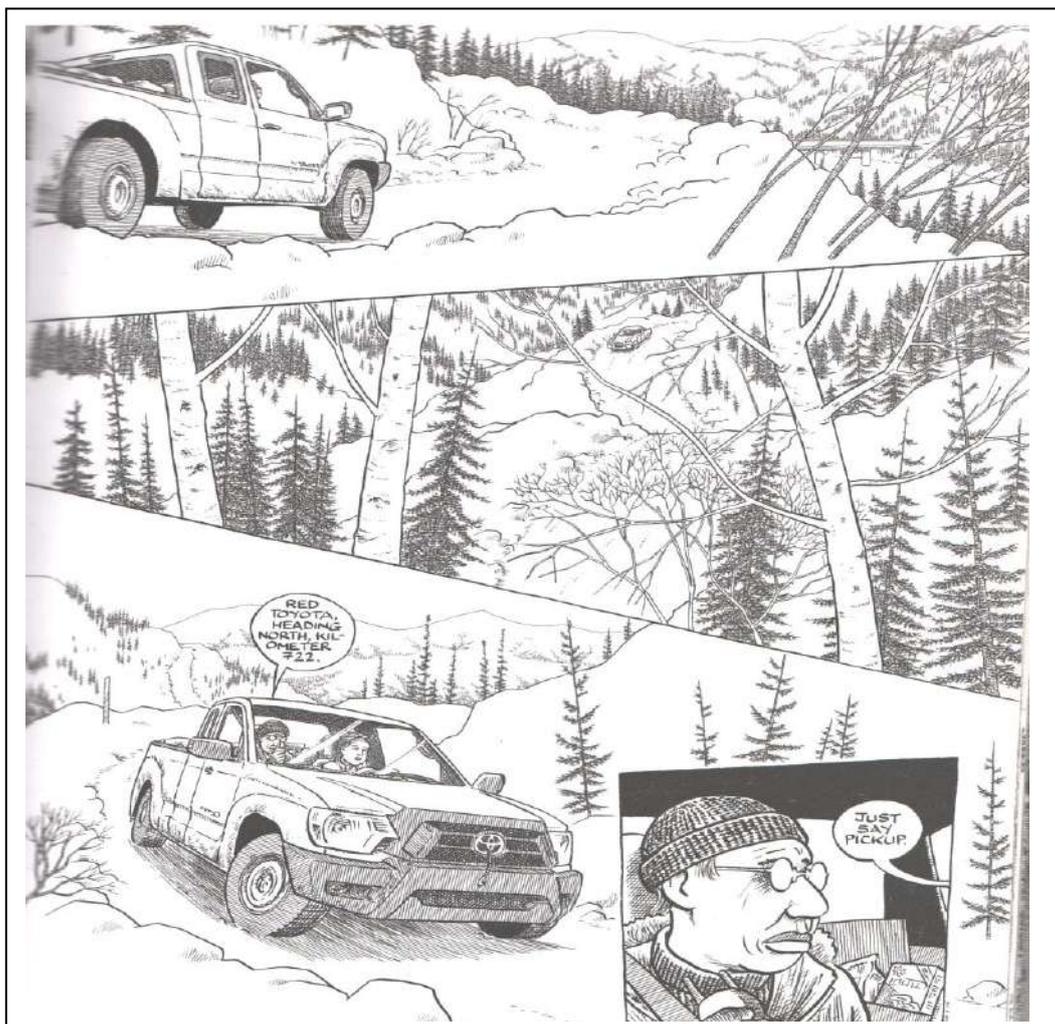
The overwhelming feeling of self-negation is associated with the dynamic sublime which is one of the two types that Emmanuel Kant identified namely: the dynamic sublime and the mathematical sublime “where the dynamic sublime applies to extremely powerful objects such as storms, and the mathematical sublime applies to extremely large objects such as mountains” (Cochrane, 2012, p. 128). The anxious affects of the people living in Yellowknife and Fort Simpson belong to the sense of self-negation that is produced by the dynamic sublime that is mainly linked to danger. Because the winter road means an intense motion of both Sacco and Shauna on their trucker and the parallel motion of the natural objects like mountains and forests, the danger is the main reason behind the feeling of fear associated specifically with the dynamic sublime. The self-negation is also produced by the mathematical sublime that engenders feelings of alienation which is a feeling of being annihilated by nature. This feeling of annihilation is translated visually using the zoom out technique (See Figure (40)) on page 29 where we see in the middle frame of the page from a high angle the trucker dissipating solely in the midst of a vast mountainous scene creating a dominant/submissive dichotomy with the trucker taking the submissive position while nature taking the dominant position.

However, the ecological sublime in the Dene question emanates from the devastation of the natural world during the process of resource extraction. In Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwestern Territories, Sacco visits the Giant Mine where the gold extraction takes place and where tons of the poisonous arsenic trioxide dust is stored. The arsenic waste in the Giant Mine evokes an ecological sublime, a fear from an ecocatastrophe made by the human beings. It

represents the new version of sublime, an emotional experience by the Dene people and by Sacco (2020) who asks rhetorically the following question: “What is the worldview of a people who mumble no thanks or prayers, who take what they want from the land, and pay it back with arsenic?” (p. 249). Sacco’s questioning is actually a deep commitment to environmental issues in the Northwestern Territories. Sacco’s emotional experience in nature is also a process of ecological sublimation which is a process of transformation where feelings of awe and wonder lead to a more profound understanding and responsibility towards ecological issues.

The following figure demonstrates the ecological sublime felt by Sacco in the mountains in the Northwestern Territories:

Figure (40): The Ecological Sublime (Sacco, 2020, p. 29)



Moreover, the winter road is considered as a passageway that should not be considered as a futile backdrop or background landscape. The transitional scenes in the winter road containing images of Sacco and Shauna's walks and gestures equal in their intensity the main dramatic scenes. Therefore, the passageways must not be treated as unimportant scenes but rather as essential moments for Sacco to express his own feelings on the subject of the Dene people. The exotic soul of the winter road also reflects Sacco's ignorance about the natural and cultural world of the Dene people and at the same time a willingness to know more about it. Moreover, the winter road as a passageway represents a movement from wilderness to the industrial zones presupposing the coexistence of two worlds. Therefore, it is a passage from the feeling of the sublime to the ecological sublime felt by Sacco whose empathy toward the Dene people is through his bodily presence in the storyworld of *Paying the Land*.

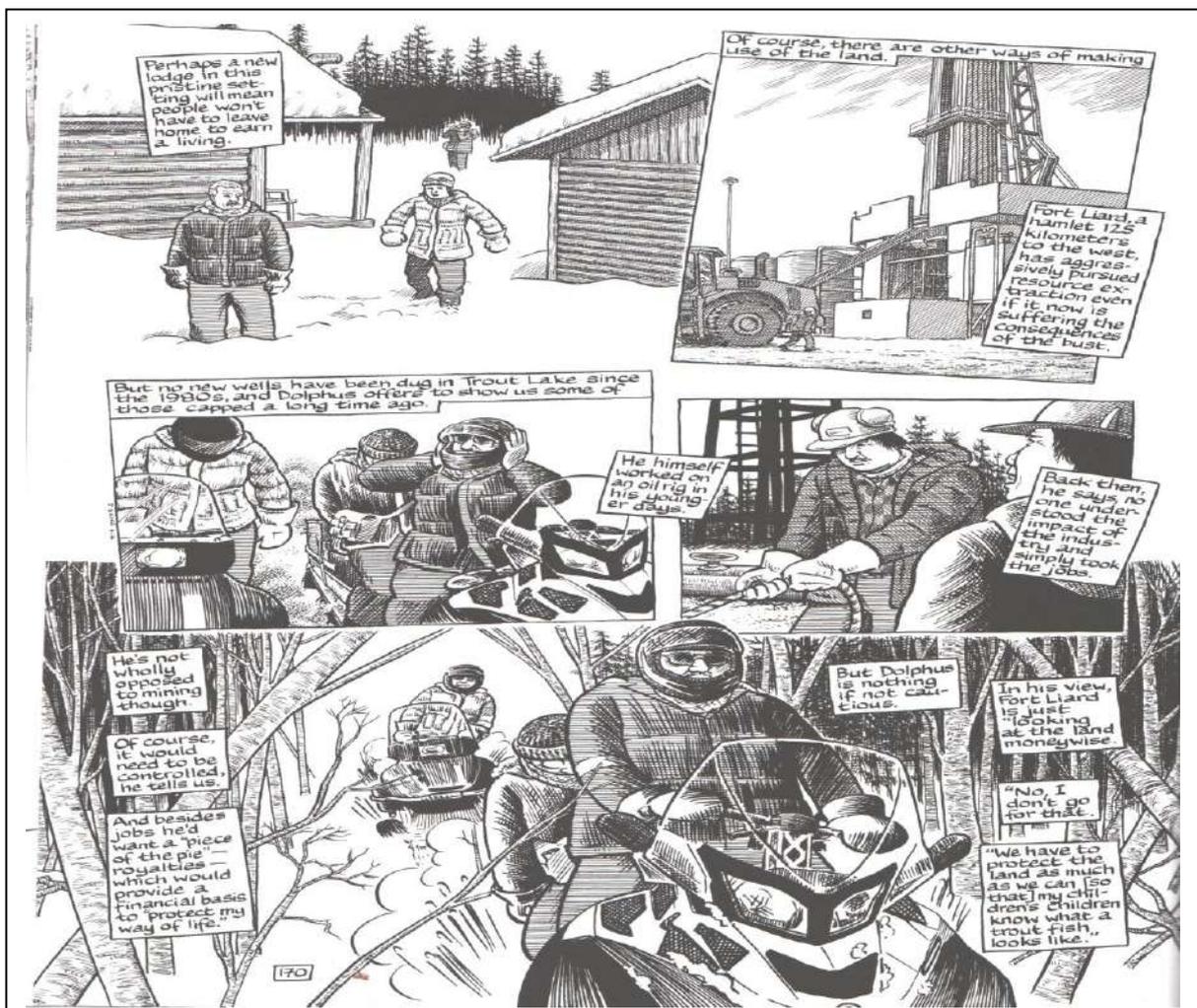
4.4 Empathy: A Sense of Justice

Sacco's comic journalism is characterized by the affect of empathy. In a review on Sacco's graphic novel *Paying the Land*, Edermaria (2020) describes Sacco's work as "a triumph of empathy." Chris Hedges also describes Sacco as someone who "has like all great artists a profound empathy for the oppressed" (K Boo Radio, 2017). Therefore, empathy constitutes an essential part of Sacco's artistic style. For example, in part V, Sacco arrives to the North exactly to Trout Lake which is a Dehcho region of a small community of fewer than 100 through the winter road that is open only for a short period, and there he meets many Dene individuals with whom he shares their emotions and experiences. He shares with them the shortage in goods which are very expensive since there is no road access there and "everything is fly in, fly out" (Sacco, 2020, p. 164). The absence of a road access to Trout Lake is supported by Dolphus Jumbo who is the chief of this community and also by the majority of people there as a way to protect the natural environment from touristic exploitation.

Sacco shares Jumbo's view on maintaining Trout Lake isolated from source extraction industry especially that of oil and natural gas by inserting the words of Dolphus Jumbo in hand-drawn square and rectangular captions rather than placing them in separate speech balloons. Knowing that captions are ascribed to the artist, on page 170 (See Figure (41)), one of the rectangular captions says, "We have to protect the land as much as we can [so that] my children's children know what a trout fish looks like." The "we" in the caption indicates that Sacco shares the same feelings with Dolphus Jumbo. Sacco, in other words, is empathetic towards the Trout Lake people.

The following figure shows Sacco's trip to the Trout Lake:

Figure (4): Empathy (Sacco, 2020, p. 170)



Since “embodied simulation is a crucial functional mechanism for empathy” (Gallese, 2009, p. 524), the embodied simulation that Sacco performs in the graphic narrative of *Paying the Land* is a form of empathy toward the Dene people, bridging the gap between their experiences and his representation of them. Sacco appears in many images while visiting the Trout Lake, sharing many activities with them. Sacco meets Victor Jumbo, the brother of Dolphus Jumbo, who takes him in a trip to one of his fish nets, and after a hard process of finding the fish net, Sacco finally grabs a trout fish stating of himself, “Joe of the North leaps into action. He takes a trout from Trout Lake. He has engaged with the fauna and redeemed himself in the eyes of his readers” (Sacco, 2020, 196). All along the trip, Sacco plays the role of a journalist by taking photographs of every movement Dolphus makes until the moment of resituating the net back to its place comes, and while Sacco is taking photographs of the actions done by Dolphus and Shauna, Dolphus invites Sacco to participate in the action of rope pulling, “Do you want to take pictures or pull rope? (Sacco, 2020, p. 198). Sacco’s participation in the rope pulling action is actually an action of feeling sharing, sharing a sense of belonging, a sense of justice.

Therefore, Sacco’s empathy is a form of doing justice to the Dene people. According to Solomon (1995), “Justice is not [...] a set of principles or policies; it is first of all a way of participating in the world, a way of being with other people, a set of feelings of affection and affiliation that link us—not through ‘reason’—with other people” (p. 32). Being in flesh and blood with the Dene people, sharing with them their joyful as well as traumatic memories, and their hopeful aspirations, and most importantly feeling with them and for them, is what Solomon conceptualizes as justice. Solomon goes further to suggest that emotions whether positive or negative “are the substance of our sense of justice” (33). Empathy is one of these emotions from which justice arises.

4.5 Iconic Solidarity or Emotional Solidarity?

Formally speaking, justice also occurs in the established relationship between the different images on the graphic page termed by Groensteen (2007) as “iconic solidarity.” The latter is a disposition, an ongoing trait of the graphic narrative. In *Paying the Land*, the iconic solidarity becomes an emotional solidarity, i. e., the interconnection between these images is not just iconic but also emotional. Groensteen (2007) defines iconic solidarity as:

interdependent images that, participating in a series, present the double characteristic of being separated—this specification dismisses unique enclosed images within a profusion of patterns or anecdotes— and which are plastically and semantically over-determined by the fact of their coexistence in *praesentia*. (18)

That is, the iconic solidarity represents the foundational principle in meaning construction in the graphic narrative, an interrelationship that is governed by an emotional solidarity. For example, on the last days of his trip to the Northwestern territories, Sacco with Shauna attends to a hand-game tournament. This game is for the Dene people a psychological ritual, but for Sacco is just a guessing game. On page 251 (See Figure (42)), the page is divided horizontally into four panels showing the game’s steps from hiding objects to making gestures and hand signals to pinpointing or guessing the hidden object or token. The holistic view of the page cannot be understood if one of the panels is omitted. What links the four panels is not just an iconic solidarity, but also an emotional solidarity as the four images together conveys the same feeling of excitement, giving an impression of national and cultural solidarity.

