Article

Beyond the written word: Investigating Post-Colonial identity through ballooned words and drawn texts in Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novels

Jerusha Angelene Christabel Godwin[1,*], **Shilaja C. L.**[2]

[1] Department of English, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai 600 119, Tamil Nadu, India

[2] Department of English, Stella Maris College, Chennai 600086, Tamil Nadu, India

* Corresponding author: Jerusha Angelene Christabel Godwin, jeru123bell@gmail.com

Abstract: This study delves into the unique narrative style of graphic novelist Sarnath Banerjee, focusing on his depiction of post-colonial identity in a modern, multilingual Indian context. It examines how Banerjee utilizes both phonetic elements and text to express this theme. Contrary to the perception of comics as trivial, this paper argues that they effectively blend visual and verbal elements, creating multimodal texts where various semiotic elements contribute significantly to meaning-making. Banerjee's work, characterized as rhizomatic, employs a hybrid symbolic system to navigate the complex postmodern and postcolonial landscape of India. He does so through the use of symbolic, emblematic, and indexical features, which are integral in articulating these societal tensions.

Keywords: graphic, Post-Colonial, phonic, ballooned words, Postmodern

1. Introduction

The paper focuses on investigating the phonetic and textual procedures by which graphic writer Sarnath Banerjee communicates types of post-pilgrim personalities on the backdrop of contemporary multilingual India in the context of a post-pilgrim society. Even though comic books—with their charming mix of words and pictures—are far from being a common, insignificant type of media, they offer a powerful platform for the outpouring of postcolonial and postmodern discussions of personality that the creator is trying to convey. There is an inherent tension between the verbal and visual components of correspondence in graphic books, which serve as a multimodal text that can make and coordinate implications between various semiotic components. At this point, Sarnath Banerjee has written three graphic works: Corridor (2004), The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers (2007), and The Harappa Files (2010). Each of these works, which uses a variety of styles and strategies, utilizes the signs as half-informational and half-codes and highlights them with famous, representative, indexical highlights in order to emphasize contemporary tensions and ambiguities.

Indian iconography and pictography, with their intricate and detailed expressions, form a rich tapestry of visual culture, yet surprisingly, comics do not originate as an indigenous art form in this diverse landscape. Despite this, the unique format of comics, marrying text and visuals, finds a natural resonance in India's multifaceted linguistic milieu. This harmonious blend of text and imagery in comics caters adeptly to India's multilingual character, facilitating communication and storytelling across linguistic barriers. Comics ingeniously leverage the country's traditional strengths in visual storytelling, embedding them within a universally accessible format. This allows for

the seamless transmission of narratives, emotions, and cultural nuances, making comics not just a form of entertainment but a potent medium for cultural exchange and education in a nation celebrated for its rich tapestry of languages and dialects. Thus, while not autochthonous, comics have carved a distinctive niche in India's artistic panorama, harnessing the country's inherent diversity and visual richness to foster a unique and thriving comic culture.

The revocation and contribution of language in post-frontier graphic books therefore mirror the worth of nearby works on, as per Pennycook's vision (2010). The logic Banerjee employs in the development of his texts is in accordance with Ashcroft's (2009) theory of language change in postcolonial settings that uses hybridized varieties of English to interpret neighbourhood societies.

In this paper, we will discuss how Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novels portray the idea of identity as a main preoccupation, visual and linguistically, in the way that it has the potential to become a crisis. As I intend to analyze several examples from the post-colonial context of India in this text, I have chosen a selection of them so that they can illustrate the different modes of construction of identity traits and cultural values that are distinguishable from one another. A network of intertextual references can be found within these graphic narratives, suggesting the possibility of ambiguity in the language of comic books, while also interrogating the forms of identity within a dual sense of fragmentation of texts in the present day multicultural and multilingual India, which presents a plurality of voices, stories, memories of the self.

2. World mapping

2.1. Meanings and signs

There is an ancient tradition of depicting stories in a graphic manner. A comparison of pictures and words can be evoked by Wolk (2007, pp. 126-127) as to how they relate to poetry and painting. This can be seen from the perspective of classical poets and rhetoricians like Simonides of Keos and Horace, who discussed a variety of genres and ways of representing themselves in their works. Despite the differences between a graphical representation of ideas and a verbal description, both graphical representations and verbal descriptions have a large potential to convey meanings and ideas, and when they are combined, the power of representation becomes especially obvious, not to mention powerful. There is no doubt that when words and pictures collaborate in graphic novels, they collaborate in a semiotic relationship that creates a new type of mixed language, in which words and signs carry a particular meaning or reference, in other words, a new mixed language.

Saraceni (2003, p. 5) argues that one of the most key features of comics is not only their use of words, but the way they use words and images in conjunction with the arrangement of selected representational parts through a textual process that makes them into cohesive and coherent stories. While the different scenes are arranged in frames called panels, in which their linguistic and pictorial components are grouped together, they are part of the narration flow and compress the story and as such, are part of the narrative flow. As a result, the scenes appear to be stuck or frozen at times, while they actually are part of the narration flow. It is also important to note that the gutter is another essential element of graphic novel architecture, since it is a blank

space between the panels which connects the different scenes and condenses the storyline, because the reader is supposed to interpret not just pictures and words but also the 'invisible' presence of meanings and developments.

There is always a certain amount of information that is missing from the narrative, and Saraceni identifies a similarity between the gutter and the space that separates one sentence from the next (2003, p. 9). The balloon and the caption are two other elements that contribute to the vigor and consistency of the comic book language. In addition to its typical cloud-like shape, the speech balloon can also be of two types, namely speech balloons and thought balloons, which are both connected to the character by a tail, said to serve the same function as clauses (Saraceni, 2003, p. 9). In addition to the use of captions, Saraceni describes them as the "background voice often heard in films when you see them sounding out of focus" (2003, p. 10), a tool that can provide extra information in support of the narration. This textual dynamism is achieved in Sarnath Banerjee's works to a great extent, as we shall see, in order to exploit in toto the fruitful dynamic within his works an arrow that indicates the way to a certain place, and finally the third regards the arbitrary assignment of values and meanings to signs, according to conventions, for example those regulating road signs.

