

**COMICS IMAGES AND THE ART OF WITNESSING:
A VISUAL ANALYSIS OF JOE SACCO'S
FOOTNOTES IN GAZA**

By Nawal Musleh-Motut

In November 1956, two large-scale killings of Palestinian civilians by Israeli soldiers took place in the towns of Khan Younis and Rafah, both located in the Gaza Strip. Although more than 275 Palestinians in Khan Younis and approximately 111 Palestinians in Rafah were killed, details of these massacres remained absent from Western media and public debate, and instead were left buried and forgotten in a United Nations report that gave them scant treatment.¹ That was until 2009—fifty-three years after the fact—when these violent events, their lingering repercussions, and the haunting memories of their survivors were brought to life in Joe Sacco's aptly titled comic *Footnotes in Gaza*. Not only does Sacco bring the Gaza massacres into visual presence, but he also gives their victims and survivors names, faces, and voices, thus reviving them from the annals of forgotten history to confront his readers with their harrowing testimonies.

In *Footnotes in Gaza* Sacco returns to the distinct style of comics journalism² that garnered him high international praise, particularly for *Palestine* and *Safe Area Gorazde*. For instance, he continues to problematize

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traditional journalistic objectivity, opts for a highly subjective and critical autobiographical style of reportage in which he positions himself as a primary subject, distinctly uses caricature, perspective, and compulsive realism,³ and gives voice to those most often negated, silenced and/or demonized by Western media. Unlike his previous works, however, in *Footnotes in Gaza* Sacco often consciously pulls himself out of the visual frame, leaving his readers face to face with survivors of the Khan Younis and Rafah massacres, both in the past and in the (then) present, as they testify to their memories of violence, injustice, and survival. In doing so, Sacco strategically employs the art of comics to present his readers with a unique and challenging opportunity to critically engage with and rethink trauma, memory, and social justice through the act of bearing witness.

Various scholars have convincingly argued for Sacco's comics journalism as a documentary form of narrative-visual witness that leverages the grammar of the comics medium to critically compile and materialize evidence of trauma, memory, and human rights abuses in Palestine.⁴ Of these scholars, only Wendy Kozol has attended to how his images facilitate witnessing specifically between his subjects and readers.⁵ As I will elaborate below, however, if Kozol's analysis shows how Sacco's images facilitate this witnessing gaze, she herself does not specifically elaborate on the active role his images play in this process. As such, I undertake a visual analysis of *Footnotes in Gaza* to highlight the multiple and interrelated ways in which Sacco's images actively create the moments and "conditions of possibility"⁶ necessary for readers to witness, that is, address and respond to,⁷ the Khan Younis and Rafah massacres, their survivor-witnesses' testimonies, and the daily lives of Palestinians living under occupation.

Building upon the work of Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, I argue that the images that make up *Footnotes in Gaza* facilitate witnessing by demonstrating the body's dual role in the act of bearing witness, providing the audience an active position in testimonial interactivity, appropriating and reusing images of trauma, manipulating time and space so as to narrativize trauma, and enabling the self-reflexive interrogation of witnessing itself.⁸ Engaging the multiple ways that Sacco's images actively create a performative space that enables his readers to bear witness to these traumatic historical events and their survivors' testimonies of them is important for two reasons. First, it showcases the phenomenological operation of the art

of comics and its ability to enable the art of witnessing.⁹ Second, it reveals how comics images can serve as tools of resistance against hegemonic and ideologically driven media coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by challenging audiences to acknowledge, address, and respond to the continued suffering and resilience of the Palestinian people.

From the Art of Comics to the Art of Witnessing

In *Comics Versus Art*, Bart Beaty asserts that although, “[as] an anti-art, comics have traditionally flown . . . below the critical radar,” in recent years intellectuals, critics, curators, and art historians have begun showing an increased interest in the medium, even “coming to stress . . . that comics are indeed an important visual art.”¹⁰ He also argues that one of the primary reasons why comics have not commonly been the object of academic inquiry in the field of visual studies is because “the most critically successful works in the field are most often valued as literature. For many critics and scholars, comics, despite their pictorial content, are fundamentally akin to narrative literary texts.”¹¹ Yet Beaty and other comics scholars, such as Jeff Adams, David Carrier, Robert C. Harvey, Aaron Meskin, and Roy T. Cook, agree that comics represent a unique and significant art form characterized by the interrelatedness of words and images.¹² Thus, a true understanding of comics as art demands an examination of how their images create meaning not only in relation to, but also apart from, their narrative content. As Harvey states, in “the best examples of the art of the comics, the pictures do not merely depict characters and events in a story [they] also add meaning. . . . No serious consideration of the art of the comics can overlook the narrative functions of pictures.”¹³

Taking Harvey’s assertion further, I argue that it is especially important to consider the unique contribution comics images make to nonfiction works that deal with trauma, memory, and testimony, as they have the potential to actively facilitate witnessing. While comics scholars such as Rose Brister and Belinda Walzer, Ben Owen, Charlotta Salmi, Rebecca Scherr, and Tristram Walker allude to witnessing and/or issues of spectatorship in their explorations of how Sacco’s comics enable ethical reading practices, human rights advocacy, and/or the humanizing of those who suffer,¹⁴ the most extensive and insightful studies to specifically investigate comics’

relationship to visual witnessing are those of Hillary Chute and Wendy Kozol. While both scholars skilfully demonstrate how comics’ unique formal capacities document witnessing in both narrative and visual registers, their definitions of, approaches to, and aspirations for visual witnessing diverge in significant ways.

In *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* Chute investigates “how war generates new forms of visual-verbal witness.”¹⁵ Contextualizing her analysis within the tradition of “drawing to tell,”¹⁶ she approaches nonfiction comics as a documentary form that materializes history through the accumulation of evidence. Highlighting the “unique spatial grammar of gutters, grids, and panels,” Chute contends that “comics makes a reader access the unfolding of evidence . . . by aggregating and accumulating frames of information.”¹⁷ Thus, she reads the “dense, virtuosic, and often photorealistic” style of Sacco’s “slow journalism”¹⁸ as an attempt to ethically represent to his readers those absent from and/or silenced by the fast-paced spectacle of Western war reporting. While cartoonists generally leave their readers to determine the pace at which they consume their works, Chute asserts that the slowness of Sacco’s visual technique grounds his comics in an “ethics of attention.”¹⁹ In doing so, they attend to “the particularity of the other,” while also facilitating “an exchange of gazes”²⁰ and thus “a condition of mutual address”²¹ between his readers and subjects. Chute also claims, however, that while she is “interested in the productive power of witnessing” she does “not believe that witnessing must have an ethical value.”²² For her, the imperative behind comics witnessing, both with regard to the traumatic and the everyday, is “the attestation of truth, even if that truth . . . is elusive or ‘unclaimed.’”²³ She declares that the works she analyzes are not concerned with issues of justice, but rather narrative explorations of witnessing that enlist testimony to document traumatic events and their human consequences. As such, Chute asserts that while attending to the silenced voices of the globally marginalized might appear to fall in line with a discourse of human rights, Sacco’s work is not in fact concerned with rights, but rather discloses “a kind of *haunting* by the other that does not end, that cannot be accounted for by rights talk.”²⁴ Although I agree with the bulk of Chute’s thinking, unlike her, I believe that works such as Sacco’s are ethically invested in advocating for human rights and social justice. As such their images do more than assist in the

narrative elaboration of witnessing. In this respect, my approach to comics witnessing generally and Sacco's work specifically is more closely aligned with that of Kozol.