4.6 The Multisensorial Character of *Paying the Land*: An Aesthetics of Suspension

Engaging with images, using the different sensorial contacts, visual, aural, or haptic, is considered a deep empathic act of interacting with the Dene question from the reader’s perspective. In this way, the images, with their sensorial frequencies, become affective objects that affect the reader’s perception about what is happening in the Northwestern Territories. Looking at incomplete images, listening to the quiet images, and touching unreachable objects

make the reader imagines the event of the image and the conveyed message. In challenging “the idea that comics are a purely visual medium,” Hague (2014) argues that comics are instead “possessed of a wide variety of properties that address themselves to readers’ senses of hearing, touch, smell and in some instances taste as well” (p. 3). That is to say, readers do not engage with the graphic novel just using their sight, they rather make their other senses involved in the reading process of the drawn work because the materiality of the graphic novel imposes a sort of a multisensory approach, which takes into consideration the sensorial embodiment of the Dene question. However, accessing the other senses happens only through the sense of sight or what is called synaesthesia, which is “the simulation of one sense by way of another” (Hague, 2014, p. 21). Yet, it does not happen separately, but rather simultaneously; we can listen to the sounds, smell the odors, touch the objects, and taste the foods of the event drawn on the graphic page all at once using our eyes.

In fact, the simultaneous sensorial re-embodiment of the Dene experience is felt by the reader, who performs an act of witnessing produced by his creative receptivity. In this sense, Hague (2014) points out, “Comics are polysemic not just in their visual content, but in their physicality as a whole” (p. 22). The multisensory experience of reading Sacco’s graphic novel, *Paying the Land*, is activated by its sensation-stimulation elements, especially the image. Meaning production is not only reduced to the storyteller, but extends to the reader whose imagination plays a crucial role in constructing a multisensorial and a multimodal account of the story in the graphic novel. The process of reading comics is defined by Hague (2014) as “an extension of the reader into metaphysical space; a cognitive process through which meaning is *pressed onto* sensory information according to the codes by which that reading is taking place.” (p. 36). In defining the process of reading, Hague combines the imaginary with the cognitive factors in order to give readership an important role in the production of meaning and

interpretation. This combination of the imaginary with the cognitive contributes to the simultaneity of different sensual experiences taking place in an imaginary world.

The following figure illustrates the guessing game which is a part of the Dene culture representing the emotional solidarity among the Dene people:

Figure (42): Emotional Solidarity (Sacco, 2020, p. 251)



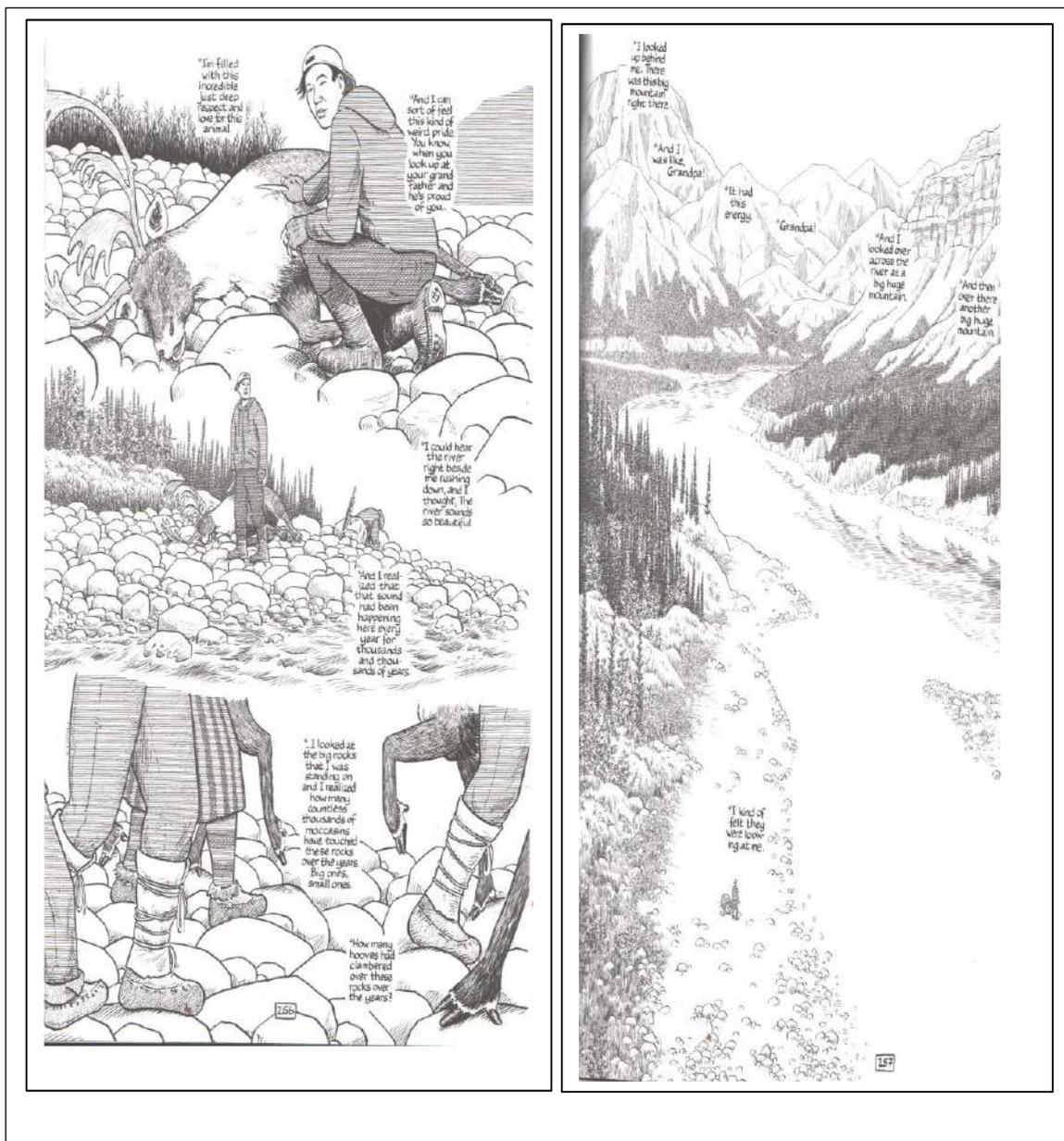
Despite the fact that Sacco's graphic novel, *Paying the Land*, is a documentary realist work, it can be considered as a suspended world, because it does not exist in reality because of its suspended formal features like the frame, the panel, the gutter, the caption, and the speech balloon. However, as Houen (2020) assumes, "this suspended world does take on existence in the event of reading by exerting real affective force and thereby making the reader feel other with it" (p. 13). In other words, exploring the affective aspect in *Paying the Land* is a mission that the reader undertakes by paying attention not only to the image and the word but also to the comics' conventional devices. For example, in the last section of *Paying the Land*, Eugene Boulanger, a Dene young man, whose experience of healing aims at making him a good indigenous man, whose ancestors represent the real model for improving his character. Eugene's feelings of belonging to the Dene culture are articulated via attached and consecutive speech balloons that creates an aesthetic suspension of Eugene's feelings and the reader's feelings as well. The speech balloons state, "As an indigenous man, if I were to hold myself up to euro-western Christian idealism [...] I'm never going to fit the mold [...] I'm going to start to feel inadequate, and I'm going to start internalize that feeling, and that feeling's going to cause me to be insecure, and it's going to cause me to be fearful, and it's going to impair my ability to trust people" (Sacco, 2020, p. 232). Being enclosed within speech balloons, Eugene's words and affects, although realistically documented, take on an aesthetically suspended status that produces in the reader an emotional response that is the result of the fusion of the form of the speech balloons, Eugene's words, his images, his cognition, and his imagination. Eugene's 'feeling' of attachment to his Dene culture and identity is, thus, both cognitive and imaginary.

The interplay between imagination and materiality elicits a literary affect that is multisensory in nature. For instance, Eugene's previously mentioned words of belongingness to the Dene culture are materialized when he reconnects with the land as an urban young Dene man. Eugene's images and words are combined to create a kind of multisensory reading of

pages 256 and 257 (See Figure (43)). Eugene's sensorial and emotional words are quoted and merged within the drawn natural world. Hearing the sound of the river, looking at the big rocks and standing on them, looking at the big mountains, Eugene feels the energy of his Dene ancestors, and relives their presence and we as readers we feel the same in our suspended area of imagination.

The following figure depicts Eugene as he attempts to retrace the steps of his forebears:

Figure (43): The Multisensorial Experience (Sacco, 2020, p. 251)



Conclusion

This chapter embraced the affect turn in order to explore how it feels like to be a Dene person with a long history of cultural uniqueness, and then an atrocious colonization that has affected and still affects the Dene people with its policies of cultural and economic genocides. This chapter used the affective approach that combined the cognitivist with the non-cognitivist perspectives as it looked both at the characters' faces and bodies, and read their minds or their words at the same time in order to understand their affectual orientations. The affective approach to Sacco's graphic novel, *Paying the Land*, took into consideration the form and the techniques in order to navigate into the inner world of the interviewed Dene individuals. The formal aspects like the close-up, the caption, the frame, in addition to the distinctive combination of words and images contributed greatly in reading the facial expressions of the Dene individuals especially those who have been victims of the residential school system. Not only the Dene people have been subject to the destroying policies of western colonization, even nature has got inflicted by the poisonous policies of resource extraction. That is, using Brennan's concept of 'the transmission of affect,' the traumatic memories of the residential schools and land loss are transmitted to the next generations in a form of violence, drug addiction, and alcoholism. This intergenerational transmission of psychological, social, cultural, and economic deregulation is also transmitted to nature that is deformed by the industries of resource extraction.

In order to communicate both the grandeur and the destruction of the natural world in the Mackenzie River valley, the concept of the sublime and the ecological sublime were used. Sacco's affect of empathy is also explored in order to create a kind of felt critique rather than just a journalistic reportage of the situation in the Dene society. In effect, Sacco's empathy represented a sense of justice and a call for justice to the Dene question. Moreover, the sense of justice was also reflected in the form of the graphic narrative of *Paying the Land* especially

in what Groensteen terms “iconic solidarity,” which is a harmonious working of various panels put next to each other, containing different images but conveying when read consecutively a unified meaning but also a unified feeling, establishing an emotional solidarity. In the end of this chapter, the reader’s affective response was also taken into consideration but not separately from the literary affect of the graphic narrative because it was the suspended world of the story in *Paying the Land*, with all its formal conventions, that influenced the reader’s emotional response produced by the interplay of cognition and imagination, which led to the recognition of the other or the Dene. Such recognition is purely an ethical act of reading.

Chapter Five
Graphic Ethics in Joe Sacco's
***Journalism* (2012)**

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Graphic Ethics in Joe Sacco's *Journalism* (2012)

Introduction

5.1 Juxtaposing Justice Before and Outside the Law

5.2 War as a Mockery of Morality in the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict

5.3 Feminine Recurrent Alterity in the Chechen War

5.4 The Ethics of (dis)Order in the Iraq War: Sequence Matters

5.5 (Un)Framed Hospitality in Sacco's "Migration"

5.6 The Truth about the Subaltern "Dalits" in the 'Passe-Partout' Gutter

Conclusion

Chapter Five

Graphic Ethics in Joe Sacco's *Journalism* (2012)

Introduction

The question of ethics in comics has a long history and is still associated with the world of comics with its various genres. At the beginning of its popularity, the comics, especially the comic books drawn for children were condemned for their content or for the art form itself. F. Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954) is a well-known example of the attack that comics in the United States received and that paved the way to the issuing of what is called the Comics Code. As the title of Wertham's work suggests the main problem with comics lies in their dangerous effects on the moralistic growth of children because of their violent and sexual content. Being a psychiatrist, Wertham based his anti-comic book attacks on clinical findings he figured out, while dealing with young children identified as juvenile delinquents. Wertham's attack was mainly against the crime comics, which are according to him harmful for the overall development of children especially their ethical development.

However, this anti-comic book sentiment that prevails at that time, in the postwar period after twenty years of the origins of the comic book, is questionable. According to Tilley (2012), the objection towards the comic books started in the 1940s, and the enactment of this objection was delayed to the postwar period because "many superheroes contributed to the war effort through their story lines, and because most adult Americans were preoccupied with the ongoing conflict" (p. 384). A condemnation that is grounded in medium specificity has led to some restrictive regulations that have contributed greatly to the development of the comics form. Various comics genres started to appear, prominently among them the documentary graphic novel, especially Joe Sacco's works which have embraced serious topics depicting people from different cultural backgrounds as they experience terrible events.

Looking at comics from an ethical perspective cannot be the same for all comics works. For example, a horror comic book is judged according to certain moral parameters that are different from the ethical framework used in analyzing a documentary graphic novel because of their different aesthetic sensibilities. That is, speaking about ethics entails speaking about aesthetics and vice versa. Undoubtedly, assuming a certain aesthetic attitude means being ethically and morally responsible. The close relationship between ethics and aesthetics represents the foundational principle for this chapter. In other words, this chapter emphasizes the role of Sacco's collection of graphic conflict zone reportage entitled *Journalism* in framing ethical issues. *Journalism* is an anthology of short graphic stories drawn for different publications between 1998 and 2011. This work is constituted of a preface and six stories taking place in Hague, Gaza, the Caucasus, Iraq, Malta, and India, respectively. In the preface, Sacco explains the concept of comics journalism as he perceives it from his own perspective criticizing the objectivity of the traditional journalism and adopting instead subjectivity. He also lays out his own standards of making comics journalism emphasizing the importance of his presence as a character in his graphic reportages. Then, he moves to tell us stories about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in Gaza, the war in Iraq, the women in the refugee camps in Ghechnya, the illegal African immigrants in Malta, the birth-country of Sacco, and the untouchables in Kushinagar in India.