2.2. Double pragmatism

Because of the multimodality of comics and graphic novels and their structural complexity, I would argue that a double approach to this genre should be taken, taking into consideration both the production of text on the one hand and the reception and translation of words and images on the other hand. Essentially, the assumption that a graphic novel is a textual creation can be derived from a set of semantic, syntactic, rhetorical, and pictorial elements that can be incorporated into the narrative construction can be described as the fact that the language of comics is not only semantic, syntactic, and rhetorical, but also typographic, pictographic, and pictorial. During the process of writing for graphic narrative, Eisner asserts that he first develops a concept, then describes it in detail, and then constructs the narrative chain as the way in which the concept is translated into images to create the narrative. Dialogue and images play a powerful role in supporting the story; both work together to tell it. There is a seamless integration of both, and they emerge as one whole" (2008, p. 113). There are many different components in comics which play a part in, and contribute to, the narration process (Saraceni, 2001; Bridgeman, 2004), because it is characterized by an amalgamation of different elements (Saraceni, 2001; Bridgeman, 2004). Eco (2008) observes that cognitive processes that are geared towards decoding signs and references play a critical role in the perception of words and pictures, and that the balloon is a great example of meta-language because it anchors the textual part to a certain code, and has its own internal rules, which can be considered meta-language.

While Barker analyzes graphic narratives from the perspective of a dialogical approach, which means the reader reconstructs his or her own world and perceptions and tries to find a balance between fiction and non-fiction, Barker (1989) emphasizes the social aspect of reading graphic narratives as part of a social interaction process. Moreover, Barker states that comic strip conventions form the basis of social relations; they help to determine the kind of reader we will be in the future. Reading becomes a

social affair as we interact with the text in a conversation" (1989, p. 11). This perspective suggests that comics have an important role to play in the visual semiotics of society, as they textualize a particular kind of linguistic landscape, and at some point, at least to a certain degree, they echoes the notion of geosemiotics, which is a social theory that investigates the social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses in the world around us and our actions within it (Scollon and Scollon, 2003. p. 2). A further endorsement of this idea can be found in Blommaert and Huang (2010) as they elaborate on the relative specificity of signs in their respective contexts and domains in their work. Furthermore, comics, as well as their grapho-textual nature, enhance the representational power of their work and reflect the specific sociocultural local context which they wish to convey: Banerjee's comics are a representation of bits and pieces of Indian culture amidst a global cultural framework. The idea that language is a local practice will be used in support of this interpretation as Pennycook (2010) emphasizes the linguistic and communication processes that occur within and across communities to express identity.

2.3. Youth language in comics?

As a socially defined group, comic book readers can be divided into two broad categories, which can be grouped in two broad subcategories: comics for children and comics for adults, like the story Banerjee, for example, that is written for adults. According to Wolk, comics contain a unique blend of content that reflects the social context within which they are produced (2007, p. 60), as a result, comics may be a uniquely modern and atypical genre (e.g., a subculture for young adults, for example). Taking the comics language in its entirety, in fact, we can say that it is a combination of verbal play, non-standard vocabulary, lexical innovation, lingos, and expressions that are often connected with the jargon of specific social groups and are thus often used as social bonding tools. In some cases, these terms may even constitute a form of "antilanguage" (a concept originally developed by Halliday), often associated with jargon of specific social groups. Often comics, because of the 'antilanguage properties' they possess, have been exploited to provide a platform for controversial issues or to express disillusionment and protest.

The "western" world is known for its comic book culture, but in the Indian context, comics do not have as much of a following and are not as widely used. The identification of comics as linguistic codes for young people must be done with caution as it may also be the result of a variety of factors. India's emerging younger generation certainly has a strong influence on communication and literacy, and implicitly on the several styles of storytelling, and can be seen as reflecting yet again the complex multilingual and multicultural situation of the country. The language of young people in South Asia is examined by Nair (2008, pp. 474-479) who identifies six strategies (clippings, inflectional and derivational suffixes, acronyms, abbreviations, neologisms, nonce formations, and relexicalized items) in her analysis. The goal of young people is to establish their sense of self as well as their sense of identity through the use of sociolinguistic resources in order to establish their sense of modernity, in order to break the link between tradition and modernity in order to establish their sense of self, and thus break the link with the tradition of the past. This article cites that "Indian

youth can demonstrate their linguistic capabilities in a number of innovative ways that will help them establish a sense of independent identity as well as form a linguistic vanguard in pursuit of 'freedom of speech' across international borders," as well as perform a set of cross-cultural linguistic feats in public for the purpose of ensuring their independence.

Now if we take a closer look at the language of Indian comics, specifically those created by Banerjee, we can see that this sort of special device does not appear to make its appearance, at least not on the surface, as many of the elements employed are blander than complex. As a result, Banerjee's uses of linguistic complexity seem to adhere to the paradigms of representation and innovation that according to the Indian socio-cultural context in which he lived in contemporary India, illustrate the social-cultural context in which the youth grew up. Although the graphic novelist is not specifically geared towards a young reader, he is able to portray the vitality of those younger generations, in a time of increasing lifespans and the institutions of the modern nation-state that have worked together to produce a new social space within which the concept of youth, a concept which has its own specialized culture, is psychologically expanded and developed, in a context where, according to Nair (2008, p. 468) "new social spaces have been created that have enabled the idea of youth to flourish and develop". This concept may also be seen as a way for comic books to be a particular site for the expression of 'in-progress' identity, using hybridity and imagination to problematize and critique the emergence of modernity and tradition at the same time.