While Kozol also understands comics as a documentary form of visual witnessing that employs its formal capabilities to accumulate evidence and testimonies of human suffering resulting from war and conflict, she differs from Chute by couching her analysis in human rights advocacy and "the political efficacy of visual culture,"²⁵ and is thus concerned with the productive potentiality of "ethical spectatorship."²⁶ In both "Complicities of Witnessing in Joe Sacco's *Palestine*" and *Distant Wars Visible: The Ambivalence of Witnessing*, Kozol investigates the limits and possibilities inherent to "ambivalent witnessing."²⁷ For her, witnessing is "a transitive process between images and viewers that pivots ambivalently around the politics of spectacle as much as around critical framings of war and human suffering."²⁸ She contends that not looking at the effects of violence or trauma runs the risk of refusing to acknowledge and take action against atrocities suffered by others, leaving her to wonder what else might provoke the ethical and political motivations necessary to confront human rights abuses.²⁹ Accordingly, Kozol is concerned not only with how, if at all, Western readers witness "the experiences and subjectivities of [the] survivor-witnesses"³⁰ presented to them by cartoonists such as Sacco, as well as whether such witnessing can take place "outside of a spectatorial framework,"³¹ but also what such works can teach audiences about the "obligations of remembrance."³² Leading from this, she argues for *Palestine* as "a pedagogical model of ethical spectatorship"³³ and *Footnotes in Gaza* as a form of "reparative visuality,"³⁴ both of which not only critically and self-reflexively make human rights abuses in Palestine visible, but also have the potential to affectively motivate audiences to ethically witness and mobilize against human suffering. Thus, while Chute and Kozol's detailed analyses of *Palestine* and *Footnotes in Gaza* are both tremendously valuable for thinking through how the formal aspects of the comics medium help structure a witnessing gaze, the latter demonstrates (even if she does not specifically elaborate on) how comics images actively create the moments and conditions of possibility necessary for their audience to address and respond to suffering and resilience in Palestine.

Comics Images as Active Agents of Witnessing

Similar to Kozol, rather than focusing solely on comics studies, my analysis of the images that comprise *Footnotes in Gaza* extends to the field of visual studies. Specifically, I am concerned with the political efficacy of visual culture and the productive potentiality of visual witnessing and ethical spectatorship, issues most often taken up by visual scholars concerned with photographs associated with or depicting, trauma, atrocity, and human rights abuses.³⁵ Much like photographs, comic images are more than passive entities that simply assist in documenting evidence of suffering. Rather, they are active agents able to performatively facilitate the act of bearing witness, both to traumatic events and the testimonies of their survivors.³⁶ It is here that I find the work of Guerin and Hallas particularly illuminating. While they acknowledge the seminal work of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, they also critique the authors' failure to account for images as active agents in the process of witnessing.³⁷ That is, they suggest that for Felman and Laub, "the visual object is always a medium and never an agent in the act of bearing witness."³⁸ Further to this, they assert that they took Felman's unwillingness to address the agency of the image in her reflections on a crisis that arose among her graduate students after watching videotaped Holocaust testimonies as their "cue to annex the specificity, and ultimate agency, of the image in the performative act of bearing witness to historical trauma."³⁹ Consequently, they emphasize that an image's power to facilitate the process of bearing witness does not originate in its technological capacity to present evidence of a particular event, but rather in its phenomenological ability to "bring the event into iconic presence and to mediate the intersubjective relations that ground the act of bearing witness."⁴⁰ In this way, they argue, images do more than "merely depict the historical world, they participate in its transformation."⁴¹ While neither Guerin and Hallas nor the authors who contributed to their edited volume *Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture* attend to comics images specifically, their arguments concerning the ability of a wide variety of images to phenomenologically facilitate multiple and interrelated ways of witnessing between their subjects and audiences is undoubtedly substantiated within the art of comics.

First, comics images bring events into iconic presence. Adams explains that comics artists, such as Sacco, literally deal in images and thus their works “directly tackle the issue of ‘presence of absence’; they involve a literal image creation, utilising all the artifices of the graphic artist . . . which conspire to recreate the presence of the event or moment that once was.”⁴² Adams goes on to assert, however, that when a comics artist seeks to bring traumatic events related to social and political crises into presence they are not attempting to represent and/or signify lived experience. Rather (and here he puts a contemporary spin on the political writings of Bertolt Brecht) he asserts that they chose the comics medium as a tool of critical social realism that allows them to not only textually, but also visually resist and challenge the processes and social configurations that both create and support the catastrophes with which they are concerned.⁴³ Here realism “refers to political critiques of beliefs and values, as opposed to the correspondence of depictions to [pre-existing] ideas about lifelike representations.”⁴⁴ Put another way, these artists do not use realism as an artistic technique meant to mimetically represent traumatic events and/or individuals’ experiences of them, but rather as a political position from which to situate their work and instruct their audiences through alienation and distortion.⁴⁵ Such a “pedagogic impulse,” as Adams calls it, positions comics as “a visual pedagogy” through which contemporary audiences can learn about, understand, and/or virtually⁴⁶ experience historical tragedies.⁴⁷ Thus, while the art of comics may not be able to right the injustices it documents and/or stop future violence from taking place, it has “the capacity to cast new and even unexpected light on a subject by moving the [audience] emotionally and intellectually toward the unknown,” thereby challenging them to contemplate “what actions [they] are prepared to take in light of [their] new understandings.”⁴⁸

Second, comics images bring survivors of the aforementioned events into presence, creating the moments and conditions necessary for intersubjective engagement, and thus witnessing, between them and their audience. Guerin and Hallas explain that

The encounter with an other is central to any conception of bearing witness. For a witness to perform an act of bearing witness, she must address an other, a listener who consequently functions as a witness

to the original witness. The act of bearing witness thus constitutes a specific form of address to an other. It occurs only in a framework of relationality, in which the testimonial act is itself witnessed by an other. This relationality between the survivor-witness and the listener-witness frames the act of bearing witness as a performative speech act.⁴⁹