Sacco's broad concern for humanity in *Journalism* brings images of moral concern back into prominence within art. That is why, this chapter sees ethics as something deeply rooted in life rather than treating it as something abstract. It also attempts to bring a moral focus to the process of making comics journalism. Most importantly, ethics is conceived as an aesthetic practice and performance. The relationship between ethics and aesthetics is emphasized by many theorists among them Eagleton who argues that, "a work's moral outlook [...] may be secreted as much in its form as its content— that the language and structure of a literary text

may be the bearers and progenitors of so-called moral content” (as cited in Lamarque, 2002, p. 245-246). Following Eagleton’s idea, I suggest that the comics features of Sacco’s graphic novel *Journalism* represent the bearers of moral meanings. Yet, this suggestion provokes several important questions, such as: How does the word-image format in Sacco’s graphic novel *Journalism* make its own statement about the issues of war, immigration, dispersion, race, class, gender, and marginalization? Being primarily a visual work, to what extent does *Journalism* can be more or less convincing or insightful than a traditional literary work while trying to represent the ethical conflicts that people encounter? Does the moral value of *Journalism* affect its aesthetic value? Is the graphic ethics in *Journalism* politically performed? In order to answer these questions this chapter uses the concept of alterity founded by Levinas.

The levinasian ethics of alterity designates being responsible for the other which is something prevailing in Sacco’s graphic novel *Journalism*. Sacco’s interest in marginal voices and its respect for the specificity of the other means an enactment of the two main concepts of ethics: responsibility and justice. According to Levinas, taking responsibility for the other means recognizing them as individuals not totalities. In *Journalism*, it is as if Sacco is speaking in Levinas’s tongue (1999):

Here I am, in that responsibility cast back toward something that was never my fault, never my doing, toward something that was never in my power, nor my freedom—toward something that does not come back to me from memory. Ethical significance of a past that concerns me, that ‘regards me’, that is ‘my business’, outside all reminiscence, all retention, all representation, all reference to a remembered present. Significance in the ethics of a pure past, irreducible to my present, and thus, of an originary past. Orinary significance of an immemorial past, based on responsibility for the other. My non-intentional participation in the history of humanity, in the past of others, who are my business. (p.32)

5.1 Juxtaposing Justice Before and Outside the Law

How does one do justice to the Bosnian people who have lost their beloved ones in the Bosnian war? Can the crimes of the Bosnian war from 1992 to 1995 be avenged? Can the

judiciary do justice to those innocent people who were killed in the war? In posing these questions, I want to raise the issue of ethics in relation to the juridical system in the graphic piece of “Hague” and how the concepts of crime and punishment are defined according to them. I argue that “The Hague” represents a responsible response to the ethnic genocide that happened in Bosnia in the Bosnian war.

Joe Sacco’s interest in the Hague tribunal event highlights the importance and difficulty of the question of the other for law. In The Hague, the capital city of the South Holland province of the Netherlands, Sacco attends the war crimes trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in May 1998 which is the first international war crimes trials since the Nuremberg court. The court is held to judge thirty suspects of ethnic genocide. For example, Dr. Milan Kovacevic is accused for committing genocidal crimes against the Bosnian Muslims during the Bosnian war. The prosecution charges Kovacevic with participating in the creation of what is called “transit centers,” concentration camps in which people from Muslim and Croat ethnicities are expelled from the Prijedor area, then imprisoned and tortured to death. In fact, Sacco tells us about the story of the Hague international court in order to highlight the issue of the moral panic in relation to the war crimes in Bosnia. That is, such atrocious crimes that happen inside Europe with no juridical response creates a sort of moral panic that calls for Law to interfere.

Juxtaposition is the aesthetic core mechanism through which Sacco discusses the relationship of the Law with the other who is the victim of the Bosnian war. According to the American cartoonist, McCloud (1993), comics can be defined as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (p.20). McCloud’s definition of comics places the pictorial juxtaposition at the heart of the comics didactic as well as aesthetic functioning. In other words, what defines the graphic narrativity of any comics work is juxtaposition. Therefore, Sacco

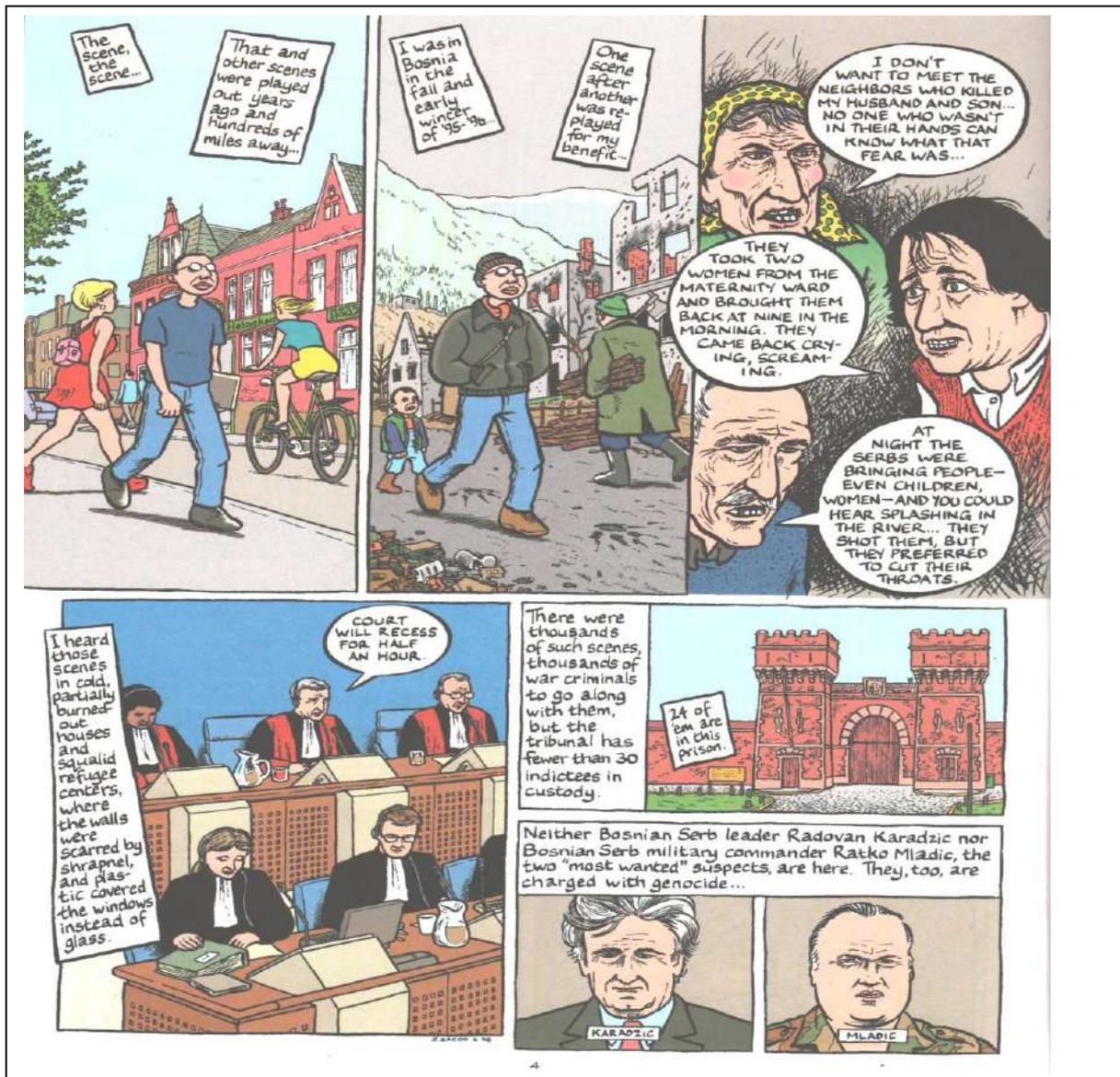
purposefully places the court hearings event in the Hague tribunal in contrast with his hearings from the victims of the Bosnian war themselves in the period between 1992 and 1995. For example, in justifying Dr. Kovacevic's intrusion in the genocidal crimes, Anthony D'Amato, a professor at Northwestern Law School states that, "they said they would shoot him, he heard about the atrocities in the camps, he didn't want to be part of the scene anymore" (Sacco, 2012, p. 3). The lawyer's use of the word "scene" indicates the theatricality of the legal performance in the Hague court. In response to D'Amato's deceiving use of the word "scene," -the scene of torture, sexual assault, and killing- Sacco uses the technique of pictorial juxtaposition in order to balance the ethical discourse of the Law in connection with the other. On page 4 (See Figure (44)), two different scenes are juxtaposed, the present scene from The Hague court and the city performed by the jury and the scene (s) from Bosnia played out by the war victims. The first scene appears on the first panel on the top of the page from the left where we see Sacco walking in a clean and prestigious street in The Hague while the second panel shows Sacco walking in a dystopian like setting in Bosnia.

Juxtaposition is not only pictorial, it is also verbo-pictorial and satirical like in the panel showing the image of the jurists contrasted with a caption that states, "I heard those scenes in cold, partially burned-out houses and squalid refugee centers, where the walls were scarred by shrapnel, and plastic covered the windows instead of glass" (Sacco, 2012, p. 4). This sentence is actually Sacco's comment on the previous panel where the Bosnian war victims with their facial expressions of anguish and pain testify about their experiences in the war and at the same time an ironical statement on what the judge has said, "Court will recess for half an hour" (4). In effect, this panel shows the difference between an ethical discourse emanating from meeting the other's naked face and a legal discourse that avoids the other's face and instead makes Law its highest source of ethics. Concerning the concept of ethics, Levinas (1999) notes:

That way of requiring me, of putting me in question and appealing to me, to my responsibility to the death of the other, is a meaning so irreducible that it is on that basis that the meaning of death must be understood, beyond the abstract dialect of being and its negation, to which, on the basis of violence that has been reduced to negation and annihilation, one reduces death. Death signifies in the concretization of what is for me the impossible abandonment of the other to his solitude, in the prohibition addressed to me regarding that abandonment. Its meaning begins in the interhuman. Death signifies primordially in the proximity of the other man itself or in sociality; just as it is on the basis of the face of the other that the commandment by which God comes to my mind is signified to me. (p. 25)

The following figure demonstrates the visual juxtaposition between the war zones in Bosnia and the Hague:

Figure (44): Juxtaposing Justice (Sacco, 2012, p. 4)



In terms of the Levinasian ethics of alterity, the relation of Sacco and the jurists to the other, the victims of the Bosnian war, occurs in discourse, and it is in discourse that ethics is located. Sacco's dialogue with the wretched other indicates Sacco's ethical responsibility and his positioning in the proximity the storyworld of "The Hague". Whereas, the legal discourse in The Hague tribunal keeps a considerable distance from the other using instead a "juridical fiction" that reclaims the "mystical foundation" (Derrida, 1992, p. 3) of the authority of Law reducing the suffering and the death of the other to a recess of a half an hour.

Pictorial juxtaposition also serves to enhance our understanding about the relationship between Law and violence in The Hague court. What is striking in The Hague judicial proceedings is the absence of the principal war criminals namely, Rodovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, and Ratko Mladic, the military commander. Their absence provokes a lot of questioning regarding the relationship between law and violence. In this respect, Derrida (1992) asserts that "in its origin and its end, in its foundation and its conservation, *droit* was inseparable from violence, immediate or mediate, present or represented" (p. 48). That is, the state's law is established and maintained by force using violence. In The Hague court, the law's violence is actually revealed by the absence of these two "great criminals". On page 5 (See Figure (45)), the pictorial juxtaposition of two scenes of violence, one is immediate and the other is mediate. The page is vertically divided: on the left side, the image shows a mass grave containing tens of dead bodies covered with blood. On the top of this grave, three Serb soldiers in a pause state after accomplishing the killing and burying work. This mass killing is known as the Srebrenica massacre where thousands of Muslim men are killed under the order of the "dynamic duo of war suspects" (to use Sacco's words), Kradzic and Mladic. On the right side, the column is divided into three panels representing Sacco's interviews with two lawyers: Kostich and Tom Moran. The first defends a Serb soldier involved in the Srebreneca killings and the second defends a Muslim man accused of killing an elderly Serb.

The following figure illustrates the difficulty Sacco finds in grasping Law:

Figure (45): The Inaccessibility of Law (Sacco, 2012, p. 5)



The paralleled scenes of violence against the Bosnian Muslims (the other) demonstrate that The Hague's legal system is internally unstable. Being defense attorneys, both Kostich and Moran attempt to prove their clients' innocence despite the fact that the accused men have admitted committing the crimes of killing. For both lawyers, their clients are innocent unless the tribunal proves the opposite. Hence, the truth of justice for both lawyers does not come from the fact that the other is killed but from the authority of prosecutor. The truth of justice is thus established by a juridical fiction. Denying the Srebreneca massacres story and replacing it with a fantastic story is what constitutes the fictionality of law. The juridical fiction of the lawyers' stories on their clients' innocence is their only way to access the law. In other words, the impossibility of their stories allows them "to reach the law, in order to stand before it, face to face and with respect, or to introduce oneself to it and into it, the story becomes the impossible story of the impossible" (Derrida, 1992, p. 199-200). In effect, the impossible narratives of the criminal clients' innocence defy the inaccessibility of law. The vertical juxtaposition on page 5 also indicates a separation between the two scenes, between law and the other, between law and the outlaw (Kradzic and Mladic). This sort of separation proves the law's failure to achieve justice because of its reliance on an unjustifiable authority or unverifiable legitimacy.

In addition, the vertical line of the juxtaposition denotes the lawyers' total blindness toward the Srebreneca massacre. This blindness means that the Srebreneca mass killings are prohibited from entering the law and they are not addressed singularly. Considering the singularity of the Bosnian war in the judicial trial is very crucial to do justice to the war's victims. Using general rules to make judgments on particular cases prevents justice from prevailing like in the case of Dusko Tadic who is charged at the end of The Hague court story with eleven counts but that story of the sexual assault is not one of them simply because "he was only watching" (Sacco, 2012, p. 7). Watching dehumanizing scenes rather than stopping them is according to the justice of law irreproachable, while in its ideal meaning and its Levinasian ethical terms is a crime.