3. Indian graphic storyteller Sarnath Banerjee

As a young child growing up in Kolkata, Sarnath Banerjee learned how to make comics to express a multifaceted representation of Indian society through the study of Communication and Image at Goldsmith College at the University of London. His unique and eclectic style allows him to break and rearrange storylines and plots in a postmodern manner, thereby offering insight into the social and cultural contexts of the country through a postmodern and eclectic fusion of stories and characters. This story weaves together episodes, pictures, signs, and references into a narrative, which, thanks to the alliance of panels, gutters, and balloons, conveys the reader's meaning, requiring the reader to cognitively deconstruct the meaning of each scene.

A series of interconnected stories, nervously oscillating between Delhi and Kolkata, have been described in various press reviews as being 'India's first graphic novel'. Brighu and Digital Dutta, two of the story's most extravagant characters, are the two most clichéd characters they must contend with. He is a young man who is enamored with outlandish collections, such as rare albums of forgotten musicians which I cannot listen to without scratching the record. The first is a man with a craze for outlandish collections... As soon as Bambi borrowed volume four and didn't return it, I stopped reading phantom—the ghost who walks—which I have stopped reading since then" (Banerjee, 2004, pp. 5-6). As a result of his rich intertextual technique, he seems to be expressing a postmodern identity accompanied by a certain psychological maelstrom. He does so by utilizing both verbal language and meaningful drawings. He also includes meta-reference to comic books by mentioning Lee Falk's The Phantom,

a classic from the genre. A postmodern Ibn Battuta, Brighu does not hesitate to define himself as such. Through the accumulation of explicit elements, symbols, quotations, Brighu constructs his textual narrative through a series of explicit elements, symbols, quotations, which is reinforced explicitly by Jean Baudrillard, a writer whose work has been interpreted as pathologically interpreting collecting and materialism. There is also another man whose visionary self is depicted similarly to the one depicted in the book; a Kolkata-based software engineer named Digital Dutta. His portrayal can be summed up as: "In his head, he is a faith healer, a quantum physicist, a war reporter, a linguist, a kalari expert, all of which are framed in narrative form. His mind is full of images of dancing with Isadora Duncan, playing the guitar with Django Reinhart, figuring out Einstein's equations, performing escape tricks with Harry Houdini, and exploding the midfield with Garincha in his mind. The man gives the impression that he has been Chris Evert's mixed-doubles partner in his head" (Banerjee, 2004, pp. 40-41). To make the reader understand the dynamic imagination of the author, the two characters are used to illustrate how the author explores and manipulates the elusive unity between contemporaneity and its sense of identity (although that may be impossible).

The second volume of Bannerjee's novel is yet another attempt to challenge textual linearity as it employs the resource of intertextuality to the highest degree possible by at the same time evoking multiple eras, worlds, historical events, and fictional events simultaneously, through explicit and hidden references, to the greatest extent possible. It can be seen immediately in the title of the work that the author practices an intricate system of references that govern the narrative worlds of his story, which is translated from a Bengali satirical novel written in the 19th century by Kali Prasanna Singh (1862-1864). A brief prologue sets the stage for The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers, which then consists of thirteen sections, the titles of which are collectively known as "The Dark Armpits of History". The stories in these books recreate the legend of the wandering Jew: the protagonist is assigned the task of relocating an eponymous book that is rife with colonial narrations and shocking revelations about the past. An obscure man retraced his ancestors and family history after traveling from London to Kolkata in search of his migrant family and ancestors in an unusual quest. There is a way in which the graphic novel behaves in a kind of schizophrenic way as an intercultural DIY who's based on the layering of various allusions, episodes, icons, and drew extensively on a variety of forms.

In Sarnath Banerjee's most recent series of graphic narratives, the idea of graphic narrative is expanded and fragmented to create an experimental, hybridised narrative that is hard to define and is not easy to define. There are numerous sketches, strips, advertisements, and photographs in this book, which are all interconnected, presenting it fictitiously as the final report of a fictitious organization called the Greater Harappa Rehabilitation, Reclamation and Redevelopment Commission. As the author describes in her book, "the Great Harappa Survey will be conducted in an effort to conduct a gigantic survey of a country in the midst of great hormonal changes" (Banerjee, 2011. p. 11). This writer, by building up a rich archive of genres and icons, has created a collection of black-and-white images without panels, descriptive captions, graphic elements taken from the worlds of advertising and cinema that have been interpolated with simple black-and-white images with no panels, with the purpose of scrutinizing

the tension and anxiety that is so prevalent in India today. As you can see from the titles of the various "files" within this volume, they often evoke memories of known persons, products, or even educational acronyms, such as "Vicco" (a group that specializes in Ayurvedic medicine) or "IIT" (Indian Institutes of Technology). They are organized into different chapters within the volume. It seems that the writer does not intend for his material to develop in a linear manner here, but rather he seems to be deliberately using symbols and allusions, as the file is about resurrecting, examining, and cataloguing cultural, human, and material relics from the near past (Banerjee, 2011. p. 15), which is why the writer is able to mix colonial memories with contemporary uncertainties.

4. Banerjee's graphic novels, linguistic strategies are employed

4.1. Fictional and non-fictional languages as local practices

My way to deal with Banerjee's multimodal texts is chiefly grounded on the possibility of language as a neighborhood practice, a thick idea utilized by Pennycook "to perceive how different semantic assets are utilized, various universes evoked, various potential outcomes participated in as individuals utilize the etymological fortitude around them" (2010, p. 69). Such a viewpoint centers around the capacity of language clients to connect and address all the while human exercises, cooperations and minds, in an open demonstration that considers how nearby social signs build the feeling of territory. Pennycook manages different settings and classifications and accentuates the interconnection among region and verbal message which ties people and networks in a consistently developing intertextual process, enhanced by the rhymes of globalization and its hybridized nearby and worldwide collections.

