

## INTRODUCTION

### Graphic Novel

Graphic novel is a fast emerging area of study in the twenty first century. Although the word 'Novel' normally refers to long fictional works, the term "Graphic Novel" is used for the novels that contain both the fictional and non-fictional elements written in a comic book format. In a way, the term is the extended version of the comics. To elaborate it further Eddie Campbell writes:

First, it is used simply as a synonym for the comic books....Second, it is used to classify a format – for example, a bound book of comics either in soft – or hardcover – in contrast to the old-fashioned stapled comic magazine. Third, it means, more specifically, a comic-book narrative that is equivalent in form and dimensions to the prose novel. Finally, others employ it to indicate a form that is more than a comic book in the scope of its ambition – indeed, a new medium altogether. (13)

The term gained popularity after the publication of Will Eisner's *A Contract with God* (1978) and the start of Marvel's *Graphic Novel Line* (1982). However, it became familiar to the general public and gained popularity among the readers of the comic community only after the successful commercial success of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986). The story deals about the experiences of a Holocaust survivor. In 1992, it became the first graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize. In 2001, the Book Industry Study Group made a category in book stores. Indian fiction in English has now added this bold new medium and genre for the more sophisticated study of modern Indian English literature. Since Graphic Novels are coming up with the stories that touch upon the issues pertaining to the varied cultural domain it has widely been hailed by the critics as

a demanding new form of literary genre that generates visual-verbal literacy. Hillary Chute, in her essay, “Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative” writes:

What is the texture of narrative forms that are relevant to ethical representations of history? What are the current stakes surrounding the right to show and to tell history? What are the risks of representation? How do people understand their lives through narrative design and render the difficult processes of memory intelligible? (462)

The dominant focus on her commentary is the representation of history in the graphic medium that dominates the contemporary world literature.

### **Graphic Novels and Comics**

Although Comics and Graphic Novels look identical in their presentation due to the use of speech bubbles and illustrations for their narratives but they are not similar. Graphic Novel is mainly for the mature audience, thereby, it deals with the serious issues or serious theme and also has a self-contained plot, meaning the story begins and end within the framework of a single novel. It is said to be a combination of the elements of a comic and a novel. While Comics are mostly periodicals and action oriented whereas Graphic Novels have the pattern of a novel. Comics or the Graphic novels differ from other visual form of arts like theatre or cinema in terms of technical aspects because unlike them where a lot of contributors coordinate among each other to give a final shape to its product, Graphic Novels and Comics have a history of being a single individual product. In this literary form, the artist himself play the role of a writer, or one can say indulges himself as the chief author and vice versa. The imagery employed into the novel tries to seek the attention of the reader at first glance and dominates over his or her mind right through

the beginning of any story. It lures the image maker to enhance his style or technique which actually dazzles the eye of its readers.

The Graphic Novel focuses not just on action but explores deep into the theme of the historical contexts as well as the psychology of the characters. It has a 'well-defined plot', 'set of characters', 'dialogues' and a 'setting'. The interplay of words and images forms the essential component of the reading of the Comics and a Graphic Novel. Will Eisner, in her critical work *Comics and Sequential Art*, states:

The juxtaposition of images and the text has been experimented from earliest times. The inclusion of inscriptions employed as statements by the people depicted in medieval paintings was generally abandoned after the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Thereafter the efforts by the artists who sought to convey statements that went beyond decoration or portraiture were confined to facial expressions, postures, and symbolistic backdrops. The use inscriptions reappeared in broadsheets and popular publications in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Now the artists who dealt in story-bearing art for the mass audience sought to create a gestalt, some cohesive language, as the vehicle for the expression of a complexity of thoughts, sounds, actions, and ideas in a sequenced arrangement separated by boxes. This stretched the capabilities of simple imagery. In the process the modern narrative art form, which we call comics (and the French call Bande Dessinee) evolved. (13)

The imagery used forms the main component of the reading that generates critical literacy among the readers. The words and the images are the two major communicating devices of it. Learning through the text has been in the normal practice since long time but the technique

of employing the images and the text has always generated curiosity among the critics alike. Tom Wolf, writing in the *Harvard Educational Review* (August 1977) summed it up this way:

For the last hundred years, the subject of reading has been connected quite directly to the concept of literacy . . . learning to reading has gradually come under closer scrutiny. Recent research has shown that the reading of words is but a subset of more general human activity which includes symbol decoding, information integration and organization. . . . Indeed, reading-in the most general sense – can be thought of as a form of perpetual activity. The reading of words is one manifestation of this activity; but there are many others – the reading of pictures, maps, circuit diagrams, musical notes. . . . (qtd. in Wolf 35)

### **Sequential Arts**

Graphic Novels are the books that use the Sequential Arts to decipher and convey its meaning. The volume of a Graphic text helps it to present a stories in a much elaborative as well as in constructive manner.

Sequential Art in literally form basically deals with the arrangements of images and words in order to form the narrative. It is universally applied into the study of Comics books as well as Graphic Novels. It has been seen that for long it was often ignored by the research scholars as well academicians but now it has found a separate place in the literary studies in the academic curriculum. The interplay of the words and the images present a collage to the readers where the regiments of arts i.e. perspective, symmetry etc and the regiments of literature i.e. grammar, plot, syntax etc. become superposed upon each other which gives the reader to act on his perspective as well as intellectual quest.

In sequential art the two functions of writing and image making are closely woven with each other. It is like an act of weaving a fabric. The author controls the mind of the readers through the usage of text while writing the text but in the case of Comics and Graphic Novels the artists do the imagining for the readers. The image drawn by the author becomes its final and precise statements for the readers where no other interpretation is required. The meaning of the image thus has a finite cognizance for the readers. When the words and the image are mixed together it not only becomes descriptive but also allows the readers to understand the passage in a very meaningful way.

Sequential art works under a pattern where an image is either defined as a 'visual' or an 'illustration'. The former is a series or sequence of images that takes the place of descriptive textual passages whereas the latter mainly embellishes a descriptive passage by repeating the text itself. As the 'visual' produces a narrative by mixing the image and the text so this makes it the most unadulterated form of Sequential Art.

Sequential art has its limitations. An image can depict a gesture without words and can convey the emotional depth of any scene of a story. Images are specific so they form a concrete meaning and eliminate interpretation. However, the reader is free to generate and recognize his own interpretation of the real-life people presented in the graphic text. Traditional prose readers, however, enjoy a kind of secrecy while interpreting a text through a visualization of the text by translating the passage in his mind. Reading a textual novel is more a private affair of a reader than reading a graphic text. Will Eisner states that "the practice of sequential art is a teachable, studied skill that stems from an imaginative employment of science and language knowledge as well the ability to portray or caricature and handle the tools of drawing"(147). She elaborates

that it is the involvement of diverse disciplines that constitute a graphic or comic book story which includes:

- (a) Psychology (Human interaction, Social values, Cultural values, History, Literature)
- (b) Physics (Light, Psychology combined with Light to highlight the Body Language)
- (c) Mechanics (Motion, Force, Architecture)
- (d) Design (Employment of Space and Shapes, Stagecraft, Calligraphy)
- (e) Language (Vocabulary, Plotting, Myths and Imagery, Playwriting)
- (f) Draftsmanship (Human Anatomy, Perspective, Color, Caricature)

Sequential art deals with “recognizable imagery” where the human beings, objects and devices, natural phenomena and language are the tools for the study. This is an art form that makes a connection with the realism because it aims to narrate the story in a Graphic Novel. It is an art form that deals with the human experience.

### **Graphic Narrative:**

A narrative is retelling of a story that highlights the sequences of the events in it. A graphic narrative describes the stories in a Graphic Novel. It presents a number of visual and verbal clues that allow the reader to follow the plot, get into the story world and engages with the characters. Since the clues are not placed in random, they establish a connection between the reader and the narrator of the story. A narrative may well be defined as the sequence where a number of characters engages with each other and is recited by a narrator. Generally, it appears that images serve the purpose of showing a story and words are mainly suited for telling it but in Graphic format it is also the images that narrate a story. Eisner states:

In sequences, images can present different events which readers understand as part of a story, but also individual images can suggest a narrative, especially,

when they represent the encounter between different characters or when they indicate several (sequential) events simultaneously. In the case of Graphic Novel, the readers pick up clues from both from the images and the words, and mostly, the two modes work together toward unfolding the Graphic Narrative in the panel sequence. (32)

The story, discourse, and plot form the most essential part of the narrative in a Graphic Novel. The plot makes the connection between the events and the actions in a story which generates the effects of the story to its reader as how he or she perceives them. “The plot falls between what narratology, the study of narrative, calls story and what it calls discourse” (35). The images, words, panel sequences and the page layouts of the novel form the discourse of the narrative. The story is the skeleton of the events and meets up with the related discourse that eventually forms the storytelling. The plot forms an appendage between a story and a discourse in a Graphic narrative.

Image sizes and angles play an important role in the Graphic narrative. The graphic Novel, by choosing a particular image size and angle, presents to the reader with a clue on how the story is to be comprehended. Long shot, Medium long shot, Medium shot and Close ups are the four basic sizes that are applied into the narratives. Graphic Novel, in a narrative medium, tells a story and it is because of the words, images and their arrangements in sequences and page layouts that create a story. Their narratives extend from complication to resolution, between story, discourse, and plot. The narrator, observer, and focalizer feature in the narrative when the story is transmitted to the readers.

## **Indian Graphic Novel: Its Emergence and Present State:**

In the world of Comics and Graphic novels there has always been a strong connection between the images and the text and in the Indian context too this has been an old notion. The precursors of Comics and Graphic Novels like the vertical scrolls and the embroidered narratives have existed in India for hundreds of years. From the Oral tradition to the literary as well as digital and multimedia, Indian has vast instances of these literary forms. Even newer forms have evolved time by time through cultural, political and technological literary traditions and each of them co-exist and can be seen as non-sequential. Nina Sabnani, in her critical work, *India in Pictures: Comics and Graphic Novels*, explains:

Words and Images came in palm leaf paper manuscripts and paper when Oral knowledge of the sacred, the epic narratives and literature, began to be transmitted through writing. The focus shifted from listening to reading. The single scroll became a unit of pages held together, a book (or *pothi*). Also known as illuminated manuscripts, these traditions continued till the emergence of the printing press, and when paper became more popular. The material used determined the size and shape of these books. (189)

*Hamza Namah* was one of the earliest illustrated collection of stories that came out during the Mughal Emperor Akbar's time was a notional blend of history and local legend. It took almost fifteen years to complete and was Akbar's favorite book. It is a collection of adventurous stories that revolve around the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, Amir Hamza. The text is written at the back of the painted image. *Anwari Suhaili*, a Persian version of the animal fables, the *Panchatantra*, was also commissioned by Akbar. The images and the text in these books are comparable to the Graphic Novels of today. Even though the term Comics was not



prevalent in those days, literature of such quality did exist in India. It was only after the Post Independence that the Comics by Indian with Indian content emerged in India. *Chandamama* published in 1947 by Telugu writer Kodavatiganti Kutumba Ra garnered nationwide popularity amongst the children with its series of illustrated stories that focused on telling the mythological and magical tales. Interestingly, the writer of *Chandamama* used a third person narrative in this new medium of storytelling i.e. the comics, which resembled to the children as the grandparents' style of storytelling. In the 1960s with the coming of the *Indrajal* comics heralded a new era of graphic reading in India. The founder of Indrajal comics, Anant Pai, is regarded as one of the founding fathers of comic literary scene in India with the more popular work like the *Amar Chitra Katha* and *Tinkle* to his credit. *Mahabharatha* which was also published by the Indrajal comics became popular among the readers and became successful. On the popularity of Indrajal comics in India, Alok sharma has said this once in his interview in the newspaper *The Hindu*: "People were crazy about Phantom in the 1960s, when these anthologies came out as comic books. I had interviewed a book seller who has been around from that time and he told me that all the books would be sold in an hour" (Sharma.A, 2011). In the year 1967, India's largest selling comic book series *Amar Chitra Katha* came into existence. "With more than 400 comics in 20+ languages that have sold 100+ million copies to date, *Amar Chitra Katha*, is a cultural phenomenon"( Sharma.A, 2011). One of India's most loved comic character *Chacha Chaudhary* was conceptualised in the year 1969. Pran Kumar Sharma's creation of *Chacha Chaudhary* captured the imagination of the entire nation and if one has to take sales into account it managed to sell around 10 million copies till date. Originally published in the Hindi magazine, *Lotpot*, *Chacha Chaudhary* managed to blur the gaps between the adults and the children creating a space where every reader enjoyed the interesting anecdote of everyday life it provided. The