In fact, Sacco's graphic piece of "The Hague" highlights the complexities and ambiguities of the legal system in The Hague court through its abrupt and unclear ending. The graphic narrative in "The Hague" is fragmentary and obscure since it does not reveal the decisions that the court takes regarding the war crimes in Bosnia. There is what Derrida (1992) calls "the ghost of the undecidable" (p. 24) that gives The Hague's graphic narrative an aura of ambivalence. An example of such ambivalence can be linked to the absence of any information about the results of the war trials. The absence of the two major war criminals from the trials also establishes the ghostly uncertainty in the story. They constitute "the undecidable" that "remains caught, lodged, at least as a ghost—but an essential ghost—in every decision, in every event of decision" (Derrida, 1992, p. 25). Nearly, in every page of "The Hague," there is a verbal and visual mentioning of Kradzic and Mladic. Another reason behind the ambiguous atmosphere in The Hague piece is the absence of the law's voice. Sacco claims in his notes that the weakness of the last page of "The Hague" is due to the absence of the most important juridical voices namely: the chief prosecutor of the Bosnian war trials, Louise Arbour, and the tribunal presiding judge, Gabrielle Kirk McDonald. Their refusal to give more information on the proceedings of the trials is a way to preserve the mystical authority of law that is inaccessible and founded on calculations. These calculations that make both judges refuse to make a conference with Sacco is an irresponsible act because justice as Derrida (1992) argues is "incalculable" (p. 16). The judges' calculations denote, then, a sort of betrayal of ethical responsibility toward the other and his history.

5.2 War as a Mockery of Morality in the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict

The graphic war narratives in Sacco's collection of *Journalism* demonstrate an ethical failure of alterity. Acknowledging the other not as a human being and reducing him to a mere abstraction and an enemy is what the graphic piece of "The Palestinian Territories" exemplifies. In this part of Sacco's *Journalism*, Sacco sheds light on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict in the

territories of Hebron and Gaza. In Hebron, the encounter between Palestinians and Israelis is marked by bullets and barricades, while in Gaza the contact is characterized by the bombardments.

The language of communication between the two adversaries is violence and the intensity of this violence depends on the physical proximity or remoteness between the two people. These two types of violence, through bullets and bombardments, are also stylistically reflected. That is to say, Sacco's style of drawing violence in the Hebron part is different from the one in the Gaza part. While in the Hebron story, the framing is narrow focusing on specific details like the bullet's traces on the walls of the Palestinian buildings and the Jews' houses. In the graphic narrative of Gaza, the image framings are wide and panoramic. These layout differences correspond to the particularity of the subject matter in the Hebron story and the Gaza narrative. The correlation between the image framing and the content is described by Groensteen (2013) as "rhetorical layout" in which "the size (and sometimes the shape) of each frame is adapted to the content, to the subject matter of the panel" (p. 148-46). Although Groensteen's concept of "rhetorical layout" is about one panel, it can be applicable to the whole page or the ensemble of panels and pages.

Ethically speaking, the "rhetorical layout" reflects the extent of the other's destruction. The irregularity of the page layout in "the Palestinian Territories" graphic piece shows that the Palestinian/Israeli conflict in Hebron is ethically framed differently from the one in Gaza. Speaking about the function of the frame, Groensteen (2007) states:

there are six important functions of the frame, which I call the function of closure, the separative function, the rhythmic function, the structural function, the expressive function, and the readerly function. All of these functions exert their effects on the contents of the panel [...] and, especially, the perceptive and cognitive processes of the reader. (p. 39)

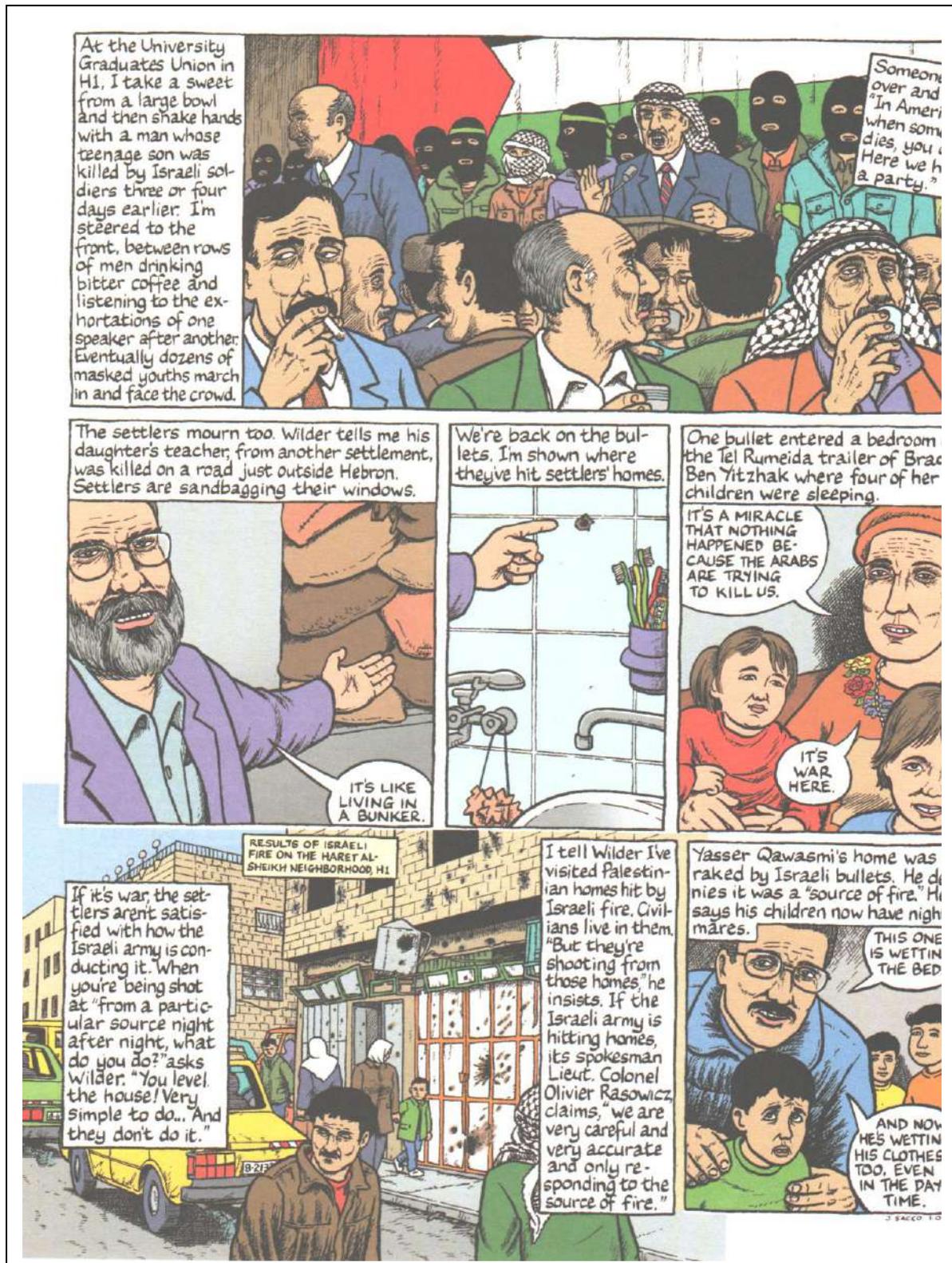
For example, a look inside Hebron shows the day-to-day confrontational violence between Palestinians and Jews using zoomed in images and cropped frames put next to each other with narrow gutters separating them (See Figure (46)). The closeness of the frames containing images of both parts, Jews and Palestinians, demonstrates the frequency of the shooting between the two neighboring parties.

On the other hand, in “Gaza Portfolio,” the images are frameless and panoramic depicting the landscape in Gaza marked with damage and isolation. The “rhetorical layout” of the portfolio shows the destruction of alterity and at the same time the absurdity of this destruction (See Figure (47)). In addition, in the graphic piece of “The Underground War in Gaza,” the frame overlaps with the background images of demolished houses as an ethical urgency for commenting on these backgrounds. These houses are suspect for being refuge for the Palestinian underground tunnels and thus destroyed by the Israeli bulldozers (See Figure (48)). The overlaying of the frame and the background is a mockery on the universal morals of humanism and also a mockery on the ethics of alterity. In this respect, Levinas (1969) claims, “the state of war suspends morality, it divests the eternal institutions and obligations of their eternity and rescinds and interim the unconditional imperatives” (as cited in Cohen, 2011, p. 154).

The command not to kill or murder is one of those of eternal obligations that is postponed and suspended by the lines of the frame. The frame eliminates the ethics of alterity in relation to exteriority and instead creates a compartmentalized world divided into two opposed parties governed by unequal power dynamics. It also emphasizes another type of ethics that which emphasizes the importance of possessing a house, of having a home; it is an ethics of interiority. This explains the framing style in the Hebron story and the graphic narrative in Gaza. While in Hebron, people’s preserved houses guarantee the visibility of the frame, the demolished houses in Gaza break down those frames.

The following figure presents a juxtaposition of the one trace of a bullet in the settler's house to the many bullets on a Palestinian building in Hebron:

Figure (46): The Bullet's Trace (Sacco, 2012, p. 12)



The following figure shows an old woman, Sabha Abu Mousa, searching for her daughter-in-law's two gold bracelets in the rubble of her home which was destroyed by the Israeli forces in Khan Younis refugee camp:

Figure (47): The Destruction of Alterity (Sacco, 2012, p. 14-15)



The following figure shows the destroyed houses in Gaza by the Israeli Defense Forces:

Figure (48): The Suspension of Morality (Sacco, 2012, p.25)



5.3 Feminine Recurrent Alterity in the Chechen War

Women are usually associated with the dwelling, the interiority. This interior life is a major loss that women in wars experience and Chechen women are no exception. Sacco's graphic piece of "The Caucasus" portrays the Chechen war using exclusive feminine voices in order to translate the ethics of a stolen inwardness. The belongingness to an inhabitation is not based on a strong attachment with the house as an object but to the act of dwelling. In this respect, Levinas (1979) argues that, "the dwelling is not situated in the objective world, but the objective world is situated by relation to my dwelling" (p. 153). The Chechen I.D.P (Internally Displaced Person) especially women suffer from this violation of their human subjectivity that can only be recollected in a habitation called home.

After their houses get destroyed by the Russian war machinery, Chechen women find themselves with their children living in refugee camps in the neighboring Russian republic of Ingushetia. The woman whose otherness or alterity is a source of gentleness and recollection in its Levinasian ethics of interiority becomes a source of a historical narrative. For Levinas (1979), "the woman is the condition for recollection, the interiority of the Home, and inhabitation" whose language of welcoming is silent and secretive (p. 155). However, the demolition of the habitation reverses this silent ethics of interiority and transforms it into a speaking ethics of a violent exteriority.

The feminine alterity of the Chechen women establishes the word/image transmission of the Chechen history of oppression by the Russian authorities. According to Levinas (1979), the feminine alterity is "situated on another plane than language and nowise represents a truncated, stammering, still elementary language" (p. 155). In other words, meeting the displaced Chechen women face to face means revealing the crisis of existence because "to exist [...] means to dwell" (Levinas, 1979, p. 156). Encountering the face of the Chechen woman in the refugee

camps goes beyond the need for a language to express the gravity of the Chechen war. Not having a home as an economic possession to dwell in signals an absence of security, secrecy, and enjoyment. That is why; most Chechen refugees prefer to stay in the camps rather than returning to Chechnya. For example, Zura refuses to return to Chechnya again because in her first return she expects to find a safe accommodation and to be provided with humanitarian aids as the Russian authorities have promised her, but she recognizes that there still shooting and war and therefore she comes back to Sputnik which is the first and biggest of the I.D.P camps. Zura's feminine alterity cannot function in a building that is not hers and that cannot be transformed into interior because of the unbearable noises of the war shooting and rockets.

Despite being forcibly displaced, the Chechen women attempt to reconstruct new homes in the camps and maintain their feminine alterity through labor. The hospitable feminine being of the displaced Chechen woman gives her the energy to rebuild a home where she can be the dweller and the proprietor. In the camps, Hazhan, wounded by a bullet in thirteen places in her testisines, flees with her five children the war in Chechnya and in order to provide for her family she works as a floor washer. Although she was an accountant and a technical institute graduate in Chechnya, in the camp, she washes floors and believes that she is "full of energy" and that she "will overcome this" (Sacco, 2012, p. 62). Hazhan's feminine energy is actually an ethical response and responsibility towards her feminine alterity. In addition to Hazhan, Zara is another Chechen woman who takes shelter in one of a series of cowsheds at a former milk factory in Altiyevo. About Zara's habitation, Sacco (2012) states, "Zara shows me into one of the two adjoining particle-board boxes where she makes her home with her seven children. Two to a bunk, I suppose" (p. 56). Zara's feminine alterity appears in her capacity to establish a 'home' for her family in spite of all the difficulties she is going through. She buys two rooms for her children, her husband with mental disorders caused by the tortures he has been through

by the Russian authority, and his two orphaned nephews. In order to preserve her feminine alterity, Zara works seventeen hours a day, a number that baffles Sacco.

Therefore, we can say that speaking about ethics starts from the feminine alterity. The feminine alterity of the Chechen women questions the atrocity of the war. It also interweaves a coherent narrative of the wars in Chechnya. If the woman is capable of forming a unified and silent interiority, it is for sure capable to draw a comprehensive picture of the Chechen question. The Chechen woman is “the condition for recollection” (Levinas, 1979). In its Levinasian meaning, the feminine energy of ‘recollection’ is linked to the man whose being is shattered by the currents of the exterior life and it is the woman inside the home who recollects these fractured pieces to form a tranquil coherent being. However, in the context of the Chechen women, the concept ‘recollection’ is used to give a narrative voice to the silent language of the interior for the recollection of fragmented memories of wars in Chechnya. The narratives that the Chechen women convey regarding the Chechen war transform the ontological perspective of war into an ethical evaluation of the Russian criminality against their people. In other words, Recollecting memories on the first and the second wars on Chechnya by the Russian authorities cannot proceed ethically without the feminine alterity of the Chechen women, young and old ones.

In effect, the ethical recollection of the Chechen women’s stories with war and coercive displacement is characterized with a responsibility towards the other. The responsibility of the Chechen women before the history of their nation is infinite as they tell us the whole story from the beginning to the end in Sacco’s graphic piece of “The Caucasus.” In this graphic narrative, the male voice is totally absorbed by the feminine alterity as in the case of Zara whose husband is mentally disordered and is completely “an invalid” as Sacco (2012) describes him (p.58). The voicelessness of men in the graphic narrative of “The Caucasus” and the voicing of the

Chechen women instead, highlights the responsibility of the feminine alterity in taking the parole concerning the Chechen wars.