I think it is feasible to broaden and apply such interpretative devices to different occasions of language being used, including comics as authentic assets for the outflow of personality on the grounds that the blended (verbal/pictorial) dialects that the graphic writer uses should be visible as parts of a bigger social interwoven. As Pennycook holds "scenes are more than the climate in which texts and pictures are drawn; they are spaces that are envisioned and concocted" (2010, p. 67), and thusly they can incorporate those text-types that mix different restricted modalities and references. To be sure, Banerjee's works convey the qualities, logical inconsistencies and appearances of the overflowing Indian social scene, with its profound and perplexing character developments, repeating key ideas, for example, rahtra (country), lakshmi (riches) and samaj (society) (French, 2011). Pennycook's examination is mostly addressed to non-scholarly classes, yet it tends to be adjusted to artistic messages too, as they also might be viewed as illustrative assets communicating a particular world vision. As Bex reminds us, "despite the fact that it is actually the case that writing doesn't allude straightforwardly to the extraordinary world, it is not necessarily the case that it doesn't allude in a roundabout way. The ideas and suggestions which are evoked by perusing a scholarly text might not have explicit connections with things and connections in the nonfictional world, however they empower us to make somewhat rich nonexistent mental universes which imitate the outer world" (1996, p. 183). In any case, assuming we widen our viewpoint, we could contend that artistic messages don't only intercede the connection among addresser

and recipient trying to address reality, however they might function as ideal destinations for the development of characters and practices, however different semiotic assets, which are privately implanted and given fitting significance.

Banerjee's graphic novels intricately weave a tapestry of communication through a meticulously curated amalgamation of visual elements, transcending conventional textual narratives. His works are not just a mere assembly of illustrations but a rich, explained collection of signs that encompass a wide array of paralinguistic components. These elements, ranging from subtle advertisements and intricate maps to vivid photographs (Banerjee, 2011, p. 15), are not arbitrary; they are deliberately chosen to resonate with the ambient cultural and linguistic nuances of the setting. In essence, Banerjee's artistry lies in his ability to harness these multifaceted symbols, transforming them into compelling instances of language that reflect and engage with the local practices, thereby offering a profound commentary on the narrative's socio-cultural context.

These texts remix and reshape social references, frontier language, picture-upheld wit, and other semiotic vehicles, in the desire to describe, reconsider, and look at the real world and its distinct aspects by means of new open channels. The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers, for instance, opens with an advance notice which peruses "This book is enlivened by history however not restricted by it" (Banerjee, 2007. IV) and subsequently expressly characterizes its aggressive and unexpected degree. In the incipit of The Harappa Files, all things being equal, the individuals from the More noteworthy Harappa Recovery, Recovery and Redevelopment Commission chorally express that "to tell/new/stories/one/needs/new/dialects" (Banerjee, 2011, p. 12), and from such a provocative declaration arise two basic viewpoints: the craving to organize characters and conditions through stories, and the choice to control or reproduce codes (through new dialects). Along these lines, the design of the text embraces language as a neighborhood practice with an end goal to communicate mentalities and sentiments, and we ought to recall that the London-instructed creator appropriates and once again imagines a non-autochthonous class to examine a majority of social settings, for example the conflicted weight of the provincial past and the tight way towards the fate of India, and its numerous contemporary personalities.

The possibility of nearby practice can likewise allude to drawn pictures that reflect contextualized real factors and settings, though the graphological aspect here capabilities through the help of "visual English", and further confirms the confined perspective and character contemplation. As per Goodman (1996, p. 52) "the manners by which we address occasions outwardly are connected to our perspective about those occasions, and what we need to convey about them". Thusly, the Indian creator's set of three turns a focal point on a few significant parts of Indian culture and society and what rises out of this literary intricacy doesn't concern a solitary type of personality, but instead various numerous selves performing various demonstrations and getting across different nearby settings.

4.2. The deconstruction of Banerjee's comics

Despite Banerjee's uncommon illustrative and phonetic assets that compose Banerjee's illustrative and phonetic assets, the three graphic stories share a few,

especially important underlying characteristics that enable him to achieve his aggressive undertaking through his unmistakable and diverse methods. There is a great deal of confusion and defamiliarization for the reader at the beginning of the article as the writer's idiolect influences conventional multimodal vehicles in an unusual way. Since these graphic books are quite thick and it requires considerable effort to reproduce the boards, I will focus on some of the more intriguing highlights in the subsequent segments to help give a sense of what is happening. However, it is essential to note that such gadgets in comics aren't simply disconnected from one another, but rather, they constitute a heterogeneity of semiotic components, intermixing images, photographs, images, and texts into a literary association that might seem hastily tumultuous at first, but that really integrates a variety of sensible edges and social conversations (Bridgeman, 2004).

4.2.1. Colouring

As one of the most eye-catching aspects in quite a while, shading is one of the first components to catch one's attention, for example, the way that photos, and sometimes even words, can either have a lot of contrast or be tinted in assorted colors. Essentially, both strategies are of importance, and they add even more meaning to the story: clear highly contrasting pictures seem "easier" to read than hued pictures, yet they can often employ really profound expressiveness and provide considerable representation. From a quantitative perspective, we can see that in Corridor out of 112 pages, 20 of which are, no doubt, somewhat hued, while in The Barn Owls' Wondrous Capers, out of 263 pages, 40 of which are, without a doubt, somewhat shaded, so from a simple quantitative perspective we can see that the North is indeed somewhat hued. It can be noted that The Harappa Files is a different case, since there are a large number of shades throughout the book, but this is solely due to the book's emphatically notorious nature, and because of its similarity to other types of portrayals, such as images and publicizes. Throughout different forms and types of illustration, Kress and Van Leeuwen affirm that "variety frequently functioned as a semiotic gadget for the purpose of creating union and lucidity, and this capability was dynamic across a large variety of classes and levels of representation" (2001, p. 58). Moreover, many of the images in this book do not have divisions between boards, yet they still occupy a generous portion of the page because they are not clearly outlined, making them seem to be going on forever on each page.