Through this process of witnessing the listener-witness not only enables the possibility of testimony, but also shares its burden with the survivor-witness. That is to say, the former “assumes responsibility to perpetuate the imperative to bear witness to the historical trauma for the sake of collective memory.”⁵⁰ By creating a performative space in which audiences are able to address and respond to survivors as they testify to their lived experiences of trauma and/or oppression, visual images facilitate the act of bearing witness. Here, and as Jill Bennett emphasizes, a “politics of testimony,” in which a distinction is made between realist claims that art can faithfully represent a particular traumatic event and a survivor’s actual experience of violence, loss, and injustice, “requires of art *not* a faithful translation of testimony; rather, it calls upon art to exploit its own unique capacities to contribute actively to this politics.”⁵¹ Due to its ability to bring testifying survivors into presence, the art of comics has the potential to ignite affective responses, generate critical inquiry, facilitate ethical engagement, and inspire political action in and/or by their audiences.⁵² In doing so, art provocatively challenges us to ask ourselves “what kinds of witnesses will we be?”⁵³ Will we be passive, yet potentially empathetic, witnesses that silently consume the injustices comics images bring into presence or will we be active witnesses inspired to take responsibility for and act on behalf of those who testify to suffering and survival?⁵⁴

Sacco’s Approach to Witnessing

Before moving on to my visual analysis I believe it is important to briefly consider how, if at all, Sacco himself approached witnessing while conceptualizing, researching, and producing *Footnotes in Gaza*. This is significant for two reasons. First, in spite of all the academic attention paid to the political and ethical potential of Sacco’s work, to the best of my knowledge, no other scholar has included his understanding of and/or aspirations for visual witnessing as part of their analysis. Second, I believe that juxtaposing

Sacco's approach to and hopes for visual witnessing alongside an analysis of how these same images facilitate witnessing independent of his artistic intentions helps underscore images' powerful function as active agents. Put differently, if Sacco used the comics medium to orchestrate a political and/or ethical encounter between his subjects and readers, it is his images themselves that phenomenologically create the conditions of possibility necessary for witnessing to take place.

While the initial impetus for *Footnotes in Gaza* was simply to document and share a story that Sacco felt had not been told, particularly to Western audiences, at a deeper level he wanted to demonstrate to his readers the organic nature of history as it manifested in the unrelenting trauma that characterizes his subjects' lives—an objective he achieved by visually juxtaposing his subjects' memories of the 1956 massacres with the conditions of their daily existence during his visits to Khan Younis and Rafah in 2002 and 2003.⁵⁵ Of particular interest to Sacco was the fact that many of the people he spoke to often had no time to reflect on past traumas because their present was also in turmoil: “[Palestinians are] living on a . . . wave that just hasn't crashed. And who knows if it ever will and what that crashing will mean. . . . I wanted people to sort of feel [that] this is [Palestinians'] past and their present and, unfortunately, it's going to be their future for some time to come.”⁵⁶ These comments seem to imply that Sacco consciously sought to create the moments and conditions necessary for his readers to witness the Khan Younis and Rafah massacres, their survivors-witnesses' testimonies of these events, as well as the Palestinians' historical and unremitting suffering. However, he admits he was not thinking about witnessing, nor did he have a theory regarding it, when he initially conceived of the project, or even when he first entered the field. Rather, as a journalist, he simply set out to “get the story.”⁵⁷ It was not until he was actually “doing the story” that the issue of witnessing, in its many variations, presented itself and demanded attention.⁵⁸

Most pressing for Sacco was the need to acknowledge and ultimately accept that the details of these survivor-witnesses' testimonies were often inconsistent and/or contradictory. Although clear and consistent narrative arcs emerged across his subjects' testimonies of both the Khan Younis and Rafah massacres, there were obvious differences in how individuals remembered certain details of both events.⁵⁹ Acutely aware of these incongruities,

but unsure how to approach them, Sacco decided “to throw it back at the reader and say ‘this is what happens.’ It doesn't mean the overall arc of the story isn't true, but [that] people remember things differently and we have to be okay with that.”⁶⁰

Equally noteworthy was Sacco's personal ability to witness his subjects' testimonies. He notes a significant difference between listening to these stories while researching in the field versus engaging with them more deeply when drawing *Footnotes in Gaza*. By prioritizing his professional role as a journalist during the survivor-witnesses' testimonies, Sacco was unable to take on the ethical position of listener-witness. In fact, it was much easier for him to hear his subjects' testimonies as he sat face to face with them because his attention was focused on “constantly corralling [them] into telling [a] particular story,” after which he would simply move on to the next interview: “It's not that you don't recognize the significance and the importance of [their testimonies] or that you're not affected, but you're also in professional mode.”⁶¹

While Sacco's professional journalistic approach may have served him well in “getting the story,” even allowing room for him to acknowledge and empathize with his subjects and their stories, it also may have closed off the possibility for him to ethically address and respond to the survivor-witnesses and their testimonies. In other words, it could be argued that by “constantly corralling” his subjects into telling him about their memories of the Khan Younis and Rafah massacres and then quickly moving along to the next individual or interview, Sacco himself was a passive witness to the very organic cycle of historical traumas and silenced voices that he set out to document.

Interestingly, Sacco only truly became an active witness to his subjects' testimonies once he began drawing the images that make up *Footnotes in Gaza*. In contrast to listening to his subjects' testimonies while in the field, Sacco found drawing *Footnotes in Gaza* very difficult. Not only did he spend a great deal more time engaged with each individual's story as he worked to interpret it, but he also had to inhabit their body as he artistically rendered their experiences of trauma and violence: “you sort of mimic [their bodily] responses . . . which is very difficult and often very unpleasant. . . . But I don't over play it, I put myself in that position, the people you're talking to didn't.”⁶² This indicates that it was through the task of drawing, an act that required both listening deeply to and physically embodying his subjects' traumatic

memories of the Khan Younis and Rafah massacres through their literal performance, that Sacco was finally able to engage in the intersubjective act of witnessing: to address, respond to, and ultimately take responsibility for these survivor-witnesses and the testimonies they provided.

The aforementioned ethical responsibility, which is necessary for witnessing to take place, is manifest in Sacco's artistic rendering of his subjects' testimonies. While stressing and honoring his subjects' desire to tell their stories and have them be heard, he also acknowledges the danger inherent in the subjective act of drawing someone else's traumatic memories and testimonies. In fact, his biggest fear is that he will draw something that is not true to that individual's experience, thus "pouring concrete over something so that that becomes the standard by which people see the event."⁶³ In the hopes of alleviating this danger, Sacco once again drew himself into *Footnotes in Gaza* as a way of providing a level of transparency to his readers: "I'm the filter. I'm an interpreter of that story so that helps me feel a little better about drawing someone's story. It's a clue to the reader that whatever is going on here is my interpretation of that story."⁶⁴ Considered in light of Sacco's earlier statements regarding his deeper purpose in creating *Footnotes in Gaza*, his comments speak to Adams's and Bennett's arguments: Sacco does not seek to mimetically represent the traumas suffered by his subjects, rather he exploits the unique capacities of the art of comics to challenge his readers to be active, rather than passive, witnesses to his subjects' testimonies of the Khan Younis and Rafah massacres, alongside the historical, unrelenting, and organic cycle of Palestinian suffering.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, when asked to speak specifically to the role his images play in the process of witnessing, Sacco simply stated that his visual interpretation of his subjects' testimonies and daily lives help his readers enter the story much more easily: "the idea is to get the reader, to get myself, into a situation visually, because that's when it becomes alive and to pull the reader along with me. And I think that has an advantage because [the image] is very visceral."⁶⁶ Although this is true, Sacco's images move beyond simply visually situating his readers and onto creating the conditions of possibility necessary to facilitate the act of witnessing in multiple and interrelated ways. Thus, while Sacco undoubtedly imbues his images with political and ethical aspirations for visual witnessing, as active agents able to independently facilitate witnessing between his subjects and readers his

images ultimately make political and ethical demands of his readers that he can neither predict nor control. Thus, it is to a visual analysis of *Footnotes in Gaza*, structured by Guerin and Hallas' aforementioned and interrelated five "conceptual clusters," that I now turn.⁶⁷