The whole story of the Chechen troublesome history with Russians starts since the Russian empire pushed its way into the North Caucasus in the 1700s. During the Soviet reign, the red army killed in one day in 1937 fourteen thousand Chechens. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ascendancy of Jokhar Dudayev to the presidency in 1991, Chechnya becomes an independent republic. In 1994, the armed war between the Russian military and the Chechen fighters starts. In other words, the horrific actions on the Chechen people have an endless history as Asset, a displaced Chechen woman, maintains, “this repeats every century, every fifty years” (Sacco, 2012, p. 41). Asset remembers the catastrophic event at the age of six years in a day in February 1944 when the Russian soldiers on the order of Stalin encircled their village then forced them to leave on a train to Kazakhstan on an eighteen-day journey. During that horrible journey, the bodies of people who die from cold and hunger are thrown by the Russian soldiers by the tracks. Because of the awful living conditions in Kazakhstan, Asset loses her mother and a quarter of her deported people die (145000 deaths).

In 1957, Khrushchev allows the Chechens to get back to their homeland from which they are forcibly displaced again in 1994. This endless tragedy of violence and displacement is ethically or femininely narrated from the interior of their habitation, in fragile tents and disused distilleries and factories. The feminine alterity that is able to make of the inhabitable a habitation is undoubtedly capable to recollect the fragments of a long history of the forced displacement of the Chechen people by the Russian authority.

Maternity is another feature of the feminine alterity of ethics that substitutes the self for the other. The feminine ethics achieves its apogee in motherhood where the woman becomes aware of her responsibility for her child whose face confronts her with an inescapable helplessness.

In Sacco's graphic piece of "The Caucasus," nearly all the pages show Chechen women holding a child or more. Whenever there is a woman, we see a child or children surrounding her; she is never drawn standing by her Self (See Figure (49)). On maternity, Levinas (n.d.) claims:

In maternity what signifies is a responsibility for others [...] Maternity, which is a bearing par excellence, bears even responsibility for the persecuting by the persecutor. Rather than a nature, earlier than nature, immediacy is this vulnerability, this maternity, this pre-birth or pre-nature in which sensibility belongs. This proximity is narrower, more constrictive, than contiguity, older than every past present. (as cited in Chanter, 1991, p. 135).

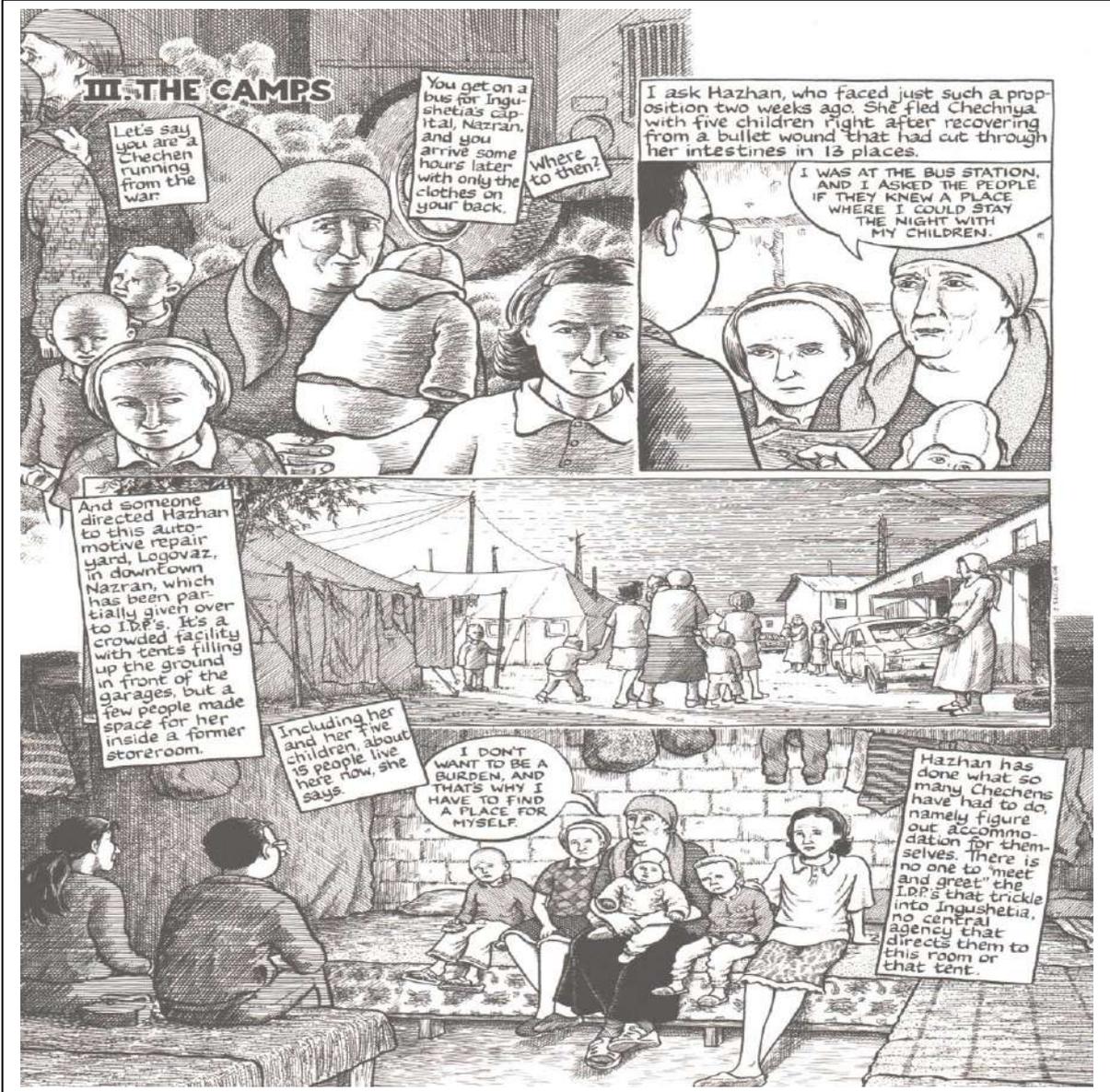
This transcendental relationship between the I of the Chechen woman and the Other, her child, is ethically rather than biologically maintained. This ethical feature of the feminine in the Chechen mothers is even intensified by the war which deprives her from her domicile, from her discretion, from her silence, and from her enjoyment. Being out there with her helpless children, the feminine alterity of Chechen woman unveils the atrocious verities of the war and the Russian authority. It is true that the Chechen woman is never drawn alone without her children, but this does not mean that her individuality is concealed. Her individuality emerges through the language of love she uses in the face of the other who is her child. In fact, the pictorial recurrence of the Chechen women with their children in the foreground and the background images of the pages signify an unchanging permanence of the maternal alterity and the continuation of the Chechen war narrative "every fifty years."

The recurrence of the mother-child image in the graphic narrative of "The Caucasus" indicates also an infinite responsibility for the other beyond the notion of being. In addition, it foresees an infinite repetition of the war and the refugee camp experience for 'other' peoples in other times and places. When the mother takes responsibility for her child, she saves his life and many other lives. However, ignoring the alterity of the other by trying 'just' to understand it without transforming it is in Levinasian terms unethical. For example, in some instances, although Sacco involves directly in the lived lives of the Chechen women, his deployment of

the objective spirit of journalism interrupts the ethical process of the metaphysical responsibility for the other. This ethical disruption happens when Zara asks Sacco if he can ask someone at an N.G.O. to help her, Sacco (2012) states in a rectangular caption, “I never know what to say to someone who thinks I have connections with important officials who can tend to her special case” (p. 59).

The following figure illustrates the mother-child recurrent image in Sacco’s story on the Chechen war:

Figure (49): Maternity (Sacco, 2012, p. 48)



Yet, Zara's call for Sacco's help is inevitable that is why he lifts her to her work two days later and along the road he listens empathetically to her while she tells him about her long hours of work. It is true that Sacco is unable to save her life, but he has "saved her a long walk" (Sacco, 2012, p. 60). Another example of the ethical of obligation in the face of the other appears when Zamani shows her killed daughter's photograph to Sacco before he leaves, Sacco (2012) states in rectangular captions, "Just a photo. A mother standing with her two daughters" (p. 69). Sacco makes a comment on the photograph he sees and touches as a form that renders the mother and her two daughters into an object on an exhibition. In addition, by stating, "We leave Zamani with her daughters and make our way out of the cowshed" (69), Sacco refers to the transcendental dimension of the photograph. Although one of her two daughters is no longer alive, Sacco is speaking about the infinite openness that sensing the photograph has created. In this moment, Sacco is ethically conscious of the maternal alterity which is a transcendental relationship with the other "totally different from experience in the sensible sense of the term" (Levinas, 1979, p. 193).

5.4 The Ethics of (dis)Order in the Iraq War: Sequence Matters

Reading Sacco's graphic story of "Down!Up!" from his graphic piece of "Iraq" gives the impression of watching a movie because of the patterned sequentiality of the panels. This graphic narrative, in particular, on the Iraq war is organized according to the military rhythms of order and discipline. "Down! Up!" is the second story in the "Iraq" war section, in addition to "Complacency Kills" and "Trauma on Loan". While the "Complacency Kills" is about looking at the invasion of Iraq from the perspective of "those at the tip of the spear of the American imperial project" (Sacco, 2012, p. 106), "Trauma on Loan" conversely turns to those Iraqi individuals "Thahe Sabbar" and "Sherzad Khaled", two Iraqi businessmen, to give their traumatic testimonies as detainees in Baghdad's airport tents. Yet, both stories have a low rhythm of narrative progression as they are seen from single points of view.

However, for the “Down! Up!” story, the rhythm and the sequence of the images are more intensified due to the face-to-face encounter between the American military men and the Iraqi men. In other words, although the question of ethics and especially the war ethics can be raised in the three stories since they complete each other, “Down! Up” provokes a presentist question on the ethics of alterity as Levinas envisions it. The actual presence of Sacco in this exclusive encounter between two American military servicemen, Sgt. Weaver and Doc. Saba, who are tasked with training a group from the Iraqi National Guard (I.N.G) to become competent soldiers, gives the ethical questions new dimensions. It is a dominant/dominated encounter characterizing any imperial project. This contact between the American soldiers whom themselves have been civilians before they come to Iraq and the Iraqi civilians puts the superiority/inferiority and order/disorder dichotomies of colonialism to the fore. That is, the encounter between them is unethical because it is enclosed within a system of order, obedience, and punishment. No one of them is able to get access to the face of the other.

The impossibility to access to the other is also enabled due to the absence of discourse and responsibility. Most of the Iraqi trainees do not speak or understand English and depend on the translations of an Iraqi translator, Ahmed. If there is no discourse, there can never be an authentic relationship with the Other. Levinas (1985) describes this relationship by claiming that, “it is discourse and, more exactly, response or responsibility which is this authentic relationship” (p. 88). The responsibility for the Iraqi volunteers that the two American veterans take is thus morally questioned because it is based on dehumanizing the other.

The recurrent images of the pushups punishment that Sgt. Weaver prescribes on the ones who fail to understand his commandment or answer his questions reveals a humiliation for the other rather than a responsibility for the other. On page 84 (See Figure (50)), the sequence of the panels exposes the act of punishing one of the Iraqi guardsmen who has been found cheating in the test. The sequence emphasizes the inhuman relationship between the American trainers

and the Iraqi trainee who is crying out of pain or maybe out of humiliation. To be ethically responsible for the other is in its Levinasian meaning a human act that “is incumbent on me exclusively, and what, *humanly*, I cannot refuse” (Levinas, 1985, p. 101). However, the human disconnection between the two American navy military men who are the new comers and the Iraqi men who are the people of the land is an image of hostility rather than of hospitality. In other words, the host who expects that the guest saves him gets instead hostilized by the coerciveness of the imperial regime.

The following figure shows the humiliating way the American soldiers treated the Iraqi soldiers during the Iraq war:

Figure (50): The Ethics of (dis)Order (Sacco, 2012, p. 84)



5.5 (Un)Framed Hospitality in Sacco's "Migration"

The concept of hospitality, for Derrida (2000), beholds an antinomy "an insoluble antinomy, a non-dialectizable antinomy between, on the one hand, the law of unlimited hospitality [...], and on the other hand, the laws (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional" (p. 77). That is, both the unconditional law of hospitality and the conditional laws of hospitality are inseparable and at the same time antinomic. The unconditional law needs the laws to stay alive among the living people and not be transformed into a mere abstractness of illusory utopia. In return, the laws require the law of hospitality to maintain their ethical status; it is the unconditional law that inspires them. In Sacco's graphic piece of "Migration," the African illegal migrants land on the Maltese islands as "unwanted" visitors who hope to have a life better than the one they had in their mother lands. These African immigrants receive a conditional hospitality from the Maltese that extends to being subjected to inhuman treatments such as being placed in detention as if these arrivers are criminals, then they are sent to open centers as "freedoms" without any job permits.

Although the Maltese conditional hospitality contradicts the absolute hospitality, its application comes from certain necessities especially those of security. The minister of Justice and Home Affairs in Malta expresses the ethical contradiction that the concept of hospitality carries:

The detention policy is odious for us [...] but it is a necessity. I cannot [allow] persons running around our streets with no accommodation [...] Knocking on doors to get food, without any idea where they came from, and with the big idea that Europe is an Eldorado. (Sacco, 2012, p. 134)

On the one hand, based on the views of the Maltese individuals that Sacco interviews, the African visitors are not welcomed for racial, cultural and economic reasons. On the other hand, the African immigrants see that they deserve a hyperbolic hospitality because of what they have gone through in their horrible journey of crossing over the Mediterranean Sea. They

believe that their entrance to the Maltese lands offers them an inevitable right to an unlimited hospitality. However, the difficulties surrounding the condition of hospitality especially the geographical transgression that the African immigrants experience put the Maltese people and the Maltese government under an ethical test, a test to their hospitality.

Hospitality as both unconditional and conditional is manifested through the framing/unframing style of “Migration.” The graphic narrative of Sacco’s “Migration” proceeds through an interplay of framed and unframed images. While the framed images feature the plural character of hospitality, the unframed images transcend the laws of hospitality to focus more on the human side of the immigrants’ experience of foreignness. The frame represents in this case the borders and the limits that regulate the laws of hospitality. On page 156 (See Figure (51)), the framed image occupying the middle of the page expresses the worries that the Maltese people hold concerning the future of their country with the incessant coming of the African ‘uninvited’ immigrants. The unframed images surrounding the framed image expose two similar scenes of unconditional hospitality.

