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# Anthropomorphism as a Narrative Tool in the Re-Telling/Showing of Contemporary History in Malik Sajad's *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir*

**Rupam Hazarika**

**Abstract**

Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics—human traits, emotions or intentions—to non-human entities like animals or gods. Anthropomorphised characters, thus, do not only resemble humans in physical and behavioural attributes but also exhibit a wide gamut of human emotions and feelings. Talking animals and other non-human entities exhibiting human-like traits have been conspicuous in literature, from ancient texts to modern-day visual narratives. Over the years, anthropomorphism has evolved from the confines of children's literature to make its presence felt in narratives aimed at a more sophisticated readership, and is particularly ubiquitous in graphic narratives which employ a combination of text and images to give visual representation to themes as varied as history,

# CHANGING SCENARIO IN NORTH EAST INDIA : EDUCATION, SOCIETY, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE


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# Home, Outside and the In-between Spaces : Negotiating Hybrid Identities in Anjum Hasan's Lunatic in My Head

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## ABSTRACT

Women writers from the north east of India have created a distinctive space for themselves in the domain of Indian Writing in English. Vexed issues like political unrest in the region, insurgency, underdevelopment, migration and the search for identity figure prominently in the works of young writers of the north east. Anjum Hasan's fiction too unpacks the complexities of home and belonging. Set in the hill town of Shillong, *Lunatic in My Head* explores the concerns of those who consider the town as their home but do not belong to any of the ethnic communities of the region. The three central protagonists, each of whose parents migrated to Shillong from the so-called mainland India, attempt to negotiate their new hybrid identities in migrant spaces. The novel thus demands a deeper probe in terms of the conflicting issues of natives, outsiders and those who inhabit the in-between spaces.

# RECLAIMING NARRATIVES:
## IDENTITY, ENVIRONMENT, AND RESISTANCE IN INDIAN LITERARY STUDIES AND BEYOND

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# The Art in Narration: Interrogating Graphic Life-Writing in India

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**Abstract**

Unfettered from the confines of mythological tales or children's stories, Indian graphic narratives have, in recent times, started to explore critical issues and themes through their visual-verbal juxtapositions. The medium of comics is increasingly being employed to tell auto/biographical stories as well. The visual structure of graphic life-writing experiments with words and art in newer and innovative ways that unsettle traditional notions of such narratives. The artwork does not just supplement the words but also at times contradicts, subverts or even lends playful and ironic commentaries on them. The objective of this paper, based on the critical theories of visual narratology and multimodality, is to carry out conceptual research on the interactions between images and text in three Indian graphic life narratives—*Bhimayana, A Gardener in the Wasteland* and *The Real Mr. Barkotoki*—each of which has employed a unique art style in the textual-visual narration of the lives they portray.

The term 'graphic novel' has emerged as a widely contested term for a medium that is gaining increasing prominence in contemporary literature and storytelling. While the term is often used to refer to a long-form standalone narrative on a serious topic, it is excluded for serialised comic books written primarily for young readers. This, however, is viewed by many as nothing short of a marketing tool or an attempt to gain literary legitimacy. In *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud (1993) discusses the term 'graphic novel' and its limitations. While he acknowledges that the term has been useful in gaining legitimacy for comics, he ultimately argues for a broader definition of comics that includes all forms, from short strips to long narratives. He remarks, "'Graphic novel' is, after all, just a marketing term—one that I sometimes use but begrudgingly. Many of the best-loved 'graphic novels' are really just long comic books, and that's fine" (McCloud 134). The terms 'graphic novel', 'graphic narratives', 'visual narratives' and 'comics' are thus often used interchangeably for a medium that employs words and images in its narrative strategy.

One of the notable developments in the field is the use of comics as a tool for auto/biographical storytelling, wherein life stories are articulated through both written and visual forms. The use of the moniker 'graphic novel' in this form of life-writing complicates it further by raising questions about the relationship between visual storytelling and life narratives. Hillary Chute (2017) emphasises that many graphic biographies function as memoir or historical documentation rather than novelistic storytelling: "Much of what we call 'the graphic novel' today is not exactly novelistic—it's not fiction. Many of the most celebrated contemporary comics are works of nonfiction: memoirs, biographies, histories." (2). The merging of narrative text with illustrations allows for the portrayal of real-life events in a dynamic, multidimensional manner, offering new ways of understanding personal histories and collective experiences. The narration also involves other techniques associated with graphic novels. For instance, the device of 'frames' in a graphic narrative also adds to the meaning of the text: "In addition to drawing style, what is included in, excluded from or spills out of a frame, the perspectives from which the content of a

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