Figure 1. "Images" from the book *Footnotes In Gaza* by Joe Sacco. Copyright © 2009 by Joe Sacco. Used by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

The Art of Witnessing in *Footnotes in Gaza*

The Body of the Witness

Guerin and Hallas contend that “the body has a dual role in acts of bearing witness to traumatic historical events.”⁶⁸ First, an intersubjective encounter between the survivor of trauma and an other is necessary for witnessing to take place, hence the testimony of the former “is dependent on her embodied presence at the moment of enunciation. No one can bear witness in her place.”⁶⁹ Nowhere do the images in *Footnotes in Gaza* demonstrate their ability to facilitate this process more than when Sacco pulls himself out of the image’s frame and refocuses the gaze of the survivor-witness to meet that of their audience. One of the most powerful instances of this is demonstrated in figure 1, in which portraits of several survivor-witnesses of the Rafah massacre are juxtaposed as they share their individual memories of hearing the Israeli announcement calling for all Palestinian men within a particular age range to gather at the local El-Ameeriah school.⁷⁰ On this single page Khalil Ahmed Mohammed Ibrahim, Mohammed Yousef Shaker Mousa, Mohammed Juma’ El-Ghoul, Ahmed Khalil El-Bawab, Mohammed Abu Ammrah, and Mohi Eldin Ibrahim Lafi are arrestingly brought into presence as they testify to the initial events that culminated in the Rafah massacre.⁷¹ This “corporeal inscription” of survivor-witnesses creates the necessary foundation, not only for bringing these tragedies into presence, but also for the type of reciprocal ethical encounter noted above.⁷² Brought into visual presence with their own names, faces, and voices, Sacco’s subjects become more than simple “talking heads.”⁷³ Instead it can be argued that such portraits “remove silenced subjects from anonymity and . . . restore the meaning and significance of the *individual*.”⁷⁴ Here previously forgotten victims of the Rafah massacre become real and present survivor-witnesses who not only regain their subjectivity and humanity, but also individually demand the attention of their audience—people who they would never meet and who might otherwise never hear their stories. Yet as Camila Loew attests, “portraits place their subjects uncomfortably somewhere between the singular instance of their exceptional experience and their attribution as a representation of a collective.”⁷⁵ Thus, caught in the sustained gazes of the six survivor-witnesses juxtaposed in figure 1, readers are forced not



Figure 2. “Images” from the book *Footnotes In Gaza* by Joe Sacco. Copyright © 2009 by Joe Sacco. Used by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

only to reckon with and attend to these men’s individual testimonies of suffering, but also the collective trauma enacted in Rafah during the massacre.

Second, the body plays a role in visualizing the physical devastation inflicted on it during traumatic historical events. While Guerin and Hallas acknowledge that such images risk the dehumanization of their subjects, particularly where death is concerned, they maintain that “visualising these consequences of enormous violence has become a principal and necessary component of witnessing practice.”⁷⁶ To demonstrate this point, consider Sacco’s interpretation of Misbah Ashour’s testimony of the Khan Younis massacre in which the latter recalls how Israeli soldiers forced him out of his home at gunpoint and then gunned him down alongside several other Palestinian men. Figure 2 contains only three of the numerous frames showing the physical injuries suffered by Mishbah’s and the other men’s bodies—bodies that became the sites upon which the violence of the Khan Younis massacre is enacted.⁷⁷ What’s more, the multiple devastated yet

nameless bodies appearing in the frames stand in for those victims who did not survive and who can no longer speak for themselves. Instead, these anonymous victims are left to testify through the only means left to them, their bodies.⁷⁸ Through these mediated images of violence and destruction, they too are brought into presence, albeit silently. By visualizing the destruction wrought on Misbah's and the other men's bodies, the images in figure 2 make their audience into "forced witness[es] by assaulting [them] again and again, willing or not, with the most atrocious of sights," thus affectively provoking their obligation to remember.⁷⁹

Testimonial Interactivity

Completing the circuit of testimonial interactivity is the spectator of the visual image. Here the focus is shifted from the survivor-witness to "the active [and redefined] role of the spectator . . . in the dynamics of witnessing."⁸⁰ Images that actively create the moments and conditions necessary for witnessing have the potential to transform their spectators from passive to active witnesses who take up the ethical obligation to respond to and address survivor-witnesses and their testimonies. Rather than simply mimetically representing trauma and testimony, these images demand an ethical response from their spectator. The threat that the latter may refuse this demand by closing off rather than opening up the possibility of response and address is undeniably always present. But the image's capacity to increase consciousness of historical traumas, facilitate critical inquiry, and ignite action in its spectators has tremendous ethical potential. While providing the names and portraits of testifying survivors makes it easier for Sacco's readers to both remember who is speaking and engage with them more naturally, I believe that images such as those in figures 1 and 2 do much more.⁸¹ True, they provide the spectator an opportunity to actively engage with Palestinians who they would not otherwise meet, but whose faces, names, and stories they now know. But they also challenge them to become active witnesses by taking on ethical responsibility for the survivor-witnesses and silent victims who are brought into presence. Thus, the effect of these images on the reader is not only extremely visceral and startling, but also potentially ethically and politically rousing. Nevertheless, Stephanie Marlin-Curiel reminds us that such mediated testimony can only be transformative if readers acknowledge