On the one hand, the image on the top of the page displays a group of African immigrants as they are roaming in the streets of Marsa, the place that contains the biggest number of African immigrants. On the other hand, the image at the bottom of page is a scene from the far past when St. Paul and his companions were shipwrecked and received “unusual kindness” from the Maltese people. When Sacco (2012) reminds one of his relatives of St. Paul’s story, she tells him that “but St. Paul was here for a while and left” (p. 156). Sacco’s relative’s conditions on hospitality are also bordered by the frame of the caption. That is to say, the unframed images of unconditional hospitality overpower the framed images and the framed words of conditional hospitality. The interplay of framed and unframed images is hierarchical since the unframed images take more space than the framed image. In other words, the hyperbolic hospitality

coexists with the conditional hospitality, but it is superior to it as Derrida (2000) states, “the law is above the laws” (p. 79).

The following figure juxtaposes the inhospitality of the African immigrants in Malta with St. Paul:

Figure (51): (Un)Framed Hospitality (Sacco, 2012, p. 84)



5.6 The Truth about the Subaltern “Dalits” in the ‘Passe-Partout’ Gutter

The ‘Other’ is not a homogenous concept that is constructed by the western discourse but rather a heterogeneous concept that envelops various and different categories of social classes even within the same society like in India. The “Dalits” are among the social poorest classes that are ‘othered’ within the Indian social structure. They are the subalterns who cannot speak and cannot represent themselves. The impossibility of the subaltern for self-representation constitutes the crux of Sacco’s last graphic story of his graphic novel *Journalism* bearing the title of “India.” In her famous essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Spivak (1994) engages in the question of subalternity assuming that “on the other side of the international division of labor from a socialized capital, inside and outside the circuit of the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education supplementing an earlier economic text, *can the subaltern speak?*” (78). Spivak’s rhetorical question is an affirmative statement about the speaking paralysis that the subalterns are doomed in.

Those people or communities from “outside the circuits of the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education” are neither able to speak nor to be heard. Sib Charan, one of the Dalits or to be more precise he is a Musahar (a lowly subcaste even among the Dalits), who receives Sacco to tell him about the Dalits condition, answers, when asked by Sacco about his expectation on his son’s future: “We ask them to do something [to] bring some food.” In response to the same question, Suvanti, Charan’s wife, states, “I don’t think anything about it.” While for their son, Rajinder, he states, “I have no plan” (Sacco, 2012, p. 166). The inability to think and the absence of a class consciousness thrusts Charan’s family and community, in general, into a dark space of marginality completely crushed by severe poverty. The Dalits are mostly located in the rural depths of Kushinagar district where people possess nothing or even possess less than nothing because of indebtedness. The Dalits are extremely poor, illiterate, and politically and religiously unconscious. The only thing that the Dalits think and worries about

is food which is “the topic to end all topics” (Sacco, 2012, p. 167). The subaltern is incapable to speak because he can barely find what to eat. He looks for food everywhere and anywhere especially in the rats’ holes.

The subaltern’s experience of silencing is represented through the “passe-partout” gutter as it shows the face of the Musahar inside and outside the framed panels. Tornes (2013) calls *passe-partout* when it is both “a frame, and eventually a gutter” (p. 14). In other words, the *passe-partout* gutter denotes a border and a passage way. Tornes adopts the term of ‘*passe-partout*’ from Derrida who uses this term to refer to what surrounds the work of art and it is there where truth lies. The *passe-partout* gutter allows the reader to move swiftly through the space of the graphic page. In Sacco’s graphic piece of “India” there is no graphic page where we do not see the musahar’s face; if he/she is not speaking in a framed talking panel, he/she is showing up, and then following the master in silence (See Figure (52)). The Musahar’s face ‘*passe partout*’ and instills in Sacco a sort of a response. The barefoot man follows Sacco and Surendra, an upper-class Indian man from the rajas, who takes him to visit some of the Hindu temples. Sacco thinks that the Musahar man is following him to steal his shoes simply because the wretched ‘other’ is barefoot.

The “*passe-partout*” gutter allows the ethical face to face encounter between Sacco and the Musahar man to take place inside the framed panels and outside the bordered images. It is in the end of this ‘supposedly’ face to face encounter that Sacco realizes that the Musahar man is actually following Surendra to wear him his shoes. The “*passe-partout*” gutter enables us to understand that the encounter between Sacco and the barefoot man is not an ethical encounter because it is constructed by Sacco’s superior gaze. According to Levinas (1985), “the best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the color of his eyes!” (p. 85). The “*passe-partout*” gutter represents an ethical conflict between transcendental unframed images the

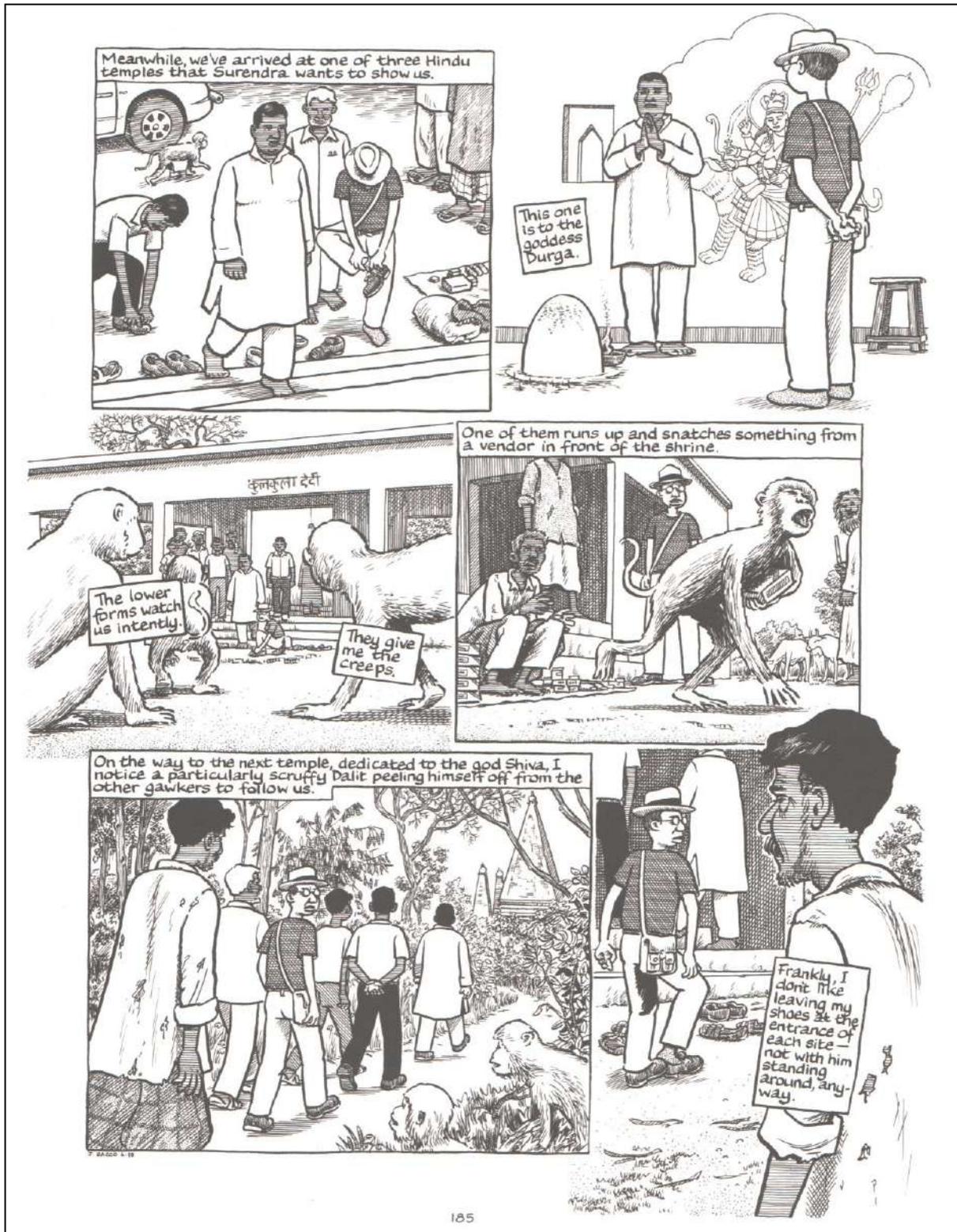
totalizing framed images. In other words, the to-and-fro visual movement between the framed and the unframed images represent Sacco's ethical struggle between totality and transcendence.

Therefore, the subaltern is silenced inside the frame and outside the frame. He is being judged upon by Sacco and humiliated by the caste system represented via Surendra inside the frame and outside the frame. In this way, the "passe-partout" gutter unveils the systematic oppression and silencing of the subaltern Musahar. The alterity of the Musahar individual is not recognized; it is repressed internally and externally. That is, the Musahar is doubly oppressed by the caste system and the official or governmental institutions. Inside his Dalit community, the Musahar cannot experience any kind of social mobility because the Dalits of higher rank oppress him depriving him of his lowest rights such as the right to get food and the right to get education. For example, Sib Charan asks Sacco not to visit them again because "big people will get annoyed" (Sacco, 2012, p. 188). Outside his Dalit community, the Musahar is not heard by the official authorities. In the end, Musahars are forever silenced and as Choudhary, a previously political activist, states, "they are a vanishing race" (Sacco, 2012, p. 189).

In order to listen to the voices of Musahar, the gutter must be perceived within the framed images, outside the frame and in between. In short, the "passe-partout" gutter releases the reader "like a trapeze artist-- into the open air of imagination [...] then caught by the outstretched of the ever-present next panel. Caught quickly so as not to let the reader fall into confusion or boredom" (McCloud, 1993, p. 90). In the case of Sacco's graphic piece "India," the passe-partout gutter throws the reader into the open air of ethical transcendence where he becomes able to meet the Musahar man or woman face to face standing on their feet not, as Sacco describes them, "hanging onto the planet by their fingernails" (Sacco, 2012, p. 160).

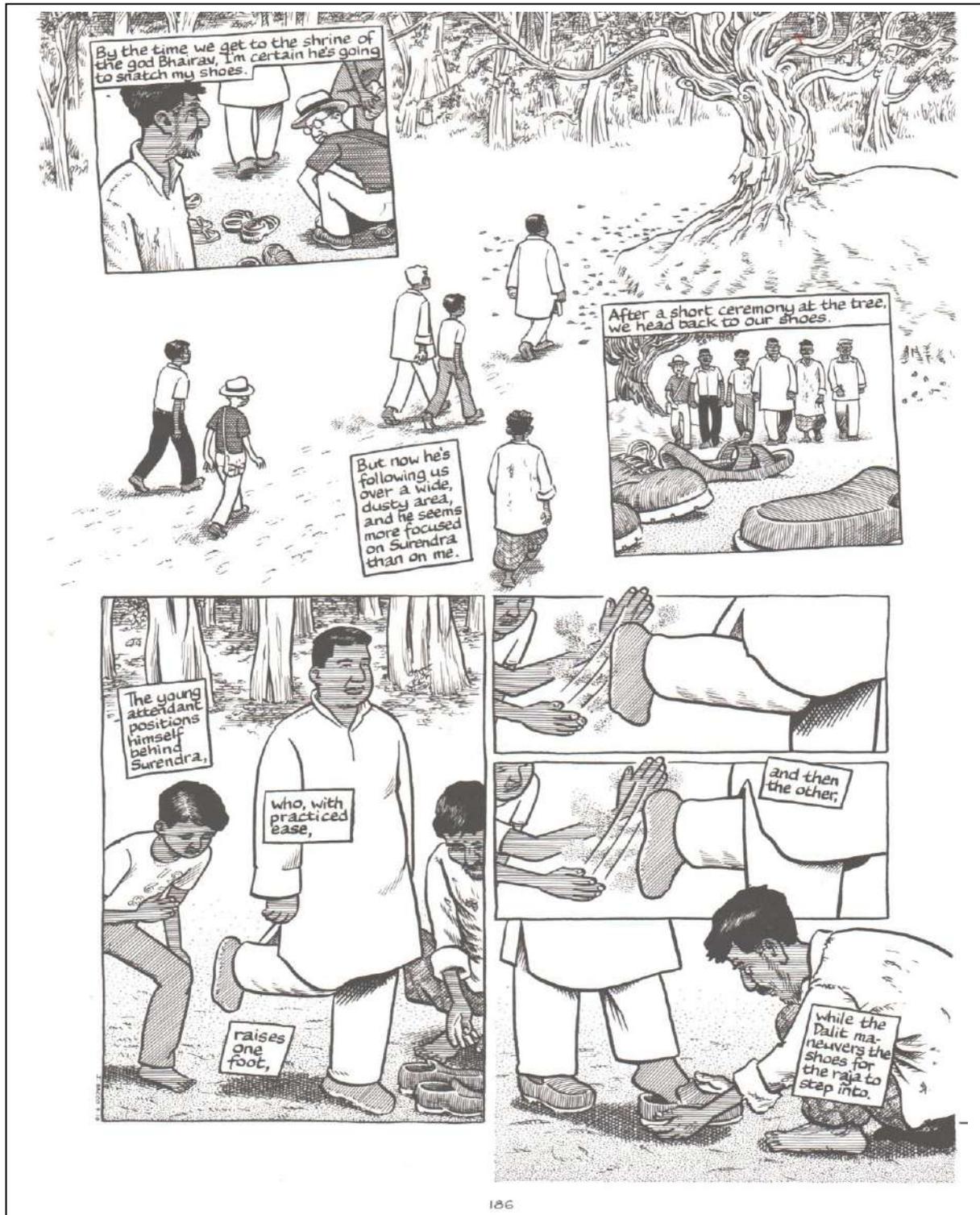
The following figure demonstrates the suspicious way that Sacco is looking at the Musahar man:

Figure (52): Can the Musahar Speak? (Sacco, 2012, p. 185)



The following figure shows that Sacco's suspicious look at the Musahar man is in the end wrong because the Musahar man was following them to give Surendra the service of wearing him the shoes:

Figure (53): Can the Musahar Speak? (Sacco, 2012, p. 186)



Conclusion

Sacco's six graphic pieces in his graphic novel *Journalism* represent what it means to gather different cultural groups of people in one graphic world. Looking at *Journalism* from a Levinasian ethical point of view gave rise to a new type of ethics that is related to the graphic narrative which can be named 'graphic ethics.' The graphic ethics combines both the comics form with the moral content of the graphic narrative. In this chapter, juxtaposition, framing, recurrence, sequence, and the gutter were the formal properties that mark Sacco's graphic narratives in *Journalism*, and it was through them that the Levinasian alterity is realized. These graphic properties enabled an ethical representation of the 'other' in unusual conditions of war, forced exile, illegal immigration, and systematic marginalization. The aesthetic imagination in Sacco's *Journalism* allowed us to see and listen to the 'other' face to face without any kind of ideologically or politically mediation.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The American graphic novel is usually thought of as purely a tool of entertainment rather than of seriousness especially that it is associated with superhero comics. Nevertheless, graphic novels such as Spiegelman's *Maus* and Sacco's *Palestine* emerge to give the American tradition of graphic novels another cultural dimension. The participation of the comics artists in the graphic narrative as characters provides the graphic novel with a special tint of seriousness and documentation. Sacco adopts this self-drawing technique in all of his graphic novels to become his own special stylistic signature in the world of 'comics journalism.' Being part of the graphic narrative as a veritable character, Sacco establishes a wholly different culture of the documentary genre. Therefore, Sacco's graphic novels constitute a distinct cultural form that is primarily influential on the local level, in the United States of America, and the global level since it tackles serious issues from different places of the world.