Alternatively, it may be that the reasoning behind the essayist's choice to keep black and white only when it comes to Corridor is related to his trial-and-error approach to dealing with the class and his desire to maintain a world tradition that has been established for centuries. While the influence of meta-reference gadgets could certainly influence the notability of images and other elements, for example, we can see the hand drawing a board on which a graphic craftsman is working through the use of a meta-reference gadget in the last scene in which we can see the hand attracting the board (Banerjee, 2004, p. 107), suggesting a continuous chain of inward references to the process of writing (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Copyright © Sarnath Banerjee 2004.
(Source: Sarnath Banerjee, Corridor, Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 2004, p. 107).

This is why the highly contrasted strategy can also serve as an expressive language device that can be used to convey a viewpoint that differs from the sensible guidelines of depiction. It is important to remember that "there are many different methodology frameworks that depend primarily on the setting where the picture will be shown" (Goodman, 1996, p. 59).

4.2.2. Lettering

As one of the most visible and valuable aspects of graphic stories, lettering has a significant role in highlighting and denoting the voices of the characters and can incorporate various kinds of devices, including spelling, typography, visual similar sounding word usages, visual jokes, and many other features. According to Eisner, the way in which letters are engraved and the way accents are copied in a graphic story are signs that guide the peruser to get the full effect of the subtleties that the comic narrator intended to convey (2008, p. 61). As much as the author uses block letters for a wide variety of statements and texts in The Corridor, in the other two works it seems he is inclined to favor letters that appear as though they were written by hand. Inflatables contain direct discourse, which is often italicized, while subtitles usually have capital letters, which is a standard font style used to write subtitles. It is evident from the way the characters are portrayed that the decision is to use handwritten letters and words evokes an effortlessness and encapsulation, such as in the storyteller's efforts in The Barn Owls' Wondrous Capers in an attempt to find peace with his disturbing past as well as ancient remnants of his past as he tries to rediscover Kolkata (2007, p. 59) as well as examines some problems with his new companion Computerized Dutta (2007, p. 158). Another instance of a difference in typeface in a similar volume occurs in the context of a radio speaker's voice being employed to signal a difference in communication, for example, the use of dispatch text as the voice of a radio announcer (2007, p. 31), or even the chilly greeting in a school letter (2007,

p. 42). There are some cases where we are presented with words that are written in Hindi using the Devanagari alphabet in order as a way to convey the meaning (Banerjee, 2004, p. 65), however in the majority of cases, such code-exchanges are used as subtitles to pictures and photographs, thereby strengthening the association between verbal and visual systems. There are several functions that lettering can fill, aside from simply esthetic or reminiscent elements, but it can also be used in depicting sound effects such as the sound to word imitation (Terescenko, 2010), which enhances the portrayal of specific audio effects. So, in a sense, this book is an excellent addition to an existing collection of knowledge by being distinguished by what Goodman calls graphosemantics, which he describes as an idea that "looks at what is composed, yet at how things are composed and at the relationship between them" (1996, p. 44, creator's emphasis). Hence, it should be noted that the surface composition of the text is his/her own determination of its importance, regardless of the style that is embraced.

4.2.3. Captioning and speech

A subtitle and direct discourse are usually connected when there is a picture present, but there might be times when one component and one component are very separate, especially when there is no picture present. A message can be used just with pictures and inscriptions, as was done in The Harappa Files with its scant presence of messages encased in inflatables. It is also possible, as happened in The Harappa Files, to substitute missing or unusual phrasing for the message. In contrast, a depiction can progress in detail since the authenticity of the images is of utmost importance, even in the absence of subtitles or unmistakable signs of explanation. This is mainly due to the way the images are presented. From a multimodal mix of different signs and components to a multimodal mix of comics, as we move from a multimodal mix of various signs and components to a multimodal mix of comics, there appears to be an attempt to decipher the multimodal mix of signs and components rather than overestimating its implications. Therefore, it makes sense that "the reader is obliged to participate in the discussion by providing implicit exchanges that create the illusion of an ongoing dialogue. That is, this device is used frequently in films, to create a succession of events which otherwise would be less credible and thus break down" (Eisner, 2008, p. 57).

A great deal has been written about the Harappa Files and its use of this technique that has become widespread. There is a distinct division in The Harappa Files that emphasizes the way in which each element of the story is arranged in a way that exemplifies the way in which the story is interconnected by imperceptible yet strong social bonds that create a visual representation of the characters (the significance of being Indian) and the countries (India as a nation). In the book, it is believed that the author attempts to portray a society that is quick to promote and has suffered from bipolar turmoil, a post-change India, in a way that tries to emphasize this point as much as possible, and this passage illustrates the twofold complexity of a nation whose upsides are a result of its traditional customs while it is embracing the staggering power of innovation in its present form. The subtitles and dialogue in the story convey the style of the story as they refer to nearby and public settings throughout the plot to construct significance in a way that is postmodern by implying local and public surroundings. The volume contains an impressive number of subtitles that add an even

greater amount of meaning to the images depicting the various scenes, types, and buzzwords of India throughout the book. Furthermore, the character development and portrayal cycle are presented in a manner that is fundamentally pluralistic and multicultural, as it is in a country such as India.