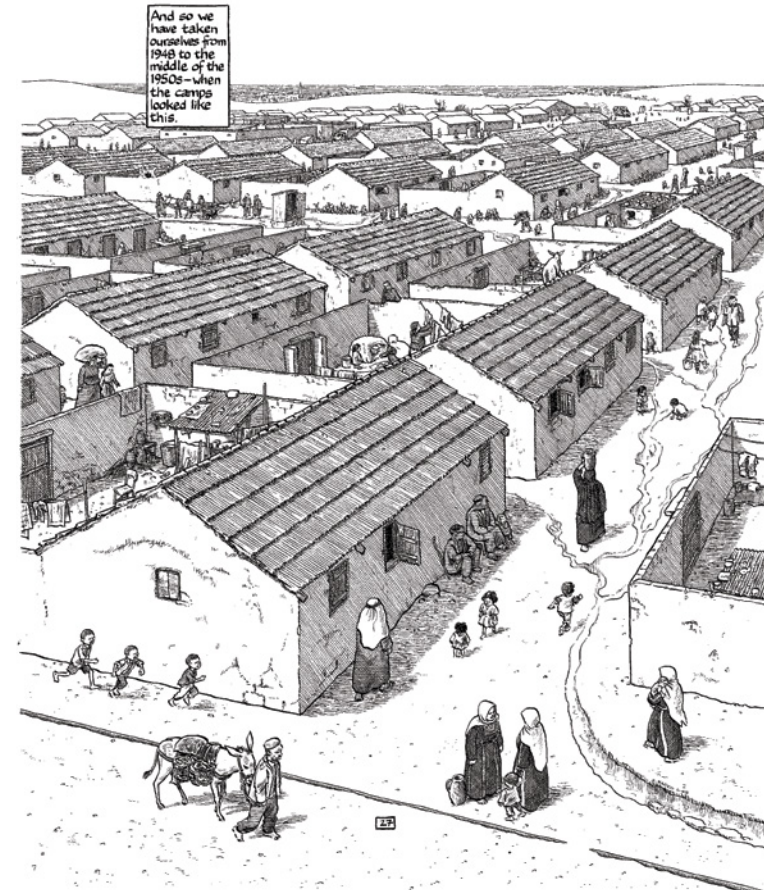


Figure 3. "Images" from the book *Footnotes In Gaza* by Joe Sacco. Copyright © 2009 by Joe Sacco. Used by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

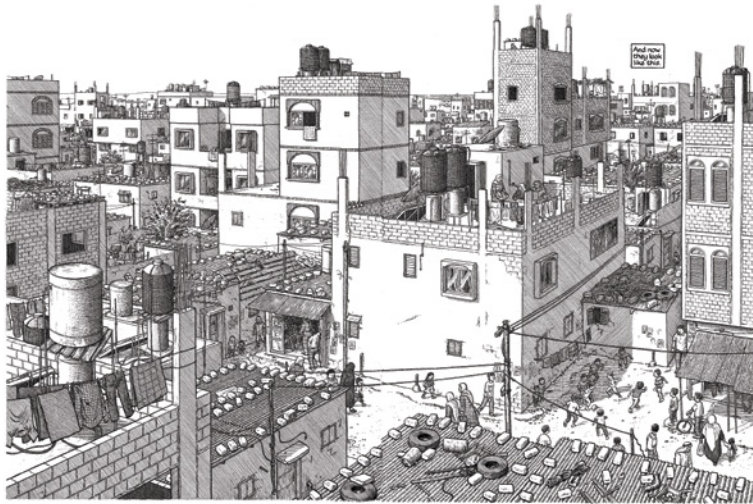


Figure 4. “Images” from the book *Footnotes In Gaza* by Joe Sacco. Copyright © 2009 by Joe Sacco. Used by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

and accept their responsibility to these survivor-witnesses “as present and living, rather than mediated and past.”⁸²

Second Hand Visions

Pre-existing images of trauma that are appropriated and reused can also enable witnessing. In such instances, images are burdened with ethical responsibilities, particularly if the survivor or victim can no longer speak for themselves. Here “the one who carries the continued memory of suffering also carries the responsibility to do so in a manner that empathizes with, rather than violates, the silent victim.”⁸³ Given his penchant for compulsive realism, something he credits to his “journalistic sensibility,” Sacco often bases his drawings of particular individuals and/or settings on photographs found in related archives and/or taken as reference photographs while he is in the field.⁸⁴ Here his aforementioned subjects’ portraits can be considered alongside figures 3 and 4, which depict the refugee camps established after the Nakba in 1948.⁸⁵ The first image shows how the refugee camps looked



Figure 5. “Images” from the book *Footnotes In Gaza* by Joe Sacco. Copyright © 2009 by Joe Sacco. Used by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

in the mid-1950s. The second reveals how the same camps looked between 2002 and 2003, when Sacco visited Gaza.⁸⁶ Based on appropriated and/or reused archival and fieldwork photographs, these images not only bring various individuals and settings into faithful presence, they also revive and/or re-energize the unresolved historical and contemporary injustices that characterize the Palestinian experience.⁸⁷ In doing so, they demonstrate “the power of the image to haunt the imagination, even when it has been understood to be framed, staged and constructed.”⁸⁸ Furthermore, these reimagined images take up the ethical responsibility to remember and carry forward the suffering and injustices experienced by Sacco’s subjects, many of whom unfortunately passed away between the time he interviewed them and when copies of *Footnotes in Gaza* made it back into Khan Younis and Rafah.⁸⁹ Reclaiming and reusing these images honors the victims and survivors of the Gaza massacres by memorializing their experiences and testimonies. Moreover, their presentation and dissemination in the highly durable comics medium passes the ethical responsibility of remembrance and witnessing on to Sacco’s vast and ever growing audience.

Temporal and Spatial Displacements

Images relating to historical trauma can also aid in witnessing by traversing time and space, as they enable “imaginative excursions between past, present and future, between the site of the original trauma . . . and the geographical, social and cultural locations of the spectator.”⁹⁰ Sacco exploits this aspect of the comics medium to great effect. Although *Footnotes in Gaza* is rife with examples, one of the most moving sets of images is seen in figure 5, which comprises two frames of Faris Barbakh’s testimony of the Khan Younis massacre.⁹¹ The image on the left depicts Faris standing beside the ruins of a fourteenth-century castle that now borders Khan Younis’s town square as he shares his memories of that day with Sacco in the (then) present. It is juxtaposed with Sacco’s interpretation of a young Faris as he stands in the same location fifty years earlier, gaping at the strewn and maimed bodies of several Palestinian men killed by Israeli soldiers. These images ground the act of witnessing by moving between the original site and moment of trauma, the (then) present site and moment of testimony, and the future site and moment of potential secondary witnessing. Sacco attributes the organic fluidity of these transitions between past, present, and future, as well as the position of the image’s subject, producer, and potential witness, to the fact that his hand has drawn both images.⁹² The dramatic impact of these chronological and geographical transitions would certainly not be as powerfully achieved through photography, as the technological discrepancies between historical and contemporary images would cause the traversing of time and space to be much less smooth.⁹³ Here we see the unique power of the comics gutter, where readers must fill in the temporal and spatial blanks left between panels, achieving what Scott McCloud refers to as “closure,”⁹⁴ thus forcing them to consider the images as a whole. This technique, more than any of the others noted, assists Sacco in demonstrating the organic and unrelenting nature of Palestinian suffering. As Sacco’s “silent accomplice[s]”⁹⁵ and the addressees of his images, readers not only have to account for the half-century that has passed between these two images, but are also called to witness how the traumatic memories of Faris’ youth continue to haunt him in (then) present-day Khan Younis, where conditions for Palestinians have only worsened. The effect on the reader is as equally visceral, startling, and potentially ethically and politically motivating as