The presence of Joe Sacco in his journalistic drawings marks the uniqueness of his graphic novels. Sacco's image does not only reflect his personal identity but also carries within its signifying expressions the American culture. Although most of his documentary graphic novels take place somewhere other than the United States of America but still, the American cultural traces are everywhere in his drawings. Sacco draws himself as a character in his graphic works in order to establish a new way of doing journalism different from the American version or what he calls "platonic idealism of journalism." The American school of journalism is challenged by Sacco who sees that journalism is a subjective rather than objective art of news reporting. Sacco (2012, December 9) even goes further in his criticism to the American culture of journalism which convinced him that "Palestinians are pure and simple terrorists. It took self-education," he adds, "I was never going to come up with another viewpoint by reading the American press."

In other words, Sacco attempts, through his 'subjective' comics journalism to respond to the 'objective' American mainstream journalism. Yet, the American identity in Joe Sacco is consistently appealed in all his encounters with the different people from different cultures he draws. The departure points in all his graphic novels discussed in this thesis has the background of an American arrival. In other words, the graphic stories in Sacco's graphic works begin usually with his arrival to the place of his graphic reportage coming from the United States of America.

Although Sacco's graphic novels are set in places such as Bosnia, Palestine, Iraq, the Canadian Northwestern Territories, they belong to the American culture of comics or graphic novels and represent an important chapter in the history of the American graphic novel especially the documentary graphic novel. In addition, Sacco's art of graphic narrative describes another facet of the American culture or a counter-culture where being earnest replaces being simply entertained. Despite the fact that Sacco seems in different instances the central character, the crux of the story is told by characters from the host culture. Subsequently, the thesis aimed at putting the American graphic novel particularly Sacco's documentary graphic novels into cultural studies. Using the scope of cultural studies in studying Sacco's graphic novels endeavored to see them as cultural forms and products rather than just as literary or artistic works. Most importantly, approaching Sacco's journalistic graphic novels from a cultural studies perspective sought to prove that life is superior to art, not only the human life, but also the plant and animal life. It is, then, the preciousness of life that is questioned in this thesis by focusing on its four important interrelated but also independent trajectories namely: space, time, affect, and ethics.

However, the problematic that the thesis attempted to answer is, how cultural studies can address questions of space, time, affect, and ethics in Sacco's documentary graphic novels as cultural forms in the American tradition of comics. Since the multidisciplinary nature of cultural

studies recognizes the cultural, social, economic, and political varieties of the world, it allows its practitioners to expand its scope for the purpose of preserving the grandeur of life especially in the contexts of war and colonialism. In Sacco's graphic novels, space becomes graphic space; time transforms to graphic times; affect turns to be graphic affects; and ethics is concretized graphically. In effect, graphic spaces, the graphic times, graphic affects, and graphic ethics as explored through the eyes of cultural studies bridge the gap between academia and its outside. They also connect the two historically hostile forms of expressions: words and images. That is, Sacco's documentary graphic narratives as hybrid forms of art transform real places, times, affects, and ethics into graphic spaces, times, affects and ethics.

The graphic space is the first arena that this research embarked on. The graphic space refers to the space of the graphic page with all its different elements such as the panel, the frame, the gutter. Sacco's graphic novel, *Safe Area Goražde*, served as a pertinent work for exploring the intersection of war and the graphic space. It is not just a narrative on war as a pure material for suspenseful news reportage, but rather a story where the 'everyday life' of Goraždans influences the Bosnian war. Usually, the spatial conflict characterizing any war is drawn from inside rather than from outside. However, in *Safe Area Goražde*, the spatial conflict is drawn from the depth of Goražde. The focus on the interrelation between the graphic space in Sacco's graphic novel *Safe Area Goražde* and the war space, in the safe area of Goražde during the Bosnian war, shows that the aesthetic spatialization of war experience in the graphic novel shapes the reader's understanding and perception of the Bosnian war.

In addition to the graphic space, the graphic time constituted an important area of investigation in this thesis. Despite the fact that time is overlooked in the current field of humanities, it represents an interesting and a central subject especially that it completes the notion of space. Treating the concept of time from a narratological as well as historical perspectives gave the Bosnian war a temporal significance that went beyond the process of

chronicling. Reading Sacco's second graphic novel, *The Fixer*, on the Bosnian war from a temporal point of view showcased both the historicity of the graphic narrative and the narrativity of History. It also displayed the flexibility of the graphic time. In other words, the graphic time(s) in *The Fixer* was not only presented through images and words but also through visual simultaneity and rhythmic sequentiality. The flexibility of the graphic time was also demonstrated through its spectography providing the dead to return and narrate their own histories.

Since being in a specific space and time invokes specific feelings, this thesis gave a special attention to the affect as an embodied experience. Approaching Sacco's graphic novel, *Paying the Land*, from an affective perspective demonstrated the importance of drawn images in capturing the traumatic past of the Dene people in the Northwestern Territories in Canada. Analyzing the facial expressions of the Dene characters, specifically those who have been victims of the residential schools, was effective in displaying the effects of colonialism and "cultural genocide." The colonial policies of resource extraction have had destructive impact both on the Dene individual and his natural world. Just like the Dene people, nature in the Northwestern Territories is deformed by the greed of the colonizing machine.

In order to assess Sacco's comics journalism ethically speaking, a Levinasian approach to his graphic novel *Journalism* was adopted. That is, reading Sacco's *Journalism* from an ethical perspective was not just a way to assess the content but also the medium which is the graphic novel. *Journalism* presents a collection of graphic stories about wars, conflicts, subalternity, and illegal migration. The specificity of topics that the graphic novel of *Journalism* tackle demonstrates that Sacco's graphic novel is a specific medium of an ethical and aesthetic autonomy. In other words, the aesthetic features of Sacco's *Journalism* correspond to the ethical character of its content. In fact, the specificity of the graphic ethics in *Journalism* lies in the ethical tension between two or more contrasting and contradictory ethical standpoints. The

ethics of Emmanuel Levinas that calls for surmounting the totality of the Western culture advocating instead the idea of infinity that is not the opposite of totality. Infinity rather transcends totality allowing the ethical moment to emerge. The Levinasian ethics of alterity celebrates cultural difference and diversity which is clearly embodied in Sacco's graphic novel of *Journalism* through the conviviality of different cultures, religions, ethnicities in one packed work of art that is the graphic novel.

In a nutshell, reading Joe Sacco's graphic novels, namely *Safe Area Gorazde*, *The Fixer*, *Paying the land*, and *Journalism* from a 'cultural studies' point of view is unavoidable. The culture of comics journalism, innovated mainly by the American cartoonist Joe Sacco, undermines the American traditional journalism that is based on an objective work of reporting news using strategies of capture and erasure. Instead, through his graphic novels, Sacco highlights the important role of subjectivity in exposing a multiplicity of views that give the reader the possibility to investigate key concepts such as space, time, affect, and ethics from an interdisciplinary perspective.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Understanding the Definition of Comics

Appendix B: Setting the Record Straight

Appendix C: Time and Timing

Appendix D: Reading the Page Frame

Appendix E: The Close-Up

Appendix F: The Face

Appendix A: Understanding the Definition of Comics

This appendix features McCloud's widely recognized definition of comics, drawn from his theoretical work *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. Its distinctiveness stems from its visual explanation, extending beyond mere text.

The following caption represents McCloud's drawn definition of comics:

Figure (54): McCloud's Definition of Comics (McCloud, 1993, p. 9)

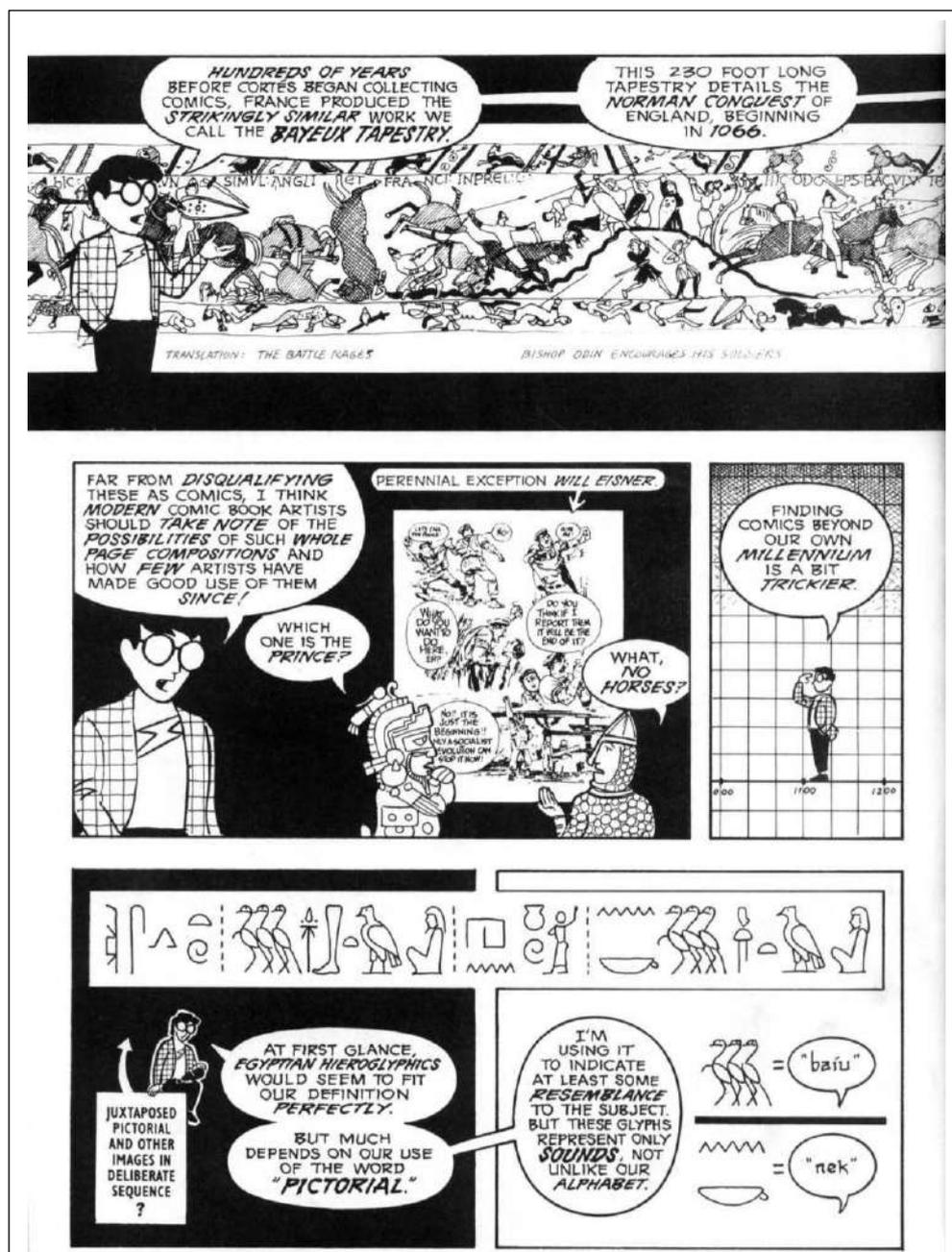


Appendix B: Setting the Record Straight

This appendix involves McCloud's exploration of old forms of sequential art in old times and its importance in the development of the modern comic book. However, for McCloud, it is difficult to pinpoint the beginnings of comics.