4.2.4. Blending pictures with photographs

The effectiveness of this blending system is quite a testament to the serious level of multimodality that is applied to comics daily. There are vivid photographs that are included in The Barn Owls' Wondrous Capers, for example, which highlight various sections of Kolkata. For example, the crowded ghats, the fish market, Dalhousie's office area, or the various publicizing photographs and logos, all support and reinforce the text-based surface of these accounts, thereby making their visual power more apparent. There are two concepts that have been introduced by Goodman (1996, pp. 48-49) that could be used here in conjunction with each other, which have been named separately as "visual similarity" and "visual jokes".

As a matter of fact, the primary classification of Harappa Files can be related to various kinds of independent ventures that are managed by the Harappa Files, for example, and the idea that there might be underlying redundancy is exemplified by a single and a half-page photograph of an Indian copy booth and writing material (Banerjee, 2011, pp. 174-175) that illustrates the possibility. It is possible to see a visual play on words with respect to the Indian organization that is notably slow by examining an episode in which a Babu representative (drawn) explains the reasons behind the requirement for a few records: "We cannot do anything for you until you have completed three forms—D6732 F, structure 11B/section 28, structure 38C/71, and thing 1016, each containing a late visa-sized photograph that has been properly endorsed and sealed by a class IV gazetted official that has been formally declared a class IV official." This verbose discourse is followed by a photograph depicting a mass of yellowishly continued, ineffective files, which serves as a common support system for both the printed and photographic components of the board, resulting in a kind of farce, in the sense that they are complementary.

4.2.5. Iconic advertisements

In recent years, photography has gained increasing prominence in popular publicity as a means of observing social nuances and mental distinctions. The presence of photographs is known to result in the observation of social qualities and mental distinctions. Using different techniques to introduce and market a promotion helps contextualize the story stream and helps to keep the message alive by moving from the language of fiction to that of an authentic message by using different photographs, logos, slogans, and using them in different settings as shown in **Figure 2**. In spite of this, it is important to remember that pictures are different from discourse forms in that they are incapable of confirming or denying anything, and this suggests that honesty itself is something that is rather elusive (Pennarola, 2003, p. 66). As a matter of fact, there have been times when discrete advertising has been found to be an effective way of conveying a clear message, which may encourage obvious responses of all kinds from the reader, which will encourage them to respond. A few of the Indian advertising references we go over in The Harappa Files can be viewed as types of Indian advertising references, such as the name of a salve or a brand of cleanser, for

instance. The over-the-counter germ-free cream Boroline, originally marketed in 1929 by a Bengali trader named Gourmohan Dutta in Kolkata, has been marketed as an over-the-counter germ-free cream which is available as an over-the-counter germ-free cream to treat cuts and injuries. In fact, the notion of public financial independence has been discussed in the twentieth century (Banerjee, 2011. p. 74), which indicates that public financial independence was discussed in the past.

Figure 2. Copyright ©Sarnath Banerjee (Source: Sarnath Banerjee, The Harappa Files, HarperCollins Publishers India, Noida, 2011, p. 82).

4.2.6. Textual interconnections

Essentially, Banerjee's graphic stories are based on the concept of intertextuality, a concept which, according to Allen 2000, continually emphasizes the difficulty of particularity, solidarity, and in this way, the undeniable power that is found in these qualities. The snares, the reverberations, the thoughts and the memories that accumulate in Banerjee's work serve as a snare that develops into a complex snare of references. With their multitude of stories and their convergent plots, these stories schizophrenically create and duplicate references and images, as if to find a balance in the roots of the pilgrim past, the roots of the postcolonial age, the roots of tradition and the roots of progress. The Barn Owls' Wondrous Capers may be the best example of intertextuality, since it identifies characters such as Jacob Charnock, Marie-Antoinette, the count of St. Germain, Anton Mesmer, Qazi Nazrul Islam, Ruler Ferdinand, and Sovereign Isabella, all in both verbal and graphic form. The author also makes meta-references to comic books in the form of Tintin and Cold, which were created in 1929 by Belgian author Hergé, and as shown in **Figure 3**, the presence of these characters is particularly impressive.
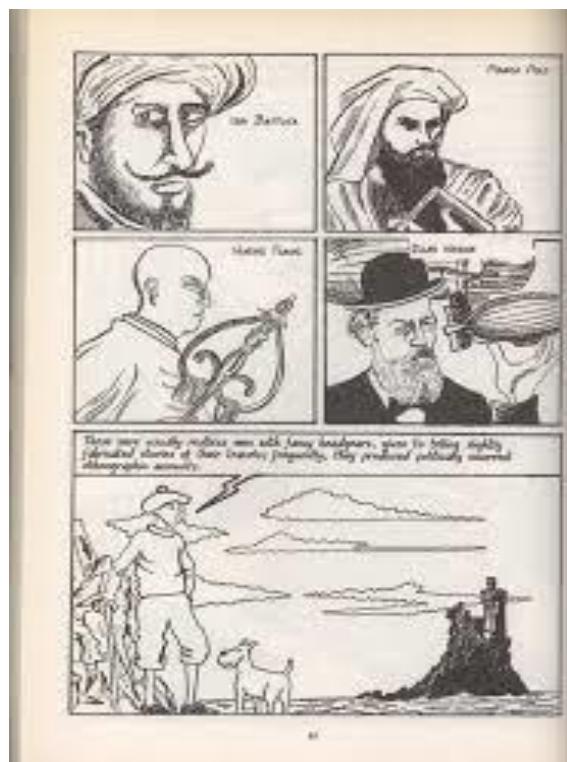
Figure 3. Copyright © Sarnath Banerjee (Source: Sarnath Banerjee, The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers, Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 2007, p. 80).