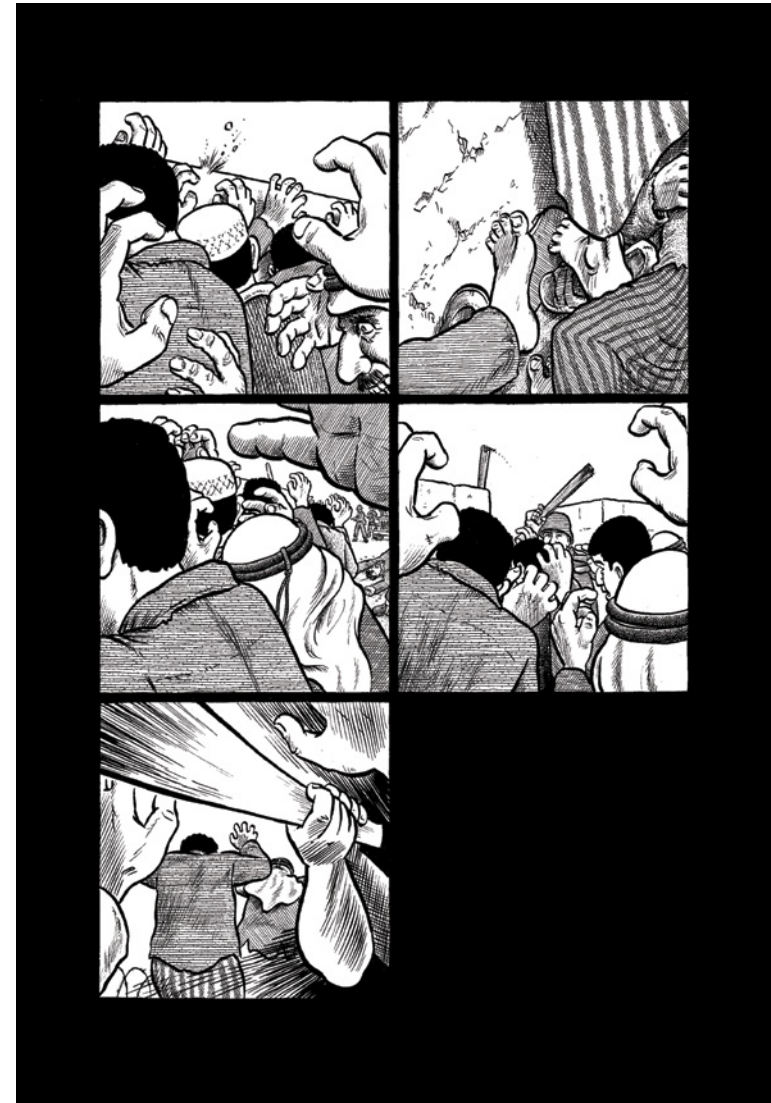


Figure 6. “Images” from the book *Footnotes In Gaza* by Joe Sacco. Copyright © 2009 by Joe Sacco. Used by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

the aforementioned images that bring the bodies of survivor-witnesses and victims into presence.

Witnessing the Witness

The fifth and final way in which images facilitate witnessing is through “the self-reflective interrogation of the act of witnessing itself,” that is, when they perform “the process of witnessing the witness.”⁹⁶ As noted earlier, it appears Sacco was a passive, if empathetic, witness to his subjects’ testimonies at their moment of enunciation, only truly becoming an active witness when he returned home and began the laborious process of drawing *Footnotes in Gaza*. Sacco’s comments above, as well as the comic’s final pages evidence this argument. In his conclusion, Sacco reflects on one of his final interviews with Abu Juhish, a survivor of the Rafah massacre. During their interview Abu Juhish breaks down in tears, simply repeating a single word—“fear.”⁹⁷ Sacco’s narrative continues as follows:

Suddenly I felt ashamed of myself for losing something along the way as I collected my evidence, disentangled it, dissected it, indexed it, and logged it onto my chart. And I remember how often I sat with old men who tried my patience, who rambled on, who got things mixed up, who skipped ahead, . . . who didn’t remember the barbed wire at the gate or when the mukhtars⁹⁸ stood up or where the jeeps were parked, . . . how often I sighed and mentally rolled my eyes because I knew more about that day than they did.⁹⁹

This self-reflexive critique of witnessing, along with its associated images, are followed by twenty visual frames, the last five shown here in figure 6, which are drawn from Abu Juhish’s perspective on that fateful day in Rafah in 1956.¹⁰⁰ They contain no words. Before fading to black, these final wordless panels of *Footnotes in Gaza* represent Sacco’s interpretation of the snapshots of fear Abu Juhish likely remembers before he was knocked unconscious by an Israeli soldier’s heavy stick—snapshots of trauma which haunted him still in the (then) present moment as he struggled to testify to the events of that day.¹⁰¹

The significance of *Footnotes in Gaza*’s conclusion is two-fold. First, by documenting and reflecting on his own struggle to bear witness to his subjects’ testimonies and the unrelenting “wave” of trauma that continues

to shape their daily lives, Sacco not only gives readers a front row seat to witness the artist as witness, but he also challenges them to share in and carry forward the ethical responsibility his subjects’ testimonies demand. Second, by creating the moments and conditions of possibility necessary for witnessing, these wordless final twenty frames force their spectators to critically contemplate how they ought to look at images of trauma and oppression in Palestine, as well as how, if at all, they might speak out about and/or act to rectify the injustices they see.¹⁰² Much like the artist who created them, these images refuse their spectators any form of comforting resolution and/or prescriptive blueprint for ethical and political action. Instead they ignite an affective and visceral unsettlement in their spectators that challenges them to consider how, if at all, they will respond to and address Abu Juhish and his testimony of the fear he experienced during the Rafah massacre. Passive or active witness—the choice is theirs to make.