The following figure is an example of McCloud's discussions of the old origins of comics:

Figure (55): Looking for Comics Beyond Our Millenium (McCloud, 1993, p. 12)

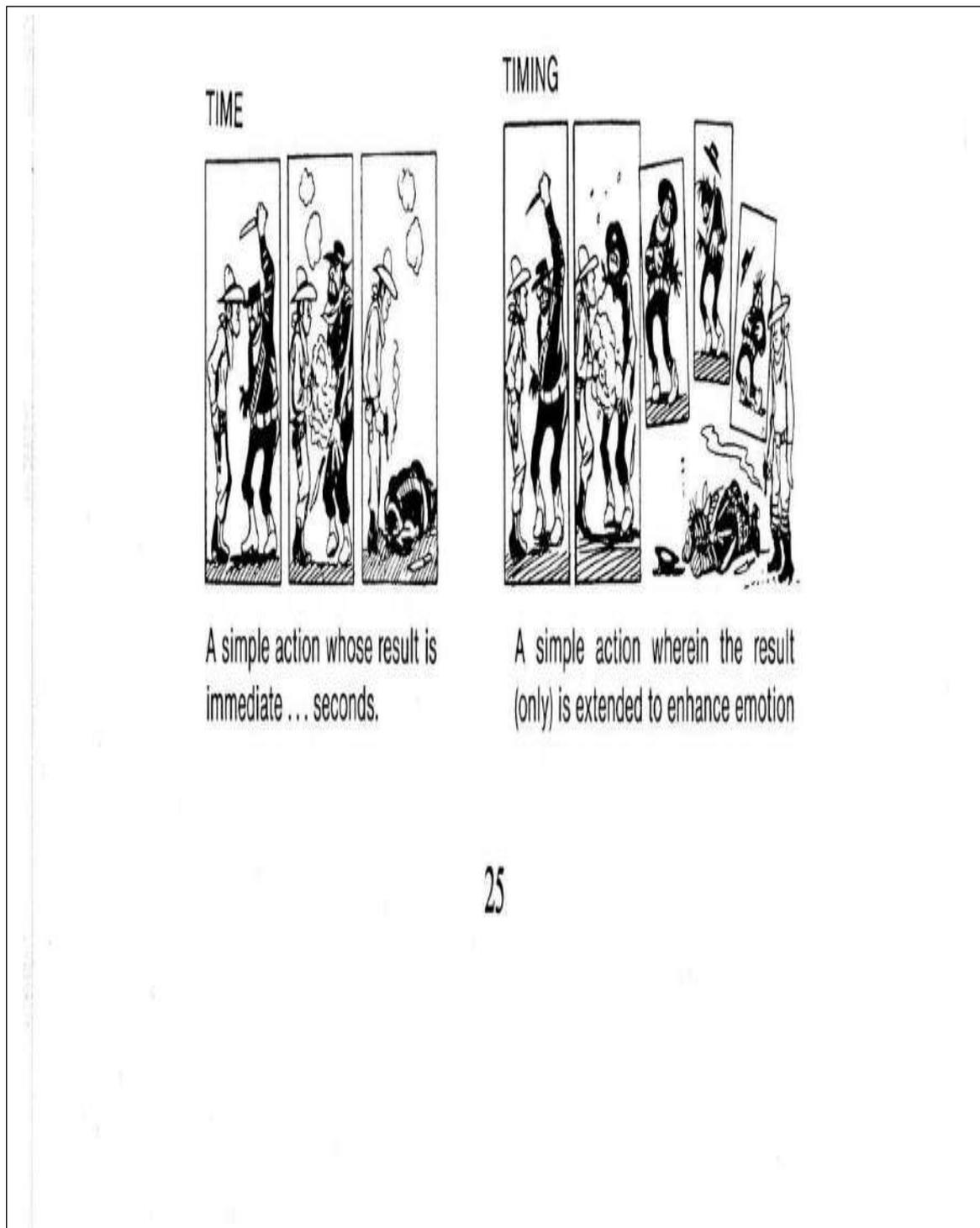


Appendix C: Time and Timing

This appendix includes Will Eisner's conceptualization of time and timing in comics.

The following images demonstrates the differences between time and timing in comics:

Figure (56): Time and Timing (Eisner, 1985, p. 25)

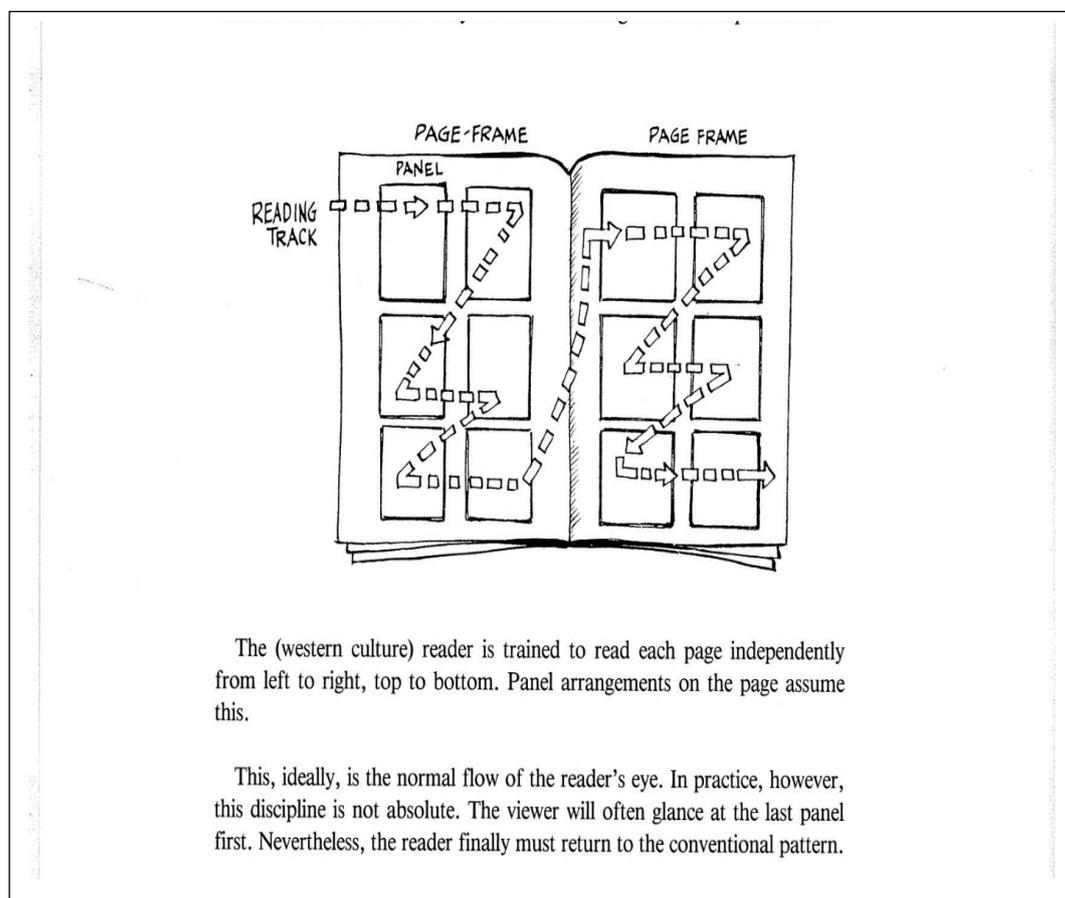


Appendix D: Reading the Page Frame

This appendix includes a demonstration of comics reading orientation, which follows a Z-shaped pattern, guiding the reader's eye from the top left across to the right, then diagonally down to the left, and across again, reflecting a common visual flow in Western comics layouts.

The following figure illustrates the reading track in Western comics:

Figure (57): The Zigzag Reading Direction (Eisner, 1985, p. 41)

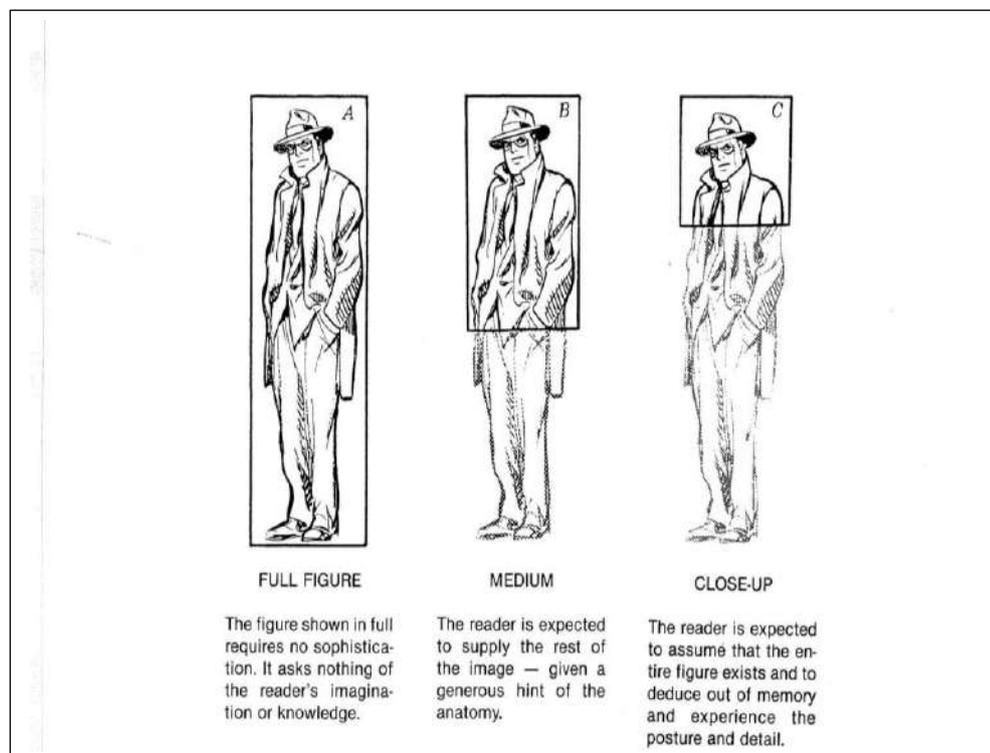


Appendix E: The Close-Up

This appendix includes Eisner's technical explanation of the close-up. The close-up technique allows the reader to participate in the interpretation of comics.

The following figure contains a visual explanation of the close-up technique:

Figure (58): The Close-Up (Eisner, 1985, p. 42)

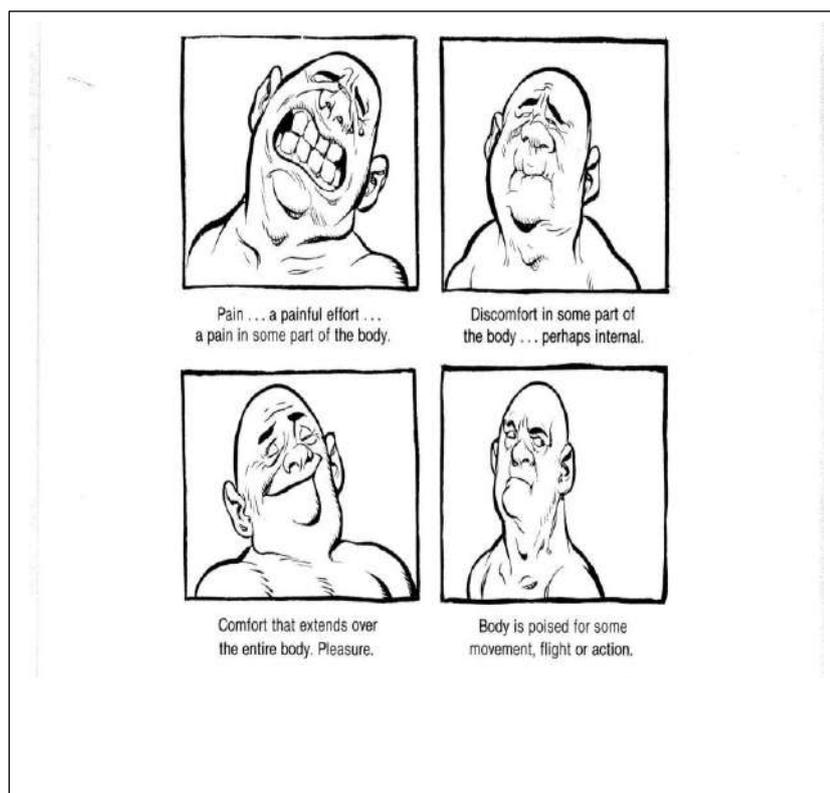


Appendix F: The Face

This appendix includes a pictorial illustration of the relationship between facial expressions and feelings, visually mapping how specific muscle movements—such as the upturned corners of the mouth or furrowed brows—correspond to joy, anger, or sadness, offering a clear guide to interpreting nonverbal cues in human interaction.

The following figure illustrates the interrelationship between the face and emotions like pain, discomfort, comfort, and readiness for action:

Figure (59): The Facial Expressions (Eisner, 1985, p. 109)



Résumé

Cette thèse examine les romans graphiques documentaires de Joe Sacco—*Safe Area Goražde*, *The Fixer*, *Paying the Land*, et *Journalism*—en tant qu'œuvres alliant divertissement et commentaire culturel sérieux, défiant ainsi les pratiques journalistiques et médiatiques conventionnelles. Située dans le cadre des études culturelles, la recherche se concentre sur le format unique du roman graphique en tant qu'œuvre longue, reliant art et littérature, et adopte une approche formaliste pour analyser l'utilisation par Sacco d'éléments visuels tels que la case, le cadre et l'intercase. En plus, en mettant l'accent sur l'esthétique plutôt que sur les déterminants économiques, l'étude met en lumière comment l'interaction innovante entre texte et image chez Sacco crée un sentiment d'urgence, de directivité et de profondeur émotionnelle, incitant les lecteurs à s'engager avec empathie envers les récits de conflits et de crises. À travers les perspectives thématiques de l'espace, du temps, de l'affect et de l'éthique, cette recherche démontre comment les romans graphiques de Sacco servent à la fois de narrations captivantes et d'outils puissants pour comprendre les expériences humaines dans des conditions difficiles, soulignant finalement le potentiel de ce médium à remodeler le journalisme et le discours culturel.

Mots-clés : roman graphique documentaire, études culturelles, esthétique, journalisme en bande dessinée, espace, temps, affect, éthique.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى دراسة الروايات المصورة الوثائقية لجو ساكو — *Safe Area Gorazde*، *Paying the Land*، *The Fixer*، و *Journalism* — كأعمال تجمع بين الترفيه والتعليق الثقافي الجاد، متحدىً بذلك الممارسات الصحفية والإعلامية التقليدية. تقع هذه الدراسة ضمن إطار الدراسات الثقافية، مع التركيز على شكل الرواية المصورة الفريد بكونها عملاً مطوّلاً يجمع بين الفن والأدب، معتمداً على منهج شكلي لتحليل كيفية استخدام ساكو للعناصر البصرية مثل الإطار، اللوحة، والفراغ بين اللوحات. فمن خلال التركيز على الجماليات بدلاً من العوامل الاقتصادية، تسلط الدراسة الضوء على كيف ان ساكو خلق تفاعلاً بين الكلمة والصورة نتج عنه إحساساً بالإلحاح، المباشرة، والعمق العاطفي، محفزاً بذلك القراء على التفاعل بتعاطف مع قصص الصراع والأزمات. ومن خلال استخدام العدسات الموضوعية للمكان، الزمن، التأثير، والأخلاق، تظهر هذه الأطروحة كيف ان روايات ساكو المصورة تمثل سرديات جذابة وأدوات قوية لفهم التجارب الإنسانية في الظروف الصعبة، مما يبرز في النهاية إمكانية الرواية المصورة الوثائقية من إعادة تشكيل الصحافة والخطاب الثقافي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرواية المصورة الوثائقية، الدراسات الثقافية، الجماليات، الصحافة المصورة،

المكان، الزمن، التأثير، الأخلاق.