There are numerous intertextual references to mainstream society in Corridor too, including photos of Groucho Marx, Hitchcock and Houdini, as well as political symbols, for example Nasser and Che Guevara, displayed in The Harappa Files: a show about movement. However, through a roundabout development of a seriously dialogic connection between the middle and the edge of the world, this social spillover grants the extension of the literary degree by way of a roundabout extension of the literary degree. The intertextual system is, therefore, able to influence elaborate and open modes and elements resulting from the process of hybridization. It is Blommaert's definition of this phenomenon as "translocalization" that leads to the creation of new, and positive, opportunities for dialects to run—whether those dialects are changing simultaneously, because "the spread of globalized social arrangements and the development of globalized networks of purchasers" (2010, p. 78). There is no doubt that Banerjee's overwhelming intertextual structure evokes and appropriates symbols as well as signs in an incredibly liquid manner, thereby recording the contemporary social peculiarities we see in local and global settings as well as their 'pluralizing' impacts in a way that is complex and engaging.

4.2.7. Language variety and register

The phonetic aspect of vocabulary will now be broken down into dialects, languages, out-of-standard structures, old discourses, and other apparatuses that may be used. Apart from a few periodic occasions when the creator must exchange codes, for instance when we see a "positive routines" banner in Bharat (Banerjee, 2004. p. 65) that states in both Hindi and English, one can assume that the creator will generally adopt Indian English as standard. In spite of this, verbal components can take

advantage of the graphological capability of their components to achieve explicit complex effects, for example, addressing current, productive shoptalk or mimicking dated, Victorian discourse. Additionally, there are some instances in which we can see sentences and expressions that are not translated, for example, in Bengali when we encounter Philip Francis, an English lawmaker and pamphleteer of Irish descent who lived during the eighth century (Banerjee, 2007. p. 5). Nevertheless, in some instances, the language attempts to elaborately recreate the geographical variation of English that was used in the early and present-day Indian civilizations, such as when the language conveys explicit diatopics, such as non-standard languages, with fillers such as "na" or loanwords that are borrowed from vernacular dialects, or when it conveys explicit diatopics.

4.3. Postcolonial authors' use of language

A great deal of attention has recently been paid to the idea that languages change plays a significant role in the composition of postcolonial works, and this concept has received a lot of attention. Although Banerjee's graphic books are somewhat like the standard of language change seen in post-provincial societies (Ashcroft, 2009), their actual concept of language is different from that which is found in other forms of language, where it mixes words and pictures together, mixing both verbal assets and non-verbal assets. Therefore, the impersonation standard of iconicity that Short and Parasite (1981, pp. 233-236) apply to break down scholarly messages is here enhanced by the graphic element, which in turn makes the message it conveys both more straightforward and darker at the same time. As it can be seen from a mental perspective that certain drawings and characters may appear to be very straightforward and easy to understand, however when closely examined they display an evocative feeling of variety and complexity.

Ashcroft's viewpoint has been largely because there has been a disparity between English's worldwide use and its local reinterpretation in post-provincial settings. According to him, such strain is not an oppositional force; instead, it demonstrates the inventive craftsmanship of the artist, who explains and appropriates semantic designs so that they convey explicit nearby implications in a meaningful manner: "this difference between language and a standard is precisely what enables language itself to be a metonymy, a major signifier of social contrast." (2010). We can therefore conclude that when language is hybridized and controlled, it ultimately becomes a powerful tool that allows character to emerge through the outflow of words. Similarly, Ashcroft explores the various processes a language changes (such as shining, untranslated words, interlanguage, syntactic combinations, codes exchanged, and vernacular records) and how they might be carried out. The problem is that the concept of language change as portrayed by text-based narratives is uniquely challenging to comprehend, and the authors are not able to continuously develop phonetic plans to meet new needs of self-articulation as the years go by. According to Ashcroft's vision of the post-frontier essayist (2009, p. 175, writer's accentuation), the essayist gives up the significance of meanness and a circumstance in which significance occurs, while simultaneously implying areas of distinction that may have been of past importance, as if they were a part of a realm of experience that had been once dominated by

importance. As expected, this vision has come to fruition because of Banerjee's graphic books, which rely on the use of language to portray a character's personality in a non-invasive way.

Ultimately, Ashcroft's analysis of language is closer to the suggestion that language may be viewed as a neighborhood practice, as Pennycook suggests that it could be "considered that various activities in language could be relocalized as well as different translingual practices that language clients might use across various assets" (2010, p. 86). It is evident in the researcher's investigations of distinct types of textualities as well as media, that he is constantly highlighting the centripetal cycles of change of open codes that have a great deal of influence in other social settings as well. Furthermore, when he examines the global aspect of English today, with its political and social implications, he suggests what he calls an 'experience' of English. This is a concept he asserts as being related to English's local and international positions, the ways it both reflects and acts as social relations. Pennycook (2010, p. 79) points out that it relates to both local and global perspectives.

The etymological climate that rises up out of Banerjee's works can in this manner be seen in the illumination of both Ashcroft's and Pennycook's examination, since it in the long run reflects complicated, numerous elements of social peculiarities in the globalized, post-pilgrim and postmodern world, with its plenty of inquiries and types of emergency, wherein various characters, like gatherers of whimsies, IIT understudies, antiquated babus, and 'rehashed' legends, establish and reevaluate portrayals through creative narrating with both verbal and pictorial collections. A number of aspects of Indian personality are elucidated by Banerjee in texts that portray experience in a graphic and verbal way to help elucidate the concept of experience. This work demonstrates that the creator can examine the sensation of vulnerability that influences contemporary life, through the coordinated use of images and words. The creator uses the energetic rhythms and specific propensities derived from this sociocultural and sociohistorical context of India to investigate the sense of vulnerability that resides in modern life.