Footnotes in Gaza is a consummate example of the comics journalism genre pioneered by Sacco. Journalistically, he has compiled the most comprehensive oral history of the Khan Younis and Rafah massacres, giving voice to survivor-witnesses whose testimonies were previously silenced or ignored by Western mainstream media and thus inaccessible to their audiences. Artistically, he oscillates between bringing complex, incomprehensible, and violent historical and present-day moments into presence, thus forcing his readers to face the true nature of war and oppression, and bringing them face to face with survivor-witnesses in the (then) present as they testify to their experiences of injustice and survival. Yet, as I have argued, the active role of comics images in this latter achievement demands more detailed attention. Far from being passive entities that simply complement comics’ verbal narrative and/or mimetically represent and document historical traumas, *Footnotes in Gaza*’s images are in fact active agents. In multiple and interrelated ways, they create a performative space that phenomenologically facilitates the moments and conditions of possibility necessary for witnessing between Sacco’s subjects and his readers. Consequently, the images that make up *Footnotes in Gaza* audaciously confront their spectators with a single unrelenting question: What kind of witness will you be? In doing so, they powerfully demonstrate the image’s significant and unique role in the art of comics and their phenomenological capacity to contribute to the art of witnessing suffering and resilience in Palestine.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Joe Sacco, *Footnotes in Gaza* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009), 399–401; United Nations, *Special Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (Covering the Period 1 November 1956 to mid-December 1956)* (New York, 1957), 116–17, 376.
- 2 Comics journalism refers to journalistic reportage presented in comics form. For detailed discussions of this subgenre of comics, which was pioneered by Sacco, see Kenan Koçak, “Comics Journalism: Towards A Definition,” *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies* 4, no. 3 (2017), 173–99; Amy Kiste Nyberg, “Comics Journalism: Drawing on Words to Picture the Past in *Safe Area Goražde*,” in *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*, eds. Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan (New York: Routledge, 2012), 116–28.
- 3 Compulsive realism refers to Sacco’s penchant for including as much minute visual detail in his images as possible. For more on the value and dangers of Sacco’s compulsive realism, as well as his use of caricature, see Adam Rosenblatt and Andrea A. Lunsford, “Critique, Caricature, and Compulsion in Joe Sacco’s Comics Journalism,” in *The Rise of the American Comics Artist: Creators and Contexts*, eds. Paul Williams and James Lyons (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 68–87.
- 4 Rose Brister and Belinda Walzer, “*Kairos* and Comics: Reading Human Rights Intercontextually in Joe Sacco’s Graphic Narratives,” *College Literature* 40, no. 3 (2013), 138–55; Hillary L. Chute, *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 197–254; Ben Owen, “Overtaken by Future Developments: The Form of History in *Footnotes in Gaza*,” in *The Comics of Joe Sacco: Journalism in a Visual World*, ed. Daniel Worden (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), 203–221; Charlotta Salmi, “Reading Footnotes: Joe Sacco and the Graphic Human Rights Narrative,” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 52, no. 4 (2016), 415–27; Rebecca Scherr, “Framing Human Rights: Comics Form and the Politics of Recognition in Joe Sacco’s *Footnotes in Gaza*,” *Textual Practice* 29, no. 1 (2015), 111–31; Tristram Walker, “Graphic Wounds: The Comics Journalism of Joe Sacco,” *Journeys* 11, no. 1 (2010), 69–88.
- 5 Wendy Kozol, “Complicities of Witnessing in Joe Sacco’s *Palestine*,” in *Theoretical Perspectives on Human Rights and Literature*, eds. Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg and Alexandra Schultheis Moore (New York: Routledge, 2012), 165–79; and Wendy Kozol, *Distant Wars Visible: The Ambivalence of Witnessing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 165–97.
- 6 Dara Culhane, “Stories and Plays: Ethnography, Performance and Ethical Engagement,” *Anthropologica* 53, no. 2 (2011), 258.
- 7 Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 6–7, 18. I base this definition of witnessing on Oliver’s “ethics of witnessing” (6) in which survivors of subordination, oppression, and/or subjectification regain their subjectivity, not through recognition from their oppressors, but rather through the process of working-through which entails “address-ability and response-ability” (6) and thus witnessing between a testifier and their audience.
- 8 Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, eds., *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory, and Visual Culture* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2007), 1–20. In their edited volume, which seeks to conceptualize the agency of the image in the process of witnessing trauma, Guerin and Hallas use these five “conceptual clusters” (13) to organize the volume’s chapters. Given that evidence of all five of these “heuristic aids” (13) is clearly present in *Footnotes in Gaza*, the former became the organizing framework for my analysis of the latter. As Guerin and Hallas stress, and as the rest of this paper will demonstrate, these frameworks should not be considered exclusive and/or definitive.
- 9 Robert C. Harvey, *The Art of the Comic Book: An Aesthetic History* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996), 3; Kyo Maclear, *Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima-Nagasaki and the Art of Witness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 11–12.
- 10 Bart Beaty, *Comics Versus Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 19.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 12 Jeff Adams, *Documentary Graphic Novels and Social Realism* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), 9–24; David Carrier, *The Aesthetics of Comics* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 1–10; Harvey, *The Art of the Comic Book*, 3–15; and Aaron Meskin and Roy T. Cook, “The Art and Philosophy of Comics: An Introduction” in *The Art of Comics: A Philosophical Approach*, eds. Aaron Meskin and Roy T. Cook (Somerset: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), xiv–xli.
- 13 Harvey, *The Art*, 3.
- 14 Brister and Walzer, “*Kairos* and Comics,” 138–55; Owen, “Overtaken by Further Developments,” 203–221; Salmi, “Reading Footnotes,” 415–27; Scherr, “Framing Human Rights,” 111–131; and Walker, “Graphic Wounds,” 669–88.
- 15 Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 2.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 201.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 202.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 205.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 206.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 31. Chute makes this statement in direct response to Kozol’s argument that, “Scholars often define witnessing as politically engaged practices distinct from media portrayals characterized by a focus on violent spectacle. Such claims presume that the spectator gazes passively at violence, whereas the witness undertakes an ethical look that mobilizes the viewer’s sense of responsibility.” See Kozol, “Complicities of Witnessing,” 166, as well as Kozol, *Distant Wars Visible*, 14.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 29.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 30. Emphasis appears in the original.
- 25 Kozol, *Distant Wars Visible*, 18.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 16. Kozol employs this term “to describe visual projects that trouble the self/other construct by foregrounding the inseparability of spectatorship and the ethical imperative to ‘see’ in order to know about acts of violence and injustice” (16). As Kozol herself notes, her consideration of ethical spectatorship is similar to Ariella Azoulay’s theory of the civil contract of photography in which spectatorship is not anchored in in the demands of the nation-state, but rather civic duty towards the photographed subject. See Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 85–135; Ariella Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography* (London: Verso, 2012), 69–78.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 29 Kozol, “Complicities of Witnessing,” 177.
- 30 Kozol, *Distant Wars Visible*, 6.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 167.
- 33 Kozol, “Complicities of Witnessing,” 167.
- 34 Kozol, *Distant Wars Visible*, 166.