popularity of *Chacha Chaudhary* was so immense that it was translated in over ten different languages. The growing popularity of the comics was given impetus by the government of India by publishing a comic book based on the life of Mahatma Gandhi. In the 70s the competition among the comics publishing house began to heat up. Several comic publishing houses like the Goyal comics, Manoj comics and Diamond comics were in the race to capture the Indian comics market. The 80s is regarded as the golden era of the comics with the Publishing of the *Tinkle* by Anant Pai and Ajit Nina's *Detective Mochwala*. The 90s is actually the phase where popularity of the comic book reading began to fade. The period between the 1986 to 1996 is regarded as the Golden decade of Indian Comic Books. The year 1994 heralded the beginning of India's first Graphic Novel. Since a large portion of comic book readers were still prevalent in India, its new format generated and garnered a lot of popularity within a quick successive time. Since the last two decade, Graphic Novel reading in India has become one of the most popular literary genre which enjoys a tremendous amount of popularity. So, the main reason for the popularity of Graphic Novel could be attributed to the larger comic reading community.

Orjit Sen's *River of Stories* published in the year 1994 is regarded as the first Indian Graphic Novel. It was loosely based on the politically controversial Narmada River Valley Projects. The uniqueness of the book was that the writer used seemingly simple medium to narrate a deeper story. Since then on politically and socially motivated Graphic Novel in India began to be published, touching upon many serious issues that affect the common lives of the Indian social order. Historical events like the Partition or the Emergency period, Queer narratives, Dalit issues, the Kashmir dispute, Gender violence, and Discrimination etc. have found a place in the Indian Graphic Novel scenario. Amruta Patil's groundbreaking work *Kari* published in 2008 is regarded as the first Indian Graphic Novel by an Indian woman that had an

underlying theme of homosexuality. It was about a suicide survivor living in the metropolis of urban Mumbai who was longing for her girlfriend. *An Itch You Can't Scratch* by Sumit Kumar came out at first ever Indian comic con and was recently sold out which itself shows the kind of achievement the Graphic Novel space it now enjoys in India.

The vastness to which the social and political issues are expressed and highlighted in the Indian Graphic Novels has caught the attention of the Indian Universities and has made it a part of their academic curriculum. One of India's top institute, the Delhi University, made *Bhimayana* by S. Natarajan (which is a graphic novel based on the life of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar) as part of their BA(Honors) English curriculum.

Graphic anthologies are another arena of Graphic Novel that is gaining ground in the Indian literary scene. The focal point of these anthologies is that the contributors of the story are not seasoned writers, in fact people from different profession are coming together to contribute a story in a graphic format. A graphic anthology is the collection of stories, prose, poems etc. from different writers group contributing their artistic work to form the contours of a Graphic Novel.

### **Objective**

*This Side That Side* is an anthology on the Partition of Indian Subcontinent. The objective of the current research is to study, observe and examine the visual-verbal narratives that have been employed into the stories of this anthology since it is graphic take of the historical event. The primary sources of the research are *This Side That Side* which has been curated by Vishwajyoti Ghosh and *Orphans of the Storm* which has been selected and edited by Saros Cowasjee and K.S.Duggal. The researcher intends to highlight the commonalities and the differences while contrasting the two different formats of the literary genre. Since the research title is centralized on the narratives of the partition in a graphic format, the research will be

applying the methods of 'Narratology' by using the concepts proposed by Gerard Genette in the context of narrative discourses. Photo story and autography often form the essential part of a graphic anthology. Photo story are the 'photographs' with story while 'autography' is the term given to the autobiographical comics and graphic novel. The research intends to examine the narratives of 'photostories' and 'autographies' if so presented in the graphic format. The secondary sources of the research are *The Indian Graphic Novel: Nation, History and Critique* by Pramod K.Nayar which is an analysis of the Indian Graphic Novel as a significant category of literary study in South Asian literature. Will Eisner's *Comics and Sequential art* and Karin Kukkonen's *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels* as well as Paul Cobley's *Narrative* and Monika Fludernik's *An Introduction to Narratology* will also be employed as the secondary source during the course of the research.