5. Constructions of identity in the (Multi) Canon

How does language reflect or rather 'make' the feeling of 'character', a stacked umbrella term that envelops different definitions and ideas? Obviously, there are no univocal, obvious responses to this inquiry and the actual idea of character calls for discussions and contentions from different perspectives (Jenkins, 2004), however we ought to recall the cozy association among language and personality, which, thusly, likewise surfaces in the texts here thought to be through various phonetic gadgets and drawn pictures. Their illustrative capacity generally conveys a particular internal viewpoint reflecting individual and aggregate qualities and practices. It is unquestionably difficult to unravel the confounded story and multimodal designs that Banerjee creates in his works, however overall, they comprise both a solitary and a plural vision of contemporary life and history through 'authentic' Indian eyes, aggressively adding the various verifiable layers that postmodern and present pioneer accounts tends on reveal and remix today. From one viewpoint, they attempt to

recreate a particular sociocultural milieu, to be specific India, and, on the other, they convey the creator's unconventional decisions and tendencies.

In other words, to move toward language and way of life as need might arise to consider the possibility of multi-standard, or group developments (for this situation the expansion of a particular classification appropriated and repealed, for example 'made neighborhood') and the resulting production of multicanons (to oblige different etymological and text based styles, assets, qualities), which by goodness of disparity and combination likewise influence the element of the English language in its twofold job both as a worldwide language and a nearby language. Kachru (2009, p. 182) has contended that "multi-groups in English have representative and substrative importance: emblematic as in one's personality is emblematic, and substrative in how character is communicated, explained, arranged and saved in language". According to this viewpoint, we could expect that given the intricacy of current character (in India and on the planet) it is important for a narrator to broaden and rehash dialects to make a crossover, "multi-standard" framework that coordinates different open codes like Indian English, social references, the transaction among verbal and visual parts, multimodality and paratextual components as well. It is in the mix and mixing of such elements that lie the different parts of personality and culture that Banerjee wishes to highlight: India and Indian culture therefore are built and taken apart with an end goal to figure out the present through the window of the past (for example the pictorial portrayal of Kolkata, which used to be the capital city during the Raj). Thusly, India as an arising super-power, with its profound inconsistencies and social issues, can't be completely perceived on the off chance that we neglect to check its set of experiences out. Yet, we ought to likewise think about future points of view, as Banerjee's large scale and miniature stories show characters, occasions and mentalities that all in all comprise the social tissue of an advancing setting, in the globalization cycle of South Asia.

In these texts, the scope of conceivable character appearances incorporate assumptions, wants, tensions that subjects see and venture in a few circles and acts: Banerjee catches and remolds these sentiments in his graphic narrating, either straightforwardly with words and pictures, or by enacting references, reverberations, images. Notwithstanding, what describes his comics is a specific viewpoint that mirrors the interconnectedness of talks, characters and voices by means of the 'limited' acknowledge of intertextuality and correspondence. Such a perspective is likewise in accordance with late examination work on the notion(s) of character and its numerous declinations as delineated by Iedema and Caldas-Coulthard in their treatment of 'personality inconvenience', in which they acknowledge the social and verifiable cycles of disaggregation influencing current history and furthermore certify that "discussing personality makes it conceivable to acknowledge that we are befuddled with implications, assets, sentiments and systems of being that reference a large number of others, other spots, other times and other practices" (2008, p. 4). To completely see such a far-reaching look, we need to consider the common exchange of the nearby (Indian qualities and images) and the worldwide (graphic narrating and the utilization of English). At last, we end up back at ground zero to Pennycook's vision of language as a neighborhood practice, which, on account of these graphic works, can propose the kind of Indianness. This seems, by all accounts, to be conflicted

between the posts of globalized experience and explicit territory, however Pennycook brings up that "what is worldwide, part of the exceptionally one-ness of the world, must be perceived through the region of point of view, in a way that incorporates the stances, the perspective, the nearby enunciations through which the worldwide happens" (2010, pp. 79-80). Subsequently, the researcher proposes a more all-encompassing methodology by featuring how subjects make up their characters by moving among neighborhood and worldwide aspects in useful cycles of change and change.

6. Conclusion, local practices reflect identity

Banerjee's comics, despite their apparent linguistic simplicity, present a challenge in unraveling the social layers embedded in their multimodal design. The author skillfully balances clarity and ambiguity in the combination of written words and images, stimulating readers to decode various signs and references. This approach reflects the intersubjective nature of personal development, as highlighted by Bucholtz and Hall, where relationships are defined by contrasts like realness and phoniness, or power and weakness. These graphic novels depict a world in flux, showcasing conflicts like the clash between traditional and modern India. Banerjee's narratives are marked by hybridity, blending cultural expressions, languages, media, traditions, and technologies. His unique style manifests in the integration of lexicon from different languages and eras, and in visual elements like the mix of color and black-and-white, and the use of photos alongside drawings. This hybridity not only captures the essence of the Indian setting but also enriches the narrative with dense layers of meaning. Characters like Brighu, Shintu, Digital Dutta, Kedar Babu, and Mandar Dey navigate through a tapestry of subplots, breaking conventional panel boundaries. Banerjee's works, rich in cultural diversity, offer novel perspectives on Indianness, a concept rooted in the multitude of cultures, voices, and heritages. His stories reflect traditional Indian viewpoints of life as a cycle, simultaneously addressing contemporary societal issues and crises. These crises include challenges to identity, societal norms, and traditions, yet ultimately seek reconciliation and peace with modern Indian life, which is inextricably linked to its traditional and regional pasts. Graphic novels, in this context, are not just vehicles for depicting key contemporary issues like societal roles and gender norms but, through their dynamic combination of various elements, also serve as catalysts for dialogue and reflection, activating cognitive and intercultural processes of understanding.

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