- 35 In addition to Guerin and Hallas' edited volume, as well as the two Azoulay titles cited above, see Geoffrey Batchen et al., eds., *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010); and Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003).
- 36 Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology, and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 13-14; Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 4; and W. T. J. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005); xv.
- 37 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 11.
- 38 Frances Guerin, "The Grey Space Between: Gerhard Richter's 18. Oktober 1977," in Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 114.
- 39 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 11. For Felman's analysis see Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1-56.
- 40 Ibid., 12.
- 41 Ibid., 4.
- 42 Adams, *Documentary Graphic Novels*, 59.
- 43 Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 107-110. Brecht's writings on popular art and political realism relate to the accessible and evolving nature of the comic medium. In his view, realism served as the antidote to the lies of the ruling classes, hence "telling the truth seems increasingly urgent" (107). As such, he argued that the only true ally in this battle is the people, for they suffer the most at the hands of the ruling powers. Consequently, it is "more necessary than ever to speak [the people's] language ... [t]he words *Popularity* and *Realism* therefore are natural companions" (107, emphasis appears in the original). In this context, Brecht defines popular as "intelligible to the masses, taking over their own forms of expression and enriching them/adopting and consolidating their standpoint" (108) and realist means as those that work at "laying bare society's casual network/showing up the dominant viewpoint as the viewpoint of the dominators" (109). In calling on the artist to use popular art forms as tools of critical social and political realism, Brecht also acknowledges that new media are required to keep pace with reality: "[r]eality alters; to represent it the means of representation must alter too" (110).
- 44 Adams, *Documentary Graphic Novels*, 10.
- 45 Brecht, *Brecht On Theatre*, 71. Brecht believed that by utilizing the avant-garde aesthetics of alienation and disruption, the epic theatre shocked its audience into questioning what they were watching, forcing them to critically and actively engage with social and political life. The audience needed to be continually reminded that what they were watching was purposefully contrived: "The spectator was no longer in any way allowed to submit to an experience uncritically (and without practical consequence) by means of simple empathy with the characters in a play. The production took the subject-matter and the incidents shown and put them through a process of alienation: the alienation that is necessary to all understanding. When something seems 'the most obvious thing in the world' it means that any attempt to understand that world has been given up. What is 'natural' must have the force of what is startling. This is the only way to expose the laws of cause and effect. People's activity must simultaneously be so and be capable of being different" (71).
- 46 Adams, *Documentary Graphic Novels*, 67; Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 47. Adams actually uses the term "vicariously." (67) I find this term highly problematic, given that claiming the ability to vicariously experience a historical event risks over-identification with the victims and/or survivors of said trauma and thus the appropriation of their experiences. Therefore, I have replaced "vicariously" with "virtually," for as Dominick LaCapra asserts, "a difficulty arises when the virtual experiences involved in empathy gives way to vicarious victimhood, and empathy with the victim seems to become an identity" (47). Instead, LaCapra argues that "the response of even secondary witnesses ... to traumatic events must involve empathic unsettlement," which entails an ethical commitment on the part of the "secondary witness" or listener-witness to feel for the other and to understand their experiences while stopping short of fully identifying with them (47).
- 47 Adams, *Documentary Graphic Novels*, 66.
- 48 Maclear, *Beclouded Visions*, 24.
- 49 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 10.
- 50 Ibid., 11.
- 51 Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); 3. Emphasis appears in the original.
- 52 Bennett, *Empathic Vision*, 7, 10; Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 10-13; and Maclear, *Beclouded Visions*, 24-28.
- 53 Maclear, *Beclouded Visions*, 9.
- 54 James Polchin, "Not Looking at Lynching Photographs," in Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 210-211. Polchin equates passive witnessing with the spectator "who is unable, or unwilling, to speak about what she has seen" (210) and active witnessing with the witness who not only looks, but also speaks out.
- 55 Interview with Joe Sacco, Vancouver, 19 February 2014.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Interestingly, Sacco shares that one of his readers recently contacted him about a UN document they had found during their research on another matter, which corroborated the narrative arc of the Rafah massacre presented in *Footnotes in Gaza*. Written by a UN worker stationed in Gaza in 1956, the document describes what he witnessed in Rafah on the day of the massacre. Sacco explains that when he read the document his "blood ran cold" (Sacco 2014). Given the relevance of this document, Sacco plans to print it in future editions of *Footnotes in Gaza* (Sacco 2013 and 2014).
- 60 Interview with Joe Sacco, Vancouver, 6 November 2013.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Interview with Sacco, 2014.
- 64 Interview with Sacco, 2013.
- 65 Interview with Sacco, 2014. Sacco acknowledges that this process requires him to ask both his subjects and readers for their trust, something they are entitled not to give. With that said, the former certainly demonstrate a degree of trust by meeting and sharing their testimonies with him.
- 66 Interview with Sacco, 2013.
- 67 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 13-17. Please note that each of the five headings below mirror, verbatim, the section titles used by Guerin and Hallas in their introduction.
- 68 Ibid., 13.
- 69 Ibid., 14.
- 70 Sacco, *Footnotes*, 205. The quotes on this page represent just one of many instances where,

- as Sacco notes, some details of the survivor-witnesses' testimonies might differ, but the narrative arch remains consistent.
- 71 Ibid., 417. Although this page begins with a quote from survivor-witness Awadallah Ahmed Awadallah, he is not depicted. In the comic's bibliography Sacco explains that, "[w]here a name is indicated but there is no portrait at all, the likely explanation is that my camera malfunctioned"
- 72 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 14.
- 73 Sacco, *Footnotes*, 417; interviews with Sacco, op. cit. Again, Sacco elaborates in his bibliography: "For the portraits, I worked from photographs for most of the interviewees. In the case of people who did not wish to be identified, I generally drew quick sketches to approximate the look of the individual without rendering him or her identifiable."
- 74 Camila Loew, "Portraits of Presence: Excavating Traumatic Identity in Contemporary Catalan Testimonies," in Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 24. Emphasis appears in the original.
- 75 Ibid., 28.
- 76 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 13.
- 77 Sacco, *Footnotes*, 91.
- 78 Matthias Christen, "Symbolic Bodies, Real Pain: Post-Soviet History, Boris Mikhailov and the Impasse of Documentary Photography," in Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 57.
- 79 Ibid., 62.
- 80 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 14.
- 81 Interview with Sacco, 2013.
- 82 Stephanie Marlin-Curiel, "Re-collecting the Collective: Mediatized Memory and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission," in Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 79.
- 83 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 15.
- 84 Interview with Sacco, 2014.
- 85 Although figures 3 and 4 appear in the Khan Younis section of *Footnotes in Gaza*, Sacco does not specify the exact location of the refugee camps depicted.
- 86 Sacco, *Footnotes*, 27–29; interviews with Sacco, op. cit. I make these assumptions based on Sacco's comments both in *Footnotes in Gaza* and during our interviews. With regard to figure 3, I considered the text provided in the image, as well as the fact that the UNRWA Photo Archive is listed in his bibliography. With regard to figure 4, I again considered the text provided in the image, as well as Sacco's multiple statements during our interviews that he takes reference photographs while in the field to assist in his drawing process.
- 87 Guerin, "The Grey Space Between," 115.
- 88 Jonathan Kear, "A Game That Must Be Lost: Chris Marker Replays Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour*," in Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 137–38.
- 89 Interview with Sacco, 2014.
- 90 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 16.
- 91 Sacco, *Footnotes*, 100.
- 92 Interview with Sacco, 2013.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1994), 63.
- 95 Ibid., 68.
- 96 Guerin and Hallas, *The Image*, 17.
- 97 Sacco, *Footnotes*, 384.
- 98 The Arabic word *mukhtar* refers to the neighbourhood or village head.
- 99 Sacco, *Footnotes*, 384–85.
- 100 Ibid., 388.
- 101 When asked to speak to these final wordless visual images, Sacco remarked: "You're very cold when you're getting these stories, you have to be, and [at] some point you realize that you have a better overall picture than a lot of the individuals who were actually there. And there's a certain arrogance to that . . . [which you really don't] . . . recognize necessarily, but . . . that was a moment of recognition when I talked to that one guy who just had one word to say about it . . . fear was what he remembered and . . . I was a little ashamed somehow . . . it was just a way of returning the story to the people, that's why I sort of put it from their point of view . . . just, you know, no more words . . . it's not my story actually." Interview with Sacco, 2013.
- 102 Polchin, "Not Looking," 208–9.