### **Research Statement**

As stated earlier, *This Side That Side* is the first Indian graphic novel based on the Partition and this got me more interested in this anthology. The stories that are there in this anthology are very unique and different from the stories that we have read in the literature of Indian Partition. What was more intriguing was the kind of 'professionals' associated with i.e. multiple authors and artists from various professions like photographers, journalists, singers etc. who are now the new age writers contributing to its stories. These professionals are mostly young and recount the stories of Partition which, most of them, either heard from their grandparents or were in their childhood, the stories of Partition. These groups of professional form the 'third generation' writers of the Partition. In the context of Indian Literature, the readers have always read the stories of Partition from the perspective of the experienced writers or who are the 'first generation' writers, who have witnessed the horrors of Partition and presented them

in their works of the literature. I propose to find out the differences in the narratives by comparing the works of the ‘third generation’ writers of the Partition with the ‘first generation’ writers. It will be done by comparing an anthology compiled by the ‘first generation’ writers with the anthology of ‘third generation’ writers to find out the differences or similarities in their narrative tone and structure. *This Side That Side* will be used for studying ‘first generation’ anthology, Whereas *Orphans of the Storm* will be used to represent the ‘third generation’ anthology. An Analytical study of these two anthologies is required to achieve the goal of the proposed research.

The narratives of *This Side That Side* are in graphic format. The graphic text conveys their meaning through its visual imagery. The general perception is that the visuals help the readers to grasp the content on the page easily and the readers can understand the content without much difficulty and don’t require creative reading. I find this perception intriguing and therefore, I propose to find out the fluidness of the visual and the verbal narratives in the graphic narrative to see if this perception holds true or not. My research will focus on to find out the critical elements of the graphic anthology which, I feel, will greatly help the students of graphic novel studies.

### **Research Methodology**

The topic of my research is “Narrating Partition ‘graphically’: a study of *This Side That Side*”. The research methodology to be employed for the proposed research involves the application of ‘Narratology’. The research will compare and contrast the verbal and the visual narrative and do a structuralize study of the graphic stories. The method involves looking at individual pictures on a page as text into themselves. But the text as a part of the structure of the real outside. The research will apply the verbal – visual narrative strategy for its findings. An

analytical reading into both the anthology will be done to highlight the similarities and differences between the theme and structure of the anthologies.

## **Literature Review**

*This Side That Side : Restorying Partition* by Vishwajyoti Ghosh is an anthology of diverse narratives and short stories pertaining to the Partition of India. The stories are showcased in graphic format with rich visual where the combination of the text and image forms the narrative to place the reader at the scene. A more powerful messaging emerges from the engaging visual representation of the images with less spoken or even absence of words.

This graphic anthology was published in 2012 and has 47 contributors who have come together to present a collection of 28 stories with the common theme of the partition. Most of the contributors come from varied professional group like the journalists, illustrators, filmmakers, artists, designers and writers. What is more interesting about this graphic anthology is that the contributors are not only confined to India but also from the neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh who have come together to present this beautiful anthology. This is for the first time in the Indian English literature that the readers get an insight to the idea or the emotions attached and his perspective about it from our neighboring country. These contributors have voiced narratives of fiction, poetry, reportage, comics and family histories. The short stories are the pieces that inform, educate, amuse and entertain. They allow the reader to look at the partition through different lenses and often with anecdotal and personal connections in the context of the real life which is not isolated in a history textbook. The stories lead the reader to explore the idea of the 'other side' by questioning the idea of identity and home. The novel itself is in a experimental format which engages the readers to approach the book without any preconceived

opinion and this allows the reader to explore deeper into our history. The cover of the novel has a praising note by world renowned Graphic Novelist Joe Sacco who notes down:

This astonishing collection of talent from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh focuses on the lasting effects of partition and dwells on the human yearning for something other than what history and its makers dictate. Beautiful, moving, and unforgettable.(bookcover)

The graphic narratives negotiate about the intermittent partition that caused a tremendous amount of loss, pain, suffering and despair. The stories in this graphic anthology are not only confined to the partition of India and Pakistan alone but also about the creation of Bangladesh and the flux of the refugees that preceded and followed it. There are stories of the experiences of the bitter migrations from India to Pakistan after the end of the riots and violence. Graphic narratives about the estrangement of minorities in every country that partition left behind are also part of this anthology. It is true that these stories are already read by large audiences earlier but *This Side That Side* does give much less space to the stories of the people who suffered the immediate consequences of the partition. If we compare the stories of *This Side That side* with the other critical works on the partition in textual form like the works of Khuswant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* or Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* then the readers can understand the discrepancies between the two formats. The anthology refused to confront the horrors altogether at most of the times. Of the two stories about the partition of Punjab, one (*I Too Have Seen Lahore!*) does refer to the slaughter that accompanied it, but the focus is more on the fortune of the protagonist in escaping it. In the other story, *90 Upper Mall*, the migration of families across the border is cut down almost to a picnic with a series of unfortunate mishaps, with only a hint that it was taking place in an atmosphere of chaos and violence. The anthology

supply itself as incomplete by bordering out the most painful losses of Partition. According to Ghosh, the objective of this anthology was to take in mind the succeeding generations of children and grandchildren and how they have negotiated maps and never get drawn.

*Orphans of the Storm* is an anthology of partition of India in textual format. This novel too has stories by a diverse group of authors from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and has narrated the traumatic experiences of the partition period that occurred in the history of the subcontinent. Most of the stories in the novel were written in vernacular languages that have been translated into English and are well presented in the novel. The anthology explores every facet of Partition right from the moments of unprecedented brutality and savagery to the moments of compassion and humanity. Most of the writers are seasoned authors of Indian Literature. The list of writers includes Kartar Singh Duggal, Bapsi Sidhwa, Sadat Hasan Manto, Mulk Raj Anand, Khuswant Singh, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Kamleshwar, Mohan Rakesh, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishen Chander and Samaresh Basu. Pakistani authors contributing to this anthology include Aziz Ahmad, Qudrat Ullah Shahab and Intizar Husain. These collected stories have a variety of themes and style that reflect a multiplicity of voices and experience.

*The Indian Graphic Novel: Nation, History and Critique* By Pramod K. Nayar is a detailed study of the Indian Graphic Novel as a significant category of South Asian literature. Nayar teaches at the department of English at University of Hyderabad, India. His critical work focuses on the genre's engagement with history, memory and cultural identity and its critique of the nation in the form of dissident histories and satire. It explores using key illustrations from the texts – critical themes like contested and alternate histories, urban realities, social exclusion, contemporary politics and identity politics. His critical work has been immensely helpful in understanding the subtlety of the Indian Graphic Novel and other related works. Furthermore



Nayar has a vast expertise of dealing with the Critical literacy and Graphic narratives which are very essential to understand the work on Indian Graphic narratives. Karin Kukkonen seminal work titled *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels* is one of the most instrumental books to understand and comprehend the nuances of Comics and Graphic literature. Researchers working on the Graphic and Comic book literature have always associated themselves delving into the works of Karin Kukkonen which is the seminal studies for understanding the compositions of this new literary format.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of the present research is that the both the anthology has Partition as its core theme and they differ in their presentation. By comparing and contrasting them, I am sure to bring out the differences in its narratives. It is to be seen in what areas both the anthologies differ with each other apart from their style of representing the story in textual and visual form. The present research will also bring out the structure of the narration in the graphic anthology by using the verbal and the visual narrative technique strategy.

The next chapter will give a description of the 'narrative' and the 'narratology'. It will further define the components and concept of verbal - visual narrative strategy and give a brief introduction on the Partition of India and the partition literature.

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